

Office of the Director of National Intelligence

Rating Scale

for

Evaluating Analytic Tradecraft Standards

With Amplified Guidance for Evaluators
(last revised on 6 November 2015)

Intelligence Community Directive 203 (ICD 203), *Analytic Standards*, effective 2 January 2015, establishes analytic standards that govern the production and evaluation of national intelligence throughout the Intelligence Community. One standard is further described in Intelligence Community Directive 206 (ICD 206), *Sourcing Requirements for Disseminated Analytic Products*, effective 22 January 2015. These directives expand on statutory requirements for standards of analytic integrity and proper analytic tradecraft specified in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. While recognizing that there is wide variety among different kinds of analytic products and target audiences, the Director of National Intelligence believes that improving US intelligence analysis is best served by having all Intelligence Community analytic elements adhere to, and measure themselves by, the common core set of rigorous analytic standards established in ICD 203.

The Analytic Integrity and Standards Group (AIS) in the Office of the Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Intelligence Integration has developed this Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) Rating Scale and associated guidance to evaluate how well analytic products prepared by agencies throughout the Intelligence Community meet the nine analytic tradecraft standards specified in ICD 203, paragraph D.6.e. This rating scale describes attributes of poor, fair, good, and excellent levels of adherence to each of these nine analytic tradecraft standards. All Intelligence Community analysts and managers of analysis are encouraged to refer to this rating scale as they enhance and evaluate their analytic tradecraft.

General Guidance

Consistency. In evaluating analytic products, evaluators should strive for consistency by measuring products against the standards using the definitions in ICD 203, this ODNI Rating Scale, and associated guidance to assess how well a product meets each standard. Evaluators are not to “grade on the curve” or otherwise weigh products against each other. ICD 203 specifies that agencies should apply the standards in a manner appropriate to the length,

purpose, classification, and production time frame of each product. Evaluators should take these factors into account to the extent that they have the information necessary to do so. A short product, for example, might treat key assumptions using only a sentence, whereas an NIE might devote a full-page text box to listing them. In cases where evaluators have taken into account a factor such as length, they should describe how the factor affected their ratings in a narrative comment. Narrative comments must justify assigned ratings. On any issue that evaluators cannot resolve themselves, they should consult with their team leaders, who in turn will seek guidance from AIS staff.

Interpretation. In seeking to be consistent in rating products against the analytic tradecraft standards, evaluators should discuss with each other issues of interpretation that arise as they conduct their individual evaluations and form consensus ratings on products. This process of surfacing and resolving differences of view should serve the goal of consistency. The overall objective should be to discuss variances in ratings resulting from different perspectives and backgrounds in such a way as to identify and clarify issues and encourage rational decisions regarding how best to address them. Evaluation team members should bring significant issues to the attention of their team leaders, who in turn will seek guidance from the AIS staff so that a vibrant learning process can occur and the evaluation process can be improved. Occasional all-hands meetings of evaluators and staff can also promote consistency.

Constructive tone. In order for evaluations to be used constructively to help analysts learn and improve their analytic performance, evaluators must specify carefully what they mean in making narrative comments about standards. AIS shares consensus evaluations with the organizations that produced the associated products. Consequently, evaluators should be especially thoughtful in constructing them. Narrative comments in consensus evaluations should be as specific and constructive as possible, and they should always be rendered using respectful and professional tone and content. Evaluators should formulate ratings and comments as though they were preparing to give useful feedback directly to the analyst who wrote the product. They should therefore be attentive to highlighting positive aspects of a product as well as to pointing out areas for improvement.

Analytic products only. The evaluations being conducted are of analytic products. Therefore, any time evaluators find themselves rating standards 2, 3, 5, or 6 as “not applicable” because they judge the product to be purely reporting or data presentation and not analysis (and therefore cannot identify any analytic judgments in it), they should bring this to the attention of team leaders. If the product does not appear to be analytic in nature, the team leaders will consult with AIS staff to determine whether it should be evaluated.

Stick to the Product. Evaluators should rate products “on their face,” that is, using only what the product presents to a reader. Otherwise, they should draw only on any relevant information that can readily be drawn from their experience and expertise. In particular, they are not to contact any analyst or producing agency unless directed to do so by AIS staff. In cases where the AIS staff wishes “special focus” to be brought to bear (for example, in examining more carefully the sourcing or accuracy of a given product), the AIS staff will specify the steps it wishes evaluators to take in extending their efforts beyond the normal level.

Methodology. Normally, two evaluators rate each product individually. They then discuss their ratings, agree upon a consensus evaluation, and mark it “pending quality control.” A third evaluator then checks the consensus evaluation for quality. The purpose of this step is to achieve maximum consistency in ratings across all products and evaluators and maximum quality in the narrative justifications accompanying the ratings. The original evaluators assist the quality checker in making any final changes, including those related to incorporating the results of any source checks. Quality review will also check product metadata, classifications, portion marking, etc. After this review, the quality checker will mark the consensus evaluation “complete.” All evaluations are entered into a database maintained on the Common Workgroup Environment used by the ODNI. This database has records for all evaluated products and is used to generate statistical information and reports of various kinds about the evaluations. On occasion, more than two evaluators may review a given product, and evaluators sometimes undertake other evaluations of particular kinds at the direction of the AIS staff (e.g., examining all sources, accuracy, collaboration, lessons learned).

Ethics. The AIS staff must be able to demonstrate that it has taken steps to ensure the fairness of its evaluation program. Evaluators do not evaluate analytic products if there is any reasonable basis for there being a conflict of interest. An evaluator will not evaluate a particular product if the evaluator or a family member or relative was involved in its production (as author, contributor, coordinator, or reviewer). If a family member or relative is responsible for the production of an analytic unit, the evaluator concerned will not review products from that unit. Also, if an evaluator has served as a mentor to an analyst, then the evaluator will not review that analyst’s products as part of the ODNI evaluation program. Every evaluator is responsible for being cognizant of and avoiding any possible conflict of interest, and evaluators are obligated to bring any they encounter to the attention of their team leader. The team leader informs the AIS Staff of any potential conflict issues and seeks guidance if necessary.

NIM. For each product, evaluators should choose from the pull-down menu the National Intelligence Manager (NIM) or NIMs responsible for the product’s topic.

Electronic products with links to additional material. In evaluating online analyses that offer electronic links to information that supplements the product’s substantive message, evaluators should explore all such links and use the information they make available in assessing the product’s tradecraft. In evaluating a product found in LNI, for example, evaluators should open “preferred rendering” and “media” links and attachments to view maps, videos, textboxes, etc. As a general rule, evaluators should consider as part of the product the content of only the first level of such links, the presumption being that consumers of electronic products would review and possibly access at least those links. If evaluators need instruction on how to access links, they should seek help from a colleague or team leader. For products with such links, evaluators should keep in mind two assumptions: (1) The main item should contain a principal analytic message, coherent and comprehensive by itself. (2) The information in the links should support the main item.

- One object for evaluation would be to note instances where the material in the link deserved inclusion in the main item.
- A link that supplies material amplifying the main item (e.g., explores strengths and weaknesses of alternative scenarios presented briefly, provides additional data on sources) might allow evaluators to award a higher rating than would have been earned by the main item alone, “crediting” the piece with information in a link.
- A link that reveals an unexplained inconsistency with the main item or presents information casting doubt on the main item’s message (e.g., extensive caveats that conflict with a high-confidence judgment, evidence at odds with the message or evidence in the main item) would justify awarding a lower rating than otherwise.

Evaluators should take into account and note the impact of information in links with respect to the specific tradecraft standard it best fits. In preparing comments, evaluators should explicitly mention the impact of link information and address whether it helps a piece. Here is an example where evaluators assigned a rating of “good” for standard four, incorporates analysis of alternatives, because of a link (without which the product would only have been rated as “fair”): “Evaluators judged that consumers who consulted the helpful link to X would be able to learn the pros and cons of the alternatives presented in summary form in this two-page product.”

Two cautions are in order. (1) Evaluators should not use links to access and evaluate a version of a product other than one that is associated with the AIS database. If evaluators find a fuller version different from one reached via an AIS database link, they should notify a team leader. (2) For links that contain sourcing information (e.g., source tabs available in CIA WIRE items), evaluators should consider only those that make available to readers endnotes or other source reference information. They are not to open and give credit for the content of link-enabled individual source reports absent instruction to do so as part of a source check evaluation.

Analytic Tradecraft Standards

Specific Requirements for Sourcing of Analytic Products

Synopsis of ICD 206 Definitions: Sourcing information shall be included in analytic products to enhance the credibility and transparency of intelligence analysis, and to assist readers in making an informed assessment of the quality and scope of sources underlying the analysis. Sourcing information shall also be structured to enable assessment of the use and utility of sourcing. Every disseminated product shall contain sourcing information, except in accordance with Sections D.4 (limitations caused by IC policy on classification and control markings and foreign disclosure and release) and D.7 (an ODNI exemption). The presentation of sourcing information shall be in the form of source reference citations (SRCs), appended reference citations (ARCs), source descriptors (SDs), and source summary statements (SSSs). Analysts should use a combination of these mechanisms to optimize clarity and reader understanding. SRCs shall be presented as sequentially numbered endnotes. ARCs are appropriate for information that

relates to analysis in a supplemental or complementary way. Their inclusion is optional; if included, they shall be listed separately from and after SRCs. SDs should be included in the main body of the text (if not, they shall be in the SRC). An SD is used in conjunction with an SRC to describe source qualitative factors germane to specific product judgments, or when the time of pertinent information in a source is significantly different from the time of publication of the source. SDs for intelligence-based or diplomatic sources shall be derived from source documents. For a source directly cited in product text (e.g., “according to...”), the SD should also appear in product text and be clearly associated. SSSs are strongly encouraged in covered analytic products to provide a holistic assessment of sourcing. The importance of including an SSS increases with the complexity of a product, complexity of the sources, or the number of sources cited. An SSS should cover the strengths and weaknesses of the source base, which sources are most important to key judgments, what sources are corroborative or conflicting, and should highlight any specific subject matter expertise used to develop the assessment.

Does the product contain source reference citation endnotes? (yes or no)

Evaluators should note whether a product has included endnotes containing source reference citations.

Does the product contain a source summary statement? (yes or no)

Evaluators should note whether a product has included a source summary statement, a practice “strongly encouraged” in ICD 206 (it need not be labeled as such).

Does the product have any ODNI-approved exemptions? (yes or no)

Evaluators should mark “yes” only if AIS staff has informed them of an exemption or if the product specifically cites an exemption.

1. Properly describes quality and credibility of underlying sources, data, and methodologies

Definition: Analytic products should identify underlying sources and methodologies upon which judgments are based, and use source descriptors in accordance with ICD 206, *Sourcing Requirements for Disseminated Analytic Products*, to describe factors affecting source quality and credibility. Such factors can include accuracy and completeness, possible denial and deception, age and continued currency of information, and technical elements of collection as well as source access, validation, motivation, possible bias, or expertise. Source summary statements, described in ICD 206, are strongly encouraged and should be used to provide a holistic assessment of the strengths or weaknesses in the source base and explain which sources are most important to key analytic judgments.

Poor (0)	Fair (1)	Good (2)	Excellent (3)
(1) Largely lacks sourcing or describes reporting base, data, or methodologies only vaguely; OR (2) Misidentifies or misrepresents cited reporting, data, or methodologies.	(1) Contains basic, generic descriptions of cited reporting, data, or methodologies; BUT (2) Provides little detail on factors that may affect the quality and credibility of underlying sources, data, or methodologies.	(1) Contains at least basic, generic descriptions of cited reporting, data, or methodologies; AND (2) Provides considerable detail on factors that may affect the quality and credibility of underlying sources, data, or methodologies.	Satisfies “good” criteria; AND (1) Identifies which sources are most important to major analytic judgments; OR (2) Provides additional detail about sources, data, or methodologies that provides insight into their contribution to the analysis.

Note: In rating this standard, evaluators should take into account all information in a product’s source reference citation endnotes, source summary statement, and main text. Paragraph portion marking should not be considered as informing readers about the source material used. Evaluators may assign “not applicable” only for a think piece presenting speculative analysis with few or no source references; in such cases, they should enter “think piece” as the comment for this standard and note that the product is a think piece in the general comment. Products should identify sources and describe source quality and credibility for any data they present, and they should identify and describe any specific methodologies they use. How well data or methodologies are used is considered in rating standard 6.

A rating of “poor” is appropriate if the only source description used is “reportedly,” “reporting,” or similarly vague terms. A rating of “fair” is appropriate if source descriptions are solely or overwhelmingly generic (e.g., “according to” clandestine reporting, special intelligence, GEOINT analysis, press reporting, etc.). A rating of “good” is appropriate if factors that may affect source quality and credibility are adequately addressed (e.g., for HUMINT, access, validation, reporting record, potential bias, etc.; for SIGINT, identities of communicants, dates of intercepts, frequency and timing of conversations, etc.; for GEOINT, quantity and timing of imagery coverage, quality and type of imagery, coordinates, etc.; for open source, association of media with organizations, political orientation, authoritativeness, etc.; for diplomatic or attaché reporting, identification of source by name or position, characterization of source’s past reporting or possible bias, regularity of contact, etc.). Evaluators should credit a report prepared by a professional US officer or observer such as a diplomat or attaché as being reliable (although failure within such a report to properly identify contacts, note timing, etc. might be grounds for withholding a rating of “good”). A rating of “excellent” is appropriate if rating criteria for “good” are met and the product links sources especially well to specific judgments or adds illuminating details about underlying sources (e.g., makes clear that the same report is cited multiple times, notes corroboration among multiple sources, discusses the impact of contrary reporting, characterizes especially well the completeness or limitations of the reporting base).

In evaluating products based solely or mainly on information drawn from one collection discipline, evaluators should not consider them disadvantaged by virtue of their not being “all-source.” For example, if a product that is especially dependent upon signals intelligence or public media information describes its sources well with respect to strengths, weaknesses, etc., it should be considered as qualified as an all-source product to receive a rating of “good” or “excellent.” A single-INT product containing only an overarching generic description of the reporting base that applies to the entire product warrants a rating of “fair” (e.g., notation in the title that a product is a SIGINT assessment, inclusion of only a general statement that a product depends on GEOINT analysis or a general reference to a type of imagery—even if accompanied by images).

2. Properly expresses and explains uncertainties associated with major analytic judgments.

Definition: Analytic products should indicate and explain the basis for the uncertainties associated with major analytic judgments, specifically the likelihood of occurrence of an event or development, and the analyst's confidence in the basis for this judgment. Degrees of likelihood encompass a full spectrum from remote to nearly certain. Analysts' confidence in an assessment or judgment may be based on the logic and evidentiary base that underpin it, including the quantity and quality of source material, and their understanding of the topic. Analytic products should note causes of uncertainty (e.g., type, currency, and amount of information, knowledge gaps, and the nature of the issue) and explain how uncertainties affect analysis (e.g., to what degree and how a judgment depends on assumptions). As appropriate, products should identify indicators that would alter the levels of uncertainty for major analytic judgments. Consistency in the terms used and the supporting information and logic advanced is critical to success in expressing uncertainty, regardless of whether likelihood or confidence expressions are used.

(a) For expressions of likelihood or probability, an analytic product must use one of the following sets of terms:

almost no chance	very unlikely	unlikely	roughly even chance	likely	very likely	almost certain(ly)
remote	highly improbable	improbable (improbably)	roughly even odds	probable (probably)	highly probable	nearly certain
01-05%	05-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%

Analysts are strongly encouraged not to mix terms from different rows. Products that do mix terms must include a disclaimer clearly noting the terms indicate the same assessment of probability.

(b) To avoid confusion, products that express an analyst's confidence in an assessment or judgment using a "confidence level" (e.g., "high confidence") must not combine a confidence level and a degree of likelihood, which refers to an event or development, in the same sentence.

Poor (0)	Fair (1)	Good (2)	Excellent (3)
<p>(1) Does not indicate levels of uncertainty associated with major analytic judgments; OR</p> <p>(2) Indicates levels of uncertainty associated with major analytic judgments that are inconsistent with the basis ascribed to them.</p>	<p>(1) Indicates levels of uncertainty associated with major analytic judgments; BUT</p> <p>(2) Does not explain their basis (e.g., by reference to strengths and weaknesses of the information base, contrary reporting, assumptions, or the nature of the judgment).</p>	<p>(1) Indicates levels of uncertainty associated with major analytic judgments; AND</p> <p>(2) Explains their basis (e.g., by reference to strengths and weaknesses of the information base, contrary reporting, assumptions, or the nature of the judgment).</p>	<p>Satisfies “good” criteria; AND</p> <p>(1) Provides especially thorough discussion of nature and sources of uncertainties affecting major analytic judgments; OR</p> <p>(2) Identifies indicators that, if detected, would alter levels of uncertainty associated with major analytic judgments.</p>

Note: In rating this standard, evaluators should focus on two elements:

- How products **express** levels of uncertainty associated with major analytic judgments.
- How products **explain** levels of uncertainty associated with major analytic judgments (evaluators should give particular weight to this element).

Expressing uncertainties associated with major analytic judgments often takes the form of references to degrees of likelihood or levels of analytic confidence. However uncertainties are expressed, the overriding consideration for evaluators should be the clarity with which products convey to readers the kind and level of uncertainty that affect the analysis. For example, if a product lacking an appropriate disclaimer mixes expressions from different rows of the likelihood spectrum presented in this standard, or uses other likelihood terms, evaluators need not penalize the rating on this standard unless the expressions cause lack of clarity in meaning.

Products need not contain expressions of analytic confidence level. If a product combines in the same sentence an explicit expression of a confidence level (e.g., “high confidence”) and an explicit expression of likelihood (e.g., “probably”), the rating on this standard should normally be penalized as such a combination causes lack of clarity.

Products should link the expression of uncertainty to its basis so readers can readily grasp the connection (e.g., “X is likely to occur because . . .” or “We have high confidence in this assessment because . . .”). Explaining uncertainties is commonly part and parcel of the evidentiary and reasoning support provided for analytic judgments, so evaluators often must review products holistically in rating this standard.

This standard is about uncertainties, but products sometimes state major analytic judgments with apparent certainty, e.g., “We judge that X will occur” or “X will occur.” In such cases, evaluators should rate products on this standard with respect to how well the apparent certainty is explained.

3. Properly distinguishes between underlying intelligence information and analysts' assumptions and judgments.

Definition: Analytic products should clearly distinguish statements that convey underlying intelligence information used in analysis from statements that convey assumptions or judgments. Assumptions are defined as suppositions used to frame or support an argument; assumptions affect analytic interpretation of underlying intelligence information. Judgments are defined as conclusions based on underlying intelligence information, analysis, and assumptions. Products should state assumptions explicitly when they serve as the linchpin of an argument or when they bridge key information gaps. Products should explain the implications for judgments if assumptions prove to be incorrect. Products also should, as appropriate, identify indicators that, if detected, would alter judgments.

Poor (0)	Fair (1)	Good (2)	Excellent (3)
Does not distinguish among statements that convey underlying information, assumptions, and judgments.	(1) Sometimes distinguishes among statements that convey underlying information, assumptions, and judgments; OR (2) Does not explicitly state assumptions that serve as linchpins of an argument or bridge key information gaps.	(1) Consistently distinguishes among statements that convey underlying information, assumptions, and judgments; AND (2) Explicitly states assumptions that serve as linchpins of an argument or bridge key information gaps.	Satisfies "good" criteria; AND (1) Identifies indicators that, if detected, could validate or refute judgments or assumptions; OR (2) Explains the implications for judgments if assumptions are incorrect.

The essence of this standard is simply "distinguishing." In many cases, the main distinction is between underlying information and comment, or, as some policy officials have advised intelligence analysts: "tell me what you know, tell me what you don't know, then tell me what you think." Considered in this fashion, statements based on intelligence reporting or other information should be clearly distinguished from what analysts add to their products in terms of explanation, assumptions, judgments, or other forms of commentary. Statements sometimes are ambiguous as to whether they are intended to convey judgments or assumptions, and assertions can be particularly problematic to interpret. Evaluators may use instances when they cannot tell whether a statement is meant to convey underlying information, conclusions, or assumptions as reasons for considering a rating less than "good."

If evaluators do not identify any unstated assumptions, they need not include this observation in the comment. If, however, they identify unstated assumptions that serve as linchpins of an argument or bridge key information gaps, they should specify them in the comment, note that

their absence is a tradecraft shortfall, and assign a rating lower than “good” for this standard. In addition, evaluators may assess the role that assumptions, stated or unstated, play in argumentation or analysis in rating standard 6.

4. Incorporates analysis of alternatives.

Definition: Analysis of alternatives is the systematic evaluation of differing hypotheses to explain events or phenomena, explore near-term outcomes, and imagine possible futures to mitigate surprise and risk. Analytic products should identify and assess plausible alternative hypotheses. This is particularly important when major judgments must contend with significant uncertainties, or complexity (e.g., forecasting future trends), or when low probability events could produce high-impact results. In discussing alternatives, products should address factors such as associated assumptions, likelihood, or implications related to U.S. interests. Products also should identify indicators that, if detected, would affect the likelihood of identified alternatives.

Poor (0)	Fair (1)	Good (2)	Excellent (3)
Does not present alternatives when uncertainties, complexity, or low probability/high impact situations warrant their inclusion.	(1) Presents alternatives when uncertainties, complexity, or low probability/high impact situations warrant their inclusion; BUT (2) Does not explain the evidence and reasoning that underpin them or discuss their likelihood or implications related to U.S. interests.	(1) Presents alternatives when uncertainties, complexity, or low probability/high impact situations warrant their inclusion; AND (2) Explains the evidence and reasoning that underpin them; AND (3) Discusses their likelihood or implications related to U.S. interests.	Satisfies “good” criteria; AND Identifies indicators that, if detected, would affect the likelihood of any identified alternatives.

This standard requires analysts to make explicit in their products alternatives they have considered in the course of their analysis. It is based on the principles that such consideration is a routine part of the analytic process rather than a special or exceptional practice, and that it is essential for any analysis affected by significant uncertainties. Dissenting views count as alternatives. In rating this standard, if a structured analytic technique is used to explore alternatives, evaluators should focus on the alternatives; assessing how well the technique contributes to the clarity or structure of an argument should be included in rating standard 6. Evaluators should use common sense in recognizing instances where no or brief treatment of alternatives is acceptable, taking into account product length and purpose. A straightforward short current intelligence item that presents an alternative might meet this standard by using only one sentence to explain it as long as it also treats the alternative’s likelihood or implications related to US interests (specific reference to the United States or its interests is not required).

If evaluators assign a rating of “poor” to a product for failing to present an alternative, they must specify the alternative that they assess should have been considered (which must relate to

a major analytic judgment) and why it should have been included. If evaluators assign “not applicable,” they must specify why they believe analysis of alternatives was not required (e.g., no identifiable plausible alternative, no significant uncertainties or complexity, application of “common sense”).

In evaluating NIEs, evaluators should consider the following questions:

- **Does the NIE consider the prospects for and potential implications of change and alternatives (even if key judgments project continuity)?** For example, does it: Consider a broad range of possibilities, including as appropriate nonlinear projections and potential discontinuities? Explore the potential for factors that could upset key assumptions and judgments such as key dependencies or contingencies?
- **Does the NIE explain differing analytic judgments within the IC (if they exist)?** For example, does it: State the key differences clearly? Explain the basis for each view? Identify key uncertainties that prevent reconciliation of differing views?

5. Demonstrates customer relevance and addresses implications.

Definition: Analytic products should provide information and insight on issues relevant to the customers of U.S. intelligence and address the implications of the information and analysis they provide. Products should add value by addressing prospects, context, threats, or factors affecting opportunities for action.

Poor (0)	Fair (1)	Good (2)	Excellent (3)
(1) Provides little or no information or analysis beyond what is generally known; OR (2) Does not respond adequately to a specific tasking.	(1) Provides useful information and analysis but does not address implications; OR (2) Does not address an important issue or question raised by the analysis; OR (3) Satisfies a specific tasking only partially.	(1) Provides useful information and analysis and addresses near-term, direct, or first-order implications; AND (2) Adds value by addressing at least one of the following: trends or prospects, appropriate context, insight gained from synthesizing a large volume of information, warning of threats to U.S. interests, or factors affecting opportunities for U.S. actions (without prescribing U.S. policy); OR (3) Satisfies a specific tasking fully.	Satisfies “good” criteria; AND (1) Assesses longer term, indirect, or second-order implications; OR (2) Provides exceptionally expert analysis (e.g., by drawing on multiple disciplines or presenting illuminating comparisons); OR (3) Warns of threats in detail (e.g., by discussing specific indicators, likelihood, or imminence); OR (4) Analyzes in detail factors affecting opportunities for U.S. action (e.g., by discussing risks, benefits, or possible reactions to potential U.S. actions).

Evaluators should consider the broadest possible spectrum in considering who the customers of a product might be (low-level or specialized as well as senior or national level) and what relevance the product might have for them (even products that are narrow in scope or largely descriptive may have value).

In considering the “implications” products should address, evaluators should interpret them to be inferences drawn from the analysis that affect US interests in the world, broadly defined. Colloquially speaking, stating such implications is often referred to as answering the questions

“so what?” or “why should a recipient care to read this?” By and large, products should “address” such implications explicitly in order to satisfy the first criterion for a rating of “good.” Evaluators may choose, however, to exercise some leeway for cases in which stating the main such implication or affected US interest would be to state so obvious and clear a point as to be better left implicit.

If evaluators discern policy prescription in a product, they should point it out in their narrative comments, stating clearly how it differs from desirable opportunity analysis. In such cases, they may assign a rating of “fair” if the product provides useful information or analysis, but they may not assign a rating of “good” or “excellent.” Evaluators often will not know whether a product responds to specific tasking, so they need not take this factor into account unless the tasking is noted in the product.

In evaluating NIEs, evaluators should consider the following questions:

- **Does the NIE add value by providing context and insights likely to help consumers think strategically about the topic?** For example, does it: Supply multidisciplinary perspective? Apply subject matter expertise to advance understanding of the topic? Integrate diverse factors to illuminate trends? Identify potential points of leverage available to US policy officials?
- **Does the NIE describe strategic choices facing key actors?** For example, does it: Explore their perceptions, intentions, and objectives? Address their capabilities for acting on their goals and plans? Describe their decision-making context, incentives, and constraints?

6. Uses clear and logical argumentation.

Definition: Analytic products should present a clear main analytic message up front. Products containing multiple judgments should have a main analytic message that is drawn collectively from those judgments. All analytic judgments should be effectively supported by relevant intelligence information and coherent reasoning. Language and syntax should convey meaning unambiguously. Products should be internally consistent and acknowledge significant supporting and contrary information affecting judgments.

Poor (0)	Fair (1)	Good (2)	Excellent (3)
(1) Lacks a main analytic message; OR (2) Does not support analytic judgments with relevant evidence or undermines them by using flawed logic; OR (3) Often uses unclear language or uses a structure that is not easily understood.	(1) Presents a main analytic message; BUT (2) Does not combine evidence, context, and assumptions effectively to support analytic judgments or uses weak logic; OR (3) Sometimes uses unclear language or a structure that at times is not easily understood.	(1) Presents a prominent and clear main analytic message; AND (2) Presents clear reasoning with no flaws in logic and effectively combines evidence, context, and assumptions to support analytic judgments; AND (3) Uses clear language and a structure that displays a logical flow appropriate for the argument being presented.	Satisfies “good” criteria; AND (1) Addresses any inconsistent or contrary information in a way that reconciles it with analytic judgments; OR (2) Demonstrates notable skill or sophistication in combining evidence, context, and assumptions convincingly to support analytic judgments.

This standard requires products to present a clearly understood main analytic message and to support that message and any other key judgments through logical structure, sound reasoning, effective marshaling of evidence, and clarity of exposition. The emphasis for this standard is on the reasoning, whether it makes up almost all of a highly analytic think piece that presents little evidence or constitutes only a thin thread in a largely descriptive item. Evaluators are not to rate products on writing style or editorial practices. They should, however, assess a product’s clarity, structure, and understandability with respect to how well they convey and explain key points. If evaluators identify assumptions in rating standard 3, they should include assessment of their role in argumentation in rating this standard.

In rating this standard, evaluators should consider the following questions: Can readers readily grasp the main points and see how they are supported? Are the title, summary, and text

consistent with one another? If a structured analytic technique is used, how understandable is it to readers and how well does it enhance the analysis?

7. Explains change to or consistency of analytic judgments.

Analytic products should state how their major judgments on a topic are consistent with or represent a change from those in previously published analysis, or represent initial coverage of a topic. Products need not be lengthy or detailed in explaining change or consistency. They should avoid using boilerplate language, however, and should make clear how new information or different reasoning led to the judgments expressed in them. Recurrent products such as daily crisis reports should note any changes in judgments; absent changes, recurrent products need not confirm consistency with previous editions. Significant differences in analytic judgments, such as between two IC analytic elements, should be fully considered and brought to the attention of customers.

Poor (0)	Fair (1)	Good (2)	Excellent (3)
Does not note or explain that a major analytic judgment differs from previous production.	(1) Does not note that a major analytic judgment is consistent with previous production; OR (2) Notes how a major analytic judgment compares with previous production but does not explain how new information or reasoning supports changing or maintaining an existing analytic line.	Notes how a major analytic judgment compares with previous production and explains how new information or reasoning supports changing or maintaining an existing analytic line.	Satisfies "good" criterion; AND Highlights and explains how a major analytic judgment compares with judgments on the topic held within the U.S. intelligence community, not just within the same analytic element.

Evaluators will not routinely assign a rating for this standard using the rating scale (the product record will show the rating as "not applicable," the default value). However, they will determine if a product contains a statement that describes how a major judgment represents a change from, or is consistent with, a judgment stated in a previously published product or is a first-time appearance. If no such statement is found, no comment is necessary. If such a statement is found, evaluators will enter as a comment whichever word best describes the nature of the comparison ("Change" if the statement indicates a change or a first-time appearance; "Consistent" if the statement indicates a judgment consistent with previous production) followed by a verbatim copy of the statement (if possible, cut-and-paste from the product). To ensure consistent entries, use an initial cap for the selected word and follow it with a period. Comment example: Change. The judgment in this product that President X is now prepared to accept a cease-fire is a change from our previous view that he was set on continuing the conflict.

If AIS directs evaluators to rate this standard using the rating scale for a specific project

(e.g., to determine if unacknowledged “analytic drift” in IC coverage of a topic has occurred), evaluators shall follow the guidance AIS will provide for the project. The phrase “previous production” refers to the most recent judgment on the same topic by the same IC analytic element (i.e., agency) that published the product being evaluated. For the purposes of this standard, a product that indicates it is addressing an issue or stating a judgment for the first time, or that indicates it is altering the level of uncertainty associated with an important judgment, will be considered to have explicitly noted change. Citation of previous products containing judgments comparable to a major judgment does not, by itself, satisfy the standard’s requirement that products state and explain change or consistency with respect to their analytic judgments.

In evaluating memos to holders of NIEs or other updates of previous analytic judgments in NIC products, evaluators should consider the following questions: Does the product explain the significance of the current judgment? Does it make clear whether the judgment is the same as or different from previous judgments? If a judgment has changed, does it explain what circumstances or factors prompted the change, the basis for the new judgment, and why it matters?

8. Makes accurate judgments and assessments.

Analytic products should apply expertise and logic to make the most accurate judgments and assessments possible, based on the information available and known information gaps. In doing so, analytic products should present all judgments that would be useful to customers, and should not avoid difficult judgments in order to minimize the risk of being wrong. Inherent to the concept of accuracy is that the analytic message a customer receives should be the one the analyst intended to send. Therefore, analytic products should express judgments as clearly and precisely as possible, reducing ambiguity by addressing the likelihood, timing, and nature of the outcome or development. Clarity of meaning permits assessment for accuracy when all necessary information is available.

First phase: Determine whether judgments and assessments are stated clearly.

Unclear	Conditioned	Unconditioned
Judgment or assessment is not expressed clearly.	Judgment or assessment is expressed clearly and is conditioned (e.g., by an “if/then” statement).	Judgment or assessment is expressed clearly and is not conditioned (e.g., by an “if/then” statement).

Second phase: Determine accuracy of judgments and assessments.

Accurate	Not Accurate	Indeterminate
Judgment or assessment is found to be accurate.	Judgment or assessment is found to be not accurate.	Accuracy could not be determined for any of several reasons: (1) Nature of judgment or assessment prevented assessment of accuracy. (2) Data needed to assess accuracy were not found. (3) Irreconcilable views among evaluators prevented agreement on a final assessment of accuracy.

In evaluating this standard, evaluators use a database (STD 8/9 DB) different from the one used for evaluating standards 1-7, and they conduct the evaluation in two phases.

First phase. Each evaluator identifies up to three judgments for assessment. For each judgment, evaluators use pull-down menus to enter their DNI-number, an order-of-importance number (1, 2, 3), a time descriptor (P, C, or F, for past-, current-, or future-oriented), a category (unclear, conditioned, unconditioned), the judgment itself (portion marked and verbatim

without quotation marks), and any expression of confidence or likelihood. Explain the category selection in the comment box. The following conditions justify categorization as “unclear”:

- *Vague “possibility” language.* Terms such as “may” and “might,” or expressions such as “suggest that X will occur,” “risks [unspecified],” or “is possible.”
- *Relative probability.* Information on relative or changing likelihood with no mention of a baseline (e.g., “has raised the risk that,” “would increase the potential for”).
- *Mental state.* Phrasing such as “is likely to distrust,” “would weigh these factors in choosing,” or “is becoming more concerned.”
- *Vague concepts.* Expressions such as “would create an opening to,” “faces serious challenges to,” “could aggravate,” or “may be emboldened by.”

If a product provides context or specifics that make clear the meaning of a judgment that by itself would be assessed as unclear, or if it lacks a baseline for a clearly stated judgment about relative change, categorize the judgment as conditioned or unconditioned and note the special condition in the comment. If a product uses a confidence or likelihood expression not in the pull-down entries, enter “other.” For apparent certainty (e.g., “X will occur”), enter “other” for likelihood. If there is no confidence level, enter “none” for confidence. For future-oriented conditioned or unconditioned judgments, enter a “harvest date” when accuracy can be assessed. Use any specified date, time period, or other indication (e.g., three years for “mid-term,” five years for “long-term”). In the absence of such indication, make a best estimate or enter a date one year after the product date. Restate the judgment as a neutral fact (enabling an unbiased true/false call) and select the National Intelligence Officer (NIO) best able to assess the neutral fact as true or false. Restating the judgment usually entails stripping away elements such as confidence levels, likelihood expressions, or other caveats (negatives and dates should be retained). For example, convert “We assess with high confidence that X will not happen before 1 July 2016” to “X did not happen before 1 July 2016” (not to “X happened”). Finally, reach consensus on judgments to enter as “DNI-CONSENSUS” records and enter those records into the STD 8/9 DB.

Second phase. Team leaders periodically direct evaluators to assess the accuracy of judgments whose harvest dates have passed. When so directed, conduct brief online research, rate each judgment’s accuracy (accurate, not accurate, indeterminate), and justify the rating in the comment box (use specific sourcing). Limit research time to a half hour, search classified information first, and do not disclose classified information if accessing the Internet (follow the rules in CIA’s agency regulation AR 9-24, (U) Official Use of the Internet). For indeterminate items, recommend to team leaders if a new harvest date should be assigned. If a predicted development can be assessed for accuracy but a condition or causation the judgment associates with the development does not obtain or cannot be determined, assign a rating, check the indicated box, and note the absence of or inability to determine the condition or causation in the rating comment.

Finalization. Neutral-fact judgment restatements are sent to appropriate NIOs, who render and justify true/false assessments. AIS engages with NIOs if necessary to resolve differences, and producers are offered the chance to comment on judgments assigned final ratings of not accurate.

9. Incorporates effective visual information where appropriate.

Analytic products should incorporate visual information to clarify an analytic message and to complement or enhance the presentation of data and analysis. In particular, visual presentations should be used when information or concepts (e.g., spatial or temporal relationships) can be conveyed better in graphic form (e.g., tables, flow charts, images) than in written text. Visual information may range from plain presentation of intelligence information to interactive displays for complex information and analytic concepts. All of the content in an analytic product may be presented visually. Visual information should always be clear and pertinent to the product's subject. Analytic content in visual information should also adhere to other analytic tradecraft standards.

Poor (0)	Fair (1)	Good (2)	Excellent (3)
(1) Does not use visual information when its use would have substantially complemented or enhanced an analytic product; OR (2) Presents visual information that is inconsistent with or not pertinent to the text of an analytic product, or that confuses or detracts from an analytic product's presentation.	(1) Presents visual information that is pertinent to an analytic product; BUT (2) Does little to clarify (illustrate, summarize, or provide greater detail), complement, or augment data or analytic points in an effective manner that enhances customer understanding of a product's analysis.	(1) Presents visual information that is pertinent to an analytic product; AND (2) Clarifies (illustrates, summarizes, or provides greater detail), complements, or augments data or analytic points in an effective manner that enhances customer understanding of a product's analysis.	Satisfies "good" criteria; AND Takes particularly effective advantage of visual presentational methods to convey data or analytic points in a way that enhances a product's value by making complex issues more understandable, adding insight or perspective, increasing knowledge retention, or highlighting trends, drivers, or indicators.

In evaluating this standard, evaluators use a database (STD 8/9 DB) different from the one used for evaluating standards 1-7. Evaluators should rate this standard for any product that contains visual information. They may assign "not applicable" if a product contains no visual information and does not need any. In such cases, no comment is necessary.

If evaluators assign a rating of "poor" for failure to use visual information that would have substantially complemented or enhanced a product, they must describe the item they believe should have been included and explain how its absence affects the product.

In assessing whether visual information is presented effectively, evaluators should consider the pertinence of the information, the soundness and creativity of design, the amount and “density” of displayed data, whether a visual impedes or facilitates customer understanding, ease of navigation for interactive products, and the clarity with which legends, icons, scales, tables, or maps frame or present information. For example, a rating of “fair” is appropriate if a product’s visual information is difficult to grasp or interpret (e.g., overly dense or complicated).

Quality rather than quantity should drive ratings of visual information. For products that use multiple visual items, formats, etc., evaluators should rate this standard on the overall balance of strengths and shortcomings of the entire body of work.

If evaluators encounter elements of visual information related to other analytic tradecraft standards (e.g., the sourcing of data in a chart), they should take them into account in rating those standards.

If evaluators are evaluating a standalone graphic product, they should consult with a team leader. In most cases, they will rate all applicable analytic standards including this one. In doing so, evaluators should take into account holistically how the standards apply. For example, text, the dominant feature of written products, often becomes a complementary feature of standalone visualization products. In such products, key points important to rating one or another standard may be found in visuals, in the text, or in both.

Comments

Are there any indications of analytic collaboration?

Evaluators should record in the free-text “collaborative product comment” field any indications of analytic collaboration evident in a product. Often it is easiest to copy-andpaste excerpts. Include references to co-authorship or contributions, collaboration within an agency or production unit, coordination, or any other indications of collaboration found anywhere in a product. The aim is to note collaboration between and within organizations, not specific analysts; indeed, be sure to omit names of individuals, which should not be stored in the AIS database. At AIS discretion, entries in this comment field will be used to support AIS studies of analytic collaboration.

While checking for and recording collaboration, evaluators should double-check the producing and contributing organizations listed in the product record. If joint production or co-authorship involving organizations other than those listed as producers is noted, tell a quality checker or team leader so the producing organization field can be corrected. If contributions involving organizations other than those listed as contributing are noted, add non-listed organizations to the contributing organization field using the pull-down menu accessed via the “add contributing org” button.

General comment.

Evaluators should craft a paragraph that summarizes the ODNI tradecraft evaluation, beginning with a topic sentence that depicts the product’s overall adherence to applicable standards. The paragraph should address all rated standards (even if only in a few words), noting strengths and weaknesses as well as any significant suggested improvements. Evaluators may also include broader observations—for example, a “greater than the sum of the parts” statement that the product was one of the most comprehensive treatments of a topic encountered by ODNI evaluators. In rare instances, the comment may include an observation about tradecraft that reflects differences in evaluators’ interpretations. Evaluators should craft the comment carefully as it is the lead element in the evaluation reports that AIS shares with producing agencies and thus serves as both an introduction to and a synopsis of the evaluation.

Classification

Evaluators will portion mark each comment in an evaluation using standard classification shorthand (e.g., S//HCS//NF). Such portion marking usually will derive from portion marking in the product being evaluated (e.g., to account for inclusion in a comment of classified product titles or classified quotations cited from a product’s text). The basic rule, however, is to portion mark comments according to content. For example, a quoted passage might properly be classified at a lower level than the portion mark of the paragraph from which it was excerpted. If classification is required for some reason other than accounting for an item derived from a product (e.g., identification of an NIPF intelligence topic), evaluators should consult the AIS classification guide. If unsure how to portion mark a comment, evaluators should contact a team leader for specific guidance. If a comment contains no classified information and requires no special dissemination or handling controls (e.g., LES, SBU, FOUO), it may be marked U.

Evaluators will also assign a classification to the entire evaluation (individual or consensus), using the pull-down menu (which uses somewhat fuller expressions than shorthand). In so doing, they must account for the product's title and all elements in the evaluation's narrative comments, including any passages quoted in the evaluation. For example, if the product is TS//HCS/SI//NF but the title is C//NF and the comments are S//HCS, then the appropriate classification for the evaluation would be SECRET//HCS//NOFORN. Evaluators should not introduce information into a comment that is more highly classified than the product being evaluated, and they should avoid including ORCON information where possible. If an evaluation contains no classified information and requires no special dissemination or handling controls, it may be marked UNCLASSIFIED.

Finally, for classified consensus evaluations, evaluators will enter appropriate information regarding eventual declassification. The default entries that appear automatically assume no classified quotations from a product and envisage declassification 25 years in the future for consensus evaluations at the CONFIDENTIAL or SECRET level. The default entry for the first element (classified by) is an identifier associated with a senior AIS staff officer, and it should be left as is. For the other elements (derived from, reason, declassify on), evaluators should, if necessary, replace the default entries with entries appropriate to the content of the evaluation (including the product's title). When in doubt, evaluators should use the declassification information associated with the evaluated product.

Evaluation Checklist

Product title, production date, classification of product match AIDB entries?
Producing organization(s), contributing organization(s) correctly identified in AIDB?
Another version of AIDB product indicated? (Tell QCer if issues with any of these.)

NIM(s) selected?
Three Y/N questions answered?

Correct ratings entered?
Topic sentences of comments and comments as a whole match ratings?
Comments refer to rating criteria and are analytic and clear?
Comments included for NA ratings for standards 1 or 4?
No special characters or other problems in comments (e.g., from pasting Word)?
Acronyms handled properly (e.g., expanded in general comment, first time used)?
Collaboration box entry supplied if appropriate?
Spell/grammar check run on Word version of evaluation?

Comment portion marks appropriate (e.g., consistent with cited passages)?
Comment portion marks properly formatted (e.g., parens closed, slant lines correct)?
Overall evaluation classification consistent with classification of product metadata, comments, STD 8/9 database entries, etc.? Declassification instructions correct?

Standard 8/9 database entries made? Do they alter overall classification of evaluation? Is standard 9 performance included in general comment?

Final, double-check step: review entire evaluation from perspective of a recipient in the producing organization. Findings clearly presented? Tradecraft performance described accurately, fairly, helpfully? Is it ready for AIS to post or send?