The RQ+ Assessment Framework provides a systems-informed approach to defining and evaluating the quality of research, and its positioning for use and impact. It allows tailoring to context, values, mandate and purpose, and can support planning, management and learning processes at any stage in the lifetime of a research project, program or grants portfolio.

The RQ+ Assessment Framework consists of three main components:

1. **KEY INFLUENCES**
   - Constraining and enabling contextual influences - within or external to the research effort - most likely to affect research performance are identified.
   - The rating of the key influences using rubrics and a three point scale (e.g. low, medium, high) establishes a risk profile that is used to inform the quality assessment.
   - The key influences can be 1) constraining (negative) or 2) facilitating / enabling (positive)
   - Examples from IDRC experience:
     1) Maturity of the research field
     2) Research capacity strengthening
     3) Risk in the data environment
     4) Risk in the research environment
     5) Risk in the political environment

2. **DIMENSIONS & SUBDIMENSIONS**
   - The four dimensions and their subdimensions encapsulate the quality assessment criteria.
   - Tailored for IDRC:
     1. Research Integrity
     2. Research Legitimacy
     2.1 Addressing potentially negative consequences
     2.2 Gender-responsiveness
     2.3 Inclusiveness
     2.4 Engagement with local knowledge
     3. Research Importance
     3.1 Originality
     3.2 Relevance
     4. Positioning for Use
     4.1 Knowledge accessibility & sharing
     4.2 Timeliness and actionability

3. **EVALUATIVE RUBRICS**
   - Performance is characterized using customizable research quality rubrics.
   - Characterization of each key influence, dimension and subdimension is done using tailored rubrics that combine quantitative and qualitative measures.
   - Ratings on an 8 point scale show four levels of performance (or progress). This is an example. Scales should be created to fit a purpose or intention.

**Framework Roadmap**

- **STEP 1**: Selecting the sample
  - [selection of projects & projects’ outputs]
- **STEP 2**: Characterizing the key influences
  - [examining context & applying a rubric]
- **STEP 3**: Rating the quality of the research
  - [using (sub)dimensions and a rubric]
- **STEP 4**: Synthesizing the ratings
  - [rolling up across projects, programs, portfolios to the desired level of evaluation]

The application outlined here describes how the RQ+ Assessment Framework was applied by IDRC in summative External Program Reviews.

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