

# Copenhagen Framework for Sound Evaluation Systems\*

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The following principles have been presented and discussed as a spin-off from the Keynote Speech delivered at the EES Conference in Copenhagen June 8-10, 2022

1. An evaluation system should be piloted at a small scale before implementation at a large scale.
2. When different evaluands are evaluated in the same evaluation system, the design of the system should respect the different types of said evaluands. Situations where part of the system produces evaluations that are unnecessarily costly or not needed should be prevented. The principle of sound evaluability assessment should apply not only to the evaluation system as a whole, but also to the individual evaluands.
3. When an evaluation system officially aims to serve multiple purposes – such as accountability, learning, enlightenment and more – attention should be paid to whether the design features supporting these different purposes are de facto compatible, and whether practical circumstances allow these different purposes to be met.
4. When designing an evaluation system, its potential overlaps, interactions, or redundancies with other evaluation systems should be taken into account.
5. While the independence of evaluations might be an important principle, it should be balanced against the ability of the evaluation system to understand and respect how problems and solutions appear in the local situations in which the evaluands are embedded.
6. The evaluation systems should be designed in such a way that it receives feedback about its own consequences across time and place. Given that the operation of evaluation systems is philosophically, sociologically, and practically different from stand-alone evaluations, attention should be given to constitutive effects of the evaluation system.
7. The evaluation system should be designed so that it is able to respond in a flexible way to relevant external social changes.
8. Over time, positive use of the evaluation systems should not only be assumed, but also documented. If “systematic evaluation” becomes a goal in itself, this should raise a red flag.
9. The balance between benefits and costs of an evaluation system should be assessed before and periodically during the system’s implementation. The calculation of costs should not only include direct costs, but also indirect or hidden administrative costs or transaction costs in terms of time, money, and attention. Special attention should be given to hidden costs incurred on people for whom the evaluation system is mandatory.
10. The evaluation system should be evaluated regularly, and not only by evaluators. The functioning of the evaluation system should be subject to deliberation among a broad set of stakeholders, and democratic feedback mechanisms should be enabled.

\* An evaluation system is an integrated and intended configuration of elements in an organizational setting, which secures ongoing evaluation of many evaluands across time and space.

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