IPDET’S EVALUATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (ECD) STRATEGY

February 2021 - Reinhard Stockmann, Stefanie Krapp, Wolfgang Meyer
WHO ARE WE?

Since 2001, the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) has offered the annual International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) program, initially in partnership with Carlton University in Ottawa, Canada and since 2018 together with the University of Bern and the Center for Evaluation (CEval) of Saarland University. Since its beginning, more than 4,000 professionals from 125 countries have participated in the IPDET program. They see themselves not only as participants in a training program, but also as part of a multi-disciplinary network committed to the vision that better evaluations contribute to the creation of a better world. IPDET unites its alumni from a wide range of countries and diverse professional backgrounds into a powerful network. The unique experiences that each individual contributes and the joint willingness to learn and grow generates our vibrant IPDET community.

IPDET is a proud partner of the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI).

OUR MISSION

IPDET aims to build a global, inclusive, and multi-disciplinary community committed to evaluative evidence improving development outcomes. IPDET creates space for people engaged in evaluation to come together to learn, exchange knowledge, and collaborate.

OUR VISION

Better evaluations for a better world.

FOR WHOM? FOR WHICH USE?

IPDET targets individuals from NGOs, ministries and public administration institutions, bi- and multi-lateral development partners, think tanks, universities, private firms, as well as parliamentarians, who are eager to drive the development of projects, programs and policies on local, national and international levels. Decision makers, managers and practitioners get the tools that are required to commission, manage and evaluate policies, programs, and projects at the local, national, regional and global levels as well as use those evaluations for decision-making. IPDET sets a great focus on practice and provides a diversified approach for audiences from different organizations and sectors who play different roles in the evaluation process.
IPDET is implemented through different formats. The onsite program in Bern – the heart of IPDET – consists of a one-week core course covering the fundamentals of evaluation, followed by two weeks of workshops on advanced and specialized topics and the latest developments in the field, taught by an experienced group of renowned international faculty drawn from organizations around the world. Individuals from all over the world meet in Bern for a unique experience of learning and networking. A variety of online events complement each year’s program.

However, evaluation capacity development can only be successful if social, political and administrative elements are covered, as outlined in IPDET’s systemic ECD approach.

Because IPDET is targeting institutional and systemic change, which goes beyond developing individual capacity, the program is expanded to include global outreach activities, which are reflected in the IPDET ECD pyramid.
If evaluation is to be used as a management tool for decision-making in international or national organizations, appropriate structures and processes need to be implemented. This cannot happen if managers are unaware of or unconvinced of the benefits of evaluation. ECD can meet this need as an awareness-building tool. For this reason, the focus of these ECD activities is on demonstrating the benefit of evaluations.

The aim is not to limit evaluation to its management function, but to also highlight other functions such as transparency and the creation of public legitimacy.

Our next target group is upper and middle management. This group also does not implement evaluations but is responsible for setting up monitoring and evaluation systems and managing evaluation processes. Consequently, they must not only be well-informed about the potential and usefulness of evaluation but also know the necessary implementation steps.

Finally, there must be people in an organization who can conduct or assign evaluations themselves. In other words, they must be able to develop realistic evaluation questions and to plan and manage evaluations. The IPDET course format is also aimed at external evaluators who are engaged by an organization to conduct an evaluation. This basic knowledge, which is currently being taught in our core course, needs to be augmented by thematic, advanced courses on special topics such as gender sensitive evaluation, rigorous impact evaluation, evaluation designs, quantitative and qualitative methods, implementing M&E systems, regulatory impact assessment, etc.
There are also target groups that do not fit neatly into the standard formats presented so far.

If a systematic approach is adopted, as is it done here, civil society organizations and networks can also play an important role in evaluation. To meet their needs, specific training formats must be developed to enable civil society organizations to conduct evaluations themselves and to strengthen their role in government evaluations.

Another important target group for ECD measures are young and emerging evaluators. These individuals are often theoretically and methodologically well-trained – some even have a master’s degree – but they often lack hands-on evaluation practice. The goal is to enable them to produce high quality and useful evaluations and enable them to successfully assert themselves on the evaluation market against established evaluators.

Evaluation lecturers and trainers (and their ongoing professional development) is a third important special target group for IPDET. They are important multipliers. The aim is to enable trainers to conduct high quality ECD trainings that include theoretical, methodological and practical components that are useful for participants.

The IPDET ECD pyramid does not include academic training leading to a diploma or master’s degree. However, IPDET can help to develop academic courses and curricula to further train lecturers.
PRINCIPLES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPING THE IPDET PROGRAM

1. IPDET further develops the 3-week onsite program in Bern as a champion of training in evaluation to a) enable a worldwide unique experience of learning, exchange and networking on a sustained basis, and b) provide a “base camp” for IPDET’s global outreach activities to better meet regional demand.

2. The main objective of IPDET is to bring together people from all parts of the world to learn from each other and discuss new methodological approaches as relevant in various regions. To specifically meet the demands of our target groups around the world, partners, lecturers, methods, approaches, and case studies from all over the world must be used so that a variety of regional contexts and experiences can be taken into account and synergies can be achieved.

3. IPDET envisages a long-term digital strategy as part of its global outreach, including trainings with tailored digital tools, didactics and methods. Establishing an e-learning platform for achieving global, multidirectional and decentralized knowledge transfer allows for the proliferation of evaluation expertise beyond spatial and temporal limitations and contributes to international community building in the field of evaluation, both for the IPDET alumni network and beyond.

To implement those principles is an ambitious yet worthwhile undertaking:

- ✓ It will build on the 3-week onsite program in Bern, link it with online elements, and further develop innovative online formats.
- ✓ It will further develop the IPDET vision of a better world through better evaluation.
- ✓ It will expand the supply structure in line with demand from around the world.

This requires strong partners from countries in all stages of development, strong support from the IPDET partners within the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI), and a strong commitment from all IPDET stakeholders. Going forward, IPDET proves to be a valuable partner within GEI to share its knowledge and experience, provide a platform for global evaluation community building, and to serve as a dedicated promoter of ECD. At the same time IPDET benefits, learns, and grows from other partners.

Reinhard Stockmann, Stefanie Krapp, Wolfgang Meyer
February, 2021