



UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

Professionalization of Evaluation Concept Paper

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Section 1. Background

Purpose of the Document

This concept paper provides a framework for thinking about the professionalization of evaluation at the global level and provides specific direction regarding the roles of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). It looks at setting up a professionalization system that would apply the UNEG Competency Framework¹, provide a platform for evaluation professional development and strengthen the professionalization of evaluation at the organizational level.

The Context

UNEG is an interagency professional network that brings together the evaluation units of the United Nations system, including United Nations departments, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and affiliated organizations. It currently has 45 members and three observers.

The ultimate decision-making of UNEG takes place at its Annual General Meeting, where UNEG members make decisions by consensus. Between Annual General Meetings, an Executive Group makes decisions concerning the ongoing UNEG work as mandated by the Annual General Meeting. The Executive Group is composed of vice-chairs of each of the Strategic Objectives².

Recognizing that evaluation is essential for advancing development, enabling change and building on previous UNEG achievements, it is imperative that the Executive Group continues to strengthen evaluation strategies and mechanisms in the United Nations system. Furthermore, for evaluation as a practice to be taken seriously, it needs to distinguish itself as a profession. This requires policies, strategies and practices within United Nations agencies that bring about changes within agencies and, by implication, at the staff level.

The 2015–2016 UNEG work plan includes activities aimed to continue advancing the professionalization of evaluation in the United Nations system. A volunteer working group, composed of various United Nations agency representatives, was formed in 2014 to address these activities. The Vice-Chair of UNEG Strategic Objective 1 (evaluation functions and products of United Nations entities meet the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation) oversees the group, whereas the two co-conveners (International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Population Fund)³ facilitate the work of the group. The group builds on the work of the past Evaluation Capacities Development Task Force and is represented by the following agencies: United Nations Population Fund, International Civil Aviation Organization, UN Women, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, International Labour Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization, Office of Internal Oversight Services, UNDP and UN-Habitat .

Developing the Concept Paper

The following methods contributed to the development of this concept paper:

¹ Evaluation Competencies for the UN System for Evaluators, Evaluation Unit Heads and Commissioners of Evaluation, 27 June 2016, UNEG.

² The UNEG strategy 2014-2019 has four strategic objectives, which each has a vice-chair responsible for and coordinating work under the specific objective.

³ Ms. Judita Jankovic (International Civil Aviation Organization) and Ms. Andrea Cook (United Nations Population Fund)

Desk Review

A desk review was carried out in order to ensure that this concept paper builds on the work previously carried out by UNEG and other organizations (see Annex A).

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with stakeholders (both internal and external to the United Nations system) currently involved in evaluation professionalization efforts (see Annex B). Interviews explored the following questions:

- What are some of the strengths and limitations of the current competencies?
- What has been learned from current professionalization efforts?
- What elements should be included in a professionalization framework?
- Which of those elements are appropriate for UNEG to undertake?
- What is an appropriate role for UNEG?

A summary of the key themes emerging from the interviews is attached in Annex C.

Round-table discussions

UNEG facilitated a round-table discussion regarding evaluation professionalization at the American Evaluation Association in Chicago in November 2015. A summary of themes emerging from this discussion is attached in Annex D. In addition, a round-table discussion regarding the future direction of professionalization occurred at the EvalPartners meeting in November 2015 in Kathmandu. A summary from that discussion is attached in Annex E.

Input from the Professionalization Working Group

The draft concept paper was shared with and reviewed by the UNEG Professionalization Working Group.

Input from attendees at the UNEG Evaluation Week

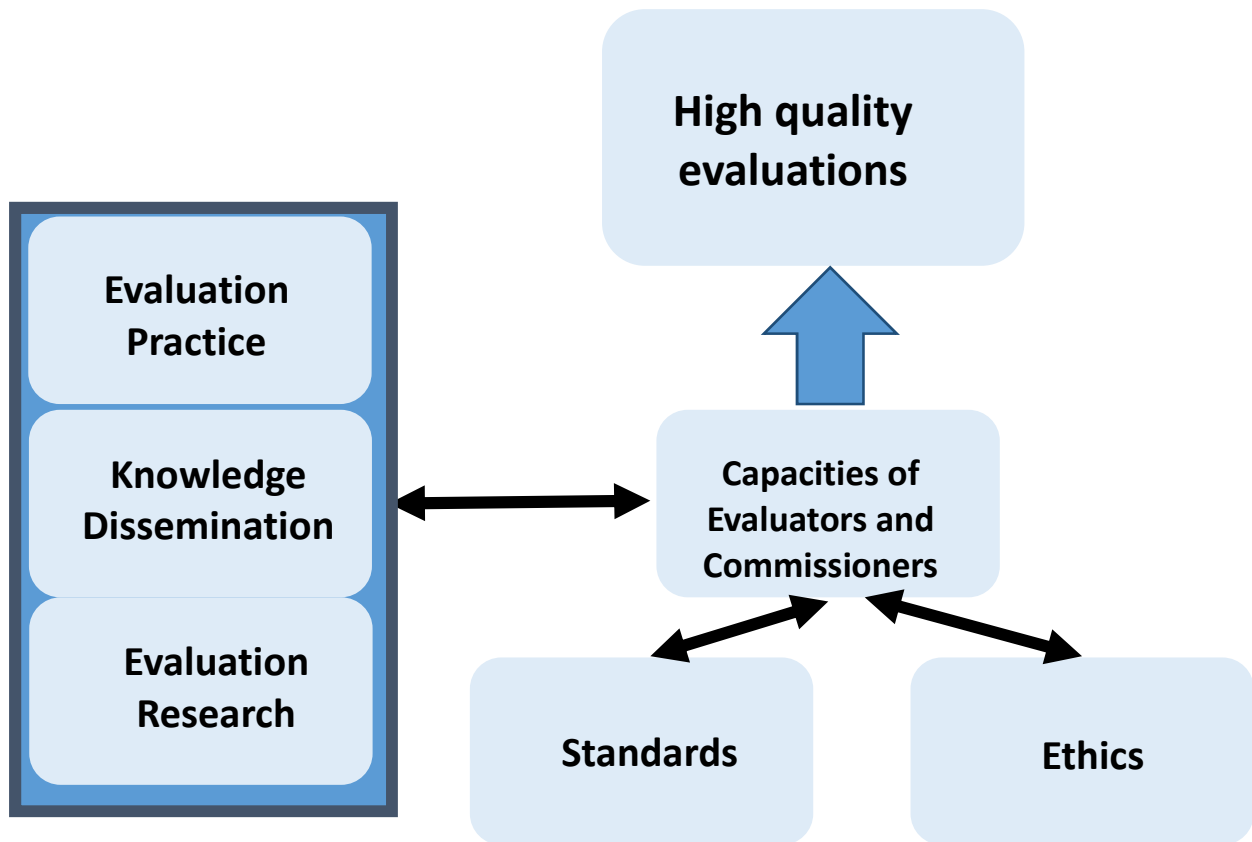
Individual interviews were arranged with eight evaluator managers during the UNEG Evaluation Week in Geneva (2016); feedback on professionalization from UNEG members as a group were noted. The feedback emphasized that professionalization is thought of differently at head offices and in field offices where evaluation is only a part of an individual's job responsibilities. There was agreement that while professionalization includes commissioners and users, the emphasis of professionalization needs to be placed on full-time evaluators with expectations being set fairly high.

The Concept of Professionalization

The concept of professionalization of evaluation is complex, with varying perspectives across United Nations agencies. The views regarding professionalization and the appropriate roles for UNEG were influenced by the size of the agency, the understanding of what is included in professionalization and individual world views. For example, some United Nations agencies (e.g. International Labour Organization, UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women) embrace the idea that United Nations agencies have a role to play in building national evaluation capacities and are already carrying out activities to do so. Other United Nations agencies are more focused on building evaluation capacities within their own organizations and look to UNEG to play a supportive role.

The UNEG Professionalization Working Group developed a theory of change that includes its planned activities, the intended outputs of those activities and the intended outcomes for a number of different stakeholders (see Annex F). Figure 1 depicts a more streamlined theory of change emerging from the Global Evaluation Agenda.⁴ This streamlined theory of change is consistent with the UNEG theory of change, and can be used to think about the goals and objectives at the global level. This more general approach supports the concept of linking clarity of the United Nations’ evaluation professional goals (through evaluation practice and research) to the development of norms, standards and ethical guidelines, which in turn should lead to enhanced expectation from United Nations evaluators who produce high-quality evaluations that are used by United Nations decision-makers.

Figure 1: The Global Evaluation Agenda Professionalization Theory of Change⁵



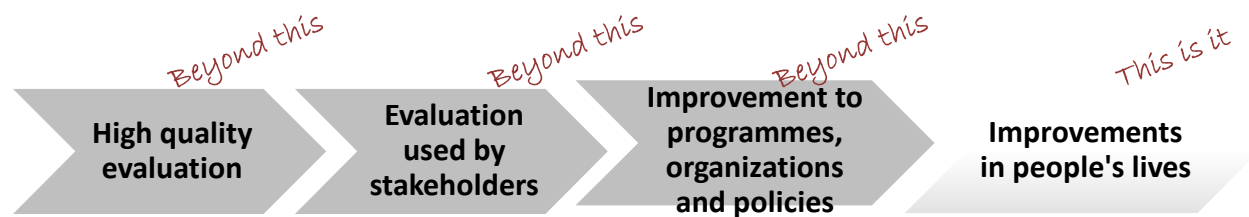
⁴ At the November 2015 meeting of EvalPartners in Kathmandu, Nepal, funders and representatives from voluntary organizations for professional evaluation agreed to a global framework that supported local adaptation. The proposed theory of change emerging from this discussion articulates the key objectives of professionalization.

⁵ EvalPartners (2016) Global Agenda 2016–2020.

The Goals of Professionalization

A primary goal of the professionalization of evaluation is to strengthen the overall evaluation function in order to support high-quality evaluations. However, it is important to go beyond that and ask why we need high-quality evaluations and what the ultimate goals of conducting a high-quality evaluation are. Most evaluators would answer: in order to improve programmes. Some evaluators would go beyond that to think about evaluation as a means of contributing towards improving people's lives (see Figure 2). The research conducted for this paper found that many evaluators' thinking stops at high-quality evaluation. However, emphasis is increasingly being placed on evaluations being used⁶ to improve programmes that have the potential to transform people's lives.⁷

Figure 2: What are Evaluations that Make a Difference?⁸



In applying this thinking, the goal of professionalization is to strengthen the overall evaluation function in order to support high-quality evaluations that have the potential to improve people's lives.

Section 2. A Professionalization Framework

There are a number of components that support professionalization, with many different perspectives on setting appropriate priorities. Those involved in the discussion of professionalization at the November 2015 EvalPartners meeting in Kathmandu agreed that the components depicted in Figure 3 provide a high-level framework for conceptualizing professionalization. Within this framework, individual organizations, voluntary organizations for professional evaluation and governments can articulate their unique priorities and roles. Hence, adoption of this framework allows UNEG to define its concept of professionalization within a global perspective while taking into account the unique needs of the United Nations context.

United Nations agency staff emphasized that in the professionalization of evaluation, UNEG must consider the overall United Nations context and the roles that it plays in evaluation. These roles vary, depending on the United Nations agency. For example, UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women have been considerably involved with EvalPartners and the promotion of a global movement to strengthen evaluation capacities at the global, institutional and individual level. The UNDP National Evaluation Capacity Conference supports creating enabling environments that help build national evaluation capacities. United Nations agency staff emphasized that although all agencies are interested in improving their evaluation capacity, not all (particularly smaller ones) have the resources for such involvement.

⁶ Patton, Michael Q (2008) Utilization-focused evaluation, Sage Publication.

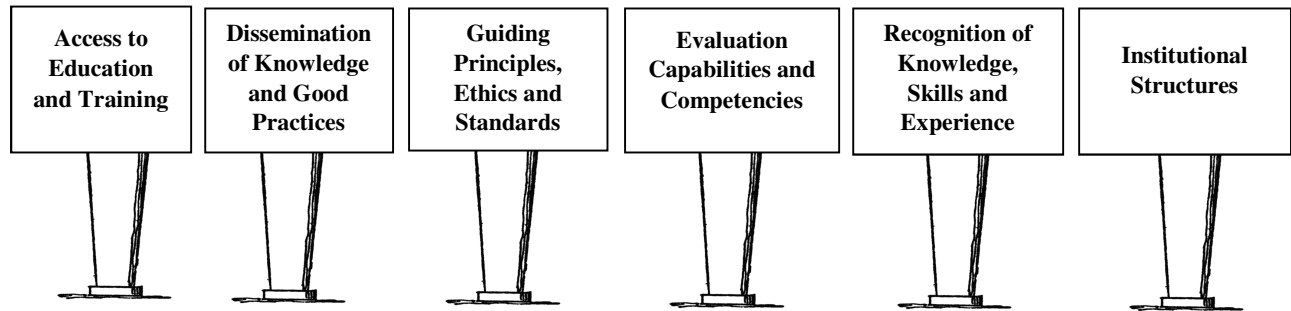
⁷ Mertens, Donna (2009) Transformative Research and Evaluation, Sage Publications.

⁸ Evaluations that make a difference: Stories from around the world (2015).

The perspective on professionalization also varies between head, regional and national offices, where evaluation is frequently part of an individual's job responsibilities. Generally, evaluators and evaluation managers practising within an evaluation unit at head offices expressed a greater interest in professionalization.

Figure 3 provides an overview of a global professional framework. This was developed as part of EvalPartners' global evaluation agenda. Although it is likely to evolve further, it nonetheless provides a starting point for conceptualizing professionalization.

Figure 3: Six Pillars that Support Professionalization of Evaluation



UNEG can choose to focus on components that are relevant to its context and that determine roles that support the selected priorities. It should be noted that UNEG and its member agencies are already doing work within many of the components, including developing norms and standards and evaluation competencies. However, more can be done to share good practices, to coordinate efforts across UNEG and to seek opportunities for further progress. The following describes each of the pillars and its implications for the UNEG context.

Access to Education and Training

This pillar includes:

- Academic training that allows entry into the profession of evaluation;
- Ongoing professional development through academic institutions; and
- Mentoring and training that occurs on the job through formal and informal mechanisms.

Access to formal academic training is particularly an issue in developing countries where access to postgraduate programmes in programme evaluation is limited. International Program for Development Evaluation Training and other evaluation training service providers are helping to close that gap. However, some people interviewed felt that this was not sufficient. Further, interviewees generally did not see UNEG as playing a role in post-secondary education leading to becoming a professional.

UNEG could play a role in two areas: professional development for practising evaluators and professional development for managers, commissioners and evaluation users.

Evaluation users were seen as particularly important and directly linked to creating an enabling environment for evaluation. Suggestions included UNEG taking a stronger role in professional development related to evaluation and collaborating with the UN College to provide professional development opportunities for evaluation managers, commissioners and evaluation users. This would build on the initiatives already undertaken by some United Nations agencies (e.g. International Labour Organization, United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF and UN Women) to provide ongoing professional development opportunities as well as entry into evaluation through internships.

Dissemination of Knowledge and Good Practices

Knowledge management and transfer is becoming increasingly important in fields such as health and education; entire systems have been established to support defining, identifying and disseminating information on best practices. Identifying best practices requires research that contributes to the body of evaluation knowledge, a current rarity in evaluation. Nevertheless, there is an extensive body of literature based on grounded theories about good practices that is disseminated through publications and shared at conferences.

UNEG could encourage further research good practices in evaluation and support conferences or events in developing countries. UNDP has already taken a step towards dissemination through its biennial National Evaluation Capacity Conference. UNICEF and UN Women have supported EvalPartners with projects that provide for developing knowledge of good practices and for sharing of knowledge and experience. Regional evaluations conducted by some agencies already provide a basis for development of evaluation knowledge. UNEG could play a role in disseminating such knowledge across the United Nations system. In addition, UNEG could support increased collaboration across United Nations agencies for knowledge development and sharing.

Guiding Principles, Ethics and Standards

UNEG has already developed ethical guidelines, norms and standards for evaluation. So have some countries such as Canada and South Africa. As early as 1991, the Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD-DAC) had developed principles for evaluation of development assistance.⁹ DCD-DAC has also developed quality standards for development evaluation. The American Evaluation Association and the Canadian Evaluation Society have developed joint standards that are used to guide evaluations carried out in those countries.

There is extensive overlap in all of these standards. UNEG member agencies provide programmes primarily to developing countries, hence UNEG would focus more on ethical guidelines and standards for development evaluation. UNEG is ensuring that its own ethical guidelines, norms and standards are consistent with the latest thinking through an ongoing revision process. Given the role of United Nations agencies in building national evaluation capacities, UNEG could actively participate in, if not support, global efforts to streamline guiding principles, ethical guidelines and standards for evaluation.

⁹ Development Cooperation Directorate Development Assistance Committee (1991) Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance, Paris

Evaluation Capabilities and Competencies

There are a number of competency frameworks for evaluators developed by the Canadian Evaluation Society, the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) and the Japanese Evaluation Society, and jointly by the European Evaluation Society (EES) and the United Kingdom Evaluation Society (UKES). The South African government has developed competencies in consultation with the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association.

Davies and Brummer¹⁰, through a survey of United Nations agencies, mapped out the extent to which UNEG organizations are using competency frameworks and job descriptions for recruiting staff; they found it varied greatly among United Nations agencies. Their report provided a summary of other international organizations that have a competency framework for individual evaluators, such as International Finance Corporation, the UK Department for International Development and the World Bank.

There is substantial consensus that evaluation competencies are important, both for evaluators and evaluation managers. In keeping with the concept that professionalization of evaluation is not limited to individual evaluator competencies, UNEG developed competencies in 2008 for heads of evaluation departments and evaluators. The competencies build on the work of King and colleagues who, in 2001¹¹, developed a taxonomy of essential evaluator competencies. The core competencies for evaluators go into detail regarding competencies in five main categories:

1. Knowledge of the context of the United Nations;
2. Technical and professional skills;
3. Interpersonal skills;
4. Personal attributes; and
5. Management skills.

The competencies distinguish between levels of evaluators within the United Nations system, which vary from P1 to P5 and are based on the salary grading system. Davies and Brummer¹² carried out a comparison of competency frameworks. They concluded that UNEG should revise its competencies “so that there is only one set independent of the level or nature of position held.” While this is consistent with most evaluation associations, IDEAS distinguishes between evaluators, evaluation managers and evaluation commissioners. The Department for International Development (DFID) makes a similar distinction. This is consistent with the most recent direction of thinking about the professionalization of evaluation rather than just evaluators. Furthermore, Davies and Brummer¹³ noted that the competencies are not being used consistently in hiring and professional development. It will be important for the revised competency framework to provide guidance on how the competencies can be applied within a human resource context.

UNEG took a decision during the 2014 Annual General Meeting to revise the 2008 competency framework in order to update the competencies needed for evaluation in a contemporary global context. The revision is intended as one important component and activity in the professionalization agenda of UNEG.

¹⁰ Davies, Ian C. and Julia Brummer (2015) Final Report to the UNEG Working Group on Professionalization of Evaluation.

¹¹ King, Stevahn, Ghere, Minnema (2001) Toward a Taxonomy of Essential Evaluator Competencies.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

Recognition of Knowledge, Skills and Experience

While there is extensive support for developing competencies, there is still significant resistance to formal mechanisms that recognize those competencies (mechanisms include credentialing, accreditation or licensing). This appears as the most controversial topic when discussing professionalization. Credentialing is seen as the most flexible approach, with licensing being the most rigid as it generally is set within a legislative framework that only allows individuals to practice if they are licensed.

Canadian Evaluation Society, Japanese Evaluation Society and the Thailand Evaluation Networks have each established a credentialing system. EES and UKES are piloting a voluntary evaluator peer review initiative, which in many ways is similar to the Canadian Evaluation Society model. Both are voluntary, and both include a competency-based review process by other evaluators. The primary difference between the Canadian Evaluation Society model and the EES/UKES model is that with the Canadian Evaluation Society, the review is carried out by a credentialing board comprised of recognized leaders in the evaluation field. IDEAS and the Polish Evaluation Society (PES) are considering the development of a credentialing system.

The experiences of those involved in developing a credentialing mechanism indicate that the process for developing a system needs to ensure adequate consultation (in order to help members understand the benefits), and to hear concerns so that they can be addressed. Some of the concerns raised through the processes of developing credentialing mechanisms include:

- Exclusion of country-based evaluators because they do not have easy access to education that is required for entry into the profession. The Canadian Evaluation Society has addressed this by developing a prior learning assessment and recognition tool; and
- The cost of credentialing can prevent some emerging evaluators from obtaining the requisite credentials.

Although a few people interviewed strongly supported the development of a credentialing mechanism, others were strongly opposed. Given the extensive activity of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation in developing credentialing systems, UNEG would only duplicate the efforts. While UNEG could establish a mechanism for recognizing a credential conferred by a voluntary organization for professional evaluation, at this point it should not tie the hiring or engaging of evaluators to having such credential because such credentials are not consistently available globally. However, this is likely to change over the next five to ten years.

Opportunities for career advancement and promotion already exist within the United Nations system. This could be refined and expanded through the use of the competencies to support individuals in preparing for promotions and planning career advancement. The competencies could be used by managers to assess readiness for promotion. Meeting expectations of most competencies and exceeding expectations of some competencies is an indication of readiness for promotion to the next level. UNEG also could also support the development and use of common self-assessment tools across United Nations agencies.

More than one United Nations agency raised the issue of finding well-qualified consultants. Developing a roster of external evaluators was suggested for recognizing the qualifications of those evaluators who undertake evaluation contracts. This was seen as a potential role for UNEG. However, it requires a fairly

complex system that is supported by dedicated staff. As a volunteer organization, UNEG is not in a good position to implement this. There was also concern that some United Nations agencies do not want to share their list of competent evaluators so that they are not taken by other agencies. One suggested approach is to develop a roster through the online service Linked-in. The evaluators themselves would need to keep their information current. It would still require some work to maintain, but would be substantially easier than a UNEG-based roster.

Institutional Structures

Davies and Blummer¹⁴ indicated that United Nations institutional and organizational conditions are an essential element of professionalization. This was echoed by voluntary organizations for professional evaluation through the EvalPartners professionalization working group. Concern was expressed that absent an enabling environment to support the use of evaluation, the five other pillars are insufficient.

To support the development of an enabling environment, UNEG provides a peer review process for evaluation units, which looks at the quality and use of evaluations produced by those units and gives recommendations for improvement. The UNEG peer review process is voluntary, and many agencies spoke highly of the value of such a review. The Davies and Blummer¹⁵ report noted that the peer review process should be embedded as part of a professionalization strategy and should serve as evaluation itself, for both learning and accountability purposes.

The Joint Inspection Unit's Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System¹⁶ noted that the evaluation function arrangements across United Nations agencies varied based on the size of the organization, the resources allocated to evaluation and the structural location of the function. The report defined four levels of maturity of agencies' central evaluation function: 1) high performers; 2) average performers; 3) below average performers; and 4) rudimentary or no defined evaluation function. This framework is useful for conducting peer reviews of evaluation units. It is important that such peer reviews take into account the current maturity level of the unit while at the same time providing clear direction on immediate realistic steps that can be taken towards improvement. The report further notes that a well-defined institutional framework is needed in order to support decentralized evaluation functions.

Section 3. Proposed Business Model

The proposed business model incorporates many of the elements proposed by Davies and Blummer¹⁷ in their professionalization architecture. The following model is based on the six pillars that support professionalization, pointing to potential roles for UNEG and a process for ensuring ongoing involvement in the global movement for professionalization. This should, in turn, support continuous improvement of UNEG professionalization efforts.

A key challenge is that UNEG is not a United Nations agency. Rather, UNEG is a network of professional evaluation staff involved in evaluation from across United Nations agencies. As such, it depends on the voluntary efforts of its members to manage any initiatives, activities or projects. Consideration of the UNEG role in professionalization needs to keep in mind these very real constraints.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Prom-Jackson, Sukai and George A. Bartsiotas (2014) Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System, Joint Inspection Unit.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The UNEG role in professionalization within the United Nations system

The UNEG role is determined, in part, by the roles, functions and programming of United Nations agencies. The primary function of UNEG is to support United Nations agencies in conducting the highest quality evaluations. Within that context, UNEG already provides:

- A forum for UNEG members to share information and concerns regarding the evaluation function across United Nations agencies;
- Leadership regarding ethics, norms, standards and competencies, with periodic review to support consistency with United Nations agencies' needs and overall global direction;
- Limited professional development opportunities; and
- A peer review process for evaluation units.

Additional options for UNEG include:

- Training and development for commissioners, managers and users of evaluations, perhaps through collaboration with the UN College or by accessing already existing programmes;
- More direct involvement in developing national-level evaluation capacities. This could include sponsorship of conferences or fellowships to allow local evaluators to attend trainings, which could possibly lead to postgraduate qualifications;
- Developing a roster of qualified evaluators that agencies can draw upon; and
- Developing self-assessment and management response tools that can be used across United Nations agencies.

The UNEG role in global professionalization efforts

UNEG can both contribute to and benefit from active participation in global initiatives related to professionalization. This could include, for example, support to IDEAS in their efforts to implement a credentialing process for development evaluators. UNEG is a member of EvalPartners already. Responsibility for implementing the roadmap related to professionalization of evaluation has been assigned to the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE). In addition to contributing UNEG's thinking to the global agenda, active participation with the IOCE professionalization working group would provide a means of staying current on the global activities aimed at professionalization.

Section 4. Plan of Action

UNEG has set out a number of activities for 2015 – 2016 that related directly to professionalization, including:

- Updating a 'fit for purpose' technical competency framework document, including a mechanism and guidelines to implement it in the United Nations system;
- Conducting three peer reviews;
- Updating the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation; and
- Supporting the efforts of members in the area of decentralized evaluation.

These activities are all within the professionalization of evaluation concept presented in this document and are being implemented. The update of the competencies should include information on how the competencies can be applied:

- When hiring evaluators and evaluation managers, thus ensuring that the job descriptions and postings reflect the core competencies. The requirements should be consistent with the position level;
- When engaging external evaluators, thus ensuring that the terms of reference include qualifications consistent with the core competencies; and
- For professional development of evaluators, evaluation managers and commissioners of evaluations such that consideration is given to the competencies required for each specific role.

The revised framework also needs to address competency expectations for different mastery levels of experience, depending also on the complexity, autonomy and responsibility that an evaluator has in an organization.

Some opportunities for 2016 to 2017 (and beyond) include:

- Market the use of the revised evaluation competencies through products, tools, presentations and debriefings, both among UNEG member agencies and externally;
- Call for and implement pilot projects on implementing the revised evaluation competencies in various domains, such as hiring, training or professional development;
- Consider opportunities to develop a core training programme with external partners;
- Join the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation professionalization working group, which would include attending meetings and contributing UNEG work to the professionalization repository.¹⁸ UNEG can thus contribute to defining the values and general principles to guide the global professionalization process, refining the thinking on the six components of the professionalization framework and defining a well-sequenced roadmap towards professionalization. UNEG can contribute to the direction of the global initiative and United Nations agencies can benefit from keeping abreast of the latest developments related to professionalization of evaluation;
- Streamline ethical guidelines and standards into a single document that is stronger than the current guidelines, thus ensuring consistency with global ethical codes;
- Conduct peer reviews, ensuring that the maturity levels outlined in the Joint Inspection Unit report provide a framework that can support recognition of and respect for the current situation with a specific evaluation unit and that can provide realistic recommendations that recognize the evolution and resources required to become a high performing unit;
- Support evaluation units to work with their agency's human resource units to ensure better integration of the competencies into recruiting, hiring, professional development and support of promotional opportunities across United Nations agencies. Activities such as secondments and bilateral exchanges could support improved promotion opportunities as well as increased knowledge sharing; and
- Support evaluation units, particularly those that are high performing, to take on a stronger role in the development of national evaluation capacities. This could be done through working with governments and national voluntary organizations for professional evaluation, keeping in mind that roles should be supportive and recognize current capacities.

¹⁸ <https://ioce.ourdocs.ca/index.php/s/6DgalWc2onzp4BO>

Annex A: List of Documents Reviewed

Australia New Zealand Evaluation Association (2010) Summary of ANZEA's Evaluation Competency 2010 Consultations: Issues and Tensions

Canadian Evaluation Society – Professional Designation Program History

Canadian Evaluation Society (2010) Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice

Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation (2015) Special Edition on the Professional Designation Program

Caroline Heider (October 2015) Professionalization with a View to Eval2013

Department for International Development (2013) Evaluation Department Technical Competency Framework

European Evaluation Society (2014) Towards a Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review System

European Evaluation Society (2015) Professionalization Thematic Working Group: Activity Report and Action Plans

European Evaluation Society (no date) The European Evaluation Society Evaluation Capabilities Framework

European Evaluation Society (September 2015) Overview of key events in the Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review workshop April 2014

European Evaluation Society and United Kingdom - Introducing a Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review Initiative for the European Evaluation Society and the United Kingdom Evaluation Society

Evaluation Capacity Development Group (2006) Job Design for Evaluation

UNEG Working Group on Evaluation Use (2015) Review of Evaluation Use in the UN System

Global Evaluation Agenda - Evaluation Capacity at the Individual Level

International Development Evaluation Association (2014) Proposed Position on Qualification in Evaluation and Possible Role for IDEAS (IDEAS)

IDEAS (2012) Crosswalk of Evaluator and Evaluation Manager Competencies and Characteristics

International Labour Organization (2015) Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (ILO)

ILO Core Competencies for an Evaluation Manager

ILO Impact Evaluation of Technical Cooperation and Development Projects and Programmes, International Training Centre

ILO Impact Results-based Management in Public and International Organisations, International Training Centre

ILO Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Programmes and Projects, International Training Centre

Imas, Linda G. Morra (2010) The Movement for Global Competencies for Development Evaluators

International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation – Discussion on Professionalization (downloaded November 5, 2015)

Italian Association of Evaluators – Auto Evaluation Assessment Tool

United Nations Evaluation Group (2008) Core Competencies for Evaluators of the UN System (UNEG)

UNEG (2008) Core Competencies for Heads of Evaluation Offices in the United Nations

UNEG (2008) Job Description for Evaluators in the UN System Senior Evaluation Officer P5

UNEG (2011) Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of UN organizations

UNEG (2005) Standards for Evaluation in the UN System

UNEG (2005) Norms for Evaluation in the UN System

UNEG (2015) UNEG Strategy 2014 – 2019 Detailed program of work for the period 2015 – 2016

UNEG (2008) UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation

UNEG Job Description for Evaluators in the UN System Associate Evaluation Officer P1 – P2

UNEG Job Description for Evaluators in the UN System Associate Evaluation Officer P3

UNEG Job Description for Evaluators in the UN System Associate Evaluation Officer P5

UNEG. Summary of Views of UNEG Members and other Stakeholders on Professionalization of Evaluation

UNEG. Survey Analysis of Views of UNEG Members and other Stakeholders on Professionalization of Evaluation

Annex B: List of Individuals Interviewed

External to United Nations

1. Gail Barrington – Canadian Evaluation Society
2. Kate McKegg – Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association
3. Caroline Heider – World Bank
4. Deborah Rugg – former head of UNEG

Internal to United Nations

1. Food and Agricultural Organization: Marahir Igarashi – Director of Evaluation
2. Global Environment Facility: Juha Uitto – Director of Independent Evaluation Office
3. International Labour Organization: Francisco Guzman – Senior Evaluation Officer
4. United Nations Capital Development Fund: Andrew Fife – Head of Evaluation Unit
5. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Amir Piric – Chief of Evaluation Office
6. United Nations Population Fund: Andrea Cook – Director of Evaluation Office
7. UN Habitat: Martin Barugahare – Chief, Evaluation Unit
8. UNICEF: Colin Kirk – Director Evaluation Office
9. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: Adan Ruiz Villalba – Deputy to the Chief of Evaluation Unit
10. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine : Robert Stryk – Chief of Evaluation
11. UN Women: Marco Segone – Director of Evaluation Office

Annex C: Themes from Interviews

Summary of interview notes

Regarding competencies

- Most say they are familiar with and use competencies
- Many also say that others do not use competencies
- Competencies should be seen as guidelines, not compulsory — concern about getting country-level evaluators if the criteria is too strict
- Should do a ‘crosswalk’ and update competencies
- Need to focus on what is necessary for the United Nations
- Competencies should be codified within the next five years

Definition of professionalization

- Definition should focus on evaluation rather than evaluators
- Really talking about accreditation — don’t want to see this; want a more relaxed approach
- Needs to be a clear career path within the United Nations system
- Keep in mind that the goal is to improve the quality of evaluation
- Hallmark of an established profession: speaks out on issues of interest to the profession including government policy
- Should be accreditation/certification of some sort
- United Nations is reluctant to recognize outside organizations such as EvalPartners, but needs to link to EvalPartners’ broad elements and then do what is needed for United Nations (including committing to building national capacities)

Revision of competencies:

- Provide better guidance on how to use competencies
- More attention to competencies for commissioners
- Incorporate competencies into performance management
- Competency document reads like a tool kit — it needs a more sophisticated approach so that it emphasizes the different approaches and methodologies
- Strong focus on ethics
- Use competencies to hire and engage evaluators — make it explicit
- Need to incorporate competencies into job descriptions, using the 30 per cent leeway allowed for changes in job descriptions
- Develop competencies in the soft skills that people don’t get trained on, such as:
 - Strategic visioning and purpose;
 - Communication, both interpersonal and public;
 - Sensitivity training, emotional intelligence and understanding the fear of evaluation;
 - Listening skills (e.g. hold space, pregnant pauses);
 - Advocacy — everyone should be educating, advocating and promoting that evaluation is the right of the people; and
 - Report writing is an important competency.

Potential roles for UNEG

- Roster of evaluators that United Nations agencies can draw from

- Need to focus on developing a culture of evaluation within the entire United Nations system, including where the evaluation unit sits and who it reports to and how it should report to heads of agencies
- Evaluation needs to be embedded into strategic planning
- UNEG should be more serious about professional development
- Training for users of evaluation
- Norms and standards need to be clearer about spaces for evaluation and embedded into programmes
- There is confusion about responsibility for building national capacities
- There needs to be credentialing. UNEG needs to establish clear core competencies in lock step with human resources so that no one is able to advertise for evaluation positions without including core competencies. United Nations has core value competencies and core technical competencies. UNEG should be involved in writing job descriptions
- UNEG should be seen as the focal point around evaluation competencies. Start off voluntary, then make it compulsory
- Work with UN College to set up training, particularly for staff who use and/or commission evaluations
- Be the squeaky wheel, do advocacy to raise profile of evaluation
- Facilitate:
 - Exchange of experiences
 - Setting the standards
- Facilitate inter-agency rotation of staff, supporting evaluators that move early in their career to gain experience
- Peer review of evaluation units should continue
- Help develop a common approach to competencies

Annex D: Themes from the American Evaluation Association Round Table

Session: “Professionalization of Evaluation in the UN” (Saturday 14 November 2015, 09:45 – 10:30 in Ogden)

Presenters: Judita Jankovic/International Civil Aviation Organization, Andrea Cook/United Nations Population Fund (Co-conveners of UNEG group) and Martha McGuire (Consultant)

General observations:

- Ten participants came to the session, one or two left midway
- Participants included the current President of the Canadian Evaluation Society (Benoit Gauthier) and founding member and former Convenor for the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (Kate McKegg)
- During the American Evaluation Association meeting, the professionalization of evaluation was topical and this session was one of the many that directly addressed professionalization
- Some of the presidential strands also addressed issues related to professionalization (e.g. Deborah Rugg – the need to address individual evaluator competencies and the YouthEval initiative for encouraging young and emerging evaluators to enter the field)
- Two participants expressed interest in joining the UNEG group on professionalization; one is from IFAD programme management, the other is a masters student from the University of Minnesota
- The consultant managed to interview a few key informants participating at the conference as part of her UNEG consultancy assignment (Martha McGuire)

Key messages and issues discussed

1. There are concerns about barriers to United Nations evaluation with the development of professionalization

- The Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association representative cautioned that some may have less privileged access to resources (e.g. the cost and accessibility of evaluation training providers) and that therefore, barriers may be created to entering the profession as the professionalization initiative develops. A participant argued that comparing evaluation to other professions, barriers are necessary, so as to provide assurance to the users of such services and the general public on the competencies of credentialed individuals as opposed to others who are not.
- UNEG representatives reminded that it is important to be mindful of not creating a framework that is too United Nations-specific so that unless one has United Nations experience one cannot get in.
- A participant remarked that the United Nations recruitment process can undermine the quality of evaluators entering the United Nations, remarking that United Nations recruitment practice needs to be more rigorous.
- In terms of evaluators uncovering corruption and malpractice, UNEG representatives added that this is a matter of policy and understanding of ethical evaluation practices.

- UNEG representatives explained that young and emerging evaluators should be considered in the framework so as to avoid creating barriers to their entry.

2. Professionalization is an ongoing process

- The Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association representative emphasized that professionalization is a process rather than a 'one-off quality stamp', with which professionalization ends.

3. Evaluation ethics, norms and standards could be part of the framework

- The Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association representative suggested adding an additional pillar to the framework: **ethically grounded practice** (since evaluation is serving public interest). She welcomed the other existing elements as relevant, particularly mentoring and ongoing professional development.
- She also views that the UNEG standards, norms and ethics should be one of the pillars.

4. The practice of evaluation (business model of evaluation offices, commissioning and deployment of evaluation) in the United Nations is complex and diverse

- United Nations commissions evaluations at the global, regional and country level. Deployment is different across United Nations organizations and therefore expectations are different accordingly. Many monitoring and evaluation staff work at the country level and so the link of professionalization with the national evaluation capacity development agenda is an important one that needs to be further explored. UNDP is advancing the national evaluation capacity agenda where evaluation is seen as a key function of governance; UNICEF and UN Women are also active in this.
- The professionalization framework needs to be receptive to this complexity and diversity in the United Nations, particularly in terms of organizational and business models and commissioning and deployment practices.

5. Many pieces of professionalization already exist in the United Nations, but they function independently. The challenge is how to make those links function effectively

- Inter-organizational peer reviews can be seen as akin to an ethics review board, and both can be bound by a certain level of confidentiality. This assurance of confidentiality for an inter-organizational peer review is important, for example, so as to avoid any conflict with information dissemination practices of evaluation reports.
- Internship programmes in the United Nations enable mentoring. Mentoring can provide a reflection on practice and the opportunity to ask questions whether being mentored or providing mentoring.

6. Perceptions about professionalization

- Professionalization is often perceived narrowly so that it only assumes credentialing, which then may result in resistance to professionalization initiatives. However, it already exists in many

forms e.g. professional development, evaluation capacity development and peer reviews (individual and organizational levels).

- A participant reinforced the notion that the enabling environment is important; it is not only the individual evaluator competencies that matter in efforts to professionalize evaluation.
- A participant expressed a suggestion to consider administering a periodic competency-based exam for evaluators.

7. Professionalization at the national/country level

- Professionalization in the context of career development is an important consideration, particularly at the country level where one should be able to move both and outside the United Nations system.
- Professionalization can be practised through how the United Nations manages and commissions evaluations, for example, by enabling national evaluators to be part of the core evaluation team and ensuring a mix of international and national consultants.
- A participant commented that professionalization in the national context is very much needed, particularly in developing countries where governments are grappling with designing monitoring and evaluation measurement systems. The participant further added that professionalization is expected to provide guidance to governments. UNEG representatives responded that professionalization needs to be considered in a broader context and that this is where the National Evaluation Capacity agenda fits in.

Annex E: Summary of EvalPartners Discussion (EvalPartners Global Forum 24.11.2015)

Definition of professionalization

The group agreed on a working definition of professionalization of evaluation. The idea is to build on this definition, enriching and strengthening it as the process goes on. The components of professionalization include:

- Improved access to quality education and training;
- Dissemination of evaluation knowledge and good practices;
- Streamlining of guiding principles, ethical guidelines and standards for evaluation;
- Agreed evaluation capabilities or competencies frameworks;
- Legitimate ways of recognizing knowledge, skills and dispositions and the experience needed to carry out work to an adequate standard of quality; and
- Institutional structures for professionalization.

Mapping of professionalization initiatives

The group mapped professionalization initiatives (ongoing, planned, dreams) around the world, based on input from discussion participants. This confirmed that a lot is going on with professionalization.

Theory of change for professionalization

The group discussed a theory of change for professionalization. The theory of change helps to keep in mind that professionalization is much broader than just credentialing evaluators. Professionalization involves a broad range of stakeholders (including evaluators, commissioners, managers and users) and components that are necessary for high-quality evaluations. Only a comprehensive approach will lead to positive changes in societies and peoples' lives and movement towards achieving the SDGs.

Successful professionalization processes are not easy, are long-term (10 to 15 years), foster inclusivity and ensure equal access. Successful processes are responsive to the context (e.g. culture, high/low demand for evaluation, high/low supply of evaluation). Successful professionalization processes need to be responsive to the changes in the operating environments and have the capacity for continuous development. A monitoring and evaluation function needs to support the process.

Work plan

The starting point for the work plan was the recognition that national voluntary organizations for professional evaluation must drive the processes at country level. The discussion focused on what we can do together at international level to support the national voluntary organizations.

1. Establish a working group on evaluation professionalization (institutional home to be defined – perhaps IOCE, or EvalPartners?);
2. Share information of existing professionalization initiatives and continue discussing professionalization (IOCE website, forthcoming European Evaluation Society and American Evaluation Association conferences in 2016);
3. Define values and general principles to guide evaluation professionalization processes;

4. Define a well-sequenced roadmap with milestones leading to evaluation professionalization reflecting the components in the working definition;
5. Unpack the components in the working definition (e.g. guiding principles, ethical guidelines and standards: What is the process for defining these? What content elements/framework belong to these?);
6. Identify unifying global commonalities in existing professionalization principles, guidelines, standards, frameworks and identify elements relevant for specific cultures and contexts to manage the risks of a global approach (work with EvalIndigenous).

Annex F: UNEG Theory of change – Professionalization of Evaluation in the United Nations System

Description of need, issue, and problem

The core issue that the current UNEG Professionalization of Evaluation working group (2014 – 2016) is addressing is that the evaluation products and services in the United Nations do not, at times, match the expectations of those who demand such products and services. Furthermore, while other professions enjoy a status and recognition as legitimate professions, also due to established systems in place (e.g. processes that recognize competencies and quality assurance), evaluation in the United Nations has not yet reached that status. Doing so is important so that those that demand evaluation are assured of the quality and credibility of the products and services. Therefore, the effort to raise the bar on the supply side of United Nations evaluation to par with international evaluation professional standards is important to ultimately strengthen the demand for and use of evaluations by key policy- and decision-makers and other commissioners of evaluation.

	UNEG/Professionalization of Evaluation sub-group	UNEG member evaluators and other evaluators in the United Nations	United Nations system	Non-United Nations evaluators	Users/society
Inputs, activities and outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inputs: evaluation norms and standards,¹⁹ competency framework, code of ethics for evaluation, UNEG members, PoE group members, UNEG Executive Board • Activities: revise the UNEG competency framework; set up a mechanism to apply the competency framework; map existing evaluation training programmes; set up centralized training opportunities hub with UNEG; and establish professionalization partnerships and resource mobilization within United Nations organizations and with external entities • Outputs: revised and updated evaluation competency framework, norms and standards, code of ethics for evaluation; competency framework application guidelines and requirements, decisions, maintenance requirements, promotional material; database of existing evaluation training programmes 				

¹⁹ Although the peer review process of United Nations evaluation functions is recognized as a relevant contribution to evaluation professionalization, it is not explicitly referenced under activities and outputs as it is managed by another UNEG sub-group contributing to UNEG Strategic Objective 1.

	UNEG/Professionalization of Evaluation sub-group	UNEG member evaluators and other evaluators in the United Nations	United Nations system	Non-United Nations evaluators	Users/society
Immediate / Intermediate outcomes (2014 –2019)	<p>Clarity of United Nations evaluation professionalization goals, needs and issues</p> <p>A link created from professionalization to UNEG norms and standards for evaluation, which in turn will meet international evaluation professional standards</p>	<p>Clearer career path for existing United Nations professional staff</p> <p>United Nations evaluation competencies used for self-assessment</p>	<p>Enhanced clarity and definition of United Nations evaluation practices</p>	<p>Clarity of United Nations evaluation professionalization goals, needs and issues</p> <p>United Nations competency framework linked to other evaluation frameworks</p> <p>Partnerships and resources for professionalization mobilized and used</p>	<p>Clarity of United Nations evaluation profession</p>
Long-term outcomes (2014-2024)	<p>Long-term planned outcomes evaluated, reflected on lessons learned and recommendations for improvement implemented</p>	<p>Enhanced use and application of UNEG competency framework in recruitment of United Nations evaluators and other processes</p> <p>Enhanced mobility of</p>	<p>Evaluation in the United Nations recognized as a credible profession in its own right</p> <p>Evaluation function in the United Nations</p>	<p>Support for new entrants to United Nations evaluation, including emerging²¹ evaluators</p> <p>Harmonization of United Nations evaluation competency framework</p>	<p>Enhanced expectations from United Nations evaluators</p> <p>Stronger use of United Nations evaluation by decision-makers</p>

	UNEG/Professionalization of Evaluation sub-group	UNEG member evaluators and other evaluators in the United Nations	United Nations system	Non-United Nations evaluators	Users/society
	PoE sub-group mandate and agenda adapted to changing needs of professionalization	evaluators within the United Nations	recognized distinct from other functions ²⁰ Multidimensional paths to professionalization in the United Nations recognized and supported	with that of others Cross-recognition of credentialing/certification programmes Enhanced mobility of non-United Nations evaluators in the United Nations and vice-versa	
Ultimate goals (Beyond 2024)	<p>United Nations system has enhanced evaluation capacities</p> <p>Evaluation standards in the United Nations system are more harmonized and consistent with international evaluation professional standards</p> <p>Credible and distinct evaluation functions in the United Nations provide quality evidence and contribute to evidence-based decision making of United Nations organizations</p> <p>United Nations evaluation makes a stronger difference in beneficiaries' lives</p>				

²¹ Emerging evaluators refer to younger evaluators who lack or have little experience in evaluation and are new to the field. New entrants may be emerging evaluators or may be experienced staff coming from other professions such as results monitoring or programme planning.

²⁰ For example, internal audit, programme planning and results monitoring.

Assumptions:

- The evaluation function in the United Nations is considered important and distinct from other functions such as internal audit, programme planning and results monitoring.
- The complexity of the United Nations context, mandate and role (e.g. development, security and humanitarian) goes beyond that of the organizational context. It is important that United Nations evaluators have an understanding of the context in which they are working and apply evaluation knowledge in specific organizational contexts.
- The professionalization agenda and work programme is supported by the UNEG Executive Board.
- Subgroup members, co-conveners and consultants are strongly committed, perform well and achieve results.
- Dialogue is established with external entities who recognize mutual needs and goals with UNEG and cooperate in identifying these
- All/key stakeholders see value added from the professionalization outcomes and results.
- United Nations Human resources policy and processes support professionalization of evaluation.
- UNEG is sufficiently resourced to take on additional responsibilities in case of developing a centralized credentialing/certification system.
- IOCE will conduct a comparative analysis of existing competency frameworks for the purposes of harmonization and the creation of a global set of principles for developing evaluation competencies (in the context of the Dublin Consensus²²). This will be useful for UNEG.

²² During the 11th EES Biennial Conference held in Dublin in October 2014, a session on the Voluntary Evaluator Peer Review (VEPR) concluded that it would be highly desirable to adapt the designs to diverse regional, national and thematic contexts while at the same time encouraging coherence among evaluation societies and associations interested in adopting the VEPR approach (The Dublin Consensus).