

Council of Europe Code of Conduct for Evaluation¹

1. The conduct of evaluators in the Council of Europe (CoE) should be beyond reproach at all times. Any deficiency in their professional conduct may undermine the integrity of the evaluation, and more broadly evaluation in the CoE itself, and raise doubts about the quality and validity of their evaluation work.
2. The CoE Code of Conduct applies to all DIO staff, staff in other MAEs who manage evaluations and consultants working for the CoE (all of which are referred to as "Evaluator"). In addition, the CoE staff must abide by the [general Ethical Framework of the CoE](#) and the consultants on the terms of their consultancy agreements.
3. The provisions of the CoE Code of Conduct apply to all stages of the evaluation process from the conception to the completion of an evaluation and the release and use of the evaluation results.
4. By confirming their participation in an evaluation, evaluators are deemed to agree with, respect and comply with the CoE Code of Conduct for Evaluation. Guidance and advice may be sought at any time from the Ethics Officer. To promote trust and confidence in evaluation in the CoE, all CoE staff engaged in evaluation and evaluation consultants working for CoE are required to commit to the following obligations:

Respect of Fundamental Values

5. The Council of Europe upholds certain fundamental values and principles such as gender equality, non-discrimination, prohibition of sexual and other forms of harassment, prohibition of ill-treatment of human beings. These shall be adhered to at all times by the evaluators. It is recalled that evaluators and members of the Secretariat themselves enjoy protection against any form of harassment. (See also [Rule No. 1292 on the protection of human dignity at the Council of Europe](#))

Independence

6. Evaluators shall ensure that independence of judgment is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.

Impartiality

7. Evaluators shall operate - and be seen to operate - in an impartial and unbiased manner and give a balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the policy, program, project or organisational unit being evaluated.

7.bis Evaluators shall assess the information and facts presented to them in the context of an evaluation objectively, without bias or prejudice, or considerations of a political nature. Evaluators should not accept any external instruction and should not be influenced by considerations which are unrelated to the evaluation (e.g., belonging to the same professional category as the one under evaluation).

Conflict of Interest

8. When confirming his/her participation, the evaluator shall disclose any potential conflict of interest or incompatibility that may hamper, or be seen as hampering his/her role as an evaluator. This requirement applies also at any later stage of the evaluation process should any change in situation occur.

9. Before undertaking evaluation work with CoE, each consultant will complete a Declaration of Honour which is integrated in the Act of Engagement.

10. CoE staff involved in evaluation have to complete a [Declaration of Interests in the Context of Procurement and Grant Award](#).

¹ Drafted on the basis of [UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System](#).

11. Evaluators shall not accept any gifts or other forms of advantages in relation to an evaluation.

Honesty and Integrity

12. Evaluators shall show honesty and integrity in their behaviour, when determining the evaluation costs, tasks, limitations, scope of results likely to be obtained and presenting their procedures, data and findings, including any limitations or uncertainties of interpretation within the evaluation.

Competence

13. Evaluators shall accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge and work only within the limits of their professional training and abilities in evaluation, declining assignments for which they do not have the skills and experience to complete successfully.

Accountability

14. Evaluators are accountable for the completion of the agreed evaluation deliverables within the timeframe and budget agreed, while operating in a cost effective manner.

Obligations to participants

15. Evaluators shall respect and protect the rights of human subjects and communities, in accordance with the European Convention of Human Rights and other human rights conventions. Evaluators shall respect differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, while using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting. Evaluators shall ensure prospective participants are treated as autonomous agents, free to choose whether to participate in the evaluation, while ensuring that the relatively powerless are represented. Evaluators shall make themselves aware of and comply with legal codes (whether international or national) governing, for example, interviewing children and young people.

Confidentiality

16. Confidentiality must be preserved throughout the process, before, during and after the evaluation. This applies to information received and the various versions of the draft report.

Avoidance of Harm

17. Evaluators shall act to minimise risks of and avoid harms to, and burdens on, those participating in the evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation findings.

Accuracy, Completeness and Reliability

18. Evaluators have an obligation to ensure that evaluation reports and presentations are accurate, complete and reliable. Evaluators shall explicitly justify judgements, findings and conclusions and show their underlying rationale, so that stakeholders are in a position to assess them.

Transparency

19. Evaluators shall clearly communicate to stakeholders the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of findings. Evaluators shall ensure that stakeholders have a say in shaping the evaluation and shall ensure that all documentation is readily available to and understood by stakeholders.

Omissions and wrongdoing

20. Where evaluators find evidence of wrong-doing or unethical conduct, they are obliged to report it to the proper oversight authority such as the Internal Audit, Investigation Unit or the Ethics Officer.