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English - Or. English

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**DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE**

Cancels & replaces the same document of 28 April 2022

DAC Network on Development Evaluation

Protection of people involved in evaluation

EvalNet position paper for evaluation reports

The EvalNet Secretariat has developed this note in consultation with EvalNet members. It provides guidance to participating agencies for submitting their evaluation reports to DEREc, the online database managed by the OECD.

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JT03495217

Protection of people involved in evaluation

Context

With the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan in August 2021, EvalNet members and the Secretariat responded to concerns about the need to protect the identities of people who had worked with foreign partners. The Secretariat reviewed all Afghanistan evaluation reports on the [DAC Evaluation Resource Centre](#) and took steps to minimize risks by removing identifying information in evaluation reports.

Lessons learned from Afghanistan have wider applicability to EvalNet members' ways of working in all contexts. This paper sets out suggested ways of working and next steps for EvalNet members, with the aim of avoiding harm and protecting people engaged in evaluations.

Principles

The following four principles guide our reflection on this topic and our suggested approach.

First, do no harm

A foundational principle of humanitarian and development assistance, "Do no harm" is to avoid exposing people to additional risks through our action. This principle calls us to consider the potential of causing harm and to avoid causing harm as a first priority.

DAC Evaluation Quality Standard 3.3 covers Protection of Stakeholders: "The rights and welfare of participants in the evaluation are protected. Anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants are protected when requested or as needed."

Uphold transparency and credibility

The commitment to publish evaluation findings, even when these are negative, is also central to DAC norms and standards. There are reputational risks related to any perceived hiding of reports. DAC Evaluation Quality Standard 4.3 states: "The evaluation results are presented in an accessible format and are systematically distributed internally and externally for learning and follow-up actions and to ensure transparency."

A transparent description of data sources (including interviewees) is part of protecting the credibility of an evaluation, as it ensures readers that relevant viewpoints are included.

Maximize the value of evaluation lessons

Evaluations are conducted with the aim of supporting learning and accountability; to do so they must be used. DAC Evaluation Quality Standard 4.3 states: "The evaluation results are systematically distributed internally and externally for learning and follow-up actions In light of lessons emerging from the evaluation, additional interested parties in the wider development community are identified and targeted to maximise the use of relevant findings."

During a moment of crisis there may be a unique window to support the use of and action on evaluation findings, as attention to the country or topic intensifies. Many lessons from evaluations are also applicable

beyond their immediate contexts and can be useful to inform broader discussions on effective development co-operation, the conflict, peace and development nexus, gender equality, governance, etc.

Ensure informed consent

The principle of informed consent requires the free prior informed consent of involved people before commencing the evaluation. Not all evaluation reports specify the extent to which interviewees and other stakeholders provided informed consent. In any case, it is clear that in most cases, for EvalNet reports on DEReC, there is currently no means by which a person could withdraw their consent.

Recommendation

The Secretariat recommends the following to ensure the safety of individuals who participate in evaluations and prevent risk related to their identification leading to negative consequences for their safety, health, or well-being:

- **All evaluations should seek informed consent** from people before any data is collected and allow people to withdraw their consent at any point during the evaluation, and be conducted in compliance with all relevant ethical standards. EvalNet members should ensure that their rules and regulations are clear in regards to ethical conduct and that suitable checks are in place.
- EvalNet members will **not include individual names or identifiable characteristics of people** (except for authors or acknowledgements as appropriate) in evaluation reports **where there is a possibility that providing this information will lead to negative consequences**. Sensitive topics will vary depending on the context, and may include, but are not limited to, evaluations of interventions related to human rights, sexual and reproductive health, security sector reform, peacebuilding, journalism or freedom of press, governance and anti-corruption.
- Depending on the context, alternatives are to use pseudonyms such as “Informant A” or, when it provides sufficient anonymity, generic information on the person’s position such as “Head of the Education Quality Unit, Ministry of Education”. The latter can be particularly useful when the list of people interviewed is needed to support the credibility of the evaluation and its data sources. A third option is to not include the list in the published report but to mention that the full list can be made available upon request.
- **Photo and videos should only be taken with informed written consent**. Stock photography, pixelated images, and images that do not show faces should be used when there is any risk that being identified will have negative consequences for an individual or community. At all times photography should be used carefully, with due consideration to the protection and dignity of persons.

Going forward


- EvalNet members will review all new reports before they are submitted to DEReC and confirm they have adhered to these requirements.
- The Secretariat will periodically check reports to understand the extent to which members are complying with these requirements.
- The Secretariat will expand and manage the area within the discussion section on the EvalNet Community Site to share best practices and useful guidance about ethical ways of working.

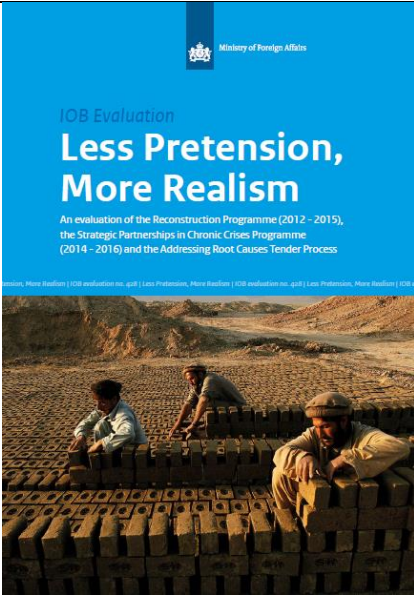
- Building on the EvalNet Meeting in November 2021, and under Canada’s leadership, the network will continue to explore the need for further work to support ethical conduct within evaluations, and the needs and interests of EvalNet members in this regard.

Annex. Definitions and examples

Definitions:

1. **Sensitive data** are: individual names or personal identifying information and photos
2. **Non-sensitive data** include evaluation findings and recommendations, information about projects, objectives, spending amounts, names of locations, generic photos of people in a country, and general photos of beneficiaries

Example	Type of information	Action	Justification																																								
<p>Upgrading of drinking water distribution service operated by the South Lebanon Establishment in the Caza of Nabatieh and Tyre</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>name</th> <th>Organization</th> <th>Position</th> <th>Telephone</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Jaoudeh</td> <td>CISP</td> <td>Project manager</td> <td>cispleb@i</td> </tr> <tr> <td>nobbi</td> <td>CISP</td> <td>Administration manager</td> <td>saracanobbi.ci</td> </tr> <tr> <td>izam</td> <td>SLWE</td> <td>Director</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Project of strengthening and consolidation of the oil sector in the conflict affected South of Lebanon - second phase</p> <p>Supporting farmers in the region of Akkar for the increase in the yield of the olive oil production of olive oil</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>name</th> <th>Organization</th> <th>Position</th> <th>Telephone</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>houry</td> <td>LARI</td> <td>Director</td> <td>+9616 470 464</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ayey</td> <td>Koyakhayt Cooperative</td> <td></td> <td>+96103691486</td> </tr> <tr> <td>hman</td> <td>Kabiit Cooperative</td> <td></td> <td>+96103370086</td> </tr> <tr> <td>elawi</td> <td>Mhamra Cooperative</td> <td></td> <td>+96103675935</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	name	Organization	Position	Telephone	Jaoudeh	CISP	Project manager	cispleb@i	nobbi	CISP	Administration manager	saracanobbi.ci	izam	SLWE	Director		name	Organization	Position	Telephone	houry	LARI	Director	+9616 470 464	ayey	Koyakhayt Cooperative		+96103691486	hman	Kabiit Cooperative		+96103370086	elawi	Mhamra Cooperative		+96103675935	<p>Personal identifying information of interviewees and implementers, phone numbers, emails, affiliations</p>	<p>Remove/do not include</p>	<p>This information can easily be used to identify or target individuals</p>				
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<p>List of interviewees</p> <p>In addition to those included in the list, the Commission interviewed a number of persons who cannot be named. The Commission is also grateful to a number of people who have supported its work.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Abobh</td> <td>Clark, Kate</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abullah</td> <td>Clarke, Michael</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abul Haq</td> <td>Cowper-Coles, Sherard</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abis</td> <td>Crowley, Peter</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abid</td> <td>Danesho, Shayma</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Danevad, Andreas</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Daoud, Sayed</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Daoudzai, Omer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ben Borholdt</td> <td>de Feijter, Erik</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christine Riis</td> <td>Dempsey, John</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christine Sand</td> <td>Dennys, Christian</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christin</td> <td>Devold, Kristin Krohn</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amad Hanif</td> <td>Diesen, Sverre</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Diset, Hans</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Dobbins, James</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amarco</td> <td>Dramdal, Torunn</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Dyrud, Merete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christine Hume</td> <td>Efjestad, Svein</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Ege, Rune Thomas</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Ergeland, Jan</td> </tr> </table>	Abobh	Clark, Kate	Abullah	Clarke, Michael	Abul Haq	Cowper-Coles, Sherard	Abis	Crowley, Peter	Abid	Danesho, Shayma		Danevad, Andreas		Daoud, Sayed		Daoudzai, Omer	Ben Borholdt	de Feijter, Erik	Christine Riis	Dempsey, John	Christine Sand	Dennys, Christian	Christin	Devold, Kristin Krohn	Amad Hanif	Diesen, Sverre		Diset, Hans		Dobbins, James	Amarco	Dramdal, Torunn		Dyrud, Merete	Christine Hume	Efjestad, Svein		Ege, Rune Thomas		Ergeland, Jan	<p>List of interviewees or implementing partners – often in an Annex</p>	<p>Remove</p>	<p>This information can easily be used to identify or target individuals</p>
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<p>4.3.1.3 Support for agricultural development</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="199 922 715 996"> <tr> <td>Implementing NGO</td> <td>GVC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sector of intervention</td> <td>Food security and income-generating activities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Title 9196</td> <td>Sustainable Agricultural Development for the most vulnerable Province</td> </tr> </table> <p>Area of intervention: The project involved the districts of Karukh Zinda Jan & Kohsan in Herat Province.</p> <p>Beneficiaries: Single mothers as heads of households</p> <p>Partners: Samandar Development Programme (SDP), Rehabilitation Association Agricultural Afghanistan (RAADA), Norwegian Project Office/Rural Rehabilitation and Association (NPO/RRAA)</p> <p>Description of the intervention: The GVC intervention in the Herat area set out to improve the living conditions of the target population by achieving food self-sufficiency by breeding livestock and growing vegetables. In particular, the activities included donating three goats to each family, providing vaccines (effective for one year), equipment for the care of the animal and providing a supply of enough feed for one year.</p> <p>The target villages were identified in collaboration with the local authority and in consultation with the community, in order to ensure the actual operation of the greenhouses. Even the choice of breed was made in accordance with local culture and animal life. Indeed, the type of goat chosen was of Afghan origin, a species which is more resistant to the cold and which has adapted traditionally reared in the areas of intervention. The activities identified (horticulture and animal husbandry) were traditionally performed also by women, and were chosen with the intent of addressing the tensions within the community, being generally recognised as appropriate work for women.</p> <p>project, sustainable agricultural development, was achieved thanks to improved agricultural training courses aimed at consolidating knowledge of agronomic and farming practices.</p> <p>53</p>	Implementing NGO	GVC	Sector of intervention	Food security and income-generating activities	Title 9196	Sustainable Agricultural Development for the most vulnerable Province		<p>Project information: details of locations (names of villages), amounts of aid project budgets, organisations, project descriptions, etc.</p>	<p>Keep / no action</p>	<p>Not viewed as sensitive, and is information that is widely known and critical to the evaluation itself.</p>																														
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<p>Appendix C – List of Key Informant Interviews</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="199 1534 715 1874"> <tr><td>DFID</td><td>Humanitarian Programme Manager – Afghanistan</td></tr> <tr><td>DFID</td><td>Programme Manager – Afghanistan</td></tr> <tr><td>DFID</td><td>Senior Humanitarian Adviser – Afghanistan and Pakistan</td></tr> <tr><td>DFID</td><td>Evaluation Advisor – Afghanistan and Pakistan</td></tr> <tr><td>Roshan</td><td>Senior Manager, M-Paisa Business Development</td></tr> <tr><td>Roshan</td><td>Junior Manager, M-Paisa Business Development</td></tr> <tr><td>Roshan</td><td>Retailer – Jawzjan</td></tr> <tr><td>Roshan</td><td>Retailer – Samangan</td></tr> <tr><td>Roshan</td><td>Retailer – Faryab</td></tr> <tr><td>ACTED</td><td>Head of Programme – Afghanistan</td></tr> <tr><td>ACTED</td><td>Monitoring and Evaluation Officer – Afghanistan</td></tr> <tr><td>ACTED</td><td>Senior Reporting Officer</td></tr> <tr><td>ACTED</td><td>Field Coordinator</td></tr> <tr><td>Afghanaid</td><td>Deputy Director (Humanitarian Programmes and Advocacy)</td></tr> <tr><td>Afghanaid</td><td>Field Coordinator</td></tr> <tr><td>Afghanaid</td><td>Area Coordinator</td></tr> <tr><td>Action Aid</td><td>Head of Programme</td></tr> <tr><td>Action Aid</td><td>Project Manager</td></tr> </table>	DFID	Humanitarian Programme Manager – Afghanistan	DFID	Programme Manager – Afghanistan	DFID	Senior Humanitarian Adviser – Afghanistan and Pakistan	DFID	Evaluation Advisor – Afghanistan and Pakistan	Roshan	Senior Manager, M-Paisa Business Development	Roshan	Junior Manager, M-Paisa Business Development	Roshan	Retailer – Jawzjan	Roshan	Retailer – Samangan	Roshan	Retailer – Faryab	ACTED	Head of Programme – Afghanistan	ACTED	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer – Afghanistan	ACTED	Senior Reporting Officer	ACTED	Field Coordinator	Afghanaid	Deputy Director (Humanitarian Programmes and Advocacy)	Afghanaid	Field Coordinator	Afghanaid	Area Coordinator	Action Aid	Head of Programme	Action Aid	Project Manager		<p>List of interviewees without names</p>	<p>Keep / no action</p>	<p>This information cannot by itself be used to link specific individuals to the project</p>
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Annex. Informed Consent

The principle of informed consent requires the free prior agreement of involved people before commencing an evaluation.

How to put this into practice:

- Planning documents, consent forms, and all documentation relating to the evaluation should be in the local language(s) that are comprehensible by the local populations of the study.
- Ensure that literacy, and participants with a different language are considered. Explain documents (ideally in person) and work with a translator when required.
- Information on the evaluation purpose, methods, process, and management of related data must be clearly communicated before the evaluation process begins, including how research material will be stored and disposed of.
- Clearly communicate who is funding the evaluation.
- Participants should be informed that they could opt out of the evaluation at any time without any damage to their relationship with you or others.
- Participants must be informed clearly about any risks involved in their participation, including any risks to maintaining anonymity (where applicable).
- Participants should have a key point of contact provided to them to address any concerns they have about the evaluation.

(Source: Adapted from [Putting ethical principles into practice - Better Evaluation](#))