



# Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020

**DOROTHY LUCKS**

Secretary, International Organization for Cooperation  
in Evaluation, EvalPartners Executive Committee,  
Co-Chair EvalSDGs, Executive Director SDF Global

**ASELA KALUGAMPITIYA**

EvalPartners Executive Coordinator

**The importance of evaluation.** Increasingly individual professionals, organizations, countries, regions and global organizations understand and acknowledge the role that evaluation can play in contributing to effective governance. Evaluation provides evidence and realistic analysis that influences policymakers, as well as wider public opinion. Evaluation helps to ensure that public policies, programmes, and processes are informed by sound evidence and lead to effective and equitable results, thus improving people's lives.

The importance of evaluation was further highlighted in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (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 programmes".<sup>18</sup> It is clear, then, that evaluation as a tool for effective governance is increasingly becoming respected and implemented.

**EvalYear 2015 culminates in the preparation of EvalAgenda2020.** In 2014, EvalPartners, with the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), with other partners started a global, multistakeholder consultative process to raise the voices of evaluators, participants in evaluation and users of evaluation results to identify key focus areas for a 'Global Evaluation Agenda' for 2016-2020 or EvalAgenda2020. In parallel to the consultation for the SDGs, the evaluation community worked hard to have 2015 declared as the Year of Evaluation or 'EvalYear 2015'. These efforts were successful and during 2015, dialogue continued face-to-face in over 92 global, regional and national EvalYear 2015 events,<sup>19</sup> with each event invited to contribute additional ideas to EvalAgenda2020.

18 For the SDGs, see <<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>>.

19 EvalYear events are listed at <<http://mymande.org/evalyear/evaluationtorch2015>>.

The Bangkok Declaration, 2015, from the joint International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) and UNDP-supported National Evaluation Capacities (NEC) Conference added the voices of national governments and evaluation practitioners worldwide.<sup>20</sup> 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.

**A Values-based Agenda.** EvalAgenda2020 is important in many ways: it is of a **participatory nature** as it was developed in consultation with the global evaluation community. Months of online consultation on top of face-to-face dialogues around the world ensured valuable inputs and participation of professionals from all corners of the globe: there is an *ownership of the agenda* by those who contributed to its development as well as anyone interested in taking part in implementation. There is an *implementation focus* as any individual, any organization, any government or interested party can contribute to implementation of any part of the EvalAgenda2020 by implementing relevant evaluation initiatives in respective geographies as long as it aligns with the key 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 policymaking, governance, programme design, programme 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.

**Sharing the vision.** 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. We strive for high-quality and value-driven evaluation that 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, programmes and initiatives.

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

EvalAgenda2020 has been summarized into four essential dimensions. These are: (1) the enabling environment for evaluation, (2) institutional capacities, (3) individual capacities for evaluation, and (4) interlinkages among these first three dimensions.

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20 The Bangkok Declaration is included in Chapter B.1 of the full version of EvalAgenda2020.

A strong **enabling environment** will ensure 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

Strong **institutional capacities** will underpin evaluation initiatives:

- 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

Strong **individual capabilities** for evaluation will support delivery of quality evaluation:

- 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

**Interlinkages** among these first three dimensions increase effectiveness:

- 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 road ahead.** The four dimensions do not operate in isolation but are connected in diverse ways in different countries, sectors and situations. Each partner (institutions, individuals and evaluation users) contributes a distinct part to the whole through the mutually supportive and interconnected dimensions of the Agenda.

How can evaluation help to achieve the EvalAgenda2020 dreams and objectives? 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 policymaking and programme implementation efforts. The vision for evaluation in the year 2020, requires much work and a great deal of experimentation. The EvalPartners consultations surfaced many challenges and opportunities. These are outlined in more detail in the full EvalAgenda2020.

**Working together.** Each stakeholder has a different role in the EvalVision2020. Any individual or organization working in line with the EvalAgenda2020 directions is considered a global partner in building evaluation capacity and contributing to better global evaluation outcomes.

**The role of EvalPartners.** EvalPartners acts as a global lead partnership that is committed to promoting and supporting initiatives to address the priorities of the Global Evaluation Agenda. Immediately after the release of the EvalAgenda2020, EvalPartners launched seven global networks and other initiatives in support of EvalAgenda2020 implementation. These are designed to engage a wide range of stakeholders in global action.

**EvalGender+** is a global partnership to strengthen national capacities for gender-responsive and equity-focused evaluations, and believes that no one should be discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, age, origin, caste or class, ethnicity, location, income or property, language, religion, convictions, opinions, health or disability.

**EVALS** (**E**valuation – adding **V**alue **A**nd **L**earning to the **SDGs**) is a network of interested and skilled policymakers, institutions and practitioners who advocate for the evaluability of the performance indicators of the SDGs and support processes to integrate evaluation into national and global review systems. EVALS members work to support the evaluation community to be prepared for evaluating initiatives towards better outcomes for the SDGs and ultimately, the ‘World We Want’.

**EvalYouth** wants to promote **Y**oung and **E**merging **E**valuators (YEEs), including young women, to become technically sound, experienced and well-networked professionals in promoting evaluation culture at national, regional and international levels.

**Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation**, officially launched at the Parliament of Nepal on 25 November, has a goal of advancing the enabling environment for nationally owned, transparent, systematic and standard evaluation processes in line with the principles of “No one left behind” and National Evaluation Policies at the country level that are aimed at contributing to good governance and sustainable development.

**EvalIndigenous** is a multistakeholder partnership which, through the recognition of the different world views and valuing the strengths of indigenous evaluation practices, will advance the contribution of indigenous evaluation to global evaluation practice.

The **Professionalization of Evaluation** network seeks to advocate for and advance the role and power of evaluation by identifying and encouraging various initiatives to develop and codify principles, standards and competencies for evaluators and those who commission evaluation.

The **State of Evaluation** will summarize significant elements of evaluation policies, systems and environments at the country, regional and international levels.

**What can you do?** EvalAgenda2020 articulates a collective hope and intention that by advocating for the many initiatives and activities outlined in the Agenda, the global community will be able to make significant contributions to strengthening the evaluation sector, building the capacity of individuals in the ability to conduct and use evaluations and together this will contribute to attaining 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.

**Top Ten National EvalAgenda2020 actions.** Collectively, the following actions can be considered to address EvalAgenda2020’s priorities and improve evaluation outcomes:

1. Increase awareness on the EvalAgenda2020
2. Organize and conduct integrated ‘stakeholder consultations’ between governments and evaluation professionals to identify national evaluation priorities

3. Organize sessions around EvalAgenda2020 in national conferences and events
4. Actively engage the government, policymakers and other stakeholders in implementation of national adaptation of EvalAgenda2020
5. Nominate representatives to the EvalPartners Networks who can actively participate in the respective thematic areas
6. Take steps to establish national evaluation policies and systems
7. Strengthen evaluation capacity of public officers
8. Use evaluation findings for evidence-based policymaking
9. Establish evaluation guidelines and ethics at national level
10. Ensure resource allocation for evaluation from the national budget

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 EvalAgenda2020 vision.

The full text of EvalAgenda2020 can be found at: [http://mymande.org/evalyear/shaping\\_the\\_2016\\_2020\\_global\\_evaluation\\_agenda](http://mymande.org/evalyear/shaping_the_2016_2020_global_evaluation_agenda)

To learn more about any of EvalPartner Networks, you are invited to go to the relevant Forum on [www.ioce.net](http://www.ioce.net) and look for the Concept Notes.