



Community of Evaluators-Nepal

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## Feedback on OECD/DAC Criteria for Development Evaluation

### 1 INTRODUCTION

We, the Community of Evaluators-Nepal (COEN), are a national-level voluntary organization of professional evaluators (VOPE) working in Nepal. We took notice of the open solicitation from OECD/DAC for suggestions for the refinement and modification of the criteria for development evaluation. Accordingly wanted to contribute our thoughts for the same. Accordingly, we carried out a national-level consultation amongst COEN members and other stakeholders in order to generate thoughts for the same.

We like to offer our observations and thoughts with the hope that OECD/DAC team will consider in the review process. Our suggestions are organized in two aspects – reorientation in approaches and framework, and suggestions for the criteria and their interpretation.

### 2 REORIENTATION IN EVALUATION APPROACHES/Framework

Following aspects might be useful to while setting the evaluation criteria

- a. **Country-specific adaptation:** Existing approaches and evaluation criteria are primarily premised upon an assumption that “development interventions” are carried out by external agencies. We see a need to consider more country-driven orientation in development evaluation.
- b. **Integrity of evaluation process and evaluators/commissioners.** We see that the quality of evaluation and its use (e.g. particularly management response) will depend upon and be shaped by the integrity in the evaluation process – including in the defining the TOR of evaluators, their selection, the relationship between evaluators and the evaluation commissioners, and the conduct and use of evaluation itself. We suggest that appropriate evaluation ethics and codes of conduct are set in place and upheld amongst key actors.
- c. **Social justice.** Given that some goals/indicators of sustainable development goals concern with social justice, and that the idea receives considerable societal preference and demands from social movements, it needs an explicit recognition in the evaluation criteria.
- d. **Consider complex and dynamic nature of the intervention:** In the rapidly changing context such as climate change and technologies, we think evaluation criteria need to capture the dynamic nature of context and be informed by possible future changes where possible.
- e. **Tailoring to project/intervention types.** We suggest that evaluation criteria be tailored to specific intervention types. For this, it may be useful to identify ‘core’ criteria, and additional criteria that will be specific to particular policy, or program or project interventions.

### 3 SUGGESTIONS FOR CRITERIA AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

Below we suggest the criteria with our definition. Our definition largely confirms to what is commonly understood, but indicate subtle differences and focus as well.

**Design and coherence:** The extent to which appropriate and participatory planning processes took place; the coherence among input, activities, outputs, outcomes, impact; the extent to which the theory of change is well articulated.

**Relevance:** The extent to which the intervention conforms to the needs of participants and other stakeholders, compliments existing initiatives, and aligns with organizational mandates and policies.

**Efficiency:** The extent to which resources and inputs are managed and used in an optimal way.

**Partnerships and coordination:** The extent to which effective partnerships were established and maintained; the extent of alignment and contribution to the coordination mechanisms.

**Effectiveness:** The extent to which intended outcome-level results are being achieved.

**Impact:** The lasting changes—positive and negative, intended and unintended—arising from the intervention.

**Sustainability and replicability:** The degree to which processes started and results obtained are likely to remain in place and replicated to other areas after intervention completion.

**Social justice (Equity, Gender and Rights).** This should include whether interventions are equitable, recognize relevant rights of communities, and whether they promote gender equity and social inclusion.

- **Equity:** The extent to which the intervention is made accessible to and is accessed by different social, cultural and economic classes of people of different sex, age, ability/disability under various development stages and geographies.
- **Gender equality:** The extent to which the intervention integrates a gender perspective (gender mainstreaming) and addresses issues such as power relations and social transformation, equal inclusion and participation, and the empowerment of women and marginalized groups.
- **Rights:** The extent to which the intervention is guided by rights standards (human rights, animal rights, etc) and principles following a rights-based approach and addressing issues such as non-discrimination, participation, accountability and social transformation.

**Leaving no one behind:** The extent to which the intervention has paid attention to the dignity of the of all kind of people including vulnerable groups.

**Learning:** The extent to which experiences and insights that were gained throughout the project/ programme; the extent to which both positive and negative lessons emerged; the extent to which innovative approaches used in interventions generated distinct results.

Please also note that our inputs are focusing mainly on the evaluation of plans/programmes/project/ intervention. However, there is growing demand for evaluating policy and institutional effectiveness. We hope that the broader consultation will give due attention to the peculiarities related to policy and institutional evaluations.

We also feel that the effect on environment protection of any initiative/intervention is another concern that should be included as part of evaluation criteria. There is vast literature on environment impact assessment to draw from. We hope that the broader consultation will provide some guidance on the extent to which an evaluation should consider environment (including biodiversity) protection where this is appropriate.

For more information, please contact: Ram Chandra Khanal, (email: [khanalrc@gmail.com](mailto:khanalrc@gmail.com)),  
Chairperson, Community of Evaluators (CoE) – Nepal