# A GUIDE FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS FOR INTERNATIONALLY FUNDED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SRI LANKA

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## ABSTRACT

*In today's world, many development efforts are implemented as Community Development (CD) projects. Their unique nature and qualitative objectives raise a special challenge in performance evaluation as performance evaluation of CD projects is affected by several factors. Thus, this research was aimed at developing a guide for performance evaluation of CD projects implemented by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Sri Lanka to streamline the process.*

*As identified in literature review, four major impact areas from in and out of the CD project environment and five major stages of performance evaluation process were identified. Five CD projects were selected as case studies and interviews were conducted to gather data.*

*The research identified existing and proposed strategies applied by NGOs. According to the findings, majority of CD projects have not practiced all identified stages by giving the same weight for each of them.*

*The identification of lessons learnt and best fit practices are important factors, while responsible officers should carefully select representative stakeholder groups to share the evaluation findings in different ways.*

***Keywords:*** *Community Development Projects; Guide; Impact Areas; Performance Evaluation Process; Strategies.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The internationally funded Community Development (CD) projects play a significant role in developing or filling the gaps in community. The ultimate goal of CD projects differs from commercial and industrial projects (Kamrul and Indra, 2009). Based on social disparity prevailing in some developing countries, both public and private sectors are involved in development initiatives with the support of donor agencies. CD efforts cater to development of rural, urban and estate poor in developing countries. These projects are implemented by the public sector entities of recipient governments under agreements with relevant donor agencies (Kularathna, 2009). Sometimes, the implementing party may be a non-governmental organization (NGO) or a private professional body (Crawford and Bryce, 2003).

In Sri Lanka, currently the development initiatives are taken by both public and private sectors. Private institutes and NGOs directly involve with some development projects with the support of their respective donors parallel to services delivered by the government to the civil society. There are different types of development programmes aimed at improving living conditions of plantation communities and residents of urban slums and shanties that are implemented as CD projects in Sri Lanka (Kularathna, 2009). Rural and urban poor and estate sector communities face different kinds of living challenges in their day to day lives and living patterns. Hence, the attention of many NGOs is focused on sufferings of these communities.

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The operating environment and culture of the host country also make CD projects different from traditional business projects (Blunt and Jones, 1992). The life cycle of CD projects implemented by these NGOs and private institutions are generally the same, but they have their own nature of the project environment. At the same, unique characteristics of CD projects help to build the complex project environment in the CD project implementation.

A CD project consists of some hard elements to concern the soft issues in human society (Crawford and Bryce, 2003). It has caused less visible and less measurable of its deliverables and its project performance. Basically, there are three stakeholder parties involved in CD projects as the funding agency, the implementing unit and the target beneficiaries (Youker, 1999). Hence, the overall performance of the CD project depends largely on the role of key major stakeholders who are from different cultures and have different expectations within the CD project environment. Therefore, when measuring the project success through the performance, the evaluation process is different from project to project or organization to organization.

Still there is no developed universal agreed project performance to CD projects' project performance. Some organizations and persons have developed the guidelines for performances evaluation. But, due to unique project environment of CD projects, these may also be affected by many impacts. The literature regarding the performance evaluation is comparatively less than the other international level and national level studies in CD project management filed. The findings from the international world or other countries may not be similar to the implementation pattern of Sri Lankan context. Further, there is lesser number of available literature studies for performance evaluation of CD projects in Sri Lankan context.

This research paper has formulated its aim to propose a guide for performance evaluation process for internationally funded CD projects in Sri Lanka. To achieve this aim, the research methodology has been developed based on the above mentioned four objectives.The literature review section examined the nature of internationally funded CD projects and major impact areas consists ins and outs of the CD project environment. At the same time, this review has also revealed the available standards and guidelines for measuring CD project performance. This research examined the available project performance evaluation processes of five internationally funded CD projects, implemented by the NGOs in Sri Lanka under the interview process. The selection criteria for selected cases were nature of project response, time factor of the project and regional disparity. In the analysis part, the research was analysed under major three areas identified through the data collection stage. First, it identified the influence level for each step of five major stages in performance evaluation process through the impact areas. Second, identified the existing strategies applied them to prevent from impact areas. Third, proposed strategies were identified for preventing the impacts through the lesson learns. The major data analysing technique was content analysis. Finally, through this research, it was possible to develop a guide for project performance evaluation of internationally funded CD projects implemented by NGOs in Sri Lanka.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the findings of literature survey, it has been identified the practical situation and impact areas in CD projects' performance evaluation process. Further, the existing standards and guidance for performance evaluation process have been identified when considering the professional and institutional framework.

### 2.1. AVAILABLE GUIDANCE

Considering the affected impact areas and unique nature of CD projects, some people and institutions have attempted to develop some guidelines and standards for conducting the impact evaluation process for CD projects in an effective way.

Touwen (2001) has identified mainly six essential parts of performance evaluation process in the hand book for projects: development, Management and fundraising. Zaarinpoush (2006) has indicated four fundamental methods and steps for conducting evaluations in the book called "Project Evaluation Guidance for non-profit organisations". Accordingly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network on international

development evaluation has developed a glossary of key terms in evaluation and results-based management to help to clarify concepts and to promote consistent use of common terms in these areas. Hughes and Nievwenhuis, (2005) has presented further fundamentals for conducting evaluations through the book "A project Managers' Guide to Evaluation". The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) (2005) has introduced nine areas of norms, ethical principles and standards.

Further, UNEG has developed a guideline including several steps for conducting evaluation for its operated projects. As part of its mandate, UNEG formed a Task Force on Evaluation of Normative Work in response to an increased call for such evaluations and a dearth of relevant resources.
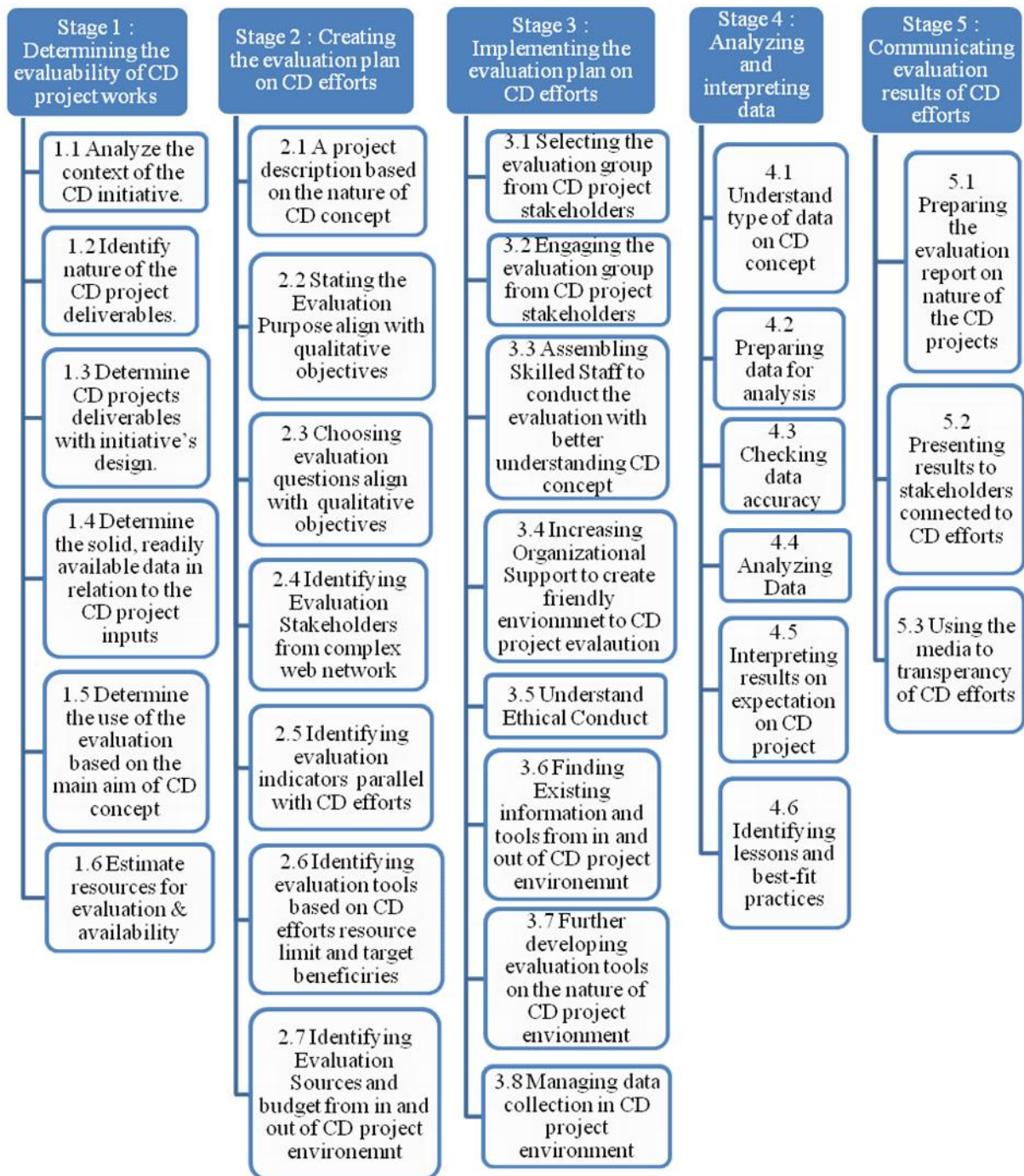


Figure 1: Project Performance Evaluation Process

By considering the above available guidelines of various professionals and organisations regard to project performance evaluation, they can be categorized into five major stages of the process as shown in Figure 1.

Basically four impact areas in both internal and external project environment influence the performance evaluation process as impacts related to CD project nature, impacts related to nature of the organisation, impacts related to external environment and impacts related to target beneficiaries.

The effects of qualitative objectives of CD projects influence measurement of the project performance (Derricourt and Oakley, 1988). The CD project contains some hard elements by concerning the soft issues of the human society (Crawford and Bryce, 2003). Based on the tangible and intangible inputs, challengeable environment is created for coordinating and evaluating project performance (Khang and Moe, 2008).

The well-defined evaluation process is led to measure the accuracy of project performance with technical sound (Touwen, 2001). Further, the involvement of external party made a pressure to conduct the qualitative measurement parallel to the qualitative objectives of CD projects (Derricourt and Oakley, 1988).

The requirements of donor led to generate the priority areas of performance evaluation of CD projects. Many organisations including NGOs have their privacy to operate humanitarian work in development field. Therefore, the organisation's culture and policies are unique to each organisation to organisation and it affects the performance evaluation plan and its implementation process of CD projects.
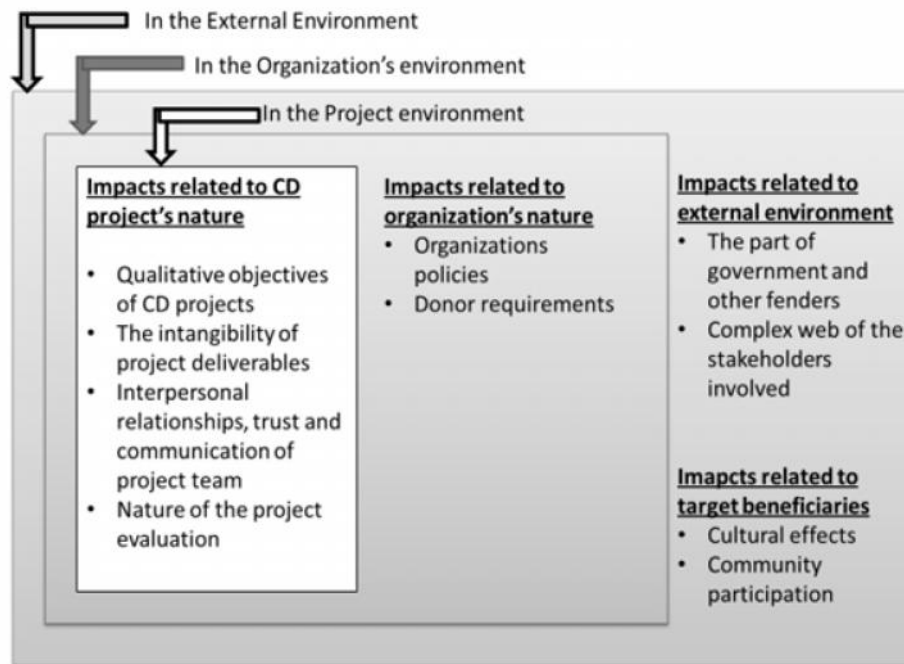


Figure 2: Impact Areas in Internal and External CD Project Environment for Performance Evaluation Process

Diallo and Thuillier (2005) highlighted the unique characteristics of CD projects and identify the influence of interpersonal relationships, trust and communication on project success. Most of the organisations attempt to fulfil the project team of a project through their permanent employees or human resources and they are developed through the culture of the organisation.

The Oakley and Derricourt (1988) have expressed that the measuring the results of CD projects as important due to the requirements of the government party and other development funding agencies. The implementing party should provide the transparent progress of CD projects: whether it should achieve its qualitative objectives with the available financial and human resources (Derricourt and Oakley, 1988). Furthermore, many kinds of stakeholders involve functioning of the CD projects. This group creates a complex network environment in the CD project. In the CD project's implementation process, the

involvement level of target beneficiary group may be differed throughout the entire project life cycle. Community participation is difficult to define merely in terms of specific, material objectives.

Correspondingly, the cultural issues of the host country may be act as a challenge for achieving the goals of the project due to its differences from country to country and continent to continent (Kamrul and Indra, 2009). Also, this may adversely affect the project performance evaluation process of CD projects.

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the main research question is "What kind of strategies can be applied for minimising the influencing impact areas for performance evaluation in CD projects?". This study is concerned with the performance evaluation processes of selected five CD projects under the interview process as mentioned in Table 1. Therefore, this research followed the multiple-case design in designing the research.

Table 1: Interviewees' Profile

| Case | Description of the Nature of CD Project | Interview Code | Responsible Interviewees |
|------|----------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Case One | Integral human development | CAS1 | M & E Coordinator |
| Case Two | Disaster responses and community development | CAS2 | Project Manager |
| Case Three | Transformational development | CAS3 | Project Manager |
| Case Four | Transformational development | CAS4 | M & E Coordinator |
| Case Five | Transformational development | CAS5 | Project Officer |

As the major unit of analysis, the study selected the CD projects implemented by five NGOs in Sri Lanka. Interviewees were selected by considering several criteria as time duration of the project life cycle, nature of project response and regional disparity.

Based on the findings of literature review survey, the interview profile was designed basically under three areas:

- How impact areas affected the CD projects' performance evaluation process?

- What kinds of strategies were already applied by them to prevent the impact areas?

- What kind of strategy can be proposed through the lesson learnt in the evaluation processes to protect the impact areas?

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 2 shows the impact areas affected the CD projects' performance evaluation process, strategies already applied by them to prevent the impact areas and strategies that can be proposed through the lesson learnt in the evaluation processes to protect the impact areas.

Table 2: Data Analysis

| Stages | Impacts | Strategies in Use | Strategies Proposed |
|--------|---------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Stage One | ▪ Unviability of baseline or assessment findings<br>▪ Not practice the monitoring mechanism<br>▪ Staff transfers (Irregular hand-over process)<br>▪ The past CD project input data missed or not recorded in a systematic way | ▪ CD Project input tracking Table<br>▪ Baseline survey<br>▪ Periodic monitoring<br>▪ Availability of key assessment & design docs.<br>▪ CD Project decisions meeting minutes and reports<br>▪ Discussion with senior | ▪ Organisation's vision, mission and core values<br>▪ Capacity Building events<br>▪ Proper handing over process<br>▪ Knowledge transferring<br>▪ Periodic reporting with stakeholders<br>▪ Records with government sector on staff transfers |

| Stages | Impacts | Strategies in Use | Strategies Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ▪ Lack of data on project implementation process<br>▪ Behaviour of stakeholders<br>▪ partners' contribution<br>▪ Effects of Intangible objectives and organisation culture | management & CD project team<br>▪ Evaluation requirements of donor & other stakeholders<br>▪ Aware organisation members regarding the evaluation | ▪ Monitoring mechanism in community<br>▪ Impact, sustainability criteria<br>▪ Applying lessons learnt<br>▪ Initial meetings with community to find resources |
| Stage Two | ▪ Not thoroughly consider the stakeholders interest & evaluation questions<br>▪ Influence of organisational mechanism<br>▪ Unstable condition in the CD project location<br>▪ Not forming a balance and appropriate evaluation representative sample group.<br>▪ Missing the stakeholder analysis session<br>▪ Influence of CD project's qualitative objectives, its less visible CD project input deliverables and complex nature of the target beneficiaries.<br>▪ Some consist essential elements were hidden and some displayed a big picture than the reality in the complex CD project environment<br>▪ Not identify regular steps for the evaluation process | ▪ Key Documents related to the CD project<br>▪ Identifying donor and stakeholders requirements<br>▪ Behaviour of beneficiaries<br>▪ Setting both qualitative and quantitative questions<br>▪ Better understanding on organisation policies<br>▪ Developing evaluation questions and criteria to generate lesson learnt, alternatives and best fit practices<br>▪ Coordinating with community leaders or re-preventatives<br>▪ Maintain monitoring mechanism<br>▪ Developing the evaluation tools considering the data analyzing<br>▪ Developed tools to find the sensitive and qualitative achievements in CD project beneficiaries | ▪ The CD project purpose aligned with organisation policy<br>▪ The evaluation questions and criteria same in the assessment phase, measuring at beginning<br>▪ Developing one or more questions for every CD project outcomes<br>▪ Stakeholders' profile<br>▪ Periodic meetings<br>▪ Potential evaluation stakeholders<br>▪ Priorities indicators<br>▪ Better understanding<br>▪ Review session with evaluation groups<br>▪ Make sure availability resources<br>▪ Correct identification of formal and informal evaluation tools<br>▪ Clearly identifying steps, activities<br>▪ Use the results of the first stage |
| Stage Three | ▪ Not form a real evaluation group as a representative sample<br>▪ Less familiar with organisational culture them<br>▪ Not following the professional ethics by external party<br>▪ Lack of knowledge on CD project environment<br>▪ Mot much consider to get the support from other staff in organisation and to aware all<br>▪ Enumerators not follow the professional evaluation ethics in data collection stage.<br>▪ The poor engagement level of stakeholders and evaluation group<br>▪ Not consider the sample size, available resources | ▪ Aware all information and background of the CD project<br>▪ Evaluation TOR for external qualified party<br>▪ Evaluation group respects the culture of the organisation<br>▪ The evaluation group and external party should be formed based on the representatives sample of the stakeholders<br>▪ Re-ensure technical knowledge<br>▪ Knowledge regarding the CD project environment and organisation culture<br>▪ Aware on evaluation process, expected outcomes<br>▪ Understanding the cultural and customs of target beneficiaries | ▪ Aware the nature of the CD project beneficiaries, respect their culture, protect the privacy<br>▪ Conducting periodic meeting sessions<br>▪ Get un bias decisions<br>▪ Protect the evaluation ethics and standards<br>▪ Identify strengthen of staff<br>▪ Considering the cultural patterns of stakeholders<br>▪ Developing realistic and measurable tools<br>▪ Sample size of tools with the budget and available resources<br>▪ Conducting pilot survey |

| Stages | Impacts | Strategies in Use | Strategies Proposed |
|---|---|---|---|
| | and time factor when developing evaluation tools<br>▪ Not following the pilot survey | ▪ Consider the ideas of evaluation group<br>▪ Encourage active participation of community and stakeholders<br>▪ Developing data collection plan<br>▪ Trained and qualified enumerators | |
| **Stage Four** | ▪ Poor designed evaluation tools<br>▪ When entering the data, not follow to re-check the filter the raw data and information.<br>▪ Responses level of target beneficiaries<br>▪ The recording pattern of enumerators<br>▪ large gap between the expected outcome and the received value<br>▪ Not use trained data entry persons<br>▪ Not give a weight to identify lessons and best-fit practices | ▪ Filtering raw data and information in a systematic way<br>▪ Well-trained data entry persons<br>▪ Having well-defined evaluation outcomes<br>▪ Getting the clear value through the data analyzing for outcomes<br>▪ Clearly identify the best practices and lessons learnt | ▪ Availability of strongly developed qualitative and quantitative data tools<br>▪ Checklist to reassure availability of collected data and information<br>▪ Providing evaluation findings for lessons learnt and best practices for management decision making purpose<br>▪ Generating lesson learnt and best practices of community engagement |
| **Stage Five** | ▪ Not follow and consider the particular content of the report based on the expectations of the different stakeholders<br>▪ Not consider the requirements of stakeholders<br>▪ Missing stakeholders for evaluation meeting did not follow this step to communicate the results<br>▪ Not follow regular results communication methods | ▪ Considering the all requirements of stakeholders<br>▪ Considering all aspects of CD project outcomes and evaluation purpose | ▪ Ensure stakeholders &community participation for the evaluation meeting<br>▪ Considering the organisation policy<br>▪ Calling media<br>▪ Conducting the meeting from mother language<br>▪ Stakeholders'.......? |

### 4.1.   STAGE ONE - DETERMINE THE EVALUABILITY OF CD PROJECT WORKS

**Stage 1.1:** All cases agreed that the step for analysing the context of CD project initiatives was difficult, due to the impacts related to the nature of target beneficiaries and their complex living environment. Without having a baseline or assessment findings and if they do not practice the monitoring mechanism throughout the project life cycle in a proper way without a large scale survey. An interviewee expressed that he had followed the proper monitoring mechanism for all aspects of target beneficiaries. Further, they had conducted a baseline survey to understand all aspects of all beneficiaries in the CD project location in the beginning of the CD project. Majority of cases have identified the need for conducting baseline survey before starting the CD project they have emphasised the importance for establishing the proper monitoring system throughout the project.

**Stage 1.2:** Two cases mentioned that the nature of the organisation policies such as staff transfers and terminations, the past CD project input data may be missed or not recorded in a systematic way. Interviewees expressed that they maintained the CD project input tracking table in systematic way. Some

cases had proposed to maintain the project input tracking table and referring the project expectations to identify the nature of the CD project inputs. Every team member must thoroughly understand the vision, mission and background situation of the organisation.

**Stage 1.3:** The step-determining the CD project deliverables with its project design was affected in most cases due to the lack of data and information related to project implementation process from the initial phase. Some cases usually refer the documents related to project design documents, assessment results and other basic information documents. Most cases suggested that need for referring to the past CD project records, design documents throughout the CD project implementation process.

**Stage 1.4:** Information related to implementation process is absent in some cases. Some interviewees attempted to maintain the tracking table for the CD project deliverables. Further, due to the nature of target group, they considered the proper monitoring mechanism. Interviewed cases stated that there was a need for maintaining documents and reports related to the CD project implementation.

**Stage 1.5:** Some responders mentioned that responsible persons including the senior management have not participated determining the accurate time for the evaluation while considering the requirements of donor and other major stakeholders. Further, some mentioned that, they had no idea to conduct the evaluation due to lack of directions mentioned in CD project proposals. Under the step - determining the use of the evaluation, some interviewees shared that they conducted a proper discussion with senior management and responsible persons in the CD project team to identify expected results through the evaluation. Further, some of them shared that they had given more focused to the requirements of donor and other stakeholders when determine the uses of the evaluation. As mentioned in early part, interviewees agreed that the conducting the discussion with the senior management and project team was more important to determine the uses of the proposed evaluation due to the nature of the CD project background. Further, they proposed a very good point; to get the community leaders' ideas on the need and uses of the evaluation. They will support to develop more prospects among the target beneficiary groups.

**Stage 1.6:** The identification of the available resources in and out of the CD project environment were not easy due to intangible objectives and unique nature of the CD project and complexity of the CD project location which aimed the community. Under the step - estimating and the available resources for the evaluation, responders suggested the better awareness on the evaluation to enhance the ability of project team as well as the organisation to find the available resources in and out of the CD project environment. According to the ideas provided by interviewees, they had not attempted to give sufficient weight for this stage. Sometimes, the steps of this stage were only done in the mind of responsible evaluator or the results of this stage were not written.

### 4.2.  *STAGE TWO - CREATING THE EVALUATION PLAN ON CD EFFORTS*

**Stage 2.1:** Based on the available data collected in the previous stage and their experience regarding the ongoing project implementation process of CD projects, they are able to complete this step in sufficient manner. All responders agreed that the need for availability of the project description based on the nature of CD efforts including all the key requirements and elements of the CD project before preparing the evaluation plan.

**Stage 2.2:** When setting the evaluation purpose, lots of requirements of stakeholders to be considered. But, some expressed that they were not able to consider such requirements thoroughly. At the same time, considering the operational mechanism also influenced this step as a barrier. Some interviewees expressed that they did not consider much about the nature of proposed questions. The stating the evaluation purpose aligns with its qualitative objectives is the most serious job. Therefore, they had clearly identified the requirements of donor and stakeholders on this evaluation. Further, responders highlighted that the need for identifying the most sensitive areas on the behaviour of the beneficiaries which should be addressed and answers through the evaluation when stating the purpose of the evaluation aligned with its qualitative objectives.

**Stage 2.3:** The expected results were varied based on the unstable condition in the CD project location and it affected the identification of evaluation questions when considering the nature of the CD project

and its location. Similarly, in choosing the evaluation questions aligned with its qualitative objectives, interviewees had used some strategies for ensuring the better understanding of the organisation policies as well as considering the need for generating lessons learnt and best fit practices. Parallel to the designed evaluation purpose, the evaluation questions should be developed both qualitative and quantitative questions considering the soft objectives of the CD projects.

**Stage 2.4:** Without proper preparation, some expressed that they faced difficulty to form a balance and appropriate evaluation representative sample group. Most of them have missed the stakeholder analysis session to assign the duties and responsibilities. Parallel with this step, most cases attempted to identify the evaluation stakeholders from complex web and one interviewee expressed that they maintained the stakeholder profile. All responders proposed that the need of the representation of the community leaders when identifying the evaluation stakeholders from the complex web environment.

**Stages 2.5 and 2.6:** These two steps were difficult jobs due to the CD project's qualitative objectives, its less visible CD project input deliverables and complex nature of the target beneficiaries. All interviewees expressed that they faced lots of difficulty in setting the indicators and its relevant tools in the design stage. Furthermore, interviewees mentioned that they had maintained a monitoring system beginning to measure the progress of indicators which were built in the assessment survey. The resource limit and target beneficiaries are identified or developed based on the neediness of the evaluation. In this process, the identification of the evaluation tools based on the nature of CD efforts, resource limit and target beneficiaries should be capable to find the sensitive and qualitative achievements in the CD project beneficiaries as well as the CD project location.

**Stage 2.7:** Some consist essential elements were hidden and some displayed a big picture than the reality in the complex CD project environment. Further, some were not able to identify regular steps for the evaluation process to allocate the financial resources for implementing them at a correct time and in a proper way. Also, some organisation policies affected the identification of the sources through in and out of the CD project due to generated constrains and some pressures from the organisation policy and organisation culture. Most responders agreed that they had used past CD project designed documents to find the evaluation sources through the implementation process. Further they had attempted to clearly identify and prioritized the steps of the evaluation process including the data collection step, to prepare the evaluation budget in an effective manner.

### 4.3. STAGE THREE - IMPLEMENTING THE EVALUATION PLAN ON CD EFFORTS

**Stages 3.1 and 3.2:** Some of them were not able to form a real evaluation group as a representative sample of all stakeholders who linked with the CD project in direct or indirect way. The bias decisions were taken by them and it also affected the real outcomes of the entire evaluation. Some interviewees expressed that they had followed a particular step when selecting the external evaluation party. They had engaged to call bid and selected suitable external qualified party who provided the better responses for evaluation TOR.

**Stage 3.3:** Majority of the interviewees shared that some staff of the external party, who engage in data collection step had not followed the professional ethics in their job and it had created some issues and conflicts among the community members. Most of interviewees proposed that to conduct a polite survey for re-ensuring the level of technical knowledge of them. This will be supported to minimise the errors in the data collection in the CD project.

**Stage 3.4:** Most of the interviewees indicated that this step was not much considered in the process to get the support from other staff in organisation and to aware all of them regarding the process of the evaluation. Most of the interviewees expressed that they attempted to improve the sufficient and more knowledge by using CD project related documents, publications of the organisation, vision, mission and policy statement of the organisations as well as the nature of cultural background of the CD project location. Some stated that they attempted to get the mother organisation support through conducting the initial meeting for all staff members regarding the evaluation process, scheduled plan and its expected outcome.

**Stage 3.5:** Interviewees expressed that they do not attempt to create an additional step to promote the evaluation ethics for evaluation team. One interviewer mentioned that they faced difficulty in the data collection step, because some of the enumerators in the external staff had involved in creating some conflict between the community members, by not following the professional evaluation ethics and it also affected the entire results of the evaluation. Majority of responders expressed that the need for applying ethical values by CD project team among the target beneficiaries in the CD project implementation process as well as the evaluation process. The CD project team is generally familiar with the nature of the target beneficiaries and they should be responsible for respecting the culture and customs of the target beneficiaries.

**Stage 3.7:** The redeveloping the evaluation tool matrix on the nature of CD project environment should be further developed in this stage with the valuable ideas of evaluation group and stakeholders based on the complex CD project environment. But, the poor engagement level of stakeholders and evaluation group members were influenced to build weak evaluation tool matrix with their valuable ideas. Further, some evaluation group members were not able to re-design the realistic evaluation tools considering the sample size, available resources and time factor created an issue in the performance evaluation process. Some interviewees expressed that their evaluation group further developed the evaluation tools based on the newly received resources from the community in the periodic review meetings.

**Stage 3.8:** All interviewees mentioned that this was the most critical step in the evaluation process. First, the nature of the designed evaluation plan influenced to run the effective data collection flow for the process. Some interviewees expressed that most of them had not attempted to conduct pilot a survey before starting the data collection, therefore, they were not able to identify the issues and wasted the resources in the process. Further, as mentioned earlier, the role in the enumerators in the data collection process was also influenced in getting the accurate data from the selected sample group among the target community. Under the data collection management step, interviewees proposed a well-defined data collection plan and importance for managing it in an effective way while having the strong qualitative and quantitative data measurement tools. Further, they have suggested that the neediness for encouraging the community and relevant stakeholders to their active participation in the data collection step.

## 4.4. STAGE FOUR - ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETING DATA

**Stage 4.1:** The nature of the CD projects is more related with the qualitative objectives, but the results can be expressed through both qualitative and quantitative value based on the requirements of donor and other stakeholders. Some interviewees responded that they faced a challenge under this step due to poor designed evaluation tools.

**Stage 4.2:** Most of the interviewees expressed that, they faced difficulty when data entering step, because, they did not follow this step deeply, to filter the raw data and information. Some interviewees have suggested that the raw data and information should be carefully filtered to identify the errors which were recorded in the data collection stage.

**Stage 4.3:** One interviewee expressed that he missed this step and it was caused by creating a large gap between the expected outcome and the received value. At the same time, due to the responses level of target beneficiaries as well as the recording pattern of enumerators, also occurred some mistakes in the data collection.

**Stage 4.4:** All of them mentioned that they had used trained data entry persons for data entering and analysing part related to the developed evaluation indicators. Some interviewees expressed that they had used the well trained data entry persons for entering and analyzing the data for each evaluation tools and evaluation indicators.

**Stage 4.5:** Interviewers stated that this step was affected by the poor design of the evaluation purpose. Further, they had given more consideration for establishing clear well-defined evaluation outcomes in the evaluation design stage after considering the qualitative outcomes of CD project.

**Stage 4.6:** Considering the step of identifying lessons learnt and best-fit practices, interviewees expressed that they do not attempt to give a weight to identify lessons and best-fit practices from the evaluation results.

*4.5.* *STAGE FIVE - COMMUNICATING EVALUATION RESULTS ON CD EFFORTS*

**Stage 5.1:** Some of them mentioned that they did not follow and considered a particular content of the report based on the expectations of the different stakeholders in the CD project environment. They had not attempted to give priority to consider the requirements of the donor, community and government sector. Some interviewees expressed that the need for conducting the evaluation presentation in mother tongue, for it assures more participation and involvement of the community.

**Stage 5.2:** Interviewees expressed that some of stakeholders missed in this stage and it was caused to miss the opportunity to experience the output of the whole CD project contribution. Some interviewees expressed that they used a stakeholder profile to identify the requirements of them separately and developed presentation flow for more emphasis their requirements how fruitful from the results of the CD project's progress.

**Stage 5.3:** Majority of interviewees saw this as an additional step which might spend lots of money with their limited financial resources. Moreover, most of interviewees agreed that the importance of using media to publish the evaluation results. They suggested to link with the communication unit of the mother organisation.

## 5.    CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to develop a guide for performance evaluation of foreign funded CD projects implemented by NGOs in Sri Lanka. The research emphasised the need for developing a guide for performance evaluation due to the lack of available literature and a developed standard guideline in Sri Lankan context. Further, the nature of the CD project and its unique characteristics create challenges in managing and evaluating a CD project parallel to its expected outcomes. The literature review session further identified the unique characteristics of CD projects and their applicability in international and national contexts while considering the performance evaluation in CD projects. Furthermore, this research identified the how performance evaluation process was affected by several impact areas from internal and external CD project environment. The research found basically four impact areas: nature of the CD project, nature of the organisation, nature of the external environment and nature of target beneficiaries. Moreover, the research examined the available developed standards and guidelines for performance evaluation process for CD projects developed by professionals and institutions and finally it was able to develop a common guideline including five major stages: determination of the ability to evaluate the CD project works, creating the evaluation plan on CD efforts, implementing the evaluation plan on CD efforts, analysing and interpreting data and communicating the evaluation results on CD efforts. Under the case study method, the research examined the selected five performance evaluation processes of CD projects of which they had done impact evaluation at the completion stage of the CD project through the interview process. The interview profile had designed considering basically three questions.

- How impact areas were affected by the CD projects' performance evaluation process?

- What kind of strategies already applied by them in the impact areas?

- What kind of strategies can be proposed through the lessons learnt in conducting evaluation processes to the impact area?

Considering the ideas of interviewees, the research identified that how different stages and steps of the performance evaluation process affected by identified four impact areas. At the same time, it also examined different kinds of strategies that are already applied by them to minimise these impacts to conduct a successful evaluation process and to present different proposed strategies generated through the lessons learnt of the past evaluation experiences. By using these proposed and existing strategies generated in NGOs, finally the proposed guide has been developed considering each steps and stages of the performance evaluation process of CD projects.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The proposed strategies for more effective stages are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Proposed Strategies

| Stage | Strategy |
|---|---|
| **Stage One**<br>**Determination of evaluability of CD project work** | ▪ Better understanding on organisation's vision, mission and core values<br>▪ Regular Capacity Building events<br>▪ Knowledge transferring and handing over |
| **Stage Two**<br>**Creating the evaluation plan on CD efforts** | ▪ Correct identification of evaluation tools<br>▪ Developing more questions for every outcome<br>▪ Stakeholders' profile Priorities evaluation indicators |
| **Stage Three**<br>**Implementing the evaluation plan on CD efforts** | ▪ Sample size of tools with the budget and available resources<br>▪ Developing realistic and measurable tools<br>▪ Conducting a pilot survey |
| **Stage Four**<br>**Analysing and interpreting data** | ▪ Providing evaluation findings for lesson learnt and best practices for management decision making purpose<br>▪ Generating lesson learnt and best practices of community engagement |
| **Stage Five**<br>**Communicating the evaluation results** | ▪ Ensure stakeholders and community participation for the evaluation meeting<br>▪ Calling media<br>▪ Considering the organisation policy<br>▪ Conducting the evaluation meeting in mother tongue<br>▪ Maintain a stakeholders' profile |

Due to the unique characteristics of the CD projects and its complex nature ins and outs of the project environment create some impacts and threats for implementing the evaluation process in an effective way. Before starting the performance evaluation process to measure the impacts in the completion stage of the CD project, they should be careful to build a strong foundation for the performance evaluation. At the same time, they should attempt to maintain a successful CD project implementation process throughout the CD project life cycle. CD projects have their own evaluation process, but considering the strategies and proposed guidelines including the steps of five stages will definitely support to achieve successful and fruitful results in the performance evaluation process while ensuring their quality throughout the process for any foreign funded CD projects implemented by NGOs in Sri Lanka.

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