

# More Effective Program Evaluation Planning Using a Visual Approach

## The traditional approach

The problems with the traditional approach to evaluation planning are that it takes too long to write a 50-100 page document, they don't provide a quick way of overviewing what is planned in an evaluation, and stakeholders don't have time to read such plans.

## The visual way is the better way

With an evaluation plan built in doview outcomes and evaluation software, you will avoid wasting your precious time and use a faster and more effective approach to evaluation planning by using the following ten steps:

- 1 Build a visual program logic (outcomes model).** With DoView you can make the model as large as is needed, safe in the knowledge that it will be easily projected in any meeting. A set of 13 Tips for how to build such models is available.
- 2 Include justifying evidence.** Visually map any existing evidence onto the model, record details of the evidence lying behind particular links in the model, and link out to local files or internet sites. Stakeholders will enjoy the credibility of an evidence-supported model.
- 3 Visually map indicators onto the model.** Put indicators onto the model next to the steps or outcomes they measure and link out to graphs showing how indicators are tracking over time.
- 4 Visually map evaluation questions onto the model.** Putting evaluation questions next to the relevant steps and outcomes in your model is a very powerful way of having more coherent discussions with the evaluation team and stakeholders.
- 5 Set up your evaluation projects based on the evaluation questions they answer.** Create headings for evaluation projects and then replicate evaluation questions onto the page that is actually answering the evaluation question. Include any additional information on the evaluation project (e.g. methods being used, dates for completion etc.)

- 6 Include evaluation management information.** Include evaluation management information (e.g. any advisory board structure, internal and/or external evaluators, managing risks to the evaluation; and summary information about the evaluation budget).
- 7 Use the evaluation plan to discuss evaluation planning with decision-makers.** In meetings with decision makers, use the visual evaluation plan to discuss which are the priority evaluation questions to be answered. Have all of your evaluation planning information just a click away when questions are asked.
- 8 Use the same visual evaluation plan to control evaluation implementation.** Immediately you start implementing the evaluation, use the DoView visual evaluation plan as your primary implementation documentation (keep it always up to date as a 'living document'). Link out to relevant files from within the DoView evaluation plan so that when staff members leave, their replacement needs only to go to the DoView visual plan to find everything they need and gain a clear understanding.
- 9 Report on, and present the evaluation plan.** To present to funders and stakeholders you don't need to create additional presentations, just use DoView's visual plan in stakeholder presentations. Send a PDF of your plan or quickly put up a web page model when reporting back to funders or other stakeholders. Make your work quickly accessible by having the web page version of your evaluation plan up on your website for readers to click through.
- 10 Share templates of your evaluation plans.** You can allow anyone looking at the web page version of your evaluation plan to immediately download a copy of the DoView file which created it - enabling others to take the evaluation plan and then immediately amend it and use it for their own evaluations. In the same way you can also borrow others' DoView evaluation plans. Those funding evaluations can use this approach to spread best practice evaluation planning.

For comprehensive instructions go to [EasyOutcomes.org](http://EasyOutcomes.org) (including a full workbook) or [DoView.com](http://DoView.com). Sample outcomes models from which you can build on are available at [OutcomesModels.org](http://OutcomesModels.org), and short instructional videos can be found at [OutcomesCentral.org](http://OutcomesCentral.org).

A free trial version of DoView software is available over the internet and a full permanent per user license costs US\$39.95. Free licenses are available to some International Development Projects in Developing Countries (see [DoView.Com](http://DoView.Com)).

This tip sheet available from <http://www.outcomescentral.org/materials/tipsheet268.pdf>

Get more information and guidance from:

[www.doview.com](http://www.doview.com) and [www.easyoutcomes.org](http://www.easyoutcomes.org) and [www.outcomesmodels.org](http://www.outcomesmodels.org) and [www.outcomescentral.org](http://www.outcomescentral.org)



Based on Duignan (2008) Encouraging better evaluation design and use through a standardized approach to evaluation planning and implementation – Easy Outcomes. Paper presented to the 2008 European Evaluation Society Biennial Conference: Building for the Future: Evaluation in Governance, Development and Progress, Lisbon, 1-3 October 2008. (<http://knol.google.com/k/paul-duignan-phd/encouraging-better-evaluation-design/2m7zd68aaz774/23>)