



Families of evaluation criteria

- [What does this mean?](#)
- [What is the purpose?](#)
- [The families of evaluation criteria](#)
 - [Relevance](#)
 - [Effectiveness](#)
 - [Efficiency](#)
 - [Sustainability](#)
 - [Impact](#)
 - [Coherence/complementarity](#)
 - [Community value added](#)
- [Use of the term criterion: a warning](#)

What does this mean?

The [questions](#) are classified in different families that correspond to different "viewpoints" on what is being evaluated. Seven of these viewpoints, also called evaluation criteria, are to be considered: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, coherence/complementarity, and Community value added.

What is the purpose?

- To ensure that essential viewpoints are not forgotten since certain evaluation criteria tend to be neglected (e.g. efficiency or sustainability) although they can lead to very useful conclusions.
- To guide the drafting of evaluation questions.

The families of evaluation criteria

This page proposes a typology of seven families of criteria. The first five correspond to the traditional practice of evaluation of development aid formalised by the [OECD](#) (DAC). The following two apply to all EC policies.

► Relevance

The extent to which the [objectives](#) of the development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donor's policies.

Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.

- Example: To what extent does the concentration of aid on basic education correspond to the needs of the partner country?

► Effectiveness

[Methodology](#)

- Evaluation Guidelines
- Methodological bases
- Evaluation tools
- Examples
- Glossary
- Sitemap

[Methods](#)

- What
- When
- Why
- Who
- How

[How](#)

- Overview
- Strategy
- Questions
- References
- Design
- Data Collections
- Analysis
- Judgment
- Quality assurance

[Questions](#)

- Overview
- Selection
- Preparation
- Examples

The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

Note: Also used as an aggregate measure of (or judgment about) the merit or worth of an activity, i.e. the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently in a sustainable fashion and with a positive institutional development impact. Related term: efficacy.

- Example: To what extent has the aid contributed to equal access to high-quality basic education?

► Efficiency

A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

- Example: Has implementation in the form of sector-specific financial aid made it possible to obtain the same effects with lower transaction costs for the EC and the partner country?

► Sustainability

The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

- Example: To what extent has the aid contributed towards durably remedying the backlog in road network maintenance?

► Impact

Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

- Example: From the point of view of the groups concerned, are environmental nuisances acceptable compared to the positive effects of the intervention?

► Coherence/complementarity

This criterion may have several dimensions:

1) Coherence within the Commission's development programme

- Example: Can it be said that the activities and outputs logically allow the objectives to be achieved? Are there contradictions between the different levels of objective? Are there duplications between the activities?

2) Coherence/complementarity with the partner country's policies and with other donors' interventions

- Example: Can it be said that there is no overlap between the intervention considered and other interventions in the partner country and/or other donors' interventions, particularly Member States?

3) Coherence/complementarity with the other Community policies

- Example: Is there convergence between the objectives of the intervention and those of the other Community policies (trade, agriculture, fishing, etc.)?

► Community value added

The extent to which the development intervention adds benefits to what would have resulted from Member States' interventions only in the partner country.

- Example: To what extent has the sharing of roles between the EC and Member States contributed to optimise the impact of the support?

► Further information:

- [Evaluation questions and families of evaluation criteria](#)
- [EC terminology](#) and [OECD-DAC glossary](#)
- [OECD development aid evaluation criteria](#)
- [Evaluation standards of the Commission](#)



Use of the term criterion: A warning!

This document concerns evaluation criteria, that is, the main ways of judging the intervention.

In order to formulate fully transparent value judgements, the approach needs to be refined into evaluation questions, and then into [judgement criteria](#).

The word "criterion" is also used with a third meaning in the framework of quality assurance. In that case it concerns the [quality assessment criteria](#) of the evaluation.