

NATIONAL EVALUATION CAPACITIES CONFERENCES ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING



The work of UNDP is anchored in the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to end poverty, fight inequality, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Evaluation has a key role to play in the implementation of these Goals. By generating objective evidence, evaluation helps achieve greater public accountability and learn from experience how policies and programmes delivered results and ways to improve them.

By adopting the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, Governments accepted to engage in a systematic follow-up and review of its implementation, which will help countries to maximize and track progress towards the achievement of the goals. However, fulfilling this commitment depends largely on the capacities of the countries to review their performance and make adjustments in order to make progress continually.

As part of its mandate, the **Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)** of UNDP contributes to strengthening evaluation capacity within the organization and beyond. Within UNDP, the Office provides guidelines, training workshops, quality assessments, and other services to enhance capacities and improve the quality and use of decentralized evaluations. Beyond UNDP, IEO's efforts aim to strengthen national evaluation capacities and support other communities of practice, knowledge sharing, and the development of new tools to facilitate **diagnostics of evaluation systems**.

The National Evaluation Capacities Conferences

The **NEC conference series** is UNDP's flagship initiative to support the development of national evaluation capacities and systems as part of a broader strategy to contribute to the realization of the SDGs.

These conferences are held by the IEO in a new region every two years in partnership with a host government. They are distinctive in that they are global and focused on supporting the governments with which UNDP works across the globe.

The broader purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for open discussion on issues confronting evaluation in countries, enabling participants to draw on the innovative experiences of others. The conference also promotes an understanding of international standards in evaluation and advocates for evaluation as a means to manage development results, thereby improving public accountability and learning. The conference provides opportunities to:

- Share lessons, innovations, experiences, challenges and solutions in developing and strengthening national evaluation systems.
- Enhance evaluation skills and the understanding of evaluation in the context of the SDGs.
- Foster existing and new partnerships to strengthen national evaluation systems.

Since 2015, the event includes two days of intensive training workshops on evaluation that complement the three days of Conference sessions.

In 2020, UNDP IEO joined forces with the World Bank IEG and other partners to establish the [Global Evaluation Initiative \(GEI\)](#), bringing together different evaluation capacity development initiatives under one umbrella. The NEC conference is part of this collaborative effort.

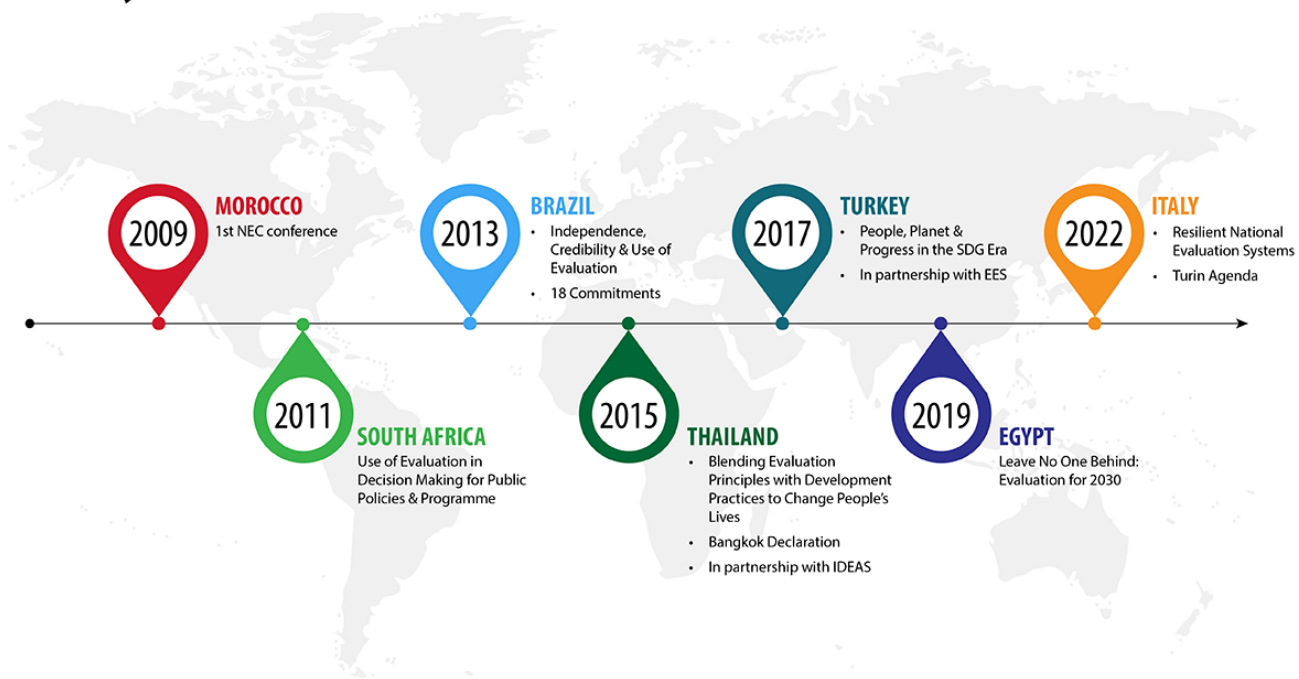
History of the NEC Conference Series

Under the 2030 Agenda, governments have a critical responsibility for the realization of the SDGs. From the outset, the NEC conferences have stressed that national evaluation capacity is directly linked to development and to its governance; over the years, the events have framed one theme that has evolved into the next, gathering momentum with new participants, new countries and new topics.

NEC Participation

- ➔ Since 2009, 2,043 individuals from governments, civil society, the UN system and UNDP.
- ➔ Participation of the primary target group – government officials – has increased steadily over the years.
- ➔ Women participating rose from 23% in 2009 to 43 % in 2022.

History and evolution of NEC conferences



Looking Ahead

The NEC conferences series has created a unique niche, establishing itself as a multisectoral forum on SDGs evaluation, and filling the gaps between other thematic forums.

The SDGs provide a normative framework for the debate on evaluation. There is a potential for collaboration in this area between the evaluation community, governments and the United Nations that could be exploited further.

Over the years, the NEC conferences have emphasized the need for clear political commitment to evaluation – with associated policies and mechanisms to take evaluation forward, – and the professionalization of evaluators, which is more critical than ever considering the complexity of the SDGs. Future events should seek greater synergies with other IEO's capacity development initiatives (such as the [NEC Information Centre](#)), as well as between these and its evaluative work.