



Approved by the Board on November 6, 2020

# Towards an International Evaluation Academy (IEAc)

## Proposed Governance

### **Introduction**

This note puts forward a governance plan for the International Evaluation Academy (IEAc). It was prepared by the Interim Organising Committee to elicit debate and facilitate a consensus among Board members. Its contents will inform next steps, including the proposed Academy Constitution, bylaws, recruitment of Council members, design of the website, etc.

### **Purpose and Values**

The Academy is dedicated to evaluation transformation, creativity, innovation, and excellence. It embraces the vision of Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement, and aspires to make transdisciplinary, value-driven evaluation play an influential role in the promotion of global justice and social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Toward these ends, the Academy embraces a wide range of evaluation approaches, models, and methods. It respects the subsidiarity principle in all its work; mobilises the energies and skills of volunteers at the local, national, regional, and global level; organizes learning communities to address diverse thematic priorities; and reaches out to partners across borders, disciplinary boundaries, and all sectors of society – public, private, and civil society.

### **Fellows**

Academy Fellows include eminent evaluation thinkers, highly experienced evaluators, mid-career practitioners, and young, and emerging evaluators. They are the life and blood of the Academy. A subcommittee chaired by a Trustee approves all Fellowship applications and ensures that Fellows fulfil their commitments to the Academy.

The only criteria for Fellows to be admitted to the Academy, and remain in good standing, as well as be eligible to use the IEAc Fellow designation and apply for Academy small grants are: (i) significant involvement in evaluation activities – research, practice, management, commissioning, etc.; (ii) commitment to Academy values and principles; and (iii) willingness and ability to contribute to evaluation excellence, advocacy, and social relevance.

Fellows who do not make substantive contributions to the Academy over time, and/or bring disrepute to the organization, may lose their Academy Fellow designation, following due process in line with Board approved guidelines and processes.

## Major governance features

The International Evaluation Academy (IEAc) is to be established as a Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO) in the United Kingdom. It will be owned and managed by a Board of Trustees with help and guidance from a Council. Board and Council members will normally be appointed for four-year (renewable) terms, except that, for the first Board and Council, the terms of service of individual members will be staggered to avoid disruptive discontinuities.

## Business model

A decentralized, collegial management approach characterises Academy activities. Under Board oversight and with Council support, the Academy supports Fellows to work together to initiate, design, and implement initiatives that fall within or across the following activity clusters:

- *Evaluation research*: research on evaluation governance, management, models, methods, and practices; science-based evaluation initiatives (e.g. complexity, systems thinking, mapping, etc.)
- *Evaluation advocacy*: promotion of sound evaluation policies; engagement with civil society groups; encouragement of corporate social responsibility-oriented evaluation; etc.
- *Evaluation education*: promotion of high-quality tertiary evaluation education in universities worldwide, especially in the Global South
- *Evaluation training*: incubation of innovative training projects focused on new evaluation frontiers, information technology, artificial intelligence, Big Data, etc.
- *Evaluation professionalisation*: mutual recognition of guiding principles; professional ethics; competency frameworks; mentoring and professional development; support to young and emerging evaluators' initiatives; prizes and awards, etc.
- *Transformational evaluation*: promotion of evaluations geared to transformational change, socially and environmentally sustainable development, Blue Marble evaluations, etc.
- *Evaluators without borders*: promotion of international evaluation exchanges; contributions to effective communications across evaluation cultures; amplification of indigenous evaluation voices; etc.
- *Expert evaluation services*: set up of independent commissions, workshops, roundtables, and expert meetings tasked with evaluation of critically important public policies and programs; Academy-directed transformational evaluations; provision of independent, objective evaluation advice to improve the validity, quality, and social utility of evaluations in the public, private, and voluntary sector<sup>1</sup>.

Board members approve and provide oversight of *programs* sponsored and carried out by Fellows (or groups of Fellows) following Council review to ensure that they deliver work responsive to one or more of the above eight activity clusters. Board members also establish means for keeping track of all Academy activities. In carrying out their due diligence responsibilities Board members take full account of Council members' views. In all its work, the Academy scrupulously observes the principle of subsidiarity relative to evaluation associations, networks, international bodies, civil society organizations, and partners.

## Partners

The Academy engages in partnerships with like-minded organizations, including evaluation societies and networks, universities, research institutes, think-tanks, civil society organizations, philanthropic foundations, and private firms. Such bilateral or multilateral partnerships are defined by Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) endorsed by the Board.

Partnerships take different forms, e.g. flexible alliances towards the realization of Global Evaluation

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<sup>1</sup> These activities will be subject to strict Board oversight and conflict of interest rules.

Agenda goals; advocacy campaigns; upscaling of promising pilot interventions; joint sponsorship of evaluation research, education or training programs; joint operation of learning communities; mentoring and professional development schemes; fund raising initiatives; outreach to social reform movements; etc.

### **The Board**

The Board of Trustees is chaired by the President. Day to day management of the Academy is delegated to the Executive Committee of the Board, consisting of President, Secretary-General, Treasurer and, as appropriate, other Trustees selected in agreement with the Board. Trustees serve in their personal capacities and not as representatives of their organizations. They assist the President and the Executive Committee manage the Academy, monitor its work, and assess the effectiveness of its processes and activities. A mix of expertise, experience, and entrepreneurship as well as a commitment to represent the interests and fulfil the aspirations of evaluators worldwide are among the competencies required of Board members.

There is no legal distinction between Trustees. They share the same collective duties and responsibilities. Trustees are tasked with exercising due diligence and control over all aspects of Academy work, including programming, monitoring, admission of Fellows, partnerships, secretariat work, data base maintenance, website management, grant approvals, fund raising, etc. The Board approves Academy policies and strategic directions and helps the President in relationship management, interaction with partners, communications with stakeholders and the public, etc.

Trustees are accountable for the integrity and ethicality of all Academy activities, the fulfilment of its statutory obligations, the maintenance of adequate membership and operational records, the production of timely audited financial statements, etc. They commission and authorize funding for independent evaluations of Academy performance every five years. While they exercise oversight over all Academy activities, they delegate their authority to the President and Executive Committee for day to day management, although they may be called upon to assist them, e.g. to chair or participate in Board committees, subcommittees, etc.

### **The President**

The President is appointed by the Board. She/he chairs the Board and provides leadership by envisioning the future of the organization and – with the collegial help of other Board members and guidance from the Council – helps shape strategies and policies that help turn the vision into reality. Together, the President and other Board members approve the creation of Board committees and sub-committees; represent the Academy vis a vis partners, other organizations, and the public.

### **The Treasurer**

While the entire Board shares responsibility for sound and accountable financial management and oversight, the Treasurer is charged with day to day management of the Academy's financial affairs, including budgeting and accounting, expenditure approval and monitoring, interaction with auditors, cash flow management, investments, etc.

### **The Secretary General**

The Secretary-General is charged with overall Academy administration including compliance with its Constitution, bylaws and charity regulations; maintenance of membership and operational records; timely and responsive website management; planning and management of Board meetings, General and Special Meetings; effective communication between the Board, the Advisory Council and the Fellows. etc. The Board secures support services from a *Secretariat* reporting to the Secretary General.

## **The Council**

While the Board brings together a wide range of skills and capabilities, it is not expected to handle without support all oversight tasks or master all the topics within its remit. It taps the energy and expertise of a diverse and dynamic Council membership for the provision of strategic and expert advice for all aspects of Academy work. The Council reports to the Board through the Executive Committee. Council members serve in their personal capacities and not as representatives of their organizations. They elicit, motivate, guide, and advise Fellows and groups of Fellows in the design, preparation, and implementation of their initiatives and in the formation of hubs.

Using their expertise, commitment and connections, Council members may:

- Act as an independent sounding board to the Chairperson and the Trustees in specific thematic and scientific areas
- Encourage debate about evaluation policy directions, including professionalization
- Connect the Academy with centres of excellence in the physical, natural, and social sciences
- Offer strategic advice with respect to new evaluation frontiers, e.g. Big Data, complexity concepts, data science and computer modelling for evaluation, etc.
- Identify opportunities for Academy activities that enhance support to young and emerging evaluators
- Support fundraising for high priority Academy initiatives
- Assist in evaluation advocacy campaigns
- Review grant proposals prior to Board approval

## **Hubs**

The Board encourages the setup of hubs within initiatives that are in keeping with the purpose and the values of the Academy. The Board may also set up hub organizations across initiatives to respond effectively to global, regional, and national priorities and concerns, and assist in fund raising to support Academy work.

For example, a hub might be set up to address climate change evaluation in the small island countries of the Pacific. This could involve various activities cutting across activities such as research, advocacy, and transformational evaluation and it would complement and support evaluation initiatives already underway, e.g. the Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment initiative.

Similarly, global thematic hubs might be created to focus on such 'problems without passport' as nuclear proliferation, loss of biodiversity, ocean pollution, human trafficking, modern slavery, refugees, etc. Equally, support to young and emerging evaluators might work across initiatives related to education, training, and professionalization.

## **Friends of the Academy**

Unlike Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs), the IEAc is not financially sustained by membership fees. Although the Fellows who are in a position to do so are asked to donate, the Academy will rely on Friends of the Academy, a network of donors who recognize that evaluation is a public good and a key instrument of democratic governance and corporate social responsibility. They include foundations, international organizations, government agencies, private corporations and individuals who share the vision of a strong and vibrant evaluation community, operating across borders and dedicated to a world where governments, private corporations and civil society organizations are accountable to citizens and learn from experience to achieve a world where peace, justice and respect for nature prevail and where development benefits all.

**Small grants**

Academy activities are volunteer driven. However, in some cases, modest expenses may have to be defrayed. To ensure that this does not preclude the implementation of priority interventions, the Academy provides small grants (normally \$10,000 or less) to support the design, incubation, and/or implementation of priority activities that support Academy goals and priorities. Grant applicants undertake to behave ethically, to report on results, and to draw lessons at project completion. Each grant application is subject to peer review under the aegis of the Council and to Board approval by a Small Grants Review subcommittee.

**The Interim Organising Committee**