

Layout guidelines for evaluation reports

February 2025

1. Introduction

These guidelines provide guidance on how to improve the presentation of findings (Section 2), and the layout to be applied to the different sections of the Danida evaluation reports (Section 3) including a list of typical errors to watch out for.

These guidelines are supplemented by the 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark Style Guide for Written Documents' which provide brief and succinct guidance on a range of issues regarding spelling, hyphens, punctuation, use of capital letters, numbers, etc.

Both of the above mentioned documents should be applied to all evaluation reports written for the department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (LEARNING).

2. Presentation of findings

In order to improve the understanding, strengthen the evidence and promote reader friendly communication of findings we encourage consultants to:

- **Include figures and/or statistics wherever relevant.** This can include:
 - project/component/programme data drawn from existing monitoring systems providing output/outcome information on the intervention being evaluated;
 - existing statistical data based on household surveys or administrative records providing key background information on a sector, theme, key indicators of socio-economic development, or on regional and local disparities;
 - quantitative data generated as part of the evaluation.

Whenever possible do not restrict the information to a single point in time, but seek to show the trend over a period of time. Where relevant also compare the actual situation with the original target/objective or predicted situation.

- Where possible **show quantitative data in graphs** (the precise numbers behind the graphs can be provided in tables in an annex). Graphs are particularly useful for showing trends over time and for comparing different indicators (see Section 2.8 on graphs).
- **If discussing regional/local differences please provide a map** showing the better off and the worse off areas.
- Include **case-stories** either within the report itself to provide further evidence, or in a text box to illustrate the findings. This will provide concrete 'real life examples' of the often more academic and cross-cutting discussion being presented in the text.

3. Layout of evaluation report

3.1. Cover page and initial sections of the report

Cover page

LEARNING will prepare the front and back cover pages. *Map:* We encourage consultants to provide a simplified colour map of the relevant project areas or country(ies) covered in the evaluation and if

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relevant a box with key background data relevant to the evaluation. The map should show all names of locations used in the report.

Title page

Numbering: The report should only make use of Arabic numbering (1, 2, 3 ...) of pages. The title page is always page 1.

Top of the page: Title of the report.

Bottom of the page: Insert consulting company's logo. Below that the month and year in which the report was finalised.

Page 2 (the colophon)

Will be prepared by LEARNING

Preface

If a 'Preface' is warranted (typically for joint evaluations) this will be prepared by LEARNING or by the Management Group established for the evaluation.

Table of Contents

The 'Table of Contents' should show the chapter headings and sub-headings, but not any additional levels of headings below that. All annexes should be listed with a letter and the title of the annex (e.g. Annex A: Terms of Reference). While some annexes will be included in the report, others will be available as separated annexes on the LEARNING website. Please see Section 3.3 for guidance on how to list them in the 'Table of Contents'.

Boxes, tables and figures are **not** listed in the 'Table of Contents'.

Acknowledgements

Follow after the 'Table of Contents'. Should include general thanks to staff and stakeholders involved in the evaluation exercise. Names of staff in LEARNING are not to be listed.

Abbreviations

The 'List of Abbreviations' used should show all abbreviations used more than once in the report. Just below the last abbreviation the currency value(s) could be indicated, preferably as a time series corresponding to the evaluation period.

Glossary of Terms

Follow after the 'List of Abbreviations'.

Executive summary

The 'Executive Summary' should not be labelled Chapter 0 or 1. The Executive Summary is written as a self-contained document that provides the bare essentials for decision-makers regarding the background, major conclusions, recommendations and, if applicable, lessons learned. If abbreviations have to be used, they should be defined the first time they are mentioned. The Executive Summary should normally not be longer than 6-7 pages.

3.2. Draft report

The draft should be made as simple as possible in order to simplify the final layout, which is outsourced to professionals who use advanced layout programmes. Do not make special designs like

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double frames around tables, shadows on graphs and other “fancy” effects. This will make the conversion more difficult. There should be no fixed right-hand margin.

The following basic rules apply:

Language:

The report must be prepared in British English. Please make systematic use of the spell and grammar check in order to save subsequent work on corrections. Please avoid referring to the consultants with the use of wording like ‘we’ or ‘the consultants’. Instead use ‘the Evaluation’ or ‘the evaluation’¹.

Font and levels:

Body text: Garamond, 12

Keep a logical division in chapters and sections. Three levels will normally be sufficient, but sometimes a fourth level is necessary.

- 1. level: Chapter (e.g. 3) heading
- 2. level: Section (e.g. 3.1) heading
- 3. level: Subsection (no number) heading
- 4. level: Division of subsection

Arial, 20, bold

Garamond, 14, bold

Garamond, 12, bold

Garamond, 12, italics

Headings:

As outlined in the ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark Style Guide for Written documents’ section 4.9.2 on headings, the initial letters of the most important words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) should be capitalized but *only* in top-level headings. In all other headings, only the initial letter of the first word should be capitalized.

Please *do not* use capital letters in headings (GOOD PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS) as these headings will then need to be retyped in the conversion process, resulting in delays and the risk of errors.

Division of words:

Please *do not* use the forced (at end of line) return key to divide words at end of the line.

Accentuation:

Can be made as *italics* or **semibold** (bold can also be used if semibold is not available on the computer used). CAPITALS should only be used for abbreviations like UN, NGO etc.

Graphs:

When including graphs please decide on a format and apply it consistently throughout the report. Remember to include a meaningful title for the graph (indicator, location and time period), clear labelling of the x-axis as well as the y-axis, legend (if applicable), and source. Please be consistent in the use of either two- or three-dimensional graphs throughout the report.

¹ ‘The Evaluation’ can be spelt with a small ‘e’ or a capitalized ‘E’, but whatever is chosen it must be applied consistently throughout the report.

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Graphs can be made in programmes like Excel (or Illustrator). When submitting the report please also provide the files with the original graphs or a file with the underlying figures as the graphs will be recreated in another graphic programme.

Text boxes:

Indicate if there is a text box: (BOX) (BOX END).

Tables:

Use only horizontal lines, *never* vertical lines. Use the tabulator key to divide the columns. The best way in Word is to use a single tab between each column:

Text	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000
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Never use the space key for tabulation. Use decimals only when absolutely necessary.

Notes:

Should be made as footnotes at the bottom of the page. Footnotes end with a full stop.

Maps and logos:

Should preferably be delivered electronically as vector based EPS files, which can be adjusted in size. Alternatively, TIFF files can be used, if they are to be reproduced in scale 1:1 (do not need much scaling).

Photos:

Should be delivered as TIFF files or jpg files in an e-mail. They should be in high resolution (preferably A5 300 dpi).

3.3. Annexes

In order to limit the size of the evaluation report, annexes will be published as separate PDF files at the um.dk website.

After the 'Table of Content' please insert the following sentence:- "The following annexes to the Evaluation Report can be downloaded as separated PDF files from um.dk. After this the annexes should be listed. All annexes must be named A, B, C etc. (sequential order)

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3.4. Typical errors in evaluation reports

Spacing

1. Double spacing. (If it is used after a full stop, it has to be done throughout the report).
2. Spacing between last word and the full stop.

Punctuation and hyphens

3. Full stops and semicolons missing after sections or bullet points where it is warranted (see section 6 in the 'Style Manual'. Use of (too) many different types of bullet points. • • • • ;
1,2,3,4; a, b, c, d.

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4. Missing hyphens in words such as long-term, cross-cutting (a Danida speciality), know-how.
5. Hyphens instead of dashes in inserted sentences. The last dash in particular is often a hyphen. To make a dash in Word type: PC: CTRL + Minus key (on numeric keyboard); Mac: ALT + hyphen key.
6. Inaccurate use of punctuation. Make use of English punctuation rules when using commas to separate items in a series (Apples, pears and carrots = British English. Apples, pears, and carrots = US English) (see section 4.4.1 of the Style Manual for further details).
7. Wrong use of commas and full stops in figures. In English the use is the opposite of in Danish. Always.
8. Confusion when referring to a range of years. In a title write 2010-2012 instead of 2010-12. In text write the sentence in full i.e. 'from 2010 to 2012' (not 'from 2010-12') (see 'Style Guide' section 5.6.3) unless quoting the name of e.g. a programme where the years are part of the name (the 'National Health and Nutrition Programme 2010-15').

Abbreviations and use of capital letters

9. Repeated definitions of abbreviations. Abbreviations are to be defined the first time they are used in the main report and then used throughout the report. (The same applies to the Executive Summary which should be considered as a separate entity)
10. Excessive use of abbreviations.
11. Use of abbreviations in headings and tables. Use the full name if space allows.
12. Erratic use of initial capitals in names and headings. Table 4.1, Chapter 1.2, Fig. 3.4 all have initial capitals.
13. Incorrect spelling or use of 'Danida'. Danida (should never be DANIDA) is not a real abbreviation and is not an organisation but is used collectively for the development assistance activities in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Language and text

14. Inconsistent way of writing numbers: Write numbers 1-9 as words (10 and up with figures) unless it is a string of numbers, a percentage or an amount (see 'Style Guide' section 5).
15. % can (preferably) be used instead of per cent or percent, but use the same throughout the report
16. Erratic use of currencies. As a general rule use DKK xx,xxx or DKK x.x million as the evaluations are about Danish development assistance. If USD or other currencies are to be used, state the rate of exchange at the end of the list of abbreviations.
17. Use of 'we' and 'The Evaluation Team'. Use 'the Evaluation' or 'the evaluation' instead.
18. References should only be made once, however, as and where relevant.