EvalAgenda2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020

Developed by a global,
multi-stakeholder consultative process

EvalAgenda2020 | EvalPartners

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013, EvalPartners, the global movement to strengthen national evaluation capacities, declared 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation (EvalYear). This was reinforced when the UN General Assembly passed Declaration A/RES/69/237, *"Evaluation Capacity Building for the Achievement of Development Results at Country Level.*[1] Many additional stakeholders, including the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the OECD/DAC EvalNet, joined the movement.

In 2014, in partnership with the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS), the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), the Independent Evaluation Office of UN Women, and the Global Evaluation Facility (GEF), EvalPartners started a global, multi-stakeholder consultative process to brainstorm about the priorities and key areas of a Global Evaluation Agenda for 2016-2020, which we call "EvalAgenda2020." This addresses priorities for evaluation during the first five years of the 15-year period addressed by the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2015, this agenda-setting consultation continued face-to-face in over 92 global, regional and national EvalYear events,[2] with each event invited to contribute additional ideas to EvalAgenda2020. The Bangkok Declaration, 2015, from the joint IDEAS and UNDP-supported National Evaluation Capacities (NEC) conference added the voices of national governments and evaluation practitioners worldwide.[3] Each event passed to the next event an Olympic-style "Evaluation Torch" to symbolize that the consultation was enriched by each additional event, culminating at the Global Evaluation Forum held in Kathmandu, Nepal the last week of November 2015. The Forum aimed to bring together key stakeholders to finalize EvalAgenda2020 and begin to develop actions plans to implement it. The purpose of full version of the EvalAgenda2020[4] is to capture the results of these many consultations over the past 15 months.

---

[1] See UN resolution at http://www.unevaluation.org/mediacenter/newscenter/newsdetail/105.

[2] EvalYear events are listed at http://mymande.org/evalyear/evaluationtorch2015.

[3] The Bangkok Declaration is included in Chapter B.1.of the full version of EvalAgenda2020.

[4] The full version of the Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020 is available at http://www.evalpartners.org/

Evaluation Has Enormous Potential to Help Improve Society

Many persons, organizations, and countries increasingly understand the role that evaluation can play in contributing to effective governance at the local, national, and global levels. By influencing policy makers, other key stakeholders, and public opinion, evaluation can help to ensure that public policies, programs, and processes are informed by sound evidence and lead to effective and equitable results, thus improving people's lives.

It is clear, then, that evaluation as a tool for effective governance is increasingly becoming respected and implemented. The importance of evaluation was highlighted in the context of the SDGs, also called the Global Goals, crafted through the largest consultation process ever documented by the United Nations. "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" states that review of the SDGs will be "rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations"; and it also calls for the "strengthening of national data systems and evaluation programs".[5]

Evaluation is not simply a value-neutral management tool. EvalPartners' members are united by a shared commitment to promoting and supporting equitable and sustainable human development. Our alliance promotes evaluation processes and criteria grounded in **values** *of equity, gender equality, and social justice and on shared principles of partnership, innovation, inclusivity, and human rights.*

The consultation for EvalAgenda2020 has shown that evaluation, in order to reach its fullest potential, must combine effective methods and techniques and the values that drive policies geared to the public interest. That is, we collectively support evaluation as a value-driven tool for improved policy-making, governance, program design, program implementation and ultimately, to achieve outcomes that are more equitable, inclusive and sustainable for all people. And we are aware that in order to achieve such expectations we need to focus on both the demand and supply dimensions of the evaluation process.

However, Evaluation Has Not Yet Reached Its Full Potential

Despite its success and growing acceptance in many parts of the world, evaluation has not yet been embraced as widely as it should be. In many organizations and countries, there is inadequate appreciation of what evaluation is, how it differs from policy research, performance measurement or performance auditing, and how it can help improve on a practical level policy-making and program implementation efforts.

---

5   For the SDGs see http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

The fact that evaluation—a relatively new discipline—is not yet fully embraced on a global scale encourages us to increase our efforts and strengthen our commitment to realize its potential. It is the gap between potential value and current acceptance that motivates us to work harder towards improving evaluation quality and usefulness and spread its bene-fits worldwide and across all segments of society, including the private and voluntary sectors.

Our Vision for Evaluation in the Year 2020

With hope and persistence, we visualize a much better world. We dream of a changed society. And we work towards a transformed global commu-nity characterized by transparency, accountability, and progress towards the common good. We recognize the need to draw the lessons gained in pursuit of the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as we turn our sights to addressing the even more demanding challenges of the 17 SDGs that imply universal respect for human rights, equality and nondiscrimi-nation: The overriding message of the SDGs is "to leave no one behind", to ensure "targets are met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society".

How can evaluation help to achieve this dream? Our vision for 2020 is that evaluation is an integral part of all efforts by governments, civil society, and the private sector to improve the lives and conditions of all citizens. Our vision is that high-quality and value-driven evaluation can improve the design and implementation of these efforts, track their progress, make mid-course corrections and assess final outcomes and impacts with a view to social learning across policies, programs and initiatives.

Our vision is that evaluation has become so embedded in good governance that no policy maker or manager will imagine excluding evaluation from the decision making toolbox, dare hold an important meeting or reach an import-ant decision without having reviewed relevant evaluation information. Equally evaluators, whether internal or exter-nal, will use whatever methods and approaches are most appropriate to the situation to generate high quality, ethical information pertinent to the issues at hand.

At the same time, we envisage that evaluation will help to amplify the voice of all stakeholders, particularly the marginalized and disadvantaged. We know from experience the difference that evaluation can make in illumi-nating the realities of specific contexts by unpacking the complexity that peoples, organizations and communities face in struggling to address economic, social and environmental issues. We have seen the beneficial

impact that principled evaluation can have in democratic settings when evaluators work in a neutral way with all stakeholders to contribute data, analysis and insights to assess results, identify innovations and synthesize learning towards improved outcomes.

In our vision, four essential dimensions of the evaluation system make up the core of EvalAgenda2020. These are: (1) the enabling environment for evaluation, (2) institutional capacities, (3) individual capacities for evaluation, and (4) inter-linkages among these first three dimensions.

Our vision of a strong **enabling environment** is that:

- All sectors of society *understand* and *appreciate* the value of evaluation

- Evaluation is explicitly required or encouraged in national evaluation *policies* and other *governance* and *regulatory instruments*

- Sufficient *resources* are allocated for evaluation, at all levels

- Credible, accessible *data systems* and repositories for evaluation findings are readily available

- Stakeholders are eager to *receive* and *utilize* evaluation information

- Evaluation receives due recognition as a profession

- The ownership of public sector evaluations rests with national governments based on their distinctive needs and priorities and with full participation of the civil society and the private sector

Our vision of strong **institutional capacities** is that:

- A sufficient number of relevant institutions, including but not limited to Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs); government agencies, Civil Society organizations (CSOs), academia and institutions that generate and share relevant data exist to develop and support evaluators and evaluation

- These institutions are capable of appreciating and facilitating quality evaluations

- These institutions are skilled at collaborating with other relevant and involved institutions

- These institutions are able to resource quality data generation and evaluations as required, make information readily accessible and are ready to follow-up on evaluation findings and recommendations

- These institutions are able to continually evolve and develop as the evaluation field advances

- Academic institutions have the capacity to carry out evaluation research and run professional courses in evaluation

Our vision of strong i**ndividual capabilities for evaluation** is that:

- Developing individual capacity for evaluation will be relevant not only to evaluators, but also to commissioners and users of evaluation

- Commissioners and users of evaluation will have a sound understanding of the value of evaluation, processes for conducting high quality, impartial evaluations; and more commitment to using evaluation findings and recommendations

- Sufficient *numbers* of qualified evaluators, drawn from a diversity of relevant disciplines, are available to conduct *high quality* evaluations in all countries and all subject areas

- These evaluators have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to make appropriate use of generally accepted evaluation *principles, theories, methods* and *approaches*

- Evaluators have integrated the **values** discussed above and are *culturally sensitive*

- Evaluators continually *learn* and improve their capabilities

Our vision of strong **inter-linkages** among these first three dimensions is that:

- Governments, parliamentarians, VOPEs, the United Nations, foundations, civil society, private sector and other interested groups dedicate resources to joint ventures in the conduct of evaluations, in innovation in the field of evaluation and evaluation capacity building

- A common set of terms exists in all languages to disseminate and share evaluation knowledge

- Multiple partners in evaluation regularly attend national and international learning opportunities

- The "No one left behind" principle stated in the SDGs is embedded as a key value that goes across three building blocks of evaluation system – enabling environment, institutional capacities and individual capacities for evaluation.

The four dimensions do not operate in isolation but are connected in diverse ways in different countries, sectors and situations. In the full version of the Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020 there is a chapter devoted to each dimension that explains the respective conceptual framework and theory of change. The following diagram illustrates the relationships between the dimensions. The relationships are dynamic, with overlapping influences, partners and drivers; yet at the same time, all dimensions are working like a vortex pulling the various dimensions ever closer towards better outcomes. Each partner (institutions, individuals and evaluation users) contributes a distinct part to the whole through the mutually supportive and interconnected dimensions of the Agenda.

What Is Needed to Reach This Vision

This then is the vision for evaluation in the year 2020, but for none of these four dimensions is this vision the current reality. Much work and a great deal of experimentation lies ahead for each dimension, and the EvalPartners consultations over the past 15 months have surfaced many challenges. The chapters of the full version of the Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020 document provide a glimpse of the great diversity of initiatives initiated or planned for each dimension of EvalAgenda2020. Each chapter provides definitions, draws together key threads from the respective consultation, highlights strategies and priority (not comprehensive) areas for action and outlines the higher level and interim outcomes that are expected to be accomplished towards the EvalAgenda 2020 vision.

It is our collective hope and intention that by advocating for the many initiatives and activities outlined in this Global Evaluation Agenda the global evaluation community will be able to make significant contributions to attaining EvalVision2020, and the attainment of all the SDGs, for the benefit of humankind. Each partner in this global community, including but not limited to IOCE and EvalPartners, including donors, governments, VOPEs, CSOs, media, private sector, will each have their roles to play.

"Together we can!"

EvalAgenda2020

Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020