

# IDEAS & Independent Evaluation Office - New Development Bank

## MULTI-DIMENSIONAL EVALUATION

for influence & transformation

**Concept note**

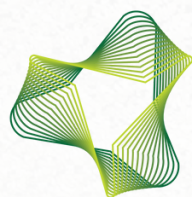


**04-06 MARCH 2025  
ROME - ITALY**

**Jointly organized by**



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**New  
Development  
Bank**





## INTRODUCTION

The [International Development Evaluation Association](#) (IDEAS) was created in 2002 to meet the needs for a global professional association for international development evaluators from diverse sectors and countries. The Mission of IDEAS is to improve and extend the practice of development evaluation, refining knowledge, strengthening capacity building and expanding networks and partnerships for development evaluation. Bi-annually, IDEAS holds a conference and a global assembly (GA) as a platform to bring together evaluators to share experiences and proposed ideas and actions to move the evaluation agenda forward. Previous conferences and global assemblies were hosted in Bonn (2022) online, Prague (2019), Guanajuato (2017), Bangkok (2015), Bridgetown (2013), Amman (2011), Johannesburg (2009), New Delhi (2005) and Beijing (2002).

The New Development Bank (NDB) is a multilateral bank established in 2014 by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS); and implements its operations since 2015 by mobilising resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs). In alignment with its members' development objectives and commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, NDB prioritizes high-impact operations that are climate-smart, disaster-resilient, technology-integrated, and socially inclusive. The [NDB's Independent Evaluation Office \(IEO\)](#) is responsible for independently evaluating the Bank's policies, strategies, processes, initiatives, and operations. The IEO also contributes and provides oversight to improve the effectiveness of the Bank's quality assurance and self-evaluation activities.

**The upcoming conference, scheduled for March 2025, will be held in Rome (Italy). This event is anticipated to be a collaborative effort to enhance its scope and influence.**

## BACKGROUND

The world continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating effects, albeit slowly and unevenly. Meanwhile, new disruptive developments with undeniably global political, social and economic consequences have emerged. Ongoing geopolitical conflicts in various regions have altered global political alliances and resulted in an unprecedented number of displaced and refugee populations. Statistics reveal that more than 50% of the displaced population are women and children. Concurrently, existing challenges related to inequities in wealth and well-being, the climate crisis, and the exclusion of vulnerable groups from access to resources, along with a persistent gender and equity divide, have created a complex scenario for effective development as well as for relevant, innovative, and influential evaluation. The search for better and more effective development and evaluation approaches continues.

Against this backdrop, evaluation aims to contribute to transformational change.



Evaluation must respond with a renewed vision to the unprecedented, multiple and interrelated complex situations. The question for the evaluation community and evaluators worldwide is, whether evaluation should be as business as usual or whether it is time to seize these crises as an opportunity to reflect on ways to become more effective and influential. There is no doubt that even in these uncertain times, evaluation has the power to engage with stakeholders, question what is working and what is not under which circumstances, to prioritize context, embrace complexity and reinforce human rights for a more equal, fair and just world. To do so, the evaluation function bears a responsibility, more urgent than ever before, to promote the use of robust evidence for decision-making to influence and sustain change.

Evaluators, in turn, must possess competencies to become change agents, address structural inequities, facilitate participatory processes that are inclusive, give voice to those left behind and promote methods and tools that capture diverse perspectives and ways of knowing. As evaluators, we ask the difficult question: has evaluation contributed, and can it contribute to transformational change? This main question, among others, is expected to be discussed at our forthcoming Conference in 2025.

## AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The joint IDEAS/IEO-NDB 2025 Conference entitled, **Multi-dimensional Evaluation for Influence and Transformation**, aims to serve as a platform for a multi-stakeholder dialogue on how evaluation can play a more influential role in contributing to transformational change.

Transformative change is inherently multidimensional, encompassing the intricate and interconnected social, economic, political, and environmental factors. Similarly, for evaluation to effectively support transformational change, it must address the multifaceted and complex nature of development and humanitarian efforts.

The conference emphasizes the need for a systems approach to evaluation—one that acknowledges the complexity and interdependencies among human, economic, and natural systems and upholds the rights and aspirations of all individuals.

To realize this goal, the conference will convene a diverse and multi-stakeholder audience, including leading thinkers in evaluation, practitioners, government and parliamentary representatives, academics, commissioners of evaluations, Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs), international organizations, and both seasoned and emerging evaluators from around the world. This gathering aims to foster an environment of collaborative thinking, paving the way for more influential and transformative-led evaluation practices.

## CONFERENCE STRANDS

The conference will provide a forum for exploring the conference theme in plenary sessions with the participation of keynote speakers. A global and multi-actor dialogue is expected to take place through panels and round tables organized around the below-mentioned strands:

### Strand 1: Relevance and complexity of SDG evaluation

This strand focuses on fostering discussions around the purpose, challenges, and relevance of evaluations, especially country-led evaluations that assess progress toward the SDGs and contribute to transformative change. The discussions in this strand will explore the multi-dimensionality and intricacy of SDG evaluation, highlighting the importance of adopting a systems approach that recognizes the interdependence of human, economic, and natural systems. Additionally, the discussions will emphasize the international, multistakeholder, and multimethod aspects of these evaluations, along with a focus on the utilization and influence of SDG evaluations.

Main questions to be addressed are:

- What challenges do evaluation and evaluators face in assessing the transformative nature of Agenda 2030?
- Are current evaluation efforts successfully adopting a multi-dimensional approach that assesses the interconnected, social, economic, political and environmental factors of development and humanitarian interventions?
- Are country-led evaluations of the SDGs proving to be more influential compared to other types of evaluations? Are there practices where the influence of evaluations has led to more equitable and just public policies? What lessons have been learned?
- Do SDG evaluations have the potential to contribute to the democratization and decolonization of evaluation processes? Are there examples that show progress in these areas?

### Strand 2: Evaluation for transformational change at the nexus of climate, crisis and development

This strand focuses on this critical relation in the face of poly-crises impacting our planet.

It challenges evaluation to recognize the need for systemic and transformational change as agreed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Transformational change requires a multi-faceted understanding that acknowledges and navigates power relations, exclusion, decolonization, and interconnectedness. Given the urgency of the climate crisis, acceleration and regeneration processes need to be balanced along with equitable and just transitions. Evaluation rising to these challenges must be forward-looking, moving from a theory of change to a theory of transformation, from project thinking to systems thinking, and from a

linear understanding of enablers and barriers to a more multidimensional understanding of relationships and trade-offs. Some questions that may be considered for this strand are:

- How can evaluation approaches address both the risks and resilience that lie at the nexus of climate, crisis and development to recommend pathways to ensure the transformation of systems and practice?
- What is the role of evaluation in analysing what works, why, and under what circumstances to inform policymaking and program design? How adaptable is it? What enablers – resources, knowledge-related, political and people-oriented – are needed for sustainable change?
- How can evaluation criteria, especially those related to sustainability, be assessed to address the interconnected and complex challenges that emerge when we address the nexus?

### **Strand 3: Evaluation context and culture**

Evaluation has evolved at a different pace worldwide. The context and culture of each country significantly influence its use. An examination of the various national evaluation ecosystems indicate the importance of the contribution of localization as a propelling or hindering factor in recognizing the usefulness of evaluation. Countries' political regimes and cultures create an enabling environment for evaluation. The presence of national evaluation associations and networks plays a significant role in fostering the systemic use of evaluation to improve evidence-based decision-making. As we move forth in enhancing the relevance of evaluation and country-led evaluation, there is evidence that this process is shifting evaluation from the supply to the demand side of international collaboration. Some of the questions that this strand will address are:

- What are the key factors that create an enabling environment for evaluation? How can the hindering factors be addressed?
- What are the lessons drawn from the development of national evaluation associations & networks in fostering a positive receptivity and use of evaluation?
- Is country-led evaluation creating a tipping point for demand driven evaluations? How does this affect the needs for evaluation capacity strengthening?
- What is the role of global and regional evaluation associations in supporting the development of national evaluation networks?

### **Strand 4: The interaction between gender, human rights and equity**

This strand explores the multifaceted and dynamic relationship that is critical to address gender inequalities and support transformative shifts. We know that meaningful change is possible only if we are able to contribute to broader societal shifts in terms of gender equality and human rights. Addressing either gender or human rights or equity is unlikely to support structural and systemic changes that are vital for transformative processes. This strand focuses on how evaluation may address all three or a combination of these to assess a more

holistic impact of interventions - policy or program. It recognizes that attempting to cover all three dimensions may require balancing depth and breadth of evaluations, the use of innovative approaches and expanding the scope of the evaluation. This strand addresses the following questions:

- What norms and assumptions about gender, equity and rights do we need to address in order to ensure continuous learning and adaptation?
- How are human rights and gender dimensions, including equity, infused into evaluation designs and approaches? What are the roadblocks for integrating these dimensions in evaluations?
- How are strategies tailored to address these dimensions across diverse contexts? What lessons have been learned?

## **Strand 5: Developing capacity for evaluation**

The intended outcomes of developing capacity for evaluation are the high quality of services, trust in the profession and the practitioners, and subsequent use and impact of evaluations on better-informed decision-making. According to EvalPartners, capacity for evaluation requires three main considerations: an enabling environment, an institutional framework enhancing evaluation, and individual competencies to conduct quality evaluation. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) supports the professionalization of evaluation, saying it includes Guiding principles, Ethics and standards, Evaluation capabilities and competencies, Recognition of knowledge, skills and experience, Dissemination of knowledge and good practices, Access to Education and Training and Institutional structures for professionalization. Evaluation paradigms emerge from the contexts and cultures they are situated in.

The Global North has provided leadership towards the theory and practice of evaluation, whereas much of the development interventions are situated in the Global South. As evaluation becomes global and has demonstrated how it can influence and be used, it is now challenged to address cultural sensitivity, equity, and relevance. Evaluators globally must think critically, learn from diverse contexts and create evaluation frameworks that truly serve the well-being of all communities. The Global South faces distinct development challenges, such as rapid urbanization, climate change, and social inequality. New evaluation paradigms must be developed to adequately capture these challenges, fostering innovation and adaptation, and creating more inclusive and contextually relevant evaluation methods better aligned with the realities of diverse people in various contexts. A new evaluation agenda has been set for 2030. It provides opportunities to grow the evaluation practice and, with it, the profession.

This strand addresses the following questions:

- What are the challenges of professionalization in different contexts? What lessons have been learned?

- Is there a common body of knowledge on international evaluation emerging worldwide? Are we moving forward toward global evaluation principles, norms & standards?
- What progress has been made toward offering evaluation capacity opportunities at the global level? What are the good practices and roadblocks?
- What are the emerging evaluation competencies addressing multidimensional crises that impact people and the planet?

## **Strand 6 – Evaluation for sustainable development in the BRICS and other EMDCs**

The EMDCs are transitioning from less developed to modern, industrial economies with higher standards of living. This strand focuses on how evaluation can support sustainable development in these contexts, particularly in the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). These countries are shifting from agricultural and resource-based economies toward industrial and manufacturing activities, which require robust infrastructure development. Governments in these regions implement strategic initiatives, including export-led growth and import-substituting industrialization, to enhance their industrial capacities and engage more with the global economy.

To support these transitions in the global south, significant investments are made in domestic programs such as education systems, physical infrastructure, and legal reforms to secure investors' rights and create a favourable environment for sustainable economic growth. Evaluation plays a critical role in assessing the effectiveness and impact of these infrastructure projects and strategies, ensuring they contribute to sustainable and inclusive development. By examining how evaluation can enhance these efforts, this strand aims to provide insights into best practices and innovative approaches for sustainable infrastructure development in the BRICS and other EMDCs.

This strand addresses the following questions:

- How can evaluation approaches be tailored to address the unique challenges and opportunities in BRICS and other EMDCs in the global south?
- In what ways can evaluation be used to improve transparency, accountability, and governance in large-scale development projects in EMDCs?
- How can evaluation frameworks be adapted to capture the diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts of BRICS and other EMDCs?
- What role can evaluation play in fostering sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the BRICS and other EMDCs?
- In what ways can evaluation drive the low-carbon transition and foster investments in renewable energy to meet the goals of the Paris Declaration and Development Goals?



By focusing on these questions, the strand will explore the critical role of evaluation in supporting sustainable infrastructure development strategies of the BRICS and other EMDCs.

## OUR APPROACH

The conference intends to provide a forum for an interactive, inclusive and action-oriented dialogue and exchange of experiences. Specifically, the conference will feature:

- I. Keynote speakers and key-note panels
- II. Round tables
- III. Panel discussions centred on the conference theme and streams
- IV. Exhibitions of publications and evaluation innovations
- V. Evaluation for Transformational Change Award and recognition of outstanding evaluations (to be determined)

## AUDIENCE

The conference participants will be drawn from a diverse range of stakeholders working across the globe, including:

- I. Evaluation professionals
- II. Young and Emerging Evaluators
- III. Civil society, especially VOPEs.
- IV. Policymakers and decision makers
- V. National and international evaluation organizations
- VI. Parliament representatives
- VII. Private sector organizations
- VIII. Media

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact IDEAS Coordinator ([coordinator@ideas-global.org](mailto:coordinator@ideas-global.org)) for further information on the planning and implementation of the Conference, in particular the key milestones in programme development including abstract submission, and participant registration.

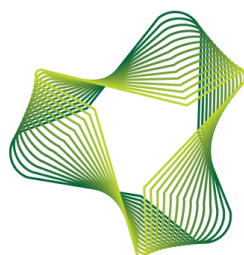
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