MUSIQUE STANDARDS
# FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

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Contents

Introduction and guidelines

Since its creation, enhancement has always been a cornerstone of MusiQuE's philosophy both in relation to higher music education institutions it serviced throughout the years, and to its own internal quality culture. As such, seeking a continuous improvement of the services and activities it conducts, MusiQuE further developed its project evaluation criteria into a full set of Standards for Project Evaluation.

The aim of these Standards is twofold: on the one hand, they constitute a tool that can be used by implementing organisations and consortia in the self-assessment process they want to conduct for specific projects, either during the implementation phase or upon the projects' completion. And, on the other hand, they are an essential instrument in the external evaluators' toolkit designed to assist them throughout the entire external assessment process – from analysis of self-evaluation documentation to the production of the external review report.

Regardless of the type of assessment conducted, either internal or external, the questions accompanying each standard should be interpreted as guidelines and addressed only to the extent that they are fit for purpose in the specific context in which the implementing organisation / consortium operates, and if they are relevant for and applicable to the project that is being assessed.

While the project assessment framework included herein draws on the [MusiQuE Standards for Institutional Review](#), it has the project life cycle stages[1] at its core and it is structured accordingly. It is therefore meant to fit with a broad spectrum of projects and domains of intervention.
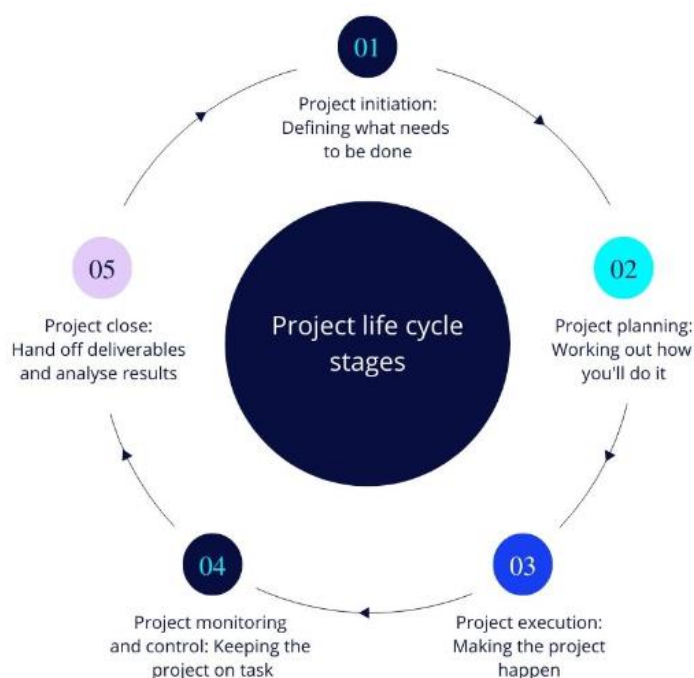
The document is structured in four distinct chapters.

- The first chapter looks into the overall context of the project, its objectives, its connections with other instruments of intervention in the targeted area, the effectiveness of the decision-making processes that frame the implementation of the project, and the overall quality culture of the implementing organisation / consortium and how it is mirrored at project level.

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[1] Photo source: [Australian Institute for Project Management](#), all rights reserved.

- The second chapter focuses on process evaluation and, as such, it looks into project planning and execution, analysing whether project objectives and activities are fit for purpose, target groups are within reach, and there are sufficient and adequate means to carry out the project as intended.
- The third chapter follows the project's progression and looks into monitoring tools and how effective they are in keeping the project on track.
- The fourth chapter addresses the project's outcomes and impact: it analyses if the intended results have been achieved and are of the desired quality, and it investigates to what extent the project produced the desired long-term change.

It is worth noting that the criteria herein consider as outcomes the immediate measurable changes, and the tangible results or deliverables that can be assessed upon project completion. The evaluation of outcome therefore measures to what extent and how well the project's objectives have been met and if the desired short-term changes have been achieved. Impact evaluation on the other hand, looks at lasting effects and whether the long-term desired change has been produced. Consequently, conclusions on the sustainability of the project may also be drawn, and it may be determined how feasible it is to continue the project, in part or in full, in the same or in a different setting, beyond the financing period. Impact evaluation can therefore be performed only after a relevant amount of time since the project's completion has passed.

Further in terms of definitions of concepts, we advise the reader to consider as internal project stakeholders all project staff, namely permanent employees involved in the implementation of the project as well as external collaborators contracted to conduct or coordinate specific work packages. Project beneficiaries, target groups, as well as other organisations conducting similar projects in the area of intervention may be assimilated to external stakeholders.

1. Context, governance and quality culture

1.1. Project objectives
The project's objectives are clearly stated and relevant for the domain of intervention, and they reflect the mission and vision of the organisation or consortium implementing the project.

Guiding questions:
- What is the rationale for the project?
- What are the project objectives and how have these been identified and formulated?
- How do the project objectives connect with the organisational mission and vision, or with the mission and vision of the consortium?
- In what way is the project innovative and / or complementary to other existent initiatives? How does the project contribute to further advancement in the area of intervention?
- In the case of a consortium, what contribution does each partner bring in terms of expertise?
- How does the project reflect on and responds to broader cultural / societal needs?

1.2. Decision-making processes and internal communication
The decision-making processes at project level are effective, clear, and transparent. Effective communication mechanisms are in place at project level to ensure that the information exchanged between internal stakeholders (i.e. permanent project staff and contracted external collaborators) is clear, consistent, regular and accurate. Decision making processes and internal communication flows at project level are well integrated in the overall governance at organisational / consortium level.

Guiding questions:
- What is the organizational structure of the implementing organisation / consortium? What are the governing bodies and how are responsibilities defined at each decision-making level?
- How is the decision-making process organized at project level and how is it integrated at organisational / consortium level? Are project responsibilities and division of tasks clearly defined? In case of a consortium, how well balanced is the relationship and involvement between partners?
- What are the internal communication systems in place at project and organisational level and how does the implementing organisation / consortium ensure that they are well aligned and work effectively?
- What evidence exists to demonstrate that the decision-making processes and communication flows at project level are effective?
- What mechanisms are in place for conflict resolution and how does the organisation / consortium ensure that they work effectively?

1.3 Internal and external quality enhancement
The organisation / consortium builds an environment where internal and external feedback is sought and connected, and where staff and stakeholders are actively involved in an ongoing dialogue about the quality of ongoing project(s). The organisation / consortium is thus enabled to ensure the quality of its services and to work towards an all-embracing quality culture.

Guiding questions:
- What internal quality assurance and enhancement procedures are in place at project level, and how do they actively involve all internal and external stakeholders through periodic reviews of the ongoing project?
- How does the organisation / consortium connect internal and external feedback and how does it feed into further enhancement during the implementation phase and after the project's completion?

- How do quality assurance and enhancement procedures used at project level inform/influence each other? How are best practices identified and shared and how do they feed into quality assurance and enhancement procedures at organisational / consortium level?
- How are the results of quality assurance and enhancement procedures being communicated to staff and external stakeholders?
- How is the effectiveness of quality assurance and enhancement procedures being monitored and revised?
- How would the overall quality culture at project level be characterised?

2. Planning and execution

2.1 Objectives, activities, and target groups
Project objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound. The project objectives are achieved through a consistent and coherent set of activities. Project target groups are clearly defined and within reach.

Guiding questions:
- How will project objectives be accomplished: what are the available resources and how will they be utilized? How may external factors help or hinder reaching these objectives?
- How do project activities contribute to achieving the project objectives? How are they connected and how is progress being measured?
- How realistic and flexible are the time frames for the set objectives? Are there any contingency plans for unforeseen disruptions?
- What is the intended impact and who is the target group? How is the project planning to reach its target groups?
- How much and in what direction will the intended change occur? What data will be used to measure the impact of the intended change?

2.2. Public information and dissemination
Effective mechanisms are in place at project level to ensure that the information provided to external target groups and to the general public is clear, consistent, regular and accurate.

Guiding questions:
- How are project objectives and activities being communicated to target groups and key stakeholders? Are all materials, information, and presentations suitable for the target audience?
- How is it ensured that the information shared externally (to target groups and stakeholders) is accurate and consistent with project activities on an ongoing basis? What mechanisms are in place to review information before it goes public?
- How is it ensured that the information related to the project has the expected reach?

2.3. Resources
The implementing organisation / consortium has means and resources to enable a successful delivery of the project and to ensure a safe working environment. There are processes in place to ensure that project staff[2] are qualified for their role, and that they are sufficient and appropriate in size and composition to effectively deliver the project.

Guiding questions:
- How does the implementing organisation / consortium secure sufficient and appropriate resources and funding to run the project?
- How does the implementing organisation / consortium ensure that its facilities, (digital) equipment and requisite are appropriate, up to date, and adequate to ensure an efficient implementation of the project?
- How are digital solutions used in project implementation and how fit for purpose are they?
- How are project staff being recruited / appointed? Are there clearly defined recruitment criteria in place?
- How does the organisation / consortium ensure that the size and experience of project staff are adequate to cover the volume of work and to cater all project activities?

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[2] When applying these criteria in the context of a specific project evaluation, please consider as project staff both permanent employees assigned to implement the project and contracted external collaborators recruited to conduct certain work packages.

3. Monitoring and evaluation

3.1 Project progression

The organisation / consortium has effective processes in place to monitor the project's progression, and to ensure that project activities are carried out as planned.

Guiding questions:
- What processes are in place to monitor the project's progression and how are they effective? How is the project's implementation being reviewed and how often does it take place?
- How is the collected information being used to adjust and improve project activities as the implementation is unfolding?
- Are all activities being implemented as intended? If not, why?
- Have any changes been made to intended activities since the beginning of the project and, if so, why?
- Are target groups and other key stakeholders satisfied with all aspects of the project's progression?
- Have any project objectives been met in the current phase of implementation and how well the intended change has been achieved?
- What project deliverables have been produced up until now and are they of the desired quality?
- What quality assurance and enhancement procedures are in place within the project?

4. Impact and outcome

4.1. Project outcomes
The intended results have been achieved upon project completion and project deliverables meet the intended quality standards.

Guiding questions:
- How well has the project reached its targets and produced the intended results?
- To what extent the intended outcomes have been produced and how well the desired short term changes have been achieved?
- What are the project deliverables and how do they meet the intended quality standards?

4.2. Project impact
The project reached its intended objectives and generated the desired change in the area of intervention. The project outcomes can be exploited beyond the funding period. The organisation / consortium promotes continued development and maintenance of links enabled or established through the project, and has strategies in place for an active social engagement in the area of intervention.

Guiding questions:
- Have the overall project objectives been achieved?
- How well the intended long term change has been achieved? Were there any external factors to support or hinder the achievement of the desired change?
- Were there any unintended changes that occurred as a result of the project?
- What recommendations have evolved out of the project?
- How does the project's impact enhances or enables sustainability? Is it possible to implement the project in other settings either in part or in its entirety?
- What are the long term plans for continuing the project beyond the funding period? How does the organisation intend to maintain and further develop the links and networks created through the project in order to strengthen the change achieved in the area of intervention?
- How does the organisation / consortium assess and monitor the ongoing needs in the area of intervention? How does the organisation / consortium plan to engage in the public discourse and promote long term an active social engagement in the area of intervention?