

Foreword

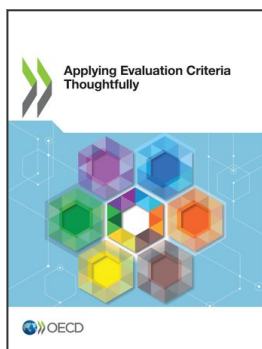
Evaluation plays a critical role in informing the design and delivery of policies and programmes that lead to better – fairer, more sustainable – development outcomes. Evidence from evaluation, and the critical thinking evaluation can support, play a crucial role in helping decision makers and communities ensure policies and programmes deliver positive, lasting results for people and the planet.

To support evaluation practice, in 1991, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) published definitions of five evaluation criteria. These criteria have shaped the design and evolution of international development evaluations over the past 30 years. The criteria are widely recognised as playing a central role in improving the quality of global evaluation practice and supporting collaboration. They have enabled organisations to design and deliver evaluations that are relevant to the needs of decision makers and capture a wide range of intended and unintended results, producing valuable evidence and insights.

These five criteria were further adapted in 2018-19. The revision process drew on nearly three decades of learning by members of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) along with the wider global evaluation community. It was informed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). A new set of definitions, including two principles guiding their use, was published in December 2019.

This guidance complements the criteria definitions and their principles for use. It aims to support thoughtful and contextualised application of the criteria. Through the inclusion of questions and examples the guidance encourages critical reflection and nuanced analysis. The guidance will assist readers as they consider how to interpret and apply the criteria to improve the quality of their evaluations and better support learning and accountability.

Learning about how best to use these adapted criteria – in international development co-operation and beyond – has only just begun. The intention is to continue to gather lessons and insights from their use and to revisit this guidance based on the collective experience and feedback from the global evaluation community. Particularly valuable will be lessons coming from new ways to use the criteria that better reflect the principles of the 2030 Agenda, such as evaluations that are participatory or apply a human rights based approach, evaluations of complex change processes, and evaluations that capture synergies and trade-offs in holistic ways.



From:
Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2021), "Foreword", in *Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/edc1937f-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.