



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Evaluating drug policy: a 7-step guide

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Health and Social Issues Committee, Georgian Parliament
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Evaluation website and guide



- Introduction
- EU evaluations
- National evaluations
- Resources
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A seven-step guide to support the commissioning and managing of evaluations

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EMCDDA PAPERS

New developments in national drug strategies in Europe

Contents: Introduction — Implementing and managing drug policies (p. 3); National drug strategies — broader scope and use (p. 4); National coordination mechanisms and drug strategies (p. 30); National drug strategy evaluation (p. 34); Conclusion — a widening strategic focus (p. 19)

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countries had a national illicit drug strategy document with a broad focus in 2016. An increased level of integration in planning of policy and provision marks what could be the start of a departure from the type of drug strategies that have been common until now. If it is, this will bring both new opportunities for wider public health orientated cross-substance/addiction policies and challenges in effective resource assignment and action implementation. As more drug and addiction strategies are evaluated, new insights into this approach to strategic planning and its relative successes and future challenges will become more apparent.

Keywords: drug policy | national drug strategies | coordinative mechanisms | strategy evaluation | addictions | strategy management

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http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/topic-overviews/policy-evaluation_en



Defining evaluation

‘Evaluation is a judgement of interventions according to their results, impacts and the needs they aim to satisfy. It is a systematic tool which provides a rigorous evidence base to inform decision making’

(European Commission, 2004).



Why evaluate?

- Establish implementation progress;
- Gauge strategy's continuing relevance;
- Consider quality and value of actions and interventions;
- Enhance resource allocation;
- Encourage organisational learning and development of best practices;
- Reflecting on intended and unintended consequences of actions;
- Support policy decision making;
- Developing new strategy based on assessment;
- Demonstrating transparency and accountability.



Evaluation criteria help consider if an intervention is...

- **Effective** and **efficient** – has it delivered the expected positive outcomes and has this been done at reasonable cost;
- **Relevant** to both the identified needs and the policy objectives;
- **Coherent** both internally and with other policy interventions;
- Brought **added-value** – has the policy itself made a difference;
- Extent of **implementation** of the policy (process evaluation) and whether it is sustainable.

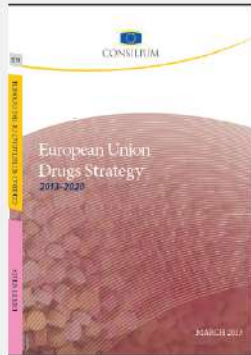


Policies, strategies, programmes and projects

International

Supranational

National

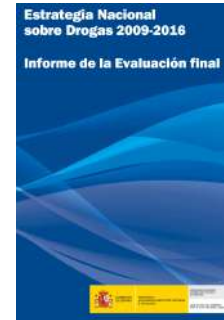
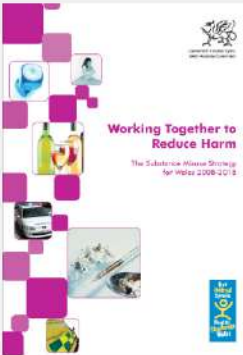


Policy evaluation

Devolved administration

Autonomous subnational region

Regional



Strategy evaluation



Action plan evaluation

City

Local

Issue-specific



Les Comités d'Environnement Social

Robert BAILLON

Juin 1998

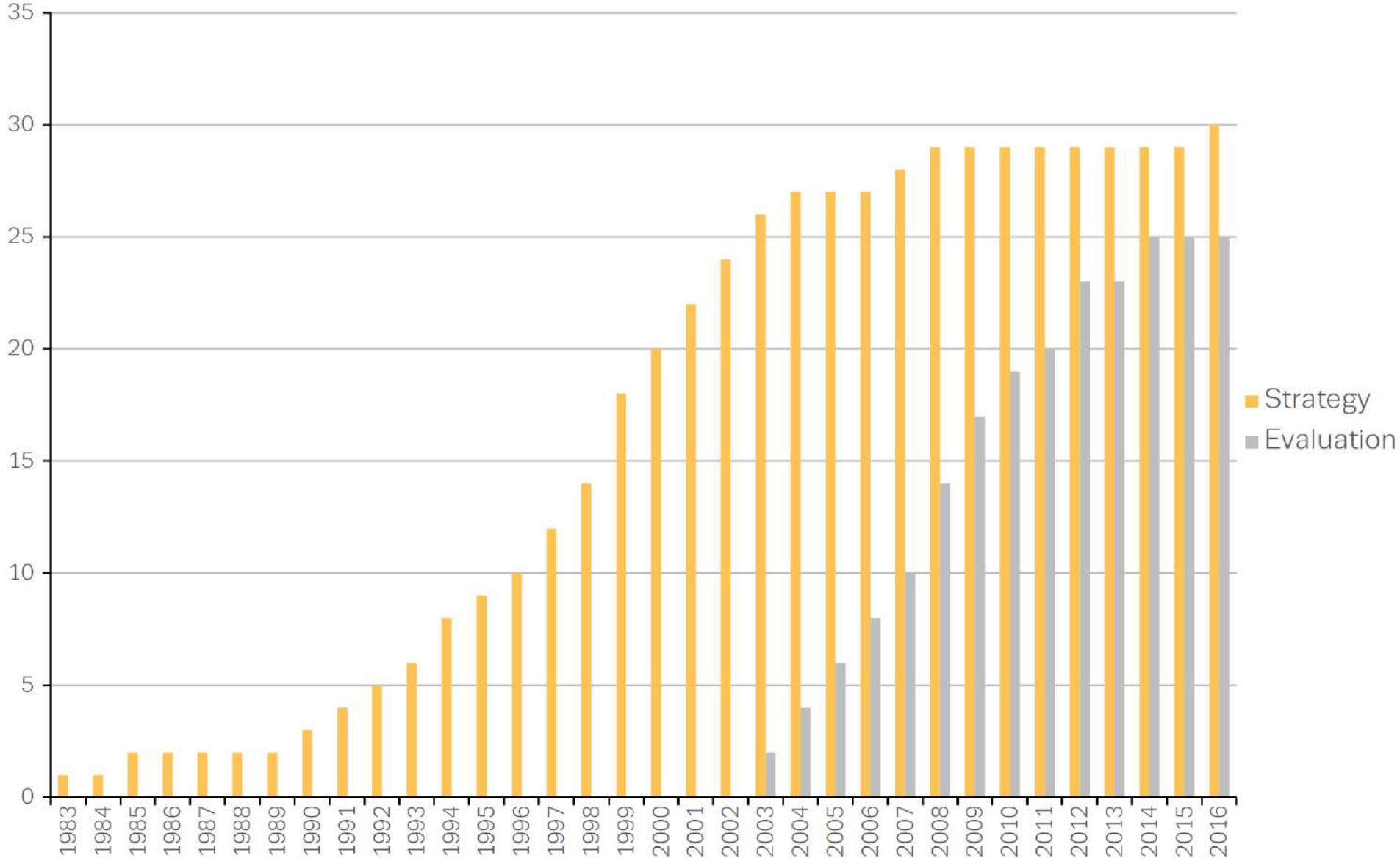
Centre d'Analyse et d'Intervention Sociologiques ENSES - CNRS

Programme evaluation



Project evaluation

Cumulative adoption of drug strategies and published evaluations in European countries (1983-2016)



National drug policy evaluations reported to the EMCDDA in 2016

Key to categories used for describing evaluations

- Multi-criteria evaluation
- Implementation progress review
- Issue-specific
- Other approaches

Note: year beneath country name in map refers to year of publication



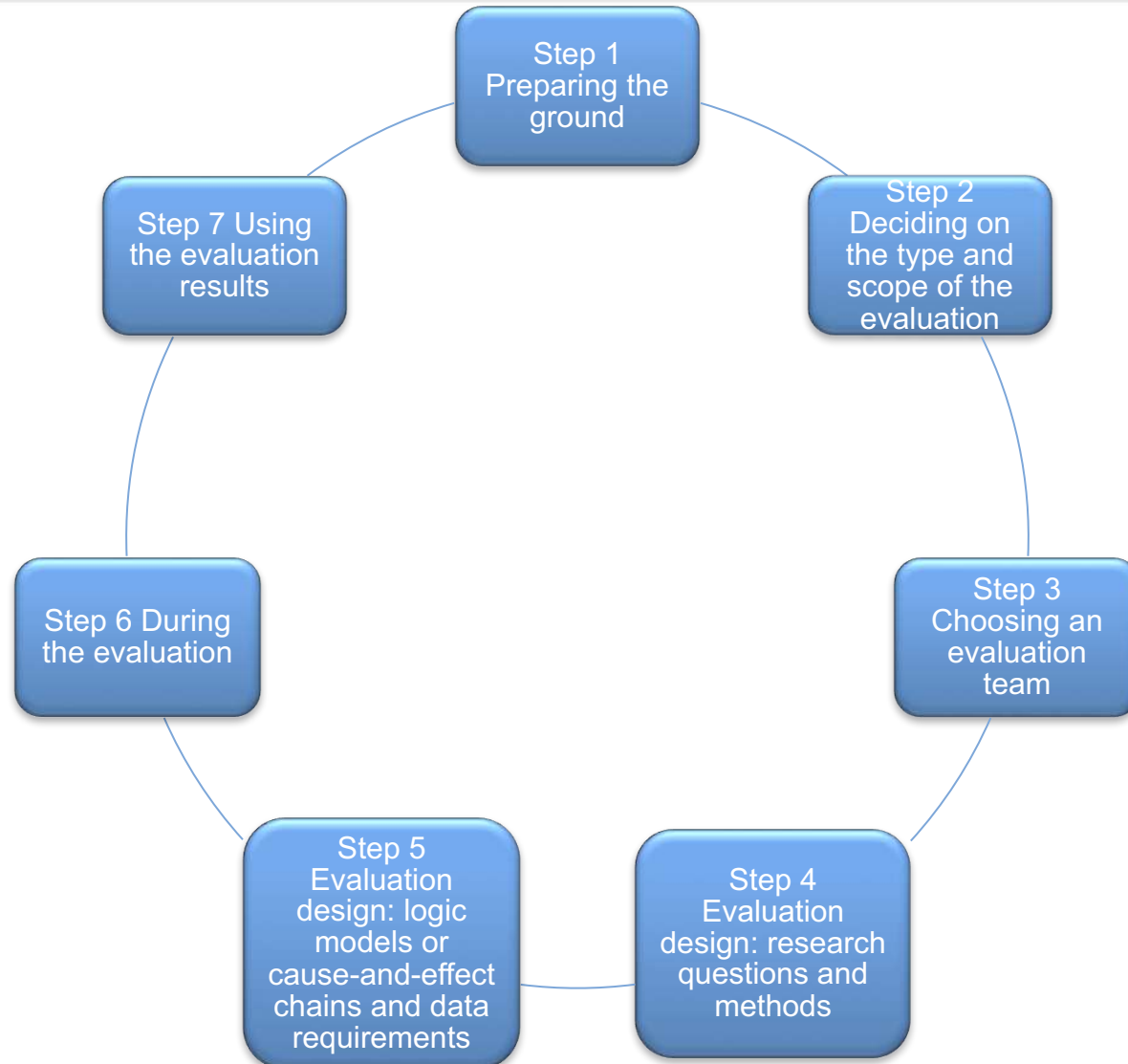
Key messages

- No one 'correct' way to evaluate
- Evaluation not a one-off event
- Commitment to take action on findings
- Develop expertise and data sources

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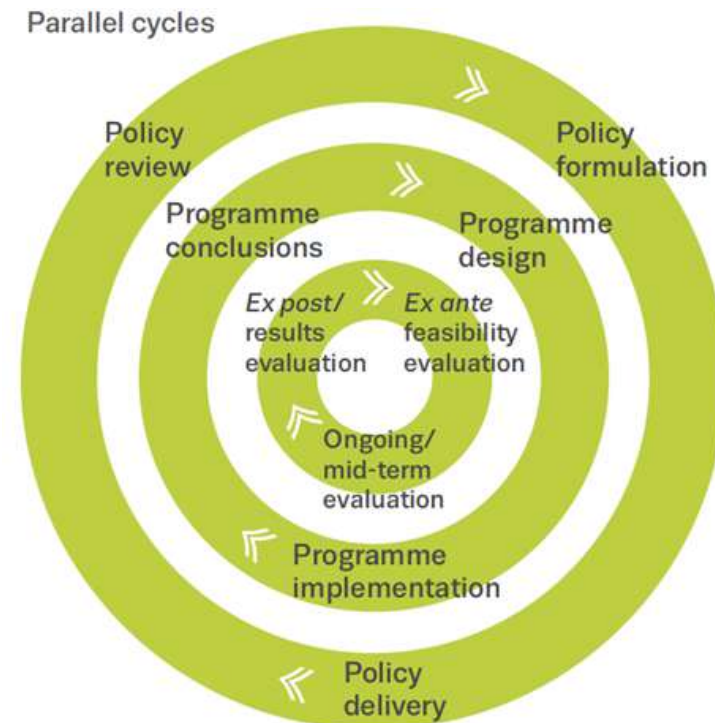
Step 1: Preparing the ground

- Leadership commitment to the process
- Adequate resources — finances and skills
- Stakeholder engagement
- Establishing a steering group



Step 2: Deciding the type & scope of evaluation

- Evaluate overall policy/strategy, or individual programmes/elements?
- What stage(s) of the policy cycle to evaluate at?
- Feasibility considerations — resources, time, data



Step 3: Choosing an evaluation team

- The importance of independent evaluation
- The need for expertise and knowledge in both evaluation and drug policy
- The available resources and the time allowed for the evaluation



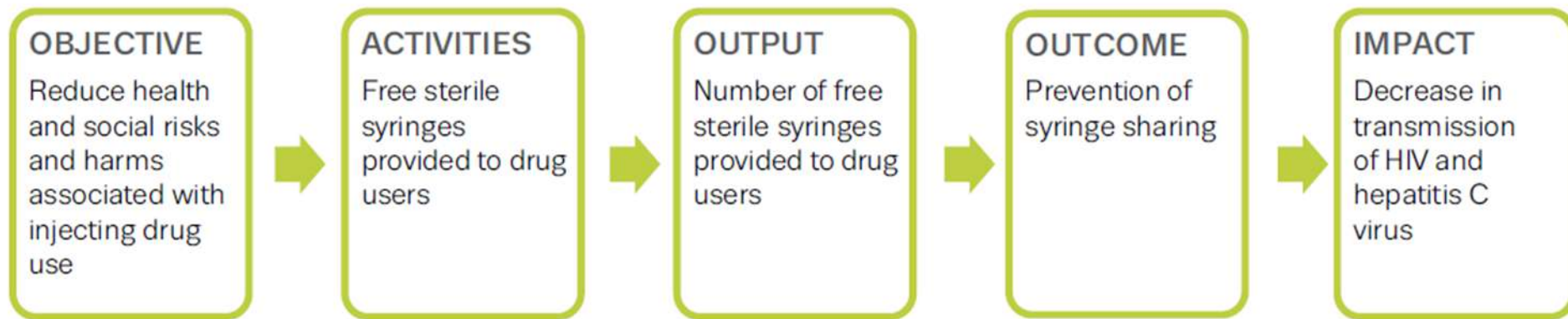
Step 4: Evaluation design: research questions

- Establish research questions, i.e. what it is that you want to learn from the evaluation
- Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (SMART) questions
- Appropriate evaluation approach to answer questions



Step 5: Evaluation design: logic models & data needs

➤ Logic models / cause and effect chains



➤ Indicators / measures:

- inputs, outputs, outcomes & impact;
- routine data sources (EMCDDA) & ad hoc

Common indicators and assessment criteria

Input	Output	Output / Impact	Impact	Outcome
public expenditure	Number of drug-related research projects funded	Drug-related crime	Prevalence of drug use among the general population	Rate of syringe sharing among injecting drug users
Number of NSP programmes	Number and quantity of illicit drug seizures	Prevalence of drug use in specific populations (e.g. prisons)	Incidence of drug use	
Cost of harm reduction programmes	Drug users entering treatment services		Age of initiation of drug use	
	Number of drug law offences		Problem drug use	
	Number of sterile syringes sold and distributed		Drug-related infectious diseases	
	Drug-related arrests		Drug-related deaths	
			Purity of drugs	
			Prices of drugs	
			Market size estimates	



Step 6: During the evaluation

- Facilitating access to stakeholders and data sources
- Monitoring progress
- Providing input or a reality check to recommendations, if appropriate



Step 7: Using the evaluation results

- Taking action and making changes
- Drawing lessons for the next evaluation
- Developing an evaluative culture



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