Self-Evaluation Guidelines

(adapted from Müller-Kohlenberg & Beywl, 2002)\(^1\)

These self-evaluation guidelines are intended to raise the quality of self-conducted evaluations in UNESCO. Self-conducted evaluations are carried out by professional staff and focus on their own work. They have two primary goals:

1) to systematically collect information that can help reflect on and bring about improvements regarding one’s professional practice (formative purpose), and
2) to support the professional development of those involved in conducting the self-evaluation (capacity building purpose).

Self-evaluations need to be conducted in an immediate environment that is characterized by trust, transparency in communication, and a constructive approach to mistakes and failures. It is necessary to ensure that the responsibility for the quality of the area of work rests with the professional(s) undertaking the self-evaluation and that they have the authority to introduce changes based on the self-evaluation findings. It has to be clear what are the resources for the self-evaluation. It also has to be clarified how the findings will be disseminated and used, among colleagues as well as with superiors and broader audiences.

Those conducting the self-evaluations play the double role of evaluator(s) and practitioner(s), which brings with it the opportunity to ensure the context-sensitivity of self-evaluation, as well as the risk that the self-evaluation lacks objectivity and credibility. The following guidelines are crucial in ensuring the high quality of self-evaluations.

Self-evaluations should be characterized by their a) utility, b) feasibility, c) propriety, and d) accuracy. These four broad categories are further delineated as follows:

**UTILITY**

U1 Stakeholders affected by or involved in the self-evaluation should be identified, so that their needs and interests can be identified and taken into consideration.

U2 The purpose(s) of the self-evaluation should be clarified: Why is it being done?

U3 It should be ensured that the immediate environment is characterized by trust and transparency.

U4 The scope and focus of the self-evaluation should be clear so that they can be matched with the available resources.

U5 The basis for interpretation of findings and judgment of success or failure should be explicated.

U6 The self-evaluation report should provide easily accessible and comprehensive information on context, purpose, key questions, methods, criteria of judgment, and findings.

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\(^1\) See [www.degeval.de/ak_soz/index.htm](http://www.degeval.de/ak_soz/index.htm) for the original German version.
U7 The self-evaluation should be timely to serve its intended process and findings uses.
U8 Self-evaluation planning, implementation and communication should raise the curiosity of those involved and affected, so that they are eager to participate in and make use of both process and findings, according to the intended purposes.

FEASIBILITY
F1 The necessary information should be collected in the most non-intrusive way possible.
F2 Differing positions and doubts should be incorporated into the planning and implementation of a self-evaluation with the aim to ensure broad consensus and a minimum of disruption of the self-evaluation.
F3 The benefits from the self-evaluation should justify its costs.

PROPRIETY
P1 A formal agreement should ensure that all involved stakeholders play their assigned role during the self-evaluation process.
P2 Self-evaluation should be conducted in a way that protects the rights of those involved and that interpersonal contacts are characterized by mutual respect.
P3 The self-evaluation should assess the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation object in a comprehensive and impartial manner.
P4 Those involved in or affected by the self-evaluation should get the opportunity to comment on the findings in a timely manner, i.e., before wider dissemination has taken place.
P5 Conflicts of interest should be made transparent so that they do not compromise the findings of the self-evaluation.

ACCURACY
A1 The evaluation report should contain detailed descriptions of all aspects of what is to be evaluated, including its relevant context, self-evaluation purposes, questions and approaches.
A2 The description of methods and sources of information should remain transparent in order to enable the reader to judge their trustworthiness and appropriateness.
A3 Data collection methods and instruments should be chosen based on the qualifications of the self-evaluators (or their technical support) as well as standards of qualitative and quantitative social research methodology, in order to provide valid and reliable information.
A4 Collected information should be scrutinized for mistakes and analyzed systematically to provide answers to the self-evaluation questions.
A5 Conclusions drawn and recommendations given on the basis of the findings should be explained and justified. Differences in opinion should be documented.
A6 Self-evaluation processes and effects should be studied so that the quality and application of this method/tool can be further enhanced.