



**Regional School of Public Administration (Phase 1)**

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**RESPA/SC(2008)4/010**

### **ReSPA Proposed Training Evaluation Toolkit**

In its 6<sup>th</sup> session, held in Paris, January 2008, the Steering committee invited SC members to develop a proposal on training evaluation. In its 7<sup>th</sup> session, held in Maastricht, on 24 April 2008, a paper (RESPA/SC(2008)2/002)) on Training evaluation was presented by the Steering Committee Members representing Serbia and Montenegro. The discussion on the paper concluded on the need for ReSPA to develop a toolkit for ReSPA training evaluation. Subsequent the presentation, the Steering Committee invited (RESPA/SC(2008)M2) the ReSPA team at the OECD to develop further a ReSPA toolkit for Training evaluation based on the original work delivered by the Steering Committee Members. The current paper is the result of this process.

#### Rationale for Training Evaluation

While not a panacea, training might be an economic way to initiate and accompany changes in Governments and institutions. But training is costly. Typically, the average cost of a ReSPA man/day of training was 755 € in 2007. (RESPA/SC(2008)1/001). Training evaluation is one instrument to reassure sponsors of the effective use of their contribution to ReSPA. The budget discussions at the ReSPA Steering Committee from April until September 2008 (RESPA/(2008)M3, ReSPA(2008)LoD, ReSPA(2008)LoD2) indicate the commitment of the ReSPA signatories to optimize spending on ReSPA. On its side, the EC has earmarked 2.000.000 € per year, mainly for training delivery. The International agreement foresees that other donors might also contribute the training programme. The draft International Agreement foresees the annual validation of its accounts and the regular audit of its functioning so that the ReSPA management will be accountable to the board of Governors as well as to the ReSPA donors on the use of funds. Ultimately, the ReSPA management will have to demonstrate the usefulness and quality of the training delivered at ReSPA. The magnitude of the ReSPA budget for training justifies the development of a training evaluation system.

Having a functioning training evaluation system might also enable ReSPA to test methodologies, modules, trainers, etc, enabling ReSPA to innovate.

Training centers (providers) and training buyers (Human resources management units) have devised different evaluation methods and techniques.

#### What Can be Evaluated?

It is important to make explicit to all counterparts what are the objectives of the training evaluation. Training managers might wish to evaluate **the modules** (seminar, conference, etc), **training providers** (partner institutions), **trainees** and the **training environment** (facilities).

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## **Evaluating Modules and Training Providers**

The evaluation of the modules and training providers is the most commonly used type of evaluation. After the training has been delivered, the trainees are asked to fill-in an evaluation form and questioned on their appreciation of the module. Such evaluation might have different degrees of depth and complexity. Respondents will be questioned on the quality of substance (interest, depth), on the quality of the pedagogy, on the quality of the presentation, on the perceived competence/knowledge of the trainers, and more generally if the module has met the respondent's expectations.

When evaluating in substance the training, the evaluation will only be useful if the training objectives (short term, longer term) are explicit and clear to all parties. This is extremely important and has consequences on the sequencing. (See: 0 below). The more explicit the objectives are formulated, the better the evaluation can be carried out.

## **Evaluating Trainees**

Training centers might also evaluate trainees. There are situations where such evaluation is part of the module and is made openly. It takes the form of a test performed by the trainees at the end of the module. Such evaluation aims at measuring the effective transfer of knowledge or skills to the trainees to demonstrate that the learning objectives have been met. It takes place when the competence subject of training is a pre-requisite for taking a new position in the office. The format and content of such evaluation is agreed upon by the client institution and the training center. There are situations where the training managers, together with the trainers, evaluate a group of trainees after the training has been delivered. Such evaluation is not necessarily made public. Its purpose is to learn from previous modules and adjust the subsequent modules to the actual initial level and expectations of the target audience.

Such adjustments can only be made if and when the training objectives and the target audience have been defined.

## **Evaluating the Training Premises and Logistics**

The training organizer might wish to ask the trainees about their perception of the quality of the logistics. In particular when a training center is organizing a module outside its own premises, it might be useful to gather feed-back so that subsequent modules in the same facility will be improved or in order to decide to organize the modules with another sub-contractor. In the case of newly established training centers, feedback from the trainees on the premises and logistics might contribute to improve the service level to the clients.

Here again, it is important that contractors know beforehand they will be evaluated and against which criteria.

### Post-Participation/Satisfaction Surveys

In order to design and implement a training evaluation procedure that can provide decision-makers with the information they need to improve service quality, **evaluation should be designed before the modules are developed**. In the case of standard (repetitive) modules, the evaluation is equally standardized. In case of tailor-made modules, the evaluation criteria, as well as the evaluation system will also be tailored to the module in question.

The most commonly used method of training evaluation takes the form of questioning trainees and trainers immediately after the module has been delivered. Typically, as indicated by the Steering Committee members in the paper presented in Maastricht, most of the post-training evaluation is based on surveys circulated to trainees and trainers shortly after the training, usually at the end of the training.

### **Open and Close Questions**

Training evaluation questionnaires can be composed of two types of questions: Closed or open questions. Closed questions (Y/N, marking from 1 to 10, etc) have the advantage of facilitating the processing by the training centre of the data delivered by the trainees and trainers. Open questions will provide the training centre with richer (qualitative) information, but will require more work from the training managers to process the information. Processing qualitative responses cannot be automated, and is thus resource intensive. It is the reason why training centers doing bulk (mass) training usually use close evaluation questions. Training centers delivering tailor-made courses tend to use open questions, gathering qualitative information which allows them to develop new modules which are better adjusted to the needs and expectations of their clients. In most cases, one can find a mix of closed and open questions.

### **Immediate or Differed Evaluation**

Training evaluation is most often performed immediately after the module has finished. The advantage of immediate evaluation is that it enables both trainers and trainees to report on recent perceptions of the module. The training center will compile and consolidate information on the quality of the module, on the quality of trainers, on the quality of the interaction, the comfort of the training premises, the quality of interpretation/translation, food, etc. Such information will be useful to adjust and improve the level of service and meet the level of expectation of the trainees. Typically such information is used by training managers to adjust the modules, feed-back to the trainers on their perceived performance during the module, etc.

The drawback of immediate evaluation is that seasoned trainers know how to influence the evaluation, which might distract both trainers and trainees from the general objective of training. In the long run, the functioning of the training centre is made a routine, and the level of quality of service has reached the expected level of quality. In such cases, only marginal improvement to its functioning can be expected. In such situation, the actual usefulness of immediate evaluation of the client's satisfaction can become marginal.

The advantage of differed evaluation is that it could eventually measure the changes in organizations, i.e. the impact of training on the actual functioning of units/ministries. However, it is to be noted that the probable, direct and measurable effect of training abroad (such as at ReSPA) on internal organization of government will, in most cases, be limited. Practice indicates that governments can mobilize changes using training (among other tools). But changes will only take effect when critical masses of civil servants working in the same environment have been trained. We know that ReSPA is not, and will not in a foreseeable future, be equipped to deliver bulk training to a homogeneous group of civil servants from the same institution at the same time.

The Drawback of differed evaluation is that it is difficult to associate with certainty a given change/improvement in an administrative unit to the participation of a (group of) civil servant(s) to a particular training module which was delivered some months/years before. Other aspects, such as a new regulation, a reorganization, etc, can equally explain the changes in functioning or behavior. Furthermore, ReSPA being an international/regional training centre, it will be difficult to survey systematically the effects of change in Governments and administrative units across the region. Another drawback of differed evaluation is that it is more costly, especially if evaluators need to travel internationally to perform such differed evaluation.

However, it would be useful for a training centre to have regular feedback on the effect of training in the client administrations.

So far, the paper has explored the evaluation done at the training center by the training management team and directly addressed to the trainees and trainers. The same tools (questionnaires with open and/close questions) can also be used indirectly:

### **Direct or Indirect Evaluation**

Evaluation forms can be addressed directly to the trainees. The training managers can also address the evaluation form to the trainee's supervisor or colleagues. In such case, we speak of indirect evaluation.

Indirect evaluation will provide the training centre with a richer array of information on the actual impact of the training: the colleagues and/or supervisors might have noticed (or not) a change in behavior of the trained colleague, might have noticed the implementation of new skills, of more and new knowledge applied, etc. However, there might be numerous reasons why the expected changes do not happen: the trainee was not present at all sessions, the new knowledge cannot be implemented in the unit/service/ministry because the preconditions are not met. It can also be because the quality of training was not to the expected level.

In the case of ReSPA, using indirect training evaluation methods can also have additional benefits such as generating additional interest for the module, which might lead to increased participation and in turn, to creating a critical mass of trained civil servants in the unit/ministry.

It is, however, often difficult for a training center to access the immediate supervisor or colleagues of the trainees. In order to address this issue, it might be useful for ReSPA to ask the name and coordinates of the immediate supervisor in the registration form. Effective indirect evaluation is based on trust between the respondent, the trainee and the evaluator. It is therefore recommended that providing the coordinates of the supervisor (for indirect/differed evaluation purpose) is made optional.

A specific case of indirect evaluation can be done through surveys performed ex-post by the Steering Committee Members or their delegates. SCM might find it useful to survey regularly the degree of satisfaction of the former trainees, of their supervisors and colleagues. In performing such surveys, the SCM will use the same methods described earlier. SCM might also want to complement their evaluation toolkit by interviewing former trainees and/or their supervisors and colleagues. In case of interviews, SCM or their delegates might consider the existing types of interviews.

## **Unstructured, Semi-Structured or Structured Interviews**

Interviews can either be unstructured, semi-structured or structured.

### **Unstructured Interviews**

In an unstructured interview the interviewee is not simply reporting on facts or experiences. The interviewees are seen as active subjects, and have the freedom to tell their stories in their own way. If not adequately trained, the interviewer might lose control over the discussion and might not gather the information needed at the end. Such methods are used by experienced interviewers when consulting senior counterparts. The method has some overlap with the semi-structured interview, in that the interviewer may have a very simple schedule, but in the unstructured interviews that may not be strictly followed.

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

In that case, interviewing is more flexible than with the standardised methods such as the structured interview (see 0 below). While the interviewer will have some established general topics for investigation, this method allows for the exploration of emergent themes and ideas rather than relying only on concepts and questions defined in advance of the interview.

### **Structured Interviews**

The interviewer would usually use a standardised interview schedule with set questions which will be asked of all respondents. The questions tend to be asked in a similar order and format to make a form of comparison between answers possible.

In interviews, there is often possible to pursue and probe emerging ideas for future training, new combination of training subjects, training methods and didactic approaches. A trained interviewer will follow-up on those openings and might report back not only on the perception and effectiveness of past modules, but also with openings for and indications of emerging needs for further training.

#### Additional Considerations for Designing a Training Evaluation System for ReSPA.

- While ReSPA should undoubtedly design and implement its training evaluation/quality management system, it should be recalled here that evaluating training is also costly and time-consuming. The ReSPA training evaluation toolkit should be sized to meet its purpose, but should not become an unaffordable burden on trainers, trainees and partner institutions alike.
- It might be advisable to build-up a training evaluation system in stages, starting in the first year with a participant's satisfaction survey, and gradually building-up a quality management system able to provide the ReSPA management and board with systemic feed-back on the impact of training and providing ReSPA management with essential information enabling it to develop and deliver training packages that meet the needs of the Governments of the Region.
- When deciding on the size and scope of the training evaluation toolkit, it is to remember that not all modules can be evaluated the same way. Typically, the evaluation techniques used to evaluate satisfaction and impact of distance learning modules, e-learning schemes, group work, simulations, mobility and lectures are different. Conversely, not all target audiences are evaluated the same way. Equally, not all trainers are evaluated the same way: professional trainers will be expected to deliver quality on both content and presentation skill and format, while practitioners might be weaker on presentation and will be expected to be stronger on substance.
- When designing a training evaluation form, the ReSPA training management team might wish adjusting the evaluation tool to the objective of the evaluation: probing a new partner institution, testing a new group of trainers, testing the adequacy of a new methodology to an existing group.
- Training evaluation tools and methods must be decided before the training is actually contracted. Doing so will also force the training managers to specify and validate coherence between the training objectives, the target audience, the training methodology, etc.
- In case of immediate evaluation, forms should be made anonymous to protect trainees (respondent) and to make possible candid report on the training.

Recommendation

Based on the experience of delivering limited amount of training in ReSPA phase 1 but also learning from good practices of established EU Civil Service training centers, the following is recommended to the ReSPA Steering Committee for implementation in ReSPA phase 2:

**Agree a Training Evaluation Toolkit**

The ReSPA team at the OECD recommends agreeing a training evaluation toolkit for ReSPA phase 2. This toolkit should allow for the immediate evaluation of the modules by trainees. It is understood that most training delivered in the coming years will be in-class training, using various traditional and more modern training methods. (This excludes, at this stage, the evaluation of distance and e-learning, and mobility schemes). At a later stage, ReSPA might wish to develop indirect and differed evaluation of the effect of its modules. In the short run, the ReSPA evaluation toolkit should be composed of the following two elements:

**1. End of Module Questionnaire for Trainees**

The objectives of this level of evaluation will be to get immediate trainees feedback on the modules, allowing the ReSPA management to adjust training supply to needs. It will also aim at adjusting the quality of service to the expectations of the trainees. The end of module questionnaires should be used as of 2009.

Annex 1 (Evaluation Form)

**2. Differed Evaluation Tool (6 months to 1 year after the module)**

The objectives of this level of evaluation are to estimate the possible impact of the ReSPA training on the administrative capacity. There is no obvious evidence that the effect of training can be isolated from other change factors. It is, however, recommended to engage into this level of evaluation, also to maintain contact with supervisors who are the decision-making authority for sending staff to ReSPA events. It is recommended that such differed evaluation takes the form of face-to-face interview with the trainee's supervisor. Such evaluation tools could be implemented as of 2010 onward.

Annex 2 (interview plan)

ANNEX 1

**PROPOSED**  
**Evaluation Form**  
**Seminar/conference on [Theme/Title]**  
**[Location], [Date]**  
**(to be adjusted by module)**

**PART A: CONTENTS**

Please give your opinion on the presentations you have heard, according to the following scale:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Scale →	5	4	3	2	1

From the [Speaker 1]

5	4	3	2	1
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From the [Speaker 2]

5	4	3	2	1
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Etc...

From the [Speaker N]

5	4	3	2	1
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Panel Discussions

5	4	3	2	1
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**PART B: METHODOLOGY**

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Scale →	5	4	3	2	1

Adequacy of the training methods used

5	4	3	2	1
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**PART C: GENERAL EVALUATION**

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Scale →	5	4	3	2	1

Questions to Speakers and Plenary Discussions

5	4	3	2	1
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The contribution of the [EIPA/EC/ReSPA/etc] facilitator

5	4	3	2	1
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Overall evaluation of the seminar

5	4	3	2	1
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**PART C: ORGANISATION**

- How do you estimate the organisation of the seminar?

5	4	3	2	1
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- Was the time allowed for discussions and questions enough?

Too much time ☐ Enough ☐ Not quite enough ☐ Not enough ☐ No answer ☐

**PART D: RELEVANCE**

How relevant was the seminar to your work?

5	4	3	2	1
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**Were there additional questions, important for your work and not covered by the seminar, that you would like to have seen included?**

**What part of the module did you valued most?**

**What part did you appreciate least?**

**Are there additional comments or recommendations you wish to make?**

## ANNEX 2

### Closed Interview Plan

While every interview requires a somewhat different structure, certain principles and techniques are applicable to all. Each interviewing plan should have the following three parts: (1) the opening; (2) the body; (3) the closing.

1. **The opening** should contribute creating a positive/constructive atmosphere. Most of the opening should be the confirmation of what the interviewee has read in the letter/email asking for the meeting. The opening should indicate the objectives of the interview (ReSPA training evaluation) and make it clear what topic will be addressed (the objective is not to evaluate the trainee, but the effect of the training). The interviewer should also provide some information to motivate the respondent to answer the questions. Finally, the opening should indicate the expected length of the interview.
2. **The body** of the interview plan always lists the topics to be covered and potential questions. Interviewers often rely on a moderately scheduled interview that contains major questions and possible probing questions under each. The schedule should allow some freedom to probe into answers and adapt to the situation.
3. **The closing** should maintain the tone set throughout the interview and should be brief but not abrupt. Interviewers should summarize the main issues discussed during the interview, discuss the next course of action to be taken, and thank the respondent for his or her time. A letter/email should be sent ex-post by the Steering Committee Member to the interviewee thanking for the contribution.

The following template can be used as a guideline to save you some time in preparing your own interview schedule.

Opening**Introduce interviewer.**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the ReSPA [Steering Committee member/liaison officer] in the Government.

**Present purpose of the meeting**

Your collaborator, Mr/Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ has participated at the ReSPA training [\_\_\_\_\_] REF [\_\_\_\_\_] TOPIC [\_\_\_\_\_] on [DATES].

The ReSPA Steering Committee has decided (ReSPA/SC2008(M4) to evaluate the ReSPA module in different ways. Beyond evaluation forms, one way of training evaluation consist of interviewing the trainee's supervisor some months after the training is finished.

**Present Motivation**

We hope to use this information to improve the quality of the ReSPA training in the future.

**Draw indicative Time Line**

The interview should take about XX minutes.

Transition

Let me begin by briefly presenting ReSPA: Thessaloniki agenda, International agreement, and Respective role of OECD in 2007-2009, and of EIPA since then. Presentation of the [YEAR] programme of Work.

Body

- How did you learn about ReSPA in general and about the module under discussion in particular?
- How did you select Mr/Mrs [NAME] for this module?
- Was there any other applicant for the module?
- What were the limiting factors for not sending other colleagues to the module?
- If Mr/Mrs [NAME] reported to you after the module, what were the main findings of the report?
- Do you think Mr/Mrs [NAME] could implement what has been learned in the daily work?
  - A. If yes, can you illustrate?
  - B. If not, why?
- Would you recommend this module to other colleagues in Government?
  - A. If yes, from which Ministry/Department/unit?
  - B. If not, why?

- What could be improved in that module to make it more useful?
- Is there a theme for training that you would like to see addressed by ReSPA?
- Is there a structural issue that prevents you sending staff on ReSPA training? (For instance, costs, languages, etc).

### Closing

#### Summarize

You think that the participation of Mr/mrs [Name] to the module [Ref] has been Not Useful/ useful / very useful. The main lesson learned from his/her participation are as follows

- 
- 
- 

You suggested the following amendments to the module

- 
- 
- 

And identified the following obstacle for further participation in ReSPA modules:

- 
- 
- 

#### Maintain Contact

I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for me to know so that I can transmit to the ReSPA management in view of next year's training programme? Thank Interviewee for time and substantive contribution.

