

# Independent Review of EvalForward Community of Practice

## Briefing note

### Why was the EvalForward Community of Practice (CoP) created?

The EvalForward community of practice (CoP) was established by the evaluation offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Programme and CGIAR to **improve national evaluation capacity in the areas of agriculture, rural development and food security.**

The vision of the founding agencies was to help support the capacity of evaluators and evaluation users working in these sectors with a CoP that would act a platform for peers to interact and learn from one another. The premise of the CoP approach to capacity development is that learning outcomes are achieved by building relationships and sharing practice-based experience and that participants are simultaneously teachers and learners. For a CoP to succeed, the key ingredients are the interest and motivation of its members and a shared trust in the process.

### EvalForward at a glance



Launched  
**2018**



**1550+**  
Members



**127**  
Countries



Languages  
**EN-FR-ES**

### Facilitates and supports



**Online  
discussion**



**Webinars**



**Blog posts**



**Networking**



**Information  
sharing**

## To what extent has EvalForward's aim been achieved?

An independent review, commissioned by the EvalForward Executive Group, analysed four years of the CoP's operation (2018–2022). It found that:

- EvalForward delivers on most of the areas prioritized in its original strategy.
- It is an effective and appreciated facilitator of knowledge-sharing and peer learning, including through online discussions, events, resources, professional networking.
- It has a distinctive niche in evaluation capacity strengthening.
- It needs a reinvestment of political capital to strengthen its position.
- It needs to invest in knowledge management to scale up operations and ensure continuity.

## What lessons can be drawn on the value of CoPs for evaluation?

- CoPs build social capital by **bridging gaps in evaluators' social networks** through proactive convening and platforming. This role can help empower practitioners, especially when professional organizations do not exist or have limited capacity.
- Building on the open and trusted spaces offered, CoPs enable members to share resources and tools in participatory and focused ways, offering an **invaluable asset for knowledge exchange, adaptation and use of evaluation approaches**.
- CoPs help to aggregate individual member micro contributions and behaviours into a **whole that amplifies and spreads their potential impact** by disseminating the impact of individual evaluators' knowledge, experience and positive behaviour.
- CoPs can occupy an important niche that builds **synergy and collaboration among other evaluation capacity development initiatives**, such as formal training, organizational development and specialized sector groups.

**Whoever teaches  
learns in the act of  
teaching, and whoever  
learns teaches in the act  
of learning**

Paulo Freire,  
BRAZILIAN PEDAGOGIST

## What direction should EvalForward take in future?

1. **EvalForward should continue to provide a CoP** with a strategy refresh, leveraging its theory of change and right-sizing its purpose.
2. **Partnerships** should be leveraged to strengthen and sustain EvalForward's distinctive contribution to change.
3. **The delivery approach** needs to be strengthened in order to amplify and spread the CoP's contribution to change.
4. **A proper monitoring, evaluation and learning system** must be set up to improve accountability to governors and learning for managers and peers, and to sustain EvalForward's value for money.
5. **Governance and management arrangements** must be reviewed and updated for EvalForward to strengthen engagement and broaden participation.

## Links and contacts

- Full report: [www.evalforward.org/resources/review-evalforward](http://www.evalforward.org/resources/review-evalforward)
- Contact the facilitation team: [info@evalforward.org](mailto:info@evalforward.org)
- Visit the website and register: [www.evalforward.org](http://www.evalforward.org)

