

For Council review

Implementing the Academy’s strategic directions

**Introduction**

Following up on Board approval of the Academy’s major governance parameters, this document articulates a strategic management framework, designed *inter alia* to inform the draft Constitution of the Academy. Grounded in the broad-based deliberations that led to the endorsement of a Global Evaluation Agenda, the Academy is committed to the vision of Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement. It is dedicated to evaluation transformation, creativity, innovation, and excellence.

First and foremost, the Academy embraces evaluation transformation towards (i) respect and care for the community of life; (ii) ecological integrity; (iii) social and economic justice; and (iv) democratic values, non-violence, and peace. Thus, the Academy aspires to make transdisciplinary, value-driven evaluation play an influential role in the promotion of good governance, global justice, social, economic, and environmentally sustainable living.

**Strategic directions**

The Academy is committed to making a difference toward a more just and sustainable world. It is a ‘big tent’ under which initiatives are elicited, implemented, and tracked. All Academy partnerships, and interventions (policies, programs, projects, events, publications, etc.) fall within the scope of Board approved *strategies* that emphasize the following priorities:

* *Transforming*: in pursuit of systemic social transformation, work to change mind sets, promote interdisciplinarity, broker knowledge exchanges, empower the civil society, promote equity, and improve the ways practitioners identify, conceptualize, plan, and carry out evaluations to address the complex challenges of socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable development, especially in fragile and conflict prone contexts
* *Influencing:* expand the reach and impact of evaluation through improved evaluation governance norms; principled advocacy; and increased evaluation engagement across borders, generations, and sectors (public, private, and civil society)
* *Professionalizing:* contribute to methodological advances at the frontiers of social research and evaluation; provide professional development support, especially to young and emerging evaluators; lay the foundations for international agreement on what being a good evaluator means, how to reach for evaluation excellence in the public interest, etc.

Since many other evaluation and social research organizations share the same purposes and embrace the same values, the Academy will not take the lead in all the initiatives it is engaged in. It will scrupulously respect the subsidiarity principle in all its work, avoid duplication and fragmentation of efforts in evaluation capacity building, and seek to add value to the activities of its partners. While it will not rule out engagement with any legitimate evaluation approach, model, or method, it will privilege creativity and innovation, emphasize cultural diversity, and amplify the voices of the poor and disadvantaged.

**Board oversight**

While the Council enjoys relative autonomy, the Board is responsible for all Academy activities. It is tasked with ensuring that the Academy fulfils all its obligations, as specified by the Foundation model of the *Charitable Incorporated Organization* legislation of the England and Wales Charity Commission.

Thus, the Board oversees all Academy activities in line with its Constitution. It is mandated to set Academy policies, to approve its strategies, to define its operational objectives, and to engage in partnerships and assemble coalitions with associations, networks, and organizations. Detailed operational guidelines and processes will govern its activities and its interactions with Fellows and the Council.

To help ensure synergy, coherence, and accountability, Fellows’ proposals submitted to the Academy for approval are normally components of Board approved programs and/or partnerships. Discrete interventions (projects, events, publications, etc.) serve as *building blocks* of Academy programs generated by Fellows, endorsed by the Council Chair, and channelled to the Board for approval.

*Partnerships* with organizations, networks and associations are also envisaged to support the Academy’s strategy. They are expected to facilitate the achievement of Academy goals and to contribute to its programs. Such partnerships will be governed by memoranda of understanding (MoUs) negotiated with partners. These MoUs are subject to Board approval before signature.

Individual partnerships and programs while they may be designed to serve one primary ‘cluster’ objective (see Annex), will often display features responsive to other clusters to promote synergies. All Academy programs and partnershipsare expected to model good evaluation practice. Evaluation products are held to high standards of excellence and quality.

As an agreed component of a Board approved partnership or program, a discrete intervention will not normally require Board approval unless it depends on an Academy small grant. While free standing initiatives may be considered for Board approval (e.g. pilot interventions), partnerships and programs will be the privileged ‘units of account’ for Academy work. Independent evaluations of Academy performance will be commissioned by the Board every five years.

The Executive Committee is elected by the Board. It includes the President, Secretary General and Treasurer and may include other Board members[[1]](#footnote-1). Other Board members are called upon by the President to participate in Committees, taking account of their individual preferences, as follows[[2]](#footnote-2):

* *Fellowship Committee:*
  + Admission of Fellows
  + Ethics
* *Policy Committee:*
  + Finance and audit
  + Operating principles, policies, and procedures
  + Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
* *Operations Committee:*
  + Strategy
  + Programs
  + Small Grants[[3]](#footnote-3)
* *Outreach Committee*
  + Partnerships
  + Friends of the Academy
  + Website Management
  + Social media engagement

**Council mandate**

The Council is action oriented. It is tasked with helping the Board implement Academy policy directions. Council members are appointed by the Board following an Executive Committee search guided by the following indicative criteria:

* Evaluation track record
* Integrity
* Intellectual leadership (publications, etc.)
* Contributions to professionalisation
* Commitment to transformational change
* Management role in an existing or potential partner organisation
* Diverse regional, cultural, gender, and age representation

While the Academy relies on its Fellows to display entrepreneurship and initiative, Council members play a critically important role. The Council operates under the aegis of the Operations Committee. Overall management of Council work is the Council Chair’s remit. The Council Chair, appointed by the Board, reports to the Executive Committee, enjoys observer status in regular Board meetings, and participates in Board Committee meetings, as appropriate[[4]](#footnote-4).

To share the workload, taking full account of preferences and qualifications, the Chair assigns Council members to thematic *Working Groups* (WGs). Each WG is led by a Coordinator. In consultation with the Executive Committee, the Chair selects the Coordinators. In line with experience, the Council Chair periodically adjusts the WG structure outlined in the Annex. Council members may also be called upon by the Council Chair to help the Board and its Committees in their review functions, e.g. management of the small grants program.

The Council Chair encourages interaction and collaboration among WGs in ways that ensure coherence; promote synergies; and enhance organizational learning and accountability. Thus, the Council Chair organizes, guides, and coordinates Fellows’ work to help ensure that their proposed initiatives ‘add up’, are of high quality, and promote the Academy’s strategic priorities.

The Council may be called upon to put together *thematic strategy* documents that are reviewed and consolidated in an overall strategy document submitted to the Board in draft for its review and approval. Strategy documents are periodically updated in line with experience.

For each of the strategic themes handled by Council WGs, individual actions (projects, events, campaigns, publications, etc.) are components (‘building blocks’) of Board approved *programs* proposed by Fellows; endorsed by the relevant WG; and transmitted by the Council Chair to the Board for approval.

Programs normally serve one primary ‘cluster’ objective, but they are also prone to display features responsive to other activity clusters to promote synergy. A process for program review and approval, based on Board endorsed guidelines will in due course be designed and submitted to the Board for its review and approval.

November 17th, 2020

**ANNEX**

**COUNCIL WORKING GROUP STRUCTURE**

Taking full account of the overarching transformation imperative underlying all Academy activities, the Council, under the aegis of the Board Operations Committee, is tasked with the design of strategy documents, the identification, preparation, and implementation of Academy program proposals, the tracking of progress, and the reporting on results of all programs and projects[[5]](#footnote-5).

To carry out this broad mandate in line with Board strategic guidance, the Council is made up of Working Groups (WGs). Each WG is led by a Coordinator. They are encouraged to interact and collaborate to ensure coherence and achieve synergies. Periodic rotation and *ad hoc* secondment of Council members across WGs may take place.

The Council Chair takes full account of individual preferences in allocations of Council members to WGs and adjusts the WG structure in light with experience. Initially, eight Interim WGs will be set up to pursue Academy priorities as follows:

* *Evaluation research*: research on cutting edge evaluation methods, evaluation governance, management, models, and practices; science-based evaluation initiatives (e.g. complexity, systems thinking, mapping, etc.)
* *Evaluation advocacy*: promotion of sound evaluation policies; engagement with civil society groups; encouragement of corporate social responsibility-oriented evaluation; etc.
* *Evaluation education***:** promotion of high-quality tertiary evaluation education in universities worldwide, especially in the Global South
* *Evaluation training***:**  filling high priority training gaps carefully identified in partnership with other evaluation and social research organizations with a privileged focus on new evaluation frontiers, information technology, artificial intelligence, Big Data, etc.
* *Evaluation professionalisation*: mutual recognition of guiding principles; professional ethics; competency frameworks; mentoring and professional development; support to young and emerging evaluators’ initiatives; prizes and awards, etc.
* *Transformational evaluation:* promotion of evaluations that ask hard questions geared to transformational change, socially and environmentally sustainable development, etc.
* *Evaluators without borders*: promotion of international evaluation exchanges; contributions to effective communications across evaluation cultures; amplification of indigenous evaluation voices; etc.
* *Expert evaluation services*: set up of independent commissions, workshops, roundtables, and expert meetings tasked with evaluation of critically important public policies and programs; Academy-directed transformational evaluations; provision of independent, objective evaluation advice to improve the validity, quality, and social utility of evaluations in the public, private, and voluntary sector[[6]](#footnote-6).

1. In the transition period, i.e. prior to Academy incorporation and elections, the Organizing Committee handles all Executive Committee functions [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Committee structure is subject to adaptation in line with experience [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A subcommittee may be set up to approve small grants recommended by the Council [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Organizing Committee appoints the Interim Council and the Interim Council Chair. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Individual Council members may also be called upon to advise the Council Chair and help the Board and its Committees in the fulfilment of their remits. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. These activities will be subject to strict Board oversight and conflict of interest rules. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)