

Quality Reporting System

Background

AusAID's Quality Reporting System tracks the quality of an activity at the stages of entry, implementation and completion. Quality Reports are entered into a central agency database to allow monitoring of quality over time. Quality Reports are required for all substantive, monitored aid activities, across all aid modalities, e.g. cofinancing, sector-wide and program approaches, global programs and bilateral activities, where:

- a. the expected Australian Government funding over the entire life of the activity is \$3 million or more, *or*
- b. the value is less than \$3 million, but significant to country or corporate strategies or key relationships with other development partners including whole of government partners.

Quality Principles

The Quality Reporting System is informed by five **Aid Quality Principles**, which guide all stages reporting; at entry, implementation and completion. Although the format and wording of quality reports vary according to the stage of the aid activity, they are designed to address the expectation that all aid activities will:

1. Achieve clearly stated objectives that contribute to higher level objectives in the program strategy
2. Effectively measure progress towards meeting objectives
3. Continually manage risks
4. Appropriately address sustainability, with due account of partner government systems, stakeholder ownership and phase out
5. Be based on sound technical analysis and continuous learning

Quality Ratings

The Quality Reporting system uses a 6-point rating scale, as also used by the World Bank and others, which makes a stronger distinction between just adequate and less than adequate ratings, and forces a more refined decision across the six points of the scale.

Definitions of Rating Scale

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6, above the line)

- 6 Very high quality; needs ongoing management and monitoring only
- 5 Good quality initiative; needs minor work to improve in some areas
- 4 Adequate quality initiative; needs some work to improve

Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3, below the line)

- 3 Less than adequate quality initiative; needs work to improve in core areas
- 2 Poor quality initiative; needs major work to improve
- 1 Very poor quality initiative; needs major overhaul

Quality At Entry

As part of the Quality Reporting System, a Quality at Entry Report is required for all substantive, monitored aid activities. Initially, draft ratings are prepared by the AusAID Activity Manager and commented on by Peer Reviewers. Ratings and Actions to Improve are agreed as part of the Peer Review Meeting, to ensure attention to quality during the design and review process. This will provide managers and corporate areas with information on the quality of designs, and focus peer reviews on key issues relating to quality. Ratings are provided according to how well the following issues are addressed:

1. Are there clearly stated objectives that contribute to higher level strategy objectives?
2. How well will monitoring and evaluation arrangements effectively measure progress towards objectives?
3. Are arrangements in place to appropriately address sustainability issues?
4. Are implementation and risk management arrangements sound?
5. Is the activity based on sound technical analysis and continuous learning?

Quality at Implementation:

Quality at Implementation reports are completed at least once a year, and typically contribute to program or thematic areas' Annual Performance Report. However, updates are also prepared ahead of independent reviews such as Technical Advisory Groups, Project Coordinating Committees and Mid-Term Reviews, and revised as needed to reflect the outcomes of such reviews.

The Quality at Implementation report provides information to support the quality ratings, and allows contestability of findings and proposed actions. The ratings are "owned" by the program team, but should be shared and discussed with partners wherever possible. The reports are open to contestability within AusAID and from independent reviews. Activities with marginal or unsatisfactory ratings, or with significant risks, are likely to require more frequent updates. For Quality at Implementation, ratings are provided in regard to the following:

1. Is activity implementation progressing on time and on budget?
2. Are activity objectives being achieved?

3. How good is the monitoring and evaluation evidence?
4. Will the activity produce sustainable benefits?

In addition, this report collects further information on key results, risk management, gender, partnerships, and anti-corruption.

Quality at Completion

Ratings of the quality of the activity after it has been completed will be entered into a Quality at Completion report, which is produced as part of the Independent Completion Report. This report differs from quality at entry and implementation reports in that although it is recorded electronically in AusAID's Quality Reporting System, the ratings and other information in the report are provided by the independent review team. These will be compared with ratings made earlier by AusAID at different stages of its cycle. The ratings to be given are:

1. To what degree did the initiative achieve its objectives, and how well did they contribute to higher level objectives in the program strategy?
2. How robust was the system to measure ongoing achievement of objectives and results?
3. How effectively was the initiative managed? To what degree did it provide good value for money?
4. How appropriate is the sustainability of the initiatives outcomes?
5. Was the initiative of the highest technical quality, based on sound analysis and learning?

Templates for Quality at Entry, Implementation and Completion are provided below.



Australian Government

AusAID

Quality at Entry Report Template

Initiative:			
Initiative Number:			
Quality at Entry Report			
Quality Report Number:		Date Approved:	
Approver:		Requestor:	

Quality Ratings

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Rating</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Actions to Improve</i>
Clear Objectives	1-6		
Monitoring Framework	1-6		
Sustainability	1-6		
Implementation and Risk Management	1-6		
Analysis and Lessons	1-6		



Quality at Implementation Report Template

Initiative:			
Initiative Number:		Initiative Period:	
Quality at Implementation Report			
Quality Report Number:		Date Approved:	
Approver:		Requestor:	

Initiative Summary

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Current Financial Year</i>
FMA 9		
Committed		
Expensed		

Quality Ratings

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Rating</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Actions to Improve</i>
Key Results	Not rated		
Objectives Summary	Not rated		
Implementation Progress	1-6		
Achieving Objectives	1-6		
Monitoring and Evaluation	1-6		
Sustainability	1-6		
Gender and Other Issues	Not rated		
Risk Management	Not rated		
Current Issues	Not rated		



Australian Government

AusAID

Quality at Completion Report Template

Initiative:			
Initiative Number:			
Quality at Completion Report			
Quality Report Number:		Date Approved:	
Approver:		Requestor:	

Initiative Summary

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Current Financial Year</i>
FMA 9		
Committed		

Quality Ratings

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Rating</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Analysis and Learning	1-6	
Effectiveness	1-6	
Efficiency	1-6	
Monitoring and Evaluation	1-6	
Sustainability	1-6	