Template : Research Design

< Insert title of the research or evaluation project>

<Date and Version>

1. Introduction and background

> a. *Give a brief background to the issue, project or programme.*
> b. *Include any previous or relevant evaluations, research or similar projects you are aware of.*
> c. *What is the problem it is addressing?*
> d. *Who is the target group?*
> e. *What evidence do you need and what do you need it for?*
> f. *What you hope to find out, and what new learning it will contribute?*
> g. *What are the key benefits of the research or evaluation?*

2. Literature review

> a. *What data already exists and what are the remaining data needs?*
> b. *What groups are included / excluded in the data?*
> c. *List any previous relevant research or similar projects you are aware of.*
> d. *What are their strengths / weaknesses?*
> e. *What data and/or groups is missing from the existing research that is still needed? (List 3-4 bullet points).*
> f. *How will this research fill that gap? (List 3-4 bullet points).*
> g. *What theory are you aiming to use that will help you make sense of the data?*

Title of research / evaluation / project	Author(s)	Date of publication	Methods used	Context and Included (and/or excluded) groups	Key findings	Strengths / Weaknesess

3. Research or evaluation objectives

> *a. State why you want to do the research or evaluation. This is a simple statement of the things you want to achieve by the end of the research / evaluation. Make sure these are clear, achievable, and distinct and put them in order of priority.*
>
> *List no more than 3 research objectives*
>
> *Use the following phrase to help you identify your objectives: I'm interested in… [insert the issue/problem you identified]… because I want to…*

4. Research or evaluation question(s)

> a. State your main research / evaluation question and sub-questions (no more than 1-2 research question and 3 sub research questions). *These will come from and help you meet the objectives.*
> b. *Make sure the questions are: possible to answer, limited to a specific place or places, and a specific time frame. This will help you restrict the data your collect.*
> c. *Explain what you mean by any technical or important terms.*
>
> Use the following phrase to help you identify your research question: *My particular focus will be on exploring… in…*

5. Audience and communication of findings?

> *Ensure that your audience is aligned with your objectives and evidence needs. Consider carrying out a stakeholder mapping exercise to help you identify your audience.)*
>
> *Use the table below to:*
> a. *State who you want to use the research / evaluation outputs (e.g. donors, partners, managers, policy makers etc) and how you will reach them.*
> b. *How or why this will translate into meaningful change or impact?*
> c. *State how will you share the findings with the research participants and other key audiences identified during the research design process?*
>
> ***Note****: You may have to do some research to find out how your target audience receives information. For example, if they don't use social media then that is not an appropriate way to reach them. For rural communities in certain countries, radio might be more effective. You may also find that your audience is quite small and select, depending on your research/ evaluation and research / evaluation objectives. A conversation sharing key findings from a report with the right person (such as a policy maker) might be the most effective ways to carry out advocacy and to bring about policy change in certain contexts.*

Audience for your research	What will they use the findings for?	What format(s) will they access the findings (outputs)?	How will they access the findings?

6. Methods and sampling

a. What types of methods and /or approaches will you use to collect and analyse the data?

b. Where will you be doing the research / evaluation?

c. Who and how many will be in your sample group?

d. What are the inclusion / exclusion criteria for your sample group?

e. What approach to sampling will you use?

f. Consider the role of the research / evaluation team including the research participants, and when and how they will be included in the analysis and reflections on findings.

Ensure that your method(s) are aligned with your objectives and will answer your research / evaluation question(s). Use the table to help you with this. If you are collecting primary data, make sure to consider how you will be inclusive and meaningfully engage different groups, including marginalised groups, in the research and/or evaluation, and how data will be disaggregated e.g. by sex, age, disability, where possible. You can use this table to help your thinking.

Research Method	Reason for choosing the method	Which research question(s)/objective does this address?

7. Ethics

Who do you need to collect data from?
What considerations do you need to make in terms of risk, consent, context, power etc.

Note any possible safeguarding, protection or ethical issues that the research topic or research/evaluation methods may raise. Identify children or adults who are vulnerable. Consider the possible ethical issues that may arise from the research / evaluation during each stage of research process. Suggest ways to reduce or manage any risks identified. (Think about confidentiality, conflict sensitivity, gender, inclusion and issues of power and discrimination between the actors involved including the researchers). Use the table to help you with this.

Question	Assessment of risk	Mitigation strategy
Does your project involve working with children, people under 18 years or adults who are vulnerable?		
Does your project involve engagement with marginalised and/or stigmatised groups?		
Are you engaging with sensitive topics?		
How will you obtain informed consent?		
How will you ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality?		
What power relations are represented in your research / evaluation?		
What (security/harm) risks does the research / evaluation pose to the participants and do you have appropriate referral mechanisms in place?		
What (security/harm) risks does the research/evalatiuon pose to the researcher or enumerator?		
What (security/harm) risks does the research / evaluation pose to the data?		
What are the safeguarding risks associated with research / evaluation (potential for sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment, physical or emotional abuse or neglect committed by staff/representatives or participants)		
What local or national legal and ethical requirements does your research need to comply with?		

8. Data Management Plan

Data Plan Questions	Response
Using the data: • What data will be created or re-used? • What are you going to do with the data? • How often do you intend to review this plan?	
Managing the data: • Which stakeholders are involved in collecting and sharing the data? • Who is collecting the data and how are they being trained? • Who will own or hold the data? • What are your plans for data sharing?	

• Do you have data-sharing agreements in place?	
Protecting the data: • How will you protect your data and those associated with your research or evaluation? • How will you ensure the data is documented and labelled in way that is systematic and anonymous? • How are you going to transfer the data internally? Have you 'password-protected' the data? • How are you storing the data? Is it stored on an encrypted site or hard drive? Is it kept in a locked cabinet?	
Retaining / deleting the data: • Which data will you or consultants retain and preserve after your project ends? • How long will you need to keep the data? (Only keep the data for a long as we need it.) • What is your plan for data deletion?	

9. Expected Outputs

Summarise the type of written and/or other outputs you expect from the research / evaluation e.g. research report, policy summary, video. Think about the different audiences you want to reach and how you want them to use the findings.

10. Timeline

Note the activities that will be covered in the research / evaluation and the time you will need for them. Specify a day for any deadlines, not a month. Remember to the time you require for planning, drafting, and communication purposes.

Activity	Deadline (be specific)

11. Budget

State the budget planned or available for the research stages and activities.
Note specific budget lines, including salaries, fieldwork costs, cost of research outputs etc.

12. Research Team – roles and responsibilities

a. State who is going to be involved and what their responsibilities and timeframe will be.

b. Note the primary point of contact.

c. Consider thematic expertise, methodological expertise, geographical experience and team diversity.

d. Outline relevant safeguarding checks that will be undertaken prior to carrying out the research (e.g. your organisations safeguarding policy and code of conduct. These must be signed before work starts. If English is not understood by those involved with or carrying out the research, please ensure the code of conduct is accessible and they sign a code of conduct in a language they understand .