



Peel Region  
Evaluation Platform

## What is Summative Evaluation

*Summative evaluation* looks at the impact of an intervention on the target group. This type of evaluation is what is most often meant by the term 'evaluation' when it's used by project staff and funders. Evaluation in this context is really about finding out what the project achieved.

Summative evaluation can take place during the project implementation but is most often undertaken at the end of a project. It's usually associated with more objective, quantitative methods of data collection. The recommended approach, however, is to use a balance of both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to get a better understanding of what a project has achieved, and how or why it has occurred. Using qualitative methods of data collection can also provide a good insight into unintended consequences and lessons for improvement.

Summative evaluation is outcome-focused more than process focused. It's important to distinguish outcome from output. Summative evaluation isn't about stating that three workshops were held, with a total of fifty people attending (outputs), but rather the result of these workshops, such as increased knowledge or increased uptake of rainwater tanks (outcomes).

### Why undertake a summative evaluation?

Here are some key reasons in favour of conducting a summative evaluation:

1. Summative evaluation provides a means to find out whether a project has reached its goals, objectives or outcomes.
2. Summative evaluation enables program or project impact to be measured objectively.
3. The impact of different projects can be compared which supports results-based decisions on future spending allocations (taking into account unintended consequences).
4. Summative evaluation allows for a better understanding of the process of change, and finding out what works, what doesn't, and why. This knowledge-gathering process supports learning that can be used to improve future project designs and implementation.

**Source: Community Sustainability Engagement: Evaluation Toolbox**

<http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/>

