

SEVAL Annual Conference 2015 and Pre-Conference for the International Year of Evaluation 2015

Friday, 4 September 2015, University of Geneva, Uni Mail

SEVAL Annual Conference 2015 Evaluation and Independence

In order for evaluation to serve as a rational decision-making basis for changes in politics, programmes, projects or institutions, it should be – in line with traditional consideration – as scientific, objective and independent as possible. The need for independent knowledge and research was the trigger for the creation of specialised evaluation services. The latter's independence is often enshrined in law and in institutional rules.

Recent surveys in various countries have shown, however, that evaluators are under pressure from various stakeholder groups. The independence of evaluation is not only called into question in evaluation practice, but also in evaluation theory. New approaches to evaluation emphasise stronger participation of interested and affected parties in the evaluation process. The question of what kind of influence is ethically right or wrong is a controversial one in the evaluation community.

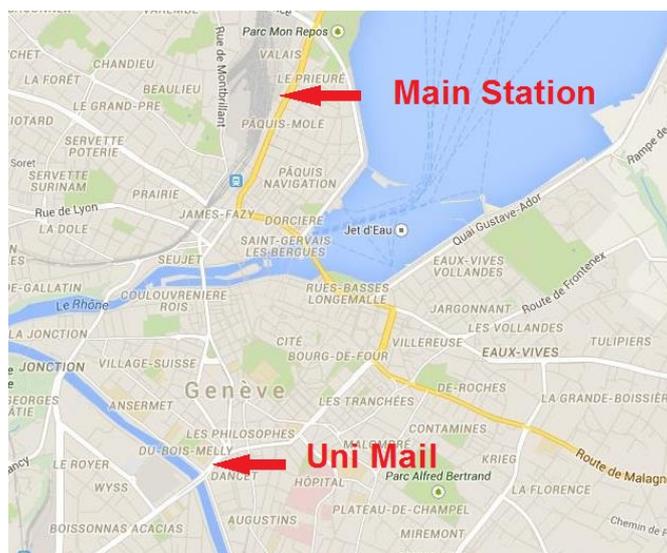
At the Conference, we will examine the independence of evaluation in practice. Moreover, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Parliamentary Control of the Administration – the evaluation service of the Swiss Parliament – we will address the question of the institutional independence of evaluation services. We will also look at the bigger picture, examining the status of the independence of evaluation in Switzerland in an international perspective.

To mark the International Year of Evaluation, we will welcome the international organisations in Geneva to our Congress. On **Thursday, 3 September 2015, the "Geneva Evaluation Network" (GEN) will hold a pre-conference on "Evaluation Challenges for International Organizations: Capacity Development for Relevant and Utilization-Focused Evaluation"**, which members of the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL) are very welcome to attend (see programme page 9).

General Information

Languages: The presentations will be held in the language specified in the programme. No simultaneous translation. Contributions to the discussion are welcome in English, French and German.

Venue: University of Geneva, Uni Mail, Boulevard du Pont-d'Arve 40, Auditorium MS 150.



Travel information: From Geneva main station “Cornavin” → Tram No. 15 in the direction of “Palettes” → Tram stop “Uni Mail” (a 10-minute journey).

Fees and Registration :

	SEVAL Members	Non-members	New member incl. membership fee 2016
2 Days (3 and 4 September)	CHF 250	CHF 320	CHF 330
1 Day (3 or 4 September)	CHF 150	CHF 200	CHF 230

* Students receive a 50% discount on their participation fee.

Registration until **7 August 2015** on <http://www.seval.ch/en/veranstaltungen/index.cfm>

Friday, 4 September 2015

09.15 *Welcome coffee*

09.45 **General meeting of the SEVAL**

Conference

10.20 **Opening of the conference** *Emmanuel Sangra, president of SEVAL,*
(in French) *Swiss Federal Audit Office*

10.30 **Welcoming speech to EvalYear** *Craig Russon,*
(in English) *Geneva Evaluation Network*

10.40 **Awarding of the Prix SEVAL** *Jury of the Prix SEVAL*
(in French)

10.50 **Introduction to the conference topic** *Simone Ledermann, SEVAL committee,*
(in English) *Parliamentary Control of the Administration*

11.00 **Independence of evaluation in** *Prof. Fritz Sager, University of Berne*
Switzerland: the current status
Results of a survey among SEVAL members
in an international comparison *(in English)*

11.30 **The position of the evaluation function in** *Thierry Rajaobelina, United Nations Relief*
international organisations *and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees*
Evaluation in the United Nations system *(in* *(UNRWA)*
French)

12.00 *Buffet*

Workshops

13.15 **Workshop 1:** The relationship between *Moderation: Céline Mavrot*
evaluators, evaluation managers and
commissioners: testing their independence
(in French)

Workshop 2: The independence of *Moderation: Prof. Alexandre Flückiger*
evaluation services: foundations and
practice
(in French)

Workshop 3: New evaluation approaches *Moderation: Prof. Andreas Balthasar*
to health policy: what role for
independence?
(in English)

Workshop 4: Evaluation and *Moderation: Scott Chaplowe*
independence – international perspectives
(in English)

14.45 *Break*

Conference and Podium

15.00	Benefits of independent evaluation in politics Reflections on the occasion of 25th anniversary of the Parliamentary Control of the Administration <i>(in French)</i>	<i>Maria Bernasconi, National Councilor, ex-president of the Control Committees, SP, Geneva</i>
15.30	Results of the conference <i>(in English)</i>	<i>Workshop-Moderators</i> <i>Moderation: Simone Ledermann</i>
16.00	<i>Aperitif and pastry</i>	
16.15	A new workgroup for evaluation in French-speaking Switzerland Presentation of the group and their projects <i>(in French)</i>	<i>Groupe romand d'évaluation</i>
17.00	End	

Presentations

Independence of evaluation in Switzerland: the current status

Speaker: Fritz Sager, born in 1970, has been a professor of political science at the Centre for Public Management, University of Bern, since 2009. He studied history, sociology and political science in Bern and Neuchâtel, worked in applied political research and evaluation and as a research assistant at the Institut de recherche sur l'environnement construit at EPFL. He then took on the role of assistant professor of policy analysis and evaluation at the Institute of Political Science, University of Bern. He has published his research on evaluation in the *American Journal of Evaluation*, *Public Administration*, *Public Money and Management*, *Evaluation* and *Zeitschrift für Evaluation*.

Topic: An anonymous survey of the members of the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL) shows that the majority of evaluators in Switzerland do not feel that they are independent when conducting evaluations. Around half of the respondents stated that they had been influenced or put under pressure in their evaluation work, and often more than once. Influence by the commissioner is particularly common. Influence was also found to be more common in summative or ex-post (retrospective) evaluation than in formative or ex-ante (prospective) evaluation. The results of the survey conducted in 2014 will be presented and compared to similar studies from other countries.

Languages: Presentation in English; discussion in English, French and German

The position of the evaluation function in international organisations

Speaker: Born in 1962, of French and Malagasy nationality, Thierry Rajaobelina is an alumnus of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) in France. From 1998, he was a member of the French Court of Auditors that has the constitutional mandate to evaluate public policies. Later, he became the Director of the internal oversight division of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and, since the 1st of May, of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Topic: The evaluation function in international organisation is still recent and constantly evolving. The norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) are supposed to promote within the United Nations system evaluations that are independent, credible, and useful. Based on his experience and examples from the available literature (peer reviews of the evaluation departments in the United Nations system, work of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system, and the work of UNEG), Thierry Rajaobelina will analyse the practical conditions for evaluation to be independent, credible and useful. He will also address questions regarding the mandates, resources, and relationships between evaluation managers and decision-making bodies.

Languages: Presentation in French; discussion in French and English

The benefits of independent evaluation in politics

Speaker: Born in 1955, Maria Bernasconi grew up in Zurich and Lucerne where she obtained a higher education entrance qualification (Matura) and then a nursing diploma. Since 1978, she has been living in Geneva, where she obtained a degree in law. She has represented the social democratic party in the National Council between 1995 and 1999 and again from 2003 to today. She is a member of the Control Committee (CC), which she chaired in 2010 and 2011. She is currently chairing the CC subcommittee dealing with the Federal Department of Finance (FDF) and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER). Maria Bernasconi is married, mother of two children and grandmother of two grandchildren and works as the general secretary of the federal personnel association.

Topic: Democracy thrives on transparency. Independent evaluations allow this transparency and help prevent corruption and favouritism. To exercise the control function attributed to the Federal Assembly by the Constitution and the law, the Swiss militia parliament is very dependent on the secretariat of Control Committees and of the Parliamentary Control of the Administration (PCA). The PCA has existed for 25 years. It carries out independent evaluations for the parliamentary Control Committees, which draw political conclusions, formulating if necessary recommendations to the government or even depositing parliamentary initiatives or requests (so-called motions or postulates) to force the government to act according to the principles of legitimacy, appropriateness, and effectiveness. In addition, the Control Committees have to inform the Federal Assembly AND the public in comprehensive manner about the performance of the federal council and the federal administration, the federal courts and other bodies entrusted with tasks by the Confederation. This helps making political action transparent and ensures the well-functioning of democracy.

Languages: Presentation in French; discussion in French and German

Workshops

Workshop 1: L'indépendance à l'épreuve de la relation entre mandants, gestionnaires d'évaluation et mandataires

Modération : Céline Mavrot, Kompetenzzentrum für Public Management, Université de Berne

Intervenant-e-s :

- Prof. Katia Horber-Papazian, IDHEAP, Université de Lausanne
- Pierre-François Unger, ancien membre du Conseil d'État, Genève

Thème : Cet atelier porte sur les liens unissant les mandants, les gestionnaires de l'évaluation ainsi que les évaluateurs et évaluatrices. La place prise par ces trois pôles dans la définition et la gestion d'un mandat a inmanquablement des répercussions fondamentales sur le contenu-même de l'évaluation. Cette triangulation constitue un des éléments-clé du contexte d'évaluation, nécessitant des ajustements constants entre les acteurs impliqués. C'est cette relation ainsi que ses implications pour l'indépendance de l'évaluation que nous discuterons ici. La question sera introduite par l'exemple d'une évaluation de politique sociale menée à Genève en 2004. Nous bénéficierons à cet égard du point de vue de l'évaluatrice (Prof. Katia Horber-Papazian) ainsi que du mandant (Pierre-François Unger) sur cette expérience commune.

Langues : Exposés en français ; discussion en français, allemand et anglais.

Workshop 2: L'indépendance des organes d'évaluation : fondements et pratiques

Modération : Alexandre Flückiger, Professeur à la Faculté de droit, Centre d'étude, de technique et d'évaluation législatives (CETEL), Université de Genève

Intervenant-e-s :

- François Paychère, magistrat à la Cour des comptes, Genève
- Nicolas Grosjean, Chef du Contrôle parlementaire de l'administration, Berne
- Isabelle Terrier, Présidente de la Cour des comptes, Genève

Thème : L'évaluation des politiques publiques est devenue progressivement une mission que divers organes de l'Etat accomplissent tant sur le plan fédéral que cantonal. L'évaluation ne constituant ni une activité de surveillance classique ni d'exécution traditionnelle, la question de l'indépendance de tels organes lorsqu'ils remplissent des fonctions d'évaluation se pose avec une acuité particulière. Cet atelier en explorera d'une part les fondements théoriques et les enjeux (François Paychère). Il sera complété d'autre part par deux illustrations, l'une sur le plan fédéral, l'autre sur le plan cantonal : l'indépendance du Contrôle parlementaire de l'administration (Nicolas Grosjean) et la mise en œuvre de l'indépendance de la Cour des comptes genevoise dans ses missions d'évaluation (Isabelle Terrier).

Langues : Exposés en français ; discussion en français, allemand et anglais.

Workshop 3: New evaluation approaches to health policy: what role for independence?

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Andreas Balthasar, University of Lucerne and Interface Politikstudien

Speakers:

- Dr. Elil Renganathan, DG Representative for Evaluation and Organizational Learning, Office of the Director General, World Health Organization
- Prof. Dr. Nicholas Mays, Professor of Health Policy and Director of Policy Innovation Research Unit, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom

Topic: In view of widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of the results of self-evaluations and the limited use of the results of independent third-party evaluations, new evaluation approaches are being discussed and examined in the field of health policy. Examples include utilisation-focused evaluation, participatory evaluation and the 'critical friend' approach. This workshop will discuss the special challenges of evaluating health policy given the tension between independence of the evaluation during implementation and the use of the evaluation results. One of the main questions is whether new evaluation approaches are needed and what to expect from them.

Languages: Presentations and discussion in English.

Workshop 4: Evaluation and independence – international perspectives

Moderator: Mr. Scott Chaplowe, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Speakers:

- Prof. Zenda Ofir, International Evaluation Specialist and Honorary Professor, University of Stellenbosch
- Prof. Thomas Widmer, University of Zurich, Department of Political Science
- Ms. Odile Keller, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- Dr. Mzia Turashvili – Evaluation Coordinator, Vienna Evaluation Unit of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

Topic: The Geneva Evaluation Network will organise a discussion of the concept of independence. Some in our profession see independence as a monolithic concept. However, others see it as being quite nuanced: there is structural independence, functional independence, operational independence, etc. Is an evaluation independent only if structural, functional and operational independence are respected? Can an evaluation still be considered independent if one of the three is not respected? How about two of the three? Which two? In other words, is any of the three more important than the others? Panellists will pay particular attention to the robustness of independence. To what extent can the assumptions underlying the various types be violated before one can no longer say that an evaluation is independent? This has implications for attempts to aggregate the concept of independence.

Languages: Presentations and discussion in English.

Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL) / Geneva Evaluation Network (GEN)

Thursday, 3 September 2015, University of Geneva, Uni Mail

Pre-Conference for the International Year of Evaluation 2015

Evaluation Challenges for International Organizations

Capacity Development for Relevant and Utilization Focused Evaluation

Time / Session Title	Item / Theme	Presenters / Modus
09h30 - 10h00	<i>Registration and Coffee</i>	
10h00 – 11h30		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IFRC (International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent; Head, Planning and Evaluation Mr. Josse Gillijns)• WSSCC (Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council; Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Ms. Chaitali Chattopadhyay)• WHO (World Health Organisation; DG Representative for Evaluation and Organizational Learning Dr. Eliil Renganathan)• OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; Director of Internal Audit and Evaluation Ms. Lucy Elliott; Head of In-depth Evaluation Mr. Kevin Williams / Plenary (Facilitation by GEN)
1 st Block of Presentations of Heads of Evaluation Units / GEN Participants (20' each including Q/A)	Role of Evaluation Units in fulfilling Evaluation Mandate / Presenting main features of evaluation units (institutional setup, mission, means, types, challenges)	
<i>Coffee Break</i>		
12h00-13h00		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ILO (International Labor Organization; Director, Office of Evaluation Mr. Guy Thijs)• JIU (Joint Inspection Unit; Inspector Ms. Sukai Prom-Jackson)• Council of Europe (Director of Internal Oversight; Dr. Ansgar Eussner) Plenary
2 nd Block of Presentations of Heads of Evaluation Units / JIU (20' each including Q/A)	Same as above and Overview by JIU on their Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the UN	
<i>Lunch Break</i>		

14h00 – 15h30	Group Sessions on Focus Areas:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Utilization of Evaluation in Organizations and by Key Partners2. Relevance and Impact of Evaluation for improved evidence-based decision-making, accountability and learning3. Evaluation Capacity Development in Organizations	Discussing challenges and opportunities in each topic / theme	“World Café” facilitated by: Ms. Elenor Richter Lyonette , Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer; Sustainable Development Services Mr. Glenn O’Neil , Evaluation Expert, Director, Owl Re Ms. Karen Russon President of Evaluation Capacity Development Group Discussion in 3 groups; each facilitator acts as a "table host". Participants rotate from room to room while the host remains at his/her table
<hr/> <i>Coffee Break</i> <hr/>				
16h00-17h00	Panel and plenary discussions of the outcomes from the presentations	Compiling and discussing the main challenges identified in the “World Café”	Panel Discussion including the facilitators and presenters from previous sessions and plenary chaired by Mr. Arild Hauge , Deputy Director, Independent Evaluation Office United Nations Development Programme	
17h00 – 18h00	Summary and Final Wrap-up: Issues to be brought into future discussions (including next day’s workshop on independence)	Chair’s Summary of discussions, which may include elements for follow-up	Plenary Presentation of Possible Action Points Chair: Dr. Craig Russon , Senior Evaluator, International Labor Organization; and Mr. Claude Hilfiker , Head Evaluation Section, World Intellectual Property Organization	
