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## 1. OVERVIEW

This manual is intended to support and guide how monitoring and evaluations (M&E) are designed and conducted by the Secretariat of MERCY Malaysia.

This manual is targeted for any MERCY Malaysia personnel including volunteers and external consultant that are directly and indirectly involved with MERCY Malaysia's monitoring and evaluation activities.

MERCY Malaysia is governed by its constitution and its signatory bodies which include:

- i) Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS)
- ii) The Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief

### Components of M&E

#### i) Minimum standards and processes

In delivering humanitarian aid, MERCY Malaysia ensures that it delivers quality and accountable services (health, WASH, shelter and settlement, etc) to the intended community in need. As part of this initiative, all its services and indicators developed are guided and referred to SPHERE project minimum standards as it covers the best-practice during humanitarian response. MERCY Malaysia also applies other standards such as Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and abides to local and national standards in its relief and development work without discarding the local needs.

#### ii) Logical Framework

Logical Framework is the most prominent aspect in Monitoring and Evaluation. It summarizes the logical sequence of the project designs by outlining the directions of activities towards impact. As it clearly defines the results it intended to achieve and provides the evidence of achievement, it is useful as a reference point during the development of M&E system and selecting the evaluation criteria. (*Details explanation of Logical Framework, please refer to MERCY Malaysia Operation Manual, Volume 1: Project Cycle Management*).

#### iii) Baseline Data & Indicators Tracking

Baseline data is the description or analysis of the current situation of the intended population, captured before or at the start of the intervention where its changes can be assessed as referred by World Food Programme. It serves as an information base and reference points to assess activities of the programs, progress and changes it made after the intervention. Meanwhile, indicator as referred by OECD/DAC is a

quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable method to measure achievements and changes due to an intervention. A good M&E practice should include indicators tracking log to measure the performance of indicators.

## 2. OBJECTIVE OF M&E

In MERCY Malaysia, the M&E system operates with four main objectives:-

- i) Contribute to organizational learning and improvements
- ii) Improve services provided to those in need of humanitarian assistance
- iii) Ensure accountability in all humanitarian efforts
- iv) Ensure quality of humanitarian assistance and resources

## 3. DEFINITION

**Monitoring** is defined as an on-going collection, analysis and use of information about project progress and the results being achieved.

**Review** is a structured activity to reflect and identifying key issues, project plan and status focusing on the inputs, activities and outputs.

**Evaluation** helps to explain why, and is an in-depth analysis on the program design, implementation and result and services of humanitarian assistance.

**Audit** is conducted to assess compliance of organization policies and processes including the standard that organisation is signatories to. As audit scopes may seems to be interchanged and overlapped with evaluation, the primary focus of audits are generally on accountability and assurance rather than project value and performance.

## 4. SCOPE OF PROGRAM/ PROJECT EVALUATION

- i) **Appropriateness and Relevance:** It refers to the extent which the project/programme is fitted to the priorities of the affected communities. Evaluators should look into project/programs objectives and analyse the validity of the design whether it is acceptable within the communities in different groups and tailored into local context. Evaluators should consider how the projects are adapted into changes.
- ii) **Effectiveness:** In MERCY Malaysia, effectiveness is measured through three components, timeliness, coordination and coverage. Evaluator should assess to what extent the project/programme were delivered in timely manner, whether it is implemented at the right time of need. In measuring coordination, the evaluator should assess the management between various stakeholders including local NGOs,

government agencies, local communities and implementing partners. In addition, evaluator should also assess the practice of referring the unmet needs to relevant stakeholders.

In assessing coverage, the project/programme team should manage to justify the area covered for implementation and to justify the inclusion or exclusion of certain groups in receiving assistance. The selection criteria for the assisted communities should also be clearly defined.

- iii) **Efficiency:** Efficiency is measured through the cost effectiveness of the project. This scope focuses on the efficient use of funds by looking at the fund utilizations against human resources, materials and time used for the project/programmes evaluated. As stated in MERCY Malaysia's constitution, the acceptable cost-effectiveness percentage for project/program's minimum direct and direct support cost is 70%.
- iv) **Output:** It refers to the analysis of results on the actual vs target outputs. It should also assess the extent of which the outputs adhere to the international and local technical standards as well as respecting local cultures and customs.
- v) **Outcome:** An assessment of positive and negative changes, directly or indirectly due to the implementation of the program based on the variance before and after the project implementation. The evaluations of outcome should also include an assessment of the external factors that could justify the changes or results of the intervention.
- vi) **Sustainability:** Sustainability refers to the likelihood of the benefits of the interventions to continue when the project/programme ends. Assessing sustainability of the projects should include financial sustainability and capacity building (including technical and leadership initiatives).
- vii) **Governance and Processes:** To ensure the quality of the project/programme, the implementation of the project/programme should be conducted according to the Organization's policies and processes. This includes the adherence of the project staff, local staff and volunteers to the key policies including:
  - i) MERCY Malaysia Code of Conduct
  - ii) Volunteer Code of Conduct
  - iii) Protection Policy
  - iv) Finance Department policies
  - v) Procurement manual
  - vi) Volunteer Management Manual
  - vii) Communication Manual

Nevertheless, the quality of documentation and reporting and timeliness submission should also be covered under this scope of evaluation/ audit. A good and quality reporting should be detailed, entailing all necessary information regarding the

project/programmes. Besides, asset management should also be taken into account during evaluation.

- viii) **Humanitarian Accountability:** This scope covers the complaint response mechanism, feedback mechanisms, sharing of information and community participations. Evaluators/ Auditors may refer to MERCY Malaysia Accountability Guidelines in evaluating projects/ programmes to ensure all commitments are taken into account.

## 5. ETHICS

M&E should be conducted in respectable and ethical way especially during data collection and communication of information. Below are the lists of ethical and standard practices of M&E in MERCY Malaysia.

- **Consent & Confidentiality**

M&E should ensure that all the activities are conducted with consent, willingness and confidentiality. Data collection process should not be conducted by forced and against the respondents willingness. All the data collected shall also be treated confidential especially during analysis and reporting. In conditions where pictures or video need to be captured, consent should be obtained from the respondents especially when it involves the affected communities.

- **Transparency**

M&E should be transparent, capturing and communicating the right and true information to the relevant stakeholders without jeopardizing the safety and security of the affected communities. As M&E may highlight and report sensitive issues regarding the projects and organisation, its planned activities should include measures to minimize the risk of corruptions and to ensure the absence of potential harm without compromising the integrity of the evaluations.

- **Impartiality and Independence**

M&E should be impartial and independent in all its practices. Impartiality refers to any M&E activities conducted on the basis of need, without discriminating any nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinion. Meanwhile, independence refers to any activities that are not dictated by political, economic, military or any objectives and agenda from any parties. M&E should avoid any form of conflict of interests, especially in reporting and in capturing lesson learnt and recommendations.

- **Adherence of MERCY Malaysia Code of Conduct, policies and upholds it Vision, Mission, Values and Commitments**

All the M&E actors should adhere to MERCY Malaysia Code of Conduct (CoC) and Protection Policy. During data collection, all M&E actors should respect the rights and dignity of human beings, treat them with fairness and respect including the customs and cultures of the

community, while upholding “do no harm” principles and minimize the risk of endangering stakeholders.

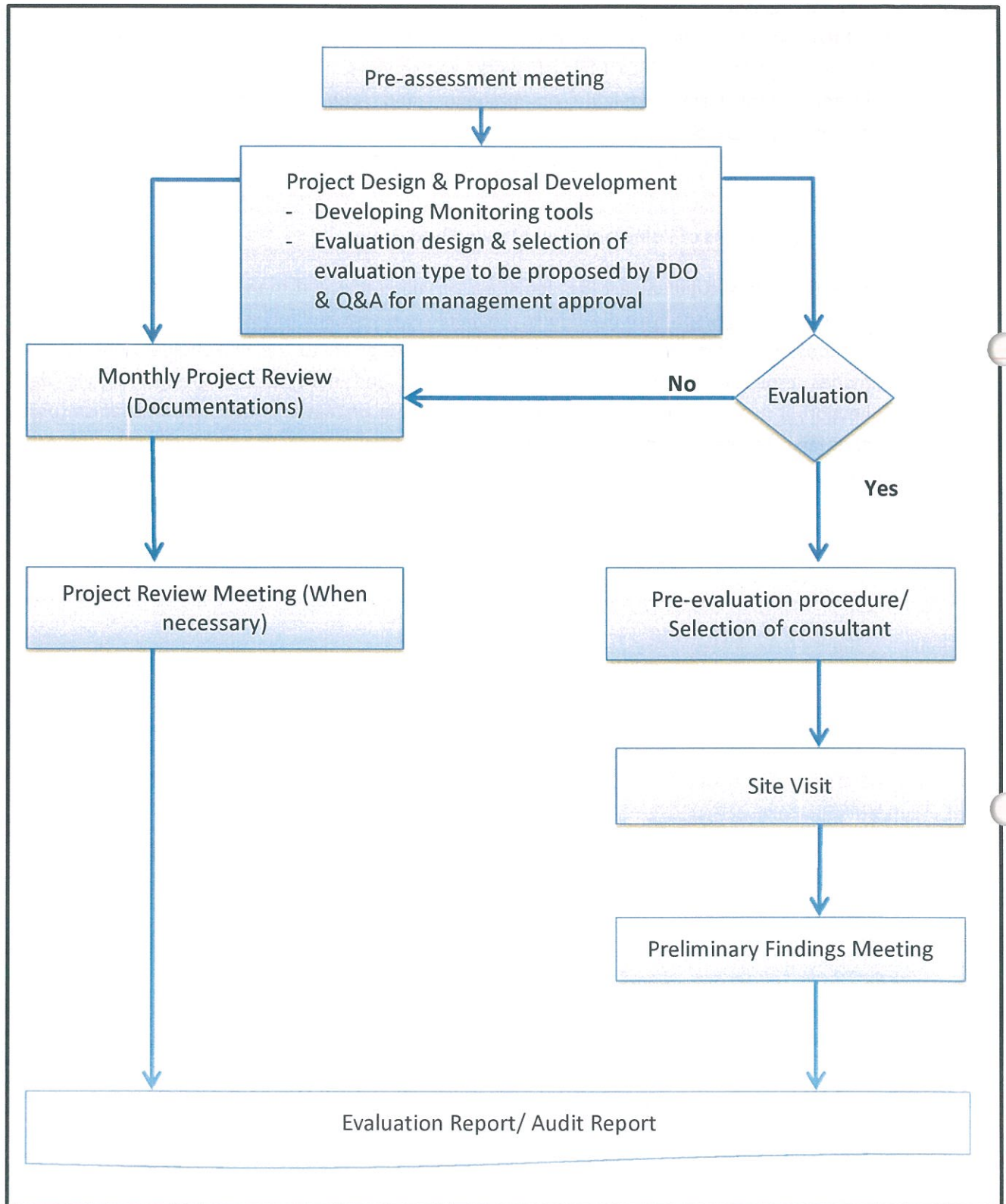
All M&E actors should also upholds MERCY Malaysia vision, mission, core values and its strategic commitments when carrying out the M&E activities and design its system accordingly. In addition, the M&E systems developed should ensure that the stakeholders can provide feedback and address complaints on MERCY Malaysia works and services. It is the responsibilities of the data collector to report any complaints or misconduct and wrongdoings found during evaluations (Corruptions, sexual abuse, etc.).

- **Representations of Vulnerable and Marginalized Group**

Ensure that when conducting M&E activities, all vulnerable and marginalized groups (women, children, elderly, person with disabilities, etc.) are represent and included during data collection and reporting. A safe and secure platform should be given to the stakeholders during M&E activities especially when dealing with vulnerable and marginalized groups. During data collection, if needed, separate and approachable group discussion/ feedback mechanism using proper language should be conducted providing comfortable space for the vulnerable groups to voice out.

## 6. MONITORING & EVALUATION PROCESS

Figure 1: Project/Program M&E Process Flow





## Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Developing monitoring plan**

Monitoring plan should be developed as early as project design stage. Developing the M&E plan at early stage is important to provide ample time to decide for resources and preparing for data collection. During planning, setting up baseline and indicators are the key important components for evaluators to plan their evaluation results.

- **Selection of Evaluation Type**

Evaluation Type	Project	Who conducted	Conditions
Real-time evaluation	Emergency + Recovery (4-6 weeks after response)	Internal/ Independent consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project duration = Response more than 1 month and/or</li> <li>• Project worth = more than RM 250,000 and/ or</li> <li>• Beneficiaries = more than 50,000</li> </ul>
Mid-term review	Development/ Pro-long crisis	Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project duration = at least 1 year and /or</li> <li>• Project worth = minimum RM 250,000</li> </ul>
Final Evaluation	Development	Internal/ Independent consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project duration = at least 1 year and/or</li> <li>• Project worth = minimum RM 200,000</li> </ul>
Audit	All project	Internal (external to the programme team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance and Assurance</li> </ul>

It should be noted that evaluation may be distinct from audit however; the scope of the evaluation and audit may be overlapped. However, in a situation where an evaluation/audit is required but does not meet the conditions above, approval from the management should be obtained to conduct the evaluation/audit with acceptable justifications.

- **Deciding the Scope of Evaluation and Evaluation Design**

Once the evaluation had been decided, the evaluation team should decide the scope of evaluations and its design. The scope of evaluation should be decided based on the evaluation objectives.

During this stage, a proper planning on the resources is required to ensure that the evaluation is conducted in effective and efficient manner. Identifying the key activities and individual involved should be carried out in this stage.

- Key activities expenses: printing, stationary, translation, computer hardware and software, travel and accommodation
- M&E personnel expenses: hiring consultant or enumerator, staff allowance, capacity building etc.

The M&E costs should be incorporated in the project/programme budget and should be separated from project/ programmes key activities. To ensure that evaluation is effective, it is also important to plan for the unexpected contingency such as currency devaluation. In situation where the M&E system had not been developed during the proposal development stage, it is critical to ensure that the M&E costs are still incorporated into the project/programme budget. The total M&E budget agreed by the management of MERCY Malaysia to be allocated for M&E activities is 3 to 5 percent from the project/programme budget.

#### **Selection of consultant (If any)**

Management of MERCY Malaysia may decide to contract consultants in any parts of the real time evaluations or final evaluations. External evaluators are often brought into the system for their professional evaluation skills and for their technical expertise on the project/programs (WASH evaluations, constructions, etc.). During the planning phase, the M&E team should take note that contracting external consultant may be expensive and should include the budget during the proposal development. The decision to hire a consultant should be advised by Head of Quality and Accountability Department and approved by the management of MERCY Malaysia. In cases where MERCY Malaysia opted for external consultant, the M&E team should prepare a Term of Reference (TOR) explaining the purpose and the scope of the evaluation. *(Please refer procurement manual for tendering processes).*

Consultants hired for MERCY Malaysia projects/programmes are **embodied** under MERCY Malaysia Code of Conduct and policies. Thus, it is required for consultants to be briefed and signed MERCY Malaysia Code of Conduct and its relevant policies as well as upholding MERCY Malaysia Vision, Mission, Values and Commitments.

- **Deciding for Evaluation**

Decision to conduct evaluation should be conducted in conjunction with project proposal approval. Once approved, the team should have prepared schedule/ timeline for the project evaluation giving an ample time for the preparation for the evaluation (i.e. developing instruments, review of literature). Please take note that, in cases where management decides to conduct an unscheduled evaluation, the time between the decision made and the evaluation should be sufficient and realistic for the team.

## Pre-Evaluation Phase

- **Term of Reference (TOR)**

Upon going for evaluation, a written TOR should be prepared entailing the overall information regarding the evaluation. TOR should include:-

- i. Background of the project being evaluated
- ii. Objective and scope of the evaluation
- iii. Methods used
- iv. Reporting requirements
- v. Budget
- vi. Timeframe
- vii. Commissioning manager and evaluation team

- **Preparation of data collection**

Once the scope of the evaluation and evaluation design are decided, appropriate data collection method should be selected to ensure useful and valid data can be captured and analysed. The details explanation of the methodology is explained in the next section.

## Methodology

There are various way and approach in data collection. It is important to determine the types of data need to be collected to ensure data was measured using the right method.

- **Sampling**

Population is defined as a total set of people that has been the subject of interest. In MERCY Malaysia, the assisted population referred to as 'beneficiaries' is defined as the total people assisted or entitled to receive MERCY Malaysia assistance and intervention. In a project/program that involves large population, it is nearly impossible to collect data from the entire individual in the assisted population. Thus, the right sampling techniques and sample size are required to represent the assisted population. However, there are few things to consider when deciding for sampling.

- i) Time constraint
- ii) Manpower constraint
- iii) Cost constraint

Nevertheless, for intervention that has less than 50 beneficiaries, the M&E team are advised to collect data from all the beneficiaries to ensure sufficient data can be obtained for results analysis.

There are two types of sampling that can be used in data collection as explained below:

- i) **Probability Sampling**

Probability sampling are the most commonly used method, using an equal chance or equal probability of being selected as sample or largely known as random sampling. The advantage of using probability sampling is that the sample may represent the whole population.

## ii) Non-probability Sampling

In situation where probability sampling is not possible and inappropriate, the team may opt for non-probability sampling. Since non-probability sampling are not representing the whole population, extra cautions is needed when making the conclusions for the evaluations.

- **Approach and Data Collection**

### Qualitative Approach

Qualitative approach provides more in-depth information regarding the opinions, experience, perceptions of the interventions and the behaviour changes that were perceived. It involves non-numerical data and helps to identifies key issues and themes. Analysing qualitative data may be challenging as it involves own interpretation of the data collected. Thus, evaluator needs to ensure that they remain neutral and limit their biasness in interpreting the data.

### Quantitative Approach

In contrast with qualitative data, quantitative data is the collection of information that can be analysed numerically. Data gathered using quantitative approach are usually presented using tables, graphs and statistic. In evaluation, quantitative analysis can be used to determine the impact of the program as whole.

### Mix-method Approach

One of the most effective ways to conduct evaluation is to combine both approaches, namely mix-method as it helps to fill in the gaps of data collection. Mix method has been acknowledged for its unique strength where it encompasses collecting, analysing, interpreting and integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Using mix method approach helps evaluators by providing better and in-depth understanding of the project evaluated. As it allows different level of analysis, combining the statistical differences and in-depth analysis from the supplied information can also be used to cross-check and can be triangulated for its validity.

- **Data Collection**

### Desk review

Desk review is gathering, combining, analysing and synthesizing available information from key project documents. Desk review is conducted prior to site visits and is intended to determine the key lessons for an evaluation. The key documents for desk review include:

- i) Assessment report
- ii) Project/ program proposal
- iii) Progress report
- iv) MoU
- v) Project timeline
- vi) Logical Framework
- vii) Minutes of meeting
- viii) Complaint response log
- ix) Final Report
- x) Other necessary documents

#### **Focus Group Discussion**

- i) The session should be conducted in a group of 6-15 people in a session
- ii) The session should be led by a moderator guided by pre-designed script
- iii) Moderator have to control the dynamic of the discussion
- iv) Interviewer must resist to over directing the session.

#### **Key Informant Interview (KII)**

- i) The session is intended for key stakeholder (i.e. government officials, community leaders, professionals)
- ii) Can be conducted through face to face meeting, telephone interviews and online meetings.
- iii) Guided by unstructured and open ended questionnaire
- iv) The session should include diverse background of stakeholder to avoid bias and one-sided results.
- v) KII is important when the evaluators need to understand the pressing issues, perspectives, behaviours of affected communities and requires recommendation from the stakeholders.

#### **Observations**

- i) Direct observations involve listening and seeing the activities, behaviour and physical of the interventions.
- ii) Evaluator should take extra cautions to reduce bias during results analysis.

- **Developing instruments**

Instruments are tools that are used to guide or to measure the intended results. In preparing questionnaire it is good to begin every self-administered questionnaire and semi structured interview questions with the purpose of evaluations and what the intended results will be served for. Each item in the questionnaire should be understandable and if necessary, back

to back translations are prepared to ensure it is culturally compatible. It is advisable to test for reliability and validity of the instruments before the actual data collection are conducted.

Semi structured interview or pre-design script can be developed by identifying key information needed for the evaluations. The interview should focus on the intended results and familiar with the issues questioned. By the same token, the questioned prepared should be open ended, leaving space for a probing and request for elaboration. However, such probing should be neutral and not affecting the nature or focus of the evaluation.

- **Data Analysis**

Once the data are collected, the team is required to organise and interpret the data. For qualitative data, evaluators are required to identify the patterns or the themes from the responds gathered from the interviews. Since qualitative data involves perceptions and personal opinions and feelings, interpretations of the information should be accurately captured.

As for quantitative data, inferential statistics and descriptive analysis are usually used to interpret this type of data. The results of analysis should also describe the distribution of data by frequency.

When the evaluations are conducted using mix-method approach, evaluators are required to link both data to a meaningful conclusion.

## 7. REPORTING

The report should be presented systematically with highlighted key findings and its subsequent conclusion. Data should also be presented in effective and relevant way. The report should be limited to what is necessary for the audience, comprehensive but simple and user-friendly. Beforehand, evaluation team members and particular stakeholders are open to object in any judgement and recommendations that they disagree during Preliminary Findings Meeting. In addition, to ensure data accuracy, evidence supporting the conclusions and recommendations made from the evaluations are required and should be included in the report. Recommendations made for the project/ programme team should be specific and implementable. *(For further details of the report format, please refer to Project Evaluation Report template).*

## 8. QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF EVALUATION

This manual highlights a few characteristics to produce a quality evaluation <sup>1,2</sup>.

- **Ethical:** Evaluation should be conducted in ethical manner and in accordance with MERCY Malaysia evaluation standards. Evaluators should uphold professional integrity and avoid conflict of interest. *(Details is explained in section 4, Ethics)*

- **Technical adequacy:** Evaluators should be credible and experts in M&E. Evaluators should be able to design accurate methods, provide neutral justifications and conclusion with adequate evidence. The evaluation team however, may consist of one M&E expert and mixed relevant technical expertise to advice on the technical aspects.
- **Dissemination of report to relevant stakeholders** – The evaluation results are presented systematically and disseminated to relevant stakeholders internally and externally for learning and transparency purposes. However, it should note that, evaluation reports to external parties may differ from internal evaluation reports and must be reviewed by Communications Department and approved by management before it is submitted to external parties.
- **Timeliness and relevance:** Evaluation should be conducted in timely manner with relevant evaluation questions. The results of evaluation should provide information that is useful for decision making and improvement of future implementation.
- **Value for money:** Evaluation should be cost-effective, not using more than 5 percent of overall project/programme budget. Budget should be utilized to gain useful information that is desired and sufficient.

#### Reference:

1. OECD DAC (2012) *DAC Guidelines and Reference Series. Quality Standards for Development Evaluation*, Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Retrieved from <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/EvaluationReports/Quality%20Standards%20for%20Development%20Evaluation.pdf>
2. UNDP 2011, *The Evaluation Policy of UNDP*, Executive Board Document via <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/>

