

## **RESULTS OF A SOCIETY WIDE CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSED EVALUATION COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPE**

### *The EES survey*

A rising demand for high quality evaluation services in the public, private and voluntary sectors has induced growing reliance on evaluation guidelines issued by national and regional evaluation societies<sup>1</sup>. But they are all predicated on the assumption that the professional capacity to meet appropriate standards of good evaluation practice is readily available.

Accordingly, a groundswell of interest has arisen for strengthening professional development and training initiatives within Europe's burgeoning evaluation community. Yet, evaluation has yet to forge a consensus about the knowledge, skills and attitudes that evaluators ought to display in the conduct of their work.

Unsurprisingly pressures to fill this gap have intensified and a growing literature has emerged regarding evaluators' competencies (Annex 1). The international evaluation community has begun to address the issue (Annex 2). In this evolving context, the European Evaluation Society (EES) explored the topic with the national evaluation societies of Europe (NESE) at the EES biennial conference in Lisbon in 2008.

The EES board subsequently decided to launch its own competencies initiative under the aegis of its "quality of evaluation practice" activity stream (<http://www.europeanevaluation.org>). As a first step, it endorsed a membership survey designed to trigger a substantive Society wide debate about the desirability and feasibility of constructing an evaluation competencies framework adapted to Europe's multi-faceted needs. A background note, a tentative framework and a questionnaire (Annex 3) were sent to all EES members on July 14, 2009<sup>2</sup>.

The deadline for completing and returning the survey forms was August 20, 2009. By that date 48 entries had been received. This document synthesizes

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, the UKES guidelines at <http://www.evaluation.org.uk/resources/guidelines.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> The EES initiative, led by Robert Picciotto, builds on prior work carried out by the EES Standards Group led by Thomas Widmer. The questionnaire reflected consultations with other EES board members and a reference group ( Jacques Toulemonde, Peter Dahler Larsen, Stephanie Kihm, Christiane Spiel, Georgie Parry-Crooke, Wolfgang Beywl, Helen Simons, Saville Kushner, Linda Morra and Hans Lundgren). They contributed considerably to the exercise but cannot be held responsible for errors and omissions in the survey or its interpretation.

the results of the consultation. It is aimed at facilitating EES deliberations on the road ahead during the October 2009 meeting of the Network of Evaluation Societies in Europe (NESE) in Muenster.

### ***The response***

The responses to the questionnaire captured the diversity of the EES membership. They also displayed the many "hats" worn by evaluation professionals: more often than not the respondents ticked more than one occupational box: an evaluator may teach as well as consult or commission evaluations.

Half of the respondents are involved in academic pursuits. Managers account for about a fifth of the responses (22 percent) and commissioners for 16 percent. The balance (12 percent) is made up of analysts, researchers and students. A third of the respondents operate in the public (domestic and international) sector; 39 percent work as consultants (a fifth of whom are self employed) and the balance are active in the education and voluntary sectors (21 percent and 7 percent respectively).

Through the survey, a broad range of perspectives was brought to bear on the issues raised by the evaluation competencies initiative. Yet, the questionnaire elicited a relatively small number of responses (about 10-15% of the membership). Hence, the results cannot be considered statistically valid but they are nevertheless revealing.

In part the low participation rate is explained by awkward timing (holiday season) and by technical glitches affecting the EES membership data base. But low response rates are not unusual for questionnaires of this kind especially when they target hard pressed knowledge professionals. Yet, from a qualitative standpoint, the responses proved remarkably complete and insightful. Indeed, most respondents articulated thoughtful, cogent and sometimes eloquent rationales for the answers they provided.

Thus, the survey seems to have struck a responsive chord among EES members. Keen interest in the issues raised by the background note was evident and many returns offered specific and helpful suggestions for improvement in the competencies framework attached to the questionnaire. In sum, as the EES board had hoped, the survey results provide a sound foundation for a fulsome debate about evaluators' competencies in Europe.

### ***Priority***

Support for the EES initiative is strong: almost four fifths of respondents (38 out of 48) ranked its priority as high (48 percent) or very high (31 percent). By contrast, no respondent considered the initiative to have very low or no priority and only seven respondents (15 percent) ranked the priority of the initiative as medium and 3 (6 percent) as low.

Various rationales were offered in support of the initiative. One respondent remarked that "*there are people out there doing evaluation who are not evaluators and do not produce evaluations: consultancy is not necessarily evaluation*". Another considered that "*guidance on competencies for*

*evaluators would be very beneficial compared to the current completely free playing field where everyone can claim to be an 'evaluator' which gives rise to ambiguity and diverse understandings what this profession is about".*

Still another respondent opined that the initiative would *"help to build a body of knowledge that is the basis of a recognized profession with well defined skills and competence, autonomy in judgment and accepted norms and ethics"*. Other supporters of the initiative expected that *"it would lift the status of the field and help the practice"*, that it *"would create a European space for professional dialogue from which would flow interest and recognition of evaluation as a professional practice"* and more concisely that *"any effort to increase quality and standards in our profession is to the good"*.

Of course, a selection bias may have affected the results: relatively more EES members opposed to the notion of evaluation competencies are likely to have abstained from participation in the survey. Thus, a reference group member who decided not to fill the questionnaire argued in a private communication that *"context is all: harmonization of evaluation serves the administrative community more than it serves civil society"*.

Similar views were expressed by a small minority of questionnaire respondents, e.g. one stated blandly: *"I do not generally like harmonized frameworks"*. Another expressed the view that *"lists of competencies are of little use because each situation requires different competencies. Good analytical skills and critical thinking are important, but are perhaps not competencies"*.

Given the generally positive support of the initiative by EES members evinced by the survey the pendulum of opinion appears to have swung compared to the situation that prevailed in 2004 when the EES Conference in Berlin concluded that the time was not ripe for a debate about evaluation competencies in Europe. But this is not to say that all EES members believe that the rewards to be reaped from the initiative justify its risks.

What then do the survey results tell us specifically about the balance of costs and benefits of an agreed evaluation competencies framework? As outlined below, the support garnered by the EES initiative while broad based is nuanced and far from unconditional.

### ***Benefits***

The questionnaire had asked EES members about the potential benefits that would likely flow from EES adoption of a harmonized framework reflecting members' and national societies' views. In response, most participants recognized that benefits would accrue to a wide variety of stakeholders.

One respondent captured the multi-faceted benefits of the initiative thus: *"there is a strong need for criteria and tools for self-assessment and professional development of evaluators; (and) an even stronger need for evaluation commissioners and final users (among them politicians) to know what evaluation is really about, what they can expect from it, what methods can be used and what theories lie behind them"*.

The survey generated the highest ranking for benefits associated with training and self assessment (Table 1). Three typical comments supporting this stance follow: *"Being voluntary, it will help evaluators' self-improvement"...* *"Most important are the training and self development for evaluators"...* *"Guidance for professional self-assessment and development would be the most important benefit".*

**Table 1: Relative importance of potential benefits**

Ranking	#	%
1. Design of evaluation education and training programs	40	83
2. Guidance for professional self-assessment and development	39	81
3. Increased recognition as a professional practice	36	75
4. Useful complement to evaluation guidelines	34	71
5. Selection and appointment of evaluators	28	58
6. Potential use for evaluators' certification	22	46

Next, survey respondents ranked the benefits of increased recognition of evaluation as a professional practice. One viewed a *"harmonized framework as assisting in the recognition of evaluation as a high quality, reliable instrument of social action"*. Another treasured its role in *"promoting intercultural discussion about the role and content of evaluation"*. Taking the opposite tack, a member expressed the view that *"increased recognition should be last on list since such recognition would require other actions, including public relations activities, sound practices, use of guidelines, professional development, etc."*

The logic of complementing national and regional evaluation guidelines<sup>3</sup> with evaluation competencies was confirmed by 71 percent of respondents. Trailing the list were the use of competencies for selecting evaluators and for their certification. Capturing a dominant preoccupation with the unintended consequences of a premature rush to adoption of formal credentials for evaluators a respondent expressed the *"long standing view that evaluation practice is a relatively broad church with a range of capabilities in common ... that favors an approach which does justice to this diversity by providing guidelines rather than certification"*.

Nevertheless, not all respondents, especially commissioners, felt this way. One respondent stated that *"voluntary certification of evaluators could be an interesting development despite it being a contentious issue within the profession since it would provide benefits to evaluators (present and future), evaluation managers and commissioners, and organizations commissioning / recruiting evaluators alike"*.

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<sup>3</sup>Robert Picciotto, *The Value of Evaluation Standards*, Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation: JMDE (3) 30 ISSN 1556-8180

Another respondent took the view that *“the market for evaluation services has made up its mind in recent years: it is increasingly insisting on ‘formal’ accreditation of competencies”*.

### ***Risks***

Only three responses visualized no risk in the promotion of an agreed EES framework of competencies. Most others warned against the temptation to define competencies too idealistically, narrowly or rigidly (e.g. by overemphasis on particular techniques, or by failing to take account of the cultural and administrative context).

Thus, according to a respondent (who nevertheless offered support for the initiative) *“the main risk is to create or reinforce, a sense of belonging to a caste of professional experts, jealous of their liturgy, using a language that can be understood only by them”*. Similarly one respondent worried that *“harmonizing competencies for evaluators may be risky in the European context, where continental public services are always tempted to resort to lists, models, guidelines, and certification in lieu of taking responsibility and dealing with the merit of issues and tasks”*.

Beyond issues of design some respondents evinced anxiety with regard to the potential misuse of any agreed codification of competencies: *“The major risk is to reify any list of competencies and/or to turn them into absolute or absolutist categories”*. Specifically, respondents pointed to three distinct categories of implementation risks: (i) a chilling effect on innovation and creativity; (ii) unjustified barriers to entry into the profession; and (iii) arbitrary exclusion of proven practitioners (e.g. due to a perceived lack of academic qualifications).

Thus, the questionnaire evinced numerous exhortations for rejecting standardization (*“A very competent lawyer in one system might fail miserably in another system”*); resisting the fallacy of equating “accreditation” with quality; avoiding distortions in the market through the imposition of doctrinal straitjackets and taking considerable care in the selection of indicators and the choice of peer reviewers in the testing of evaluators’ competencies.

In sum, one can safely conclude that EES members perceive the central challenge of the competencies initiative as arduous: it will require a balancing act between combating shabby evaluation practices while retaining the unique and positive characteristics associated with today’s free wheeling evaluation scene: diversity, openness, creativity and flexibility.

### ***Whose competencies?***

The survey confirmed that the demand for evaluation competencies is multi-faceted. The need for reliable evaluation competency information is acutely felt among European Universities that deliver master degrees in evaluation<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup>Suddansk Universiteit, Odense (Denmark); Universite de Lyon (France), Universitat Sarrebruken (Germany), Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain), Universitat Bern (Switzerland) and

The demand for an agreed evaluation competencies framework has also grown among evaluators interested in self-assessment or professional improvement. In addition there is now keener recognition that evaluation managers and commissioners should be equipped with adequate knowledge and understanding of the evaluation business in order to enhance the independence and integrity of the process and the utilization of evaluation results<sup>5</sup>.

To illuminate the potential benefits of the proposed initiative, the questionnaire had also asked about the desirable targeting of the evaluation competencies initiative among diverse categories of potential users. The priority ranking that emerged from the survey is summarized below (Table 2).

**Table 2: Whose competencies?**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. Evaluators</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>2. Evaluation managers</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>3. Junior and senior evaluators</b>	<b>31 (each)</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>4. Evaluation commissioners</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>5. Self evaluators</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>

The responses received demonstrate that EES members give prominence to the absolute necessity for independent evaluators to practice what they preach. A lower but still comfortable majority believe that managers and commissioners should not be spared from the discipline of a competencies framework. On the other hand, most members seem to doubt the feasibility of defining competencies for self evaluators (e.g. management advisers who use evaluation or monitoring specialists).

### ***Structure and content***

The questionnaire asked whether the proposed structure was adequate and also whether the tentative list of competencies was complete. Whereas

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London Metropolitan University (UK) are working on a detailed list of competencies to guide their work.

<sup>5</sup> Burt Perrin, *How can information about the competencies required for evaluation be useful?* The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, Volume 20, No 2, 2005.

almost four fifths of respondents judged the structure to be sound, participants were sharply divided regarding its completeness (Table 3). Remarkably, most survey respondents had no difficulty in endorsing the structure of the initial scheme.

In the words of one respondent *"knowledge, professional practice and dispositions/attitudes are indeed the three main poles of professional competencies"*. On the other hand, no unanimity materialized regarding the adequacy of the listing of competencies proposed for debate. Indeed, half of the respondents expressed a need for further consultation and many of them gave specific suggestions for additions to the list.

**Table 3: Adequacy of proposed list of competencies**

	Sound structure #	Sound structure %	Complete listing #	Complete listing %
Yes	38	79	23	48
No	7	15	22	46
Not sure	3	6	3	6

Reflecting the position of the most supportive group, one respondent *"liked the structure of evaluation knowledge, professional practice and dispositions and attitudes for a general framework"*. Another saw it as *"a very good starting point indeed..."* Still another put it this way: *"This is a very good tentative framework. It encompasses the basics of what any evaluator should know, understand and use once in the field or when writing a report"*.

Other respondents were more cautious. One of them worried about the risks of being *"bogged down"* in controversy over too detailed a framework. Another concluded that *"some further discussion would be needed: the problem here is how detailed a competency framework should be..."* This conclusion seems warranted by the survey results. Roughly half of the respondents judged the proposed list to be incomplete while the other half characterized it as too complete and overambitious.

Thus, one respondent stated that *"the competencies listed describe an ideal evaluator who in practice would be recognized only on very few occasions"*. Indeed, the proposed list of competencies was perceived by one participant *"as a vision to aspire to"* an opinion echoed by another participant who described it as *"the portrait of the perfect evaluator"* – i.e. an ideal to strive for. Conversely, another respondent, viewed the proposed list of knowledge

and practice competencies as *'too narrow'* while at the same time opposing the *'strange'* inclusion of personal dispositions in the framework.

Attempting to bridge these contrasting views, one respondent stated that *"we cannot have an exhaustive list, but this one helps for a beginning"*. In the same vein, the very notion of completeness was shrewdly challenged by another respondent: *"To be complete is a pretentious wish; fortunately we can always be better tomorrow"*.

Finally, a participant acutely conscious of the tension between the ideal profile of the fully rounded evaluator and the harsh reality of evaluation practice wisely suggested *"that we start with a very basic set of competencies, get something out, and then revisit in a few years to supplement it"*.

Quite apart from the generic tension between the "less is more" and the "more is more" advocates highlighted by the survey a number of specific suggestions for improvement were offered. Most were helpful and a revised version of the framework that takes account of them is attached (Annex 4). It goes without saying that the proposed framework is still "work in progress".

### ***A single or a multiple framework***

The need for further consultations about the competencies framework also becomes even clearer when considering the answers provided to another query included in the questionnaire: *do you favor EES consideration of a single core framework allowing for additional criteria for different uses - or should it propose several frameworks that address different levels of mastery and different potential uses?*

Thirty out of forty eight responses (63%) opted for a single framework; sixteen (33%) for a multiple framework and two (4%) could not express an opinion. A few respondents favored separate frameworks for evaluators, managers and commissioners. Others while arguing for a single framework acknowledged *"that different levels of mastery should be expected from a junior/senior evaluator"*, i.e. that *"the framework should allow for different levels of attainment within it"*.

Indeed, the questionnaire elicited very precise and thoughtful suggestions from participants about the relative importance of the individual characteristics listed in the proposed framework for various users. Once a basic framework is endorsed it should be possible to complete its architecture by highlighting the weight that should be placed on each criterion for different evaluation roles and by specifying different indicators for diverse levels of mastery.

### ***Conclusions***

First and foremost the survey results confirm broad based and principled support for the EES competencies initiative among Society members, a far cry from the opposition evinced by the 2004 Berlin Conference. Significantly, a substantial majority of survey respondents would like the

initiative to reach beyond evaluators in order to embrace evaluation managers and commissioners<sup>6</sup>.

Multi-faceted benefits are expected to flow from the initiative. While the use of a competencies framework for individual self assessment and for the design of education and training programs rank the highest, most participants also believe that a Society-wide agreement on core competencies, in combination with other initiatives, would help achieve greater public recognition of evaluation as a profession and an agent of positive social change.

On the other hand, use of officially sponsored competencies listings for evaluators' certification and testing remains highly controversial. More generally, the survey highlights serious concerns about the unintended consequences of rigid application of competency criteria since the misuse of officially sanctioned competencies could discourage creativity, adaptability and innovation; distort the evaluation market and exclude new and proven talent from practicing evaluation.

Respondents are almost evenly divided among those that consider the proposed framework as excessively ambitious and those that consider it incomplete. While a majority favors a single framework, there is substantial support (one third of respondents) for a multiple framework that recognizes different levels of mastery and diverse roles in the evaluation process (i.e. managers and commissioners). Specific comments were offered regarding the circulated competencies framework and Annex 4 takes these helpful suggestions into account.

Further expert consultations will be required to refine and finalize and disseminate the competencies framework, specify safeguards for its application and enhance its content to respond to the diverse needs of potential users. To define follow up actions a prudent road map will have to be drawn by the EES board in consultation with Society members and the national evaluation societies.

RP:rp

September 10, 2009

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<sup>6</sup> Understandably there is far less support for the feasibility of promoting a core set of competencies for self evaluators (e.g. management consultants and performance monitoring advisers).

## Annex 1

### Selected bibliography

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## Annex 2

### Recent and on-going work on evaluation competencies

Most on-going competency initiatives seek to capture the knowledge content, analytical rigor and presentational quality of products and the inter-personal behavior and leadership characteristics needed for effective evaluation delivery.

#### *Diverse approaches*

Whereas input based approaches focus on evaluators' qualifications, the outcome based approach assesses competencies in terms of the results of evaluators' activities. The main advantage of the input based approach is its accessibility and simplicity. The main advantage of the output or outcome based approach is that it aims to make competencies "evaluable".

On the other hand, threats to the validity of competencies as performance indicators arise when, as is frequently the case, evaluation outcomes are affected by the behaviors of other actors (commissioners; other stakeholders, etc.) and the characteristics of the enabling environment.

Both the input based and outcome based competency frameworks interrogate capabilities in terms of disciplinary content as well as delivery, social interaction and/or management skills. Equally, both models consider theory as well as practice; knowledge as well as experience.

Finally, both provide for competency assessments at different competency levels ranging from basic entry level requirements to higher order and/or specialized knowledge and skills.

The output based approach is illustrated by the Canadian Evaluation Society initiative. It is geared to a proposed certification scheme for Canadian evaluators<sup>7</sup> and linked to a core body of knowledge qualifications for individuals tasked with the design and delivery of program evaluation products<sup>8</sup>.

Canada's approach to evaluation competencies focuses on quality assessments of practice in five categories: (i) reflective; (ii) technical; (iii) situational; (iv) managerial; and (v) interpersonal<sup>9</sup>. Similarly, essential competencies for program evaluators have been codified in the United

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/site.cgi?en:1:1:01031>

<sup>8</sup> Rochelle Zorzi and others, *Evaluation Benefits, Outputs and Knowledge Elements*, Zorzi and Associates, 2002

<sup>9</sup> Based on extensive consultations with the CES membership, it gives major weight to evaluation practice. The resulting framework (47 competencies) is complex. It is designed to feed into a process of professional designation and accreditation to be considered by the Canadian Evaluation Council in May 2009.

States<sup>10</sup> to complement the guiding principles for evaluators endorsed by the American Evaluation Association.

By contrast, in Europe, the German Evaluation Society (DeGEval) has designed generic, input based recommendations for education and training in evaluation<sup>11</sup>. They outline five competency fields that evaluation education and training programs should cover: (i) theory and history of evaluation; (ii) methodological competencies; (iii) organizational and subject knowledge; (iv) social and personal competencies; and (v) evaluation practice. This approach is more input based than output based: it focuses on the content of education and training programs capable of generating the skills, knowledge and mastery needed to contribute to high quality work.

### ***The professional designation debate***

In the long standing, self-governing professions (e.g. lawyers, accountants, architects, engineers and physicians) a specific organization controls access to the professional designation. It verifies that registered professionals are competent to carry the designation label and it disciplines members who do not comply with ethical and professional norms.

Typically this licensing regime is grounded in legislation. For example, in some jurisdictions, a town planner can only use the title if he/she has achieved membership in a regular professional association that ensures that its members are qualified for the tasks expected of them.

Of course, not all professions are self governing, e.g. in the financial securities industry, government agency licensing rather than a specific professional body controls access to the practice. Nor are exclusive designation policies universal. For example, unlike psychiatrists and psychotherapists, psychologists need not be registered to teach or practice their profession or use the title of psychologist.

Equally, a professional designation is not always necessary to aspire to senior management positions. Thus, in the wake of the recent credit crunch, senior executives of major UK banks admitted that they had no recognized banking qualification. This led some observers to argue for official certification of senior financial services executives on the ground that competency criteria generated inside organizations tend to be self-serving and incongruent with the public interest<sup>12</sup>.

But there is no unanimity behind the notion that official regulation of competency standards would generate useful guidance in a competitive professional field subject to rapid change. Similarly, there is no consensus

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<sup>10</sup> Gail Ghore and others, *A Professional Development Unit for Reflecting on Program Evaluator Competencies*, American Journal of Evaluation, Sage Publications, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> See [www.degeval.de](http://www.degeval.de). Alexandra Caspari, Manfred Hennen, Dirk Scheffler, Uwe Schmitt and Oliver Schwab, *Recommendations on Education and Training in Evaluation: Requirement Profiles for Evaluators*, DeGEval, Mainz, Germany, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> John Kay, *Introduce professional standards for senior bankers*, Financial Times, 18 February 2009.

**about the reliability of public protection offered by official and semi-official bodies and professional associations whether through licensing, certification, credentialing, membership registration, proficiency testing or training certification.**

**On the one hand, some evaluators would welcome confirmation by a voluntary body or an official organization that they have acquired the knowledge, experience and character considered necessary to carry out their work. Such advocates of certification and exclusive professional designations for evaluators consider that the title of evaluator should be a badge of professional pride and that poorly qualified persons practicing evaluation undermine public trust in the evaluation profession.**

**Other evaluators concerned with the chilling effect of industry-wide standards would be content with authoritative accreditation of education and training programs by a legitimate body. They argue that the identification of specific knowledge, skills and dispositions criteria would improve the quality of education and training programs. In turn, this would enhance the standing of the profession, provide comfort to employers and generate wholesome incentives for upgrading the knowledge and skills of evaluation practitioners.**

**Still other evaluators argue that it is not feasible to specify the professional knowledge needed to carry out evaluations given the diversity of contexts and the multiplicity of uses of contemporary evaluation practice. Finally, there are those who do not regard evaluation as a profession. They are comfortable with the free wheeling ways that characterize the evaluation marketplace today and resist any effort to guide, constrain or regulate it. These basic policy differences will long be debated in our young and lively discipline.**

**As long as the debate on licensing and certification remains deadlocked, an awareness raising approach to evaluators' competencies seems the preferable option. Hence, the EES board decided that at this stage in the evolution of the profession the proposed competencies framework for Europe should only be used on a voluntary basis by evaluators, commissioners and training providers. Its adoption would not signify any intent to promote an exclusive or compulsory designation, licensing or certification or even a credentialing regime for UK evaluators.**



## Questionnaire about evaluation competencies

Competencies connote the abilities, skills, capacities or qualifications to handle a task, fulfill a function or deliver a service. This questionnaire, endorsed by the EES Board, requests all EES members to comment on an initiative geared to the identification of evaluators' competencies in Europe. Based on the results, EES and the Network of Evaluation Societies in Europe (NESE) will consult about next steps. The survey is anonymous.

### 1. What is your profession and employment status?

<b>Evaluator</b>		<b>Public sector</b>	
<b>Evaluation manager</b>		<b>International organization</b>	
<b>Evaluation commissioner</b>		<b>Voluntary sector</b>	
<b>Self evaluator</b>		<b>Consultancy</b>	
<b>Analyst or manager</b>		<b>Other private sector</b>	
<b>Teacher/researcher</b>		<b>Educational institution</b>	
<b>Student</b>		<b>Self employed</b>	
<b>Other:</b>		<b>Other:</b>	

### 2. What priority should EES give to a consultation process among members and national evaluation societies regarding competencies in evaluation?

<b>Nil</b>	<b>Very low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Very High</b>	<b>No opinion</b>

**3. What potential benefits would flow from EES adoption of a harmonized framework that reflects members' and national societies' views?**

	Yes	No	No opinion
<b>Increased recognition as a professional practice</b>			
<b>Useful complement to evaluation guidelines</b>			
<b>Guidance for professional self-assessment and development</b>			
<b>Design of evaluation education and training programs</b>			
<b>Selection and appointment of evaluators</b>			
<b>Potential use for evaluators' certification</b>			
<b>Other (specify):</b>			

**Comments about the relative importance of these benefits**

**4. What risk(s) if any should be managed in the formulation of an agreed EES framework of evaluators' competencies?**

**Comments**

**5. Which of the following categories should a framework of core competencies address?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
<b>Junior evaluators</b>			
<b>Evaluators</b>			
<b>Senior evaluators</b>			
<b>Self evaluators</b>			
<b>Evaluation managers</b>			
<b>Evaluation commissioners</b>			

**6. Do you favor EES consideration of a single core framework allowing for additional criteria for different uses - or should it propose several frameworks that address different levels of mastery and different potential uses?**

<b>Single framework</b>	
<b>Multiple framework (explain)</b>	

**7. What are your comments regarding the content of the framework of evaluation competencies outlined in Annex 1?**

**Comments:**

**7a. Is the structure adequate?**

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

**Please explain:**

**7b. Is the list complete?**

<b>Yes</b>	
<b>No</b>	

**Please explain:**

**7c. Based on your experience what competencies do you consider the most critical?**

**For independent evaluators**

**For self evaluators**

**For evaluation managers**

**For evaluation commissioners**

**8. Are you a member of the European Evaluation Society?**

**Yes:**

**No:**

**Contact details (optional)**

**Name:**

**Email:**

**Telephone number:**

## ANNEX 4

### **A PROPOSED COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN EVALUATORS**

The broad outline of competencies displayed in the attachment to this annex draws on good practice in evaluation education, training and testing and it takes account of the results of the Society wide consultation. It is composed of competencies that relate to (i) evaluation knowledge; (ii) professional practice; and (iii) dispositions and attitudes.

These evaluation competencies are conceptually linked to - but are not the same as - social research competencies. Evaluation is an autonomous discipline: it provides analytical tools to other disciplines. But it also uses the methods and concepts of all the social science disciplines.<sup>13</sup>

Thus a responsive evaluation competencies framework distinguishes between the generic competencies that are shared with other professions and those that are specific to evaluation. For example, ethical values and norms cannot be ignored in a well conceived evaluative process. This contrasts with “value free” social science research. Hence, adherence to democratic values would help to ensure coherence in European evaluations and strengthen their legitimacy<sup>14</sup>.

Evaluation work requires knowledge and skills honed through experience. Mastery of core knowledge elements is intrinsic to evaluation excellence. So is a basic understanding of evaluation methods and an understanding of the potential and limits of evaluation tools.

On the other hand, a person can have all the knowledge needed for evaluation and yet fail to perform as a good evaluator. Quality evaluation work implies interpersonal skills honed through experience: practice is central to evaluation competencies. Without a capacity to deliver, evaluation quality falters.

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<sup>13</sup> Vaessen/Leeuw (2009) *Mind the gap – Perspectives on Policy Evaluation and the Social Sciences*, Transaction Publishers.

<sup>14</sup> Equally, evaluators should aspire to intellectual virtues like honesty and precision of language that are relevant to the quality of evaluations. From this perspective, evaluation practice is closely associated with the scientific method and familiarity with it is desirable since evaluators are increasingly called upon to assess the validity of scientific claims on which public policy rests.

Finally, evaluation is not for everyone. Good evaluators are endowed with a distinctive mindset. Knowledge can be imparted and systematic training can enhance the quality of practice. But it is far harder but no less important to instill in evaluators the special dispositions of character and attitudes<sup>15</sup> that make for evaluation excellence. Hence, the trilogy of knowledge, practice and dispositions proposed to structure an evaluation competencies framework in the European space.

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<sup>15</sup> In this respect, evaluation is akin to auditing. Revealingly, the International Federation of Accountants (2003) identifies independence of mind as “*the state of mind that permits the provision of an opinion without being affected by influences that compromise professional judgment, allowing an individual to act with integrity, and exercise objectivity and professional skepticism*”. Also needed for effective evaluation work is independence in appearance.

## ATTACHMENT

### TOWARDS AN EVALUATION COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK

#### 1. Evaluation knowledge

##### 1.1 Appreciates the role played by evaluation in diverse contexts

1.11 Evinces familiarity with evaluation theory and approaches

1.12 Shows awareness of evaluation history and trends

1.13 Understands the linkages between evaluation and the social sciences

1.14 Grasps program theory and its evaluation implications

1.15 Relates evaluation to governance, policy and management environments in public, private and voluntary sectors

##### 1.2 Understands evaluation methods

1.21 Uses appropriate concepts and terms

1.22 Knows how to design, structure and plan an evaluation

1.23 Comprehends the value of diverse evaluation approaches

1.24 Appreciates their limits in diverse contexts

1.25 Adapts evaluation methods to specific contexts

##### 1.3 Grasps the basics of major evaluation tools

1.31 Data collection and analysis

1.32 Participatory methods, indicators and scores

1.33 Case studies, surveys, interviews

1.34 Evaluation panels

1.35 Monitoring systems

#### 2. Professional practice

##### 2.1 Demonstrates capacity to deliver

2.11 Ascertains the evaluative context; identifies stakeholders and their needs; manages their expectations

2.12 Assesses policy logic and program content

2.13 Manages the evaluation process through appropriate approaches, methods and tools

2.14 Gathers relevant evidence; interprets it with care; chooses appropriate evaluation criteria; reaches sound judgments

2.15 Disseminate evaluation findings and encourages utilization of evaluation results

##### 2.2 Evinces interpersonal skills

2.21 Writes fluently and communicates clearly

2.22 Shows empathy; displays listening skills; appreciates the value of team work

2.23 Uses sound negotiating and conflict resolution skills

2.24 Demonstrates cultural sensitivity

2.25 Nurtures professional relationships

#### 3. 1. Dispositions and attitudes

3.1 Upholds ethical and democratic values

3.2 Reaches out to clients and stakeholders

3.3 Respects the public interest

3.4 Evinces independence of mind and appearance

3.5 Displays self-awareness and pursues continuous professional development.