

Evaluating and assessing performance

There are four common types of evaluation:

Process	Impact
<p>Focuses on the way we achieve our aims, the activities we engage in and the processes we use. The sort of questions it asks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we working in the right way? • Are we maximising our resources? • Who does what, and how do they relate? <p>Used when an organisation wants to examine and improve its methods of working.</p>	<p>Focuses on the difference the work is making. The sorts of questions it asks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does what we do link with our objectives? • What has changed as a result of our work? <p>Usually used in conjunction with Performance, to check that the organisation is achieving both its outputs and its intended aims.</p>
Performance	Strategic
<p>Measures the extent to which the objectives and targets have been achieved, in terms of both quality and quantity. The sorts of questions it asks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we achieving our aims? • What is the connection between inputs and outputs (<i>see below for definitions</i>)? <p>Used to assess if the organisation is achieving what it set out to do.</p>	<p>Focuses on overall purposes or goals. The sorts of questions it asks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we doing the right things • Have the problems we set out to address, or the context changed significantly? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we need to change what we do? <p>Used towards the end of a period of funding, or to plan strategy for a period of years.</p>

Only that is good for oneself, which is good for any body whatsoever.
Zoroastrian description of good

Some definitions:

Inputs	Resources that contribute to a programme or activity, including income, staff, volunteers and equipment.
Activities	What an organisation does with its inputs in order to achieve its mission. They could be training, counselling or advice.
Outputs	Countable units; they are the direct products of a programme or organisation's activities. They could be classes taught, training courses delivered or people attending workshops. In themselves they are not the objectives of the organisation.
Outcomes	The benefits or changes for intended beneficiaries. They tend to be less tangible and therefore less countable than outputs. Outcomes are usually planned and are therefore set out in an organisation's objectives. Outcomes may be causally and linearly related; that is, one outcome leads to another, which leads to another and so on, forming a linear sequence of if-then relationships.
Impact	All changes resulting from an activity, project, or organisation. It includes intended as well as unintended effects, negative as well as positive, and long-term as well as short-term.