



## IDEAS CODE OF ETHICS

**Adopted by the membership at the AGM Barbados, 2013**

**Adopted by the IDEAS Board of Directors November 8, 2014**

### FOREWORD

The mission of IDEAS is 'to advance and extend the practice of development evaluation by refining methods, strengthening capacity and expanding ownership', with a particular focus on developing and transitional economies. This mission is rooted in core values and principles, which are intended to guide the behaviour of its members. IDEAS expects that its members, in any role in which they are engaged in a development evaluation process, display integrity, honesty, and respect.

IDEAS considers it of high value to publish and uphold this Code of Ethics for its membership as an instrument to promote and advance evaluation as a key tool for development effectiveness, transparency and accountability in policy-making, and social and organisational learning. The Code provides guidelines to lead and support evaluators as well as to inform evaluation clients and the general public about what to expect from professional international evaluators who are members of the Association. Additionally, IDEAS considers the Code of Ethics of value to those international development evaluators outside of its membership, and encourages its general use.

What must be specially noted is that these are international guidelines developed by a multicultural evaluation group. They are the product of an intercultural dialogue that is historically significant in itself. Cultural values are profound in our lives and to have reached agreement on a set of ethical guidelines for the conduct of evaluation by evaluators representing 90 countries is truly worthy of our commendation. This is part of the value of IDEAS.

The Code of Ethics shall be periodically revisited and revised, as IDEAS engages in a continuous process of self-reflection and examination for leveraging effective professional development evaluation. In this endeavour, an important role is to be played by IDEAS members, who may contribute with examples from their experiences in the field that the Code does not appear to cover.

The IDEAS Code of Ethics is composed of three main parts:

**I. Ethical Principles** –organized based on the IDEAS mission and values expressed and translated in broad behaviour orientations;

**II. Code of Conduct** – containing specific rules of conduct for evaluators in relation to (1) colleagues and to the Association;(2) the public and stakeholders, including the client;(3) the profession of monitoring and evaluation in the development context, and to the development field itself, comprehensively understood as the sustainable development of societies;

**III. Application** –indicating ways to use this Code of Ethics to preserve the high spirit of the Association in the accomplishment of its objectives and mission.

## **I. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

### **P1. Excellence, knowledge and competence**

Members shall exhibit integrity, honesty, and respect in the practice of evaluation while continually seeking to uphold and raise the standards of evaluation education, research, training, and practice, at the same time contributing to the enhancement of conceptual thinking in development monitoring and evaluation, promoting monitoring and evaluation as a useful tool for learning and accountability, and using it as a means to effectively and positively contribute to the improvement of the interventions and the issues they address.

**P1.1**Members shall strive to attain IDEAS core competencies

(<http://ideas-global.org/evaluator-competencies-2/>), to continuously work to raise their own level of competency, and to keep themselves abreast of professional advances in their field.

**P1.2**Members shall apply the technical knowledge and skills gained through education and through hands-on experiences in the evaluation field to improve their own practice.

**P1.3**Members shall participate in networks of evaluators, researchers and practitioners, sharing experiences and seeking opportunities for learning.

**P1.4**Members shall demonstrate a consistent pattern of care, balance, competence and objectivity in practising development monitoring and evaluation, guaranteeing the integrity of the processes in which they are engaged.

**P1.5**Members shall ensure they are knowledgeable and competent to carry out the tasks for which they are being engaged, accurately representing their level of skills and knowledge, and providing a professional level of service akin to IDEAS competency standards.

### **P2. Respect for individuals, societies and the environment**

Members shall exhibit integrity, honesty, and respecting their professional relations, clearly acknowledging the value of individuals, displaying sensitivity to the diversity of cultural expressions and manifestations, respecting social norms and laws while promoting human rights, and working collaboratively to contribute to sustainable development.

**P2.1** Members shall act to respect human rights in their evaluations, and shall be aware of the diversity of cultures, beliefs and practices, and consider these in designing and conducting evaluations.

**P2.2** Members shall not discriminate when designing and carrying out an evaluation on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, national origin, ethnicity, language, age, or disability, nor engage in any practice that may violate these principles unless the nature of the project

or programme under evaluation (e.g. program for girls only), and of the evaluation itself requires selectivity.

**P2.3** Members shall display courtesy and consideration for any individuals with whom they relate as development evaluator professionals, be they clients, respondents, colleagues, stakeholders, or the general public.

**P2.4** Members shall strive to be culturally knowledgeable, sensitive and respectful, and be fully aware of their own biases, cultural and other, in the course of their professional work.

**P2.5** Members shall not knowingly violate the Constitution and the laws of the country in which they are carrying out their work, or international covenants.

**P2.6** Members shall seek to identify the potential and actual social and environmental impacts of policies, projects and programmes under evaluation and be mindful of possible environmental impacts of projects, noting them in written reports, and recommending environmental assessments as appropriate.

### **P3. Partnership and collaboration across professions and practices**

Members shall espouse integrity, honesty, and respect, and promote partnership and collaboration among evaluators and related professionals with whom they work.

**P3.1** Members shall strive to broaden knowledge of the context of an intervention, and thereby enhance the quality of the evaluation, listening to various stakeholders' points of view and collaboratively working in multi-professional settings.

**P3.2** Members shall help build the evaluation capacity of colleagues and of stakeholders sharing knowledge and experience.

**P3.3** Members shall champion joint evaluations to enhance the quality of the evaluations and reduce the burden on those who provide the necessary data.

## **II. CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **CC1. Regarding the profession embraced**

**CC1.1** Members will offer clear and justified comments on the Terms of Reference (TOR) for an evaluation, whenever the quality of the evaluation could thereby be significantly improved.

**CC1.2** Members are responsible for honestly negotiating the terms of an evaluation with clients, for completion of the evaluation within the conditions negotiated and agreed in the Terms of Reference, including the timeframe, the necessary human and logistical resources to carry out the task, and implementation of the methodology and data collection procedures that will yield reliable evaluation results, and for negotiating in good faith should unforeseen circumstances arise.

**CC1.3** Members shall decline evaluations when development evaluation professional standards, principles, values and concerns cannot be resolved, and integrity would be compromised.

**CC1.4** Members shall make appropriate acknowledgments of published or unpublished sources, of colleagues' works, ideas, and collaboration, either written or oral, and of the guidance and support received from others.

**CC1.5** Members shall design and conduct evaluations with technical rigour and internationally recognized standards and norms, and make use of reasonable criticism to improve the evaluation.

**CC1.6** Members shall seek to make evaluation data and analysis, findings, limitations and conclusions, and evaluation reports themselves, publically available, unless doing so would violate legal and propriety obligations or assurances of confidentiality or anonymity.

**CC1.7** Members shall seek to organize and document data gathered or otherwise produced in the course of an evaluation to enable its future use by others.

**CC1.8** Members shall seek to prevent or correct misuse of the work by others, within reasonable limits.

**CC1.9** Members shall not knowingly make or prepare or certify as true any oral or written statement that is false, incorrect, misleading, or incomplete.

**CC1.10** Members shall report to the proper authority for further action any evidence or reasonable suspicion of fraudulent, corrupt, illicit, or illegal practices that they encounter in the course of the evaluation work.

## **CC2. Regarding the client, the public and stakeholders**

**CC2.1** Members shall not accept any gift or payment from any person or institution that is intended to influence evaluative judgment in relation to an existing or prospective programmes or projects or gives the appearance of seeking to influence an evaluation.

**CC2.2** Members shall not make any payment nor offer gifts to any public official with the intent of influencing their judgment in relation to an existing or prospective evaluative activity in which the members are interested.

**CC2.3** Members shall decline to carry out evaluations of any programmes or projects intended to promote unethical activities.

**CC2.4** Members shall withdraw from any evaluation where potential conflicts of interest are identified.

**CC2.5** Members shall not succumb to pressures of any kind to omit or downplay reliable information gathered during the evaluation process, considered necessary to answer a main evaluation question.

**CC2.6** Members shall record all changes made in the originally negotiated terms of reference for an evaluation and the reasons why the changes were made and include these in the evaluation report.

**CC2.7** Members shall explore with the client(s) and stakeholders the various evaluation questions, raising potential issues, identifying implications for evaluation approaches, strengths and shortcomings.

**CC2.8** Members shall obtain informed consent from respondents before beginning data collection, clearly describing their task, identifying the financing institution, the purpose of the evaluation, the potential users of the findings and uses to which the findings will be put, and the need for the respondent's collaboration, and shall explicitly indicate whether anonymity or confidentiality will be offered.

**CC2.9** Members shall make clear in reporting of the evaluation who commissioned it, its general purpose, the source(s) of financing, the scope, methodology, and limitations of the evaluation, the potential users and uses of the findings, and provide whenever possible the opportunity for the entities evaluated to comment on evaluation reports, before and after they are finalized.

**CC2.10** Members shall uphold professional objectivity at all times, being fair and explicit when making judgments, giving adequate weight to opinions expressed by respondents, and avoiding preconceived notions and conclusions.

**CC2.11** Members shall seek to empower stakeholders by involving them in the evaluation to the maximum extent feasible and shall present evaluation findings, strengths, limitations and conclusions with the appropriate level of simplicity, conciseness, and clarity to make them understandable to varied audiences.

### **CC3. Regarding the Development field**

**CC3.1** Members shall exhibit awareness and consideration for the inherent complexity and diversity of situations, practices and beliefs faced by professionals who work in the field of Development.

**CC3.1.1** Members shall strive to broaden their perspective of the subject of the evaluation, listening to various parties, and appropriately incorporating their perspectives.

**CC3.1.2** Members shall use reasonable criticism, limiting personal judgements, and avoiding unnecessary debate over differing viewpoints.

**CC3.1.3** Members shall take into consideration judgments, interpretations, and rationales that differ from their own but are consistent with evidence gathered.

**CC3.2** Members shall promote equity in all domains, and identify impacts that may result in inequalities of any kind in reporting evaluation results.

**CC3.3** Members shall seek to promote evaluation processes as key tools for development effectiveness, transparency and accountability in policy-making and in social and organisational learning.

**CC3.3.1** Members shall seek to promote the use of evaluation findings as a means to improve the effectiveness of development interventions and of the development field as a whole.

**CC3.3.2** Members shall seek to design and implement and report evaluations in a way that makes the results useable for development.

### **III. APPLICATION**

**A1.** IDEAS will encourage the use of this Code of Ethics as a good practice in development evaluation, and will offer support for its members to deal with particular situations that may arise in the practise of evaluation, be they explicitly stated in this document or not.

**A2.** Members will seek advice from IDEAS as represented by its board, or its designees, whenever ambiguous or unclear cases emerge or when the current Code of Ethics does not address particular situations.

**A3.** Members shall be prepared to explain breaches of these ethical guidelines to IDEAS as represented by its board, and to colleagues, should the board so request.