

62 (Good) Reasons for Avoiding Evaluation in the United Nations System

Courtesy of the United Nations and equally applicable to EPA's evaluation and performance measurement activities.

As part of our untiring efforts to make life easier for overworked project directors, here are some of the more original responses to evaluation propositions, collected by a colleague in another organ of the United Nations System. When a single reason is not enough, one can always give two or three, for example, "our project is different and the costs are too high". However, one must be careful that the two reasons given do not contradict each other, for example, "we are constantly evaluating" and "it's impossible".

1. Our project is different.
2. It would cost too much.
3. We don't have the time.
4. The project/activity is too limited.
5. It doesn't figure in the workplan.
6. We've never done it before.
7. The government/organization wouldn't like it.
8. Give me the funds.
9. It's not my responsibility.
10. An evaluation isn't necessary.
11. It's too theoretical an exercise.
12. Let's be realistic.
13. It's none of our business.
14. It works, so why change it?
15. We're not ready for it yet.
16. It's not included in the budget.
17. There's a new resident representative/government representative/counterpart.
18. The resident representative/counterpart has left.
19. The director/counterpart hasn't been appointed yet.
20. The counterpart's personnel are still in training/on fellowship.
21. We can well do without it.
22. We've never done this before.
23. There must be some ulterior motive.
24. Is somebody trying to teach me my job?
25. It might work in any other organization (region / country / technical domain) but it will never work here.
26. I'm not convinced that it would be useful.
27. "It's a trap!".
28. Think of all the hassle that it would cause.
29. It's impossible to do it with the necessary objectivity.
30. Change upsets things too much.
31. We've always worked like this.

32. We've done what we said we'd do.
33. We've done what was in the project document.
34. We've already been evaluated.
35. We don't have any problems.
36. There's been a government reshuffle.
37. Financial havoc has delayed our schedule.
38. Our accounts have just been checked.
39. The resident representative says that it's one of his best projects.
40. It's a pilot project.
41. It's a demonstration project.
42. It's an experimental project.
43. The project is too new.
44. The project is almost over.
45. The construction isn't completed.
46. The equipment hasn't arrived yet.
47. The equipment hasn't been installed yet.
48. The institutional framework hasn't been worked out yet.
49. We can't find the original workplan.
50. The programme specialist in charge at the beginning of the project was somebody else.
51. The government was happy with the project.
52. The government hasn't given its contribution yet.
53. The project isn't ready for evaluation yet.
54. We don't have all the data.
55. The project document is too vague.
56. It's a national holiday.
57. It's the rainy season.
58. Let the Inspection Unit take care of it.
59. Outsiders won't understand the complexities.
60. We are constantly evaluating ourselves.
61. I have to take my annual leave.
62. Another donor agency might want to evaluate us at the same time.