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EvalPartners International Forum on Civil Society's Evaluation Capacities

**F3E : a national network dedicated to the culture of
evaluation, impact and quality of the actions of a
community of development actors.**

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1. Brief presentation of F3E


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- **F3E is a French not-for-profit network dedicated to the evaluation, impact and quality of the development activities implemented by its members. It is currently made up of approximately 100 members, namely NGOs, local governments and hospital centres, all conducting international solidarity, decentralised cooperation or inter-hospital activities.**
- **It was created in 1994 following a concerted initiative with the State (Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs) around the shared goal of spreading the culture of evaluation as a step in the on-going improvement of action (whence the founding credo of F3E, “evaluating in order to evolve”).**

- **The overall objective of F3E since its creation has been to help its members to become more professional, by giving them recourse to study procedures and external expertise, in response to their particular needs as development actors.**
- **F3E is a system of pooling means (human, financial, methodological, expertise, experience, etc.), a resource centre dedicated to evaluation, impact and quality of development actions.**

- **Promoting culture of evaluation in NSA organisations as sponsors and users of evaluation is at the heart of F3E's identity and its project. For F3E :**
 - **what can be learned from evaluation is more important than accountability ;**
 - **each evaluation has its specificities and must be “tailor-made” in its conception and implementation, by and for the actors who participate in it and use its results ;**
 - **the two main factors that make up the utility of an evaluation are, on the one hand, its appropriation by the actors who sponsored it and, on the other hand, the external opinion that it brings.**

2. Strategy to enhance individual capacities to conduct credible and useful evaluations

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- **F3E is working today around two operational axes broken down by type of activity; its activities taken as a whole make F3E a sort of resource centre:**
- **Strengthening individual learning capacities, achieved through activities involving mentoring, study co-funding, advising support, training in methodology and making tools and methods available.**
- **Coordinating the network with an eye towards mutual learning: through activities involving approval and dissemination of studies, working groups, sharing practices, production of tools and knowledge.**

- **The key role of F3E is that of "Demanding Third-Party Mediator and Mentor"**
- **Demanding Third Party = guarantee of quality, usefulness, credibility and objectivity in the process of external evaluation**
- **Mediator = organisation of dialogue and cooperation among the stakeholders of an evaluation**
- **Mentor = strengthening the capacities of the sponsors/users, even those of consultants/evaluators**
- **Its role as a demanding third party contributes to professionalising the evaluators, and its methodological productions are useful to both the evaluators and those who sponsor the evaluations.**

- **Concretely, F3E guides the phases of evaluation conception (creation of the terms of reference), the choice of external evaluators (invitations to tender and selection), interfacing with the external evaluators (framework, approval of intermediate and final reports) and possibly the evaluation steering committees that it may be called upon to run.**
- **F3E can also assist in the application of evaluation results and in decision-making based on the evaluators' recommendations.**

3. Three factors of success

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- **The main strength of F3E is that it is anchored to concrete mentoring of analysis and improving actions on the one hand, and its collective and multi-actor aspect on the other hand, which enables F3E to structure the strengthening of individual capacities and collective learning.**
- **It is thus a very operational system, specialised and focused on a type of actor, able to structure individual and collective approaches, practical experiences and knowledge production, mentoring and training, etc.**

Another factor in F3E's success lies in the expansion of its base with a simultaneous strengthening of F3E's networking aspect.

Although this expansion has brought about diversification in its ranks, F3E is made up of actors who operate in the same field, that of development ; this uniqueness of action is an important element in collective identity and thus the building of similar interests and a common culture around evaluation practices.

- **The last key factor (and not the least) is an effective and constructive partnership with public authorities since F3E's creation, even though the institutional context is shifting and has evolved significantly since the 1990s.**

- **Indeed, F3E is supported by the French Government without being strongly pressured in its strategic and institutional choices; this is the result of a culture of dialogue and cooperation that allows for a better reconciliation of the issues of accountability and learning.**

4. Key sessions learned and advice to share

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- **The main lesson learned is that the promotion of evaluation must be done as concretely as possible, based on what it produces and its real usefulness: this is what is at issue in promoting the process and results of evaluations.**
- **This promotion must be done first on an individual scale, that is, at the level of the organisation sponsoring the evaluation, but also in a more collective and cross-cutting way, that is, by sharing among actors the points learned from evaluations having to do with shared subjects.**

- **This central issue of promoting evaluation assumes that the actors agree to share and open the results of their evaluations to debate.**
- **The principle of collective benefits that forms the foundations of F3E has, since its creation, allowed it to give free access to evaluation reports to all of its members.**
- **Since the mid-2000s, F3E members have agreed to share their evaluation reports on-line at the F3E site being made available to non-members.**

- **An innovative aspect of F3E lies in the fact that it incorporates some complementary functions of a resource centre such as mentoring, co-funding, promotion, training, the production and dissemination of knowledge, and advocacy.**
- **This complementarity enables F3E to develop its activities in a virtuous process of managing a knowledge cycle : analysis, appropriation, application.**

- **Another innovative aspect is that F3E reconciles individual and collective learning by linking its members in a network, which creates confidence, inter-knowledge and reciprocal interests.**

- **This networking particularly facilitates the anchoring of F3E's actions around the concrete activities and needs of its actors; this very operational dimension of F3E's activity is a powerful leverage for disseminating the culture of evaluation to the extent that it promotes the demand for evaluation and uses the expertise of the NSAs themselves to formulate that demand and identify the type of external expertise to call upon in response.**

5. Next steps

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- **F3E will pursue the work already started on quality approaches in order to situate evaluation more forcefully in a perspective of organisational strengthening.**

- **The direction chosen is to design a process of global quality management that offers a framework of organisational learning and continued improvement in which the culture of evaluation as promoted by F3E can find its meaning.**

- **In its efforts to strengthen itself institutionally, F3E is currently drawing up its own charter, which will enable F3E to reinforce its institutional visibility, collective identity and advocacy in favour of a culture of evaluation, quality and impact.**

- **F3E particularly intends to strengthen its advocacy for an evaluation approach that takes into account the complexity of the reality to which it is applied as well as the issues specific to the interaction of multiple development actors.**



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[Thank you for your attention](#)

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