

Checklist for Writing Evaluation Request for Proposals (RFPs)

When issuing an RFP for evaluation:

- Set a proposal deadline longer than two weeks to ensure the RFP achieves maximum exposure and circulation among proponents.
- Remember that good evaluators are often booked up two or more months in advance, so schedule the project start date accordingly.
- Set a project end date that coincides with your key decision-making cycles.
- Evaluations come in all shapes and sizes. Providing a project budget or range will allow proponents to propose the most cost-effective evaluation design possible.
- Avoid requesting a specific type of evaluation or detailed evaluation plan at the RFP stage. Allow proponents to apply their considerable knowledge and experience to designing an evaluation that best meets your needs. To develop an effective design the evaluator needs to consult with program staff and stakeholders to fully understand the evaluation purpose and program context. Instead, ask about what evaluation approach they might use, e.g. developmental, participatory, empowerment, etc.
- Provide sufficient background on the program and the reasons for an evaluation at this time. Don't leave proponents guessing as to your needs. Present your needs in terms of what questions you would like the evaluation to answer.
- Name your organization's main values and priorities, e.g., equity, reconciliation, so proponents can speak to how their work will be aligned to these.
- Be willing and available to answer proponents' questions about the RFP. Again, don't make it a guessing game.
- Link concrete deliverables to disbursement periods in the payment terms.
- Avoid forcing the evaluation of outcomes that may be too premature or beyond the scope of the program. Again, allow proponents to apply their considerable knowledge and experience to designing an evaluation that best meets your needs.