

2023 OECD Survey on Public Policy Evaluation

Glossary of key terms

The data collected through the survey will be used as a basis for comparative analysis in all GOV's thematic studies and evaluation country reviews. For this reason, and given different structures across countries, comparability of data is a major challenge. **In this regard, please read carefully the glossary of terms below and whenever necessary complete your replies with any comments that might be useful to the interpretation of the data collected.**

Capacities: refers to an organisation's resources, both in terms of people and of budget, dedicated to the activity of evaluations.

Capital expenditure: Investments in physical assets such as buildings and equipment that can be used for a number of years. Capital expenditure can be defined differently across countries. In general, includes spending on assets that a) are used in the production or supply of goods and services (productivity criterion), has a life that goes beyond one year (longevity criterion) and is not intended for resale (use-by-government criterion) (Premchand, 2007:94). Capital expenditure often includes infrastructure (e.g., office buildings, housing, schools, hospitals, etc).

Civil service: covers public employees under a specific legal framework or other specific conditions.

Current expenditure: Current expenditure incurs in carrying out an organisation's day-to day activities such as payroll, rent, office supplies and utilities.

Evaluation champions: actors or institutions inside the government that have a cross government mandate related to policy evaluation. Their exact responsibility can vary across countries, but often includes coordinating cross-sectoral policy evaluations and sharing best practices.

Evaluation clauses: refers to a clause expressed in a legal act requiring the evaluation of said act .

Evidence synthesis methodologies: tools to combine and rate evidence from multiple studies that have evaluated the same issue, to come to an overall understanding of what they have found in terms of policy results and to provide an assessment of the robustness of these results.

Evaluations society: refers to non-governmental actors, often organised at the national level, working to promote and strengthen the practice of policy evaluation inside the country.

External evaluation: refers to evaluations that are conducted outside of the institution in charge of the public policy, that is, either by another government institution, or by an institution outside of the government.

Ex ante appraisal: Appraisal is the process of assessing the costs, benefits and risks of alternative ways to meet government objectives through expenditure. It helps decision makers to understand the

potential effects, trade-offs and overall impact of expenditure and financing options by providing an objective evidence base for decision making.

Guidelines: refers to a document providing directions on how to conduct policy evaluation, for instance in terms of what methods to use, what stakeholders to consult, how to manage the process or how to use evaluation results.

High-level guidance: refers to a document, such as a legal or policy framework or a multi-annual evaluation agenda, providing clear directions on when to conduct policy evaluation and what type of evaluation is needed, in order to adapt the timing of evaluations to feed into decision-making processes, focus the analysis where it is most needed, co-ordinate efforts for cross-sectoral evaluations, and avoid overlaps.

Knowledge brokers: refers to an individual or organisation that strengthens linkages between evidence users and suppliers, for instance by facilitating policymakers' access to evaluation results.

Monitoring: the systematic collection of performance data to assess the progress and achievement of policy or reform objectives against set targets, as well as to identify and lift implementation bottlenecks.

Peer review: consist of a panel or reference group, composed of external or internal experts, that review the technical quality and substantive content of an evaluation.

Performance audit: Performance auditing is an independent and objective assessment of an entity's activities, processes, internal controls systems, governance and risk management, with regard to one or more of the three aspects of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, aiming to lead to improvements.

Performance budgeting: The systematic use of performance information to inform discussions and decisions around the budget. The purposes of performance budgeting are to instil greater transparency and accountability throughout the budget process, by providing information to legislators and the public on the purposes of spending and the results achieved.

Primary Legislation: The definition of primary legislation varies across different legal systems in OECD countries. Generally, primary legislation refers to statutes or acts passed by a parliament (legislature) which describe broad principles. In many cases, primary legislation delegates responsibility to other parts of the executive branch, which shall define more specific laws under the aegis of the principle statute.

Public intervention: refers to different means through which governments structure their efforts to attain desired objectives. These can be policies, programmes, strategies, projects or plans. The expression 'public policies' is used as a proxy for public intervention in this survey.

Public Policy Evaluation: the structured and evidence-based assessment of the design, implementation or results of a planned, ongoing or completed public intervention, its design, implementation or results. For ease of understanding of the questions, this survey uses the expressions 'public policy evaluation', 'policy evaluation' and 'evaluation' interchangeably.

Secondary legislation: Subordinate regulations are regulations that can be approved by the head of government, by an individual Minister or by the Cabinet - that is, by an authority other than the parliament/congress. Note that many subordinate regulations are susceptible to disallowance by the parliament/congress. Subordinate regulations are also referred to as "secondary legislation" or "subordinate legislation". Examples include Regulations, Rules, Orders, Decrees or Ministerial Directives.

Skills: an ability to do something acquired through training and/or experience.

Spending reviews: Tools for systematically analysing the government's existing expenditure. They are clearly linked to the budget process. The purposes of spending review is to enable the government to manage the aggregate level of expenditure; align expenditure according to the priorities of the government; improve effectiveness within programmes and policies.