

IOCE EvalPartners profile survey of Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs)

I. Basic profile information

1. Name and acronym of organization (VOPE)	Community of Evaluators for South Asia (CoE South Asia)
2. Geographic scope of organization	Regional (multi-national)
3. Contact Details	Name of main contact person for EvalPartners: Shubh Kumar-Range; shubhk.range@gmail.com CoE Coordinator: Sandip Pattanayak E-address: sandip@cms-india.org Postal address: Catalyst Management Services, #19, 1 st Main, 1 st Cross, Aswath Nagar, RMV 2 nd Stage, Bangalore – 560094. Telephone: +91-80-23419616 VOPE website URL: www.communityofevaluators.org
4. Current membership – numbers of individuals, by their affiliation (if known; please at least give total)	Government: NGOs/CSOs: Academics: Private sector (consultants): Other: Total membership: 37
5. Year VOPE was founded	2008
6. Current status (identify which)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal network
7. Information about growth: evolution of the number of members or financial resources in the last 5 years.	Started in December 2008 with 25 members, and has 37 members from six South Asian Countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
8. Purpose and mission of VOPE	Advancing theory and practice of evaluation in South Asia, building a professional organization for evaluators and promoting evaluation field-building in the region.
9. Current strategy and emphasis	Building on the foundation of the past three years, we will focus on institutionalizing the organization, knowledge building and promoting effective evaluations and their use, develop linkages with regional and international evaluation organizations.
10. Organizational capacity: Please describe your governance structure, leadership, services provided, finances, human resources, linkages with other organizations, etc.	The governance structure for CoE, is informal, with Members joining ‘core groups’ for different activities such as proposal development and Evaluation Conclave and others volunteering for Task Forces set up. Our institutional Host is currently CMS (Catalyst Management Services). In addition to individual members, we also have Institutional Members with whom we regularly liaise -- such as – SLEvA, Sambodhi, Association for Stimulating Knowhow (ASK), International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), and DESI.
11. Means of communication with members , e.g. newsletter, listserv, publication, website	Listserv, bi-weekly Skype calls, website
12. Past events (e.g. during past year)	Planning Meetings for Phase II (second 3-years) that started in 2012
13. Forthcoming key events/conferences – dates, location	Second Evaluation Conclave planned for Feb 2013 in Kathmandu, Nepal
14. Name and e-address of person submitting this information	Shubh Kumar-Range Shubhk.range@gmail.com
15. Date of this update	April 26, 2012

II. Experience with Evaluation Capacity Building

<p>1. Background: Please provide a brief history of the formation of this organization (VOPE).</p> <p>1.1 Who were/are the key players?</p> <p>1.2 How many members do you have on your governing board/ committee?</p> <p>1.3 What are the main existing strengths that your VOPE is trying to capitalize on?</p> <p>1.4 What are the main challenges that your VOPE is trying to address?</p>	<p>1.1 The key players in forming the CoE were IDRC SARO and ASK (Association for Stimulating Knowhow) which submitted and implemented a 3-yr proposal for supporting the formation of CoE. This start-up phase was conducted between August 2008 and December 2011. For the next 3-year period we have developed a workplan and since the incorporation of the Regional organization is still being firmed up, we have contracted CMS (Catalyst Management Services) to host and manage the funds and coordinate activities. An ad-hoc group of task oriented volunteers are supporting the substantive aspects of our work.</p> <p>1.2 At present we do not have an elected governing board. CMS is managing funds and coordinating activities based on a proposal developed by CoE members, and for which we have received part-funding from IDRC. An additional funding proposal has been submitted to EU by CMS, and additional funding opportunities as being explored by members.</p> <p>1.3 We have a very enthusiastic group of 'founding members' from 6 of the 7 south Asian countries. We have started setting up national chapters of CoE in each of these countries, and are going to incorporate the regional organization to be registered in India. We have also conducted a very successful Evaluation Conclave in 2010, that has raised our profile and expanded interest in membership.</p> <p>1.4 Our main challenges are related to i) legal challenges with registering and operating a regional organization in South Asia; ii) ongoing engaging and involving our membership's participation; iii) raising adequate funds to fully energize and operationalize the vision of CoE</p>
<p>2. Organizational motivation: What were/are the driving forces of the VOPE and its historical development?</p>	<p>We are still a young fledgling organization that operates on an informal basis. We have got to this point with financial support and guidance from IDRC SARO. Founder members are very motivated, and we are grateful to both ASK and CMS for helping to shepherd us along.</p>
<p>3. Evaluation Capacity Building: What has your VOPE done to promote evaluation (M&E) capacity?</p>	<p>Our main activity was the Evaluation Conclave of 2010. In addition we have held regular 2-3 day meetings which we timed along with other regional events, e.g. SLEVA's bi-annual conferences. At each of these meetings we have organized capacity building for members. We are producing an edited volume on Evaluation in South Asia to which members as well as non-members have contributed.</p>
<p>4. Context / target entities: More specifically, who are the persons or institutions your organization seeks to influence (to strengthen evaluation capacity)? For example:</p> <p>4.1 Technical capacities to <i>supply</i> quality evaluations, partnering with experts, local universities or others to provide training for members, etc.;</p> <p>4.2 Strengthening VOPE organizational capacity itself;</p> <p>4.3 Enhancing the enabling environment for evaluation, including strengthening the <i>demand</i> for and use of evaluations by policy makers;</p> <p>4.4 Influencing governmental policies related to evaluation, evaluation designs and implementation of M&E</p>	<p>Our vision and workplan includes all of the categories of activities, but focuses primarily 4.2,4.3, and 4.4</p>

systems, etc.	
5. Public accountability: Is your VOPE helping to strengthen oversight and transparency of government programs? If so, in what ways? Can you share any success stories of evaluators or others promoting public accountability?	Yes, we are going to work on promoting evaluation policy at the national level in our region.
6. More specifically, what are some of the key themes for which you advocate? For example, are you promoting issues related to cultural sensitivity, equity, social justice, empowerment, transformation, gender, environment, poverty? If so, please describe or attach relevant documents.	At present we are mostly focused on building our organization, and hosting the next Evaluation Conclave in our region in Feb 2013. In addition we want to encourage evaluation professionals to also do evaluation research and writing. This will raise the profile of evaluators in the region and assist with evaluation field-building.
7. Methods: Experiences in strengthening skills of individual members, by (for example): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizing workshops led by local experts; • organizing webinars with international speakers; • designing and delivering e-learning programmes; • administering mentoring programmes; etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizing workshops led by local experts; • administering mentoring programmes
8. Standards: Has your VOPE developed professional standards/ ethical codes/ competencies (or adheres to those developed by others)? If so, please provide documentation.	We have not developed professional standards, but members have reviewed and presented ethical guidelines used internationally.
9. Job opportunities: Do you share employment/ consultancy opportunities with evaluators on your database?	Yes
10. Progress and results: What progress has been achieved so far in any of the above or other domains? What are expected and unexpected results achieved?	<p>We have made progress in the domains of: i) capacity building (conclave, regional workshops); ii) writing and publishing (have a nearly completed manuscript, and many working papers on our website); iii) institutional development for setting up a regional body in this region with many restrictions on movement of funds and people.</p> <p>We have managed to develop a good synergy and trust among our membership in the past 3 years of our operation. To the extent possible members have been attending events, Skype calls and participating in developing and implementing activities. We have been a bit stymied by the legal challenges in registering and we hope to get that done in this year. This will allow us to raise funds and manage our organization more sustainably.</p>
11. Lessons learned: Recommendations/ tips to others for good practices on how to organize and sustain VOPEs like yours.	It is a good idea to spend resources at the beginning to try to create a cohesive group, that shares a common vision and is energized to participate ongoingly. Given the costs of F2F meetings this is particularly important. Related is the issue of legal aspects of the organization – this should be given a high priority from the start.
12. Next steps: What does your organization plan to do next?	We have a very well thought-out 3-year plan of work, which is partly funded. We are moving forward with this, with a priority on the next Evaluation Conclave. Our other priority is to get our organization registered and a functioning legal entity in South Asia.

<p>13. Willing to share with other VOPEs? For example, would you be interested in forming peer-to-peer partnerships with one or more other VOPEs to share lessons learned, advise each other? If so, describe what you would be willing to share / advice you would seek.</p>	<p>We can share: Start-up challenges, how to organize small membership at start to make progress on wide-ranging priorities – capacity building, writing skills development, organizational challenges, etc.</p> <p>We would like to get advice on: how to grow from a small organic group to a larger organization. The challenges are in many parameters: structures, priorities and how to develop transparent and participatory systems, to keep motivating and involving our membership.</p>
<p>14. Suggestions: What ideas do you have for what should be included in activities of the EvalPartners Initiative?</p>	<p>Learning from successful organizations – specifically from those in different parts of the trajectory, since needs and lessons are very specific to the stage of the organization’s life-cycle. Some thinking on this would be helpful. For example, would a study of positive/negative deviants be illustrative?</p>
<p>15. Want to be actively involved? Does your VOPE want to be actively involved in EvalPartners? If so, in what ways?</p>	<p>We are a small organization, but want to both learn and contribute to EvalPartners.</p>