



## PET: Practical Evaluation Tool for (art) projects

### INTRODUCTION

To start and perform a meaningful evaluation process is not an easy task: defining valid indicators, deciding what questions should be asked, whom to speak to, where to look for, how to gather relevant evidence, how to transfer information into knowledge, how to report to interested parties, these are just a few samples of the many, many factors and activities that concerns a (formative) evaluation process.

Even for experienced evaluators it takes an effort to get the evaluation process rolling, imagine how it will be for a well willing, but not so-experienced (self) evaluator. To get started, to keep a grip on the process, to keep track of one's actions and to keep an overview, ART<NOTION has developed an instrument (based on practical experience) that provides an accessible, practical and visualised tool to perform a formative (self) evaluation process, PET.

### EVALUATING WITH PET

PET focuses on to generate *qualitative information* by means of pointing out, monitoring factors/acts that are of determining influence to the process, within its own context. PET relates to transactional evaluation in a sense that it focuses on the improvement of one's actions through reflective analysis of what emerges throughout the process and that is treats each project as unique. Every single project knows its own dynamic; an evaluator must be aware and recognize this and should keep an open mind. The evaluation must be adjusted to the process and not the other way around. PET leaves enough space for the singularities of a project.

PET provides a clear and logic evaluation framework that gives a hold on the process during the realisation of a project.

PET shows *if* and above all, *how* goals are met. It generates qualitative data that can serve as a base for a founded analysis of the process. It does not pretend to give unambiguous, objective answers to the question whether a project has succeeded or not.

PET offers a solid point of departure, it creates a context, it incorporates expectations, it shows connections, it stimulates reflective abilities and it creates overview.

Therefore PET is an accessible and practical evaluation tool for complex matters that do not let themselves be measured through quantitative criteria.

### FOR WHOM AND WHY

PET is meant for (self) evaluators, project organisations, subsidizing bodies and (art) commissioners.

PET can make a process more efficient.

PET encourages organisations to reflect on, to learn from and to improve their practice.

PET is a tool to monitor and to improve quality during the realisation of a project.

PET brings about relevant information and data regarding the project, so that better-informed decisions can be made.

PET offers insight into the context and initial objectives of the project, so that the outcomes can be assesst in a more project-specific way.

PET helps organisations account for their use of resources received.

PET helps organisations to communicate successes to their stakeholders and other parties concerned.

## A formative evaluation with PET

### STEP 1

#### creating a context

Before answering 'where does this project lead to', one needs to know 'where does it derive from'

### STEP 2

#### defining indicators for success within three domains:

- 1 the artistic/content domain
- 2 the organisational domain
- 3 the audience/experience domain

No more than ten indicators of success, divided among the three domains, can capture the essence of the project.

### STEP 3

#### focus, collecting information and evidence

- Focus: defining what information is needed, where to look for it, whom to speak to, where to go to etc.
- Gathering information and evidence: monitoring, interviewing, source material and/or observation.

### STEP 4

#### evaluation dossier: arranging, analysing and reflecting information and evidence

An active and ongoing process during the realisation of the project. This step shows why PET is not just an evaluation tool but a reflection tool as well (and therefore a learning tool).

### STEP 5

#### evaluation report

The emphasis needs to be on the analysis of the evidence, and the lessons learned.

### ABOUT ART<NOTION

ART<NOTION was founded in 2005 by Drs. Machteld Willemse, and is specialised in the evaluation of projects in the cultural field. ART<NOTION is based in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Machteld Willemse, has an academic degree in cultural history and brings more than 20 years of practical experience in the field of art and culture. Since 2005 she is an independent arts consultant, specialised in the evaluation of cultural projects.

ART<NOTION has performed evaluations in commission of, among others, the following organisations:

- Mondriaanfoundation
- VSB-fund
- Province of Utrecht
- Municipality of Utrecht
- Kunstgebouw, province of Zuid-Holland
- CBK-Utrecht
- DB-Consult

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