



EvalAnalytica

LEAD WITH LEARNING EXCEL WITH EVIDENCE

APEA / EvalforEarth Webinar

# From Criterion to Practice: Is Climate and Ecosystems Health Really Changing Evaluation?

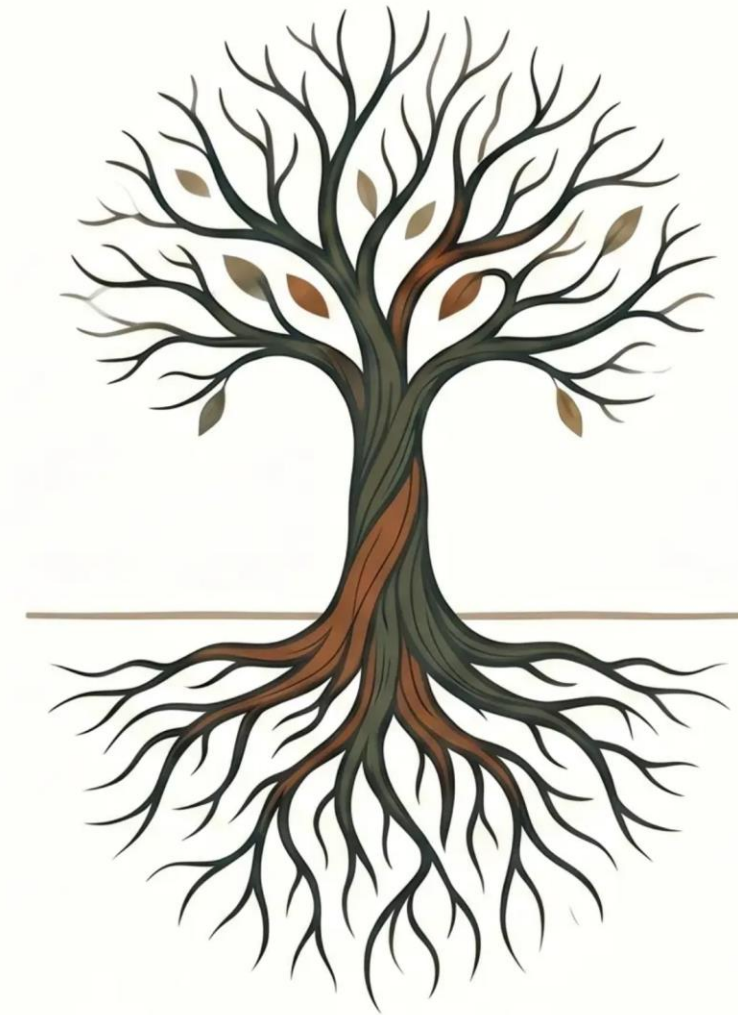
*South Africa as entry point • Africa and Asia-Pacific as the learning horizon*

---

## Moses Mashingaidze

- Director, EvalAnalytica
- African Evaluation Association Board Member – Southern African Representative
- South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association | Legacy Board Member & Former Deputy Chair

“An institutional innovation exists. The deeper question is whether it is reshaping evaluation practice.”



## Why This Matters Now

**“Climate, ecosystems, inequality, and sustainability can no longer sit outside mainstream evaluation.”**



Across Africa and Asia-Pacific, interventions are increasingly implemented in contexts shaped by climate volatility, ecological stress, inequality, livelihood vulnerability, and uneven adaptive capacity.

These are not background conditions, they are the operating environment.

### CEH AFFECTS

- **Relevance** — Does the intervention align with ecological realities?
- **Implementation conditions** — Is the operating environment accounted for?
- **Resilience** — Can outcomes survive environmental stress?
- **Sustainability** — Will gains endure beyond the programme cycle?
- **Distributional outcomes** — Who benefits, and who is exposed to harm?
- **Future viability** — Is the intervention designed to last?

***“The question is no longer whether evaluation should engage CEH. The question is how seriously, how practically, and how contextually it does so.”***

# What CEH Adds

*CEH introduces a practical evaluative lens, not simply another abstract principle.*



## **Intervention → Ecosystems**

How do interventions affect climate and ecosystems health? Do they degrade, ignore, or help regenerate ecological systems?



## **Ecosystems → Intervention**

How do climate volatility and ecosystem stress affect implementation conditions, outcomes, and long-term sustainability?



## **Adaptive Capacity**

Do interventions strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity, or risk reinforcing vulnerability, dependency, and maladaptation?

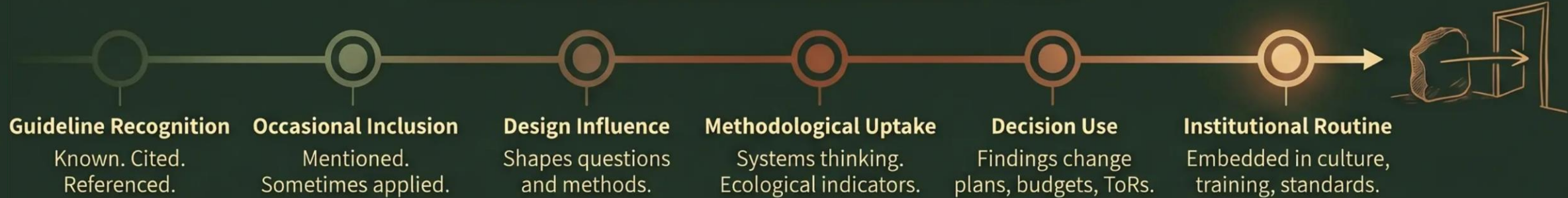


*“The value of CEH lies not only in the criterion itself, but in whether it changes evaluative questions, judgement, and use in practice.”*

# From Institutional Innovation to Actual Practice

*South Africa's CEH work represents a meaningful institutional innovation.  
But institutional innovation is not the same as practice change.*

MATURITY SPECTRUM — WHERE ARE WE REALLY SITTING?



*“Has CEH moved beyond endorsement into the everyday practice of evaluation?”*

Commissioning • Evaluation Design • Methods • Stakeholder Engagement • Recommendation-Making • Evidence Use

*This is the difference between conceptual progress and lived evaluative practice.*

# Why Uptake Is Still Uneven

*The challenge is not lack of conceptual value. The challenge is uneven practice translation.*

## Late Entry

CEH is introduced too late in the evaluation cycle, after commissioning and design are already fixed, limiting its ability to shape core questions and methods from the outset.

## Capacity and Expertise Gaps

Applying CEH well requires systems thinking, climate literacy, and methodological confidence, competencies not yet routine in many evaluation teams.

## Data and Evidence Limitations

Reliable evidence on ecological effects, resource use, vulnerability, and adaptation is often scarce, fragmented, or not routinely collected.

## Weak Commissioning Incentives

CEH is not yet consistently treated as non-negotiable by commissioners and funders, making it optional rather than embedded.

## Legacy Programme Designs

Many interventions were conceived without ecological or equity considerations, making retrospective CEH application harder and less coherent.

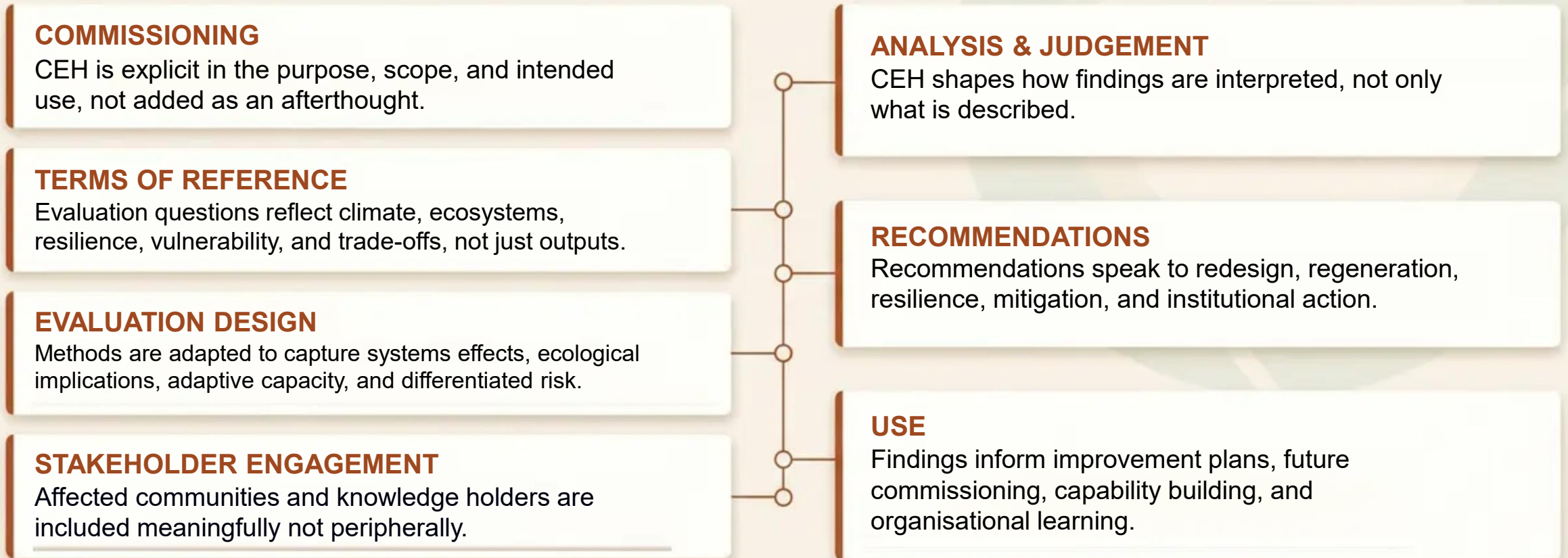
## Fragile Decision-Use Pathways

Even when CEH findings emerge, they rarely trigger changes in plans, budgets, ToRs, or institutional behaviour.

“Progress exists, but uptake remains partial, uneven, and still heavily dependent on champions.”

# What Real Uptake Would Look Like in Practice

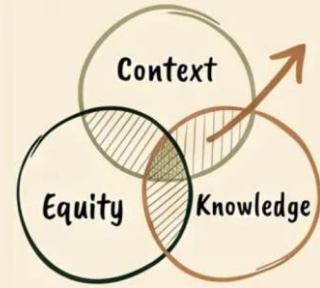
*If CEH is genuinely taking root, it should be visible across the entire evaluation cycle.*



*“If nothing changes in ToRs, methods, judgement, recommendations, or use — then CEH remains largely rhetorical.”*



# Why Made in Africa, Equity, and Transformation Must Sit Inside CEH



*CEH is not only an environmental lens.*

*It is also a justice, knowledge, and transformation lens.*

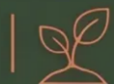
- **Context** A Made in Africa approach asks whether CEH is being interpreted through the realities of inequality, informality, livelihood vulnerability, ecological dependency, service delivery pressures, and uneven institutional capacity. These are not exceptions, they are the foundation.
- **Equity** Climate and ecosystem harms are not experienced equally. Evaluators must ask: who bears the greatest burden, who benefits, who adapts, who is exposed, and who is left behind.
- **Knowledge** Whose knowledge counts in defining environmental risk, resilience, and sustainability? Are indigenous and local knowledge systems treated as legitimate evaluative resources or marginalised as anecdote?
- **Transformation** Are we merely inserting CEH language into existing practice? Or are we allowing it to shift how evaluations are framed, conducted, interpreted, and used?

*“A contextualised African response should not be a copy-paste adaptation of global discourse. It should be grounded, plural, justice-aware, and practice-led.”*

# Why Testing, Learning and Iteration Matter

*No framework becomes credible through principle alone. It becomes credible through application, reflection, and refinement.*

For CEH to mature as an evaluative practice, it must be tested where it is most challenged:



Climate  
Adaptation



Ecosystems  
Work



WASH



Food  
Systems



Livelihoods



Community  
Resilience

*These are the operational frontlines where the criterion meets reality.*

Have we sufficiently tested CEH in these applied settings?

Have we generated meaningful learning from implementation?

Have we iterated the approach based on real-world feedback?

*Or are we still operating mainly at the level of conceptual promise?*

“Institutional innovation must be followed by implementation testing, learning loops, and iterative refinement. That is how practice deepens.”

# What Africa and Asia-Pacific Can Take Forward

“The lesson is not to copy one model. It is to build context-responsive pathways into practice.”



## Start with Use

Build for decision uptake, not only analytical completeness.



## Localise Intelligently

Adapt the CEH lens to local institutions, vulnerabilities, ecological realities, and development pathways.



## Build Evaluator Capability

Strengthen systems thinking, climate literacy, and methodological confidence.



## Centre Affected Voices

Make stakeholder voice, indigenous knowledge, and local adaptation realities foundational not supplementary.



## Strengthen Commissioning Incentives

Make CEH visible in ToRs, standards, review processes, and learning expectations.



## Create Learning Loops

Test, reflect, refine, and institutionalise through repeated application.

> The future of CEH lies in contextual adaptation, not universal replication.

The real success test of CEH is not whether it exists as a guideline.

---

It is whether it reshapes:

- evaluative practice
- institutional behaviour
- organisational learning
- public decision-making

“The task now is not only to endorse CEH, but to test it, use it, iterate it, and embed it.”