superu ⊕

BUILDING YOUR ORGANISATION'S ABILITY TO DO EVALUATIONS

PART
2

Evaluation Capacity Assessment (ECA) Tool

Using Evidence for Impact

AUGUST 2016

What is this tool for?

The ECA Tool helps you develop a good understanding of where your organisation is at when it comes to evaluation capacity. By using this tool, you will be able to determine what your organisation's current evaluation capacity is. More specifically, you will be able to answer the following questions:

- What do we know about evaluation?
- How well is evaluation embedded in our organisation?

What is this tool about?

The ECA Tool comprises three sections that complement each other:

- Section 1 is about the *Context* that shapes your organisation and in which it operates
- Section 2 is about your *Organisation* itself
- Section 3 is about the *People/Individuals* who make up your organisation.

Each section contains four different dimensions (a total of 12 dimensions) that focus on specific aspects of the *Context, Organisation and People/Individual*s.

Each dimension is defined by a series of statements (between four and six). These statements characterise evaluation capacity and will help you to determine what your organisation's current evaluation capacity is. The statements are designed to be challenging and provoke discussion.

3 Areas
(Context, Organisation, People/Individuals)

12 Dimensions
(4 Dimensions per Area)

55 Statements
**(4–6 Statements per Dimension)**
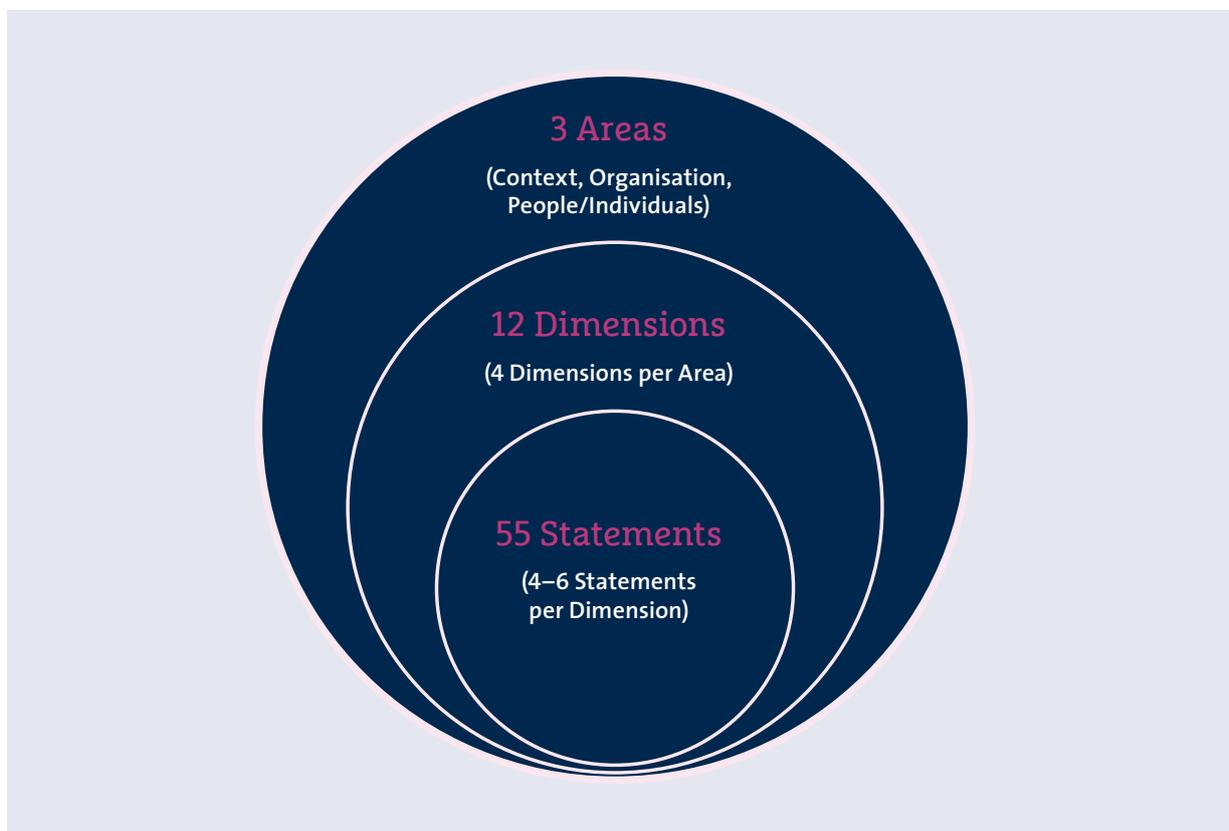
How do we use this tool?

This tool is primarily designed to be used in a self-directed manner, but the process can also be facilitated externally. If you want to use the ECA Tool yourself, each participant needs to have their own copy of it.

You can start with the section of your choice (e.g. Context, or Organisation, or People/Individuals). You may want to follow the order in which the dimensions are listed for simplicity of purpose (four dimension for each section), but this is not compulsory.
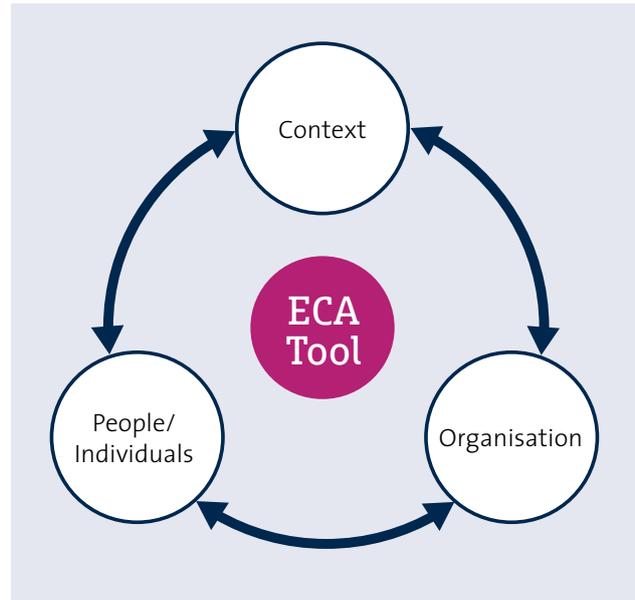
How do we complete the questionnaire?

Starting with the section and associated dimension of your choice: you need to read each statement and think about how it relates to your organisation. Then tick the box (**E**-Emerging, **D**-Developing, **C**-Consolidating or **H**-Highly developed) which best represents how you think your organisation is doing. When you have completed one dimension, move on to the next dimension. You need to repeat this process for the three sections and 12 dimensions in total.

Remember that there is no right or wrong answer.

REMINDER OF THE FOUR LETTERS' MEANING:

E for **Emerging** (very little or no evidence of this occurring)

D for **Developing** (there is some evidence of this occurring in the organisation; it happens sometimes but is not well embedded in routines)

C for **Consolidating** (this is seen regularly in the organisation, however not everyone is yet on board)

H for **Highly developed** (this is evident at all levels of the organisation and appears strongly embedded in the organisation's governance, leadership, systems, structures and practices)

The assessment of your organisation's evaluation capacity is done once everyone has completed their questionnaire. To be able to make sense of these findings, you then need to use the Evaluation Capacity Planning (ECP) Tool.

Section 1: Context

This section focuses on aspects of the context which influence your organisation (e.g. how it operates). These are, for example, history, values, principles, purpose and the presence of enabling factors in the environment. These aspects of the context potentially impact on how your organisation can develop its evaluation capacity.

1_ Values and principles

Successful NGOs have strong values and principles that sustain and guide a supportive organisational culture and way of working. These values and principles need to be taken into account when seeking to build evaluation capacity.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
1.1. Strong cultural values and principles anchor and guide decision-making				
1.2 Policies and practices give effect to our vision and mission in ways that are grounded in our values and beliefs				
1.3 There is careful consideration of the diverse needs of the communities we serve				
1.4 There are cultural processes in place that give effect to our principles when working internally and externally				
1.5 Our values and beliefs help to provide a shared sense of direction				

2_ Purpose and history

Building evaluation capacity is a process of learning from an organisation's history and using this to inform its future. It requires a whole-of-system approach, where everyone is on the same page about where the organisation has come from and where it is heading.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
2.1 We have a clear understanding of where the organisation is going, as well as where it has come from and why it exists				
2.2 Desired outcomes have been negotiated with our stakeholders				
2.3 The outcomes we want are clearly stated and linked to our understanding of why they will happen (that is to say, our theory of change)				
2.4 We have a good understanding of the systems, policies and procedures required to support organisational performance				
2.5 We understand the key dynamics of our programme or service and what difference it will make to those we work with				
2.6 There is future-focused strategy in place that ensures the organisation will be resilient and can be sustained into the future				

3_ Enabling environment

Building evaluation capacity is supported by an organisation being well networked and credible to its community and funders.

Our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
3.1 Is well respected and trusted, and its services are valued within its community				
3.2 Is strongly positioned with funders				
3.3 Has a good understanding of the policy and legislative environment it works in				
3.4 Has high-quality relationships with diverse external stakeholders who matter to the organisation				
3.5 Systematically looks for a range of funding and resources				

4_ Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) purpose

Widespread knowledge and understanding in the organisation about the benefits of having evaluation capacity increases motivation and commitment to building evaluation capacity.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
4.1 Everyone understands how developing evaluation capacity will help us achieve our vision, mission and goals				
4.2 Everyone understands the importance of developing evaluation capacity as a mechanism for capturing the organisation's way of working				
4.3 Everyone understands how developing evaluation capacity in the organisation will empower them in their own role				
4.4 We understand the value of demonstrating the difference we have made for clients and/or whānau				

Section 2: Organisation

This section asks questions about organisational factors, such as leadership infrastructure and learning culture, as well as the sharing of information and resources. These speak to organisational commitment and resourcing to build evaluation capacity.

5_ Commitment of leaders to developing evaluation capacity in the organisation

Supportive leadership is essential for evaluation capacity building.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
5.1 Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to ongoing learning that is based on regularly using evidence to review our performance				
5.2 Leaders set clear expectations of the performance and results they seek				
5.3 Leaders think creatively and encourage innovation				
5.4 Leaders bring together stakeholders to support the use of evidence				

6_ Learning culture

Evaluation capacity building is an ongoing process of learning and examining current practices to identify ways to improve. Therefore, functioning as a learning organisation is an important pre-requisite for developing evaluation capacity.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
6.1 Regular evaluation and presentation of evidence drive service improvement and organisational development				
6.2 Data collection systems are in place to track and regularly report on performance				
6.3 Time is available to reflect on the evidence and come to an understanding of what we can learn from it				
6.4 We are open and able to adapt and respond to changing external opportunities and challenges				

7_ Communication and information sharing

Communication and information sharing are important for understanding context and the factors that impact on an organisation (particularly changes in these factors), as well as facilitating peer learning and networking with communities.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
7.1 Information and communication systems are timely and relevant				
7.2 The quality of the information we have available contributes to effective decision-making				
7.3 There are regular opportunities for clients and/or whānau to provide us with feedback about the quality and value of our services				
7.4 There are regular opportunities to share our skills and knowledge in interpreting and using data				
7.5 We effectively communicate our successes to internal and external audiences				

8_ Resources and infrastructure

Realistic resourcing and robust infrastructure are critical for developing sustainable evaluation capacity.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
8.1 We use evaluation to be accountable to our funders and community				
8.2 We have the tools and processes to collect the data required				
8.3 Our IT systems are fit-for-purpose and capable of producing good-quality reporting for decision-making				
8.4 Systematic monitoring and evaluation occurs at all levels				
8.5 Staff have sufficient time to collect the data required				

Section 3: People/Individuals

The individuals that make up an organisation have a substantial impact on the development of evaluation capacity.

9_ Readiness

All staff and leaders need to be ready to participate in developing evaluation capacity. Readiness relates to practices as well as attitudes.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
9.1 Leaders and staff reflect on evidence to understand how well we are doing				
9.2 Leaders and staff are clear about the data and systems required to undertake evaluation				
9.3 We can safely share reflections with others about good and not-so-good practice				
9.4 We are motivated to know the difference we are making in our work through applying evaluation practice				

10_ Skills and knowledge

The skills and knowledge of an individual can influence the process and outcome of developing evaluation capacity.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
10.1 People have the skills and knowledge they need to collect and record data				
10.2 People have the skills and knowledge they need to understand and use data				
10.3 There is help available to collect, analyse and make sense of data				
10.4 People are supported to put into practice what they learn from the data and evidence				

11_ Level of involvement

Ideally most, if not all, staff and leaders are regularly involved in evaluation and developing evaluation capacity.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
11.1 We regularly use data to talk about the quality and value of our work				
11.2 There are opportunities for a wide range of people to be involved in evaluation				
11.3 Multiple sources of evidence are used to make judgements about client and whānau outcomes and achievements.				
11.4 Direct feedback from clients and/or whānau are used to inform judgements about client or whānau outcomes and achievements				
11.5 We use ongoing cycles of reflection and action to improve our performance and keep up with change				

12_ Opportunity

For successful evaluations and development of evaluation capacity, time and resources need to be available for leaders and staff to actively participate in the process.

In our organisation...

	Emerging	Developing	Consolidating	Highly developed
12.1 People know about the kinds of support and resources that are available to support data collection and analysis				
12.2 We embrace opportunities for coaching and peer learning about evaluation				
12.3 Networks or peer learning about evaluation are a feature of the organisation's culture and practice				
12.4 There are opportunities for people to reflect on their practice and contribute to evaluation				

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