

PROGRAM CYCLE GUIDANCE

ADS 201 Additional Help

EVALUATION TRIGGERS

As noted in ADS 201: Evaluations should be considered by missions in the CDCS and by all OUs in the early stages of project design to ensure adequate planning and implementation. However, a decision to evaluate may be made at any point during strategy, project and activity implementation, particularly if new information arises indicating that an evaluation is appropriate for accountability or learning purposes. Such new information is referred to as an evaluation “trigger”.

While it is not possible to determine during strategy, project, or activity planning whether something unexpected will occur during implementation that will necessitate an evaluation, it is possible to consider during the planning stages what potential situations may serve as an evaluation trigger.

The following situations may serve as triggers for conducting a previously unplanned evaluation:

- A key management decision is required, but there is inadequate information to make it;
- Performance information indicates an unexpected result (positive or negative) that should be explained, such as unanticipated results affecting either men or women
- Beneficiary, partner, or other informed feedback, suggests that there are implementation problems, unmet needs, or unintended consequences;
- Issues of sustainability, cost-effectiveness, or relevance arise;
- The validity of Results Framework hypotheses or critical assumptions is questioned, for example, due to unanticipated changes in the host country environment; or
- Portfolio Reviews have identified key questions that are best answered by an evaluation.

Regardless of whether the evaluation was planned, it should still follow the evaluation processes and procedures described in [ADS 201.3.5.15](#) through [201.3.5.18](#) to support quality and use.