



# The revised evaluation criteria

EVALUATION ADVISORY PANEL OF IOE

Seminar Series [\[video\]](#)

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Evaluation



Transformation



Development



Justice

## The issue



The DAC Evaluation Criteria have come to serve as the core reference for evaluating international development and humanitarian projects, programmes and policies. They are widely used by Government ministries, development agencies and banks, and civil society organisations. The purpose of the criteria is linked to the purpose of evaluation; to enable the assessment of the merit, worth or significance of an intervention. In practice, the criteria often support evaluation managers and their interlocutors in defining and thinking creatively about the key evaluation questions. Each criterion provides a different lens or perspective and together they convey a more comprehensive picture of the intervention, the implementation process, and the results. The criteria were revised through a broad consultative process over a period of two years involving views and inputs from numerous organisations and thousands of individuals. Major findings of the review were strong support for adapting the five original criteria and for keeping a limited set, and the need for guidance on how to apply the criteria thoughtfully.



## The status quo

The agreement on the revised evaluation criteria was reached in November 2019 and published by the OECD. Several translations have since been made and the adapted criteria and principles are currently available in 10 languages.

Insights on the application of the criteria were gathered alongside the consultation process and guidance on how to apply the criteria thoughtfully was published in 2021. The new criteria have implications for the glossary of terms which is currently being updated.

## The horizon

Better use of each criterion will strengthen the quality of the evaluation process. A limited set of criteria makes the evaluation clearer and easier to understand for those involved and for the users of the evaluation. Insights from the application of the criteria, both on the new coherence criterion and the other redefined criteria, will inform future guidance.

In the work on a new evaluation manual, IEO could consider which of the revised criteria makes sense to include and consider reducing the number of criteria generally applied in evaluation. Additional criteria could be indicated in the manual for specific use, depending on the purpose and focus of a particular evaluation. It would be useful if evaluation managers and evaluators could document their experience in applying the various criteria to support collective learning.

### Literature

- Better Criteria for Better Evaluation, OECD, 2019
- Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully, OECD, 2021
- Better Criteria for Better Evaluation? Reforming the International Evaluation Criteria, DEval Policy Brief, 1/2021, German Institute for Development Evaluation
- Origin and background of the DAC Evaluation Criteria, Reference document by H. Lundgren, 2017