The landscape has evolved. Now it is common for funding agencies to require an evaluation plan as part of a proposal, including NSF proposals.

Funding agencies are interested in:

- the outcomes of your project
- a process for feedback to allow for improvement
- a plan for assessing impact

They want to be sure you will accomplish your proposal objectives and that your project will have important impacts that fit with funding priorities.
Strategies for Proposal Development Related to Evaluation

- A good **project plan** supports meaningful **evaluation**
- Study the **priorities** of the RFP and understand the **mission** of the funding agency
- Carefully develop **your goals**, objectives, anticipated outcomes - - aligned with the RFP
- Develop **your plan** – activities to accomplish your objectives – the project activities and anticipated outputs and outcomes
- Enjoy the creative process - align all the interlocking pieces of the **puzzle**
- Recognize proposal development as **planning process**
Logic Model Approach

- Evaluation is aligned with your Logic Model
- The Logic Model is a foundation for project planning

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Logic Model Approach

• Evaluation is aligned with your Logic Model
• The Logic Model is a foundation for project planning
Elements Described in the NSF Evaluation Handbook
(Note: This Mirrors OEIE’s Approach)

• Logic Model Approach/Perspective
• Focus on Project Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact
• Overarching Evaluation Questions
• Formative and Summative Evaluation
• Research-based Evaluation Methods
• Comprehensive Program Evaluation
Evaluation is Designed to Provide

- **Formative** evaluation:
  - integrated into project management /implementation related to progress, process, and program planning
  - to assess **performance** of project activities
  - to provide **feedback** to improve the project and enhance outcomes

- **Summative** evaluation:
  - to assess and document the **impacts and outcomes** of the project
  - to assess overall success focused on **overarching questions**
  - aligned with the logic model, NSF program priorities, **project goals**, and **anticipated outcomes**
Resources for Evaluation and Proposal Development

• **Expectations** regarding the evaluation plan and evaluation resources are different for each RFP/Solicitation

• OEIE can provide **advice** regarding your proposal and evaluation resources

• If OEIE is included in the proposal, we can design the **evaluation plan**, including methods and instruments, and implement the plan when the project is funded

• **Other resources:**
  – American Evaluation Association Website
  – NSF publication: *The 2010 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation*
Goal of evaluation is to:

- Improve project through ongoing feedback
- Provide sound evidence on outcomes & impacts of the project
- Provide guidance to ensure long-term impact to a broader audience and society

Research-based evaluation methods include:

- Multiple evaluation approaches
  - Observations
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Web-based surveys
  - Checklists
  - Document analysis
- Both qualitative & quantitative methods
- Triangulate data for more robust findings where possible
OEIE Background and Experience

• Evaluation services for over 250 projects totaling over $250 million, including large-scale grants funded by NSF, USDA, USDE, Defense, USAID, etc.
• Staff of 22 full-time professionals including our evaluation team, technology team, development team; as well as part-time GRA/UGRA research assistants.

OEIE Data Collection Protocols and Implementation

- Based on accepted standards of the American Evaluation Association
- Use established instruments, methods, and theories
  Surveys (Dillman, 2009) -- Focus groups (Krueger and Casey, 2009)

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