The SDG Transformations Forum

MANIFESTO AND FIRST INITIATIVES

of

Working Group #1:

Transformational Evaluation for Transformational Development (TE-TD)
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**Our Commitment and Focus**

The [SDG Transformations Forum](https://www.sdgtransformations.org) draws together a wide range of specialists with interest and expertise in transformational change, with [transformational systems change](https://www.sdgtransformations.org/practice) as priority. Transformational change is at the heart of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment) with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Forum is founded on the belief that transformation is not a buzzword; instead, many pressing challenges facing the world, its ecosystems and societies today challenge us all to work towards transformation rather than incremental or reforming change and superficial trade-offs. The 2030 Agenda and related international frameworks and agreements present ‘grand challenges’ that require deep, even radical changes in mindsets and worldviews, and in acting and organizing.

The Forum therefore aims to work in practical ways that enable mutual learning and support around transformational (systems) change in order to build capacities and translate theory into practice. Co-creating and co-stewarding the emergence of different types of transitions and transformations systems lies at the heart of Forum actions.

**The Transformational Evaluation for Transformational Development (TE-TD) Working Group** – one of six working groups in the Forum – comprises a network of people from around the world who work on a wide range of activities at the intersection between sustainable development, evaluative practice and transformation, with emphasis on national, transnational and global level.

The Working Group brings together theoretical and practical expertise that combines perspectives from evaluation with insights from fields such as hard, soft and critical systems thinking; complexity science; (sustainable) development; and [large and global systems change](https://www.sdgtransformations.org/practice). We use scientific understandings around complex social-cultural, economic, political, biological, physical and environmental systems, and enhance these through evaluation practice. We aim to contribute to a stronger interface between scientific research, evaluative practice and development policy, strategy and action.

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1 Transformational change fundamentally shifts connections, relationships, purposes, and function of systems and their subsystems at scale and in enduring ways in the direction of a flourishing, just and inclusive world (SDG Transformations Forums).

2 In order to be [accurate in our terminology](https://www.sdgtransformations.org/practice), we should use the term “transformational” rather than “transformational”. However, this work is distinct from the [transformational research and evaluation paradigm](https://www.sdgtransformations.org/practice) established by renowned evaluation specialist Donna Mertens. We also recognize that today the two terms are often used interchangeably.

3 The others currently are the (i) Capacity; (ii) Meta-narrative; (iii) Innovation; (iv) Financing Transformation; and (v) Transformations Systems Analysis Working Groups.

4 We use the term “evaluative practice” to include all evaluative actions such as reflection, monitoring, assessment, review and evaluation in all its forms - in other words, all professional action where evaluative thinking and processes are systematically applied with the aim to inform, improve and support decisions, actions and systems. It has close connections with complementary areas such as scenario planning and foresight, and as far as interventions (e.g. projects, programmes, policy implementation) are concerned, aimed at informing planning, design, implementation and progress towards desirable positive impacts.

5 The SDG Transformations Forum conceptualization of transformation embraces the following four elements: (i) transformation is purposeful – in the case of the TF this involves alignment with (and going beyond) the SDGs; (ii) transformation is systemic, involving fundamental changes in current structures, values and ways of working; (iii) transformation takes place at scale; and (iv) transformation is an enduring process.

6 The terms large and global systems change can also be used interchangeably.
TE-TD participants draw our inspiration and focus from the profound urgency with which national, regional and global development goals, and in particular the SDGs, have to be realised. The state of our societies, our ecosystems and the planet demands that we take robust collective action within the framework provided by the 2030 Agenda, complemented by international conventions and strategies such as the Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework and the African Union’s Agenda 2063.

The 17 goals and 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals are a major step forward in global governance towards a sustainable future. The SDG framework has addressed many of the failures and gaps associated with the Millennium Development Goals and has illuminated barriers to sustainability on a systemic level. Nevertheless, the framework remains more siloed than integrated, and the strong focus on quantitative indicators and monitoring does not adequately encourage transformational action. To reach the targets by 2030, governments must reconcile messy interconnected problems such as feeding their populations (Goal 2) and industrializing (Goal 9) without negatively affecting biodiversity (Goal 15) or the climate (goal 13). Implementation is also designed primarily for the nation-state, with few mechanisms to inspire and mobilize innovation across national boundaries, across cultures, or within the private sector and civil society to implement alongside national governments.

We believe that transformational systems change has to be at the core of efforts to achieve the SDGs and related conventions, agreements and strategies. We also believe that evaluative practice not only has the potential to contribute to such change, but that we have a shared obligation to help ensure that it does.

Yet evaluative practice has yet to fully embark on this path. It faces political and technical challenges, as well as unresolved tensions that stymie progress. Evaluative processes are largely incremental and tend to focus on isolated interventions or portfolios of interventions, rather than on large or global systems change. Attention remains firmly on quantitative monitoring and measures of success, and mostly at the scale of the nation-state for purposes of donor or government accountability. Approaches and methodologies are not designed and implemented with critical transitions, transformational change or transformational development in mind - even where they are available and suitable for this purpose. The whole evaluation system worldwide is under pressure from political demands for measurable impact and specific types of results within set - and usually narrowly defined - boundaries.

This means that our evaluative practice itself, and the systems that shape and direct its theories and practices, need to be transformed to reflect the complex challenges posed by issues of inequality, unsustainable consumption patterns, weak governance and more. The SDGs provide a suitable platform to both make the case for, and prototype and crystallize transformation of evaluation at the scale of global or large systems change that both supports and transcends the nation-state. Without transforming the nature of how we determine or measure progress toward the SDGs and other related frameworks and undertakings, we believe Campbell’s Law will prevail.

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7 Projects, programmes, policies, etc.
8 The law states "The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor". Applied to SDGs, the law posits: "The more any single SDG indicator is used for high stakes decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor".
Rooted in the ambition of SDG 17\(^9\), the Working Group therefore envisions the emergence of a powerful evaluation system that can help accelerate and support transformational development. In so doing we have to mobilize the rich diversity of expertise, experiences, philosophies and knowledge systems of societies and their relevant specialists in both the global south and global north – whether in evaluation or development practice, in policymaking or policy implementation, in academia, in philanthropy or in the private sector.

**Our focus is twofold.** We aim to draw together a global network of interested persons and organizations who wish to cooperate and co-create to explore and advance the following interlinked areas of work:

- Evaluative practice for transformational development, and
- The transformation of evaluative practice.

We have two objectives:

1. **To use the transformational power of evaluative practice** to understand and help enable the changes sought towards rapid achievement of the SDGs and other relevant international goals. We are especially interested in understanding the evaluation of large systems change (see also [here](#)) and global systems change (see also [here](#) and [here](#)) as a means to energize, stimulate and open up new pathways for learning, acting and reflecting.

2. **To seek transformational change in the global evaluation system itself**, so that its full potential is harnessed in support of accelerating progress towards rapid achievement of the SDGs and other relevant international ambitions. We aim to explore a reframing of evaluative practice around the SDGs and other ambitious frameworks and undertakings as part of transformational processes, with the field of evaluative practice itself being transformed.

**We are building a global network** with those who are already working on, or who want to work on, evaluative practice from this perspective, with a particular interest in large and global systems change, and in how to adjust current evaluative practice at all levels to engage better with issues of transformation. We believe that if we are connected – doing, sharing and analyzing what we are finding as we go down unknown roads – we will learn what is possible, and act accordingly. The Forum, and this Working Group, provide an opportunity to connect people and organizations interested in evaluative practice across a range of disciplines, fields of work, sectors and countries who might otherwise not have the opportunity to benefit from such interactions.

**We therefore wish to call on all those who recognise the limitations** in our current global evaluation system and ways of thinking and working, and who are interested in accelerating the pace of change towards evaluative practice that best serves transformation in the context of the SDGs and other relevant international frameworks.

**We invite you to join forces with us** to work towards change at a pace and scale that will enable continuing progress and success on the journey towards transformational development from national to global level.

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\(^9\)“Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.”
**OUR APPROACH**

i. **Start from small yet meaningful beginnings.** We still have to mobilise financial and in-kind resources that are appropriate for our level of ambition. We therefore start with ‘small beginnings’ – a set of limited yet meaningful, potentially impactful initiatives selected to address critical issues of interest that can also demonstrate within current time and resource constraints the value of the Forum and the TE-TD Working Group.

ii. **Connect, rather than duplicate or compete.** There are many people and initiatives already trying to address many of the aspects of our objectives and initiatives. Instead of duplicating or competing, we want to connect these efforts to realize the scale necessary to be effective in working towards transformational change in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

iii. **Stay within the spirit of SDG 17.** At present the work of the TE-TD Working Group fits best under SDG 17, “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”. It is not a perfect fit. Nevertheless, we interpret Goal 17 to be rooted in building capacity for greater forms of learning and adaptation.

iv. **Accept uncertainty and emergence.** We recognize that many of the major tensions in evaluation have both dominant and contrary perspectives. This has assisted us in starting to craft a suitable synthesis that can be useful to help us frame transformational evaluation for the SDGs. Yet this journey must still unfold. We have to explore new ways of thinking and working and pathways to transformation that will lead to as yet unknown destinations. We therefore need high tolerance for both ambiguity and paradox, as we know this work cannot be overly planned, controlled or strategized.

v. **Work in different modalities.** We work as a virtual network of individuals, but leave space for *time-bound interest groups* who collaborate on specific issues, as well as ‘nodes’ in geographic areas where a critical mass of participants can collaborate face-to-face on issues of common interest, yet continue to connect closely with the rest of the Working Group.

vi. **Engage across boundaries.** We have no preference in terms of working with, within or across sectors, as long as we can add value – whether in the realm of the evaluation sector; the development sector; the business, private or impact investing sectors; or the government, non-profit or philanthropic sector.

vii. **Ensure diversity, seeing also beyond dominant narratives.** We want to make sure that the Working Group draws from, and builds on expertise, experiences, philosophies, knowledge systems and interests in the global south, the global north and among indigenous societies. While we recognise the disadvantage of working as a group in English, we encourage the formation of virtual and geographic nodes that can also work in local languages while remaining an integral part of the TE-TD Working Group.

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10 In particular, given the focus on numerical measures for monitoring effectiveness to meet SDG 17. Over-reliance on quantitative indicators, making context-free assumptions and over-emphasis on the nation-state as the implementer are a few major challenges that are reinforced with current reporting under SDG 17.
viii. **Draw on, and contribute to the larger Forum.** We have the expertise of the other working groups of the Forum at our disposal. We can mobilize, and in turn contribute to this wherever appropriate and feasible in processes of knowledge generation, sharing, learning and encouraging. We can also contribute our expertise to the larger mission and activities of the Forum, for example by working on place-based or issue-based transformation systems.

ix. **Simplify without being simplistic.** We aim to conceptualise and communicate issues such as complexity, systems and transformation in ways that immediately speaks to evaluative practice, while recognising that these issues require a certain level of expertise as well as commitment to continuous learning by those who wish to be part of this effort.

x. **Cooperate on a firm foundation.** The Working Group is directed by a set of Guiding Principles, activities and time-bound initiatives determined by the environment and resources within which it currently operates. They will evolve with experience and as contexts change.

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**THE PRINCIPLES THAT SHAPE OUR WORK**

Underlying the conceptualization and operations of the Working Group is a set of Guiding Principles, complementing the overall set of the Forum Guiding Principles, and derived from our perspectives and approach to our work.

The Guiding Principles are subject to periodic reflection and review to ensure that they co-evolve with the Working Group’s context and experience.

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**Guiding Principles of the SDG Transformations Forum**

1. **Transcendence.** Build on common understandings and actions rather than a community of disparate interests.


3. **Holistic perspectives.** Enable participants to see themselves as contributing to a bigger whole - developing holistic systems rather than islands of success.

4. **Fit for context.** Design around experience by taking context-specific and principles-based action, rather than importing models and solutions that are not fit for context.

5. **Mindful of complexity.** Work with complexity and emergence rather than seeking linear, simple and defined solutions.

6. **Building on available resources.** Work with the energy and resources of Forum participants as a means to attract further resources.
Guiding Principles specific to the TE-TD Working Group

OUR PERSPECTIVE

First Overarching Principle: Focus on evaluative practice for large and global systems transformation.

Principle #1. **Global perspective.** Have a global village perspective that values holistic approaches, and connections and diversity across multiple boundaries.

Principle #2. **Transformation of evaluation.** Understand that the transformation of evaluative practice itself is a necessary response to large and global systems change.

Principle #3. **Evaluation for transformation.** Widen understanding of the potential for the transformational use of evaluative practice to respond to (the need for) large and global systems change.

Principle #4. **Integrated systems design and evaluation.** Connect the dots between climate, ecosystems and inequity, and between other important intersections of interest.

Principle #5. **Real-world relevance.** Focus on practical examples within real-world opportunities and challenges, with a special focus on transformations systems at transnational scales.

OUR WAY OF WORKING

Second Overarching Principle: Engage authentically around our shared purpose and vision.

Principle #6. **See beyond convention.** Value insights beyond dominant paradigms, models and ways of working.

Principle #7. **Build on what exists.** Appreciate what has already been developed for the evaluation of the SDGs and related frameworks and undertakings, and for transformational development.

Principle #8. **Ensure value.** Engage in rigorous thinking and high quality execution in order to generate work with credibility, legitimacy, salience and utility.

Principle #9. **Innovate across boundaries.** Use multiple disciplines, fields of work, sectors and worldviews to identify new, potentially transformational ways of thinking and working.

Principle #10. **Be pragmatic.** Begin with small yet meaningful steps, expanding systematically in breadth and depth from the foundation of existing intellectual energies, and financial and in-kind resources.
OUR IMMEDIATE ACTIVITIES

- **Know the WG.** We get to know one another, and the evolving make-up of the Working Group, through sharing information about our interests and work.

- **Shape the WG.** We form subgroups – our *TE-TD Interest Groups* - around common interests, working on initiatives that accommodate time and resource constraints. The nature, size and foci of these groups evolve over time as priorities and contexts change.

- **Focus the WG.** We continue to develop common understandings around key issues so that we all share in the ideals of the Working Group, and work to address the challenges posed by the era in which we work.

- **Galvanise the WG.** Our Interest Groups work on specific initiatives that are of interest to the whole Working Group. They share within the Working Group, with the other Forum Working Groups and with other relevant partners and networks.

- **Connect the WG.** We aim to connect at least once every two months as whole group in a webinar-style ‘huddle’ to discuss topics of importance, clarify outstanding or emerging issues and shape our work together. At the same time strong external connections will be built – to organizations, networks and coalitions relevant to the work of the Forum, including the global evaluation architecture – where they are not integrated within the Working Group.

- **Monitor the WG.** We are evaluative, reflecting regularly and systematically on what we do, why and how we do it, for whom and with what results.

- **Grow the WG.** We appreciate the intimacy and productivity of limited numbers as well as the opportunity to grow in ways that engage diverse forms of expertise and interests, both from within and far beyond the global evaluation architecture. We believe that diversity around shared goals enriches results.

- **Resource the WG.** Expertise and interest bring us together, but we also need resources – intellectual, financial and in-kind – that can make our vision a reality. We will seek resources to ensure that our activities will not only be driven by the goodwill and commitment of the participants in the Working Group, but by sufficient support to turn ideas and experiences into action.
FIRST INITIATIVES

Our first set of time-bound initiatives are about to be launched and our first Interest Groups mobilized. They are organized around the three activities of the Forum: (i) seeing, (ii) connecting and (iii) radical learning and acting.

The Interest Groups are transient, and all their initiatives are interconnected. Steps will often have to be taken in a certain sequence and/or iteratively shared and acted upon in rapid iterations across the Interest Groups or, in some cases, also in cooperation with the other Working Groups. Stronger results will be possible if the Interest Groups draw from, and share with the others as well as with the other Forum Working Groups.

In order to ensure a realistic workload given the volunteer nature of the Working Group at this time, manageable sub-initiatives can be implemented by each Interest Group until resources are available for more intensive action.

Participants in the TE-TD Working Group can be part of any number of Interest Groups.

Current Interest Groups are set up around the following nine initiatives:

#1. Analysing and synthesizing state of the art.
#2. Prototyping, demonstrating and radical learning.
#3. Connecting with Blue Marble Evaluation.
#4. Communicating concepts, frameworks and approaches.
#5. Understanding the (global) evaluation system(s).
#6. Connecting (with) leaders and influencers.
#7. Finding transformation potential for evaluative practice.
#9. Guiding the TE-TD Working Group strategy and resourcing.

INITIATIVE #1. ANALYSING AND SYNTHESIZING STATE OF THE ART.

Although the literature on critical transitions, transformational systems change and transformational development is growing, transformation remains an under-empiricized and misunderstood concept in evaluative practice. Transformation occurs in non-linear and largely unpredictable ways, and often has to deal with large-scale issues associated with climate change, dying oceans, clean drinking water, refugees, human trafficking, virulent infectious diseases, feeding growing global populations and so on. This Interest Group engages in horizon scanning and synthesis of the state of the art knowledge at the intersection between transformation, transformational development and evaluative practice.
They do so focusing on appropriate scales and units of analysis, and synthesize relevant patterns and responses in ways that are useful.

Evaluative practice (for) transformation may not require a massive investment or find entirely new ways of thinking and doing, but needs an integrated systemic approach considers multiple perspectives, cases, criteria and kinds of data, from global to local scales. Understanding what matters will require co-creation by evaluation and transformation theorists and practitioners who will help identify gaps and shortcomings, and launch dynamic interactive sense-making processes. The work of this Interest Group will support such efforts.

Many positive benefits can flow from change processes aimed at better understanding and articulating relevant concepts. A global network on the topic of evaluative practice for transformation has the potential to transform the evaluation system itself, as well as the kinds of concepts that we bring to evaluative practice. A more inclusive approach to collectively defining what we mean by this new frontier can influence the evaluation culture in organisations, and increase uptake of new insights and practices while broadening our understanding of evaluative practice for transformation.

**INITIATIVE #2. PROTOTYPING, DEMONSTRATING AND RADICAL LEARNING.**

Going beyond simple monitoring to understanding and assessing progress aimed at addressing the wicked challenges of interrelated issues such as poverty, hunger, well-being, education and ecosystem health requires radical experimentation, innovation and learning. Noting that conceptualization, design, implementation and evaluative actions are interlinked, this Interest Group co-creates knowledge with interested individuals and organizations in order to support programmes, networks and systems aimed at, or that can benefit from a focus on transformation. It helps conceptualize, design and test new approaches by facilitating radical learning, providing timely feedback and illuminating sense-making processes.

In the context of transformation, evaluative practices are ideally applied to transboundary and transcultural efforts that integrate across multiple goals, including across the SDGs, and have long time horizons. It will be the task of this Interest Group to identify such opportunities and help mobilize participants from the various Forum Working Groups who can assist; we have already identified several ongoing initiatives as potential case studies or demonstrations where Working Group participants have been engaged as part of regular assignments.

By applying radical learning logic, the Interest Group will seek to develop deeper understanding of assessment and measurement systems suitable for responses to large and global systems change. This requires cross-fertilization between Forum Working Groups. Wicked problems require radical thinking that challenges fundamental assumptions while focusing on dynamics such as critical transitions, ripple effects, unintended consequences, surprises and critical incidents. “Transformation thinking”
and radical learning not only questions the “inside” and “outside” of the box, but also whether there is a box in the first place. New forms of open-ended data collection and evolutions in evaluation criteria and indicators are considered, as are new types of collaborative sensemaking. Trajectories and adaptive development are attended to, and the value of failure is recognized.

This type of approach will require evaluative practice to become more self-critical, reflexive and accountable for the impact it has on the assessment of transformational systems change and transformational development, and for the degree to which it supports or inhibits transformation.

**Initiative #3. Connecting with Blue Marble Evaluation.**

Blue Marble Evaluation (BME) views the world globally, holistically and systemically. It makes sense of interconnections in the global system, thinking beyond a world of nation-states, sector siloes and narrowly defined issues. Blue Marble thinkers see the interconnections between the global and local, the macro and the micro, and the relationships between worldwide patterns and area-specific challenges. They become adept at zooming out for a big picture perspective, and zooming in to understand and incorporate contextual variations, problems and solutions. Applying Blue Marble thinking to initiatives aimed at sustainable transformation has implications for how such initiatives are designed and evaluated. BME tracks and documents global systems changes, including transformational developments. Since Blue Marble principles apply to both intervention designs and intervention evaluation, design, implementation and evaluation are integrated.

The TE-TD Working Group and BME therefore share many common interests. Differences are primarily a matter of emphasis, with the work of TE-TD framed by the SDGs and other international conventions and therefore more focused on the nation-state (although not exclusively so); more directly guided by the mission and objectives of the Forum as a whole; and more focused on engagement with the current global evaluation system in all its forms.

Many participants in the Working Group are likely to be also interested in BME. It is the charge of this Interest Group to ensure sound engagement and cross-fertilization between the two efforts. The extent of the common interests and common ways of working between the Forum and Blue Marble Evaluation will be determined over time, and guide the relationship between the two.

**Initiative #4. Communicating Concepts, Frameworks and Approaches.**

This Interest Group focuses on understanding and bridging hindrances in order to cultivate common understandings among the groups who deal with the intersection between transformation, evaluation, development, systems and complexity. They will devise content and ways to communicate relevant concepts, frameworks, approaches and methodologies – both state of the art and knowledge that might emerge from the work of the Forum - in terms that can be understood beyond highly
specialist environments. They will simplify, without over-simplifying, complex ideas for application in practice, and produce materials that can be widely used to facilitate understanding, including among those who wish to experiment with such approaches, and who wish to use them in education and training initiatives. The Interest Group will also seek opportunities to promote the work of TE-TD through education and training initiatives that can use its materials and expertise.

**Initiative #5. Understanding the (global) evaluation system(s).**

This Interest Group will analyze the evaluation systems within which transformation is being - or should be - addressed. They will do this by using innovative ways to map what can be considered as the ‘global evaluation system’ (or parts thereof), as well as the network of individuals and organizations explicitly involved in the evaluation of transformation, large or global systems change, and of progress towards attaining the SDGs. This can be done at any level depending on purpose and utility, whether global or at a more granular level in a specific region or country.

SDG attainment is growing in importance as it is increasingly linked to national priorities and other global agreements. While the SDGs are not by any means the whole picture - and are actually disconnected to other important initiatives such as nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement for climate goals - a growing number of people are being asked to monitor and evaluate initiatives that link to the SDGs. The number of Voluntary National Reports (VNRS) has shown a dramatic increase, with 47 countries reporting at the High Level Political Forum in 2018. Yet a clear synthesized picture has yet to emerge about who is doing what, where and to what extent as part of a national, regional and/or global system of evaluation, and there is as yet no clarity on the larger patterns of change unfolding regarding investment in time and energy to evaluate SDG progress.

It is also necessary to make the ‘global evaluation system’ more visible, including the global evaluation architecture (organizations and networks active in the field across all sectors, and the relationships between them), any asymmetries in activity and power, and potential and actual hindrances to progress towards evaluation for transformation and transformational development. Who is doing work relevant to the foci of the Working Group? Where are repositories of relevant data and information?

We propose to apply the field of data visualization and geographic information systems to create custom maps of permutations of the global evaluation system and its relations with the attainment of the SDGs. We recognize that getting such systems analyses “right” will be a major endeavour, and clarity of purpose and use will be paramount. The task will require the proper construction of boundaries and data gathering strategies, with clear articulation of utility. Yet such maps can increase understanding of the evaluation profession and enable better connections among relevant networks and coalitions that make up the backbone of the global evaluation architecture. The maps can also
support collaboration and help track whether and where the intensity of evaluation versus monitoring increases over time. Such analysis might inspire more deliberate effort - for example if countries or regions see that they have no or few ‘nodes’ in a given geography or thematic focus.

In addition, the Interest Group will apply insights on how scientific paradigms tend to change in general, and evaluation paradigms in different contexts more specifically. How and why do theories and practices evolve to change the nature of a certain discipline or practice? How can this knowledge be used to inform the actions of the larger Working Group?

**INITIATIVE #6. CONNECTING (WITH) LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS.**

It is essential to connect with leaders in the global network of evaluators, evaluation commissioners and funders of evaluation, as well as leaders of initiatives aimed at transformational systems change. This will help to deepen understanding of their needs, challenges and priorities, and cultivate interest in co-creating actions and strategies to address their concerns and interests.

Transformation within the evaluation system will entail shifts in attention, among others from snapshots to development trajectories, and from project and programme evaluation to evaluation informed by insights about systems and transformational change. It will demand innovation - developing new or adjusted approaches, methodologies, evaluative criteria and metrics. It will have to integrate state of the art knowledge on how ecology, economics, psychology, sociology, behavioural science, and so on collectively contribute (or can contribute) to measuring sustainable development. Yet such new ways of thinking, doing and measuring must get broad support from those who fund, commission and practice evaluation in both the global south and global north – a major challenge within a systems-wide culture driven by the politics and practicalities of ‘influence’, ‘results-based management’, ‘impact’ and ‘value for money’.

**INITIATIVE #7. FINDING TRANSFORMATION POTENTIAL FOR EVALUATIVE PRACTICE.**

This Interest Group will build on insights about transformation and the global evaluation system in order to do horizon scanning and provide information on forefront developments in other fields of work and disciplines not normally associated with evaluative practice, and that can support the two objectives of the Working Group. Areas to explore could include new technologies with potential for transformation in and of the evaluation system; novel ways of conceptualizing evaluation; forefront developments in relevant disciplines or fields of work; and innovative practices in sectors (for example, impact investing) that are experimenting and engaging successfully outside conventional evaluative theories and methodologies.

Such potential can be based on current situations or on major emerging or futuristic trends, in other words, challenges that, according to forefront practitioners and futurists, could have transformational
influences on development in coming decades - and hence on the evaluation of development. This is likely to require engaging with the implications and promises for evaluative practice of well-known concepts such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the circular economy or a more humane economy, or exploring more deeply the implications and promises for evaluative practice of what some call the blockchain economy, or the notion of social singularity.

**INITIATIVE #8. CONDUCTING A DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION OF THE FORUM.**

It will be essential to ensure that not only the Working Group, but the Forum itself has the best chance to be effective and impactful, contributing in line with its mandate, value proposition and the expectations of its participants.

This Interest Group will therefore be responsible for designing and implementing a uniquely designed developmental evaluation for the Forum itself as soon as this can feasibly be done. It will require engagement with the governance structures and Working Groups of the Forum in order to ensure common understandings, as well as examination of the potential and demands posed by the evaluation.

**INITIATIVE #9. GUIDING THE WORKING GROUP STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCING.**

The TE-TD Working Group is steered by the Lead Steward working in close collaboration with the relevant SDG Transformations Forum Councillor and a small group that can help refine and update the Manifesto, and think through strategy and the further evolution of the work of the Group. It will be constituted from the leads of the other Interest Groups.

In addition, this Interest Group will assist with the establishment of a global network or platform of interested organizations and ‘early adopters’ among evaluation leaders and influencers. We will work with participants in this platform to identify gaps, challenges and issues of priority interest in their own organizations and in the global evaluation community, and to help unlock new funding and in-kind support for experimentation and the co-creation of understanding and evaluative practices in line with the objectives and foci of the Working Group.

Such a platform will thus help create the necessary space to demonstrate how existing state of the art as well as new ideas and approaches can be reflected in their everyday realities, and in efforts to transform the global evaluation system to be more salient for the development challenges of this era.

**HOW WE WILL WORK**

Participants in the TE-TD Working Group can select which Interest Group(s) they wish to join; any number is possible. At the moment, participation only commits us to contribute to, and benefit from the work of the Forum for as long as it provides us with a good value proposition.
The activities and initiatives of each Interest Group are lightly coordinated by a lead (or two co-leads) who is part of a core group that together helps direct the evolving strategy of TE-TD.

Each Interest Group has to find its own way of collaborating and getting work done, in the initial phases in the absence of financial and other forms of support using a ‘light touch’ approach. Ongoing communication and iterative sharing among the larger Working Group (and with the larger Forum) is essential, and facilitated by the connections among the core group. Until support becomes available for face-to-face or more intensive interaction, webinars and virtual meetings are to be the main modes of engagement within and among the Interest Groups. Common workspaces can be set up as required.

A webinar or virtual meeting to ensure momentum and engage the whole Working Group (including other Forum Working Group participants if required) will be held every 8-10 weeks. They will help develop common understandings about actions, modes of working, outputs and potential for support. They will also enable sharing of progress and breakthroughs.

Outputs will include establishing a presence in the social media, including through blog posts and the Forum website; think pieces, working papers and formal publications; a repository of resources relevant to, and generated by the Working Group; and materials for short courses and graduate curricula that can help evaluation practice advance among young and emerging evaluators.

**JOIN Us!**

This TE-TD Working Group Manifesto and summary of initiatives are the synthesis of many discussions, several drafts and a more detailed work plan developed over a nine-month long process that engaged around 100 people, including leading thinkers in the field of systems, complexity science and evaluation, and supplemented by a survey that gauged the specific interests in, and perspectives on the intent and potential of the Working Group.

**This provided a sound foundation for action.** The Manifesto is to be concluded through a final consultation with participants in the Working Group. It will remain a living document that will be adjusted as our thinking is enriched by our experiences and by the ongoing input of all concerned.

Fundamental to the work of the Working Group is the understanding that there are many people and initiatives already trying to address many of its elements. We trust that we can connect all of us to help realize the scale of effort necessary to make this a truly collaborative, truly effective effort.

**For further information and to participate in the Working Group, contact:**

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