Independent Review of EvalForward Community of Practice

Annex 7.
Findings by evaluation question

Introduction

1.   This annex sets out the findings from the Independent Review of the EvalForward Community of Practice. Preliminary findings were presented and discussed at meetings of the EvalForward steering committee (of the four founding agencies) on 8 September and 6 October 2022. Access to the analytical tables supporting the preliminary findings, with evidence presented by collection method and synthesized across them by evaluation question, was also made available to the steering committee. The steering committee discussion and written feedback served to verify and enrich the findings. The evaluation team lead has responded to fill or clarify evidence gaps and provide additional narrative requested.

2.   For ease of reference, the rest of this document is structured around the 12 evaluation questions set out in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2). For each evaluation question, an overall finding is given followed by detailed findings from different evaluation methods that support it.

Evidence base

3.   The evidence base for findings arises from the following evaluation methods:

   i.   Key Informant Interviews x 10 members steering committee and executive group;

   ii.   TOC Reflection Interviews x 5 peer organizations;

   iii.   Member Survey x 149 respondents x 44 countries (Annex 3);

   iv.   Document Review x 13 items;

   v.   Membership statistics from current website profiles;

   vi.   Website use metrics x 4 years, plus content/functionality assessment (Annex 4);

   vii.   E-Newsletter/DGroups/Twitter/YouTube metrics from start of accounts (Annex 4);

   viii. Financial reports – budgets and actuals x 3 full years.

4.   Excerpts from the change stories (Annex 5) are also provided that illustrate findings already made by analyzing the evidence base above. The change stories were not used within the analysis itself because the interviewees were purposively sampled from among the most active members and so present a positive bias risk if used otherwise.

Type of overall finding

5.   The Evaluation Matrix set out for which Evaluation Questions it would be possible to give a Red Amber Green (RAG) Rating of the overall finding and those for which only a Descriptive Synthesis could be provided. For those Evaluation Questions with a RAG Rating, Green corresponds to a good level of performance, Amber to a moderate level of performance and Red to a poor level of performance.

Q1. To what extent are EvalForward activities and contents responding to the needs of its Members?

Overall finding: RAG rating Green

6.   EvalForward activity and content are responding to most of the needs identified in the 2017 Needs Assessment which informed the 2018 Strategy design. This rating is supported by a consensus across the stakeholders consulted. EvalForward has been most responsive to the needs of members in terms of their preferred ways of learning, topics for discussion and content, languages for reading and discussion and devices to access online services. That the majority of members are from least developed or middle income countries suggest it is responding well to the needs of this demographic as intended in the 2018 Strategy. EvalForward has been less responsive to members' needs for access to evaluation reports, formal training, the topic of monitoring, and a higher number of webinars and discussions. Although total subscribers and followers of the EvalForward E-Newsletter, DGroup, Twitter and YouTube accounts are still increasing, it is noted that the relative level of engagement through these channels by individuals has peaked or may be declining.

Detailed findings

i.   The Member Survey's finding that EvalForward is seen as Very Responsive or Responsive to member needs by a majority of respondents is supported by analysis of the website and other EvalForward online platforms' usage. This shows that the majority of priority services identified in the Needs Assessment (2017) are being delivered: sharing of tools, methods and best practices, facilitation of events, conferences and partnerships, online discussions and peer-to-peer support, sharing job vacancies and training opportunities. Two services identified as needs but largely not responded to are sharing evaluation reports and syntheses[1] and formal E-learning courses and webinars. Analysis of the categories and rates at which content is added to the website also shows this pattern of service delivery. The exceptions are lower levels of content than needed for evaluation reports, E-Learning, webinars, and discussions. The Document Review further confirms the findings from these two methods. It illustrates a management approach that adapts to changes in member needs, for example by diversifying the types of online platforms used. But also shows less responsiveness to the need for content on monitoring and training.

ii.   Analysis of website user profiles shows that most users reside in least developed or middle income countries. It also shows that the number of user profiles representing staff employed by the founding agencies is small at some 15 percent. The percentage of founding agency staff employed in the Rome Headquarters is even smaller at 7 percent. It is reasonable to state that EvalForward has this membership demographic because it is primarily responding to the needs of users in middle income and least developed countries, which was the intention mentioned in the 2018 Strategy.

iii.   EvalForward also looks responsive to the language and device needs of its members. Website metrics show that 68 percent use the internet in English, 15 percent in French and 9 percent in Spanish, which matches the three languages supported by EvalForward translation. The same metrics show that 68 percent are accessing from computers with increasing mobile and tablet use. EvalForward has responded by optimizing its website for use by both types of devices.

iv.   Analysis of the metrics for other online platforms used by EvalForward suggests a note of caution within the positive trend of increasing subscribers and followers. The E-Newsletter's

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[1] The Facilitator has to date decided not to host Evaluation Reports to avoid EvalForward becoming a repository.

subscribers are increasing but there is a relative decline in the number of times individuals open it or click links within it. DGroups subscribers continue to increase but with a significant relative decline in contributions to the Platform (the website now competes with the DGroup as a place for members to contribute their views). Twitter followers show an increasing trend and Impressions and Mentions by users are keeping pace with the increase (perhaps driven by the increasing rate of Tweets by EvalForward). The YouTube channel has an average of 72 views per month, but only 67 subscribers.[2]

> **Change story excerpts**
> *EvalForward responds to my needs. For example, the TOC Review discussion and webinar were asking a very key question and it was nice to see it discussed from different international and organizational perspectives. The chat exchange within such webinars is an important dimension.*
> *For my capacity development needs, I have got what I expected from EvalForward – outside perspectives that help me judge if my work is in line with international standards. This gives me confidence that I am on the right track and that if I make mistakes, I have access to others' experiences to sharpen my approach. My ambition with EvalForward, to expand my professional network, to find consultancy opportunities and speak at a conference is being achieved.*

Q2. To what extent are activities appropriate to meet the purpose of EvalForward?

Overall finding: RAG rating Amber

7. The activities of EvalForward are partially appropriate to meet its stated purpose of improving national capacities to conduct or use evaluations related to agriculture, rural development and food security. This rating reflects the mixed opinion across stakeholders consulted. EvalForward is seen as mostly relevant to individual capacity building at a national level. In this regard, most services are seen as appropriate to purpose except Twitter and YouTube where there are mixed opinions on their relevance. That the most popular section of the website is 'Discussions' confirms that EvalForward is succeeding in deploying a core Community of Practice approach of peer-to-peer learning. The increasing trend for most file downloads from EvalForward to be of technical documents is a positive one in line with EvalForward's capacity-strengthening purpose. Conversely, EvalForward is seen as less relevant to building the capacity of organizations and systems at a national level. Here, EvalForward's purpose may be too ambitious, and the related implicit TOC logic underdeveloped. That members from public sector organizations are declining as a proportion of total members probably reflects this. Government officials are identified as significant secondary participants in the 2018 Strategy.

Detailed findings

i. The Key Informant Interviews found that EvalForward is relevant to individual capacity building at a national level, but less so for building the capacity of organizations and systems at a national level. There it is seen as being over-ambitious and lacking a formal training offer. This finding is supported by those from the TOC Reflection. The logic for the related Enabling Environment change pathway for organizations and systems is found to be lacking in detail and innovation. Though it is recognized that evidence for how to effect change is less well established here than for individual capacity building.

ii. The Member Survey found that most EvalForward services are appropriate to improving capacity, especially discussions, DGroups, webinars, and the E-Newsletter. This is supported by analysis of website Use showing the most popular sections are 'Home', 'Discussions', 'Blog', 'Webinar', 'Events', and 'Resources'. The fact that 'Discussions' comes out strongly confirms that EvalForward is succeeding in deploying a core Community of Practice approach of peer-to-peer

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[2] The facilitator has to date decided simply use YouTube to host uploaded EvalForward videos and has not promoted it as a channel in its own right.

learning. There are mixed opinions on how appropriate YouTube and Twitter are for EvalForward's purpose, which may partly reflect the degree of familiarity of some respondents with these platforms.

iii.   Analysis of website use also found that most downloaded files are now technical documents when in the beginning they were event brochures. This suggests that users increasingly see EvalForward as a trusted source of technical material.

iv.   Analysis of website member profiles shows that the number of users who say they work in the public sector has declined from 23 percent of respondents at the time of the 2017 Needs Assessment to 2 percent in 2022. This trend may reflect the findings about lower relevance for building the capacity of organizations and systems at a national level, but more evidence is needed if this user group is still seen as significant although secondary, as stated in the 2018 Strategy.

Change story excerpts

EvalForward has helped to bring national evaluators together in this country that weren't all aware of each other before. I have personally learned a lot from international and national evaluator's experience through EvalForward. In terms of government ministries, it is hard to say, but together we do slowly influence other organizations.

Deep specialism in M&E for agriculture is generally lacking and EvalForward providing insights and sharing member views raises awareness, including among the commissioners of evaluation. Commissioners can be unrealistic about the kinds of methods that can be used in the sector as compared to the health sector, for example.

With twenty years of professional M&E experience, I understand many technical tools and if I need a new one I know how to explore the wide online literature. But I also need to test what I already know and EvalForward is valuable and relevant in supporting this because of the diverse discussions. EvalForward also helps to keep me up to date with emerging trends in M&E in the sector.

Q3.   How successfully has EvalForward balanced pursuit of its objective with responsiveness to the aspirations and guidance of the evaluation offices of the supporting agencies?

Overall finding: descriptive synthesis

8.   EvalForward has struck a good balance between pursuing its objective with responsiveness to the policy aspirations of the supporting agencies. It has supported members in influencing which topics get discussed and enabled the founding agencies to highlight their messages. This task has been made easier by the relatively similar purposes and policies around evaluation capacity development among the founding agencies.

Detailed findings

i.   Key Informant Interviews found that a good balance is being achieved between the pursuit of EvalForward's objective and being responsive to the aspirations of the Evaluation Offices of the founding agencies. It has remained supportive of members' interests' significantly driving the topics of discussion, whilst at the same time enabling the founding agencies to highlight key messages aligned to their policy interests (which are also well aligned). The Document Review finding helps to explain the ease of this task. EvalForward sits squarely within the FAO Office of Evaluation (FAO OED)'s strategy commitments (2021) to national M&E capacity development and knowledge management and the FAO evaluation workplan's (2021) explicit commitment to host and support EvalForward and step-up engagement in NECD including through EvalForward through to 2025. EvalForward is part of IFAD's work programme and budget through 2024 with explicit mention under Communication and Knowledge Management.

Q4.   Is EvalForward positioned coherently with existing initiatives in the evaluation community?

Overall finding: descriptive synthesis

9.   EvalForward is well-positioned in relation to existing initiatives in the evaluation community with a distinctive focus on evaluation of Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development and with evaluation practitioners in developing countries. There are opportunities for EvalForward to collaborate with a philanthropic organization or the Global Evaluation Initiative on formal training and other areas. Another opportunity is to have content curated around themes that its governance mechanisms consider to be strategically important within the wider NECD context. EvalForward's implicit TOC needs to recognize that any access to formal training in evaluation is being provided by other initiatives.

Detailed findings

i.   The Member Survey finding that EvalForward is very well/well-positioned amongst 26 other initiatives in evaluation that members participate in, is supported by Key Informant Interview opinion that the focus on evaluation of Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development and evaluation practitioners in developing countries is distinctive. These interviews also suggest two opportunities to further improve EvalForward's position. Firstly, through collaboration with a philanthropic organization or the Global Evaluation Initiative on formal training and other areas. Secondly, through having more content curated around themes that its governance mechanisms consider to be strategically important within the wider NECD context.

ii.   The TOC Reflection found that it is missing an assumption about whether members have access to formal training elsewhere that complements peer learning on EvalForward. This finding is supported by the Document Review that shows that UNDP and UNICEF are the main multilateral actors involved in formal training for NECD and that the GEI is seen as presenting an opportunity for greater NECD collaboration.

Change story excerpts
EvalForward is the main networking space for M&E professionals in agricultural development, with other networks being focused on different audiences.
I am involved in other networks, but EvalForward is very dynamic compared to some others and it is a South-South capacity development network which I value.

Q5.   Has EvalForward been able to establish synergies and complementarities with relevant Initiatives in the evaluation community with direct benefits to users or wider strategic value?

Overall finding: descriptive synthesis

10.   Synergy and complementarity with relevant initiatives in the evaluation community have been consistently established at the level of individual activities (e.g. more specialized webinars/events) as envisaged in the 2018 Strategy. This has established credibility with these initiatives which present opportunities for deeper collaboration. However, a lack of investment by EvalForward's governance mechanisms has not yet brought opportunities for institutional, financial, or strategic collaboration to maturity. An updated strategy and TOC for external communication would be welcomed by external partners.

Detailed findings

i. Findings from Key Informant Interview show that synergies and complementarities have been established with relevant initiatives. This has been consistent at the activity level, but not in terms of institutional, financial or strategic collaboration. A lack of governance investment to bring such opportunities to maturity is cited. This finding is supported by Document Review that shows how collaboration envisaged in the 2018 Strategy has been reported annually at the activity level. However formal collaboration initiatives have started but not been completed.

ii. The TOC Reflection found that existing collaborating organizations want to continue and have very positive impressions of EvalForward as capable and trustworthy. It further found suggestions that if the EvalForward TOC could explicitly show areas for future collaboration in a simplified version for external communication this could lead to deeper collaboration.

Q6.   To what extent does the current set-up of EvalForward allow efficient delivery of its mandate?

Overall finding: descriptive synthesis

11. The set-up of EvalForward enables efficient delivery of its mandate. In particular, this is due to EvalForward being delivered like an external project from within an agency, having light touch governance, the recruitment of a professional consultant facilitator, and creating incentives for member contributions. These positive attributes originate in the good design and adaptive set-up of EvalForward. However, there are some risks to sustained efficiency from weak plans for staff succession, a limited monitoring system, and increasing financial variance.

Detailed findings

i. The Key Informant Interviews found that the light touch governance arrangements and set-up of EvalForward as an external project (with delivery by consultants) have lowered administrative and management costs. The interviews also found that recruitment of someone to the position of consultant facilitator with appropriate skills and experience to run a CoP is seen as an asset to efficiency and value for money. Sometimes these roles can be handed to non-professionals who struggle to deliver efficiently. However, this asset becomes a risk if there are no plans for succession should the postholder no longer be available. These findings are supported by the Document Review that found that governance and incentives to members were both designed with efficiency in mind. The steering committee was designed to have oversight of the consultant facilitator to monitor value for money and members who increased their profile through contributions to EvalForward might be alerted to consulting opportunities with the founding agencies.

ii. The Key Informant Interviews found that some existing ideas to strengthen efficiency (e.g. delegation of some facilitation tasks to members, rotating the role of facilitator through the founding agencies to strengthen relationships) had stalled due to governance not reaching a consensus. Other findings on risk include the rudimentary monitoring system which lacks indicators (Document Review) and increasing financial variance between budgets and actual expenditure increasing. Some of this variance however is due to COVID disrupting planned activities (Financial Reports).

Q7. To what extent and how has EvalForward contributed to facilitate knowledge sharing and knowledge generation on evaluation in order to enhance evaluation capacities in the food security, agricultural and rural development (FSARD) sectors?

Overall finding: RAG rating Green/Amber

12. EvalForward has made a strong contribution to facilitating knowledge sharing to enhance capacities in FSARD evaluation. This Green rating is supported by a consensus among the stakeholders consulted. Knowledge-sharing contributions include members engaging to share their knowledge and experience (with a strong trend of increasing website use), facilitation of members' learning and networking, and curation of existing knowledge (with many suggestions from members of future techniques, tools and topics to share).

13. EvalForward has made a medium contribution to facilitate knowledge generation to enhance capacities in FSARD evaluation. This Amber rating reflects the mixed opinion across stakeholders consulted. The 'Blogs' section of the website is the second most popular and is the primary activity where knowledge generation is facilitated. The other way knowledge generation is facilitated is through making and uploading 'Notes of Discussions and Webinars', but downloads of these files only account on average for 5 percent of the total. EvalForward has produced three original publications in four years.

Detailed findings

i. The Member Survey found that EvalForward has made a strong contribution to facilitating members sharing their knowledge and experience and to facilitating their learning. It is also found to have made a medium to strong contribution to gathering and organizing existing knowledge, highlighting professional opportunities, building professional cultures and systems, and raising the profile of evidence availability and use. These findings are supported by the Document Review where value is found to have been added through facilitating knowledge sharing, member engagement, professional networking, individual capacity strengthening, and raising international awareness. This is further supported by an analysis of website use that found an increasing trend in the number of users and unique visits to the website, with each user visiting more often over time.

ii. Analysis of website use found that unique visits to the 'Blogs' section (which is most related to facilitating knowledge generation by EvalForward) are the second most popular, accounting for on average 15 percent of unique visits per quarter. This analysis also found that downloads of files from the website related to knowledge generated by EvalForward (primarily 'Notes of Discussions and Webinars' account for on average 5 percent of the total per quarter. Analysis of website content supports this mixed finding, with EvalForward having published one original research report (in collaboration with FAO) and two briefing notes to date.

Change story excerpts

I wrote a blog on EvalForward to share my experience of institutionalizing evaluation in government and then transferring to a monitoring role. I learned that ministers and presidents are much more interested in monitoring evidence because it is timelier. These decision-makers are elected and have a short mandate, so they want evidence updated daily – not from Evaluations in three months or several years. In response to the blog I received a lot of interest, it generated debates on EvalForward DGroups and we ran a related webinar. It was a real benefit to share my experience widely. A very good capacity development experience.

In my role as MEL Adviser for an INGO last year I benefited from access to guidelines on evaluation of Climate Smart and Regenerative Agriculture (Climate-Smart Agriculture Farm Sustainability Assessment Framework). I was responsible for commissioning evaluations of an agriculture project and found these FAO guidelines very helpful. I referred to the guidelines very early on in the MEL planning stage and when writing the evaluation TORs. Later the wider Evaluation Reference Group referred to the guidelines when quality assuring data collection tools set out in the Evaluation Inception Report.

An EvalForward webinar helped our NGO to adopt the Rapid Assessment tool and this led us to identify when we were actually off-track toward achieving our project's impact during COVID. Within six months this enabled us to correct project activities by additionally helping girls to access education in a remote region. I came across the Rapid Assessment tool when it was shared in an EvalForward webinar, with links given to the documents available from WFP and other organizations. Participating in the webinar helped to identify what documents were most relevant to our NGO and project.

In October 2021 I ran a webinar with EvalForward on the evaluation of a donor-funded agriculture project. The webinar shared an innovative evaluation tool we had developed. I asked a colleague from the donor side to co-present with me. We were also joined by a staff member from a related agriculture team. We got good questions from other members, and this helped us to further refine the tool. The donors to the project encouraged us to share our innovations widely and so EvalForward was an ideal platform. EvalForward has a wider international audience than an alternative EU-focused platform we could collaborate with. EvalForward was also more open to my suggestions for webinar topics and more flexible to collaborate with as a speaker than the other platform.

I read about the toolbox in an EvalForward blog and then began considering whether we would pilot its use at the INGO I work for. We were able to get in direct contact with the FAO staff behind the toolbox to see if we could become a regional partner because they had listed their emails on the Blog. EvalForward enabled that institutional cooperation. In practice, it was easier to discover the toolbox through EvalForward than it would have been through FAO's website.

Q8.   To what extent has EvalForward peer learning contributed to changes in Members' non-technical knowledge, attitudes and practice?

Overall finding: descriptive synthesis

14.   EvalForward has made a strong to moderately positive contribution to most of the dimensions of change in members' non-technical knowledge, attitudes and practices assessed by the Review[3]. These are deepening understanding of problems and challenges, contextualization of knowledge, understanding how to put knowledge into action, and incentives and motivation to use evaluation and monitoring to make change. EvalForward's support of incentives and motivation is also seen in enabling members to make a difference to others, increase their professional visibility and gain recognition from their employers. Two other dimensions of change were interpersonal skills conducting or using evaluations and monitoring and the quality of professional relationships. In these areas, while most responses said the contribution was strong or moderately positive, a significant minority said it was weak or negligible.

Detailed findings

i.   The Member Survey found a strong to moderate positive contribution is being made to five of the seven dimensions of change in members' non-technical knowledge, attitudes and practices assessed by the Review: deeper understanding of evaluation and monitoring problems and challenges, acquiring new technical knowledge about evaluation and monitoring,

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[3] The seven dimensions of change draw on Fisher, C (2022) 'Peer Learning for Climate Action', Pg.19-21 *Direct Results of Peer Learning Processes*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Bonn. They were chosen because, in the absence of any having been set by EvalForward, they provided an evidence based set of relevant indicators to assess changes to members non-technical knowledge, attitudes and practice.

contextualization of evaluation and monitoring knowledge, understanding of how to put evaluation and monitoring knowledge into action, and incentives and motivation to use evaluation and monitoring to make change. This finding, in relation to incentives and motivation, is supported by the Document Review. It found that EvalForward's support of incentives and motivation is seen in enabling members to make a difference to others, increase their professional visibility, and gain recognition from their employer.

ii. The Member Survey also found a strong to moderate positive contribution to Interpersonal skills conducting or using evaluations and monitoring, and quality of professional relationships. However, a significant minority said the contribution was weak or negligible here.

> **Change story excerpts**
> Through EvalForward I am able to network with other M&E professionals in agricultural development – it brings members closer together. I find opportunities to share my views with other members and get their reactions.
> I was organizing our fifth National Evaluation Week. I shared the conference topics on EvalForward and the President of the National Evaluation Association of a neighboring country contacted me after getting my email from the EvalForward facilitator. I invited them to run a panel and speak, supported by access to UNDP funding for their travel and attendance. For me, this was the first time I had been contacted in this way and I was pleased we found a way to collaborate. His attendance helped to make the week more dynamic. They brought an external perspective and experience from UNDP. Our Government would like our National Evaluation Association to be more proactive, raise its own funds, be self-organizing and publish rather than expecting the government to do it all. The added dynamism advanced that agenda.

Q9.   What is and could be done to amplify or spread the likely impacts of EvalForward?

Overall finding: descriptive synthesis

15. Suggestions on what is and could be done to amplify or spread the likely impacts of EvalForward arose from Key Informant Interviews, the Member Survey, Document Review, Website Review, and review of other online platforms. The suggestions fall into two areas – existing activities and ideas for new activities.

Detailed findings

i. EvalForward activities that already amplify and spread impact which could be prioritized for scaling cover collaborative activities with external partners, the technical documents collection, webinars, events, social media marketing, website functionality and structure, E-Newsletter subscription guidance and links to the website on DGroups and YouTube accounts.

ii. Ideas for new EvalForward activities that could be prioritized for testing cover producing community knowledge products, national chapters, showcasing reports from nationally led evaluations, certified online training, mentoring, exchange visits, prize competitions, volunteer facilitators, a LinkedIn group, non-evaluator speakers and authors, incentivizing Southern Think Tank engagement, an E-Newsletter archive and guiding new members on how to participate in EvalForward.

> **Change story excerpts**
> *Could EvalForward have thematic teams/groups of members as quite broad membership as a whole? People could sign up to these groups in the way you can as part of the American and European Evaluation Associations. As a group, EvalForward is quite mature now and so it's a good time to analyze what topics are of most interest and form sub-groups. Maybe there could be three member volunteers to lead each group.*
> *Nationally we need to increase support young and emerging evaluators as there is no clear route for them to join or stay in the profession. In our National Community of Professional Evaluators, we have organized training for young and emerging evaluators, but they often move on to other careers if they can't get hired. It would be good if EvalForward could advocate for more internship opportunities for young and emerging evaluators at national level.*

Q10.   Are there mechanisms in place to ensure sustainable funding of and support to the CoP by the supporting agencies and potential external partners?

Overall finding: descriptive synthesis

16.   There are insufficient mechanisms in place to ensure sustainable funding of and support to EvalForward by the founding agencies or potential external partners. Existing mechanisms for sustainable funding are that EvalForward is included as a project in the regular budgets and workplans of the founding agencies (as opposed to the more vulnerable programme-funded budgets). Without additional mechanisms there are sustainability risks should EvalForward not effectively brief incoming senior decision-makers. There are similar risks from the low capacity of EvalForward governance to reach out to potential partners and from EvalForward's budget potentially being too small for co-funding to be efficient for potential partners.

Detailed findings

i.   The Key Informant Interviews found that EvalForward is included in the multi-year horizon regular budgets and workplan of most founding agencies (but subject to annual confirmation based on wider priorities and EvalForward performance). The interviews found few other mechanisms and several risks. For instance, incoming decision-makers on EvalForward funding in the founding agencies may be unbriefed. Also, EvalForward's light touch governance has insufficient capacity to sustain outreach to potential partners as envisaged in the 2018 Strategy. Finally, the scale of EvalForward's budget may make it too small for co-founder attention – bundling EvalForward with other FAO projects for co-funding was explored but not found to be practical.

> *Change story excerpts*
> *The independence of EvalForward is important to maintain, especially the topics that it discusses and who can be members. I trust the founding agencies to sustain its independence. EvalForward should no longer be seen as an experiment and the founding agencies should put their budget and decision-making onto a sustainable basis.*

Q11.   Are governance and management arrangements appropriate to facilitate engagement and ownership by the supporting agencies and potential external partners?

Overall finding: descriptive synthesis

17.   Existing governance and management arrangements have sustained EvalForward over four years. Suggestions on ways to refresh and adapt governance to contemporary engagement and ownership needs fall into five areas. Action on some of the suggestions would imply additional staff resources in-kind from the agencies for governance and management.

Detailed findings

i.   The Document Review found that EvalForward governance and management might be underdelivering on the fundraising, promotion, and internal burden-sharing objectives set out in the 2018 Strategy. The 2018 Strategy also envisaged that external partners and a core group of active members would become involved in governance, but neither has happened.

ii.   Findings on five groups of suggestions to refresh and adapt management and governance arise from Key Informant Interviews. These are first, introducing a Half-Yearly Update and an expanded Annual Report and Agenda (e.g. covering EvalForward performance, horizon scan, strategic direction, and content priorities) for the executive group. Second, offering individual briefings and an experience of being an EvalForward member for the executive group; Third,

adding P3 level founding member staff alternates to the steering committee to share the load and help it to return to a quarterly cycle. Fourth, introducing layered governance categories: founding agency, funder, collaborator and core group member. Fifth, increasing administrative support for widened participation in governance.

Q12.   How does EvalForward promote and monitor access to and the relevance of its services for different genders and those groups at risk of marginalization within the intended user group?

Overall finding: descriptive synthesis

18.   EvalForward promotes access to its services from three major language groups by translating content. It also collects basic gender data on members who establish profiles on the website. No other actions are taken to promote or monitor access to and the relevance of its service for different genders and those groups at risk of marginalization within the intended user group. Whilst seen as an important topic, it is said to require clarity, strategic thinking and advocacy to take forward. There are findings on suggestions arising from evidence gathered by the review on how to take this topic forward.

Detailed findings

i.   The Key Informant Interviews found that EvalForward already takes two actions to promote and monitor access to and the relevance of its services for different genders and those groups at risk of marginalization within the intended user group. These are to provide translation of its services into English, French and Spanish and by collecting basic data on the gender of members through a website profile question. No other at-risk groups or targets or criteria for services are set. The interviews also found that this is considered an important topic, but one that has so far not been considered by EvalForward governance. It is thought to need more clarity, strategic thought and advocacy to take forward – including before more data are collected from members.

ii.   Findings on suggestions arising from evidence gathered by the review in the Member Survey are as follows. Providing training, more webinars and more discussions on gender equality and social inclusion, including in collaboration with other communities and networks specialized in the topic. Increasing participation by different genders and those at risk of marginalization in all aspects of EvalForward, including as speakers and discussants, through proactive outreach and provision of space to these groups. Improving the 'Resource Library' collection and categorization of relevant documents, for example, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) evaluation and monitoring methods and evaluation reports exploring GESI. Increasing the use of social media to reach out to those at risk of marginalization.