

Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

1. Introduction

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy will apply to the global Laudes Foundation including Fundación C&A in Mexico and Instituto C&A in Brazil (here after collectively referred as ‘the foundation’) and the strategies and the range of initiatives that receive financial support from the foundation.

The foundation organises and deploys resources in accordance with its strategy. The strategy guides the selection of outcomes, the choice of foundation partners and the allocation of financial and technical resources. The foundation executes the strategy through grants, core support to partners, research and convenings.

The foundation strives to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency in the use of its resources through monitoring and evaluation with the following overarching objectives:

- a. To promote accountability for the achievement of the foundation mission through the assessment of results, processes and performance of partners involved in initiatives.
- b. To promote learning and knowledge sharing² on results and lessons learned within the foundation, partners and the fashion industry. Lesson learning will form the basis for future strategic decision-making and resource deployment across the foundation signature programmes.³

The following principles underpin our M&E policy:

- a. Results orientation in all initiatives supported by the foundation.
- b. Accountable and transparent use of foundation resources for the delivery of results.
- c. Simplicity and cost-effectiveness in criteria and minimum requirements for M&E.
- d. Build capacity of partner organisations to improve their M&E⁴.
- e. Use and utility driven evaluation – the foundation conducts evaluation based on a clear need for knowledge to document lessons and improve strategy, programming and decision-making.
- f. The purpose of the policy is to align the foundation and partner expectations and actions on systematically measuring and managing for results. The foundation supports a diverse range of initiatives and partners hence it is necessary to have a common understanding of how M&E will be conducted. This includes roles and responsibilities of the partner and the foundation to foster mutual accountability and learning throughout

¹ Hereafter referred to as ‘initiatives’.

² Aligned with the foundation’s learning agenda and strategy

³ Forced and Child Labour, Sustainable Cotton, Working Conditions, Circular Fashion and any other programmes that are added.

⁴ This may be delivered as part of an initiative to build partner capacities more generally through ‘core support’.

the grant management cycle and organisation.

- g. The foundation places a strong emphasis on selecting initiatives and partners that leverage additional resources and aim to scale-up initiatives. This places particular importance on monitoring progress towards results during implementation and the development and use of a range of evaluation types to provide feedback and learning, such as; developmental, programme and impact evaluation, that go beyond traditional approaches of summative evaluations.
- h. The policy and minimum requirements will be applied flexibly in relation to; context, need and type of initiative⁵, capacities of partners and based on the reviews by foundation staff.

⁵ Note that the policy and minimum requirements will not be applied to individual micro-grants such as store grants and associated employee-volunteering initiatives. Although the store grant / volunteering taken as a whole will be subjects for programme evaluation.

2. Monitoring

Definition: Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of qualitative and quantitative data on specified indicators to provide management with information on a programmes activities, outputs and outcomes to track its performance. It is first and foremost a management instrument used at the initiative level and addresses the key question – “Are we doing things right and in the right way?”

Purpose and use of monitoring: Monitoring provides management and the key stakeholders of initiatives with regularised reporting on the extent of progress towards outcomes, taking account of internal and external assumptions and risks. Monitoring data is used during implementation to provide feedback into initiative management decision-making on activities both ongoing and planned, evaluation and learning.

Levels: Within the context of the foundation’s work monitoring will take place at the initiative and portfolio level.

- a. Initiative level – monitoring focuses on implementation including the tracking of activities, use of financial and human resources, delivery of outputs and progress towards outcomes. Initiative level monitoring is the responsibility of the partners.
- b. Portfolio level – monitoring focuses on aggregating data from initiatives to report against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and in accordance with a standardised rating system for measurement of portfolio performance and ‘health’. Portfolio performance monitoring is the responsibility of the foundation.

M&E quality at entry: is concerned with ensuring that partners monitor progress towards initiative outputs and outcomes, and their contributions towards KPIs. The foundation will place emphasis on ensuring the quality-at-entry of M&E plans within the context of the overall review of initiative designs to meet the minimum requirements⁶. The foundation will work proactively with partners to ensure that they can meet the minimum requirements.

⁶ See separate document ‘Laudes Foundation Minimum Requirements for M&E’

3. Evaluation

Definition: Evaluation refers to the systematic process of determining the worth or significance of an initiative, strategy or policy. Evaluation typically assesses the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the initiatives supported by the foundation.

An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, therefore permitting the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into decision-making processes at the corporate and initiative level. In doing so, an evaluation answers key questions – “Have we done the right things? What works and what doesn’t and why? What have we learned?”

In line with the foundation goal and strategy, evaluation places specific emphasis on utility-driven evaluations that assess the scaling up potential, sustainability of initiatives and partner organisations within the context of a well-defined demand for evaluation.

Purpose and use of evaluation: Evaluation feeds into foundation decision-making processes regarding the refinement and/or development of strategy, programming and reporting cycles against KPIs. Evaluation aims at improving organisational relevance and achievement of results, effectiveness and efficiency of resource utilisation for enhancement of positive impacts on beneficiaries. It should also identify good practices and as well as those to be avoided.

Types of evaluation: The foundation approach to evaluation must be adapted to the initiative context and available resources. The main types of evaluation conducted by the foundation and partners will include the following (see also Annex 1):

- a. **Initiative evaluations** – of initiatives under implementation (e.g., formative – mid-term evaluations), and at the end of an initiative (e.g., summative – terminal evaluation) will be conducted by partners, if self-evaluations. The foundation will manage and / or oversee the evaluation if independent evaluation is needed.
- b. **Programme / strategic evaluations** – of a signature programme (e.g., sustainable cotton, working conditions, forced and child labour or circular fashion) and long-term programmes with partners focusing on a specific set of initiatives. The foundation will initiate and manage these independent evaluations, with the participation of partners as necessary.
- c. **Thematic evaluations** – of a selection of initiatives which address a similar area or issue, for example – policy advocacy, scaling-up, gender and women’s empowerment. The foundation will initiate and manage these evaluations with the participation of partners as necessary.

- d. **Impact evaluation**⁷ – will be used to assess results of initiatives and will be integrated into design so that counterfactuals can be identified prior or at the beginning of implementation.

Impact evaluation is often resource intensive and will only be used where there is a clear knowledge gap and utility for evidence that can be used to decide whether or not to scale-up or replicate pilots or innovations. Evaluations address questions of causation and must be able to rule out effects of factors other than the specific initiative, through mixed-method⁸ designs that include counterfactual using theory-based, experimental or quasi-experimental designs.

The foundation is less interested in issues of attribution of causality to its own financial and technical resources, but in the contribution those resources make with other partners to prove that an initiative can produce sustainable impacts on people's lives.

Therefore, impact evaluation will contribute with critical knowledge to the foundation and partners. The foundation will work with partners to identify suitable initiatives taking into account focus, size, and available resources for M&E, knowledge needs and key audiences, local context and methods.

- e. **Developmental and real-time feedback / evaluation** – will be used to assess results and provide rapid and regular feedback for decision-making and learning to the foundation and partners for initiatives and programmes where pathways to success are not clear. This type of evaluation will be useful for impact investment, early stage innovation or social entrepreneurship where traditional forms of formative and summative evaluation are not suitable.
- f. **Syntheses and systematic reviews** – of initiatives (of the foundation and other donors) that do not require a field-based evaluation, but have sufficient documentary data to warrant assessment. The reviews will respond to specific knowledge gaps and questions that have the potential to improve the design and implementation of future foundation initiatives or provide relevant information to the apparel industry. The reviews will be initiated and managed by the foundation in collaboration with partners, where necessary.
- g. **Organisational performance evaluation** – of organisational effectiveness and operating models of key partners. This type of evaluation will be used to assess the efficacy of core support initiatives, when:
- Significant amounts of financial and technical support are provided to a partner with shared goals and thus are essential to the success of the foundation strategy.
 - A partner's organisational development and ongoing relationship with the foundation requires additional knowledge to inform future collaboration.

⁷ Impact is defined as the “positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development initiative, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.” (OECD-DAC). Impact evaluation is defined as: “Analyses that measure the net change in outcomes for a particular group of people that can be attributed to a specific programme using the best methodology available, feasible and appropriate to the evaluation question that is being investigated and to the specific context.” (3ie)

⁸ By mixed methods we mean qualitative and quantitative approaches.

- The foundation redefines or develops a new strategy or models of operation that require review of current long-term partner funding.

Evaluation quality assurance: Is concerned with ensuring that partners evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, and also contributions towards the success of the foundation goal and KPIs. Within this context, the foundation will place emphasis on ensuring that evaluation designs, resourcing, planning and execution are in-line with the minimum requirements.

Follow-up to evaluations: The foundation will request partners to provide a management response to initiative evaluation findings and recommendations when a partner is requesting further funding.

Knowledge management, learning and communication: M&E contributes to building knowledge for organisational improvement and learning among partners and within the foundation. The main purposes of knowledge management of M&E information are to:

- a. Actively promote a culture of learning and feedback within the foundation and partner organisations.
- b. Promote the use of lessons learned to improve the design and implementation of initiatives.
- c. Contribute towards increased awareness and confidence in the foundation's work and leverage further support and partnerships.
- d. To inform and influence changes within the business and across the industry as a whole.

Key findings and lessons will be collated and made accessible internally to programme managers, internally and externally through the foundation annual reports, the website and other social media, as appropriate and necessary.

Audiences: For communication of findings and lessons, the key audience will be the foundation Board and staff in all regions, C&A management and staff, partners, other industry influencers, other brands / retailers and the public.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Laudes Foundation Board(s): The Board(s) and committees will on an ad-hoc basis review evaluations that will inform the strategy and / or operations of the foundation. The Board(s) and committees will review completed evaluations that have been initiated and managed by the foundation or jointly with partners and would include impact, programme, thematic and organisational performance studies. The Board(s) and committees, where appropriate and necessary, will instruct the foundation management to take appropriate action based on evaluation findings and recommendations.

Foundation management and staff commit to developing and improving M&E and the focus on utility-driven evaluation for learning and decision-making.

- a. **Foundation Management** support the design and use of M&E as they:
 - Request and use evaluation to inform decision-making at strategic and programmatic levels.
 - Support the Impact Team at the foundation to ensure quality in the technical review of M&E and instil the results-orientation of the organisation and across initiatives.
- b. **Foundation Programme Managers** promote high quality M&E in initiatives through:
 - Support and consultations with partners to ensure overall initiative design is results-oriented.
 - Use and promote existing evaluative evidence from inside and outside the foundation in their decision-making and dialogue with partners to enhance initiative design.
 - Consult with the Impact Team when they or partners need technical support to improve M&E in initiative design, reporting and design of evaluations.
 - Work with the Impact Team to identify knowledge gaps and evaluation needs, including potential initiative designs that can incorporate impact evaluation.
 - Share findings transparently from evaluations to promote organisation learning and decision-making.
- c. **Foundation Head of Impact and Communications** provides overall leadership of the Impact Team and guidance on M&E throughout the foundation. The Impact Team:
 - Develops in collaboration with foundation staff the M&E policy and minimum requirements, and subsequent revisions thereof.
 - Leads the design and management of the foundation evaluations.
 - Provides guidance and advice to foundation staff and partners in the design of M&E plans and methodology to ensure they meet minimum requirements (ex-ante quality-at-entry).
 - Provides technical support and guidance to partners in the design and execution of their evaluations to ensure they meet minimum requirements and use established criteria where appropriate (ex-post quality assurance)
 - Ensures that foundation staff has access to relevant evaluative evidence to inform their decision-making with partners on initiative design and implementation.

- Advances the use of innovative approaches to M&E across the organisation that is tailored to foundation staff and partner needs, including the identification with partners of opportunities for impact evaluation.
- Supports knowledge sharing and follow-up to evaluation findings and recommendations within the foundation and partners, to encourage accountability.
- Communicates and disseminates key findings and lessons learned within the foundation and to partners, and ensures that knowledge is systematically managed and retained within the organisation.

Foundation **partners** are responsible for the design and execution of initiative-level M&E (self-evaluation). The partners are responsible for ensuring initiative designs adhere to evaluation and monitoring principles, criteria and meet the minimum requirements, including the use of indicators and targets that are aligned with foundation KPIs and strategic outcomes.

Partners can request technical assistance and advice from the foundation to ensure the M&E plans and systems align with principles, criteria and meet the minimum requirements. The foundation looks for opportunities to build the capacity on partner M&E systems and frameworks rather than creating parallel systems.

Partners will ensure that M&E data from initiatives is made available to the foundation.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation Principles and Criteria

The work of the foundation and its relationships with partners in M&E is informed to some extent by internationally recognised good practices, principles, norms and standards developed for evaluation by the OECD DAC Evaluation Network⁹, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)¹⁰, and the experiences of other foundations.

No international principles have been formulated on monitoring, however it is common to formulate minimum requirements for monitoring systems, for example that initiatives shall have M&E plans and logical frameworks with indicators and targets *inter alia*. It is also established that initiative M&E plans need to be related to overall organisational efforts to manage for results and indicate their contribution towards corporate goals and strategies.

Evaluation principles: Evaluation conducted by the foundation will be guided by the following internationally recognised principles:

- a. **Independence:** Members of evaluation teams should be independent from the partner organisation(s) implementing the initiative and the foundation. They should not have been involved in the design or implementation of the initiative or programme.
- b. **Credibility:** Evaluations shall be based on reliable and credible data and observations. Evaluations shall use established and appropriate methodological approaches to ensure credibility and validity of data collected.
- c. **Utility:** Evaluations must respond clearly to demand and needs of the foundation and partners. Evaluations are not to be conducted for their own sake.
- d. **Impartiality:** Evaluations must provide a comprehensive evidence-based overview of the strengths and weaknesses of initiatives, programmes, thematic area or organisation taking into account the views of stakeholders.
- e. **Transparency:** Evaluations must be based on clear lines of communication concerning the purpose, scope, methodologies and use of findings. The evaluation reports should, unless containing sensitive information, be made available to all relevant stakeholders.
- f. **Disclosure:** The foundation will disseminate evaluation findings and lessons internally and externally via the website and appropriate social media.
- g. **Ethical:** Evaluations shall provide due regard for the welfare, beliefs and customs of those involved or affected, avoiding conflict of interest. Evaluators must respect the right of individuals, institutions and companies to provide information in confidence.

⁹ OECD DAC Evaluation Network consists of the main bilateral aid agencies and has worked for over a decade to discuss and develop professional norms and standards in evaluation of development and grant-related areas.

¹⁰ UNEG consists of the UN agencies and has also developed professional norms and standards for evaluation including terms of reference, inception and final reports, evaluation processes and job descriptions

- h. **Participation:** The foundation does not directly design and implement initiatives and programmes but works with partners. Therefore, where appropriate and possible, the foundation will pursue joint-evaluations with partners to gain insights and feedback that may not be gained through stand-alone evaluation approaches.
- i. **Competencies and capacities:** The foundation and partners shall ensure that in commissioning evaluations, teams are composed of experienced and sufficiently senior evaluators, who adopt appropriate methodologies for assessment of results and performance.

Evaluation criteria: Evaluations shall in general report against the following internationally established criteria¹:

- a. **Relevance:** the extent to which the initiative was suited to the priorities of the recipient or beneficiary group, partner and the foundation. The analyses should include an assessment of changes in the validity and relevance of the initiative over time.
- b. **Effectiveness:** the extent to which initiative objective was achieved or likely to be achieved, including assessment of influencing factors for achievement and / or failure.
- c. **Efficiency:** the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources available using efficient and timely processes.
- d. **Results / Impact:** the extent the initiative has achieved positive or negative changes, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended on beneficiaries. For the foundation, this will involve an assessment of socio-economic, environmental, scale-up and replication effects taking into account external factors.
- e. **Sustainability:** is concerned with the extent initiative benefits are likely to continue after foundation funding has been withdrawn. The foundation is particularly interested in financial, socio-economic and environmental sustainability of initiatives and partner organisations.
- f. **Scalability:** the extent to which the results achieved by the initiative have been able to (or have the potential for) effect wider systemic change (industry and societal).

Monitoring Principles: The foundation and partners are guided by the following set of principles:

- a. **Credibility:** Monitoring shall be based on valid and reliable data or observations, quantitative and / or qualitative. Monitoring reports shall adhere to and reflect clearly structured data collection methods and analyses.
- b. **Utility:** Monitoring must serve the information needs of the intended users at initiative level. Partners shall ensure that monitoring is relevant, timely, clearly presented and performance and results orientated.

¹ www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

- c. **Impartiality:** Monitoring reports, self-evaluations and other partner-produced reviews of initiative implementation performance must be free of bias.
- d. **Transparency and Disclosure:** Openness and consultation with all major stakeholders involved in initiative monitoring is essential. At the foundation level, KPI performance monitoring must be clearly communicated to internal and external stakeholders.
- e. **Participation:** Foundation initiatives are undertaken through and with partners – Non-Governmental Organisations, private sector, communities and others. Monitoring shall be carried out with the participation of relevant partners at the local level.

Monitoring Criteria: Partners will develop and execute monitoring plans and / or systems that are appropriate to the initiatives for measuring performance, outcomes and progress towards impact. In doing so, indicators shall adhere to SMART criteria:

- a. **Specific:** Target a specific area for improvement and appropriately relate to the achievement of an objective.
- b. **Measurable:** The monitoring system and indicators are amenable to quantitative or qualitative measurement. Partners must agree on common and practical ways to track progress.
- c. **Achievable and Attributable:** The monitoring system / plan identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the initiative and whether the results are realistic. Attribution requires that indicators track changes in relation to the initiative.
- d. **Relevant and Realistic:** The monitoring system selects performance indicators that are relevant to the objectives and are likely to be achievable within the period of initiative implementation.
- e. **Time-bound:** The monitoring system allows progress to be tracked periodically and in a cost-effective manner.

Annex 1: Evaluation Typology

Evaluation Type	Responsibility	Level
<i>Initiative (project initiative, convening, research)</i>	Partner & Foundation	Individual initiative
<i>Thematic</i>	Foundation	Issue (e.g., innovation, core support, gender, scaling-up)
<i>Programme (signature programme)</i>	Foundation	Signature programme
<i>Impact</i>	Partner & Foundation	Individual initiative
<i>Organisational Performance (core support)</i>	Partner & Foundation	Individual initiative
<i>Developmental and Real-time Feedback</i>	Partner & Foundation	Individual Initiative