



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION ASSOCIATION

Competencies for Development Evaluation Evaluators, Managers, and Commissioners

IDEAS Working Group on Evaluation Competencies

This document is the product of the volunteer efforts of many IDEAS members, under the guidance of Linda Morra Imas, chair of the IDEAS Initiative on International Competencies for Development Evaluators, and IDEAS Board member. It contains Competencies for International Development Evaluators, Managers of Evaluations, and Commissioners of Evaluations. Detailed criteria underlying the competencies are provided. The document reflects revisions made in response to comments on (1) a September 19th draft, posted on the website as of October 31st, 2010, (2) a revised draft circulated at the IDEAS General Meeting at the Global Assembly in Amman, Jordan in April 2011, and (3) an additional final

comment period. Additional edits were made for clarification and publication. The main core of the October document, however, remains substantially the same.

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REMARKS FROM THE PRESIDENT

The issuing of this document to members of the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) and to the evaluation community in general marks an important milestone as we enter the New Year. Here, in one place, are presented the broad array of competencies and criteria for judging the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals or teams who seek to design, conduct, review, and/or manage a "development evaluation." Heretofore, this has never been available to either guide persons who wish to concentrate their evaluation efforts in the development arena or those that wish to procure development evaluation services. So new ground is being broken, and new perspectives are being set forth, by which the professionalism of development evaluators can be judged.

It is daunting to think of building such a set of competencies for any one national setting – as a number of evaluation societies have sought to do – but to do so for the entire developing world is another whole level of complexity in and of itself. Cutting across languages, across cultures, and across educational systems only suggests the tip of the challenges that those who have undertaken this work have had to face. And to add to that complexity, this set of competencies is not just for evaluators, but for managers of evaluations and for those who commission evaluations as well! This is ambitious, to say the least.

It is appropriate that IDEAS undertake this effort. The membership is voluntary and presently numbers more than 1200 – coming from at least 105 countries. It is an organization of persons who claim an interest in and commitment to development evaluation.

The evaluation community in general, and IDEAS in particular, owe a real debt of thanks and appreciation to Dr. Linda Morra Imas of the United States for her leadership of this initiative. Linda and all the volunteers who worked with her (specifically noted are sub-group leaders Cristina Magro from Brazil and Rashmi Agrawal from India), have brought us to this point. The document before you has been disseminated, discussed, and now seeks final review and approval.

As President of IDEAS, I think this document and the process behind it, represents the value and the uniqueness of IDEAS. Here is an effort not only with leadership from three continents, but also involvement of members from more than 40 countries. It has successfully come to

closure. No other evaluation association in the world has either this capacity or capability to deliver such a thorough document with such a high level of quality that encompasses the globe. This document represents a first step in the initiative of IDEAS to systematically address the issue of competencies. Some of you have asked us to indicate which competencies are core, and others have asked us similarly to designate levels of competence. Let me say that there will be continuing work on the competencies and on the issue of whether IDEAS will grant a certificate of competence or some type of credential. These are issues that will be taken up in stage 2 of our work on competencies. For now, we hope that the competencies will assist you in the context of your own professional improvement or for reviewing team competence.

Ray C. Rist, Ph. D.

IDEAS, President
January 2012

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special appreciation is given to IDEAS subgroup leaders

Luis Bernal (USA), who led a subgroup to develop the initial survey of IDEAS members' opinions on the establishment of international competencies for evaluators, and also conducted the survey and analyzed the data;

Cristina Magro (Brazil), who led the subgroup working on competencies for evaluators;

Rashmi Agrawal (India), who led the subgroup working on competencies for managers and commissioners of evaluations; and

Reinhard Skinner (Netherlands), who led the subgroup on an IDEAS Code of Ethics.

While this latter subgroup has not completed its work, significant progress was made.

Appreciation also goes to all IDEAS members that have volunteered. A special thanks to those who could indeed give their time and effort to make this work possible, both those who lively participated on the survey, and the members of the subgroups. The full composition of the subgroups is indicated at the end of this publication. A final thank you is due to IDEAS Vice-President Daniel Svoboda. Daniel carefully reviewed the entire April 2011 competencies document. The final product is improved because of his efforts.

Linda Morra Imas

Chair of the IDEAS Initiative on International Competencies for Development Evaluators
IDEAS Board member and Secretary

NOTES ON THE COMPETENCIES

IDEAS COMPETENCIES FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATORS, MANAGERS, AND COMMISSIONERS OF DEVELOPMENT EVALUATIONS

Background

The IDEAS draft competencies were developed following a lengthy review by many IDEAS volunteers of evaluation-related competencies and standards, both with and without a development focus. Among the documents available on the IDEAS website <www.ideas-int.org> is *The Movement for Global Competencies for Development Evaluators*, by Linda Morra Imas (2010), which describes the rationale for the initiative, its endorsement by the membership, and the process followed.

The IDEAS competencies framework is based on a three part premise. The first is that there is a core set of competencies that all who are development evaluators or development evaluation managers should look to, wherever they work. That is, the core competencies of development evaluation are basically the same regardless of whether a development evaluator or manager works, for example, out of Belgium, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, or Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, or the United States. Second, the core competencies are the same whether the development evaluators or development evaluation managers work for a bilateral development organization, a developing country ministry, a large or small non-profit, or a university. The third part of the premise is that each organization will have its own context-specific competencies to add to this core set.

A first review draft of this document was posted in September 2010 on the IDEAS website for comment from members. Comments were considered and reflected as appropriate in the second review draft presented at the April 2011 Global Assembly in Jordan. This current version of the core competencies reflects revisions made following a third review period after the 2011 Global Assembly. The competencies were adopted by the IDEAS members in February 2012.

Comments Received on the IDEAS Competencies

Most comments submitted in response to the draft competencies have been on four issues:

1. Designation of *core* competencies;
2. Designation of *levels* of competence;
3. Need for *separate* competencies for Evaluators and Managers of Evaluations; and
4. Need for a certificate or other certification of competence.

Each issue is discussed in turn.

Designation of core competencies

As a whole, the IDEAS competencies are viewed as a set of core competencies. An exception is the obtaining of a specialty within development evaluation which may be desirable, but would not be required under the IDEAS competencies. Indeed, depending on the nature of the specific evaluation to be conducted, those who have specialty in an area such as participatory evaluation or randomized control trials might need to demonstrate that they have other core development evaluation competencies as well.

We also recognize, however, that it is highly unlikely that any one individual can meet all the IDEAS competencies for an evaluator or a manager of evaluations. It is more likely that an evaluation team might meet the competencies as a whole. While the competencies can be used proactively to identify the desired or ideal background of an evaluator or evaluation team, the critical competencies for an individual or team may depend on the objectives, scope, and methodology of the particular evaluation.

The IDEAS competencies and associated characteristics are meant to:

- Enable development evaluation professionals to self-assess their relative strengths and weaknesses against accepted standards in order to improve their evaluation practice;
- Facilitate the review of the capabilities of an individual or team to conduct a given development evaluation;
- Encourage the setting up of individual capacity building plans; and
- Promote an increase in available training in the competency areas.

Periodically the competencies should be re-examined. New developments in the field of evaluation may necessitate new competencies.

Levels of Competence

Some organizational competency systems, such as those for evaluators in the UN system, specify levels of competence from novice to expert, although the specific terms used may differ. Levels of competence seem to be important particularly in large organizations that have many grade levels of personnel within a professional area and need to differentiate among them. The set of IDEAS competencies for evaluators and managers of evaluation have not been slotted into different competence levels. It is also possible that each competency could be written so as to have variations for entry, intermediate, and advanced levels. As part of next steps, this issue will be revisited. The first step is approving the core set of competencies. Making decisions about the level of difficulty of achieving a competency is adding a significant layer of complexity.

Separate Competencies for Evaluators and Evaluator Managers

The competencies are mainly for those who are evaluators of development interventions or managers of evaluations of development interventions. While a few competencies have been developed for those who commission evaluations, they are similar to value statements. Separate but related sets of competencies were developed following the IDEAS Global Assembly in Johannesburg. At that Assembly, a majority of IDEAS members agreed that the skill sets differed somewhat and that there should be separate competencies for each.

The international development evaluator is an individual who (1) self-identifies his or her primary or secondary profession as evaluation and (2) works or seeks to work as an evaluator of development interventions. Development interventions are policies, strategies, systems, programs, and projects that take place in or otherwise directly affect low or middle-income countries. Development evaluators have or seek to acquire the

knowledge and skills to conduct evaluations in this context.

Managers of international development evaluations are those who have general oversight of an evaluation of a development intervention. Typical titles are Project Officers or Project Managers. This individual may not necessarily identify his or her primary or secondary profession as evaluation nor be involved in the conduct of the evaluation except in an oversight role. The manager's primary task may be to develop terms of reference, select one or more consultants or firm to design and conduct the evaluation, and oversee the contract. The *Competencies for Managers of Development Evaluations* concern only the role of managing the evaluation. If an evaluation manager self-identifies as a professional evaluator, puts together an evaluation team or works as a sole practitioner, and plans, designs, and conducts the evaluation, then these competencies would apply to his or her manager responsibilities. The *Competencies for International Development Evaluators* would apply to his or her work as an evaluator of development interventions. Thus, such individuals would follow two sets of competencies.

Commissioners of international development evaluations are the main clients for the development evaluation as distinct from stakeholders, of whom there are many for any evaluation. Commissioners of development evaluation may be members of the board of organizations, parliamentarians, executive directors, or those in similar roles. Often they are the individuals who "hold the purse strings" and will authorize expenditure of the funds for the development intervention and its evaluation. They are also usually the primary intended users of the evaluation and their purpose for requesting the evaluation and critical timing needs set the parameters.

Commissioners of development evaluations do not need to know much about the design and conduct of development evaluations (although the more they know, the better), but they do need some specific skills. These include, for example, safeguarding the integrity and transparency of the evaluation process, communicating the purpose and timing of the development evaluation, and understanding and agreeing to the evaluation questions, scope, and approaches. In a sense, these competencies are closer to values than the competencies identified for development evaluation managers and development evaluators. Therefore, no criteria have been specified for the competencies that follow for commissioners of development evaluations.

The IDEAS Competencies and Credentialing of Development Evaluators

At this time, IDEAS has no plan to use the competencies to credential development evaluators. Credentialing has both arguments for and against it (see the article *The Movement for Global Competencies for Development Evaluators*, by Linda Morra Imas (2010), on the IDEAS website). A particularly important issue for IDEAS in this context is that many developing countries have limited opportunities for evaluation training. Thus, "learning by doing" and mentoring programs have become time-honored ways of increasing knowledge and skills. If and when credentialing is sought, decisions will be needed on crediting both experience and training. Other groups have struggled with this issue. The Canadian Evaluation Society, which has gone forward with credentialing,

requires a certain proportion of competencies to be met under each domain for a single level credential, plus a combination of graduate level education and experience. IDEAS has not as an organization yet explored certification of evaluators or evaluation managers. A subgroup of the IDEAS Working Group on Competencies will explore issues around credentialing and develop a recommendation for IDEAS members.

Definition of “competence”

“Competence” is the demonstrated background, knowledge, and skills necessary to practice development evaluation or to appraise its practice by others.

The Competencies Framework

Each of the professional categories (Evaluator, Manager of Evaluations, and Commissioner of Evaluations) has its own list of competencies that are organized by dimension. Examples of organizing dimensions are *Professional Foundations*, *Monitoring Systems*, and *Evaluation Planning and Design*. For the Development Evaluator and Manager of Evaluations, each competency under a dimension has characteristics specified for use in determining the extent to which a competency may be met. These have not been developed for commissioners as this set of competencies is akin to value statements. The detailed tables are presented in a crosswalk as a separate document.

Relation of the Competencies to Values

Competency systems for evaluators often have some degree of overlap with the values that one would expect such individuals to have such as integrity, honesty, and respect for stakeholders. The IDEAS competencies share this overlap with values. Some key values are identified in the competencies or sometimes the criteria underlying a competency. However, the intent is for the competencies to support an IDEAS Code of Ethics, a work still under progress.

COMPETENCIES FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATORS
1.0 Professional Foundations
1.1 Knows the general literature and current issues in development evaluation.
1.2 Knows and applies concepts, terms, and definitions used in development evaluation.
1.3 Understands and applies the approaches, methods, and tools of development evaluation.
1.4 Seeks to understand the full context of an intervention by developing, or reviewing and revising as appropriate, its theory/logic to identify implications for evaluation.
1.5 Displays appropriate cross-cultural competence and cultural sensitivity.
1.6 Knows the IDEAS Code of Ethics and behaves in accord with it.
1.7 Knows and applies other internationally recognized standards and principles for development evaluation, as well as other applicable regional, national, sub-national, and/or organizational standards and principles.
1.8 Pursues professional evaluator networks and self-improvement.
1.9 Seeks to develop expertise in a specialty within development evaluation.
2.0 Monitoring Systems
2.1 Demonstrates skills in developing and using monitoring systems and data.
3.0 Evaluation Planning and Design
3.1 Undertakes appropriate up-front exploration and planning for an evaluation, including stakeholder engagement.
3.2 Seeks to minimize the burden of evaluation through sound planning that is participatory in nature, secondary analysis of existing data sets, and joint and country-led evaluations, as appropriate.
3.3 Ensures that evaluation planning considers potential unintended effects of interventions, both positive and negative, as well as intended effects.
3.4 Develops, or assists in developing, the strongest feasible design to answer the evaluation questions and respond to the evaluation's purpose.
4.0 Managing the Evaluation
4.1 Participates in the evaluation as a team member, demonstrating strong leadership and team skills.
4.2 Manages evaluation tasks and resources to deliver evaluation responsibilities on time and within budget and of high quality.
4.3 Builds and maintains constructive relationships with partners, evaluation commissioners, and other stakeholders.
4.4 Provides guidance to others within and external to the organization on development evaluation planning and design, methods, and approaches.
4.5 If the evaluation manager, meets additional competencies specified in the IDEAS Competencies for Managers of International Development Evaluations.
5.0 Conducting the Evaluation
5.1 Conducts fieldwork and other reviews in accord with the design and evaluation good practice.
5.2 Analyzes and interprets data appropriately, drawing evidence-based conclusions and making sound recommendations when warranted.
6.0 Communicating Evaluation Findings
6.1 Raises awareness and use of evaluations through effective communication in each stage of the evaluation, promoting transparency of the evaluation methods, and to the extent

possible, publically disseminating the evaluation findings and developing targeted presentations, as set out in a dissemination plan.
6.2 Provides opportunity for those evaluated to review and comment on the draft evaluation and its findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and incorporates the feedback as appropriate.
7.0 Promoting a Culture of Learning from Evaluation
7.1 Engages in reviews of completed evaluations to identify lessons learned both on the evaluation process and quality of the product.
7.2 Supports follow up and tracking of progress in implementing recommendations from evaluations, as appropriate.
7.3 Champions evaluation and seeks to build the evaluation capacity of others.
7.4 Supports forms of knowledge building such as meta-evaluation and lessons-learned systems.

COMPETENCIES FOR MANAGERS OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATIONS
1.0 Professional Foundations
1.1 Knows and applies concepts, terms, and definitions used in development evaluation.
1.2 Generally understands and applies the approaches, methods, and tools of development evaluation.
1.3 Seeks to understand the full context of an intervention and its theory/logic to identify implications for evaluation
1.4 Recognizes the importance of cross-cultural competency and displays cultural sensitivity.
1.5 Knows the IDEAS Code of Ethics and behaves in accord with it.
1.6 Knows and applies other internationally recognized standards and principles for development evaluation, as well as other applicable regional, national, sub-national and/or organizational standards and principles.
1.7 Knows of and supports professional evaluation networks and own and staff self-improvement.
2.0 Monitoring Systems
2.1 Ensures review of the quality of monitoring data for evaluation use.
2.2 Uses monitoring data to inform the evaluation, and evaluation findings to improve monitoring.
3.0 Evaluation Planning and Design
3.1 Supports and promotes appropriate up-front exploration and planning for an evaluation, including stakeholder engagement.
3.2 Seeks to minimize the burden of evaluation through sound planning which is participatory in nature, secondary analysis of existing data sets, and through joint and country-led evaluations, as appropriate.
3.3 Ensures that evaluation planning considers potential unintended effects of interventions, both positive and negative, as well as intended effects.
3.4 Develops or procures the strongest feasible design to answer the evaluation questions and respond to the evaluation's purpose.
3.5 Obtains reviews of the evaluation design as a quality check.
3.6 Checks for and takes appropriate action on possible ethical issues, including potential or actual conflict of interest, granting of confidentiality/anonymity, and obtaining informed consent from evaluation participants.
3.7 Ensures data collection instruments are pre-tested, protocols are developed, and data collectors have appropriate training.
4.0 Managing the Evaluation
4.1 Builds and maintains constructive relationships with the evaluation team, including staff, consultants, advisers, and partners, as relevant, and with other stakeholders.
4.2 Manages and monitors evaluation resources efficiently and effectively, including staff resources, and displays strong leadership and project management skills to deliver timely quality evaluations.
4.3 Keeps informed and informs the organizational leadership of the evaluation's progress and issues.
4.4 Liaises with evaluation commissioner(s) throughout the evaluation.
4.5 When procuring services of evaluators, develops good practice terms of reference and ensures that the selection procedure is transparent, with use of fair tendering practices.

4.6 Solves problems, using negotiation, conflict resolution skills, and motivational techniques, and develops contingency plans to mitigate risks throughout the conduct of the evaluation.
5.0 Conducting the Evaluation
5.1 Refrains from exerting undue pressure on the evaluation team and/or consultant(s) evaluators or otherwise seeking to influence the findings of an evaluation.
5.2 Reviews emerging findings and helps identify patterns, connections, and themes.
5.3 Ensures the sufficiency of evidence for conclusions and recommendations.
5.4 Ensures recommendations are clear, concise, highly relevant, and realistic.
5.5 Relates evaluation findings to strategy and the larger context.
5.6 Uses internal peers and/or external advisers to review and comment on the draft report.
6.0 Communicating Evaluation Findings
6.1 Raises awareness and use of evaluations through effective communication in each stage of the evaluation, promoting transparency of the evaluation methods and, to the extent possible, publically disseminating the evaluation findings and developing targeted presentations, as set out in a dissemination plan.
6.2 Provides opportunity for those evaluated to review and comment on the draft evaluation and its findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and considers and incorporates the feedback as appropriate.
6.3 Includes a management (or key stakeholder) response in the final report, as relevant.
6.4 Speaks truth to power in presenting strong evidence-based findings.
6.5 Ensures that written reports follow good practice standards for evaluation reports.
7.0 Promoting a Culture of Learning from Evaluation
7.1 Engages in reviews of completed evaluations to identify lessons learned both on the evaluation process and quality of the product.
7.2 Supports follow up and tracking of progress in implementing recommendations from evaluations, as appropriate.
7.3 Champions evaluation and seeks to build the evaluation capacity of others.
7.4 Supports forms of knowledge building such as meta-evaluation and lessons-learned systems.

COMPETENCIES FOR COMMISSIONERS OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATIONS
1.0 Understands and Upholds the Integrity of the Evaluation Process
1.1 Accepts the potential upfront risks, as well as the benefits, of an evaluation’s findings confirming or not confirming existing beliefs and public positions.
1.2 Agrees to accept evidence-based findings of the evaluation.
1.3 Relates the evaluation to political, policy, and governance environments and issues.
1.4 Ensures that the selection procedure is transparent and fair tendering practices are used, if involved in the selection of the evaluation manager or evaluation team.
1.5 Refrains from exerting pressure on the evaluation manager or evaluators or otherwise seeking to influence the findings of an evaluation.
1.6 Respects clearly stated limits of an evaluation.
1.7 Refrains from taking and using parts of an evaluation out of context.
1.8 Pursues follow up action on recommendations from an evaluation.
2.0 Understands and Acts on the Need for Communication throughout the Evaluation Process
2.1 Sets out for the evaluation manager/team the purpose of the evaluation, issues to be addressed by the evaluation from his/her perspective, critical timing needs, type of product(s) needed, and budget (if in domain).
2.2 Agrees to and follows a communication and reporting schedule with the evaluation manager and meets when unexpected issues arise.
2.3 Is realistic about what an evaluation can accomplish given available resources
2.4 Refrains from dictating the evaluation scope and methodology.
2.5 Reviews and agrees to the evaluation questions and general scope and methodology, timeline and evaluation products before the evaluation is conducted.
3.0 Supports Evaluation Access to People and Records and the Public’s Right to Information
3.1 Agrees to broad consultation with stakeholders by the evaluation manager/team.
3.2 Honors confidentiality agreements made by the evaluation manager/team.
3.3 Supports the access of the evaluation manager/team to records and people.
3.4 Is clear about who “owns” the data within organizational policies.
3.5 Works to promote the public interest by encouraging a participatory approach to evaluation planning and agrees to make evaluation reports public unless prohibited by organization policy.
4.0 Respects the Terms of Agreement
4.1 Considers changes to the evaluation design/questions/methods if unanticipated issues arise.
4.2 Renegotiates the evaluation contract in accord with agreed-on major changes to the evaluation.
5.0 Pursues Action on Recommendations from an Evaluation
5.1 Supports a recommendation tracking system, and its public accessibility where possible.
5.2 Monitors action on recommendations and dissemination of lessons.
6.0 Supports Monitoring and Evaluation
6.1 Supports monitoring and evaluation capacity building.

IDEAS Initiative on International Competencies for Development Evaluators - Team composition

Linda Morra Imas	USA	Competency Initiative Chair
Robert Picciotto	UK	Observer
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Shruti Joshi	India	Competencies for Evaluators WG
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Rashmi Agrawal	India	Chair, Competencies-Managers & Com.
I. C. Awasthi	India	Competencies-Managers & Com. WG
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Please note that many other IDEAS members are working on two more working groups—one led by Reinhard Skinner on a Code of Ethics and well underway; the other on Credentialing just starting out and led by Epaminandos Bellos. Their efforts will have later opportunity to be acknowledged. Additionally, they and numerous other IDEAS members have commented on

IDEAS Competency Initiative

various drafts of the member survey and competencies. The overall initiative is truly the work of many around the globe.