

## Peter Dahler-Larsen

### Bio

Peter Dahler-Larsen, PhD, is professor of evaluation at the Department of Political Science and Public Management, University of Southern Denmark, where he is director of the master program in evaluation. He was president of European Evaluation Society in 2006-7. His main research interests include cultural, sociological, and constructivist perspectives on evaluation and evaluation systems. He has contributed to the Sage Handbook of Evaluation, The Oxford Handbook of Public Management and the Sage International Handbook of Educational Evaluation.

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### Workshop title

Evaluability Assessment before the introduction of Evaluation Systems

### Target audience

The target audience includes administrators, commissioners, consultants, teachers and researchers with an intermediate level of experience with evaluation systems. If you are already an expert with all answers ready, this workshop is not for you. The workshop is especially targeted to persons who do not think that evaluations systems are the answers to all questions in all situations, but who are interested in engaging in a critical reflection about a better use of evaluation systems in a complex society.

### Workshop content

Evaluability Assessment applied not only to stand-alone evaluations, but to comprehensive Evaluation Systems (such as performance indicator systems).

Evaluability assessment is a diagnostic and prescriptive tool which helps evaluators determine whether evaluation is appropriate based on a careful situation-specific analysis. However, since its emergence in the 1970's, evaluability assessment has not gained ground. Today, mandatory, comprehensive and repetitive evaluation systems, such as performance indicator systems supported by general social, political and managerial norms, are often introduced without any evaluability assessment.

Can a form of evaluability assessment be re-vitalized in order to pave the way for a more modest, more reflexive, and more context-sensitive belief in evaluation systems? An updated version of evaluability assessment should take into account not only the complexities of evaluation systems but also the non-linear use of knowledge in contemporary society.

### Format

An interpretation of the history of evaluability assessment will be offered. Next, we go point by point through a list of items in a suggested algorithm for evaluability assessment to be carried out before the introduction of an evaluation system. The session concludes with a discussion of the suggested approach.

### Detailed workshop outline

- a) Participants will be stimulated in critical-reflexive thinking about evaluation systems, and will be encouraged to think in a situation-specific way about evaluability assessment as a tool in evaluation
- b) Participants will know a list of questions that can be used to analyze a situation where an evaluation system might be appropriate



Participants will be given a paper which describes the concrete steps in the suggested version of evaluability assessment.

### Timing

The workshop takes three hours.