

Delta 8.7 Policy Guide Process

Technical Note on *Submission and Evaluation of Evidence*

About this document

This document provides guidance on how to submit evidence for consideration in the Delta 8.7 Policy Guide Process and explains how that evidence will be evaluated and handled.

It aims to provide a clear and transparent set of criteria by which both individual sources of evidence, and bodies of evidence, will be evaluated. This will help ensure that the resulting Policy Guides are evidence-based and will make this process replicable in future.

The document draws on best practice in assessing evidence in policy domains, including:

- UK DfID, [Assessing the Strength of Evidence](#), How to Note, March 2014.
- [Guidance Note](#) for Lead Authors of the IPCC Report on Consistent Treatment of Uncertainties
- Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Richard Mallett, "[How to do a rigorous, evidence-focused literature review in international development](#)", ODI Working Paper, September 2013.

The approach

Assembling and classifying the evidence

Between July and September 2020, Delta 8.7 will assemble a public database of evidence on what works to achieve SDG 8.7. This will be assembled through submissions from the public using a Submission Form found [here](#) and through a parallel literature review carried out by an independently commissioned consultant – the University of Nottingham Rights Lab.

The database will be 'published' at several points during the submission period, to allow submitters to review whether certain sources have already been submitted, and thereby focus their time on adding new sources of evidence to the database.

Both public submissions and the independent review will provide specific information about 20 data-points for each piece of evidence they are submitting, allowing for classification of that evidence. (Discussed further below.)

Mapping bodies of evidence

The database will allow Delta 8.7 to use simple statistical methods – discussed further below – to map the contours of bodies of evidence relating to specific thematic areas and, potentially, specific hypotheses about *what works* to achieve SDG 8.7. The independent consultant will make a parallel assessment of bodies of evidence, using the same evaluative criteria as the Delta 8.7 statistical analysis. The two sources



of analysis of bodies of evidence will be combined into background documentation for the Policy Guide Working Groups identifying the characteristics of bodies of evidence associated with certain themes or, potentially, hypotheses.

Working Group discussion of evidence on what works

Each Working Group will meet several times during the autumn of 2020. Each Working Group will have access to the database of evidence, and to a background document identifying the characteristics of bodies of evidence associated with certain themes or, potentially, hypotheses. The Working Group will use this information to develop a short (12 to 15 page) 'Policy Guide' identifying what works and what may work to help achieve SDG 8.7 in different circumstances or contexts.

Working Groups will be furnished with a template format for this Policy Guide but will have the discretion to fill out and complete this template. For each sub-area or hypothesis addressed, Working Groups will be asked to indicate their level of confidence in the effectiveness of an intervention (or the validity of the hypothesis), again using a prescribed scale (discussed further below).

Assembling and classifying evidence: the submission process

The Policy Guides will be evidence based. The submission process aims to identify sources and bodies of evidence that are based on rigorous scientific methods and/or have been tested through government implementation.

To achieve this, Delta 8.7 invites submissions through a Google Form that gathers specific information allowing for classification of individual pieces or sources of evidence – one source per form. Here we explain each of these variables, and how submitters should choose amongst the options available for each variable.

Submitter details – name, contact email, type

On the first tab, we ask for information to allow us to identify the source of specific submissions, to be in touch if necessary, and to allow us to understand which types of groups are submitting what evidence. Submitter name and contact details will not be shared with third parties (including Working Groups). Submitter 'type' will be.

Submitters then move to a second tab, where they provide data on 20 characteristics for each piece of evidence they wish to submit to the process.

Evidence source – publication info or full title and authorship details, year, URL or hard copy

These columns gather information about the evidence source. First, submitters must provide the publication information (citation) for the source of evidence, or, if the source is not published, provide full title and authorship details. A year column captures this information separately. *If the source is published*, provide citation details and, where possible, a URL. *If the source is not published*, a copy must be shared



with Delta 8.7 via the submission form or by emailing angharad.smith@unu.edu. In sharing a copy, the submitter confirms that they are entitled to do so, and that Delta 8.7 may share the document either i) with the public or ii) with the Working Groups and Steering Group.

Topic – Basket(s), theme and hypothesis

Third, we ask submitters to indicate what basket(s), theme(s) and hypotheses the source deals with.

Baskets refers to the three broad domains that the Working Groups address – Justice, Markets and Crisis. The options here are closed. *Theme* deals with specific thematic domains within those baskets – submitters may nominate up to 3 themes per source. *Hypothesis* is a free-form option, allowing the submitter to identify the particular hypothesis or claim the source tests.

Justice	Markets	Crisis
Criminal justice	Economic policy	Conflict
Civil justice	Labor markets	Humanitarian contexts
International justice	Trade policy	Displacement
Survivor engagement and support	Supply chains	Migration
Health policy and practice	Financial regulation	
	Development policy	
Cross Cutting Themes		
Gender		
Climate/environment		
Education – including formal and vocational education but excluding training for antislavery practitioners and awareness raising		
Social policy – social assistance, welfare systems, housing policy, welfare interventions, anti-discrimination and empowerment		

Source characteristics – type, method, design, scale, geography

This set of columns captures data about the characteristics of the source.

First, we ask about the source **type**. Submitters can choose from the following types:

- A **Project Evaluation**: involves a review or evaluation of the impact or other characteristics of a specific project or programme
- A **Primary Study**: empirically observes a phenomenon at first hand, collecting, analysing or presenting 'raw' data



- A **Secondary Study**: reviews and interrogates primary studies and/or project evaluations, summarizing and analysing their data and findings. This may include literature reviews and systematic reviews
- A **Theoretical or Conceptual Source**: Many studies (primary and secondary) will include some discussion of theory, but some focus almost exclusively on the construction of new theories or concepts, rather than generating or synthesizing empirical data.

Second, we ask about the **method** used in the study or research. Submitters can choose from: Qualitative, Quantitative, or Mixed Methods.

Third, we ask about the **design** of the research. Here, submitters select from 6 research design options:

- **Experimental**: where the study involved *both* 1) manipulation of an independent variable *and* 2) random assignment of subjects to treatment groups;
- **Quasi-experimental**: where the study involved one, but not both, of the features of Experimental design;
- **Observational**: no active manipulation of independent variables or control over assignment of subjects to treatment groups. Researcher is a passive observer. This covers both:
 - quantitative designs such as: surveys; cohort and/or longitudinal design; case control; cross-sectional design; and
 - qualitative designs such as: interviews; focus groups; case studies; historical, ethnographic, political economy analysis.
- **Systematic review**: secondary studies involving exhaustive, systematic methods to search for literature on a given topic, screening for relevance and quality and using formal synthesis techniques.
- **Non-systematic review**: secondary studies involving fewer and less rigorous search, screening and synthesis techniques.
- **Not applicable**: where the study is Theoretical or Conceptual, or the research design is unclear.

Fourth, we ask about the **scale** of the research. Here, submitters indicate how many cases, instances or subjects are covered by the research:

Fifth, we ask about the **geography** of the analysis. Submitters are asked to indicate all countries the research addresses and, if applicable, the region addressed (regions defined by ILO).

Evidentiary quality

Finally, the Submission form collects data that go to the evidentiary quality of the source and Hypothesis. (For a more detailed discussion of these variables, see [this DfID How to Note](#).)

- Is the study **published**? – Yes, in a peer reviewed journal; yes, in some other location; no; don't know.
- Is the study grounded in a **clear research framework** (i.e. it acknowledges existing research, constructs a conceptual framework, poses a clear research question, states a clear hypothesis)? – Yes; somewhat; no; don't know.
- Is the study **transparent** (i.e. it shares underlying data, declares funding sources)? – Yes; somewhat; no; don't know.



- Is the study **context-appropriate** (i.e. it explains why a certain design or method were used, considers cultural or other factors that may influence the analysis, handles human subjects appropriately)? – Yes; somewhat; no; don't know.
- Are the **measurements valid** (i.e. indicators measure the concept in question, study is replicable, study accounts for endogeneity)? – Yes; somewhat; no; don't know.
- Is the analysis **reliable** (i.e. consistency in how data is gathered; measurement methods likely to gather data needed for indicator; findings seem unlikely to be influenced by analytical techniques applied to data gathered)? – Yes; somewhat; no; don't know.
- Is the analysis **cogent** (i.e. conclusions recognize limitations of design and methods; study considers alternative interpretations; conclusions map to study results)? – Yes; somewhat; no; don't know.

Mapping bodies of evidence

The database will be mapped in two ways – qualitative and quantitative – to provide one background document for each Working Group. Both approaches will, however, offer assessments of the **strength of evidence associated with specific themes and, where possible, specific hypotheses**. 'Strength of evidence' will be broken into three components:

- **Diversity** of evidence
- **Size** of a body of evidence
- **Technical quality** of the evidence

The Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham will undertake an independent *qualitative* review of the evidence submitted in the database to reach conclusions on each of these three factors for each theme and/or hypothesis (TBD, depending on the data available in the database).

In parallel, Delta 8.7 will prepare a simple *quantitative* analysis of evidence in the database associated with the same themes and/or hypotheses. This will derive mechanically from the data entered into the database. This analysis will approach each factor as follows:

- **Diversity** examines how varied the type, methods and design of the evidence associated with different themes and hypotheses is. It will draw on the scores associated with variables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in the Submission Form. This data will allow the Working Group to distinguish themes and hypotheses that have been explored through a variety of research and implementation approaches from those that are backed by less diverse evidence.
- **Size** looks at the size, scale and geographic reach of evidence associated with a theme or hypothesis. It will draw on the scores associated with variables 3.4 and 3.5, and on a count of the number of sources of evidence associated with a particular theme or hypothesis. This will help the Working Group identify themes and hypotheses that have been more extensively tested.
- **Technical quality** will be derived from data provided by submitters in the 'Evidentiary Quality' columns for each source of evidence (variables 4.1 to 4.7). These are the only subjective assessments in the submission form, so Delta 8.7 will combine measures of quality in these scores



with measures of the variability (ie distribution) of these scores. This will help the Working Group understand both which themes and hypotheses are backed by evidence that is perceived to be of what quality, *and* to see where there is consistency or variation in those perceptions.

Working Group discussions

Each Working Group will thus be presented with two inputs for its deliberations:

1. Access to the evidence database, combining all submissions (while anonymizing sources), with classification of each body of evidence against 20 variables;
2. A Background Document that maps the bodies of evidence associated with specific themes and/or hypotheses relevant to that Working Group's Basket. The Background Document will present both the Rights Lab's qualitative analysis, and the Delta 8.7 quantitative analysis, for 3 aspects of Strength for each body of evidence: Diversity; Size; and Technical Quality.

Through a series of virtual meetings, each Working Group will consider these Background Documents, and rework them, using a shared template, into a Policy Guide aimed at providing a snapshot of evidence on what may work to achieve SDG 8.7.

We anticipate the Working Groups proceeding theme by theme (and/or hypothesis by hypothesis), to:

- consider the evidence already provided, and identify evidentiary sources that are missing and need to be incorporated;
- discuss the strength of the evidence associated with each theme and/or hypothesis;
- [TO CONFIRM – ascribe a 'confidence score', using a calibrated confidence scale, to the evidence base supporting certain policy interventions or hypotheses]; and
- Identify other interventions or hypotheses that are not reflected in evidence but may be promising and explain why.

Negotiations (and drafting) will be led by the Working Group chair, with Delta 8.7 providing secretarial support.

The result will be a 12 to 15 page Policy Guide for each basket. This will be negotiated through several drafts in the autumn and winter of 2020, with an opportunity for public notice and comment around January 2021, and final revisions in February 2021. Publication is anticipated in March 2021.

