Summary of the
Framework for Program Evaluation[1]

Citation: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Framework for program evaluation in public health. MMWR 1999;48(No.RR-11):1-42.

1. **Summary**
Effective program evaluation is a systematic way to improve and account for program actions involving methods that are useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate. The framework is a practical, nonprescriptive tool, designed to summarize and organize essential elements of program evaluation. The framework comprises steps in evaluation practice and standards for effective evaluation. Adhering to these steps and standards will allow an understanding of each program's context and will improve how evaluations are conceived and conducted. The framework inherently maximizes payoffs and minimizes costs because it is a template for designing optimal, context-sensitive evaluations.

2. **How to Assign Value**
Assigning value and making judgments regarding a program on the basis of evidence requires answering the following questions:

- What will be evaluated? (i.e. what is "the program" and in what context does it exist)

- What aspects of the program will be considered when judging program performance?

- What standards must be reached for the program to be considered successful?

- What evidence will be used to indicate how the program has performed?

- What conclusions regarding program performance are justified by comparing the available evidence to the selected standards?

- How will lessons learned from the inquiry be used to improve program effectiveness?

These questions should be addressed at the beginning of a program and revisited throughout its implementation. The framework provides a systematic approach for answering these questions.

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[1]   This is a condensed version of a longer description of the framework. The full version has 112 references which show the depth of research and theory upon which the framework rests. Due to space limitations, these references have been removed. Also, the term "program" is used to describe the object of evaluation; it applies to any organized action to achieve a desired end. This definition is deliberately broad because the framework can be applied to almost any program activity.

3. **Framework for Program Evaluation**
   The framework comprises steps in evaluation practice and standards for effective evaluation
   (Figure 1). There are several subpoints to address when completing each step, all of which are
   governed by the standards for effective program evaluation (Box 1). Thus, the steps and standards
   are used together throughout the evaluation process. For each step there are a sub-set of standards
   that are generally most relevant to consider (Box 2).

4. **Steps in Evaluation Practice**
   The six connected steps of the framework provide a starting point to tailor an evaluation for a
   particular program, at a particular point in time. The steps are all interdependent and might be
   encountered in a nonlinear sequence; however, an order exists for fulfilling each — earlier steps
   provide the foundation for subsequent progress. Thus, decisions regarding how to execute a step
   are iterative and should not be finalized until previous steps have been thoroughly addressed. The
   steps are as follows:

   • Engage stakeholders

   • Describe the program

   • Focus the evaluation design

   • Gather credible evidence

   • Justify conclusions

   • Ensure use and share lessons learned

   a. ***Engaging Stakeholders*** (Box 3)
      The evaluation cycle begins by engaging stakeholders (i.e., the persons or organizations having
      an investment in what will be learned from an evaluation and what will be done with the
      knowledge). Almost all program work involves partnerships; therefore, any assessment of a
      program requires considering the value systems of the partners. Stakeholders must be engaged
      in the inquiry to ensure that their perspectives are understood. When stakeholders are not
      engaged, evaluation findings might be ignored, criticized, or resisted because they do not
      address the stakeholders' questions or values. After becoming involved, stakeholders help to
      execute the other steps. Identifying and engaging the following three principle groups are
      critical:

      • **Those involved in program operations**
        (e.g., sponsors, collaborators, coalition partners, funding officials, administrators,
        managers, and staff)

      • **Those served or affected by the program**
        (e.g., clients, family members, neighborhood organizations, academic institutions, elected
        officials, advocacy groups, professional associations, skeptics, opponents, and staff of
        related or competing agencies)

      • **Primary users of the evaluation**
        (e.g., the specific persons in a position to do or decide something regarding the program)

b. ***Describe the Program*** (Box 4)
Program descriptions set the frame of reference for all subsequent decisions in an evaluation. The description enables comparisons with similar programs and facilitates attempts to connect program components to their effects. Moreover, stakeholders might have differing ideas regarding program goals and purposes. Evaluations done without agreement on the program definition are likely to be of limited use. Sometimes, negotiating with stakeholders to formulate a clear and logical description will bring benefits before data are available to evaluate program effectiveness. Aspects to include in a program description are:

- **Need**
  What problem or opportunity does the program addresses? Who experiences it?

- **Expected effects**
  What changes resulting from the program are anticipated? What must the program accomplish to be considered successful?

- **Activities**
  What steps, strategies, or actions does the program take to effect change?

- **Resources**
  What assets are available to conduct program activities (e.g., time, talent, technology, information, money, etc.)?

- **Stage of development**
  How mature is the program (i.e., is the program mainly engaged in planning, implementation, or effects)?[2]

- **Context**
  What is the operating environment around the program? How might environmental influences (e.g., history, geography, politics, social and economic conditions, secular trends, efforts of related or competing organizations) affect the program and its evaluation?

- **Logic model**
  What is the hypothesized sequence of events for bringing about change? How do program elements connect with one another to form a plausible picture of how the program is supposed to work?

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[2] During planning, program activities are untested, and the goal of evaluation is to refine plans. During implementation, program activities are being field-tested and modified; the goal of evaluation is to characterize real, as opposed to ideal, program activities and to improve operations, perhaps by revising plans. During the last stage, enough time has passed for the program's effects to emerge; the goal of evaluation is to identify and account for both intended and unintended effects.

c. ***Focus the Evaluation Design*** (Box 5)

The direction and process of the evaluation must be focused to assess issues of greatest concern to stakeholders while using time and resources as efficiently as possible. Not all design options are equally well-suited to meeting the information needs of stakeholders. After data collection begins, changing procedures might be difficult or impossible, even if better methods become obvious. A thorough plan anticipates intended uses and creates an evaluation strategy with the greatest chance of being useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate. Among the items to consider when focusing an evaluation are the following:

- **Purpose**:
  What is the intent or motive for conducting the evaluation (i.e., to gain insight, change practice, assess effects, or affect participants)?

- **Users**
  Who are the specific persons that will receive evaluation findings or benefit from being part of the evaluation?

- **Uses**
  How will each user apply the information or experiences generated from the evaluation?

- **Questions**
  What questions should the evaluation answer? What boundaries will be established to create a viable focus for the evaluation? What unit of analysis is appropriate (e.g., a system of related programs, a single program, a project within a program, a subcomponent or process within a project)?

- **Methods**
  What procedures will provide the appropriate information to address stakeholders' questions (i.e., what research designs and data collection procedures best match the primary users, uses, and questions)? Is it possible to mix methods to overcome the limitations of any single approach?

- **Agreements**
  How will the evaluation plan be implemented within available resources? What roles and responsibilities have the stakeholders accepted? What safeguards are in place to ensure that standards are met, especially those for protecting human subjects?

d. ***Gather Credible Evidence*** (Box 6)

Persons involved in an evaluation should strive to collect information that will convey a well-rounded picture of the program and be seen as credible by the evaluation's primary users. Information should be perceived by stakeholders as believable and relevant for answering their questions. Such decisions depend on the evaluation questions being posed and the motives for asking them. Having credible evidence strengthens evaluation judgments and the recommendations that follow from them. Although all types of data have limitations, an evaluation's overall credibility can be improved by using multiple procedures for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data. When stakeholders are involved in defining and gathering data that they find credible, they will be more likely to accept the evaluation's conclusions and to act on its recommendations. The following aspects of evidence gathering typically affect perceptions of credibility:

- **Indicators**
  How will general concepts regarding the program, its context, and its expected effects be translated into specific measures that can be interpreted? Will the chosen indicators provide systematic data that is valid and reliable for the intended uses?

- **Sources**
  What sources (i.e., persons, documents, observations) will be accessed to gather evidence? What will be done to integrate multiple sources, especially those that provide data in narrative form and those that are numeric?

- **Quality**
  Is the information trustworthy (i.e., reliable, valid, and informative for the intended uses)?

- **Quantity**
  What amount of information is sufficient? What level of confidence or precision is possible? Is there adequate power to detect effects? Is the respondent burden reasonable?

- **Logistics**
  What techniques, timing, and physical infrastructure will be used for gathering and handling evidence?

e. ***Justify Conclusions*** (Box 7)

Evaluation conclusions are justified when they are linked to the evidence gathered and judged against agreed-upon values or standards set by the stakeholders. Stakeholders must agree that conclusions are justified before they will use the evaluation results with confidence. Justifying conclusions on the basis of evidence includes the following five elements:

- **Standards**
  Which stakeholder values provide the basis for forming judgments? What type or level of performance must be reached for the program to be considered successful?

- **Analysis and synthesis**
  What procedures will be used to examine and summarize the evaluation's findings?

- **Interpretation**
  What do the findings mean (i.e., what is their practical significance)?

- **Judgment**
  What claims concerning the program's merit, worth, or significance are justified based on the available evidence and the selected standards?

- **Recommendations**
  What actions should be considered resulting from the evaluation? [Note: Making recommendations is distinct from forming judgments and presumes a thorough understanding of the context in which programmatic decisions will be made.]

f. ***Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned*** (Box 8)

Assuming that lessons learned in the course of an evaluation will automatically translate into informed decision-making and appropriate action would be naive. Deliberate effort is needed to ensure that the evaluation processes and findings are used and disseminated appropriately. Preparing for use involves strategic thinking and continued vigilance, both of which begin in the earliest stages of stakeholder engagement and continue throughout the evaluation process. The following five elements are critical for ensuring use:

- **Design**
  Is the evaluation organized from the start to achieve intended uses by primary users?

- **Preparation**
  Have steps been taken to rehearse eventual use of the evaluation findings? How have stakeholders been prepared to translate new knowledge into appropriate action?

- **Feedback**
  What communication will occur among parties to the evaluation? Is there an atmosphere of trust among stakeholders?

- **Follow-up**
  How will the technical and emotional needs of users be supported? What will prevent lessons learned from becoming lost or ignored in the process of making complex or politically sensitive decisions? What safeguards are in place for preventing misuse of the evaluation?

- **Dissemination**
  How will the procedures or the lessons learned from the evaluation be communicated to relevant audiences in a timely, unbiased, and consistent fashion? How will reports be tailored for different audiences?

5. **Standards for Effective Evaluation**
   The second element of the framework is a set of 30 standards (Boxes 9-12) for assessing the quality of evaluation activities; these standards are organized into the following four groups:

   • Utility

   • Feasibility

   • Propriety

   • Accuracy

   The standards answer the question, "Will this evaluation be effective?" They are an approved standard by the American National Standards Institute and have been endorsed by the American Evaluation Association and 14 other professional organizations.

   Program professionals will recognize that the steps in evaluation practice are already part of their routine work. Although informal evaluation occurs through routine practice, the standards help to assess whether a set of evaluative activities are well-designed and working to their potential. The program evaluation standards make conducting sound and fair evaluations practical by providing guidelines to follow when having to decide among evaluation options. The standards help avoid creating an imbalanced evaluation (e.g., one that is accurate and feasible but not useful, or one that would be useful and accurate but is infeasible). Furthermore, the standards can be applied while planning an evaluation and throughout its implementation.

6. **Applying the Framework**

   a. ***Conducting Optimal Evaluations***
      Program professionals can no longer question whether to evaluate their work; instead, the appropriate questions are:

      - What is the best way to evaluate?
      - What are we learning from evaluation?
      - How will we use the learning to make programs more effective and accountable?

      To use the recommended framework in a specific program context requires skill in both the science and art of program evaluation. The challenge is to devise an optimal — as opposed to an ideal — strategy. An optimal strategy is one that accomplishes each step in the framework in a way that accommodates the program context and meets or exceeds all relevant standards.

   b. ***Assembling an Evaluation Team***
      Harnessing the efforts of a collaborative group is one approach to conducting an optimal evaluation. A team approach can succeed when a small group of carefully selected persons decides what the evaluation must accomplish, and pools resources to implement the plan. Stakeholders might have varying levels of involvement on the team corresponding to their own perspectives, skills, and concerns. A leader must be designated to coordinate the team and maintain continuity throughout the process; thereafter, the steps in evaluation practice guide the selection of team members.[3]

   c. ***Addressing Common Concerns***
      Common concerns regarding program evaluation are clarified by using this framework. For example, evaluations might not be undertaken because they are misperceived as having to be costly. However, the expense of an evaluation is relative; the cost depends on the questions being asked and the level of precision desired for the answers. A simple, low-cost evaluation can deliver valuable results.

      Rather than discounting evaluations as time-consuming and tangential to program operations, the framework encourages conducting evaluations that are timed strategically to provide necessary feedback to guide action. This makes integrating evaluation with program practice possible.
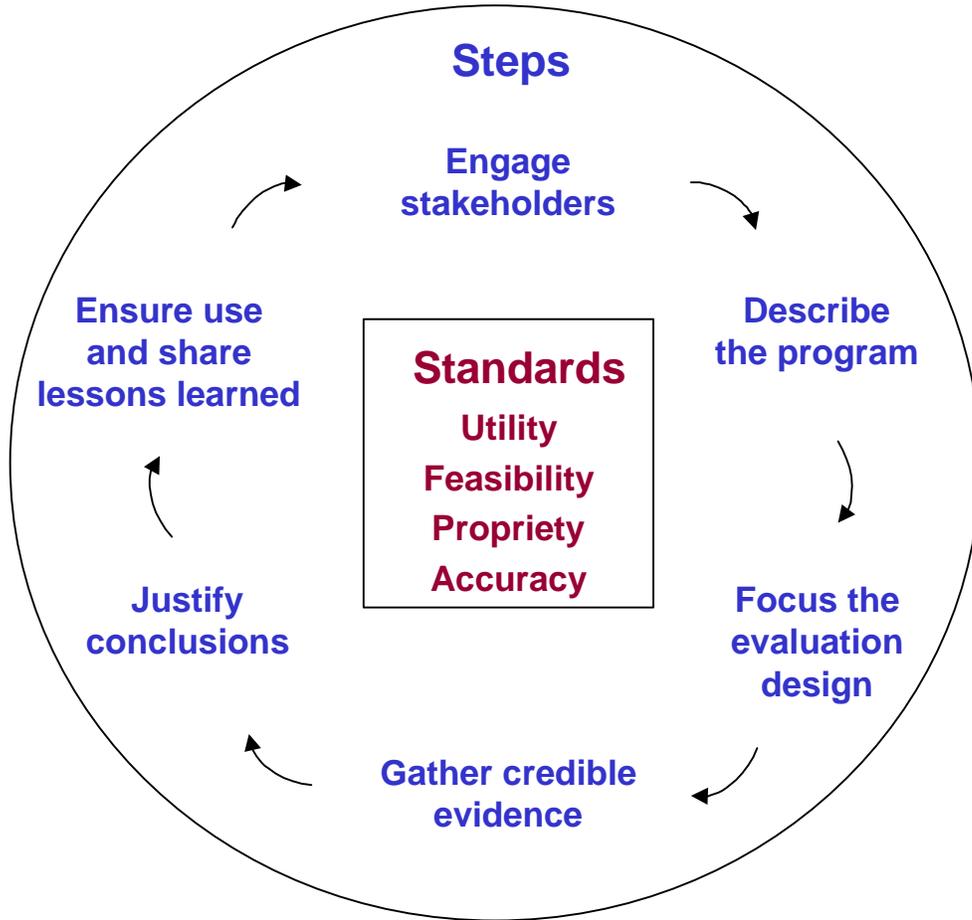
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[3] For example, those who are diplomatic and have diverse networks can engage other stakeholders and maintain involvement; those who understand the program's history, purpose, and practical operation in the field can help describe the program; decision makers who guide program direction can help focus the evaluation design on questions that address specific users and uses and can also set parameters for the evaluation's scope, time line, and deliverables; experienced evaluators or social and behavioral scientists can bring expertise to the development of evaluation questions, methods, and evidence gathering strategies; trusted persons who have no particular stake in the evaluation can ensure that participants' values are treated fairly when applying standards, interpreting facts, and reaching justified conclusions; advocates, clear communicators, creative thinkers, and members of the power structure can help ensure that lessons are learned from the evaluation influence future decision-making regarding program strategy.

Another concern centers on the perceived technical demands of designing and conducting an evaluation. Although circumstances exist where controlled environments and elaborate analytic techniques are needed, most program evaluations do not require such methods. Instead, the practical approach endorsed by this framework focuses on questions that will improve the program by using context-sensitive methods and analytic techniques that summarize accurately the meaning of qualitative and quantitative information.

Finally, the prospect of evaluation troubles some program staff because they perceive evaluation methods as punitive, exclusionary, or adversarial. The framework encourages an evaluation approach that is designed to be helpful and engages all interested stakeholders in a process that welcomes their participation. If sanctions will be applied, they should result not from discovering negative findings, but from failure to use the learning to change for greater effectiveness. The following table summarizes assumptions that can be re-framed to fit the practical approach endorsed by this framework.

Evaluation Is Thought To Be	**Evaluation Can Be**
Expensive	Cost-effective
Time-consuming	Strategically timed
Tangential	Integrated
Technical	Accurate
Not Inclusive	Engaging
Academic	Practical
Punitive	Helpful
Political	Participatory
Useless	Useful

FIGURE 1: Framework for Program Evaluation

BOX 1.   Steps in evaluation practice and standards for effective evaluation

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Steps in Evaluation Practice

- **Engage stakeholders**
  Those persons involved in or affected by the program, and primary users of the evaluation.

- **Describe the program**
  Need, expected effects, activities, resources, stage, context, logic model.

- **Focus the evaluation design**
  Purpose, users, uses, questions, methods, agreements.

- **Gather credible evidence**
  Indicators, sources, quality, quantity, logistics.

- **Justify conclusions**
  Standards, analysis/synthesis, interpretation, judgment, recommendations.

- **Ensure use and share lessons learned**
  Design, preparation, feedback, follow-up, dissemination.

Standards for Effective Evaluation

- **Utility**
  Serve the information needs of intended users.

- **Feasibility**
  Be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.

- **Propriety**
  Behave legally, ethically, and with regard for the welfare of those involved and those affected.

- **Accuracy**
  Reveal and convey technically accurate information.

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BOX 2.   Cross-reference of steps and relevant standards

Steps in Evaluation Practice	Relevant Standards	Group/Item
Engaging stakeholders	Stakeholder identification	Utility/A
	Evaluator credibility	Utility/B
	Formal agreements	Propriety/B
	Rights of human subjects	Propriety/C
	Human interactions	Propriety/D
	Conflict of interest	Propriety/G
	Metaevaluation	Accuracy/L
Describing the program	Complete and fair assessment	Propriety/C
	Program documentation	Accuracy/A
	Context analysis	Accuracy/B
	Metaevaluation	Accuracy/L
Focusing the evaluation design	Evaluation impact	Utility/G
	Practical procedures	Feasibility/A
	Political viability	Feasibility/B
	Cost effectiveness	Feasibility/C
	Service orientation	Propriety/A
	Complete and fair assessment	Propriety/E
	Fiscal responsibility	Propriety/H
	Described purposes and procedures	Accuracy/C
	Metaevaluation	Accuracy/C
Gathering credible evidence	Information scope and selection	Utility/C
	Defensible information sources	Accuracy/D
	Valid information	Accuracy/E
	Reliable information	Accuracy/F
	Systematic information	Accuracy/G
	Metaevaluation	Accuracy/L
Justifying conclusions	Values identification	Utility/D
	Analysis of quantitative information	Accuracy/H
	Analysis of qualitative information	Accuracy/I
	Justified conclusions	Accuracy/J
	Metaevaluation	Accuracy/L
Ensuring use and sharing lessons learned	Evaluator credibility	Utility/B
	Report clarity	Utility/E
	Report timeliness and dissemination	Utility/F
	Evaluation impact	Utility/G
	Disclosure of findings	Propriety/F
	Impartial reporting	Accuracy/K
	Metaevaluation	Accuracy/L

BOX 3.   **Engaging stakeholders**

Definition	Fostering input, participation, and power-sharing among those persons who have an investment in the conduct of the evaluation and the findings; it is especially important to engage primary users of the evaluation.
Role	Helps increase chances that the evaluation will be useful; can improve the evaluation's credibility, clarify roles and responsibilities, enhance cultural competence, help protect human subjects, and avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.
Activities	• Consulting insiders (e.g., leaders, staff, clients, and program funding sources) and outsiders (e.g., skeptics); • Taking special effort to promote the inclusion of less powerful groups or individuals; • Coordinating stakeholder input throughout the process of evaluation design, operation, and use; and • Avoiding excessive stakeholder identification, which might prevent progress of the evaluation.

BOX 4.   Describing the program

Definition	Scrutinizing the features of the program being evaluated, including its purpose and place in a larger public health context. Description includes information regarding the way the program was intended to function and the way that it actually was implemented. Also includes features of the program's context that are likely to influence conclusions regarding the program.
Role	Improves evaluation's fairness and accuracy; permits a balanced assessment of strengths and weaknesses and helps stakeholders understand how program features fit together and relate to a larger context.
Activities	• Characterizing the need (or set of needs) addressed by the program; • Listing specific expectations as goals, objectives, and criteria for success; • Clarifying why program activities are believed to lead to expected changes; • Drawing an explicit logic model to illustrate relationships between program elements and expected changes; • Assessing the program's maturity or stage of development; • Analyzing the context within which the program operates; • Considering how the program is linked to other ongoing efforts; and • Avoiding creation of an overly precise description for a program that is under development.

BOX 5. Focusing the evaluation design

Definition	Planning in advance where the evaluation is headed and what steps will be taken; process is iterative (i.e., it continues until a focused approach is found to answer evaluation questions with methods that stakeholders agree will be useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate); evaluation questions and methods might be adjusted to achieve an optimal match that facilitates use by primary users.
Role	Provides investment in quality; increases the chances that the evaluation will succeed by identifying procedures that are practical, politically viable, and cost-effective; failure to plan thoroughly can be self-defeating, leading to an evaluation that might become impractical or useless; when stakeholders agree on a design focus, it is used throughout the evaluation process to keep the project on track.
Activities	• Meeting with stakeholders to clarify the real intent or purpose of the evaluation; • Learning which persons are in a position to actually use the findings, then orienting the plan to meet their needs; • Understanding how the evaluation results are to be used; • Writing explicit evaluation questions to be answered; • Describing practical methods for sampling, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, and judgment; • Preparing a written protocol or agreement that summarizes the evaluation procedures, with clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders; and • Revising parts or all of the evaluation plan when critical circumstances change.

BOX 6. Gathering credible evidence

Definition	Compiling information that stakeholders perceive as trustworthy and relevant for answering their questions. Such evidence can be experimental or observational, qualitative or quantitative, or it can include a mixture of methods. Adequate data might be available and easily accessed, or it might need to be defined and new data collected. Whether a body of evidence is credible to stakeholders might depend on such factors as how the questions were posed, sources of information, conditions of data collection, reliability of measurement, validity of interpretations, and quality control procedures.
Role	Enhances the evaluation's utility and accuracy; guides the scope and selection of information and gives priority to the most defensible information sources; promotes the collection of valid, reliable, and systematic information that is the foundation of any effective evaluation.
Activities	• Choosing indicators that meaningfully address evaluation questions; • Describing fully the attributes of information sources and the rationale for their selection; • Establishing clear procedures and training staff to collect high-quality information; • Monitoring periodically the quality of information obtained and taking practical steps to improve quality; • Estimating in advance the amount of information required or establishing criteria for deciding when to stop collecting data in situations where an iterative or evolving process is used; and • Safeguarding the confidentiality of information and information sources.

BOX 7.   Justifying conclusions

Definition	Making claims regarding the program that are warranted on the basis of data that have been compared against pertinent and defensible ideas of merit, value, or significance (i.e., against standards of values); conclusions are justified when they are linked to the evidence gathered and consistent with the agreed on values or standards of stakeholders.
Role	Reinforces conclusions central to the evaluation's utility and accuracy; involves values clarification, qualitative and quantitative data analysis and synthesis, systematic interpretation, and appropriate comparison against relevant standards for judgment.
Activities	• Using appropriate methods of analysis and synthesis to summarize findings; • Interpreting the significance of results for deciding what the findings mean; • Making judgments according to clearly stated values that classify a result (e.g., as positive or negative and high or low); • Considering alternative ways to compare results (e.g., compared with program objectives, a comparison group, national norms, past performance, or needs); • Generating alternative explanations for findings and indicating why these explanations should be discounted; • Recommending actions or decisions that are consistent with the conclusions; and • Limiting conclusions to situations, time periods, persons, contexts, and purposes for which the findings are applicable.

BOX 8.   Ensuring use and sharing lessons learned

Definition	Ensuring that a) stakeholders are aware of the evaluation procedures and findings; b) the findings are considered in decisions or actions that affect the program (i.e., findings use); and c) those who participated in the evaluation process have had a beneficial experience (i.e., process use).
Role	Ensures that evaluation achieves its primary purpose — being useful; however, several factors might influence the degree of use, including evaluator credibility, report clarity, report timeliness and dissemination, disclosure of findings, impartial reporting, and changes in the program or organizational context.
Activities	• Designing the evaluation to achieve intended use by intended users; • Preparing stakeholders for eventual use by rehearsing throughout the project how different kinds of conclusions would affect program operations; • Providing continuous feedback to stakeholders regarding interim findings, provisional interpretations, and decisions to be made that might affect likelihood of use; • Scheduling follow-up meetings with intended users to facilitate the transfer of evaluation conclusions into appropriate actions or decisions; and • Disseminating both the procedures used and the lessons learned from the evaluation to stakeholders, using tailored communications strategies that meet their particular needs.

BOX 9.   Utility standards

The following utility standards ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users:

A. **Stakeholder identification.** Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified so that their needs can be addressed.
B. **Evaluator credibility.** The persons conducting the evaluation should be trustworthy and competent in performing the evaluation for findings to achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.
C. **Information scope and selection.** Information collected should address pertinent questions regarding the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders.
D. **Values identification.** The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings should be carefully described so that the bases for value judgments are clear.
E. **Report clarity.** Evaluation reports should clearly describe the program being evaluated, including its context and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation so that essential information is provided and easily understood.
F. **Report timeliness and dissemination.** Substantial interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users so that they can be used in a timely fashion.
G. **Evaluation impact.** Evaluations should be planned, conducted, and reported in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders to increase the likelihood of the evaluation being used.

BOX 10.   Feasibility standards

The following feasibility standards ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal:

A. **Practical procedures.** Evaluation procedures should be practical while needed information is being obtained to keep disruption to a minimum.
B. **Political viability.** During planning and conduct of the evaluation, consideration should be given to the varied positions of interest groups so that their cooperation can be obtained and possible attempts by any group to curtail evaluation operations or to bias or misapply the results can be averted or counteracted.
C. **Cost-effectiveness.** The evaluation should be efficient and produce valuable information to justify expended resources.

BOX 11.   Propriety standards

The following propriety standards ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation as well as those affected by its results:

A. **Service orientation.** The evaluation should be designed to assist organizations in addressing and serving effectively the needs of the targeted participants.
B. **Formal agreements.** All principal parties involved in an evaluation should agree in writing to their obligations (i.e., what is to be done, how, by whom, and when) so that each must adhere to the conditions of the agreement or renegotiate it.
C. **Rights of human subjects.** The evaluation should [K:must??? B:The ANSI-approved text reads "should"] be designed and conducted in a manner that respects and protects the rights and welfare of human subjects.
D. **Human interactions.** Evaluators should interact respectfully with other persons associated with an evaluation, so that participants are not threatened or harmed.
E. **Complete and fair assessment.** The evaluation should be complete and fair in its examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the program so that strengths can be enhanced and problem areas addressed.
F. **Disclosure of findings.** The principal parties to an evaluation should ensure that the full evaluation findings with pertinent limitations are made accessible to the persons affected by the evaluation and any others with expressed legal rights to receive the results.
G. **Conflict of interest.** Conflict of interest should be handled openly and honestly so that the evaluation processes and results are not compromised.
H. **Fiscal responsibility.** The evaluator's allocation and expenditure of resources should reflect sound accountability procedures by being prudent and ethically responsible, so that expenditures are accountable and appropriate.

BOX 12.   Accuracy standards

The following accuracy standards ensure that an evaluation will convey technically adequate information regarding the determining features of merit of the program:

A. **Program documentation.** The program being evaluated should be documented clearly and accurately.
B. **Context analysis.** The context in which the program exists should be examined in enough detail to identify probable influences on the program.
C. **Described purposes and procedures.** The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail to identify and assess them.
D. **Defensible information sources.** Sources of information used in a program evaluation should be described in enough detail to assess the adequacy of the information.
E. **Valid information.** Information-gathering procedures should be developed and implemented to ensure a valid interpretation for the intended use.
F. **Reliable information.** Information-gathering procedures should be developed and implemented to ensure sufficiently reliable information for the intended use.
G. **Systematic information.** Information collected, processed, and reported in an evaluation should be systematically reviewed and any errors corrected.
H. **Analysis of quantitative information.** Quantitative information should be analyzed appropriately and systematically so that evaluation questions are answered effectively.
I. **Analysis of qualitative information.** Qualitative information should be analyzed appropriately and systematically to answer evaluation questions effectively.
J. **Justified conclusions.** Conclusions reached should be explicitly justified for stakeholders' assessment.
K. **Impartial reporting.** Reporting procedures should guard against the distortion caused by personal feelings and biases of any party involved in the evaluation to reflect the findings fairly.
L. **Metaevaluation.** The evaluation should be formatively and summatively evaluated against these and other pertinent standards to guide its conduct appropriately and, on completion, to enable close examination of its strengths and weaknesses by stakeholders.