

About the Ethical Protocol: Ethical evaluation practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings

This document is considered a ‘working document’ that will be revised over time based on our experience with using it for the continuation of the BetterEvaluation project and informed by the experience from other initiatives or organisations working in this space.

We are keen:

- to receive your feedback at any time to help us improve this Ethical Protocol
- to hear how you have used this Ethical Protocol in your work

Purpose of the Ethical Protocol

To promote the full implementation of ethical principles when engaging in monitoring and evaluation activities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the aim to support M&E practices that respect the rights of, and function for the benefit of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Content of the Ethical Protocol

This document lays out a set of principles organised under six key themes or domains which, together, represent a holistic approach to ethical M&E practice. Each principle is defined in terms of expected knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of those engaging in the design, implementation, reporting and/or use of M&E in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings. The document also specifies common barriers to ethical practice that were identified by evaluators and communities and will be further explored over time.

Intended users of the Ethical Protocol

The BetterEvaluation team –consisting of the BE core team and the members of the Project Working Group (current and future) – in their work on identifying and sharing examples of good evaluation practice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings.

Any government agency, non-governmental or other type of organisation which wants a principles-based approach to applying ethics and wants to put this into practice. They can learn from this Ethical Protocol and further adapt it to their specific type of work and context.

How to use the Ethical Protocol

The BetterEvaluation team will use the principles and associated practice guidance to identify and verify examples of good evaluation practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings.

Others can use it as an example of how to put principles into practice. The Ethical Protocol can be applied across various contexts, evaluation methods and approaches.

It is intended as a companion document to:

- Australian Evaluation Society (AES). *Code of Ethics*. AES, 2013. Available at www.aes.asn.au The *AES Policy on the Application of the Code of Ethics*, as adopted by the AES Board on 12 December 2000, states that upholding the Code is a condition of AES membership. The Code does not currently cover specific statements related to ‘Indigenous groups or communities, or other cross-cultural issues and issues of cultural safety’ as was noted by AES members in a recent survey.
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). *2019 Revision of the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies, Consultation Draft*. “These guidelines apply to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research including research activities relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections. In the Australian context, research has generally been defined as ‘investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding’ and casts a wide net in terms of what constitutes research. Research includes not only academic research carried out in and by universities and publicly funded research agencies, but also archival research, evaluation, quality assurance, social marketing, government policy and program design, and re-use of data for public policy and clinical trials, among others.” (p.8).

The BetterEvaluation Ethical Protocol builds on these (and other) existing Codes/Guidelines to support practical application within the context of monitoring and evaluation activities.

Ethical protocol acknowledgement

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- Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). *Code of Conduct*. Deakin: ACFID, 2016.
- Australian Evaluation Society (AES). *Code of Ethics*. Melbourne: AES, 2013.
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (GERAIS)*. Canberra: AIATSIS, 2012.
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). *2019 Revision of the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies, Consultation Draft*. Canberra: AIATSIS, 2019.
- BetterEvaluation, *Rainbow Framework*.
- Boulton A, Potaka Osborne G, Cvitanovic L, Clarke S, Warner L, Judd J, Chakraborty A, Cargo M. *The STrengthening Evaluation Practices and Strategies (STEPS) in Indigenous settings in Australia and New Zealand Project: Next ‘steps’ in the journey*. Paper presented at the Australasian Evaluation Conference, Launceston, Tasmania, September 2018.
- Indigenous Data Sovereignty Summit and Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, *Data Sovereignty Communique*. Available at: <https://www.maiamnayriwingara.org/mnw-principles>
- National Health and Medical Research Council, *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders* and

Keeping research on track II.

- Terri Janke and Co. Advice on *Copyright and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property*.
- The Fred Hollows Foundation Indigenous Australia Program. *A Cultural Protocol for Evaluation*.

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