



SUMMARY NOTES

EEAP WEBINAR 28

From Evidence to Policy: Innovative Evaluation Methods for Sustainable Energy and Waste-to-Energy Systems

On July 7, 2026, the Energy Evaluation Asia Pacific (EEAP) organized its 28th webinar, focusing on the topic of “From Evidence to Policy: Innovative Evaluation Methods for Sustainable Energy and Waste-to-Energy Systems”. The session featured a presentation by:

- **Fayyaz Ahmed Fayyaz**, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Specialist and evaluator

A second presentation on evaluating the multiple benefits of sustainable energy and waste-to-energy systems had also planned. However, the speaker was unable to join because severe weather and connectivity problems in Nepal disrupted his connection."

The webinar examined how evaluation practice can remain credible, inclusive, ethical, and useful in a fast-changing digital environment. It connected established evaluation principles - including clear evaluation questions, OECD-DAC criteria, data quality, stakeholder participation, and evidence use - with digital data collection, automated analysis, visualization, and artificial intelligence.

Fayyaz emphasized that evaluation is an interconnected journey rather than a single method or reporting exercise. He discussed common weaknesses that undermine evaluation quality, approaches for integrating “leave no one behind” and meaningful participation, the opportunities and risks associated with AI, and the conditions under which impact evaluation is appropriate.

Overall, the webinar showed that innovation in evaluation is not limited to adopting new technology. Credibility depends on purposeful data collection, sound professional judgement, ethical safeguards, stakeholder ownership, and the practical use of findings in decisions. This document summarizes the key discussion points and takeaways from the webinar.

Webinar Agenda

Time (PKT)	Sessions/Speakers
9:00-9:05 AM	Welcome Remarks & Context Setting <i>Edward Vine, Affiliate, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) and Steering Committee Member, EEAP</i>
9:05-9:45 AM	Presenter 1. Fayyaz Ahmed Fayyaz, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Specialist Presentation Title: <i>“Innovative Evaluation Methods for Sustainable Energy”</i> 2. Planned presentation: “Evaluating the Multiple Benefits of Sustainable Energy and Waste-to-Energy Systems” (not delivered because the speaker could not connect)
9:45-9:57 AM	Moderated Audience Q&A, Edward Vine
9:57-10:00 AM	Concluding Comments & Vote of Thanks

Introduction and Context Setting



Edward Vine

Affiliate, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) and Steering Committee Member, Energy Evaluation Asia Pacific (EEAP)

Ed welcomed participants, introduced the webinar, and framed the discussion around the importance of objective and useful evaluation for energy policies and programmes.

Introduction to Energy Evaluation Asia Pacific (EEAP)

Ed described EEAP as a non-profit community of practice established in 2018 to strengthen the practice and capacity of energy evaluation across the Asia-Pacific region. He explained that EEAP works with governments, civil society organizations, research institutions, industry, evaluators, and practitioners through webinars, conferences, workshops, knowledge resources, and technical exchange.

He emphasized the value of post-implementation monitoring and evaluation for answering practical questions: which actions pay off, how programmes and policies can be improved, and how successful approaches can be expanded. He also highlighted EEAP’s focus on collaborative, data-driven decision-making and on evaluating policy adoption, implementation, behavioural change, and wider economic and environmental benefits.

Ed noted that evidence-based decision-making is increasingly important as societies confront climate change, artificial intelligence, environmental risks, and weakening public trust in science. He also highlighted EEAP’s upcoming webinars and virtual conference, and encouraged participants to use the recordings and resources available through EEAP’s website and YouTube channel.

“Innovative Evaluation Methods for Sustainable Energy”



Fayyaz Ahmed Fayyaz

PPM Hub Coordinator (DHIS-2) at Mercy Corps and Evaluation Expert at Madiba Group, Germany.

Fayyaz presented a broad overview of how established evaluation practice can be strengthened through inclusion, digital tools, artificial intelligence, professional judgement, and a stronger focus on evidence use. His presentation drew on resources from organizations and networks including OECD-DAC, ALNAP, the Independent Evaluation Group, UNHCR, and the wider evaluation community.

Evaluation as an interconnected journey

Fayyaz began by describing evaluation as a sequence of connected decisions rather than a standalone study. Terms of reference and procurement establish the scope and accountability of an external evaluation, while the core evaluation journey moves through planning, data collection, analysis, reporting, and action on the findings. Each stage affects the credibility of the next.

The selection of methods should be driven by the evaluation questions, available budget, programme stage, intended users, and the type of decision the evaluation needs to support. No single method is suitable for every evaluation, and innovation should not be adopted without considering whether it is appropriate for the purpose and context.

Using established evaluation standards

He highlighted the six OECD-DAC evaluation criteria as a widely used basis for assessing development and energy programmes: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. These criteria provide a common framework, but they still need to be translated into context-specific questions, indicators, and evidence requirements.

Moving beyond activities and outputs

A recurring message was that evaluation should not stop at confirming whether activities were completed or outputs were delivered. Evaluators should examine whether those activities generated short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes, whether the intervention contributed to meaningful change, and whether the expected impact is beginning to emerge. Evidence should therefore connect implementation with results rather than merely document completion.

Credibility, Inclusion, and Stakeholder Participation

Common practices that weaken evaluation credibility

Fayyaz identified several recurring practices that can reduce the usefulness and trustworthiness of evaluation:

- **Collecting data without a clear purpose:** Large volumes of data do not create credibility when the data are not linked to decisions, indicators, or intended use.
- **Focusing on activities rather than outcomes:** Counting trainings, meetings, or completed tasks is insufficient without examining changes in knowledge, behaviour, systems, or performance.
- **Using weak indicators or operating without a baseline:** Unclear indicators and missing reference points make it difficult to measure progress or interpret results.
- **Treating M&E as a reporting exercise:** Monitoring and evaluation should support learning, accountability, adaptation, and follow-up, not only donor reporting.
- **Limiting stakeholder involvement:** Governments, communities, civil society organizations, programme teams, donors, and affected groups should be involved according to their influence, interest, and role.

- **Failing to use findings:** Evidence has little value when recommendations are not discussed, tracked, or incorporated into programme and policy decisions.

Data quality and purposeful evidence

He stressed that credible data should be assessed for completeness, relevance, precision, integrity, reliability, and timeliness. Data collection tools should be derived from a clear results framework and indicators, while analysis should focus on interpreting what the evidence means for the intervention and its stakeholders.

Leave no one behind and meaningful participation

Evaluation design should actively consider gender, disability, grassroots organizations, minority groups, and other populations who may be excluded from programme processes or evidence. Disaggregation is important, but genuine inclusion also requires people to participate in shaping questions, interpreting findings, and deciding how results will be used.

Fayyaz described participation as a progression. At the lowest level, people may attend only as representatives. Participation becomes more meaningful when stakeholders influence the process, contribute to decisions, experience transformative changes, and ultimately develop ownership of the intervention and its results. Ethical participation also requires informed consent, confidentiality, data protection, and a commitment to do no harm.

Digital Tools and Artificial Intelligence in Evaluation

Opportunities across the evaluation cycle

Digital platforms can increase the speed, scale, consistency, and accessibility of evaluation work. Fayyaz referred to tools such as KoboToolbox, ODK, Microsoft Forms, and Google Forms for data collection; SPSS, R, Stata, and Excel for quantitative analysis; MaxQDA and NVivo for qualitative analysis; and Power BI for visualization and communication.

When well designed, digital systems can apply validation and skip logic during data collection, accelerate cleaning and aggregation, generate tables and graphs, support large datasets, and shorten the time required for analysis and reporting. AI and machine-learning approaches can also assist with pattern detection, predictive analysis, synthesis, automated reporting, and policy simulation.

Ethical and methodological risks

Fayyaz cautioned that AI can strengthen or weaken evaluation credibility. AI systems reflect the data used to train them and can reproduce bias, omit context, misuse sensitive information, or produce outputs that appear authoritative without being accurate. Risks increase when data are used without clear consent, when confidentiality is not protected, or when evaluators cannot explain how a result was generated.

He proposed fairness, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, contextual understanding, and human oversight as key principles for AI-supported evaluation. The integrity of AI-assisted evidence depends on responsible data governance and on evaluators being transparent about how tools were used and how outputs were checked.

AI should assist, not replace, the evaluator

The central message was that AI can identify patterns, summarize information, and accelerate synthesis, but it cannot replace professional judgement. Evaluators remain responsible for understanding context, interpreting meaning, weighing uncertainty, engaging stakeholders, and determining whether evidence is credible and useful. Human involvement is therefore essential regardless of how capable digital tools become.

Impact Evaluation and Evidence for Decision-Making

When impact evaluation is appropriate

Fayyaz distinguished between formative evaluation, which supports improvement during implementation, and summative approaches such as final, ex-post, and impact evaluation. He cautioned against using the term “impact evaluation” without first confirming that the programme and evidence conditions make causal or contribution-focused analysis feasible.

Impact evaluation may be appropriate when:

- scaling or replication is being considered and decision-makers need evidence on whether the intervention works;
- contribution or attribution needs to be demonstrated;
- a significant knowledge gap exists;
- the intervention is sufficiently stable, clearly defined, and measurable;
- comparison groups, counterfactual reasoning, or other credible causal approaches are feasible; and
- enough time has passed for the expected outcomes or impacts to become observable.

It may be inappropriate when the programme is still at an early stage, the counterfactual cannot be established, participant groups are too small, expected effects require a longer time horizon, or indirect effects cannot be measured credibly.

More data do not automatically produce better decisions

The presentation emphasized that evidence quality is determined by its relevance to the decision, precision, timeliness, context, uncertainty, and intended use - not by volume alone. Credibility is strengthened through collective interpretation, dialogue, and transparent reasoning. Evaluators should therefore plan not only how evidence will be generated, but also how it will be synthesized, communicated, discussed, and acted upon.

Illustrative evaluation resources

Fayyaz briefly highlighted visual and practical resources that can help evaluators navigate methods and decisions, including Michael Quinn Patton's Evaluation Periodic Table and the Rainbow Framework. He also referred to ALNAP, BetterEvaluation, M&E Universe, professional associations, and recorded EEAP webinars as useful learning resources.

Key takeaways from the presentation

- Evaluation is an interconnected process in which planning, data collection, analysis, reporting, and evidence use must reinforce one another.
- Innovation should respond to evaluation purpose and context; new technology is not automatically a better method.
- Credibility requires clear questions, strong indicators, appropriate standards, data quality, transparency, and practical use of findings.
- Leave no one behind should influence sampling, disaggregation, participation, interpretation, ethics, and ownership - not only the wording of reports.
- AI can improve speed, scale, and synthesis, but it introduces risks related to bias, privacy, consent, accuracy, and explainability.
- Human judgement and stakeholder dialogue remain essential for interpreting evidence and making responsible decisions.

Moderated Audience Q&A

The Q&A session was moderated by Edward Vine. As no questions were submitted by participants, the discussion focused mainly on Ed's questions about how new evaluators can develop their skills, access reliable resources, and build a career in evaluation.

- **Learning pathways for new evaluators:** Fayyaz explained that early-career evaluators now have access to far more learning resources than in previous decades. He recommended using structured online resources such as M&E Universe, ALNAP, BetterEvaluation, recorded webinars, and practical toolkits to understand theories of change, logframes, M&E plans, methods, and the wider evaluation cycle.
- **Professional networks and continuous learning:** He encouraged young professionals to join national and regional evaluation associations, youth evaluation groups, professional communities on LinkedIn, and training platforms such as DisasterReady. These networks provide webinars, mentoring, peer learning, and opportunities to understand different evaluation specializations.
- **Career pathways:** The discussion noted that evaluators can build experience in government, consulting firms, non-profit organizations, research institutions, or programme teams. Rather than presenting one path as universally best, Fayyaz emphasized personal interest, self-directed learning, practical exposure, and sustained engagement with professional communities.
- **Building expertise in energy evaluation:** Ed added that many national evaluation associations increasingly address climate change and sustainability, while EEAP provides a specialized platform for energy evaluation. He encouraged participants to explore the universities, courses, webinars, and resources listed through EEAP.

Presenter's Bio



Fayyaz Ahmed Fayyaz,

PPM Hub Coordinator (DHIS-2) at Mercy Corps and Evaluation Expert at Madiba Group, Germany.

Fayyaz Ahmed is a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) specialist with nearly two decades of experience in emergency response, humanitarian assistance, and international development programming. Throughout his career, Fayyaz has worked with leading international organizations, including Mercy Corps, Save the Children International, VSO, UNDP, NRC, AKDN, Muslim Aid, and other development partners. His expertise spans monitoring and evaluation systems, data analysis, health, education, climate change adaptation, humanitarian response, and organizational learning.

Fayyaz has successfully designed and implemented MEAL systems for complex development and emergency programs, including assignments in challenging and conflict-affected environments such as Afghanistan and Somalia. He has contributed to major education initiatives, including Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programs and the Pakistan Reading Project, while also supporting evidence-based decision-making through research, evaluations, and data-driven program management.

In addition to his operational and technical roles, Fayyaz collaborates with diverse communities and research institutions. He serves as a Research Fellow with Torque Communities and works closely with Germany's Madiba Group on evaluation and research initiatives. His professional interests include digital data systems, DHIS-2 implementation, impact evaluation, accountability mechanisms, and strengthening organizational learning for sustainable development outcomes.

Planned second presentation

A presentation on "Evaluating the Multiple Benefits of Sustainable Energy and Waste-to-Energy Systems" was scheduled for the webinar. The speaker was unable to participate due to some personal reasons. EEAP indicated that the contribution may be included in a future session.

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