

Guiding questions to help narrow the scope of an evaluation

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Time and budget constraints can mean that programmes are not able to assess all possible evaluation questions; this is especially true for multi-component or multi-site programmes operating in challenging environments. This tool identifies areas of enquiry to help programmes prioritise the number of questions and measurement indicators used. This tool was developed by Anne Buffardi for use in in [Methods Lab](#) projects.

Prioritising evaluation questions and data collection

Nature of evaluation questions	Orientation of data collection
<i>If it is more relevant to:</i>	<i>Then focus on:</i>
1. Understand multiple dimensions of a complex problem (e.g. women's empowerment or community resilience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One broad outcome area (e.g. community resilience)• Multiple measures and sources of data• A smaller sample
2. Understand the interaction and influence of multiple programme components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple outcomes (one measure for each)• Narrow geographic and demographic scope (fewer people, locations)• A smaller sample
3. Understand how changes vary across contexts and/or population groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A narrow set of outcomes (e.g. income, food security, involvement in community groups - use one measure for each)• Measure context• Wider geographic and demographic scope (e.g. different population groups, locations)• A larger sample
4. Understand change among individual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selected number of outcomes• A medium sample of the same participants at multiple time points
5. Understand change among participants compared to non-participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrow set of outcomes• A medium sample of participants and non-participants