Key Horizontal Principles

Cultivate a Culture in Evaluation

Strengthening VOPEs' capacities in Europe: A practical approach for streamlining the evaluation of Key Horizontal Principles (KHP)
Landscape Report

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Evaluation as an agile tool for an appropriate response in uncertain times

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1 Background Information of the landscape

1.1 Background on international action

Horizontal policy in the sustainable development context refers to balancing economic, social and environmental needs when implementing development policies at national and global level. In the evaluation context, horizontal (cross-cutting) issues have become increasingly important following global efforts towards achieving human development goals incorporated into the fundamental idea behind the Millennium Development Goals – MDGs, and the Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs. MDGs were adopted in 2000 in line with OECD DAC International Development Goals, following the UN Mille**n**nium Declaration and the UN Mille**n**nium Summit held in New York. MDGs consisted of 8 main goals measured by 21 targets. Each of the targets defined within the MDGs agenda included a set of measurable indicators of success to be achieved within a 15 years' time horizon (2000-2015). In response to a noted gap in evaluation guidance in general and the UN system-wide mandates to integrate human rights and gender equality in all areas of work, including evaluation, UNEG Human Rights and Gender Equality developed a Handbook on how to integrate human rights and gender equality dimensions in evaluation (UNEG, 2012). Despite notable progress in achieving goals set by MDGs, which among other include halving the extreme poverty, the achieved results were largely disproportional requiring more balanced and inclusive approach. One of the main critiques with regard to MDGs implementation refers to the lack of concrete evidence on achievements and policy inputs that could be used to tackle future global challenges. MDGs were therefore replaced by 17 SDGs adopted in 2015 under the Paris Agreement signed by 193 nations. The 17 SDGs are as follows:

(1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reduced Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the Goals.

Each goal has from 8 to 12 specific targets, out of which each target has between 1 and 4 indicators. Some of the targets have no specified end date (UN, 2020).

Since the adoption of the SDGs, evaluation practitioners and representatives of global evaluation organisations (ie. IOCE, EvalPartners, WB IEG, etc.) have started investing more efforts in designing effective system of monitoring and evaluation of the SDG implementation. Aiming to provide adequate policy response to arising needs related to effective SDG implementation, EvalPartners established an EVALSDGs platform. The main purpose of the platform includes promotion of the evaluation activities

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around SDGs and support the review and follow-up process on the SDG Agenda 2030 through evaluations. EVALSDGs platform is structured within several working groups, each of them focusing on different aspects of evaluation as determinants of successful SDGs implementation.

Cross-cutting policy challenges are often complex and require intensive collaboration among different stakeholders. Climate change, for instance, has been described as a "diabolical policy problem" because its solution requires high levels of cooperation among governments and the implementation of policy measures across many economic sectors (Garnaut 2008). Therefore, isolated policies aimed at solving one issue, may create even greater problems in other policy areas. Each cross-cutting issue therefore needs to be approached in a holistic manner and analysed through its interdependency with other factors. In some policy contexts, small-scale targeted interventions that can create innovation will be more effective than expansive policies (UN, 2016). That is one of the particularly important entry points of the evaluation studies which provide information about the factors behind successful policy interventions. Taking into account cross-cutting issues, the role of evaluators is to extract, sometimes hidden, interconnectivity between targeted policy interventions and achieved outcomes which may also have impact on the achievement of the SDGs.

There have been several important global documents that used to analyse the role of evaluators through the lenses of cross-cutting development issues. Bamberger et al. (2015) analysed challenges of developing national evaluation policy systems (NEPS) that are sensitive to the gender equality and social equity issues. They primarily focused on gender equality arguing that few NEPSs address issues of gender equality and social equity, despite the fact that some countries have a strong commitment to gender equality or have a national gender policy. Therefore, authors argued that for many countries gender equality is not recognized as policy priority or universally relevant development issue. In order to achieve full integration of the gender equality into the national evaluation policy systems, it should be developed gender-responsive national evaluation system including the elements that would support its effective implementation. Aiming to respond to the observed challenges in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues, OECD integrated lessons learned and previously documented findings in the field of gender equality and environmental sustainability to support more effective organisation's design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes (OECD, 2014). Cross-cutting issues are deeply integrated into the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) methodology framework. Within the Stage 1[1] – Inception, MOPAN assesses the institutional position against cross-cutting issues. Agenda 2030 and horizontal issues are also integrated within the MOPAN's theory of change and indicator framework. More specifically, Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 2 envisages that defined structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda principles (MOPAN, 2020). Finally, it should be noted that raising concerns over the OECD DAC criteria, that did not adequately encompass the 2030 Agenda objectives, has been stated as one of the main reasons behind their adaptation and introduction of the Coherence as the new criteria which refers to the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution (OECD, 2019).

There have been also developed documents targeting evaluations of the specific horizontal issues – eg. gender, human rights, governance. For example, UN Woman (2015) developed Handbook on managing gender-responsive evaluations, whereas the EU Commission defined rules on integrating and synchronizing human rights principles into development activities within the Toolbox - A Rights-Based Approach, encompassing all human rights for EU development cooperation (EU Commission, 2014).

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[1] A MOPAN assessment process involves 4 stages - inception, evidence collection, analysis, and reporting.

1.2   Background on policies/action at the EU level

Horizontal issues are embedded in the EU evaluation framework becoming increasingly important in the period 2021-2027. A Sustainable Europe 2030 strategy, that inherited Strategy EU2020, outlines the EU's long-term strategy on how to achieve a sustainable future for all. The Strategy aims at addressing the interlinkages of the SDGs – and their environmental, social, economic and governance dimensions – in a holistic and coherent policy approach at all levels. A Multi-Stakeholder Platform has been set up to ensure that the strategy is inclusive, participatory, accountable and transparent (EU Commission, 2018).

In order to contribute to the achievement of the horizontal principles European Parliament and Council Regulation (EU) Nr.1303 / 2013 the following objectives have been set (EU Parliament and the Council of the EU, 2013):

- rational use of natural resources, environmental quality and the conservation of biodiversity,
- climate change mitigation and resource efficiency through the development of low-tech carbon economy
- environment and climate change risk prevention, prevention and management, including creation of green thinking.

The rationale for assessing horizontal principles stems from the fundamental documents and founding values of the EU such as Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Other important EU documents and guidelines covering evaluation rationales and methodologies envisage mandatory involvement of horizontal issues into evaluation practice as well. The EU Guidance document on ex-ante evaluation provides basis for the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation of the European Cohesion Policy. Article 55(3) (l-m) CPR requires the ex-ante evaluator to assess "the adequacy of planned measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women, to prevent discrimination and to promote sustainable development" (EU Commission, 2014a).

Gender and human rights as cross-cutting dimensions have been involved into the evaluation practice through the several EU documents with an aim to feed into management and decision-making processes. In 2007, the European Commission adopted the document "Communication on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) in Development Cooperation". This document has been later followed by Action Plans on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in external actions (GAP I and GAP II), (EU Commission, 2018a). With regards to the human rights, in 2012 has been introduced the "EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy", followed by "A rights-based approach, encompassing all human rights for EU Development Cooperation" adopted in 2014 (EU Commission, 2014).

EU commitment towards horizontal principles could be also noticed within the Document on Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation of the EU Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, and the Justice Transition Fund in 2021-2027. In terms of main evaluation criteria, cross-cutting issues are in general considered within the rationale of coherence criteria which envisages how different interventions work together. Cross-cutting issues are covered under specific indicators set out across 5 policy objectives (EU Commission, 2021).

The EU guidelines on applying horizontal principles have been to a certain extent translated into the evaluation practice of the EU member states. The document entitled "Evaluation of Human Rights and

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Equality, Democracy, Good Governance and Rule of Law in the Finnish Development Cooperation" aimed to provide the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) with information on how and to what extent the cross-cutting themes have been integrated into Finland's official development. The main focus was on the human rights, gender and democracy including good governance and the rule of law (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2008).

German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs established The Agency for Horizontal principles within the European Social Fund (ESF). In 2018, the Agency adopted Recommendations for the Implementation and Consolidation of the Horizontal Principles Gender Equality, Non-discrimination, and Environmental Sustainability in the European Social Fund+ in the Programming Period 2021–2027 (Agency for Horizontal Principles within the ESF, 2018). The recommendations outlined the specific actions that needs to be pursued in order to strengthen horizontal policy implementation:

- Invest into building and development of capacities of ESF stakeholders
- Specify relevance and specificity of ecological sustainability
- Set-up and implement transparent monitoring of equality and diversity
- Support structures through ensuring expertise
- Strengthen rules of democracy and sustainability throughout planning and consultation procedures

In Latvia, Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development and Ministry of Welfare are responsible for the two horizontal principles defined within the Operational Programme "Growth and Employment" – sustainable development and equal opportunities respectively (Ministry of Finance, Republic of Latvia, 2014). Within a document "Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations", Austrian Development Cooperation (2009) included assessment of cross-cutting issues – poverty, gender and environment, also providing specific examples – Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), gender equality promotion, environment promotion, etc. (Austrian Development Agency, 2009).

Finally, involvement of horizontal issues into evaluation matters has also been supported through the work of some Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs). It should be underlined initiative performed by the seven European evaluation societies (Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine) aiming to assess the current capacities for conducting evaluation of democracy, human rights and governance (DRG) in Europe (IOCE, 2018). As a result, at the 2018 conference of European Evaluation Society (EES), representatives from EES, the Network of Evaluation Societies of Europe (NESE), and the IOCE formulated the Thessaloniki Statement which stipulates VOPEs commitment from to promote DRG evaluation across Europe (Baastel, 2021). A blueprint has been provided by the Institute for Evaluations and Social Analyses (INESAN) from the Czech Republic that developed Methodology or the Evaluation of Cross-cutting Themes in Development Cooperation, as a practical tool for evaluators. It aimed at providing standards for evaluating cross-cutting issues and ensuring comparability across different projects. Methodology encompasses 4 cross-cutting issues – good governance, environment and sustainable development, human rights, and gender equality. INESAN also developed a cross-cutting theme indicator matrix including specific dimensions, subdimensions, as well as output and outcome indicators (INESAN, 2018).

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1.3   Objectives of the Report

This report has been prepared within the project "Strengthening VOPEs' capacities in Europe: A practical approach for streamlining the evaluation of Key Horizontal Principles (KHP)". The report aims to provide assessment of the VOPEs' position towards KHP taking into account strategic documents (e.g., statute, mission statement, standards, guidelines) and informal practices, and policy environment for conducting evaluations that are sensitive to cross-cutting development issues. The following VOPEs were involved in realization of the project activities including development of the research methodology and instruments:

- •   DeGEval – Evaluation Society (Gesellschaft für Evaluation e.V.)
- •   Hellenic Evaluation Society (HES)
- •   Iberian Association of Professional Evaluators (APROEVAL)
- •   Informal Network of Evaluators Serbia (INES)
- •   Macedonian Evaluation Network (MEN)
- •   Polish Evaluation Society (PES)

The purpose of the report is to provide overall understanding of the VOPEs' capacities to support involvement of horizontal evaluation principles as well as to create basis for strengthening their capacities in promoting KHP in local evaluation communities. Additionally, research presented within the report represented the basis for drafting the Common Reference Framework (CRF) for VOPEs' that should support them in advocating on key principles of equity, gender equality and social justice and on the shared principles of partnership, good governance, innovation, inclusivity, democracy, human rights and sustainable development (KHP).

1.4   Landscape-Mapping of EU selected countries-Methodology

1.4.1   *Methodological framework*

Methodological framework for conducting KHP assessment included two components – desk and field research. Desk research includes analysis of the EU regulative, global strategic framework, assessments, feasibility studies, research papers and case studies with an aim to obtain a clear picture on the current situation and the state of the art related to KHP sensitive evaluations. Obtained knowledge, also described within section 2.1, helped us to develop a questionnaire aimed at providing insights into VOPEs' activities and efforts related to KHP.

Field research has been conducted remotely through an e-mail questionnaire sent out to all European VOPEs members of NESE. In overall, 14 out of 22 VOPEs responded, which accounts for 63,64% response rate. Questionnaire was conducted to assess the efforts undertaken by VOPEs to promote KHP sensitive evaluations. It also aimed at gathering the necessary information from VOPEs in order to explore how they consider KHPs in their strategic documents (e.g., statute, mission statement, standards, guidelines).

The VOPEs from the following countries answered the e-mail questionnaire:

- •   Austria (AT)
- •   Bulgaria (BG)
- •   Czech Republic (CZ)

- France (FR)
- Germany (DE)
- Greece (GR)
- Italy (IT)
- Latvia (LV)
- Luxembourg (LU)
- North Macedonia (MK)
- Norway (NO)
- Poland (PL)
- Serbia (RS)
- Spain (SP)
- Switzerland (CH)
- Ukraine (UA)

Envisaged research approach could be explained with the simplified theory of change as follows in the Table 1:

Table 1. Project Theory of Change

PROBLEM	KEY AUDIENCE	ENTRY POINTS	STEPS NEEDED TO BRING THE CHANGE	MEASURABLE EFFECT OF WORK	WIDER BENEFITS OF WORK	LONG TERM CHANGE
Diversity of approaches and of strategic documents or even gaps for VOPEs in Europe and NESE in the streamlining of KHP Limited impact of common evaluation practices regarding KHP.	Sectoral, national and regional VOPEs in Europe, especially their Boards Other stakeholders such as VOPEs from other regions and levels of evaluation community building	NESE Advisory Board Board members of VOPEs in Europe Secretaries of VOPEs Active members of VOPEs who are representatives to NESE	Landscape of VOPEs as is situation SWOT and GAP Analyses Drafting of the CRF as reference document E-consultation for co-design Finalisation of the CRF Dissemination Event Translations	CRF (draft and consolidated versions) Translated versions of CRF **MEASURABLE EFFECT OF WORK** Qualitative field research (interviews/meetings) SWOT and GAP Analyses **MEASURABLE EFFECT OF WORK** Expert panel conclusions E-consultation Dissemination Event **MEASURABLE EFFECT OF WORK** Strategic documents reviewed by VOPEs under the scope of the CRF practical guidelines	Strengthening individual level of VOPEs in Europe. Appropriate interlinkages are improved. Common ground is set for VOPEs to exchange practical approaches to advocate for the adoption of KHP in the design and implementation of evaluations	Strengthening VOPEs capacities towards having a 'tool' comprising the KHP; Supporting VOPEs' professionalization processes through the provision of a guidance document (CRF). Enhancing the Institutional Capacity of VOPEs
Key assumptions *Diversity of approaches and of strategic documents or even gaps for VOPEs in Europe and NESE in the streamlining of KHP*	*Key assumptions* *On the back of the recent NESE Meetings it seems there is a big interest in developing a practical tool to guide VOPEs for the integration of KHP in their strategic documents.*	*Key assumptions* *Due to the wide range of the partners in the project, and the involvement of NESE AB, it gives potential to reach out as many as possible VOPEs in Europe.*	*Key assumptions* *What is needed right now is to stock disparities and gaps, and proceed to the co-design of a common approach for integrating the KHP in evaluation practices.*	*Key assumptions* *The involvement of NESE members can be only truly fruitful to them if it's sufficiently prepared and consulted to meet VOPEs needs. This will be also done by the participation of VOPEs in the stocking exercise and the e-consultation. Translations will support the further adoption from VOPEs outside the project.*	*Key assumptions* *VOPEs aligned strategic documents based on the CRF*	*Stakeholders* *Professional evaluators both in VOPEs and those who are not yet members.* *Societies of European Countries.*

Source: Autho

1.4.2 The profile of the qualitative field research

The questionnaire consisted of 8 sections. In the first section, VOPE representatives were asked about their overall perception of the KHP evaluation practice in their respective countries. They provided self-assessment on whether KHPs were systematically evaluated in all/several/some sectors, are they usually included as cross-cutting issues in the evaluation tenders, are there any guidelines resulting from the EU documents for their evaluation, etc. The second section provided self-assessment of the activities that specific VOPE perform to promote the evaluation of KHPs in practice including advocacy, collaborations, declarations, documents developed, etc. In the third and fourth section, VOPE representatives were inquired to provide and elaborate in more details specific areas through which they contributed to greater use of KHPs in evaluation matters. Within the fifth section, VOPEs provided specific documents developed to tackle KHP in the local evaluation practice. In the sixth section, VOPEs were asked to suggest elements to be included in development of the common reference framework (eg. support to readiness, to knowledge intensity, etc.) based on their experience. Finally, sections seven and eight provided national regulative and other important documents that could be useful for understanding the existing policy environment and for developing common standards.

The following ten horizontal principles were analysed:
- equity
- gender equality
- social justice
- partnership
- good governance
- innovation
- inclusivity
- democracy
- human rights
- sustainable development

They were mostly defined as per available generally accepted definitions provided by the UN, WB and the European Commission. More details provided in the Table 2. below:

Table 2. Definition of the analysed KHP

Key Horizontal Principle	Definition	Source
Equity	Equity is related to the existence of disparities between population groups. Some of these disparities may be unavoidable (e.g., driven by biology). The disparities between population groups that are avoidable and unfair are termed inequities. Equity is therefore based on notions of fairness and social justice. Equity is distinguished from equality. The aim of equity-focused policies is not to eliminate all differences so that everyone has the same level of income, health, and education. Rather, the goal is to eliminate the unfair and avoidable circumstances that deprive people of their rights.	UNICEF
Gender Equality	Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for women and men … In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities	UN Women Gender Equality Glossary
Social Justice	Social justice refers to the equitable sharing of social power and benefits within a society	Osborn, 2006
Partnership	Partnership refers to the collaborative relationship and/ or a strategic alliance between different actors to work towards mutually agreed objectives with a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities based on the comparative advantage of each entity	UN
Governance	Governance refers to the process of decision making and the implementation (or not) of those decisions. It can take place in different settings/levels. An analysis of governance requires then to review the diverse actors and structures involved in decision making and processes. Good governance should be participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law (UN ESCAP) Kaufman and Kray from the World Bank Institute defines Governance as the traditions and institutions by which authority is exercised. This is composed by: 1) The process by which those in authority are selected and replaced: of which indicators are voice and accountability and political stability and violence 2) The capacity of governments to formulate and implement policies: which indicators are government effectiveness and regulatory burden.	UN, WB

Key Horizontal Principle	Definition	Source
	3) The respect of citizens and state of those that govern interactions among them: rule of law and corruption	
Innovation	Innovation refers to the use of new ideas, products, services or methods where they have not been used before Social innovation refers to new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations	EUROSTAT Glossary EC
Inclusivity	Inclusivity refers to the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights	UN
Democracy	Democracy refers to "a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives (...) while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy and democracy does not belong to any country or region" (United Nations, General Assembly 2010). Other important concepts related to democracy that have been highly validated worldwide by the General Assembly are the need to respect the sovereignty and the right to self-determination, and to see the links between democracy, development and respect for all human rights as they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing (United Nations, General Assembly 2010)	UN
Human Rights	Human rights refer to the moral principles and norms that recognize that human rights are universal, inalienable and inherent to all human beings, regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin, or any other status, meaning that we are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination	UN
Sustainable Development	Sustainable development refers to the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs	UN

Source: Authors'

2   Major Findings per KHP mapping

2.1   Equity

Equity is related to the existence of disparities between population groups. Some of these disparities may be unavoidable (e.g. driven by biology). The disparities between population groups that are avoidable and unfair are termed inequities. Equity is therefore based on notions of fairness and social justice. Equity is distinguished from equality. The aim of equity-focused policies is not to eliminate all differences so that everyone has the same level of income, health, and education. Rather, the goal is to eliminate the unfair and avoidable circumstances that deprive people of their rights (UNICEF).

The analysis of the horizontal principle of Equity shows a difference in its degree of promotion at the country and VOPE level.

The KHP of Equity is weakly developed at countries level. The evaluation of the Equity principle is carried out mainly at European Social Fund (ESF) funded programs, at the national NGO level and when it´s clearly expressed in tender documents. In some countries, KHP´s social justice and equity are mostly evaluated in the social policy areas and international evaluation programs (FR, SP).

In almost all VOPEs, there is a mention on "some kind of activities" related to the promotion of Equity, such as Evaluation Standards or guidelines (developed by the VOPEs), explored through VOPE's dedicated collaborations in the DRG Evaluation capacity assessment project (funded by IOCE), content in VOPE's specific training provided and ad hoc initiatives.

The inclusion of the Equity principle in national strategic documents appears in few countries (FR, LU, SP, CZ) and in nearly all countries there are no national policies or regulations referring to equity.

However, it´s important to highlight the example of the Italian Association (AIV) initiative: *An open letter was signed by the president of AIV and the presidents of five scientific societies and sent to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to encourage the government to invest in the evaluation of Italian recovery policies; it is recalled that: i) the evaluation of the equity of the National Recovery Plan and its impact on equal opportunities should constitute an essential and transversal reference of the Plan design; ii) the institutional governance of the Plan should involve the main public institutions already currently engaged in evaluating the various policy actions of the Plan.*

Recommendations:

-   Use the ESF experience to promote importance of involving equity principles into national evaluation regulative and guidelines
-   Experience of AIV should be considered when defining VOPEs approach towards promotion of the equity principles to the local evaluation communities

2.2   Gender equality

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Gender equality in evaluation implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration in all phases and tasks of an evaluation, recognizing the diversity of

different groups of women and men. This understanding of gender equality is in line with the claim of gender mainstreaming, the political strategy to which the EU and the member states have committed themselves.

Gender mainstreaming has been defined by the Council of Europe as "the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making."

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and therefore changeable. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities.

Gender equality is widely present commitment which could be found in almost all analysed national evaluation contexts.

For almost all participating countries it is mentioned that there is a commitment to gender mainstreaming at national level and that considering the gender dimension is required in context of EU- or UN-funded programmes. However, only some VOPEs have structures or guidelines in place which support gender mainstreaming in the context of evaluation. The existence of structures is more likely in countries where a strong community of gender evaluators exists – like in Spain, Germany/Austria or Italy.

SP mentions that gender equality is the criterion for which the most progress has been made in recent years. "It is increasingly required in evaluation tenders (in at least some NGOs it is 'mandatory' to ask for it in the TOR and specific evaluation questions are required, the evaluation methodology must include a gender perspective and the external team must have training in this regard)." In some other countries the situation is described similarly (e.g. DE/AT, GR, IT, LV, LU, PL).

In SP, DE/AT and IT thematic working groups aim at providing a platform to exchange experiences in the field of gender evaluation and to build up gender competence among evaluators. SP and DE/AT explicitly included gender competence in the competence profile of evaluators. In IT the thematic working group on gender equality and equal opportunities aims to "enhance the dimension of transversality of gender equality and equal opportunities for all in evaluation (both equal opportunities and evaluation go through multiple and complex processes), so that the constant pursuit of these principles finds strength and validation in the evaluative actions." In DE/AT the thematic working group aimed at integrating the gender dimension in the evaluation standards and formulated a position paper.

In some countries, guidelines have been formulated for specific evaluation fields. For example, CZ developed a guide on how to integrate KHPs in developmental evaluation. This guideline could serve as a starting point to discuss the relevance of KHPs in other fields too. However, it is unclear to which extend this potential is exploited.

The discrepancy of the number of VOPEs stating that it is assumed that evaluators consider the gender dimension at least in specific evaluation fields and the number of VOPEs which provide structures or guidelines focusing on gender/gender equality is striking. This discrepancy may be attributed to a lack of awareness regarding the relevance of gender mainstreaming in evaluation. Furthermore, it assumes that no specific competences are needed to consider gender/gender equality adequately in evaluation designs and their implementation.

Recommendations:

- Development of a position paper on the relevance of gender as a cross-cutting issue in evaluation (gender mainstreaming)
- Development of a guideline on how to consider the gender dimension adequately in different phases of the evaluation process
- Development of an argumentation for the use of a gender sensitive language in evaluation

2.3 Social justice

Social justice refers to the equitable sharing of social power and benefits within a society. Social justice-oriented evaluation "seeks to increase understanding of the interdependency of individual, community, and society using a more judicious democratic process in generating knowledge about social problems and social interventions and using this knowledge to advance social progress." (Thomas & Madison, 2010).

Social justice is hardly recognised as a specific horizontal principle incorporated into evaluation practice among analysed VOPEs and therefore rarely promoted as important.

No formal way is identified for streamlining evaluation practices for social justice throughout the EU. The social justice principle is not very visible in evaluation. In fact, limited reference is presented in the answers of the European VOPEs participating in the survey. Some references are related to Donors specific requirements *(FR: for international evaluation programmes) (including NSRF 2007-2013 for PL)*. Within this framework, the same as for democracy, social justice principle is **not systematically included in the evaluation of public policies overall** *(respondents: "…to our best knowledge, there is no formal monitoring of the principle, SP: the principle is not analysed enough nor is it properly valued.")*.

The **absence of related evaluation actions** is also identified among the activities of VOPEs throughout EU since the majority of the VOPEs participating in the survey do not mention any activity. Apart from IT where there is evidence for promoting the specific principle in 2 out of 9 Thematic Groups outputs, the rest of the VOPEs main activities are categorised in:

- strategic objectives inclusion (UA)
- trainings (DE/AT, SD, PL) and correlation to the competence framework (DE/AT)
- development of evaluation quality standards (UA, SP, PL)
- dedicated collaborations, and development of guidelines and tools (SP)
- ad hoc initiatives (DE/AT)
- awareness activities (DE/AT, SP)

Social justice in the EU – participation opportunities have improved in the majority of EU member states, *"but is still a long way behind precrisis levels (Social Justice Index, 2016)".* Even if such a finding indicates that there is space for investigation, social justice principle in evaluation practices is not requested nor considered. Fragmentation appears in some VOPEs activities. In the vast majority of cases, no actual commitment to it has been identified.

Recommendation:

- Development of a position paper on the elements of social justice principle to be regularly evaluated in public policies and of a list of evaluation questions to be considered.

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2.4 Partnership

"**Partnership** refers to the collaborative relationship and/or a strategic alliance between different actors to work towards mutually agreed objectives with a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities based on the comparative advantage of each entity" (UN, 2020).

There is a rather well developed and commonly accepted use of partnership as a key component of evaluation definition and practice in Europe.

Partnerships are facilitated by a range of specific factors and/or contexts of evaluation:

- EU funds, especially cohesion funds, are subject to European evaluation regulations which contributed to develop evaluation practice within the Member States in coordination with several stakeholders in a multilevel governance framework (IT, LV, PL);
- Working with institutional actors and stakeholders active in the evaluation "ecosystem", and cooperation with NGOs and international networks, give an opportunity to build international partnerships (BG, RS);
- The complexity of public policies objectives and governance, implemented at several levels of government, was highlighted by the UN SDGs, and especially SDG 17 about partnerships (NO);
- The increasing awareness of SDGs, highlighting the crosscutting environmental issue, enhanced the need of partnerships for addressing climate change threats (PL, CZ);
- The evaluation of aid to development is typically a matter of dealing with complex partnerships (LU, CZ);
- The development of evaluation both in theory and practice requests strong partnerships with research and universities (FR);

Recommendations:

- To promote partnerships at local, national and international levels with a wide range of actors
- To encourage a multidisciplinary approach to evaluation.

2.5 Good governance

"**Governance** refers to the process of decision making and the implementation (or not) of those decisions. It can take place in different settings/levels. An analysis of governance requires then to review the diverse actors and structures involved in decision making and processes. Good governance should be participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law" (UN, 2012).

Although governance principles exist in evaluation related documents across the analysed countries, it seems that analysed VOPEs did not invest significant efforts in supporting greater use of governance indicators.

In Europe, governance principles are not identically developed everywhere. The legal framework may be mainly formal, lacking practical implementation (RS, UA). However, it may include the fight against corruption (BG). Reforms in public management and governance fostering evaluation seem to be more effective when supported by external incentives such as:

- EU integration and role of Regional development (CZ GR, IT, LV, PL)
- Programs funded by donors (RS)
- International networking: role of UN agencies
- Influence of evaluation indicators developed in other policies (OECD DAC criteria for cooperation to development): CZ, FR, DE/AT, LU, SP
- Role of NGOs and civil society (BG).

However, these incentives remain weak when public authorities do not assign enough importance to KHPs (PL, RS, SP).

Some countries do not report precisely on specific KHPs, stating that the relevant KHPs are used according to the topic subject to evaluation (CH, LU).

However, a number of countries develop several actions in order to promote the evaluation and/or the promotion of good governance in practice. The most commonly cited ways to achieve this goal are the inclusion of good governance issues in evaluation goals and standards and training and awareness raising activities.

Almost half of the VOPEs surveyed have explicitly included "good governance" in their statutes/mission statements/strategic objectives: BG, DE/AT, FR, GR, IT, CH, PL, SP, UA. It is less present in VOPE's action plans (CZ, FR, GR).

This kind of commitment, made public and engaging the VOPEs in one of the most important dimensions of evaluation, has the capacity to bring significant change to the society and enhance democracy; it should be encouraged.

As actions on governance involve a complex set of institutional, professional or private actors, the most effective way to foster change, for VOPEs, is to provide trainings, organise awareness activities, develop communication or launch *ad hoc* initiatives: CZ, UA, DE/AT, GR, LU, PL, RS.

Recommendations:
- Give more visibility to the KHP of good governance in the public documents issued by VOPEs on their mission, goals and standards, to help this principle become a common an unavoidable reference in designing, conducting and evaluating public action;
- VOPEs should organise trainings and provide support on the development of good governance, by disseminating tools, documents and examples of good practice

2.6 Innovation

Innovation refers to the use of new ideas, products, services or methods where they have not been used before.

Social innovation refers to new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other

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words, social innovation is the process of developing and deploying effective solutions to challenging and often systemic social issues in support of social progress.

Existence of innovation in the evaluation practise of the analysed countries has been to the large extent determined by the overall EU commitments towards achieving innovative knowledge-based societies.

For the EC[2]: *"… the innovation principle seems to have been inspired by the observation that Europe could perform better on innovation and its diffusion, and for this, related regulation can play a decisive role to change and adapt to enable more evidence- and foresight-based policymaking"*. The Commission also states that *"…there is evidence that not all innovation is equally relevant for sustainable growth. Regulation, besides promoting innovation and its diffusion, can also provide direction to innovation, steering it towards societal needs"*.

Within this framework, innovation principle is promoted or embedded in evaluation practices in a fragmented way throughout Europe. Apart from the 'compulsory' evaluations of EC horizontal principles, at national level for MS, **the specific KHP is not included systematically in the evaluation of public policies overall**. The principle is often assessed/evaluated in relation to the evaluation scope and its developed evaluation questions (for instance innovation is related to growth, competitiveness, extraversion, education and research, and rural development)[3]. For instance, innovation is an embedded principle in all evaluations related to HORIZON Programme and its projects, since it is expected as the main outcome to be mainstreamed.[4] Therefore, it is usually conceived as a 'vertical' topic rather than a cross-cutting theme: *"…evaluations concerning entrepreneurial support relate to innovation. However, it is difficult to point to a well-established, systematic approach to innovation in evaluations"; "... Principles such as ….and innovation (more in ex ante evaluations) are included in tenders to a lesser extent"*.

From the field research, findings are consistent with the above analysis. Two groups of countries can be identified, as regards to the degree of practicing the principle of innovation in evaluations:

1. The first group of countries (BG, LV, LU, MK, RS, UA) do not consider the principle, since in most cases evaluation is in its initial status.
2. The second group of countries (CZ, DE/AT, FR, GR, IT, PL, SP) are related to requirements set by the E.C. mainly in policies and programs where entrepreneurship, education, research and technology are involved: *"In general, evaluation activities investigate the effective integration of horizontal principles according to the Regulations' requirements"*. If this is the case, then there is evidence that the principle is evaluated. Regardless of the above provisions, there are countries (CH, NO) where innovation is also evaluated thematically when necessary: *"As far as we are aware the KHP is not systematically evaluated, but is included whenever relevant for an evaluation"*.

At the national level, there is no mentioning of any context for social innovation principle in evaluations. For the specific theme, there is no evidence provided in the field research, not even a long time after the evaluation of the CIP EQUAL, where a number of KHPs were requested for

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[2] Study supporting the interim evaluation of the innovation principle, Centre for European Policy Studies,2019
[3] For the latter, guidelines have been developed by the EC to apply to all MS, EVALUATION OF INNOVATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES 2014-2020, DECEMBER 2017
[4] Why did the EU establish the innovation principle? "The innovation principle was introduced for a number of reasons. First, there is ample evidence confirming the strong positive relationship between investment in research and innovation and gross domestic product (GDP) growth43; and more generally between innovation and growth…"

evaluation. Also, in the national context, no regulations or policies have been identified for innovation. The principle is methodologically related to specific thematic areas, as mentioned above.

The **fragmentation of the evaluation action,** related to the principle of innovation, is also identified among the activities of VOPEs throughout EU. No VOPE includes a specific mentioning of innovation in its mission statement, even if in many cases generic declarations and commitments are announced. A very few VOPEs (DE/AT, PL, SP) undertake specific action such as trainings, development of evaluation quality standards, awareness activities, development of guidelines and tools and *ad hoc* collaborations. More effort is needed for the innovation principle to be included in VOPEs Strategic Action in order to promote the KHP in national evaluation practice.

To conclude, in total, innovation principle in evaluation practice is graded low and it seems to be given lesser importance as a cross cutting theme, not even considered as one *"…innovation is a thematic evaluation according to the Operational Programme Evaluation Action Plan"*. Boost is given thematically when required by specific provisions, scope, content or framework. Evaluation of social innovation remains even lower, at a non-identifiable status.

Recommendations:

- Taking into account EU experience and particularly experiences obtained through Horizon 2020 evaluations, VOPEs should include innovation principles into their Strategic documents and commitments.
- VOPEs should invest more efforts in developing and promoting importance of social innovation principles in evaluation

2.7   Inclusivity

Inclusivity refers to the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights (UN). Social inclusion is the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities – that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as enable citizen's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Similarly, the European Union is committed to inclusion and equality irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Inclusivity is not systematically considered in evaluation practices and VOPEs strategic documents or activities.

Inclusivity is only a topic in specific contexts like developmental evaluation, SDGs or educational evaluation. Hence, some VOPEs mention working groups which address inclusivity as a key horizontal principle in specific contexts (e.g. in DE/AT the working group school). Only IT mentions a working group which focuses on inclusivity.

Similar to gender equality, inclusivity is in most cases perceived as an external requirement to evaluation – e.g. in the context of EU- or UN-funded programmes. Only BG, GR and PL mention inclusivity in its strategic documents (statute, mission statement or strategic objectives). Several other VOPEs mention inclusivity as a KHP in its standards (e.g. CZ, GR, LV, PL, UA). The low awareness regarding inclusivity as a KHP leads to the fact that it remains a topic in specific fields and a topic which is addressed in form of ad-hoc initiatives (e.g. LU).

Some VOPEs which did not integrate inclusivity as a KHP in its strategic documents see it as a relevant aspect of the competence framework of evaluators and provide specific training (e.g. CH, CZ, DE/AT, PL, RS).

Furthermore, the answers of several VOPEs indicate that inclusivity is interpreted differently. The scope ranges from an understanding of inclusivity focusing on the use of participatory approaches in evaluation designs to an understanding of inclusivity as a cross-cutting issue following the UN definition. The participation of all relevant groups in the evaluation is one relevant dimension of inclusivity, however, the definition of UN or EU is going beyond that.

Recommendations:

- Initiate discussion meetings among VOPEs in order to provide common understanding of the inclusivity principles, its importance, purpose and specific indicators that could be used to assess inclusivity in the national evaluation contexts.

2.8 Democracy

Democracy refers to "a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives (...) while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy and democracy does not belong to any country or region" (United Nations, General Assembly 2010). Other important concepts related to democracy that have been highly validated worldwide by the General Assembly are the need to respect the sovereignty and the right to self-determination, and to see the links between democracy, development and respect for all human rights as they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing (United Nations, General Assembly 2010).

Democracy principle in EU countries is taken for granted.

"In Europe, democracy is seen by many as being a universal value and considered by them to be the best possible system to organise citizens' preferences. At the same time, however, there are major concerns about the public's apparent dissatisfaction with the way democracy actually works in most European

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countries. European democracies are facing serious challenges which might be undermining citizens' trust in the capacity of their democracies to solve important problems[5]".

Democracy could be considered as the least evaluated principle in Europe. In 2018, 6 EU countries (CR, GR, NM, SD, PL, UA), TR and Western Balkan Evaluation Network (WBEN) have delivered an IOCE Project: Assessment of the Current State of Democracy, Human rights and Governance (DRG) Evaluation in Europe, resulting in Thessaloniki Declaration, were the VOPEs committed themselves in taking cooperative action regarding the promotion of standard procedures for DRG evaluation, the development of recommendations for integrating DRG into evaluation practices and the creation of awareness and the support of a competent framework for capacity building and evaluation skills. Since, no significant progress has been assessed, especially related to democracy.

In fact, limited reference is presented in the answers of the European VOPEs participating in the survey. Most references make a reference to Donors specific requirements:

- SP states that *"… although there is an attempt to promote the principle in Humanitarian Action evaluations, it is not analysed enough nor are they properly valued"*. On the same path, PL states that "there are also DRG evaluations of the initiatives financed by the national funds, i.e., Polish Development Assistance – provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and evaluated since 2012. Moreover, some KHP evaluations that are carried out in Poland refer to Norwegian and the EEA Financial Mechanisms (… democracy, …)".
- RS also confirms that the evaluation of the principle is related to specific requirements "The situation is different with regard to donor-funded programmes and related evaluations that are often implemented according the harmonised principles being respected at the global level". The same statement is made by FR: *"Regarding international evaluation programs (such as AFD's), human rights, social justice, democracy are very much analysed"*.

Within this framework, democracy principle is promoted or embedded in evaluation practices in a foggy way throughout Europe. Apart from the 'requested' evaluations of donors in specific areas, **the specific KHP is not included systematically in the evaluation of public policies overall**.

According to Europeans' Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy-Topline Results from Round 6 of the European Social Survey 2014: *Democracy is a principle containing sub-principles such as: Rule of Law, Horizontal Accountability, Human Rights, Social Justice, Direct Participation, Inclusiveness*. The above finding explains in a way that democracy is a **'shadow' principle/cross cutting theme for evaluation**, since not many clear country references were identified in the current survey.

The **absence of related evaluation action** is also identified among the activities of VOPEs throughout EU since the majority of the VOPEs participating in the survey do not mention any activity. Apart from DE/AT where there is an initiative on the operation of a specific Working Group, the rest of the VOPEs 'activities undertaken are categorised in:

- Trainings (DE/AT, RS) and correlation to the competence framework (DE/AT)
- Development of evaluation quality standards (DE/AT, LV, SP)
- statute declaration, dedicated collaborations, and development of guidelines and tools (SP)
- awareness activities (DE/AT, SP)

To conclude, overall, democracy principle in evaluation practice is graded very low and it seems to be taken for granted: *"…democracy is the least evaluated principle, since it is considered that the country*

is under rule of law status". Evaluation is performed when required by specific programmes and donors, aside from the European acquis.

Recommendation:

- Development of a position paper on the elements of democracy principle to be regularly evaluated in public policies and of a list of evaluation questions to be considered

2.9 Human rights

UN - Human rights refers to the moral principles and norms that recognize that human rights are universal, inalienable and inherent to all human beings, regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin, or any other status, meaning that we are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. The definition of Human Rights principle is very broad and include the Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights but also covers the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Rights of the Child; the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. (OHCHR, 2012 p.14).

Evaluation of HR principle is insufficiently developed and distinctly promoted across EU VOPEs.

It has been noted there is awareness regarding HR principle in most of the surveyed countries but few of them include it in their evaluation practice. Some countries have expressed clearly the evaluation of HR principle (Respondent*: "…the reference to the evaluation of the principle of HR (preventing discrimination) has been indicated by the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy in the guidelines for evaluation for 2021-27 and; respondent: "…human rights is mandatory principle to be included in most evaluations."),* others have referred to issues as non-discrimination in the evaluation activities (RS, IT) and for various there is no explicit mention o no mention at all of the HR´s evaluation principle.

Differently from the countries, at the VOPEs level there is a better promotion of the evaluation of HR principle. It has been observed, in almost all of them, a reference to activities undertaken in their practice such as: "*VOPE´s main issues are linked to fight corruption and to Human Rights; "*The promotion of the evaluation of *HR principle is covered "indirectly" by the discussion on national evaluation standards"; "Equity and HR principle are included in the XX Statute, in awareness activities and specific training programs"; "..involvement in the implementation of a project funded by IOCE on Rule of Law and Human Rights, and Good Governance (DRG) Evaluation in Europe"; " through TWGs related to the standards developed by the VOPE";* "*...Human Rights principle is clearly expressed in activities such as: i. training programs; ii. The xxx Statute; ii. Strategic objectives; iii. The evaluation Standards; vi. The Thessaloniki Declaration on DRG evaluation signed in 2018". "...through TWGs equity and human rights are incorporated into the objectives, strategic plan, … the bases of the collaboration agreements with evaluation entities".*

Concerning the National evaluation regulations or policies which aim to support the evaluation of HR principle, the answers varied from countries where there is no national specific regulations or policies yet to countries where the evaluation of HR principle is done only in EU projects related to Structural Funds and Cohesion Policy or linked to the Guidelines for Development Aid.

> **Recommendation:**
> - Initiate consultations among VOPEs, also using experience obtained in PL and SP, aiming to understand potentials for developing harmonised approach towards involvement of human rights as evaluation principle

2.10 Sustainable development

Sustainable Development refers to the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UNDP, 2022).

Sustainable development is mainly included into documents covering evaluation issues at the national level, but its implementation is mostly fragmented and not harmonized across the EU.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 are broad and ambitious, calling on all countries to make tangible improvements to the lives of their citizens. They provide a new framework for international development co-operation and encompass social, environmental and economic aspects. Evaluation, important in processes of learning and mutual accountability, can be used to generate evidence on what works and to assess progress in SDG implementation. The evidence generated through evaluation can contribute to strategies to operationalise the SDGs and to inform policy and management decisions.

Sustainable development principle is promoted or embedded in evaluation practices in a fragmented way throughout Europe and mainly in the context of EU funded programmes / initiatives e.g. ESIF, SRSS, etc. Being among the most common principles evaluated, there is no unique approach established and the extent differs from programme to programme and from field to field. If not clearly expressed in the tender documents, the above evaluation is not usually performed (GR, FR, IT).

In some cases, the specific KHP is generally not included in the evaluation of public policies due to the low importance assigned to KHP by public authorities (PL).

At national level, the topic of sustainable development in particular has gained considerable importance as a cross-cutting issue, although not all the KHP are systematically included in all evaluations. Even if sustainable development is among mandatory principles to be included in most evaluations, those lack guidelines on how to do so and are analyzed in a general way (SP, PT). In other cases the formal basis for conducting evaluations of the national strategic documents is in place but sections referring to KHP are often only formally respected without serious consideration due to low capacity of the state institution (RS).

The fragmentation of the evaluation action, related to the principle of sustainable development, is also identified among the activities of VOPEs throughout EU. No specific reference to sustainable development is mentioned in VOPEs' mission statements, whereas in some cases generic declarations and commitments are announced (GR, CZ). Rather, most of the VOPEs undertake specific action such as trainings, development of evaluation quality standards, awareness activities, development of guidelines and tools and ad hoc collaborations (GR, CZ, PL, FR, SP, PT, UA, LV, RS).

To conclude, in total, sustainable development principle in evaluation practice is recognized as a cross cutting theme but it seems to be given lesser importance. Boost is given thematically when required by specific provisions, scope, content or framework. More effort is needed for the sustainable development principle to be included in VOPEs Strategic Action in order to promote the KHP in national evaluation practice. The relevant capacity of the state institutions needs improvement.

Recommendations:

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- Sustainable development as a cross-cutting issue should be included into Strategic documents of the VOPEs
- It should be strengthened collaboration between VOPEs and the state institutions in their respective countries in order to produce specific provisions and scope with regards to inclusion of sustainable development into regular evaluation practice.
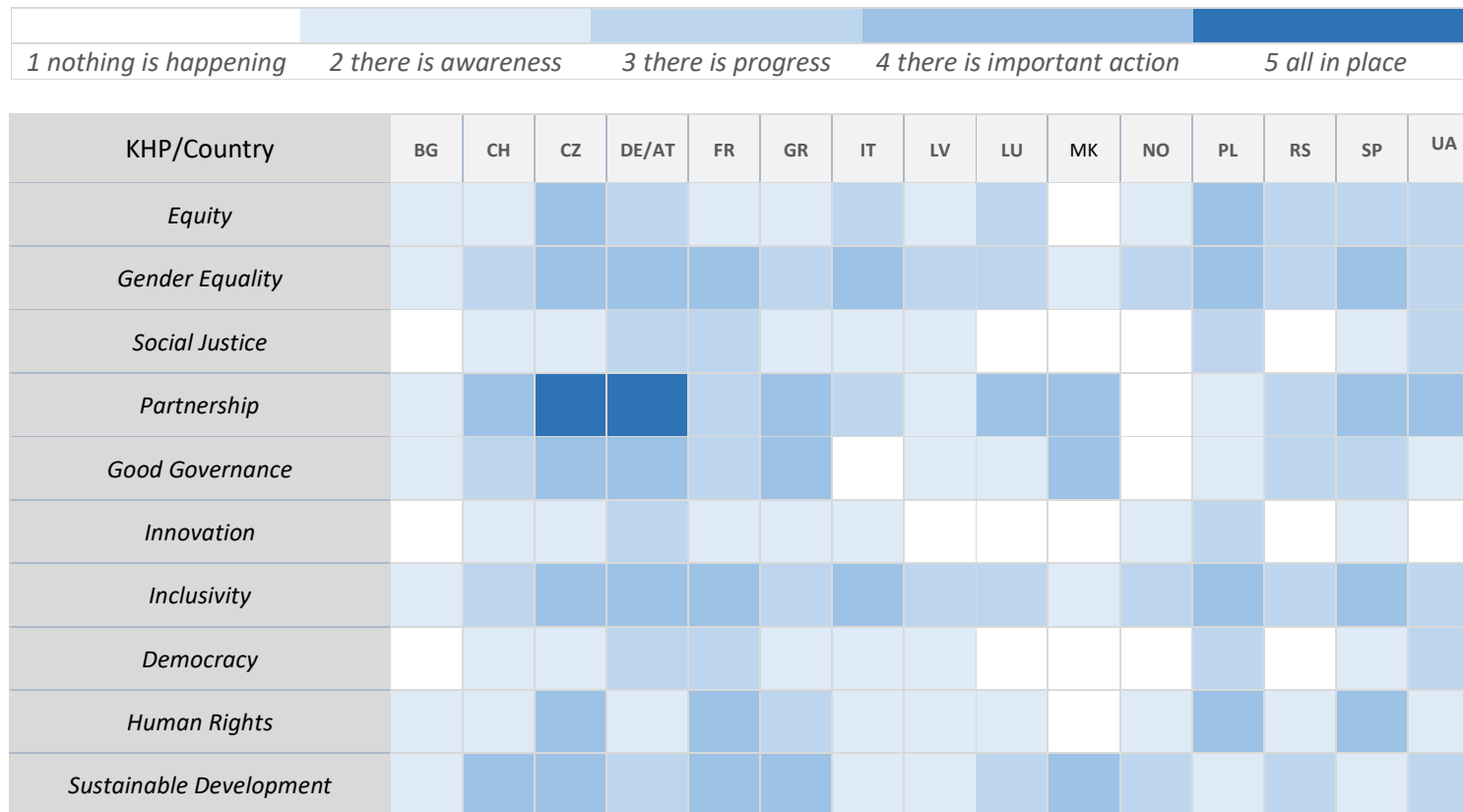
3   SWOT Analysis

The findings of the countries' questionnaires were analysed in order to feed the SWOT analysis.

The synthetic analysis resulted in key points as key elements of the SWOT, in relation to the KHPs practice and promotion in evaluation. These points are listed below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
▪ Dedicated IOCE funded project, acting as a tool for 'as is' assessment in European countries ▪ European acquis ▪ Advanced methodological approaches for certain KHPs (e.g., gender) ▪ Developed awareness of some KHPs (e.g., partnerships, good governance, democracy)	▪ Lack of clarity on the perception of the KHPs throughout European VOPEs (due to limited visibility of the KHPs evaluation practice) ▪ Lack of commitment of the VOPEs to the promotion of the KHPs ▪ Fragmentation in VOPEs-related activities ▪ Very small correlation to evaluation standards and professionalization framework ▪ Disparate evaluation practices used at national level documents and/or guidelines, that support advocating for greater use of evaluation evidence in local policy making processes or help local evaluators dealing with diverse contemporary challenges,

Opportunities	Threats
▪ Greater use of evaluation evidence in policy processes requiring greater awareness about the benefits of evaluation, as well as fundamental principles that should be followed ▪ IOCE, EES and NESE action in order to promote the KHPs in evaluation Practices ▪ Development of a guidance document for VOPEs capacity building and for streamlining KHPs in evaluation ▪ Exchange of good practices shared by more advanced countries ▪ Thessaloniki Declaration expansion in more countries and a specific action plan could be undertaken in close monitoring by NESE for its implementation	▪ No further action taken to change the current situation ▪ Lack of focused and/or integrated approach throughout Europe

4   GAP Analysis

The GAP analysis is based on the responses provided within the questionnaires. The analysis has been performed by country, so to indicate (and visualize) the as is situation throughout Europe and explore which KHP 'is left behind'

1 nothing is happening	2 there is awareness	3 there is progress	4 there is important action	5 all in place

KHP/Country	BG	CH	CZ	DE/AT	FR	GR	IT	LV	LU	MK	NO	PL	RS	SP	UA
Equity															
Gender Equality															
Social Justice															
Partnership															
Good Governance															
Innovation															
Inclusivity															
Democracy															
Human Rights															
Sustainable Development															

From the above visualisation it is clear that almost all KHPs 'are left behind' in evaluation practices and in the visibility of the VOPEs dedicated action. The KHPs overpassing the average threshold by a small difference are: Gender and Partnership. Inclusivity and Sustainable Development are in the average. The analysis demonstrates that a lot needs to be done at the level of VOPEs and country level to embed the KHPs in evaluation practices.

The averages are listed below:

KHP	AVE	ESTIMATION
Equity	2,60	😐
Gender Equality	3,27	😐
Social Justice	1,93	🙁
Partnership	3,33	😐
Good Governance	2,80	😐
Innovation	1,73	🙁
Inclusivity	3,00	😐
Democracy	1,93	🙁
Human Rights	2,53	😐
Sustainable Development	3,00	😐

5 Conclusions

The key conclusions resulting from the survey can be listed as follows:

1. KHPs in evaluation are topics that are gaining such importance with respect to the objectives of the cohesion policy that they should be considered and integrated into all interventions' and policies' evaluation.

2. The current analysis revealed disparities among 14 European VOPEs, participating in the related survey. In the vast majority of countries, surprisingly enough, there is no clear perception of the KHPs and limited visibility of the KHPs in their promotion or in the evaluation practices.

3. There seems to be a lack of clear commitment in VOPEs strategic documents. A fragmentation has been identified in VOPEs activities since many VOPEs and NESE members still do not have developed documents and/or guidelines to support advocating for greater use of evaluation evidence in local policy making processes or to help local evaluators dealing with diverse contemporary challenges.

4. Moreover, there is limited evidence for the integration of KHPs in evaluation standards and in the professionalisation framework, even though trainings and development of tools are undertaken by a small share of VOPEs.

5. The most common approach relates to the principles being evaluated in specific/thematic evaluations and not as cross-cutting issues embedded in all evaluation tenders. Greater progress has been identified for principles related to issued methodological guidance documents, such as gender, inclusivity, partnership and sustainable development where there is a clear request for their evaluation.

6. From the gap analysis, there seems to be an important need for streamlining the KHPs and for effort to be put in increasing awareness and visibility activities of the KHPs, along with specific action for commitment to their promotion.

6 ANNEX I: Questionnaire

Scope of the questionnaire	The current questionnaire is a survey tool addressed to European VOPEs in a landscaping exercise. It is intended to map the as is situation, regarding the evaluation of Key Horizontal Principles, throughout EU, and the efforts undertaken by VOPEs to this extent. It also aims at gathering the necessary information from VOPEs in order to explore how they consider KHPs in their strategic documents (e.g., statute, mission statement, standards, guidelines).

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Landscape survey:	Mapping VOPEs throughout Europe				
VOPE name:					
Country(ies):					
Person responsible for the completion of the form:					
Position:					
Contact details:					

Field of the survey

1. What is your perception of the KHP evaluation practice in your country(ies) *(i.e., are KHP systematically evaluated in all/several/some sectors, are they usually included as cross-cutting issues in the evaluation tenders, are there any guidelines resulting from EU documents for their evaluation, etc)?* (250 words)

2. In what ways your VOPE promotes the evaluation of KHPs in practice? *(i.e. activities undertaken, advocacy, collaborations, declarations, documents developed, etc.)?* (250 words)

3. Please put a P in the area where your VOPE takes specific action for acknowledging, promoting and/or applying each KHP:

Documents/Areas of activities investigation:è Key Horizontal Principle:ê	included in VOPE's statute	declared in the VOPE's mission statement	related to a VOPE's strategic objective	related to the standards developed by the VOPE	identified as an initiative undertaken within VOPE's action plan	embedded in VOPE's guidelines & tools developed	explored through VOPE's dedicated collaborations	content in VOPE's specific training provided	content in VOPE's awareness activities	undertaken in VOPE's ad hoc initatives	competence framework	other (Please, indicate)
equity												
gender equality												
social justice												
partnership												
good governance												
innovation												
inclusivity												
democracy												
human rights												
sustainable development												

4. For the selected area(s) please provide a short explanation/description of the choices above (max 250 words)

5. For the above-mentioned documentation, please attach the relevant documents (if any in English, please, attach them too)**:**

		Please, indicate part of the document where KHPs are mentioned (section/paragraph/page…)	is the document available in English (yes/no)?
1. (provide the name of the file to be attached)			
1. (provide the name of the file to be attached)			
1. (provide the name of the file to be attached)			
…..			

6. Which elements should a common reference framework for the Key Horizontal Principles (KHP) include to support your VOPE in strengthening the KHP in evaluation in your country? (150 words) *(i.e. support to readiness, to knowledge intensity, etc.)*

7. Are there specific national regulations or policies in place which support considering the Key Horizontal Principles (KHP) in evaluation? (150 words)

8. Please mention any other issue you think is important to the specific project: (100 words) (optional)

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