



Charter of evaluation guiding principles for public policies and programmes

Adopted by SFE's general assembly (20 october 2003)

• Preamble

These guiding principles express the values French Evaluation Society (SFE) members share. As a first milestone in SFE's debate, the guiding principles will be confronted by members with their own evaluation practice with a view to further development. Users of the charter are invited to apply this reference text to documents adapted to their specific needs, particularly in the area of quality standards.

The purpose of evaluation is to provide a basis for judging the worth of public activities.

It aims at increasing the coherence of government action, at improving its efficiency and motivating all parties involved.

Evaluation contributes simultaneously to government decision-making; to the modernisation of public administration and services and to more efficient public expenditure; to the development of internal or external accountability practices and organisational learning.

In doing so, evaluation contributes to the democratic debate at all levels of government.

In addition to the interests of the direct stakeholders, issues at stake in the evaluation of public programmes and policies concern all citizens. As a matter of common good, evaluations always address the general public interest. Hence, they should be guided by the following **guiding principles**.

Guiding principles

- **Pluralism**

Evaluation implies considering in a balanced manner all the legitimate points of view expressed about the evaluated activity.

This recognition of multiple viewpoints is effected wherever possible by involving the various stakeholders in the evaluation process, or by other appropriate means.

- **Independence**

Evaluation is carried out impartially. Evaluation professionals inform their other partners of any possible conflict of interests.

The evaluation process is carried out independently of programme management and decision-making processes. This independence serves to safeguard the public decision-makers' freedom of choice.

- **Competence**

Designing evaluations, managing and commissioning them, collecting data and choosing methods, as well as interpreting findings entail using specific competences. Those who participate in evaluation in a professional capacity should build and update their professional skills consistently.

Evaluation implies using recognised methods, particularly those used by the international evaluation community. In using these methods, participants in evaluation should explicitly mention their limitations.

- **Respecting the integrity of individuals**

Participants in the evaluation process respect the rights, integrity and safety of all affected parties.

They shall not disclose the sources of any information or opinions they collect without the agreement of the persons concerned.

- **Transparency**

Presentations of evaluation findings should be accompanied by a clear description of the object of the evaluation, its purpose, its intended audience, the questions asked, the methods used and their limitations, and the arguments and criteria which led to these findings.

The findings of evaluations should be made public. Decisions ought to be taken at the beginning of an evaluation on how the findings will be disseminated. The integrity of findings should be respected, irrespective of the format and methods of dissemination.

- **Responsibility**

At the beginning of an evaluation, decisions as to the allocation of responsibilities between the different actors involved should be made in such a way that clear responsibility is assigned for each function in the evaluation (definition of the brief, management process, research and analysis, formulating findings and recommendations, dissemination of findings).

Persons and institutions involved in the evaluation process should make available appropriate resources and the information required to carry out the evaluation.

They are jointly responsible for properly implementing the guiding principles set out in the present charter.