

American Evaluation Association
PROTOCOL for PARTNERSHIP

May 27, 2015

Introduction

Mindful of its mission, this protocol establishes an avenue through which the American Evaluation Association (AEA), by means of its Executive Director, in collaboration with the International Working Group (IWG) and International and Cross-Cultural Topical Interest Group (ICCE TIG) can respond to and propose opportunities for AEA's partnership with peer **Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs)** in the international arena and between various organizing bodies (AEA Affiliates, TIGs, AEA Working Groups) and officially recognized VOPEs.

Definition

For the purposes of this protocol, partnership is defined as a temporary, short-term arrangement between two organizations to facilitate closer engagement to further the development of the field of evaluation through international VOPEs, prioritizing those organizations in developing countries. They will be organized for specific purposes and objectives to be achieved within a specific time frame, which reflect the priorities and areas of work outlined in the partnership agreement document and the corresponding annexes.

AEA acknowledges that some VOPEs may be candidates for longer term relationships, which can be explored at the conclusion of an initial short-term partnership, and on a case-by-case basis.

Further, the AEA recognizes – and promotes – other types of relationships of collaboration, so this protocol specifically refers to those collaborative arrangements between AEA (a recognized VOPE), AEA Affiliates, Topical Interest Groups (TIGs), or AEA Working Groups, and non-US based VOPEs .

Objective

In line with AEA's values (see annex 3), the objective of any partnership established through this protocol will be to strengthen the field of evaluation by strengthening the professional organizations and practitioners of evaluation. AEA values a global and international evaluation community and understanding of evaluation practices and hopes to gain much knowledge and perspective through these partnerships as well. Therefore, the partnership (and the associated support) will be directed to the VOPEs.

In concrete terms, this translates into a direct link between the protocol, and the strategy and corresponding priorities established by the International Working Group (IWG) and approved by the AEA Board of Directors. This initiative to promote international partnerships also calls for collaboration with AEA TIGs, especially the ICCE TIG, and AEA Local Affiliates, as mechanisms to communicate the opportunities for partnership, with potential direct engagement of AEA TIG and/or Local Affiliate leadership and/or members in the partnership or to play other supportive roles.

More specifically, this initiative expresses itself through a prioritization to strengthen organizations (over individuals) and to the sustainability of the results of any endeavor (over momentary or individual gain).

The Proposals

AEA will consider and promote proposals related to strengthening the following areas of VOPE functioning:

- Infrastructure and organizational design
- Governance and functioning
- Reach and Visibility
- Legitimacy
- Promoting membership
- Capacity to influence key actors regarding evaluation
- Effectiveness in strengthening capacities of evaluators and commissioners of evaluation, and
- Effectiveness in addressing the enabling environment for evaluation.

Criteria to consider

AEA will only receive proposals from those VOPEs that fulfill a country's legal requirements or have a formal partnership with a local academic institution or recognized NGO that acknowledges the organization's status as a voluntary organization to promote the evaluation profession.

The criteria for supporting a proposed partnership include the following:

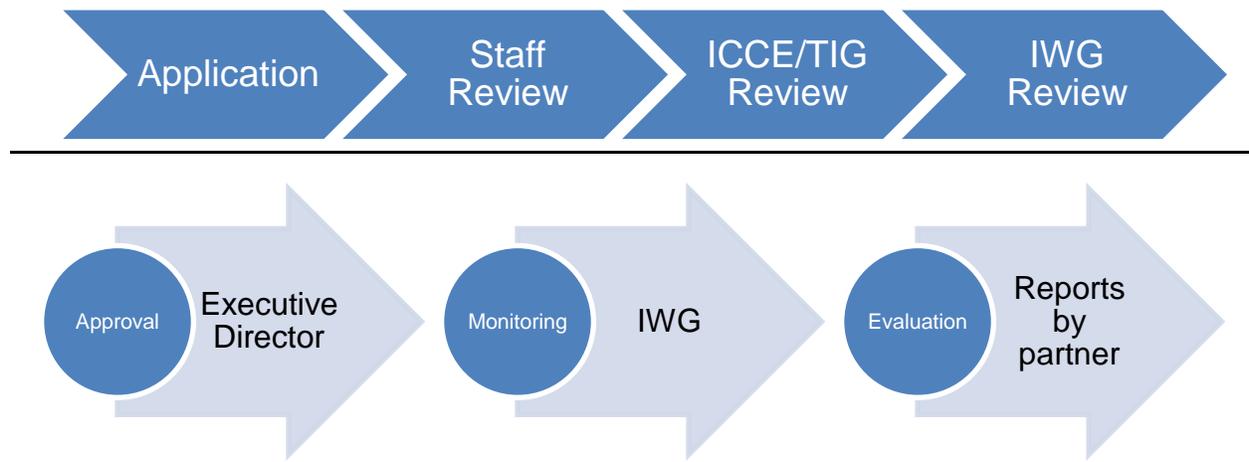
- The proposal reflects the values of the AEA
- The proposal has the backing of the VOPE leadership
- The proposal is informed by close collaboration with IOCE and EvalPartners, to avoid duplication and make the best use of limited AEA funds
- The proposal has a clearly articulated purpose linked to the areas cited above, with concrete and direct benefits to the VOPE
- The proposal articulates the added value and distinctive contribution that AEA will bring to the partnership and the VOPE has clarity about its own contribution to the partnership
- The proposal has a clear plan to implement and/or disseminate the results of the partnership
- The VOPE soliciting the partnership makes an organizational commitment (financial or in kind) to ameliorate the costs of the partnership
- The proposal covers a time frame that will not be longer than one year
- The proposal may include a financial component, or a request for consulting type services only or both. Suggested uses for financial support may include travel for consultative purposes, conference attendance, etc. The financial component will be paid directly by AEA for the expenses and may not be given nor deposited directly to the applicant organization.

Steps in the Process to Present a Proposal

- a. Interested VOPEs may prepare a proposal as part of the EvalPartners Peer-to-Peer (P2P) annual proposal process using the EvalPartners proposal annual process. In addition, AEA will entertain direct proposals from VOPEs three times a year (July 31, October 31 and January 31), using the format attached in annex.
- b. Only one proposal per VOPE may be presented to AEA each year.
- c. The IWG will first consider each proposal in the light of potential bilateral partnerships with local affiliates of AEA; if appropriate, AEA Executive Director (ED) will forward the proposal to the appropriate affiliate for consideration.

- d. The selected proposals will then be reviewed by the International Working Group; upon agreement, they will be submitted with recommendations to the AEA Executive Director for final approval.
- e. Announcements of approvals will be made within two months of the submission dates.
- f. The AEA ED will submit to the AEA Board for their information a summary of the approved partnerships and their links to the Strategy of the AEA International Working Group.
- g. All submitting organizations will receive an explanation behind the decision to support (or not) their proposal. Accepted proposals will be posted on www.eval.org.
- h. Once a proposal is accepted, the AEA ED will prepare the necessary agreement papers for appropriate signatures and the exchange of corresponding work plans as well as any additional necessary information (as the proposal might require). If processed through the EvalPartners P2P program, these agreements will be done in coordination with IOCE/EvalPartners. The MoU/letter of agreement/contract between IOCE and the partnering VOPEs would include language specifying the role AEA will play in that particular partnership project.
- i. All submitting organizations are invited to include the names of specific individuals, members of AEA, who are interested and willing to engage in the partnership initiative.
- j. If the submitting organization has not named a specific individual to represent the AEA in its partnership activities, the AEA ED and/or AEA International Working Group will suggest and contact appropriate individuals to assume this responsibility.
- k. In either case, the specific individual that will take on AEA responsibilities in the partnership must agree to the following:
 - The individual must either meet (virtually or in person) or correspond with the AEA's Executive Director to identify and discuss specific representational responsibilities that are consistent with the particular partnership initiative.
 - The individual must represent AEA's values during the implementation of the partnership initiative.
 - The individual must NOT make any financial commitments to the other VOPE in the agreement.
 - The individual must NOT commit AEA to any activity outside the strict scope of the partnership.
 - The individual must communicate any information regarding the other VOPE or the partnership initiative that could adversely affect AEA's reputation or represent a risk to AEA in any other way.
 - The individual will be expected to facilitate communications between the partnering VOPE(s) and the AEA leadership and membership, including help with the final evaluation and reporting of the partnership experience.
- l. The AEA International Working Group will monitor the implementation of awarded projects.
- m. Once the partnership arrangement has formally ended, and within one month of the end date of the agreement, the AEA ED will organize with the partner VOPE a light review in an effort to improve this new process. The review will be posted on www.eval.org.

The diagram below offers a visual representation of the **partnership application proposal process**



Annex 1 Partnership Proposal Template

Annex 2 Agreement Acceptance of Partnership between American Evaluation Association and (name VOPE) [annex 2 will need to be reviewed by legal advisor for AEA]

Annex 3: AEA's Values Statement

The American Evaluation Association values excellence in evaluation practice, utilization of evaluation findings, and inclusion and diversity in the evaluation community.

- i. We value high quality, ethically defensible, culturally responsive evaluation practices that lead to effective and humane organizations and ultimately to the enhancement of the public good.
- ii. We value high quality, ethically defensible, culturally responsive evaluation practices that contribute to decision-making processes, program improvement, and policy formulation.
- iii. We value a global and international evaluation community and understanding of evaluation practices.
- iv. We value the continual development of evaluation professionals and the development of evaluators from under-represented groups.
- v. We value inclusiveness and diversity, welcoming members at any point in their career, from any context, and representing a range of thought and approaches.
- vi. We value efficient, effective, responsive, transparent, and socially responsible association operations.