



Evaluation Policy

Jordan Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Fund
(JREEEF)

Introduction

JREEEF was established in 2012 by the EE and RE law 13 (articles 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16) yet it became operational in 2015 after the promulgation of bylaw 49 of 2015. It is established at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR) to provide necessary funding for EE and RE measures at end-user's level. It supports any program and financial mechanism allowing RE and EE users to access to financing from banks, local and international financial institutions. This includes loan interest rate subsidy, revolving funds, financial risk mitigation, credit guarantees, equity participation, subsidy to investment in innovating projects and soft investment such as, energy audits, feasibility studies, and public awareness campaigns.

Overall, the key strategic objectives of JREEEF are to:

- Rationalize the exploitation of energy and improve its efficiency in various sectors
- Exploit Renewable Energy Sources for increasing the percentage of their contribution to the total energy mix and achieve safe supply.

Purpose

The Purpose of this policy is to define the overall evaluation framework at JREEEF to setup and establish an independent evaluation function and facilitate conformity with the principles, norms and practices brought forward by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) IN 1991[1], and by various UN Organizations. Aid evaluation plays an essential role in the efforts to enhance the quality of development. The following set of principles state the most important requirements of the evaluation process based on current policies and practices as well as donor agency experiences with evaluation and feedback of results.

[1] PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, DAC, 1991

Definition of Evaluation

An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders. The purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning. Evaluation aims to understand why — and to what extent — intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse the implications of the results. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, marketing, implementation and reporting and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking, development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness[1].

Evaluation Norms

Utility and Usefulness

In commissioning and conducting an evaluation, there should be a clear intention to use the findings analysis, conclusions or recommendations in decision making. The utility of evaluation is manifest through its use in making relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning. Utility relates to the impact of the evaluation on decision-making and requires that evaluation findings be relevant and useful, presented concisely, and monitored for implementation. The utility of an evaluation depends on its timeliness, relevance to the needs of the programme and stakeholders, the credibility of the process and products, and the accessibility of reports to key stakeholders.

[1] UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016

Credibility

The credibility of evaluation depends on the expertise and independence of the evaluators and the degree of transparency of the evaluation process. Credibility requires that evaluation should report successes in addition to failures. Credibility is grounded on independence, impartiality and a rigorous methodology. Key elements of credibility include transparent evaluation processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders, and quality assurance of results and recommendations. This entails using sensible utilization of the best available, objective, and reliable data for accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence. Credibility also entails that evaluators abide by ethical standards, and exhibit the best professional and cultural competencies

Impartiality and Independence

Impartiality contributes to the credibility of evaluation and the avoidance of bias in findings, analyses and conclusions. Independence provides legitimacy to evaluation and reduces the potential for conflict of interest which could arise if policy makers and managers were solely responsible for evaluating their own activities. The requirement for impartiality and independence exists at all stages of the evaluation process, including the planning of the evaluation programme, the formulation of the terms of reference and the selection and approval of evaluation teams.

Independence is also pivotal for credibility, affects utilization of the evaluation, and allows evaluators to be impartial.

Independence of the evaluation function has twofold:

1. The ability of evaluators to express freely their assessment without undue influence for any party, and being able to conduct their evaluative work impartially, and without any risk on their career or contractual relationship with JREEEF.
2. Establishing a separate evaluation body from management solely for the purpose of setting evaluation agendas and to avail adequate resources for planned evaluations.

Independence also necessitates that evaluation managers have the discretion to directly submit evaluation reports to the appropriate level of decision-making and that they report directly to an organization's the executive head. Independence is vested in the Evaluation Head to directly commission, produce, publish and disseminate duly quality-assured evaluation reports to key stakeholders without influence from any party.

Ethics

Evaluation must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners, and customs of the social and cultural environment, for human rights, and gender equality. Evaluators must respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence, must ensure that sensitive data is protected and that it cannot be traced to its source and must validate statements made in the report with those who provided the relevant information. Evaluators should obtain informed consent for the use of private information from those who provide it. When evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered, it must be reported discreetly to a competent body.

Human Rights and Gender Equality

Generally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to be integrated into all stages of evaluations. It is the responsibility of evaluators and the evaluation body to ensure that these values are respected, addressed and promoted in all evaluations.

Evaluation Criteria

JREEEF adopts the five widely recognized criteria for evaluation that have been recommended by the OECD DAC:

1. **Relevance:** The degree to which an undertaking responds to the needs and priorities of the targeted beneficiaries, a contextual situation to be addressed, in addition to the Jordanian government and donors' priorities.
2. **Effectiveness:** The extent to which an undertaking has achieved its objectives.
3. **Efficiency:** The cost effectiveness of transferring inputs into outputs taking into consideration alternative approaches.
4. **Impact:** The cumulative and/or long-term effects of an undertaking or series of undertakings which may produce positive or negative, intended or unintended changes.
5. **Sustainability:** The likelihood that benefits derived from an undertaking will continue over time after its completion.

Types of Evaluation

JREEEF commissions the following main types of evaluation:

1. Thematic Evaluations: focusing on particular sectors, strategies, or cross-cutting theme or function. They may also address a specific issue of governmental interest or priority. Thematic evaluations will provide an improved understanding of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability. These evaluations will be conducted by external independent evaluators.
2. Programmatic Evaluations: focusing on specific programme or project. This evaluation will provide an in-depth understanding of how and why results have been achieved over an extended period of time and will examine relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. These evaluations will be conducted by external independent evaluators.
3. Internal Evaluations: There can be thematic or programmatic evaluations that can be implemented internally.

Evaluation Management

JREEEF will establish an evaluation body that will be led by JREEEF Director, and with the technical support of the M&E Specialist that will ensure upholding JREEEF to their internal evaluation norms, that the evaluation function is operational, duly independent, and that all evaluations are conducted in accordance with the highest standards of evaluation. The M&E Specialist works under the direct supervision of JREEEF Director (who in turn reports to JREEEF's management board), while the operational division of JREEEF includes project managers that report to the JREEEF Deputy Director (who in turn reports to the JREEEF Director). This ensures independence of the evaluation function from the organization's operations. In addition, internal operational reports are normally submitted in alignment with the standard organizational structure. Evaluation reports are separate from the regular operational reporting structure since they are directly submitted to the evaluation body to ensure independence, and upon review, will be shared with intended stakeholders in addition to JREEEF's management board that is led by the Minister. The evaluation body will also include at least two other senior managers. The evaluation body will be responsible for:

- a) Providing overall oversight of the evaluation function within JREEEF
 - b) Approving the annual evaluation work plan and allocating the necessary resources
 - c) Raising awareness and promoting the function of evaluation and learning
 - d) Establishing the process for each evaluation
 - e) Identifying roles and responsibilities for setting up, managing, implementing, quality controlling, reviewing, reporting, and disseminating the results of these evaluations.
 - f) Ensuring the participation of respective stakeholders
 - g) Providing guidance and feedback on the developed methodology
- Reviewing and disseminates reports

Planning, Prioritizing, and Costing Evaluations

JREEEF will develop an organizational wide annual work plan as part of annual budgeting. The plan will be developed by members of the established evaluation body and in consultation with the project managers, partners, and donors. All donor funded projects should include a clause in project documents/proposals that specify the exact requirements for evaluation, in addition to the evaluation modalities. The plan will include prioritized evaluations for each annum.

The cost of evaluation will vary in accordance with the proposed evaluation scope, purpose, research questions, data collection methods, geographic coverage, in addition to other factors that need to be considered during the planning process. It is recommended to budget at least 2% of projects budgets for evaluation. Planned evaluations will be considered in accordance with the following factors:

- JREEEF's commitment relevant to international organizations, donors, agreements with partners, and requests from the government/Ministry.
- Organizational significance related to performance issues in achieving results and the need to validate the accomplishment of results for specific programmes, levels of financial investments, and inherent risks.
- Organizational learning needs specific to certain sector, cross-cutting theme, ex-post impact evaluations, or any policy review related questions that can be validated for the purpose of decision making.

The Process of Evaluation

Initial Study:

Once the evaluation plan has been developed, a preliminary context study can be initiated for each evaluation to further understand the specifics and details. This may include becoming familiar with a policy area, cross-cutting theme, or any area that needs to be evaluated. The initial study will help in the identification of available resources, and to establish a preliminary idea about the questions that need to be answered within the evaluation. It can also suggest broadly the most appropriate type of evaluation, expected duration, and the required resources.

The preliminary study should also identify the main objective of the evaluation and ensure that the broad focus of the evaluation remains clear, reasonable, and aligned with the needs of JREEEF. The objective establishes the limits of the evaluation including geographic locations, time, and identifies the key questions that will be answered based on literature review within the field of study. It will also help in the identification of existing secondary data sources such as literature, statistical data, information, and any other supplemental information that can help in formulating the research questions. The initial study will need to be shared with the evaluation body for taking key decisions on the abovementioned key points. After decisions have been made on the proposed options in the preliminary study, the Terms of Reference for the actual evaluation will be drafted.

Terms of Reference

The ToR establishes and describes the conditions under which the evaluation will be conducted. It is a detailed document that includes at least the following elements:

- (a) The justification and rationale of the evaluation;
- (b) The objective and aim of the evaluation;
- (c) the core research questions that will be answered by the research;
- (d) The scope of the evaluation including themes,
- (e) The evaluation criteria (inter alia, relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, sustainability)

- The drafted ToR will be discussed in advance with direct stakeholders and among members of the evaluation body. Eventually, the ToR will need to be approved by the executive director upon the recommendations of the evaluation body, while its framework will be used for contracting external researchers and evaluators that will be responsible for implementation.

The evaluation body will be responsible for setting up and concluding evaluations. This includes identifying suitable candidates for the implementation of the research, consulting agencies, external evaluation consultants, or researchers from research institutions or universities. Researchers may include qualified recent graduates that can be considered subject matter expert in specific thematic area of expertise. Most evaluations will require contracting external evaluators that need to have relevant technical and sectoral evaluation experience, an in-depth understanding of requested evaluation methodologies, and previous relevant experiences in conducting similar reviews and evaluations. The selection process must ensure that identified researchers or evaluators have no conflict of interest with any member of the team.

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Methodology

The methodology will bring about a distinction between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative methods are more focused on processes and provide a plausible and deeper understanding and explanation of the context and implemented solutions. They can also be used to revalidate the results of quantitative results. To the contrary, quantitative techniques rely on statistical techniques that can isolate the complex effects of an intervention and make general statements. Qualitative techniques, however, can be expensive, and may require a large sample size. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques are considered complimentary. The most common forms of data collection include literature reviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, observation, surveys, and case studies.

The general methodology will be derived from the ToR and the initial study, but external researchers and evaluators will be requested to provide a more detailed and comprehensive methodology as part of the inception report. OECD/DAC evaluation quality standards require a sound methodology that needs to be integrated into the final report. This will include broadly the evaluation design, means of data collection, data collection instruments, and the details of data analysis, leading to answering the key research questions.

Reporting

The final report of the evaluation is approved by the evaluation body after the evaluators respond to comments and feedback. The final report will then be shared with the Minister. Some evaluations will be available to the public, and other evaluations will be utilized for learning and decision making. The decision not to publicise the evaluation must be taken before the evaluation is commissioned.

The report must also take into consideration the type of stakeholders that will be presented with the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Different versions of the report can be drafted to fulfill the function of learning or sharing key findings with the public. Many evaluations include summary synthesis reports that make it easier for decision makers to learn. In all cases, a transparent presentation of results is considered imperative. It is also essential to attach the ToR as an annex to the report, while detailed information related to the methodology and the challenges that arise during the implementation need to be included within annexes.

The final report will need to include at least the following:

- (a) General information related to the purpose and objective of the evaluation;
- (b) Answer key research questions detailed in the ToR;
- (c) Describe the methodology utilized in data collection and analysis;
- (d) Provide evidence for findings, in addition to detailed conclusions and recommendations.
- (e) Indicate challenges and limitations;
- (f) Attach the ToR as an annex;

Utilization of Evaluation Findings

The recommendations included within the evaluation reports reflect the added value of the entire evaluation process. Each evaluation will require a management response plan which includes the responsible party, actions, and timelines to respond and implement these recommendations. Each evaluation will be assigned to an owner or managing lead that will oversee the process of developing and implementing a response plan, and that will report periodically to the evaluation body on progress in implementing these recommendations. The M&E Specialist will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the evaluation recommendations systematically.

Communications

Reports will be disseminated in accordance with the communications plan stipulated in the ToR which will be at minimum to all parties directly or indirectly involved in the project, and preferably as widely as possible. Lessons learned will also be distilled and communicated through various means to relevant stakeholders and potential users of the information and generated knowledge. Messages may indicate key findings and recommendations, contribution of the evaluation to the effectiveness of the organization, successes and good practices, or the technical evaluation capacity of the organization. Proper distribution of key messages can be effective in improving the utilization of evaluations to enhance public accountability, building knowledge, and cross-fertilization of lessons learned across different sectors.