

Before [starting to investigate evaluators](#), we wrote a list of questions that we would consider. We didn't expect to be able to answer every question — rather, we focused on what we expected the biggest cruxes to be — but we wanted to have some kind of template that would help us with our evaluation.

### Worldview and approach

1. Who are the beneficiaries they want to maximise positive impact for, and to what extent do they weigh each beneficiary's interests compared to others?
  - a. I.e. who do they include in their moral circle and to what extent?
2. What do they consider positive and negative impacts for these beneficiaries?
  - a. How do they define and measure positive impact?
3. Are there further worldview-based constraints or principles they take into account in determining their recommendations?
  - a. E.g. do they screen for equality/diversity considerations?
4. Do they have any further decision-relevant views/assumptions or do they employ any further heuristics/rules-of-thumb in making their recommendations?
  - a. E.g. do they prefer certain types of evidence over others; do they try to account for harder-to-measure and/or longer-term effects; do they have any preferences for "hits-based" or "highly evidenced" recommendations?

### Quality of evaluation and grantmaking

1. Are they trying to find the highest-impact funding opportunities (according to some worldview) and acting as such? (**focus on impact**)
  - a. Do they claim they are trying to find the highest-impact funding opportunities?
  - b. Does their self-stated bar for making a recommendation imply their recommendations are among the highest-impact funding opportunities?
  - c. Can/Do they make a plausible case for why their cause area focus is in alignment with finding the highest-impact funding opportunities, given their worldview?
  - d. Can/Do they make a plausible case for why their evaluation methodology and approach is in alignment with finding the highest-impact funding opportunities, given their worldview?
  - e. Are they continuously looking for improvements so they can get to / keep finding the highest-impact funding opportunities?
    - E.g. do they invite and implement feedback?
    - Do they self-evaluate (e.g. how their past recommendations have panned out) and update as a consequence?
    - Do they learn from mistakes?
2. Do they apply the best-available evaluation methodology and practices? (**rigour/methodology**)
  - a. Do they have a sufficiently clear bar for recommendations, and a transparent test for whether funding opportunities meet that bar?
  - b. How do they sample their causes, interventions and charities?
    - Top-down or bottom-up (e.g. on request)? What heuristics do they use to choose whether to evaluate a cause/intervention/charity?
  - c. Do they use all types of evidence available?

- d. Are they good at integrating evidence to come to an overall judgement / do they apply the right methodology for this?
    - E.g. Bayesian vs frequentist
    - E.g. CEAs, their comprehensiveness, how much they are relied on, how they deal with uncertainty
  - e. Do they only look at track record and (extrapolating) cost-effectiveness estimates/results, or do they also form an inside view on the theory of change of a charities' programmes?
    - And if so, how well-founded is this, and how does this influence their evaluation?
  - f. Do they apply strategic grantmaking considerations appropriately?
    - room for funding
    - fungeing and leverage
  - g. Generally: what may they be (structurally) missing, given the framework/methodology and heuristics they use?
  - h. Do they engage in external (peer) reviews or seek expert opinions to validate their evaluations?
  - i. How do they ensure that different perspectives and voices are considered in their assessments?
  - j. To what extent are there any positive or negative externalities for charities or other actors participating in their evaluation processes?
    - E.g. do they provide useful feedback; do they ask a lot of time; do they communicate clearly; do they generally take a supportive attitude or do they sometimes do things at the expense of a charity; are there risks involved for a charity to participate in their evaluation; do they collaborate and share lessons with other evaluators?
3. Do they have the appropriate in-house resources to implement their stated methodology? (**implementation/resourcing**)
- a. How much staff time goes into (each step off) their evaluations?
  - b. Do they have the appropriate in-house expertise?
  - c. Do they have access to and utilise the appropriate external expertise?
  - d. Do they have the appropriate network, reputation and resources to get access to all the information they need?
    - Do they have access to unique funding opportunities via their network? How do these reach them?
    - Are they able to identify opportunities that others may not, e.g. due to internal expertise?
  - e. How often do they update their recommendations? How up-to-date are their recommendations?
  - f. How have organisations they've recommended performed over time?
  - g. How many mistakes do they make in their evaluations, e.g. in their CEAs?
  - h. How many charities and interventions drop out of their process and at which point? What does their "funnel" look like and is it consistent with them selecting the highest-impact funding opportunities?
    - How often do they decide not to recommend a charity they've seriously started investigating?
  - i. In how much detail do they check everything?

- How many things do they check about their recommendations (e.g. do they just check results or also organisational competence, theory of change, etc.)
  - What does their due diligence process look like
  - Do they follow up on claims by orgs (e.g. with third parties), references and citations? Do they double-check things?
  - Do they check how the money granted/recommended is ultimately used by the org they recommend / to what results it leads?
4. Are incentives internally and externally aligned with them making impact-maximising recommendations? (**incentives/conflicts of interest**)
- a. Does the organisation have other interests (such as other teams with their own goals/metrics; fundraising interests) that could get in the way?
  - b. How independent is the research team within the organisation?
  - c. How are relationships with charities set up?
  - d. Are there any downsides/upsides to the organisation to removing/recommending charities?
  - e. Are there any other potential conflicts of interest?
  - f. How have their recommendations and their processes changed over time, and why?
5. Do they communicate transparently and accurately? (**transparency/scout mindset**)
- a. To what extent do they share their reasoning for recommendations?
  - b. Is their public communication generally truthful and nuanced?
    - E.g. do they qualify their statements / avoid making overconfident claims (e.g. "this has x more impact than this")
  - c. Do they highlight their uncertainties and the limitations of their approach?
  - d. How accessible and user-friendly are their evaluation outputs for different stakeholders, including donors and charities?
  - e. Do they acknowledge and learn from their mistakes?
    - How do they react to criticism?
  - f. Does their website and other public communications accurately reflect their approach, worldview and quality, based on our evaluation?