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## **Appendix D The link between local initiatives, Local Evaluators and national evaluators**

### **Background**

The National Evaluation Framework for the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS) will link local and National Evaluation activity to a cohesive whole, by drawing together information from:

- local evaluations;
- targeted methodologies developed specifically for the SFCS evaluation – these are both quantitative and qualitative; and
- secondary data sources (for example, from the ABS and Australian Early Development Index).

In the context of the National Agenda for Early Childhood, the focus of SFCS Evaluation activity is to understand the impact of funded initiatives and improve the quantum and quality of Australian evidence on what works and why:

- in early intervention and prevention in early childhood;
- in strengthening families and communities to meet the needs of young children;
- for Communities for Children (CfC) Facilitating Partners to achieve better co-ordination, joined up and sustainable services for parents and young children; and
- to extend Invest to Grow (ItG) projects to broader or different communities.

CfC Facilitating Partners and ItG projects are responsible for evaluating their own initiatives within the National Evaluation Framework, and for implementing components of that Framework. Broadly, local evaluations should aim to verify and improve on the effectiveness of the local initiatives in achieving planned outcomes, and contribute to the data collection and research activities of the National SFCS Evaluation.

### **Role of Local Evaluators**

Local Evaluators are appointed by the CfC Facilitating Partners and ItG Project Administrators, and are therefore accountable to them. Local Evaluators have different roles, responsibilities and accountability in the different areas and projects, but it is recognised that there should be a common framework for them to work to.

The Local Evaluators have five basic roles to play (within the local evaluation budget for the CfC or ItG initiative):

- To advise the CfC Facilitating Partner or ItG Project Administrator on applying evidence in their initiative design and implementation;
- To provide consultancy to local initiatives in relation to evaluation, management information and data collection, storage and analysis;
- To undertake or supervise evaluation activity commissioned by the local initiative;
- To quality assure the data produced by the local initiatives; and

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- To coordinate local data collection on behalf of the National Evaluation.

The Local Evaluators responsibilities, on behalf of the National Evaluation, will include carrying out the following activities [or ensuring that they are carried out by others]:

- Baseline service mapping of services for under 5s at the beginning and end of the funding period
- Selecting a sample for the operational and strategic level snapshots (a questionnaire which will canvass how services work together).
- Collecting data for the Progress reports analysis.

A full list of Local Evaluators responsibilities is outlined in Table E1 below.

### **The link between Local and National Evaluators**

- The National Evaluators will, in consultation with Local Evaluators design a suite of instruments that will be used for the tasks listed above and for other tasks that the Local Evaluators may wish to undertake (e.g. short term outcome studies for service users).
- The National Evaluators will provide advice and support to Facilitating Partners and ItG Project Administrators on what is required to embed the National Evaluation Framework into ongoing project management and to tailor local data collection to fit the National Evaluation requirements.
- Each local CfC initiative and ItG project will nominate one person responsible for data collection and data quality (The Data Manager), who will be the main contact between the National Evaluators and local initiatives. This could either be a Local Evaluator or it may fall to a staff member of the local initiative.
- The role of the Data Manager is to ensure that:
  - data are submitted to the National Evaluation on time;
  - data are collected in the correct manner;
  - data are complete and ‘clean’ ;
  - and to facilitate qualitative research which will be done by or on behalf of the National Evaluators (e.g. identify relevant stakeholders, as well as advise on local sensitivities and any other matters relevant to the evaluation of the project in this location etc.)
- The Local and National Evaluators will work together to ensure that front line staff are trained and ready to administer the Service User Questionnaires. The National Evaluators will provide support and advise on evaluation tasks and provide information on how to administer the questionnaires. Local Evaluators will monitor the administration of the questionnaires.
- The Local and National Evaluators will work together on programmes of work relating to the Themed Case Studies for the National Evaluation. This may involve a range of tasks to be agreed mutually at the beginning of each themed or case study.

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- The Local Evaluator will work with the CfC Facilitating Partner and ItG projects, to help identify and validate services that demonstrate exceptionally promising practice, with the National Evaluators to assist in its documentation.

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**Table E1 Communities for Children – Division of Tasks Between National and Local Evaluations**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>National Evaluation</b>	<b>Local Evaluation contributions to National Evaluation<sup>1</sup></b>
Outcome Evaluation	Outcome indicators framework	- designs list of data items - compile data	
	Family Study	- designs questionnaire - conducts study	
	Service users before and after study	- designs questionnaires and modules	*- organises and monitors administration of questionnaires by CfC service providers
Process Evaluation	Comprehensive community profile		
	- Demographic profile	- designs list of data items - compiles data	
	- Baseline service mapping	- designs list of data items - designs template for reporting back	- collects data
	Service coordination study		
	- Strategic level snapshots	- designs questionnaires - designs template for reporting back - conducts additional interviews - conducts national analysis	- identifies sample and supplies list of suitable respondents with contact details
	- Operational level snapshots	- designs questionnaires - designs template for reporting back - conducts additional interviews - conducts national analysis	- identifies sample and supplies list of suitable respondents with contact details
	Partnership model study	- designs questionnaire - conducts telephone or face to face interviews or mail survey	- supplies list of suitable interview partners with contact details
Progress reports analysis	- designs templates for data collection and reporting - conducts national analysis	- collects data - send data to FaCS	
Cost Effectiveness Evaluation		- conducts evaluation	

<sup>1</sup>Tasks assigned to the Local Evaluation will be carried out either by the Local Evaluator or the Facilitating Partner.

\*Tasks marked with an asterisk are voluntary

**Table E2 Invest to Grow – Division of Tasks Between National and Local Evaluations**

<b>Task</b>	<b>National Evaluation</b>	<b>Local Evaluation contributions to National Evaluation<sup>1</sup></b>
Development of Evaluation Plan	-Review and comment on proposed evaluation methodology of ItG projects - Facilitate the sharing of methodology, instruments and findings	- Develop evaluation plan
Service Users Study- before and after	- designs questionnaires and modules	*- organises and monitors administration of questionnaires by ItG service providers
Service coordination study		
- Strategic level snapshots	- designs questionnaires - designs template for reporting back - conducts national analysis	*- identifies sample and supplies list of suitable respondents with contact details
- Operational level snapshots	- designs questionnaires - designs template for reporting back - conducts national analysis	*- identifies sample and supplies list of suitable respondents with contact details
Progress reports analysis	- designs templates for data collection and reporting - conducts national analysis	- collects data - ensure reliability and completeness of data - send data to FaCS
Promising Practice Profile	- develops list of criteria - assists in documenting cases - makes cases available for dissemination	-*Works with NE to identify and validate submissions
Themed studies	* - mutual agreement on division of tasks for each study	
Synthesis Report	- produces report	

\*Tasks marked with an asterisk are voluntary.

**Table E3 Local Answers – Contribution to the Overall SFCS Evaluation**

<b>Task</b>	<b>National Evaluation</b>	<b>Contribution to Overall SFCS Evaluation</b>
Service Users Study- before and after	- designs questionnaires and modules - conducts national analysis	*- where appropriate organises and monitors administration of questionnaires by LA service providers
Themed studies	* - mutual agreement on division of tasks for each study	
Promising practice profile	- develops list of criteria - assists in documenting cases - makes cases available for dissemination	*- works with LEs to help identify cases *- supply documentation for submissions
Synthesis report	- produces report	

\*Tasks marked with an asterisk are voluntary.

**Table E4 Cross Strategy Evaluation – Division of Tasks Between National and Local Evaluations**

<b>Task</b>	<b>National Evaluation</b>	<b>Local Evaluation contributions to National Evaluation<sup>1</sup></b>
Themed studies	* - mutual agreement on division of tasks for each study	
Promising practice profile	- develops list of criteria - assists in documenting cases - makes cases available for dissemination	*- works with FPs and projects to help identify and validate cases
Synthesis report	- produces report	
Data management		-supervises local data manager - facilitates contact between data manager and National Evaluator - sends raw data collected in surveys to National Evaluation for analysis
Evaluation support	- supports and advises on evaluation tasks	*- attends meetings
	- provide information on how to administer questionnaires	*- attends information sessions

<sup>1</sup>Tasks assigned to the Local Evaluation will be carried out either by the Local Evaluator or the Facilitating Partner.

\*Tasks marked with an asterisk are voluntary