



Asia Pacific Regional Evaluation Strategy

Asia Pacific Regional Evaluation Strategy

October 2020



IN COLLABORATION WITH



Table of Contents

ACRONYMS	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
FOREWORD FROM THE CO-LEADERS OF THE #EVAL4ACTION CAMPAIGN	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY.....	6
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE ASIA PACIFIC STRATEGY	6
THE OVERALL GOAL, PRINCIPLES AND COORDINATION	9
THEMATIC ACTION AREAS.....	12
PROFESSIONALISING EVALUATION	12
DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIP FOR EVALUATION CAPACITY.....	15
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP IN EVALUATION	18
PROMOTING YOUNG AND EMERGING EVALUATORS	21
STRENGTHENING VOPEs	24
ENGAGING PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR DEMAND AND USE OF EVALUATION	27
PROMOTING NATIONAL EVALUATION POLICIES AND SYSTEMS.....	30
USING EVALUATION TO REPORT ON THE SDGs.....	33
REFERENCES	36

Acronyms

AfES - Afghanistan Evaluation Society
APEA - Asia Pacific Evaluation Association
ADB - Asian Development Bank
ANZEA - Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association
CLEAR South Asia – Center for Learning on Evaluation and Results
CoE-SA - Community of Evaluators – South Asia
DBM - Department of Budget and Management
Eval4Action campaign - Decade of EVALUATION for Action
ECOI - Evaluation Community of India
FUR – Follow Up and Review
GPFE -Global Parliamentarians Forum on Evaluation
HLPF - High-level Political Forum
ICU - Implementation Coordination Unit
IFIs - International Financial Institutions
InDEC - Indonesian Development Evaluation Community
IOCE - International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation
LGBTQI – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning or Intersex
MES - Malaysia Evaluation Society
M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation
MOF - Ministry of Finance
NEDA - National Economic and Development Agency
NEP – National Evaluation Policy
NEPS - National Evaluation Policies and Systems
NES – National Evaluation Systems
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
PFDE SA - Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation –South Asia
PSC - Parliamentary Select Committee
SLPFE - Sri Lanka Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation
SDGs -Sustainable Development Goals
VNRs - Voluntary National Reviews
VOPEs – Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation
UN - United Nations
UNEDAP - United Nations Development Evaluation Group in Asia Pacific region
YEE – Young and Emerging Evaluators

Acknowledgements

The Asia Pacific Regional Evaluation Strategy is a result of hard work and generous support of various stakeholders and individuals. Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA), EvalYouth Asia and Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation – South Asia (PFDE-SA) recognize the valuable contribution of all involved and supported.

Eval4Action Campaign for the strong partnership including for the regional consultation and the strategy development process, particularly the co-leaders:

Marco Segone, Director, UNFPA Evaluation Office

Khalil Bitar, Chair, EvalYouth Global Network

Kabir Hashim, Chair, Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation

And Neha Karkara, Communications Specialist, Evaluation Office, UNFPA

Tessie Catsambas and **EnCompass World LLC for supporting the regional consultation** and the strategy development process

Kieron Crawley, **for compiling the consolidated strategy**

Samantha Pathirathne and PASSasia Pvt Ltd **for supporting the stakeholder consultation**

Soma de Silva and Alok Srivastava for helping with **final editing**

Janaranga Dewasurendra for **designing the cover and inner pages**

Committee members for excellent contribution to develop the strategy

Samandar Mahmodi, Vice President, APEA/ Afghanistan Evaluation Society (AfES)

Ruchira Paranavithana, Sri Lanka

Umi Hanik, MONEV Studio, Indonesia

Rashmi Agrawal, Core Team Member, Evaluation Community of India (ECOI)

Qudratullah Jahid, EvalYouth Asia and AfES

Ana Erika Lareza, EvalYouth Asia, APEA and PHILDEV

Paula White, Board Member of Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA)

Debbie Goodwin, Former Co-chair, EvalIndigenous/ ANZEA

Rituu B Nanda, Facilitator, Global Fund for Children/ Institute of Social Studies Trust/ ECOI

Samantha Pathirathne, PASSasia Pvt Ltd

Soma de Silva, Former President, International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)

Surabhi Seth, Government of India/ Young and Emerging Evaluator

Mylvaganam Thilakarajah, Former Member of Parliament, Sri Lanka

Sawsan al Zatari, Co-chair, EvalYouth MENA

Weronika Felcis, Secretary, IOCE

Serge Eric, Co-chair, EvalIndigenous

Kieron Crawley, Evaluation Consultant, Spain

Asela Kalugampitiya, President, APEA

Oyuntsetseg (Oyuna) Chuluundorj, Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office

Foreword from the co-leaders of the #Eval4Action Campaign

It is with great honor that we welcome the Asia Pacific Regional Evaluation Strategy. This is the first regional strategy among Eval4Action partners, emerging as a follow up to the Eval4Action regional consultation held in the Asia Pacific on 25 June 2020. The strategy development was led by the Asia Pacific Evaluation Association, EvalYouth Asia and the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation – South Asia. These organizations, along with several other VOPEs, civil society organizations, private sector companies and development agencies in the Asia Pacific are partners of the Eval4Action campaign. The campaign is leading global advocacy for influential evaluation and evidence-based policymaking in order to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Quality evaluations are crucial to build a culture of influential evaluation. There are several challenges on this path, including lack of competent evaluation professionals and limited use of evaluative evidence in policymaking. Like other regions, Asia Pacific is seeking to strengthen these areas in the evaluation sphere, while also addressing several socio-development and humanitarian issues, now exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Given this background, the Asia Pacific Regional Evaluation Strategy is a giant step to strengthen influential evaluation in the region, and in turn contribute to the ongoing efforts in the Asia Pacific to deliver on the SDGs by 2030. We believe that the roll out of the strategy will be an opportunity for various stakeholders to come together on a common platform to push forward an evaluation agenda in the region with extended partnership, cooperation and regional solidarity.

The strategy includes eight themes, which cover various key aspects in the evaluation field. Among several areas, the strategy will help in professionalizing evaluation in Asia Pacific especially during this Decade of Action. In addition, strengthening young and emerging evaluators and engaging policy makers including parliamentarians are important aspects of the strategy.

The strategy followed a highly participatory process where VOPEs, parliamentarians, public officials, evaluators and development partners actively participated in defining the key themes of the strategy and their related actions. We are amazed and encouraged to see the vast volunteer contribution by committee members to develop the strategy. This spirit of commitment, dedication and volunteerism will pave the way for the successful implementation of the strategy in the days to come.

We congratulate the region and all the partners involved in the strategy development process. We believe the roadmap detailed by the strategy will go a long way in building a sustainable and equitable future for all in the region.

Marco Segone, Director, UNFPA Evaluation Office

Khalil Bitar, Chair, EvalYouth Global Network

Kabir Hashim, Chair, Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation

Introduction

Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA), EvalYouth Asia, and the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation–South Asia (PFDE-SA) are committed partners to the Eval4Action campaign. As part of the Eval4Action agenda, APEA and EvalYouth Asia jointly organized an Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on Evaluation on 25th June 2020. The consultation attracted a wide spectrum of participants including parliamentarians, Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs), evaluation professionals, government officials, development partners and others. The consultation was a virtual event where interactive thought provoking presentations followed by group discussions where participants took the opportunity to provide rich and insightful comments.

Using inputs from the consultation, regional partners proceeded to develop the **Asia-Pacific Regional Evaluation Strategy**. APEA, EvalYouth Asia and PFDE-SA led the process in collaboration with the UNFPA Evaluation Office, EvalYouth Global Network, and the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation. A Committee of representatives from a range of stakeholders was established to develop the regional strategy. The Committee identified 8 themes and developed content under each theme. The draft regional strategy was compiled consolidating content from each theme. A Stakeholder Consultation was subsequently used to finalize the draft regional strategy. This document is the finalised regional strategy incorporating feedback received at the stakeholder consultation.

Irrespective of the individuals and organizations that developed it, this regional strategy does not belong to any particular organization or entity. It belongs rather to the region and any organization within the region. Any organization or entity can use the strategy and implement all or some of the activities proposed. Partners who led the process will continue to coordinate partnerships for the regional strategy and ensure its implementation is sufficiently harmonised and avoids duplication.

We thank committee members for their excellent support, partners for contributing to a successful process to develop the strategy, and the voluntary committee for working hard to make the strategy a reality. We also invite all stakeholders in the region and beyond to partner together to accelerate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Asia Pacific.

Asia Pacific Evaluation Association
EvalYouth Asia
Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation

The process of developing the strategy



The process of developing the strategy commenced in June 2020 with a regional consultation with stakeholders in the Asia Pacific region. Following the formation of an action committee, the strategy itself has been developed by a group of 18 representative stakeholders from various institutions spread across 12 countries and was officially launched in November 2020.

The strategy document contains a roadmap for action spread across eight thematic areas that

have emerged from the rich and insightful contributions to the earlier regional consultation. While the document contains details of contextually relevant opportunities for accelerating action to support evaluation in the Asia Pacific region, the potential partners must be further mobilised across the region to detail out own action plans that can identify, commit to, and create timelines for interventions and activities to support the strategy.

Background and context for the Asia Pacific Strategy

Context

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted as a global agenda to create a sustainable future where no one is left behind. While progress is being made to achieve the SDGs, the deep transformation required to deliver the goals in full and in time by 2030, is still elusive. With just 10 years left to achieve the goals, the year 2020 is critical to galvanize urgent action and upscale to deliver the global goals by the target date.

The Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 highlights key accelerators to achieve the

SDGs by 2030. This includes, among others, stronger links between evaluation and the SDGs, better data and evidence, and robust plans to monitor progress. It also recommends governments incorporate targets and indicators into their national plans and budgets, formulate policies and programmes to achieve them, and create institutions that deal with uncertainties and risks, and systems for monitoring and evaluation.

However, many countries lack effective national evaluation systems to evaluate the

implementation of national development strategies towards the delivery of their localized SDGs. While several stakeholders, including United Nations (UN) agencies and civil society actors, are supporting country-owned, country-led evaluations with an emphasis on their use in influencing policies, there is a risk that lack of robust national evaluation systems and capacity could slow down and even derail the momentum toward achieving the SDGs. A large majority of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented at previous High-level Political Forums (HLPF) revealed a lack of evaluative evidence, with scarce mention of evaluation, evidence, and monitoring¹. Strong national evaluation systems are critical to delivering the SDGs as they demonstrate to countries what solutions work and what could be done better to ensure no one is left behind.

The United Nations Secretary-General issued a global call to mobilize all actors, at all levels, for a Decade of Action² to deliver the SDGs by 2030. The Decade of Action campaign aims to mobilize everyone everywhere, demand urgency and ambition, and supercharge ideas to solutions.

In alignment with and complementary to the Decade of Action campaign, UNFPA Evaluation Office, EvalYouth Global Network and the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation are partnering to roll out a global communications campaign, the Decade of EVALUATION for Action (Eval4Action campaign³). This campaign seeks to bring widespread recognition to evaluation as a

powerful tool to improve public accountability and good governance toward delivering SDGs.

The campaign's overall objective is to mobilize and spur commitments from decision-makers, evaluation community, and other stakeholders to develop stronger national evaluation systems and capacities, toward delivery of SDGs by 2030, with a focus on no one left behind. The specific objectives of the campaign are as follows⁴:

- Raise awareness and widespread recognition of the role of evaluation and its use in accelerating the delivery of SDGs by 2030, and by including evaluative evidence when reporting progress of SDGs at the HLPF and at the national level.
- Generate personal and institutional commitments for action (a) from decision-makers to strengthen national evaluation systems/capacities, develop/support national evaluation policies and use of evaluations; and (b) from UN agencies, broader evaluation community and academia to produce high-quality evaluations and evidence to achieve the SDGs.

The first regional consultation under the auspicious of Eval4Action was held in the Asia Pacific region. The idea was to get inputs for the Regional Evaluation Strategy. In the Asia Pacific Region, several countries have progressive achievements regarding evaluation.

The Asia Pacific Regional Context

Asia and the Pacific region is a hugely diverse collection of over 50 nations and five sub-regions stretching from Iran and Afghanistan in the West to the island nations of the central and southern Pacific in the East. The region spans ten time zones and covers large landlocked nations to small island states.

There is a varying capacity in terms of evaluation policies and systems from Australia, New Zealand and Japan, where capacity is strong, to Nepal, Sri

Lanka, Malaysia and Philippines, where it is still emerging. In many other countries, individuals are working hard to push the evaluation agenda through fledgling VOPEs.

The Island nations of Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia are under-represented in the regional evaluation agenda and there is a recognised need during this decade of action to explore innovative ways of including island nations more centrally in the 'eval for action' dialogue.

¹ Evaluation; a missed opportunity in the first set of Voluntary National Reviews, May 2017, IIED, EVALSDGs

² <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/>

³ <https://www.eval4action.org/>

⁴ Concept Note of the Eval4Action Campaign, April 2020

South Asia

In South Asia, there are nine countries. A few countries have put in place processes to strengthen the evaluation culture. Bhutan has drafted a National Evaluation Policy (NEP), which is with the government for approval. In addition, Pakistan Evaluation Association is starting to develop a draft NEP.

Nepal: Nepal is the only country in the Asia Pacific Region that has evaluation included in the national constitution (2015). Nepal also developed National Evaluation Policy Act, which is now in the Parliament for approval. There are three VOPEs in Nepal – Community of Evaluators – Nepal, Nepal Evaluation Society, and Society of Monitoring and Evaluation. Nepal Planning Commission is the designated government institution for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The first-ever national parliamentarians’ group– National Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation Policy–was formed in Nepal.

SouthEast Asia

Philippines: National Economic and Development Agency (NEDA) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) developed a national evaluation policy framework which primarily aims to provide a framework for the conduct of evaluations in the public sector in support of good governance, transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. On July 15th, 2015, NEDA and DBM signed the Joint Memorandum Circular No 2015-01 for all Departments, Agencies, Bureaus, Offices, Commissions, State Universities and Colleges, other instrumentalities of government and others concerned regarding the National Evaluation Policy Framework of the Philippines. In Philippines there are three VOPEs, and APEA Secretariat is located in Manila.

Malaysia: Evaluation functions are embedded in Malaysian central planning agencies, such as the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU), and the Economic Planning Unit, and several key directives and

Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka is the only country in South Asia having a National Evaluation Policy approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. It was endorsed by the government in June 2018. Sri Lanka Parliament established the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on Evaluation in 2019, which is the first-ever such committee in the world. The PSC drafted the National Evaluation Bill and encouraged the evaluation capacity building of the Parliament Research Unit. Sri Lanka Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation (SLPFE), which was established in 2016 played a strong role, including advocating for the NEP and PSC. SLPFE was also instrumental in evaluation capacity building at the district level and holding the EvalColombo2018, parliamentarians’ global event on evaluation. Sri Lanka Evaluation Association is one of the oldest VOPEs globally and one of the few in the Asia Pacific Region, and the first in South Asia.

circulars govern evaluation activities. The emphasis on evaluation in the public sector has gradually evolved as an integral component of performance management and results-based management approaches. Since 2005, there has been a shift to an outcome-based approach, particularly through the work of the ICU in outcome evaluation, and efforts to achieve the strategic policy objectives of the 10th Malaysia Plan towards strengthening implementation capacity. Further, Outcome-based Budgeting, which the MOF is managing, was introduced in 2010 as part of the government’s Integrated Results-Based Management system. Malaysia Evaluation Society (MES) is one of the few VOPEs first established in the Asia Pacific region⁵.

Indonesia: Indonesia has made progress toward building a national monitoring and evaluation system. A transformation of the national M&E system evolved in pushing for performance-based agenda supported by laws and regulations that depict the strong commitment of the

⁵ Case study on national evaluation system of Malaysia, UNDP and UNICEF, 2018

Government of Indonesia to be held accountable to the achievement of long-term and medium-term development targets. M&E Infrastructure of the government bodies is the most impressive one in South-East Asian countries⁶. M&E related rules and regulations are in place, but still, a long way to go to build an evaluative thinking and

learning culture. Indonesian Development Evaluation Community (InDEC), the only M&E association in Indonesia, was established in 2009. It is contributing to emerging evaluation discourses among its members via offline and online knowledge-sharing platforms.

East Asia

Japan: Japan has the Government Policy Evaluations Act (act No 86 of 2001), which was passed in 2001. Japan is the only country in the Asia Pacific region that has a parliament act on evaluation. Japan Evaluation Society was

Instrumental in passing the law and is an active VOPE.

China: China, in partnership with Asian Development Bank, annually conducts Asian Evaluation Week in China.

Pacific

In the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand have fairly strong evaluation systems. Australia has established an evaluation system within the government, and Official Development Assistance emphasizes recipients to follow M&E guidelines provided by AusAID. Australian Evaluation Society is a well-established VOPE and works actively on capacity building. New Zealand VOPE – ANZEA is also a strong VOPE and

instrumental in establishing Maori Evaluation Association (Ma Te Rae), an indigenous evaluation group. The only country in the Pacific islands having at least a nascent VOPE is Papua New Guinea. However, the VOPE is not active at the moment. Pacific islands are yet to become active in the VOPE community and more represented in regional or international evaluation forums.

The overall goal, principles and coordination

The overall goal for the strategy is to realise *Greater use of evaluation contributing positively to achievement of national development goals and SDGs in Asia Pacific Region.*

This is in turn supported by strategic action across 8 strategic action areas;

Action Area 1 - Professionalising Evaluation

Action Area 2 - Developing Partnerships for Evaluation Capacity

Action Area 3 - Strengthening Community Ownership in Evaluation

Action Area 4 – Promoting Young and Emerging Evaluators

Action Area 5 – Strengthening VOPEs

Action Area 6 – Engaging Parliamentarians for Demand and Use of Evaluation

Action Area 7 – Promoting National Evaluation Policies and Systems

⁶ Case study on national evaluation system of Indonesia, UNDP and UNICEF, 2017

Action Area 8 – Using Evaluation to Report on the SDGs

While each of the thematic areas contributes significantly to the overall goal of the strategy there are important interactions and synergies between them. These are further outlined under each thematic section below.

Overarching Principles

The strategy is guided by underlying principles which also underpin the SDGs. These include the following.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Women and girls make up 50 percent of the world's population, yet are the most vulnerable to poverty, sexual violence and exploitation and most affected by natural disasters and ongoing conflict situations. In contributing to SDG 5, the strategy will, where possible, adopt a gender-transformative approach. In addition to the inclusion of women and girls in its implementation, the strategy will, where possible, tackle the underlying structural barriers and power imbalances that lie at the root of gender inequality. The Strategy will promote truly *gender-transformative* work and encourage partners to embrace gender equality within their own organisations.

Human Rights

The SDGs are firmly founded on the realisation of rights, especially for poor and marginalised people and are recognised as the “smart way” to accelerate progress for more equitable and sustainable development”.⁷ The evaluation has the potential to empower people to shape the decisions that impact their lives. The universal, transformative, comprehensive, and inclusive principles that underpin the SDGs will also be central to the implementation of the Strategy.

Leaving no one behind

Leaving no one behind through ending discrimination, exclusion and reducing inequalities and vulnerabilities is central to the pledge of the 2030 agenda. The Asia Pacific Evaluation Strategy will embrace this principle and seek to promote evaluation to benefit the poorest, combat discrimination, and address rising inequalities within and amongst countries

Coordination

A number of thematic areas have overlaps in terms of actions, partners and stakeholders. It will be important when lobbying government and policymakers to have a coordinated approach to receive coherent messages from partners in their country and region.

Approaching the work guided by the thematic action areas can help bring this coherence and clarity. APEA is in a strategic position to coordinate activities and to help ensure that there is a coherent and unified approach for the strategy at the regional level while VOPEs have a clear role to play at the national level.

⁷ UNHR Empowerment, Inclusion, Equality: Accelerating sustainable development with human rights

The overall Theory of Change

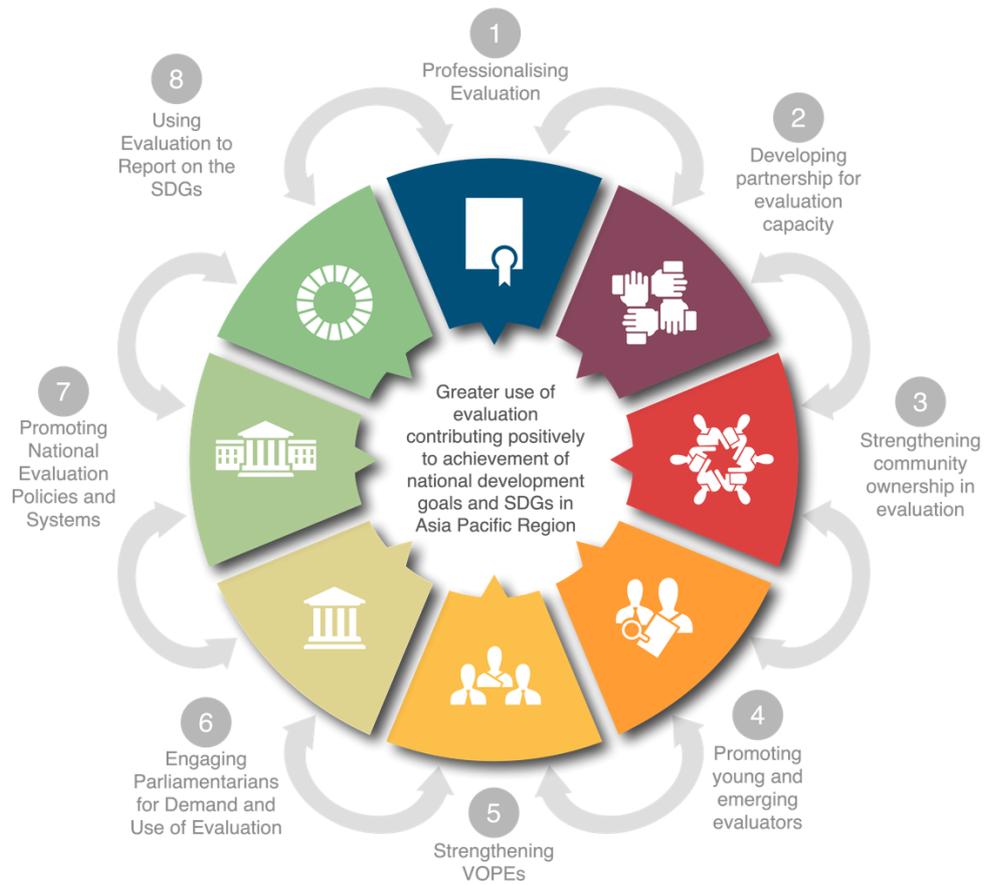


Figure 1: The overall Theory of Change for the Strategy

Thematic Action Areas



ACTION AREA 1

Professionalising Evaluation

Links to



Developing
partnership
for evaluation
capacity



Promoting
Young and
Emerging
Evaluators



Strengthening
VOPEs



Using
Evaluation to
Report SDGs

The professionalisation of evaluation remains a dominant theme within the sector, as evaluators strive to establish an acknowledged profession such as doctors, accountants, lawyers, and engineers. For such professionals, prescribed competencies, qualifications, standards, principles, and values guarantee a quality of service that in turn, wins public trust.

Professional recognition that is conventionally awarded after years of education, dedication, commitment, scholarly work, and practice is challenging for a young and fledgling profession. Despite the challenges, there have been some compelling initiatives to build pathways to evaluation professionalism that uphold quality and standards while avoiding the protective and rigid barriers to accreditation and licensing.

High expectations of evaluation and its role in measuring progress towards 17 SDGs, has added a sense of urgency to the theme. At the same time, ever more complex, volatile and uncertain development environments promise to push individuals and organizations to the brink of their capacity.

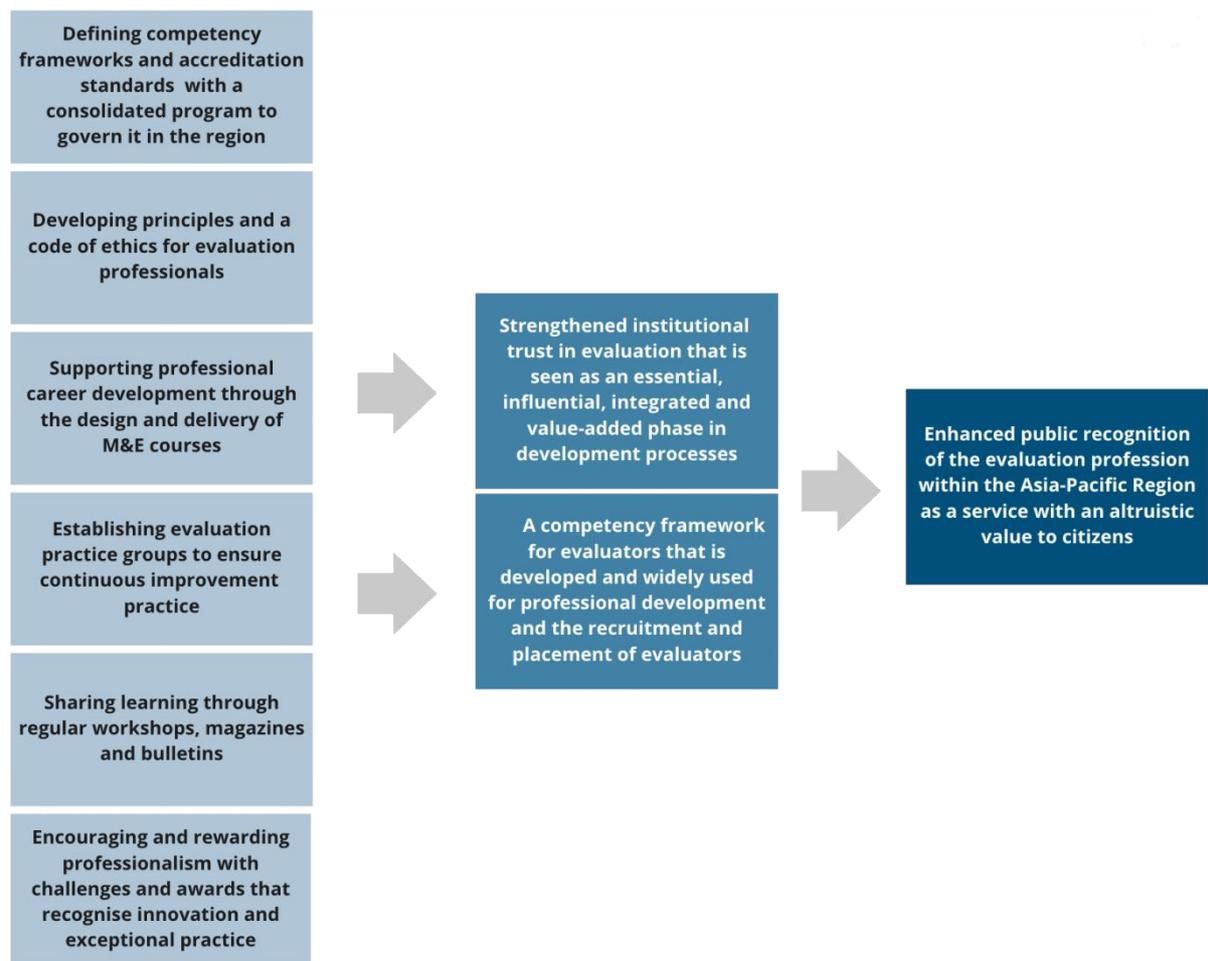
In this context, improving the quality, delivery, reliability, and flexibility of evaluation services will be key to reaching standards of professional performance. While there may be an outlay to our institutions to achieve this, it should be regarded as an investment rather than a cost.

The roadmap to the professionalization of evaluation includes the following milestones:

Expected outcomes

1. Enhanced public recognition of the evaluation profession within the Asia-Pacific Region as a service with an altruistic value to citizens.
2. Strengthened institutional recognition and trust in evaluation that is seen as an essential, influential, integrated and value-added phase in development processes.
3. A competency framework for evaluators that is developed and widely used for professional development and the recruitment and placement of evaluators.

Theory of change



Action components

To achieve the outcomes identified above, the following actions are recommended;

1. Partners to the plan can help develop and define competency frameworks and accreditation standards for the evaluation profession together with a consolidated program to govern it in the region. VOPEs and academic institutions can partner to start competency profiling and the delivery of competency enhancement programmes.
2. Governance and compliance can be strengthened in the region through developing principles and a code of ethics for evaluation professionals. An appropriate assurance system may also be needed to ensure that professionals comply with standards. Dialogue amongst evaluation professionals can help ensure that intrinsic values are upheld and that an altruistic service is delivered to the public by evaluators acting with social responsibility.
3. Supporting professional career development through the design and delivery of M&E courses to those who are already practicing as evaluators and those who are entering the profession.
4. The establishing of evaluation practice groups together with mentoring programs and programmes for coaching and consultation support, can help ensure that there is continuous improvement of evaluation practice in the region.
5. Sharing and learning through regular workshops, magazines, and bulletins can help strengthen evaluation practice, while a strong social dialogue and listening programme can help to uncover valuable learning from stakeholders.

6. Evaluation research and development programmes, together with evaluation study circles, can lead to avenues for improvement.
7. Challenges and awards that recognise exceptional practice and innovation can help to motivate, encourage and reward professionalism, while regular events such as evaluation days (or weeks) can help raise the profile of the profession and act as a focal point for communication and advocacy.
8. Establish evaluation training at the undergraduate level in universities.

Role of partners

APEA and VOPEs have an important role in facilitating and contributing to dialogue around the action areas, while Government Institutions such as planning ministries must contribute to competency development. . VOPEs have the role in partnering with universities for academic courses on evaluation. EvalYouth, which represents the interests of young professionals

who seek to move into the evaluation sector must also be centrally involved in the process of Professionalisation. Fellow Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and employers in the development sector have a valuable role in testing out the usefulness of selected processes such as talent acquisition.



ACTION AREA 2

Developing partnership for evaluation capacity

Links to



Professionalising Evaluation



Promoting Young and Emerging Evaluators



Strengthening VOPEs



Engaging Parliamentarians for Demand and Use of Evaluation



Promoting National Evaluation Policies and Systems



Using Evaluation to Report SDGs

In this Decade of Action there is a pressing need to evaluate progress towards SDG outcomes, and encourage the use of evaluation findings in ongoing policy planning. High-quality evaluations are more likely to be utilised in this way.

Recognising the holistic, multi-dimensional and interlinked nature of the SDGs guided by the principle of 'Leave No One Behind' the UN General Assembly and the Global Evaluation Agenda have highlighted the importance of enhancing evaluation capacities at individual, organisational and national level.

Strong local, national, and regional partnerships have the potential to enhance capacity building processes through sharing knowledge and experiences. In building these partnerships, it is important to define precisely who the targets of partnership for capacity development are and to recognise that while Asia and Pacific countries

have many things in common, they also exhibit a diversity of geography, demographics, culture, economic profile, evaluation capacities, and evaluation systems. Within this diversity, we have an opportunity to utilise country strengths as capital for strategic partnerships. The resulting portfolio of evaluators and institutions will become APEA's collective strength in the future.

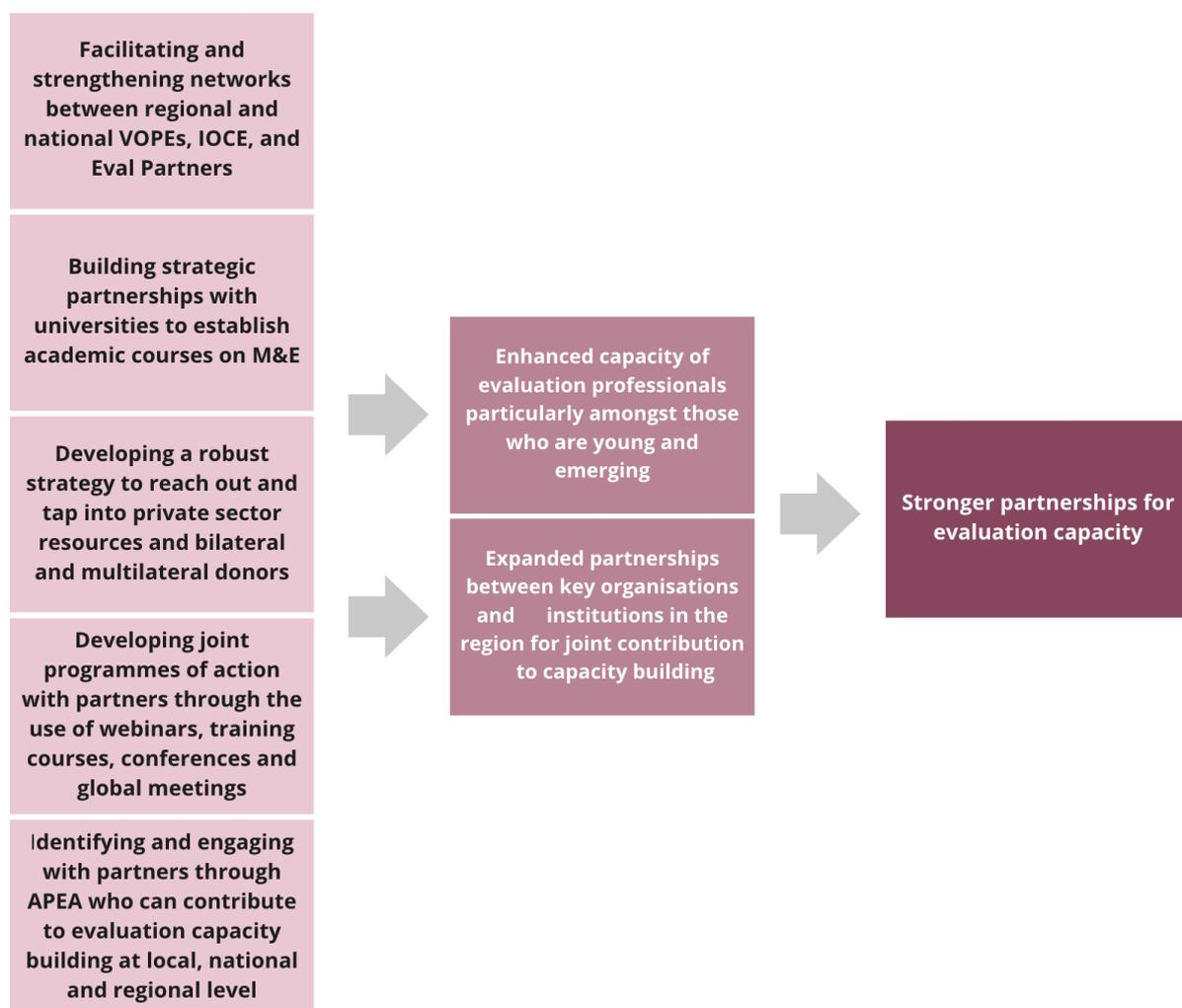
Effective communication is the cornerstone around which partnerships are built and face-to-face gatherings an important means of building trust between potential collaborators. In the context of an ongoing global pandemic however, partners may need to adopt new and innovative ways of collaborating. While online collaboration will inevitably become part of recognised evaluation capacity, we may still need to find ways of keeping local conditions and contexts in focus.

Expected outcomes

The anticipated outcomes under Action Area 2 are;

1. Enhanced capacity of evaluation professionals, particularly amongst those who are young and emerging
2. Expanded partnerships between key organisations and institutions in the region for joint contribution to capacity building

Theory of change



Action components

Each stakeholder group within the spectrum of partners will need to develop their own strategy for building capacity. Bearing this in mind, to

achieve the outcomes identified above, the following actions are recommended;

1. Facilitating and strengthening networks between regional and national VOPEs, IOCE, and EvalPartners.
2. Building strategic partnerships with universities to establish academic yet practical courses on M&E that can be widely disseminated and shared.
3. Developing a robust strategy to reach out and tap into private sector resources and most importantly to focus on bilateral and multilateral donors.
4. Developing joint programmes of action with partners through the use of webinars, videos, training courses, conferences and global meetings
5. Appointing ambassadors for young and emerging evaluators, who promote learning and motivate others.
6. Identifying and engaging with partners through APEA who can contribute to evaluation capacity building at local, national, and regional level.

There are many existing partnerships for capacity building within the region that can be strengthened, while opportunities for new partnerships with bilateral, multi-lateral donor agencies and governments can be developed. Of particular importance will be identifying potential partners for collaboration to increase capacity development and demand evaluations. An important aspect of the action plan will be to

increase awareness amongst partners about the importance of enhancing evaluation capacity and working together. Innovations that have emerged through joint activities between partners during the time of COVID-19 can be built upon. Finally, it will be important for actions under this to be coordinated closely with other thematic groups to leverage common opportunities.

Role of partners in supporting the action area

Developing partnerships for evaluation capacity involves collaboration at multiple levels. At a global level, useful collaborative partnerships may be established with Eval4Action campaign partners and other regional VOPEs and evaluation networks (particularly VOPEs that collaborated with EvalPartners to strengthen National Evaluation Systems (NES) under Flagship programmes including the Evidence Matters campaign). UN Agencies that cooperate with EvalPartners and the Eval4Action campaign are also prospective partners. At a regional level, there are opportunities for partnerships with regional networks, national VOPEs, universities, and private sector organisations with a regional

profile and can offer capacity building programmes.

At a national level, legislators, government, international donor agencies have the potential to support mobilising resources while universities, colleges, evaluators, and the private sector can collaborate to deliver capacity building programmes.

Partnering with NGOs and the media may help to raise awareness around evaluation capacity building and its role in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs.



ACTION AREA 3

Strengthening community ownership in evaluation

Links to



Developing partnership for evaluation capacity



Strengthening VOPEs



Using Evaluation to Report SDGs

Community and citizen ownership in evaluation is recognised as an important priority particularly for marginalised population groups. It empowers them, reduces reliance on external experts, and builds sustainability of interventions by building buy-in to evaluation findings. Communities also possess valuable indigenous knowledge that can help us understand how and why programmes succeed or fail. To deliver on the SDG promise of “Leaving No One Behind”, communities must be mobilised not only to identify the most marginalised and vulnerable amongst them, but to ensure that the benefits of national development programmes become sustainable and are shared equitably by everyone.

Communities can include but are not limited to place-based communities, communities of interest, ethnically based populations, cultures and sub-cultures, to name a few. Involving these groups successfully in the

evaluation process requires evaluators to value and understand how communities are organised in terms of social structure and leadership and build an appreciation of local values, priorities and culture.

Key marginalised groups can be part of the diversity within communities and are the focus for interventions and programmes in many instances. Their collaboration as well as influence on how evaluation is undertaken, is important.

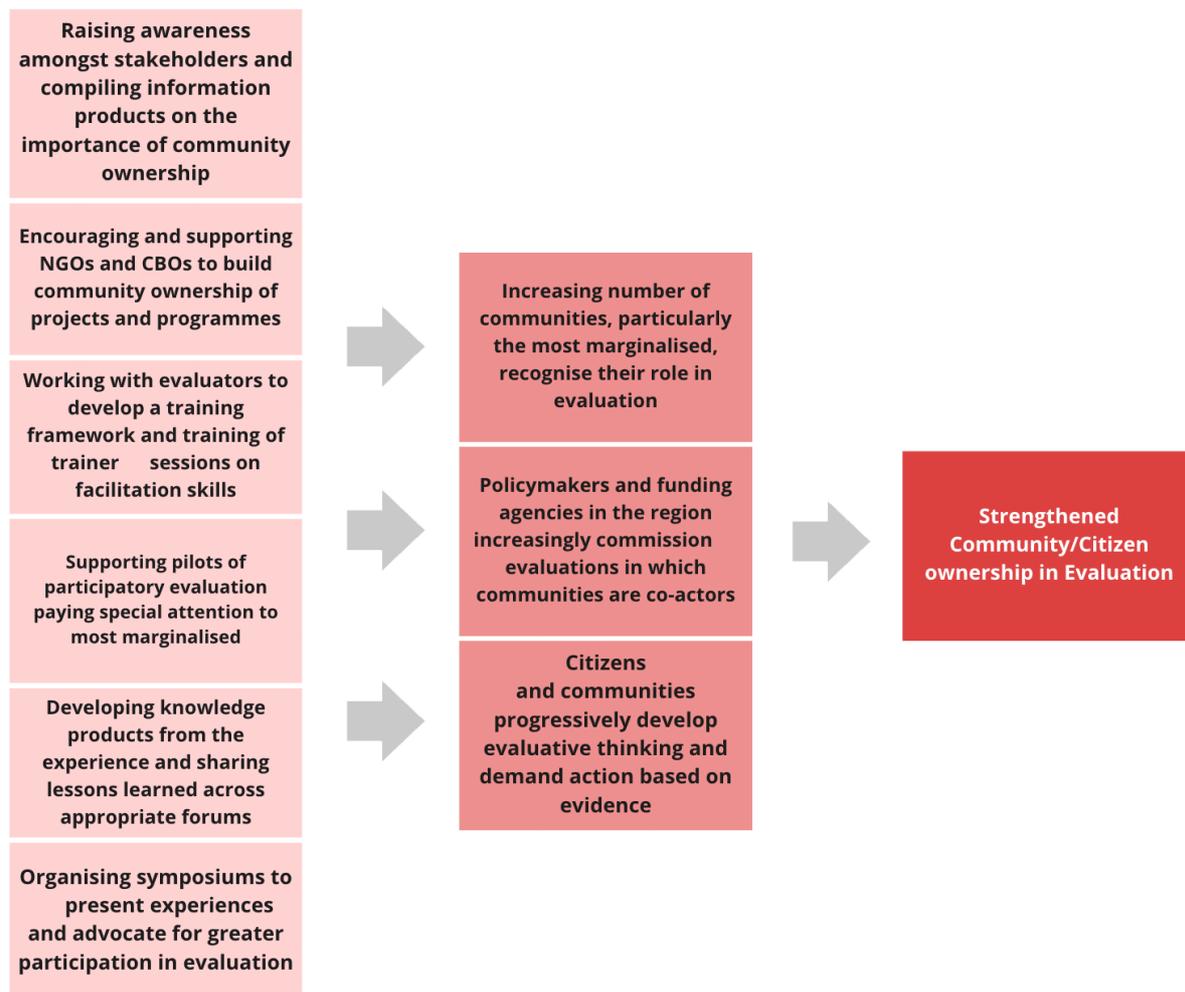
True ownership arises when people participate in the design of the project and its monitoring, evaluation, and analysis of results. Therefore, it is important for evaluation professionals to transform away from being dissociated experts to becoming listeners and letting the power flow to the community. While community ownership is recognised as important, the question of how best to ignite the community’s to engage with evaluation remains.

Expected outcomes

The anticipated outcomes under Action Area 3 are;

1. An increasing number of communities, particularly the most marginalised, recognise their role in evaluation.
2. Policymakers and funding agencies in the region increasingly commission evaluations in which communities are co-actors.
3. Citizens and communities progressively develop evaluative thinking and demand action based on evidence.

Theory of change



To build the participatory mindset required for greater community participation in evaluation, NGOs must build community ownership of programmes. At the same time, evaluators must facilitate and hand over greater control to the community for evaluations. It will be important

to strengthen participatory and transformative approaches. A greater recognition by communities of their role in evaluation combined with a shift by funders and policy makers to commission or co-partner with communities should increase the demand from communities for evaluative action based on evidence.

Action components

To achieve the outcomes identified above, the following action areas are recommended;

1. Raising awareness amongst stakeholders and compiling information products on the importance of community ownership in evaluation.
2. Encouraging and supporting NGOs and CBOs to build community ownership of projects and programmes.
3. Working with evaluators to develop a training framework and training of trainer sessions on facilitation skills.

4. Supporting participatory evaluation pilots paying special attention to involving youth, indigenous, LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning or Intersex), differently-abled, women and girls, and the most marginalised.
5. Developing knowledge products from the experience and sharing lessons learned about how best to ignite the communities' passion and interest across appropriate forums.
6. Encouraging and supporting communities in the Asia Pacific region to organise symposiums to present experiences and advocate for greater participation in evaluation.

Role of partners in supporting the action area

NGOs and community groups (formal and informal) are important partners that can build community ownership of development programmes and help communities recognise their role in evaluating them.

Communities of practicing evaluators, VOPEs and government planning departments will be important partners to help raise awareness around community evaluation and instigate a mindset shift.

Institutes that conduct training on evaluation are valuable partners to develop and deliver training frameworks and training of trainer sessions to strengthen evaluators facilitation skills.

UN agencies, funding agencies, and commissioners of evaluations are important partners to support the development of training initiatives, pilot participatory evaluations, disseminate knowledge products, and share knowledge.



ACTION AREA 4

Promoting young and emerging evaluators

Links to



Professionalising
Evaluation



Developing
partnership for
evaluation
capacity



Strengthening
VOPEs



Promoting
National
Evaluation
Policies and
Systems



Using Evaluation
to Report SDGs

The global vision for evaluation within EvalAgenda2020 has helped build recognition of evaluation amongst policymakers as a valuable source of evidence for decision making. To fulfill this role and meet rising demand, the evaluation must become a recognised profession sustained by a growing number of young evaluators moving into the sector. While there are expanding opportunities for young and emerging evaluators, numerous challenges hamper young people from entering the evaluation profession.

Information and awareness regarding evaluation as a career are in short supply. Peer support, coaching, and mentoring opportunities for young people are essential if they are to consider evaluation as an attractive career option and take advantage of opportunities in the ecosystem.

Evaluation as a recognised area within higher education curricula is gradually emerging, however, there are limited opportunities for

many young people in the region to study evaluation at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Professional development for practicing young evaluators is also costly and often inaccessible. The rich and diverse culture within the Asia Pacific region, while valued, sometimes presents a challenge when locating English-based materials and learning programs in the region.

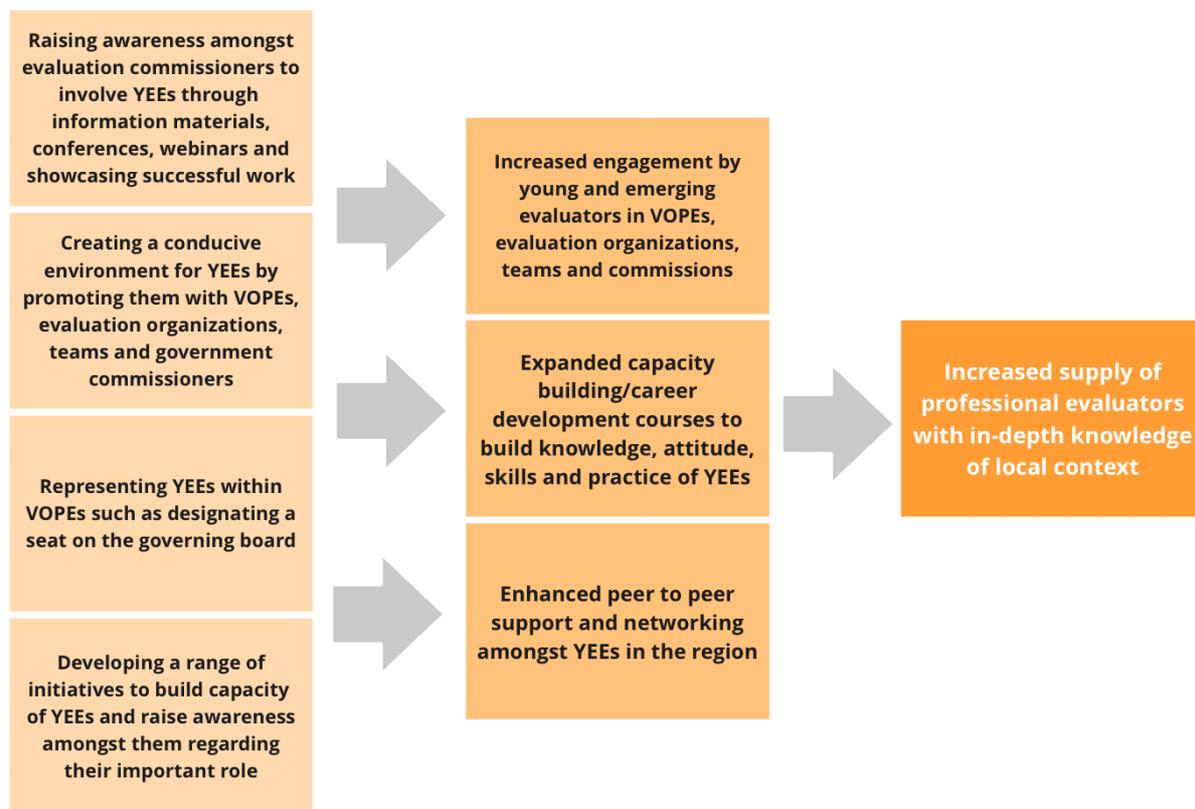
To promote young evaluators, institutions must invest in bringing them into the workforce and onto evaluation teams. Those who commission evaluations can help by recognising the value of engaging them in evaluations. Networks amongst young evaluators in the Asia Pacific region also have a role to play in better understanding the characteristics of Young and Emerging Evaluators (YEEs), their needs and aspirations and providing support and learning experiences to help them grow into professionals of the future.

Expected outcomes

The anticipated outcomes under Action Area 4 are

1. Increased supply of professional evaluators with in-depth knowledge of the local context
2. Increased engagement of young and emerging evaluators in VOPEs, evaluation organizations, teams, and commissions
3. Expanded availability and accessibility of capacity building/career development courses to build knowledge, attitude, skills and practice of YEEs

Theory of change



To increase the supply of quality evaluators with in-depth knowledge of local context, young and emerging evaluators need to be brought into the professional pipeline. Greater engagement of YEEs in VOPEs, evaluation organisations, teams, and commissions must be accompanied by

initiatives to build the young evaluators' capacity. Peer support and networking are also important to create access to opportunities, create communities of practice, and share learning around the challenges of entering the profession.

Action components

To achieve the outcomes identified above, the following action areas are recommended;

1. Raising awareness amongst evaluation commissioners about the importance of involving YEEs through developing information materials, engaging YEEs in conferences, webinars, and showcasing their successful work.
2. Creating a conducive environment with opportunities for YEEs by promoting them among stakeholders such as VOPEs, evaluation organizations, evaluation teams, and government evaluation commissioners.
3. Making special provisions for representing YEEs within VOPEs such as designating a seat on the governing board
4. Developing a range of capacity building initiatives for YEEs such as
 - a. certificate and diploma programs in partnership with public and private universities
 - b. summer and winter evaluation schools
 - c. training courses and specific sessions on career development in M&E
 - d. mentorship programs, including the development of mentors' guide and related resources
 - e. internships with VOPEs and other on-the-job capacity building opportunities

To be effective, capacity building courses should be designed and contextualized for the Asia Pacific region, take advantage of e-learning, and be made available in a range of languages. It should also be used to raise awareness amongst YEEs on their important role within the sector.

5. Encouraging and supporting regional and international networking opportunities for YEEs by engaging them in task forces, committees and working groups of national, regional and international VOPEs. Networking can also be enhanced through webinars that focus on YEE career advisory, peer support, and professional development.

Role of partners in supporting the action area

EvalPartners and specifically the EvalYouth Network under whose mandate this action area falls is a key partner to support work in this area. EvalYouth Asia as the regional chapter of the region is well- positioned to mobilize partners in the region. National, regional and global VOPEs can raise awareness and provide networking opportunities for YEEs. United Nations agencies and organizations, including UNFPA who are active in the Asia Pacific region, are also valuable

partners who can help provide opportunities for YEEs by including them on evaluation teams. Bilateral and multilateral development agencies can potentially provide support for capacity building and networking initiatives. At the same time, National Parliaments and Youth Parliaments can help to raise awareness around the importance of investing in YEEs as part of a long-term process to build the national supply of quality evaluators with in-depth knowledge of the local context.



ACTION AREA 5

Strengthening VOPEs

Links to



Professionalising Evaluation



Developing partnership for evaluation capacity



Strengthening community ownership in evaluation



Promoting Young and Emerging Evaluators



Engaging Parliamentarians for Demand and Use of Evaluation



Promoting National Evaluation Policies and Systems



Using Evaluation to Report SDGs

VOPEs are professional associations established by evaluation practitioners that operate variously at national, international, and regional levels. Members, who are typically experts in conducting and commissioning evaluations, self-organize to discuss and share professional experiences, challenges, to advance the profession and develop professional standards jointly. Governments and development partners stand to benefit from VOPEs' work to help build capacity in the sector and expand the supply of quality evaluators for their programmes. VOPEs that become directly involved in the development of national and subnational evaluation policies also benefit not only members but also society⁸.

Since establishing the Canadian Evaluation Society in 1981 and the American Evaluation Association in 1986, around 189 evaluation associations have been formed at national, regional, and global levels. The International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation, founded in 2004, operates as a member association for VOPEs. The Asia Pacific region with over 40 countries contains 20 VOPEs, however, not

all are active. The Asia Pacific Evaluation Association operates at the regional level while the Community of Evaluators – South Asia (CoE-SA) covers the sub-region. Both VOPEs are represented at IOCE.

Despite committed and dedicated staff, many VOPEs in the region face challenges in keeping operations dynamic and sustainable. Capacity often determines whether VOPEs play an active advocacy role in creating and implementing National Evaluation Policies and Systems (NEPS), while funding for internal operations and programmes rely on membership fees and short-term funding sources of limited scope and availability. Many VOPEs face challenges in maintaining rotating and transparent governance structures, and in some countries where there is more than one VOPE, synergy and coordination may suffer.

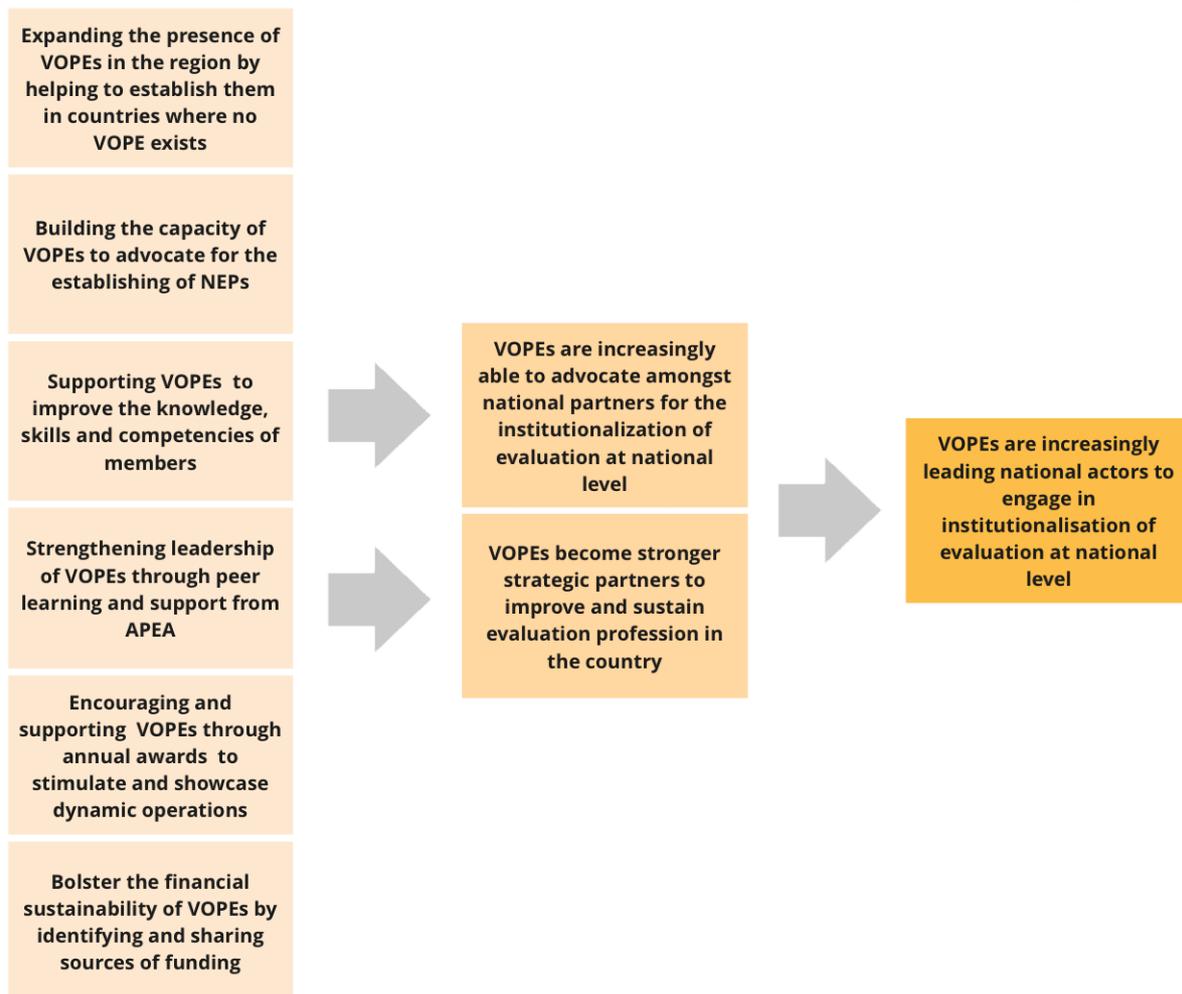
While there has been substantial learning to date amongst VOPEs, it will be important to understand better their needs to inform ongoing action this area. It will be important too to support VOPEs to learn from the evaluation of their own activities.

Expected outcomes

1. VOPEs together with other actors such as government, parliament, civil society and development partners are actively engaged in institutionalising evaluation at the national level
2. Evaluation profession is recognized in the region with clear competency and practice framework.

⁸ Segone M, Rugh J (Ed), "Evaluation and civil society: Stakeholders' perspectives on national evaluation capacity development", EvalPartners and IOCE, 2013

Theory of change



Action components

To achieve the outcomes identified above the following action areas are recommended;

1. An important component of this action area will be to expand the presence of VOPEs in the region by helping to establish them in countries where no VOPE exists. The APEA secretariat is well placed to provide one-to-one support to fledgling VOPEs during start-up using online meetings.
2. Strengthening the capacity of VOPEs is another important action area; simple surveys can help understand their needs better. Resources such as the IOCE VOPE toolkit can be promoted to enhance institutional capacity while established VOPEs can share their own experience with others via webinars. Additional areas of support include guidance from the APEA secretariat to develop focussed action plans that detail realistic and achievable VOPE activities on an annual basis.
3. Advocacy for establishing NEPs and evidence based Voluntary National Reviews is an important area of focus for VOPEs in the region. Capacity building on advocacy will help VOPEs to actively promote NEPS while a guide on use of evaluation for VNRs and training for officials engaged in VNRs at the national level link closely with the Action Area 8. Other potential areas of advocacy for VOPEs include engagement with international campaigns such as Eval4Action and Evidence Matters.

4. In addition to building their own capacity, VOPEs in the region can be encouraged and supported to improve the members' knowledge, skills, and competencies. This links closely with the action area on professionalisation and the sharing of successful initiatives from other countries.
5. Strong leadership is crucial for the success of VOPEs in the region. Partners to the plan can facilitate VOPE leadership development by supporting peer learning using webinars and developing and disseminating relevant learning materials. APEA also has a role to play and can provide leadership support through its quarterly meetings with VOPE leaders.
6. Establishing and sustaining a VOPE can be challenging; encouragement and support are important to sustain fledgling organisations. An annual award for VOPEs in the region can help to stimulate and showcase dynamic operations. APEA is in an appropriate position to facilitate this as a part of evaluation conferences or in the context of any other major events in the region.
7. Partners to the action plan can help bolster the financial sustainability of VOPEs by identifying and sharing regional and local funding sources to support their work.

Role of partners in supporting the action area

Existing VOPEs in the Asia Pacific region are the focus of this Action Area. Other VOPEs that are well established and strong have the potential to partner to mentor and share learning with existing and fledgling VOPEs in the Asia Pacific region.

The United Nations Development Evaluation Group in Asia Pacific region (UNEDAP) has championed the cause of VOPEs. It is a valuable partner to advise and support initiatives in the area. In parallel, the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation as the global

umbrella body for VOPEs can link Asia Pacific VOPEs with others across the globe.

EvalPartners and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are committed to supporting the growth of VOPEs while 3ie collaborates with VOPEs to promote their approach to Impact evaluation. CLEAR (Center for Learning on Evaluation and Results) South Asia has the potential to contribute to capacity building while partners such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Green Climate Fund can potentially partner to provide valuable resources.



ACTION AREA 6

Engaging Parliamentarians for Demand and Use of Evaluation

Links to



Developing partnerships for evaluation capacity



Strengthening community ownership in evaluation



Promoting National Evaluation Policies and Systems



Using Evaluation to Report SDGs

Parliamentarians have a unique role acting both as a source of demand for quality evaluations for oversight and in creating an enabling environment for evaluations through enacting policies into law. They also potentially represent the largest single audience for evaluations within their national environment.⁹ Raising awareness amongst parliamentarians about the usefulness of evaluation as well as building their capacity to source and interpret evaluation evidence is a potential cornerstone for the decade of action in the region.

Parliamentarians are in an advantageous position to push the government to use quality evidence when engaging in national policy decision making, and to resist temptations to ignore it or politicise its use. They can additionally use their role as representatives of citizens to push for decision making that results in policies and programmes that “Leave No One Behind”.

Building on their tangible experience of development at constituency level, evaluators

can support parliamentarians to recognize and bring to the attention of government, the complex interconnections between outcomes across multiple SDG areas.

Parliamentarians however, are notoriously challenging to engage. Their time is precious and there are often multiple issues that are concurrently competing for their attention. Getting them on board requires a strategy that is informed by an understanding of what incentivises them and effectively demonstrates how evaluation can support their constitutional role, enhance their standing with constituents, and build their professional reputation.

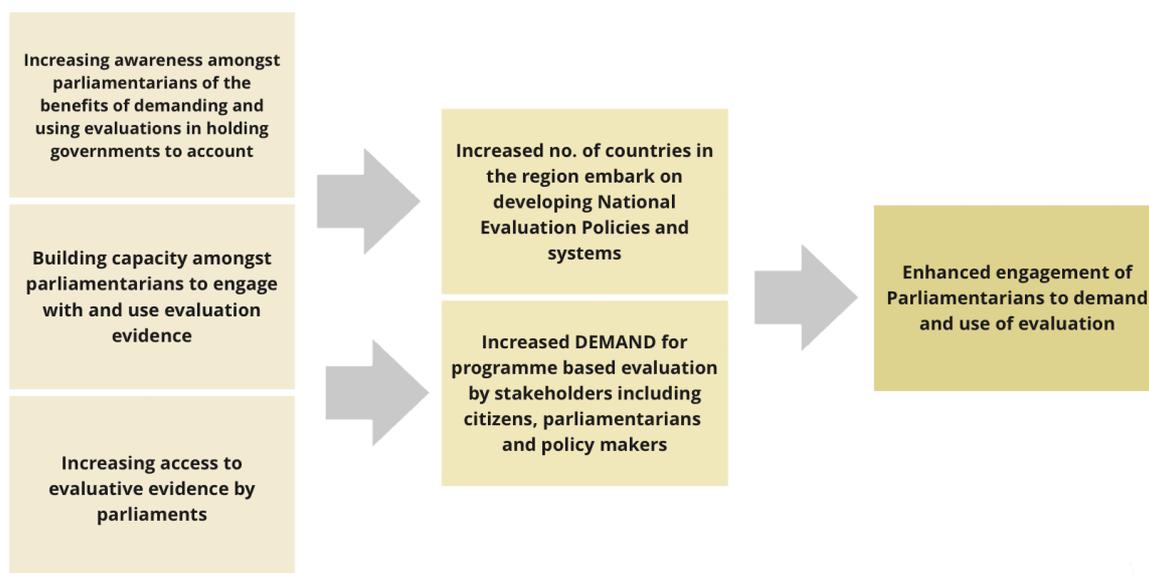
The institutionalising of evaluation within parliaments requires internal advocacy to raise awareness amongst Parliamentarians. However, unlike other stakeholders, the regular electoral cycle casts them as somewhat of a moving target. Investing in advocacy and parliamentary champions needs to be mindful of this cycle if the journey towards enacting policy is to be successful.

Expected outcomes

1. Enhanced engagement of parliamentarians to demand and use evaluation
2. Increase in the number of countries embarking on the development of National Evaluation Policies and Systems
3. Increased demand for programme-based evaluation by stakeholders including citizens, parliamentarians and policy makers

⁹ Hon. Kabir Hashim, Keynote address, EvalColombo 2018

Theory of change



Action components

To achieve the outcomes identified above the following action areas are recommended;

1. Increasing the number of parliamentarians who are aware of the benefits of demanding and using evaluations to hold governments to account is an important first step to engaging parliaments in the region. Partners to the action plan can work with media and other public opinion influencers to promote the benefits of evaluation evidence while simple information materials for parliamentarians on the benefits of using evaluations and building the capacity of Parliamentary Research Units can also help. Collecting, collating, and disseminating "success stories" around the use of evaluation in parliaments can help move beyond theory and lead to peer learning, while support to parliamentary evaluation champions can help them to lobby for the development of national evaluation policies.
2. Increasing the number of parliamentarians who have the capacity to engage with and use evaluation evidence is crucial if parliamentarians are to use evaluations more widely as part of oversight. Partners can develop and make available short online courses for parliamentarians and Parliamentary Researchers in sourcing and using evaluations to achieve this. It is important too to build the capacity of Parliamentary Research Units to produce briefs based on evaluation reports for parliamentarians.
3. Awareness and capacity are both important for parliamentarians, however, there is a need also to increase access to evaluative evidence by parliaments. Partners can contribute to this by encouraging and supporting collaboration between the parliament and academic institutions and other sources to use evidence generated through academic research.

Role of Partners

There are a range of partners that might potentially contribute to the realisation of outputs and outcomes under the Parliamentary action area;

The Global Parliamentarians Forum on Evaluation and the Parliamentarians Forum on Evaluation in South Asia can help to develop and disseminate awareness materials and facilitate

the access by other stakeholders (including VOPEs and academic institutions) to parliaments.

Regional parliamentary networks on evaluation and VOPEs have the potential to help collate “success stories” on the use of evaluation evidence to influence national decision making positively.

National VOPEs can support and coordinate the implementation of Decade of Action plan for engaging parliaments at a national level while

APEA, in conjunction with selected Asia Pacific academic institutions, can potentially develop and offer short online courses for parliamentarians and parliamentary researchers to help build the capacity of parliamentary research units.

Selected Asia Pacific academic institutions can develop links with national parliaments and share evidence shared through academic research.



ACTION AREA 7

Promoting National Evaluation Policies and Systems

Links to



Developing partnerships for evaluation capacity



Strengthening VOPEs



Engaging Parliamentarians for Demand and Use of Evaluation



Using Evaluation to Report SDGs

National Evaluation Policies provide both roadmaps and procedures to strengthen the demand for evaluation use. They are instruments through which to promote, implement, and manage National Evaluation Systems.

NEPs, once established can stimulate the political will to ensure evaluations are demanded, valued and used; on the other hand, NES provides the structural, technological, administrative and management platforms and systems that manage the facilitation, creation and use of evaluative evidence in public policymaking processes, including the review and evaluation of the SDGs and other development agendas.

The SDG agenda requires that national governments develop systems that support the Follow-up and Review (FUR) of the SDGs, and support the Voluntary National Reviews presented at the High-Level Political Forum.

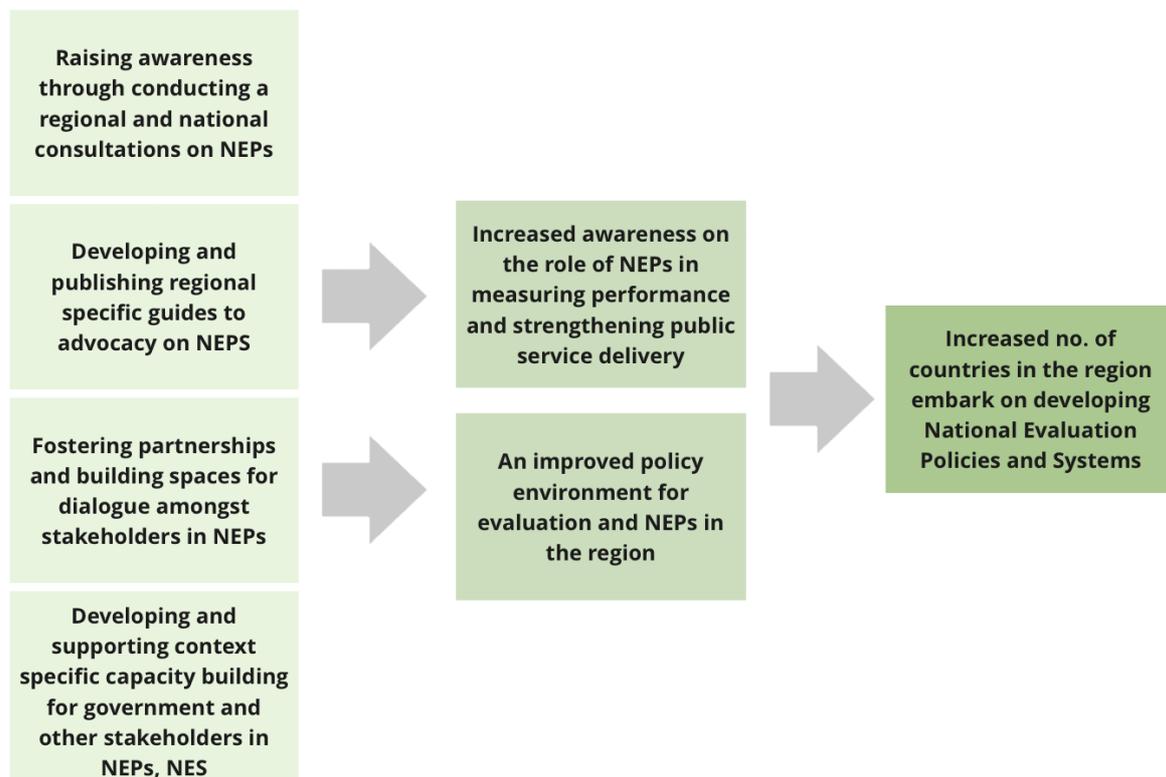
To achieve the SDG goals in the Decade for Action within the Asia Pacific Region, it is important that evaluation evidence is systematically used to inform public policymaking processes and improve public service delivery. Therefore, national evaluation systems are integral to support the demand and use of evidence in decision making at all levels; their promotion should form a key component of any action plan.

To better understand the challenge, a mapping of countries that have developed evaluation policies and M&E systems can act as a valuable starting point to inform strategy in this area. It will also be important to understand the local mechanisms that influence policy decision-making and how evaluations might be supported to feature in it more prominently.

Expected outcomes

1. Increased awareness of the role of National Evaluation Policies in measuring performance and strengthening public service delivery.
2. An improved policy environment for evaluation and NEPS in the region

Theory of change



Action components

To achieve the outcomes identified above the following action areas are recommended;

1. Awareness-raising will be necessary to build momentum for this action area. Partners to the plan can support webinars and public awareness sessions on NEPs and NES while regional and national consultations supported by VOPEs can inform how NEPs can be best promoted across different Asia Pacific country contexts.
2. To create perceived value and demand for evaluations it will be important to identify pathways to change the government mindset; the political dimension of this process requires advocacy and lobbying. VOPEs have a valuable role to play here in building their capacity to advocate in this area.. NEPs are also highly dependent on parliamentarians as lawmakers suggesting a close link between the two thematic areas. Partners can support these advocacy objectives by developing a regionally specific advocacy guide for use by champions in this area.
3. Partnerships are crucial in the process of lobbying for and developing NEPS. Partners can facilitate these partnerships by creating neutral spaces for dialogue and bringing together the necessary actors to promote and implement NEPS.
4. Capacity building of government and other key stakeholders is important to implement NEPs and embed NES. Partners can usefully develop training materials on NEPs and NES while institutions can integrate material on the role of NEPS within in educational curricula. Materials should be adapted to national contexts and translated into national languages of countries in the region.

Role of partners

The key partner and focus within this action area are national governments. UN Agencies, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), multi-lateral donor agencies, and development partners can use their established linkages with governments to advise and lobby for NEPS.

Regional and national VOPEs are in a strong position to coordinate and create spaces for

dialogue where multiple stakeholders can chart a route forward.

Public and Private universities and educational institutions are key to providing capacity building training while regional cooperation platforms are in an appropriate position to facilitate cross-country learning within the region on successful approaches to developing NEPs and setting up NES.



ACTION AREA 8

Using Evaluation to Report on the SDGs

Links to



Developing partnership for evaluation capacity



Strengthening community ownership in evaluation



Strengthening VOPEs



Engaging Parliamentarians for Demand and Use of Evaluation



Promoting National Evaluation Policies and Systems

The Sustainable Development Report 2020, which details levels of achievement across countries towards the Sustainable Development Goals, also underlines the critical role of strong national evaluation systems. Evaluations have the potential to reveal what solutions work, what could be done better to ensure that “Leave No One Behind”, paving the way for sustainable actions that achieve the global goals on time. Many countries however, lack effective NES to evaluate national development strategies that deliver their localized SDGs.

While several stakeholders, including UN agencies and civil society actors are supporting country-owned, country-led evaluations emphasising their use in influencing policies, there is a risk that a lack of robust NES and capacity might slow down or even derail momentum toward achieving SDGs.

Amongst the challenges that countries in the region face are;

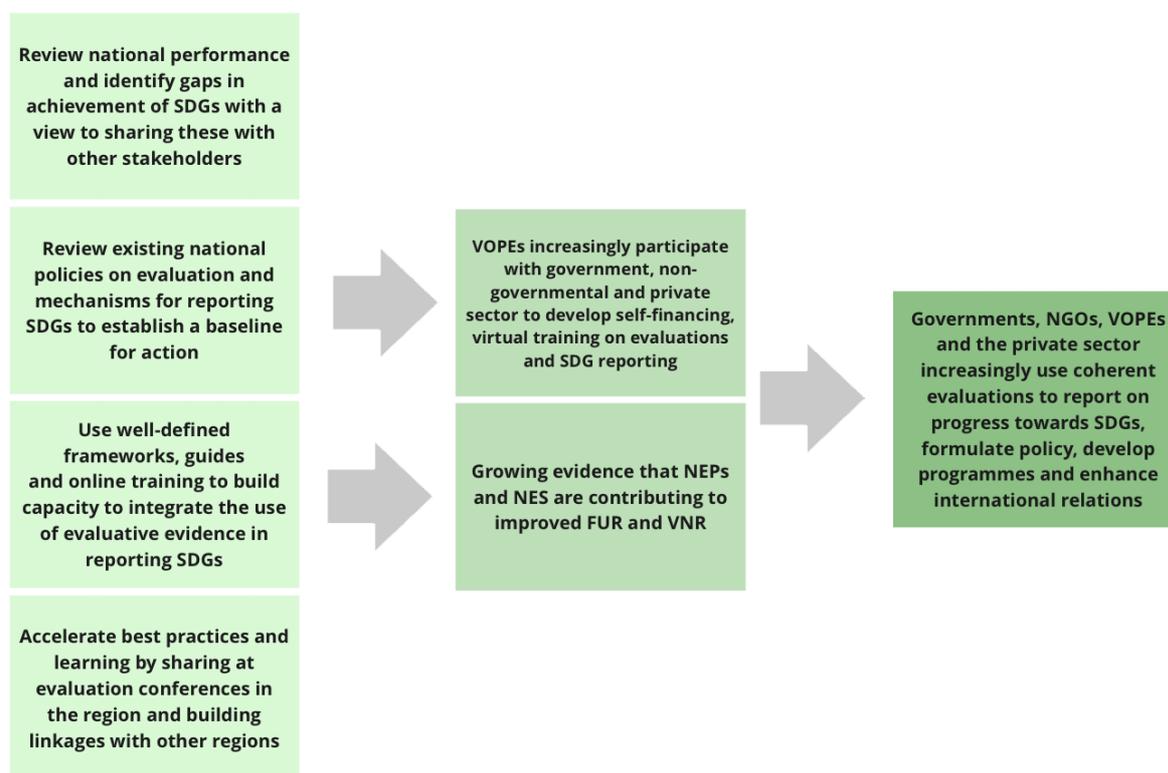
- there is not yet a well-developed, all-inclusive, and well-coordinated way to report SDGs
- governments and professional associations have yet to innovate and create ways and means to use evaluation to report SDGs
- there is as yet no agreed framework for using evaluations in reporting SDGs

During the decade of action, government, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, and the private sector in the Asia Pacific region must coordinate and collaborate. The micro, meso and macro-level social and economic indicator chains must be sufficiently defined so that evaluations can report SDGs across all levels. It will also be important to align and map project and program goals with the SDGs to ensure that we can quantify their positive impact. Above all, the evaluation and reporting process must be consolidated at all levels and become inclusive of all stakeholders.

Expected outcomes

1. Governments, non-governmental organizations, VOPEs, and the private sector increasingly use coherent evaluations to report on progress towards SDGs, formulate policy, develop programmes, and enhance international relations.
2. VOPEs increasingly participate with government, non-governmental and private sector organizations to develop self-financing virtual training courses on evaluations and SDG reporting.
3. Growing evidence that NEPs and NES are contributing to improved FUR and VNR

Theory of change



Action components

1. Action in this area will be usefully informed by a deeper understanding of country and regional performance against the SDGs. Partners to the plan can usefully review national performance and identify gaps in achievement of SDGs to share these with other stakeholders.
2. A review of existing national policies on evaluation and mechanisms for reporting SDGs will help establish a baseline for action while a review of any recent VNRs submitted by Asia Pacific countries will reveal the extent to which evaluation evidence is currently incorporated.
3. Building capacity to integrate evaluative evidence in reporting SDGs is an important component of this action area. Partners to the plan can help develop a well-defined framework and guide on using evaluation evidence in VNRs while online training may be used to build capacity amongst those with responsibility for reporting SDGs.
4. Accelerated learning will be important to realise widespread outcomes in this area during the Decade of Action. Partners can support learning by organising panel sessions for experience sharing at evaluation conferences in the region and building cross-learning linkages with other regions to share innovations¹⁰ and best practices of using evaluations in reporting SDGs.

Role of Partners

A central partner and focus of this action area will be government institutions designated to implement and report on SDGs.

Political parties, political movements, and members of parliament can help to spotlight the importance of evidence in holding governments

¹⁰ Some innovative practices with potential for replication are currently being piloted such as India's SDG dashboard

to account for performance. At the same time, universities, think tanks, and consultancy firms can potentially develop frameworks, advise on reporting mechanisms and provide capacity building on reporting SDGs.

VOPEs and UN organizations are in a strong position to facilitate dialogue between multiple stakeholders in SDG reporting and provide technical support.

References

UN resolution A/RES/69/237, "Evaluation Capacity Building for the Achievement of Development Results at Country Level" passed in Dec 2014

UN resolution 2015 A/70/1 "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted by the General Assembly on 25 Sep 2015 emphasizes Follow Up and Review

Concept Note of the Eval4Action Campaign, April 2020

The Global Sustainable Development Report 2019, United Nations

Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020, EvalPartners 2015

Evaluation and civil society: Stakeholders' perspectives on national evaluation capacity development, EvalPartners and IOCE, 2013



Web: www.asiapacificeval.org
Email: apea.secretariat@gmail.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/APEAeval
Twitter: www.twitter.com/APEAeval
Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/company/apeaeval