

ALNAP

# Shaping new guidance for the evaluation of humanitarian action

Updating ALNAP guidance on using the OECD  
DAC criteria for humanitarian evaluations

11 December 2023



# ALNAP

is the global network for advancing humanitarian learning

- 1 We host the largest living library of humanitarian knowledge & evidence.
- 2 We create collaborative spaces to exchange insights, experience & practical ideas.
- 3 We rigorously distil learning to help you make sense of the vast amounts of evidence available.
- 4 We produce research & guidance where there are gaps in humanitarian knowledge.
- 5 We regularly review & assess the humanitarian system, shining a light on how the sector is performing ([sohs.alnap.org](https://sohs.alnap.org))

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# Why are evaluation criteria important?

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**How does the humanitarian system assess its performance?**

**Who defines the success of humanitarian interventions?**

**Does the system adequately capture the perspectives of affected communities? And responses delivered by local actors and communities?**

**Evaluation criteria are a tool used to measure performance and success to reflect what works and what does not work.**

# 2006 ALNAP guide on the OECD DAC criteria

Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria

An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies

ALNAP's guide has been used for the past 17 years.

Times have changed and new issues have arisen.



It's time for a revision!

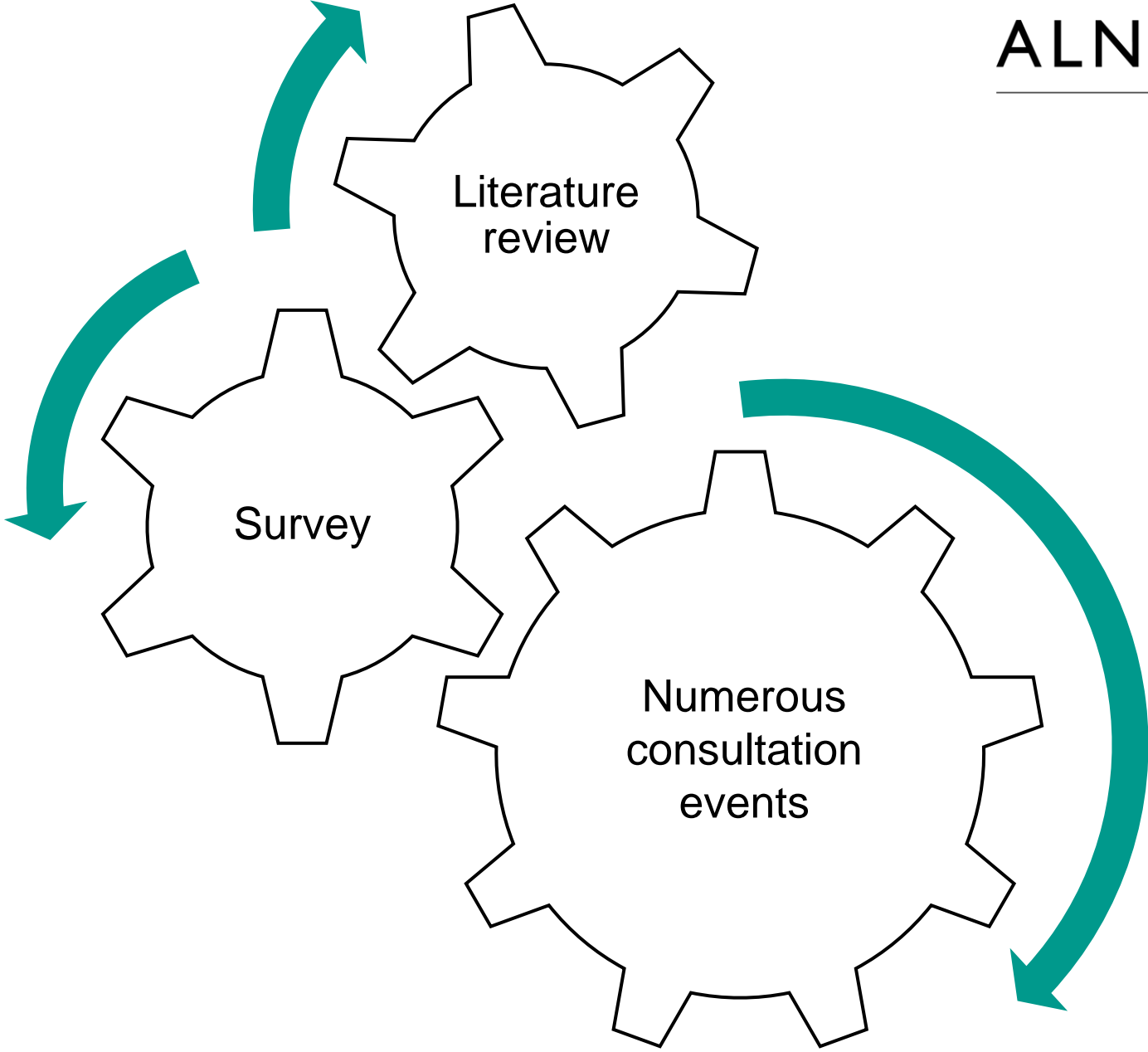
# Revision process



**Evidence based**



**Participatory**



# Survey – Share your views!

## Who is it for?

- Humanitarian evaluators
- Evaluation commissioners/managers
- Users of humanitarian evaluations

## Short option & technical version

- Designed to allow for those with less experience to give input
- More technical questions are optional

## Language options

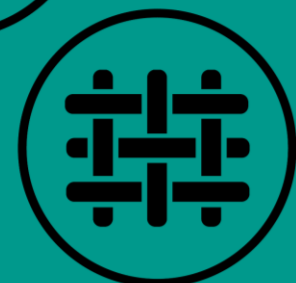
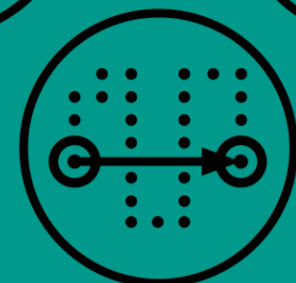
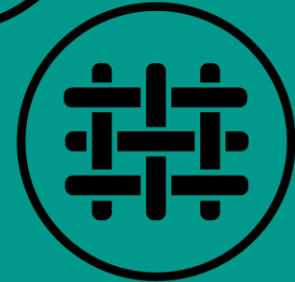
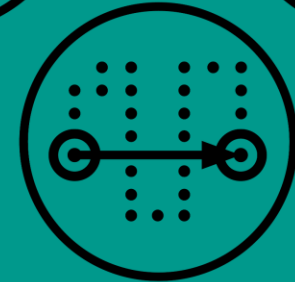
- Available in English, Arabic, French and Spanish.



**[alnap.org/oe.cd-dac-survey](https://alnap.org/oe.cd-dac-survey)**

Please share with  
interested friends  
& colleagues

Key issues to  
consider in the new  
guidance





# Alignment with the OECD DAC criteria

The OECD DAC criteria definitions were updated in 2019

The OECD published a guidance on the criteria in 2021

ALNAP's existing guide, predates this.

ALNAP's definitions in 2006 were **different** – but **mostly aligned**

**Should revised ALNAP guidance align closely with updated OECD DAC guidance?**

**How important is standardisation** – (having common, standard definitions)

**vs.**

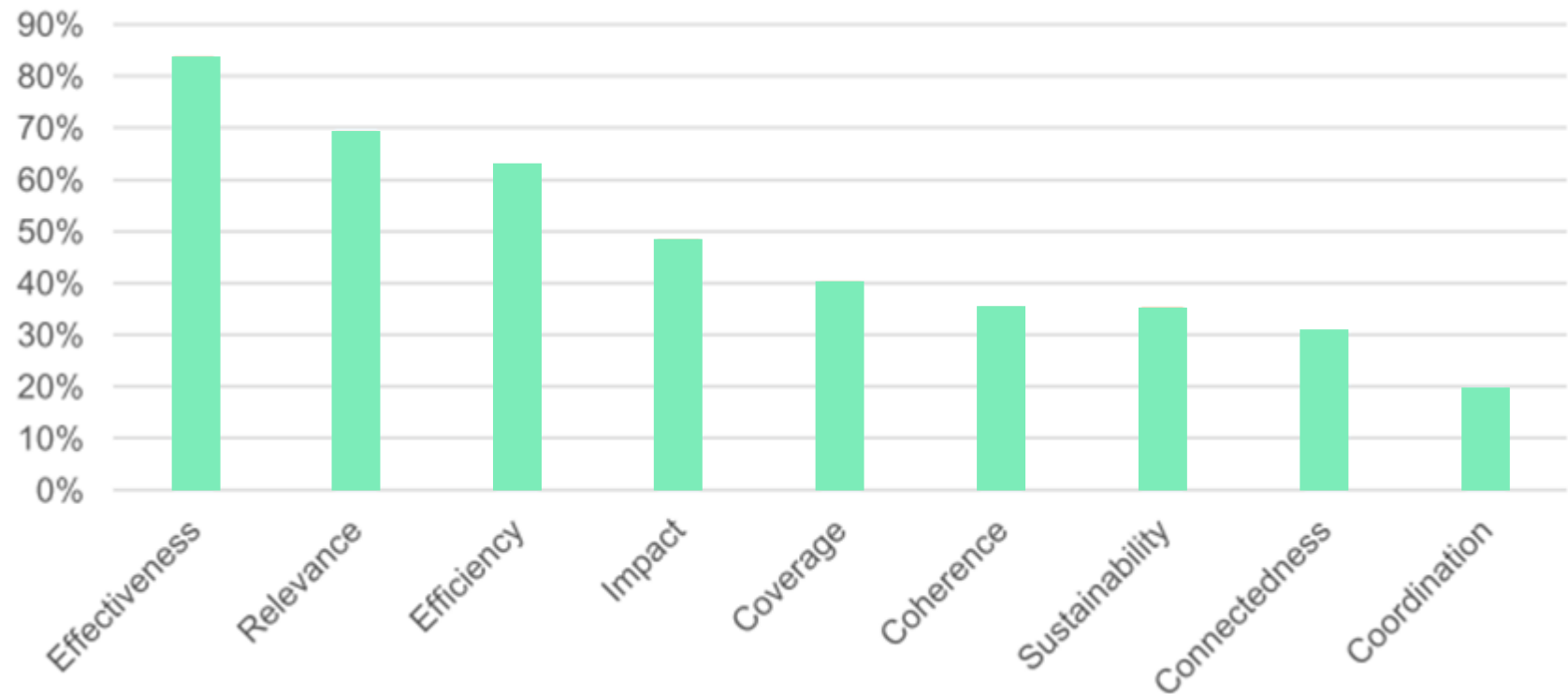
**Flexibility** (to interpret and apply based on context)?





# How often are the OECD DAC criteria used in evaluating humanitarian action?

The vast majority of humanitarian evaluations use the OECD DAC criteria



Source: Darcy and Dillon, 2020

# Advantages & critiques of the OECD DAC criteria

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## Advantages

- Simple. Common language.
- Well-established. Widely-applied
- Promote comparability across evaluations
- Concise & limited in number
- Adaptable to different contexts

(Adapted from Lundgren 2017)

## Critiques

- Relevance in different cultural contexts-  
decolonisation of evaluation
- Does not enable the evaluation of  
transformational change
- May not reflect important norms/issues -  
protection, humanitarian principles, gender, SDGs

(Patton 2020, Ofir 2017, Chilisa and Mertens 2021)



# Cross-cutting themes

ALNAP listed **8 cross-cutting themes** in the 2006 guide.

- 1) Gender equality
- 2) Participation of primary stakeholders
- 3) Local context
- 4) Human resources
- 5) Protection
- 6) Coping strategies and resilience
- 7) Environment
- 8) HIV/AIDS





The OECD DAC has taken the approach of **not explicitly** including cross-cutting themes.

**Should we include cross-cutting themes in the new guidance?**

**Which should we prioritise?**

**Or should we propose additional criteria?**

# How are cross-cutting themes covered in evaluations? ALNAP

	Sample of 40 humanitarian evals	As own criteria	As a cross-cutting theme	Under other DAC criteria	In some other form	Total
	Gender	1	14	4	1	20
	Inclusion	2	13	10	5	30
	Equity		1	1	1	3
	Climate / environment		2		2	4
	Accountability to Affected Populations	1	9	6	5	21
	Communication with communities		3	6	2	11
	Participation		7	3		10
	Localisation	2	2	1		5
	Local capacity / Capacity building	1	2			3



# Positionality

Cultural biases and values will impact the evaluation process and its results.

Who defines what is effective?

Who defines what is relevant?

Are affected populations views incorporated as an addition to or in place of international perspectives?

**Is it important for ALNAP to address the issue of positionality in the new guidance?**



# Localisation

In the vast majority of the sampled evaluations in ALNAP's research localisation does not appear at all.

Despite high-level policy commitment, ALNAP research suggests little progress on localisation

**Should localisation be explicitly included in the new ALNAP guidance?**

**Should it be a criterion or a cross-cutting theme?**



## Question for you!

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Is Bangkok the best city in the world?



## Question for you!

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Should evaluators always have to clarify how their background (values and biases) influences the evaluation process?





## Question for you!

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Should all evaluations address localisation?



## Question for you!

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Do evaluations reflect affected populations perspectives to a sufficient degree?



## Question for you!

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Should communities' own measures for success be integrated into humanitarian evaluations to a higher degree?



## Question for you!

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Should evaluations emphasise community-based responses to a higher degree?

# Thank you!

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