



REGULATE AN EVALUATION OR AN EVALUATION SYSTEM

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Reference number: 618596-EPP-1-2020-1-SE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
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Objectives

- Define the evaluation concept and its role in assessing actions and policies.
- Identify the resources required for an evaluation, including financial, management, analytical, policy, and delivery-related resources.
- Summarize the significance of obtaining early agreement for an evaluation within the decision-making process.
- Explain how data collection costs may vary based on the type of policy or intervention, particularly new policies and data collection.
- Discuss the role of external researchers and experts in advising on evaluation design and quality assurance.
- Describe the governance arrangements necessary for effective evaluation management.



Establishing the evaluation

- Evaluations are best planned in an environment where all actions and policies are expected to be assessed.
- When this is not the case, an agreement to an evaluation should be obtained as early in the process as possible.
- At all levels of business planning, the assessment should be expressly considered, and resources included into the business case to cover both internal expertise and external spending.
- Evaluation might necessitate significant resources, both monetary and from analysts and policymakers.



Resources required in an evaluation



Financial

Management

Analytical (including external researchers conducting the evaluation)

Policy

Delivery bodies

Wider stakeholders

Post-delivery resource



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1. Financial Resources



- The evaluation's scale is usually proportional to the policy's scale and ambition, although there is no standard proportion.
- Evaluation will cost more for pilots, trials, and other new policies than for established ones.
- New data collection generally comprises a major amount of evaluation costs.
- Building data requirements into routine monitoring can significantly cut expenses.



2. Management



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3. Analytical (including external researchers conducting the evaluation)



- Evaluation professionals, social researchers, statisticians, operational researchers, and economists may advise on its design and outputs.
- Large or complex evaluations benefit from an evaluation professional. Complex and technological tasks go into evaluation design and execution.
- Evaluation guidance and quality assurance benefit from multidisciplinary support.
- External peer reviews are usually commissioned and require resources and a lead time.
- External evaluation specialists often evaluate. They must grasp the evaluation standards, but sometimes it helps to preserve some independence from commissioners to build confidence in the evaluation results.





4. Policy

- Engaging with the evaluation is essential for the policy or delivery team responsible for the intervention, and they should allocate resources accordingly.
- This will include day-to-day engagement to ensure the . is focused and the findings are useful, and through discussions at policy/program boards where appropriate.



5. Delivery bodies



- The engagement and collaboration of the organizations and persons engaged in delivering the intervention are frequently required for a successful evaluation.
- It will be critical to earn their commitment and be clear about what feedback they will be asked to provide.
- Evaluation fieldwork is frequently constructed around the delivery body's ability to participate and the time commitment that will be necessary.



6. Wider stakeholders



- Other stakeholders are often involved; for example, those directly or indirectly affected by the policy.
- Engagement of this group can be made through inviting them onto the steering group, informing them about the evaluation or including them as participants in the research.





7. Post-delivery resource

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- Evaluation fieldwork is frequently constructed around the delivery body's ability to participate and the time commitment that will be necessary.





Project management

- Management of the assessment requires adequate time and experience to ensure it satisfies the needs of the policy and delivery team responsible for the intervention, is on time and within budget, and is of appropriate quality.
- Managing the project will also help identify and resolve concerns promptly.
- There are often shortcomings with intervention design, execution, or data collection that demand rapid evaluation design adjustments.
- The topic of interest and evaluation design may change as new data emerge.



Governance

- Effective governance mechanisms must be established early in an examination. This helps with scoping, commissioning, and delivering the assessment.
- When assessment plans must change over time and demand a more flexible evaluation design, it is crucial.
- Key stakeholders can benefit from being informed and involved in an evaluation and seeing its conclusions early on.
- Analysts including evaluators, social researchers, economists, operational researchers, and statisticians create and oversee evaluation.
- Governance processes can clarify and manage stakeholder roles, duties, expectations, and conflicts.



Governance arrangements involve the following

- Policy program/project board
- valuation steering group
- Expert peer review



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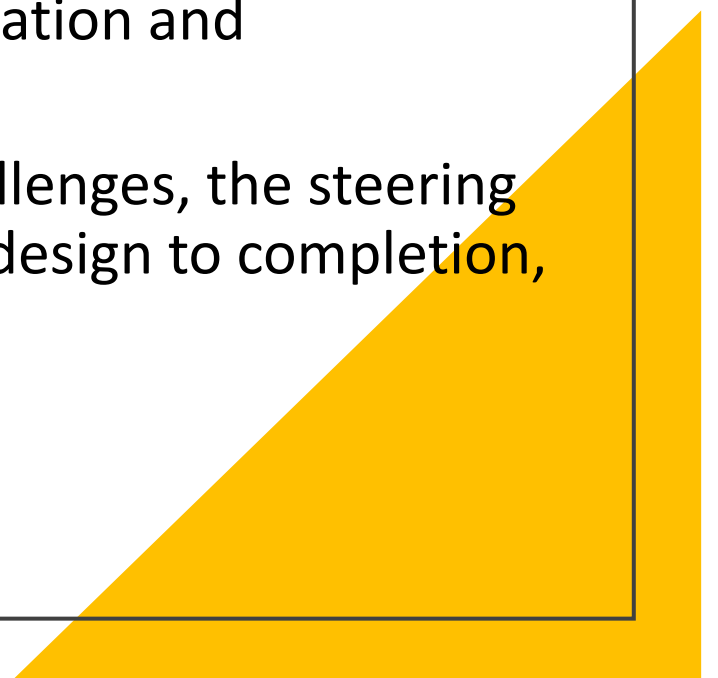
Governance - Policy programme/project board

- Evaluations of government interventions require decision-maker buy-in and utilization of findings.
- To do this, the policy team should own the evaluation and periodically report progress to the policy board.
- The policy board can
 - Shape and steer the evaluation
 - Agree on resources
 - Understand the evaluation's scope
 - Adapt to changing circumstances (e.g., key decision points)
 - Be aware of emerging findings; - Apply emerging findings.



Valuation steering group

- A steering group exists to ensure the evaluation meets objectives and addresses new difficulties. Include all key stakeholders, such as evaluators, commissioners, and intervention policy team representatives.
- For larger programs, it is recommended to incorporate intervention delivery personnel, participants, and independent expert examination and recommendations.
- To truly steer development and address unexpected challenges, the steering group should convene throughout the evaluation, from design to completion, discussing and participating with the evaluation team.



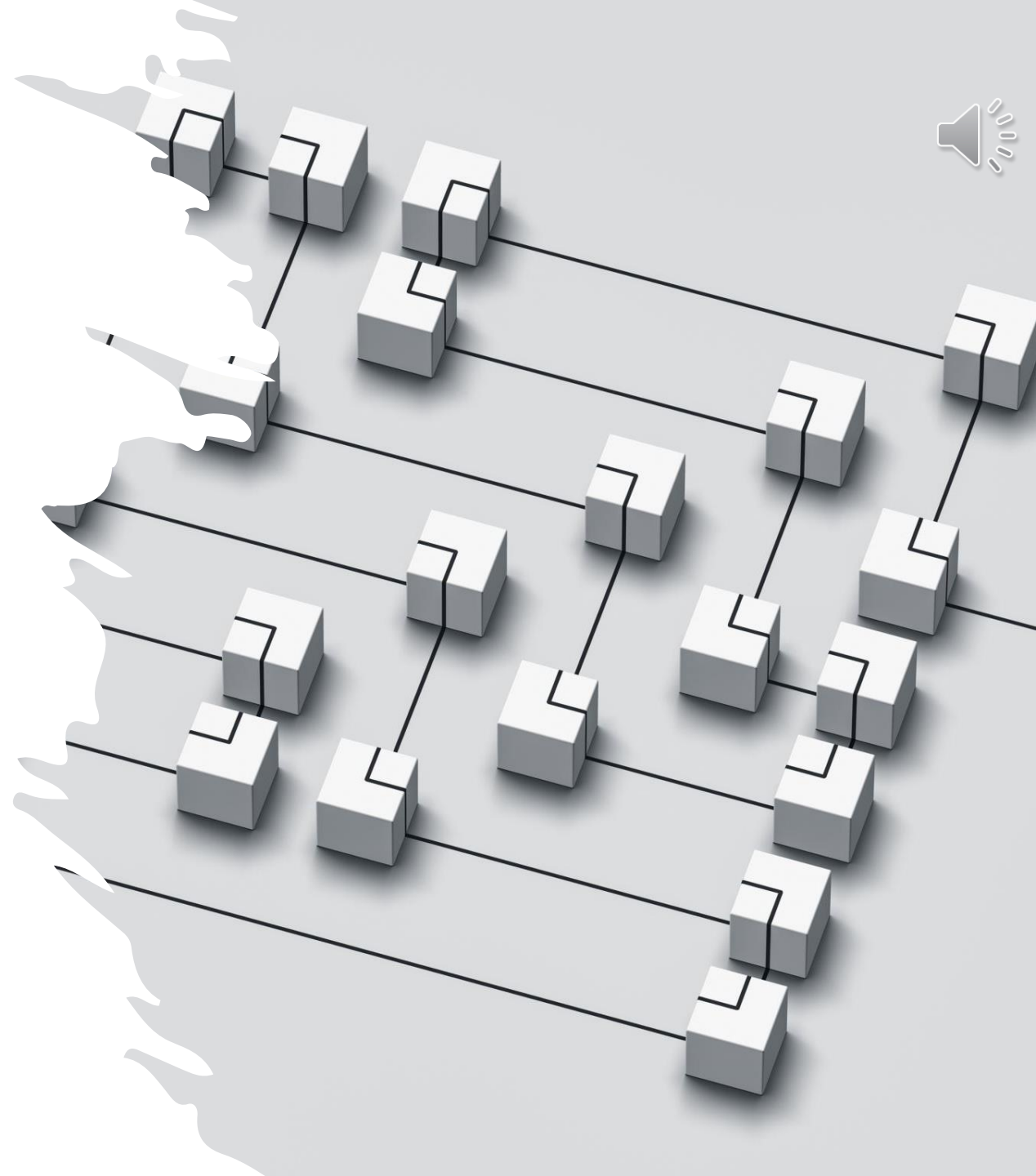
Expert peer review

- Peer review is beneficial throughout the assessment process but is most prevalent during the design and reporting stages.
- Independent specialists analyze the suitability of the intervention and its evaluation through peer review. This ensures that the questions, design, execution, and findings satisfy the stated objectives.
- It also evaluates and ensures compliance with ethical, legal, and commercial processes. Peer review can be undertaken internally by unaffiliated individuals or externally by subject specialists



Linking evaluation to the intervention design

- The evidence requirements from the evaluation can usefully influence the design of the intervention to enhance the quality of the evidence generated and the resulting learning that can be achieved.
- The plan for the evaluation should, therefore, be designed in tandem with that of the intervention.



How to Build evaluation data requirements into monitoring data collection.



Keyways the intervention can support the evaluation include:

- Building evaluation data requirements into monitoring data collection.
- Collecting contact details and consent.
- Conducting a census of participants.
- Piloting/testing
- Targeted implementation to create comparison groups



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Specifying an evaluation

- Departmental analytical professionals or specialist teams can evaluate.
- Even in-house evaluations require external commissioning for specific tasks like primary data collection.
- To choose a route, consider the capacity and capability of the in-house analytical team.
- Independence need. This boosts findings credibility and trust.
- Timeframes. Internal resources may vary throughout long-term evaluations. Overreliance on persons can be problematic.



Specifying an evaluation

When specifying an evaluation, it is important to include:

- the purpose and intended use of the evaluation evidence
- the timing of any decisions that will be informed by the evaluation
- the recommended evaluation approach and/or methods where these exist
- the data that already exist (the intervention's own monitoring data or other available and relevant data)
- any specific essential evaluation activities
- an indicative publication strategy that sets out what will be published and when.



Commissioning an evaluation



If additional fieldwork is needed, other experts are often hired to evaluate.



Evaluation project managers should consult departmental commercial experts to determine the best commissioning approach.



Having a variety of external assessors ensures a steady supply of new ideas and supplier competition.





Commissioning an evaluation



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- Evaluation project managers should consult departmental commercial experts to determine the best commissioning approach.
- The most popular methods are departmental framework contracts, cross-government frameworks, the Crown Commercial Service research marketplace, and open competition.



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Assessing bids



Project managers and at least two others will evaluate bids. These can be steering committee members, intervention design or delivery team members, or evaluation or analytical experts.



The Invitation to Tender specification must clearly state the assessment criteria, and the assessors must agree on what "good" is before receiving bids.



Cost information is usually separated from bids to assess quality only. After cost is assessed, quality bids are distinguished. Ideas from one bid cannot be shared with another.



Always allow enough time for commissioning. Obtaining stakeholder approval for the specification, procurement sign-off, bidder response time, bid review and agreement time, and contract awarding can take months.



Flexibility and consistency of evaluation

- Evaluation design and management require a balance between consistency and flexibility. Experimental and quasi-experimental methods are consistent.
- This allows comparisons between the intervention and the control group or between "before" and "after" samples, but both the intervention and evaluation must remain unchanged during delivery.
- However, interventions can be challenging. Decisionmakers typically want to make 'in-flight adjustments' to enhance benefits.
- It may also be difficult to predict which evaluation approaches will generate helpful results.

Quality assurance



- All evaluations require quality assurance. Independent inspection, especially from many analytical perspectives, is helpful, but even without it, the project manager must take reasonable steps to assure quality design, implementation, and results.
- Quality assurance is continual and must be prepared in advance. This ensures that evaluation design, execution (including fieldwork), analysis, and reporting are suitable and useful.



Quality assurance



- Each level may include internal expert/inhouse peer review, steering group review, or external expert peer review for quality assurance. A blend of all three is typical.
- Quality assurance ensures the findings are based on an objective and defensible interpretation of the results and relate to the evaluation objectives at the reporting stage.
- Check all reported numbers wherever possible.
- Observing data collection (e.g., listening to telephone interviews or focus groups), reviewing the analytical framework, or testing a sample of analytical results to ensure they can be reproduced from the raw data using contractor documentation are other checks.



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Thank you!

