CHAPTER 6

REPORTING

VI. REPORTING

6.1. How to make use of the results of data analysis?

After completing the qualitative and quantitative data analysis stage, you have a lot of information, which should be used properly and wisely. These data should be translated into knowledge that will allow you to make accurate decisions regarding project improvement (e.g. how to adapt it better to the needs of its recipients, how to achieve similar effects using smaller resources, how to obtain greater impact and sustainability of the results).

Diagram 3. **Relation of the findings (result of data analysis) to their interpretation, conclusions and recommendation**

Results
- Results of data analysis
- Information from different sources, collected and analysed with various methods

Interpretation
- Referring evaluation results to wider knowledge pertaining to selected subject

Conclusion
- General and concise summary of the research process

Recommendation
- Recommendations based on the result
- They are used to solve identified problem and to improve subject of evaluation

Based on the **findings** of conducted analyses, you can draw **conclusions** that relate to phenomena or problems **identified** during the evaluation. These conclusions relate primarily to the issues described in the **evaluation questions** but may also include issues that were **additionally diagnosed** during the research.

In the evaluation report, you should present not only the findings of the evaluation research, but also their **interpretation** (i.e. reference to a broader knowledge of the studied issue), as well as the **conclusions** derived from the obtained data and the accompanying **recommendations**. The above diagram presents the relationships between these elements. To get through this process, you can use the questions that accompany the subsequent stages (in the diagram above they are marked in *italics*).

Below you can find an example of the process of formulating conclusions and recommendations regarding a training project directed to NEETs (the findings refer to the quantitative part of the research).

TOOL 8. EXAMPLE OF THE RELATION BETWEEN THE EVALUATION'S FINDINGS, THEIR INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS	• Vocational training responded to the needs of 71% of its participants • Soft skills training was useful to 63% of its recipients. • 85% of those unemployed for 6 to 12 months want to take part in vocational training and 64% in soft skills training. • 26% of those unemployed for 6 to 12 months and 9% of the long-term unemployed (i.e. from 3 to 5 years) expressed their willingness to participate in the abovementioned training.
INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	• The study of the target group's needs made it possible to adapt the training offer to their expectations. • A longer period of unemployment reduces the motivation of project recipients to participate in activation training. This is the result of a lack of faith in the possibility of finding a job that increases over time.
CONCLUSIONS	• Both forms of training support, aimed at vocational activation of the unemployed, were useful and adequate to the needs of the majority of recipients. • People who were unemployed for a shorter time were more interested in participating in activation training than the long-term unemployed.
RECOMMENDATIONS	• Increasing the relevance of the forms of support offered in the project to the needs of the long-term unemployed recipients, for example, through in-depth study of the group's expectations, offering them professional counselling, internships and individual support of a job trainer, as well as immediate contact with people who found employment after a longer period of time. • Increasing the level of usefulness of conducted training thanks to changes in its programs, duration and methods of conduct with special regard to ... (specific modifications should be proposed in those areas, for example, indicated by the respondents).

Remember to take into account various elements related to evaluation research, e.g. **used methods** (qualitative, quantitative), **sample selection** methods and degree of **responsiveness** (level of return of questionnaires), which may lead to some **limitations** when formulating conclusions.

RULES FOR FORMULATING THE CONCLUSIONS:

- Treat your conclusions **critically**, look at them **from a distance**, constantly seeking alternative explanations for the phenomena found. It is always worth consulting your conclusions with another, preferably more experienced person ("a critical friend") who – thanks to not being involved in the evaluation – will look at them with a "fresh eye".
- Make sure that you correctly **interpret** the statements given by the research participants, e.g. by **confronting the conclusions** with them. If you are **not completely sure** about a conclusion, soften it by using the terms "**probably**", "**possibly**", "**maybe**".
- **Do not generalise** the conclusions for the whole population (i.e. people who did not participate in the research) if you used qualitative methods or the sample you studied was not randomly chosen.
- Learn how to avoid mistakes in drawing conclusions from our online course

HOW TO FORMULATE THE RECOMMENDATIONS?

- Group them **thematically** (e.g. project management, cooperation with partners, implemented activities, project effects).
- Relate them to both **strengths** and **weaknesses** of the subject of evaluation. Don't focus only on the negatives – also show those areas that work well and don't need any changes. If you concentrate solely on positives, it will undermine the **credibility** of the evaluation.
- Make sure that recommendations are **detailed**, **precise** and **realistic** (possible to implement), so that they are also **practical**, **accurate** and **useful**.
- Assign to each recommendation: a **recipient** (with whom it will be agreed in advance), a **deadline**, and a **degree of importance**, as this increases the chances of them being implemented.

Conclusions and recommendations can be presented in a **concise table** as a summary of the report, or as an independent "final product" of the evaluation. The following is an example of a recommendation table regarding the evaluation of a training project (Tool 9A):

Problem area: *Training organization*	
Problem/phenomenon	Classes are conducted until 8 p.m.
Cause	The organisers want to conduct the training in one day to save money on room rental.
Effect	Training participants are tired at the end of the training; at such late hours they are unable to absorb knowledge.
Importance	**KEY**
Addressee of the recommendation	Training organiser *(indicate the entity)*
Recommendation	Start and end classes earlier (at 6 p.m. at the latest) or divide them into two days.
Benefits	Better acquisition of knowledge by participants, as well as greater satisfaction with participation in training.
Deadline	Immediate (*if possible, provide a specific date)*

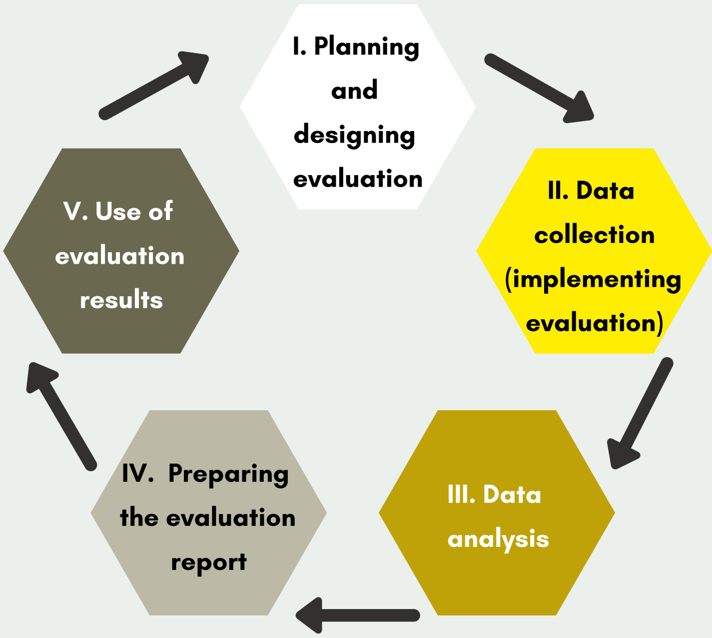
In the simplified version, the table of conclusions and recommendations may look like this (Tool 9B):

Problem	Conclusion	Recommendation	Expected outcome or implementation	Addressee of the recommendation	Deadline

6.2. What are the features of a good report?

The report is the **finalisation** of the evaluation process, because it presents its concept, course of research and its findings, as well as conclusions and recommendations that are based on them.

Diagram 4. **Evaluation process**



During the evaluation process, v**arious types of reports** may be written, e.g.:

Table 8. Types of reports

Inception report - initial (methodological) - describes in detail the concept of evaluation (passed before the start of the research)	**Final -** presents the concept of evaluation, its findings as well as conclusions and recommendations (passed after the end of the research and analysis of its findings)
Partial - covers some parts of ongoing evaluation (e.g. project tasks that have already been completed)	**Comprehensive** - covers the full scope of ongoing evaluation
Periodic - developed as part of ongoing evaluation (e.g. every 3-6 months)	**Annual, semi-annual, quarterly** - prepared as part of the ongoing evaluation (the report from this evaluation does not have to cover a given period of time, e.g. subsequent project tasks)
In the draft version - the first version of the report is forwarded to stakeholders for comments and corrections	**In the final version -** the next corrected version is usually the final one

The final report can be prepared in **various forms**, which – like the scope of content presented in them – should be **tailored to the needs** of individual groups of recipients (evaluation stakeholders). Examples of ways to **present and promote** evaluation findings include:

- The **final report** in an **electronic** version (less often in a paper version) distributed to stakeholders and / or posted on the **Internet** (e.g. on the project website or the entity ordering the evaluation website),
- **Summaries** of reports in the form of **information folders / brochures** containing key conclusions and recommendations,
- A **multimedia presentation** during conferences and meetings, e.g. with stakeholders, partners,
- An **infographic** posted on the project website, on social media, and sent to local media,
- **Printed posters** presented at various events, e.g. conferences, picnics,
- **Films** (video presentations) addressed to large audiences (including a dispersed audience), and posted on the Internet,
- **Follow-up** – presentation on the effects of implementing the recommendation.

The report in the version of the extended **text document** may have the following structure:

- **Title page** – name of the contracting institution, name of the institution conducting the evaluation (if the evaluation was external), date of preparation, authors, title (e.g. Ex-post evaluation of project X),
- **(Executive) summary** – main elements of the evaluation concept, key findings, conclusions and recommendations (necessary for extensive reports),
- **Table of contents** – enabling automatic access to a given page of the report,
- **List of abbreviations** (and possible definitions of specialised terms),
- **Introduction** – information on the commissioning institution, type and cut-off date of the evaluation, name of the evaluated project, sources of its financing, and organisation that has implemented it,
- **Subject and scope of the evaluation** – a brief description of the evaluated project and its parts which were included in the evaluation,
- **Goals of the evaluation** – explanation of what the evaluation was conducted for, what was expected of it,
- **Evaluation criteria and questions** – an indication of how the value of the subject of the evaluation was estimated / what was supposed to be learnt through the evaluation,
- **Methodological issues** – description of sources of information and research methods used, sample selection methods, course of the research, levels of responsiveness (what percentage of respondents participated in the survey).It is also worth describing the problems encountered during the implementation of the research, as well as the ways and effects of dealing with them,
- **Description of evaluation findings** – a description of the qualitative and quantitative findings collected during the research, along with their interpretation, according to the adopted method of presentation (e.g. in accordance with evaluation criteria / questions). Findings from different sources and obtained with different methods should be confronted (by triangulation). Every chapter can present partial summaries,
- **Conclusions and recommendations** – a concise but substantive answer to evaluation questions. The conclusions must be based on the findings of the study and the recommendations should be closely related to them,
- **Attachments / annexes (optional)** – e.g. research tools used, tabular summaries, case studies, etc.

It is worth remembering that regardless of what form of report you choose, both in the case of external and internal evaluation, any changes to the content of this document require the c**onsent of the evaluator.**

If you want to learn more about the table of comments to the evaluation report, click **HERE**.

A **good evaluation report** should meet the following conditions:

- be **adequate** to the terms of the contract and the needs of the recipients, be written in a language they **understand**,
- contain a list of **abbreviations** used (and possible definitions of **key terms** when, for example, a report is to be presented to a wider audience that may not know them),
- have a **clear** and **legible** structure,
- have a **concise** form, and at the same time **comprehensively** answer evaluation questions (without "waffling"),
- be based on **credible** and **reliable** findings that have been properly analysed,
- present not only the obtained **findings,** but also its **interpretation**, as well as indicate the relationship between the data and the conclusions,
- contain **justified conclusions** and **useful recommendations** related to them,
- contain **graphic elements** (tables, charts, diagrams) and **quotes** from respondents' statements that make the reception of the report content more attractive.

The table at the following page (Toold 10) will help you in verifying **the quality** of the evaluation report. It contains detailed criteria for its assessment. You can choose its scale (numeric or verbal) and assess your own or a commissioned report. For example, assessment in a numerical 5-point scale, where 1 is the lowest, in 5 the highest value, or a verbal scale such as "excellent", "very good", "good", "sufficient", "insufficient".

6.3. How to deliver what is needed for the recipients of your evaluation

The possibility of **using evaluation findings** depends on **its type**, i.e. the moment / life cycle of the project in which the evaluation is carried out.

The most chances for introducing changes are provided by **ex-ante evaluation**, carried out at a time when the evaluated undertaking / project has not yet started.

Tool 10. REPORT QUALITY ASSESSMENT TABLE

Choose your own scale - numeric or verbal:

REPORT QUALITY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Due to the following criteria, the report is:
1. Appropriate scope and meeting information needs: • Does the report comply with contract requirements? (*if applicable*) • Does the report provide comprehensive answers to research questions? • Did the report describe methodological issues in detail? • Does the report contain conclusions and recommendations?	
2. Clarity, intelligibility: is the language of the report adapted to its recipients?	
3. Methodological adequacy: • Is the test methodology appropriate? • Did the methods used allow you to gather information enabling answers to eval. questions?	
4. Data reliability: • Were data collected in an appropriate manner? • Was the reliability of data collection guaranteed?	
5. Proper data analysis: • Was the qualitative data analysis carried out properly? • Was the quantitative data analysis carried out properly? • Were the findings correctly interpreted? • Do the obtained findings allow research questions to be answered?	
6. Reliable and objective conclusions: • Does the report contain logical and reasonable conclusions resulting from data analysis? • Are the applications impartial and free from the influence of the parties involved/stakeholders?	
7. Useful recommendations: • Are the recommendations applicable, reasonable and detailed? • Do the recommendations include the addressee and implementation date? • Were the recommendations agreed with the addressees?	
8. Quality and size of attachments: • Are all necessary supplementary information included in the annexes? • Do the attachments contain information that should be included in the main part of the report?	
9. Other: _	
Given the specific constraints of the evaluation (i.e. _) the **report from the evaluation is assessed as**:	

IIn the case of **mid-term evaluation,** the opportunities for using recommendations to introduce specific changes are limited as the project is in progress and individual actions are gradually implemented. Nevertheless, some of its elements may still be modified, e.g. in order to better adapt the ongoing activities to the needs of their beneficiaries, to ensure that the planned indicators are achieved at the assumed level, or to adapt them to the changed project implementation conditions.

The findings of **ex-post evaluation** can only help you in planning the next (same or similar) projects because the evaluated project has already been completed.

When evaluation findings are related to organisational or management issues, you can use them for current work.

The **dissemination of evaluation findings** (most often in the form of conclusions and recommendations) among its stakeholders is a very important stage, as it contributes to a better **understanding** of the need for change, to **strengthening the cooperation, commitment and motivation** to act, as well as to obtaining **support** in this process.

Sharing the findings of the evaluation with other people / entities may show your ability to self-reflect on the **value and quality** of your activities. It is a sign of your readiness to engage in **discussion** on various aspects of the subject of the evaluation, as well as the ability to assess its **strengths and weaknesses** and the desire to **develop and improve** in cooperation with other stakeholders.

Tool 11. DISSEMINATION OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

RESULTS RECIPIENTS To whom do you address the information?	**Our organisation**	**Stakeholder/ Partner**	**Other recipients e.g. local community**
INFORMATION FORM In what form should it be presented?	*Text document*	*Multimedia presentation*	*Infographics*
PURPOSE Why do you want to inform the recipients?	*Introducing changes to improve the project*	*Improvement of cooperation in the implementation of the project*	*Increasing public support for the project*
STATEMENT/ CONTENT What do you want to communicate? What do you want to inform the recipients about?	*Difficulties encountered and opportunities for improvement, introducing necessary changes to the next edition of the project*	*The course of the project implementation process, encountered difficulties, opportunities for improvement*	*Degree of achievement of the planned results, adaptation of the project to the needs of recipients, its usefulness*
DEADLINE When should you inform the recipients?	*On a regular basis and as a project summary*	*Periodically and at the end of the project*	*At the end of the project*