

Evaluation culture and evaluation impact

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This presentation

- What do we mean with an ‘evaluation culture’
 - When do evaluations have an impact?
 - What can we learn from European and global ‘good -practices’
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A definition

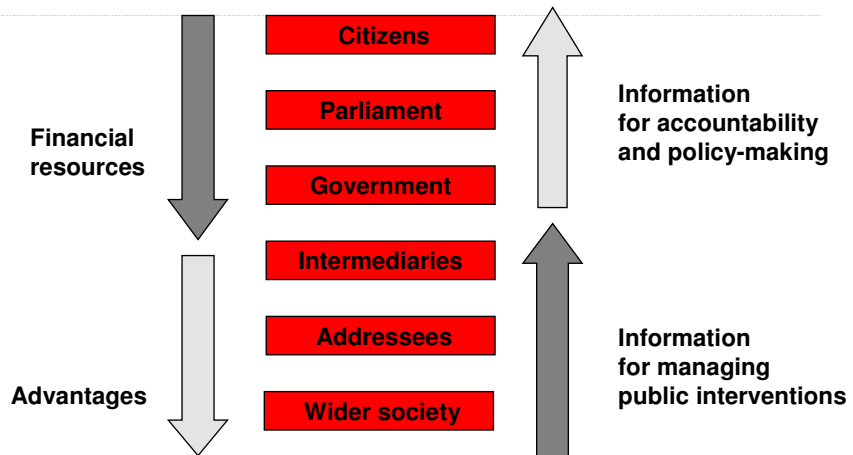
- The systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the...

- conceptualisation
- design
- implementation
- effects

...of public actions

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Fulfilling a need for information about public action



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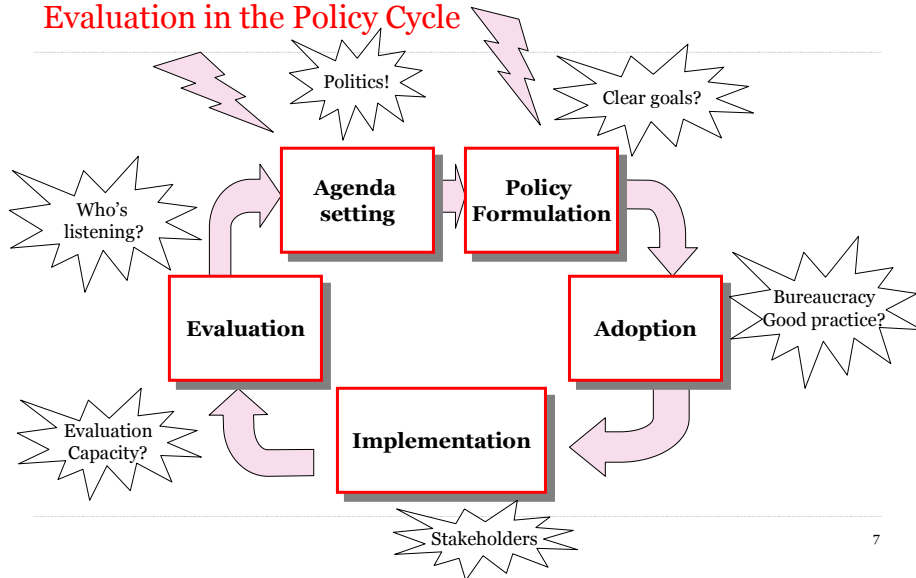
The European evaluation culture

- Evaluation culture is growing in Europe
- Positive influence European Commission funding (particularly Structural Funds)
- Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries by far the most ‘evaluation’ oriented
 - *Strong culture of New Public Management (accountability, steering on performances)*
 - *Separate evaluation units to oversee evaluation activities*
- While a legal obligation for evaluations helps, countries with very strong culture (UK, Sweden) do not have a legal basis for evaluation

Impact assessment in various countries

	Impact assessment emphasis on soft effects	Output measurement quantitative analysis	Outcome measurement quantitative analysis	Quantitative assessment wider economic impact	Cost-benefit analysis (C-BA)	Comparative analysis on basis of performance indicators	Comparative C-BA analysis
Australia	⊙	●	●	●	○	○	○
Canada	●	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	○	○
Finland	●	●	●	●	○	⊙	○
France	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	○	○	○
Germany	●	●	○	⊙	○	⊙	○
New Zealand	●	●	⊙	○	○	○	○
Norway	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
UK	⊙	⊙	●	●	⊙	●	○
USA	●	●	●	●	⊙	⊙	○
EU	●	●	⊙	○	○	○	○

Evaluation in the Policy Cycle



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What improves the chances for a larger impact?

- High-level policy (and political) interest in evaluation activities and their results
 - *E.g. USA Government Performance and Results Act*
- Links between evaluations and budget allocation
 - *E.g. Canada and the influence of the Treasury Board*
- The existence of Evaluation Frameworks: while designing programmes their future evaluation is already considered
- Timeliness: the evaluation results are in time to influence decision making for the continuation (or termination)
 - *Provides a particular challenge for RTDI evaluations*
- A 'policy learning' culture: readiness to improve
- Distance between those commissioning the evaluation and the 'evaluated' (programme) managers
- Transparency: evaluation results are in the public domain
- Systematic evaluations that also consider the wider policy context

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Some EU examples

- UK
 - *ROAME*
 - Finland
 - *System evaluation by Council for Science and Technology Policy*
 - *TEKES: separate evaluation unit*
 - *Long term monitoring of business data*
 - The Netherlands:
 - *By law evaluations at least every 5 years and discussed in Parliament*
 - *Now every new major programme needs a baseline study, a monitoring framework, mid-term evaluations and final after 5 years*
 - *But does not necessarily lead to change in policy making*
 - Germany
 - *BMW: evaluation of whole range of SME policies*
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What can we learn from EU examples?

- Do not expect a simplistic mechanical use of evaluations
 - Radical changes in policy making rarely happen: needs a 'window of opportunity'
 - Evaluation studies alone are not the only piece of strategic intelligence that make policy makers change policies
 - Build in user focus in the execution of evaluations
 - Create a culture of accountability and performance based steering throughout government policy
 - *Develop evaluation frameworks as integral part of policy making*
 - *Make performance based indicators smart and meaningful*
 - Disentangle evaluations from day-to-day programme management as well as from short term politics
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Thank you

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