

# DMEO Conversation Series

## Designing Governments' Evaluation Strategies: Key Considerations

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04:30 PM - 05:30 PM IST

# DMEO Conversation Series

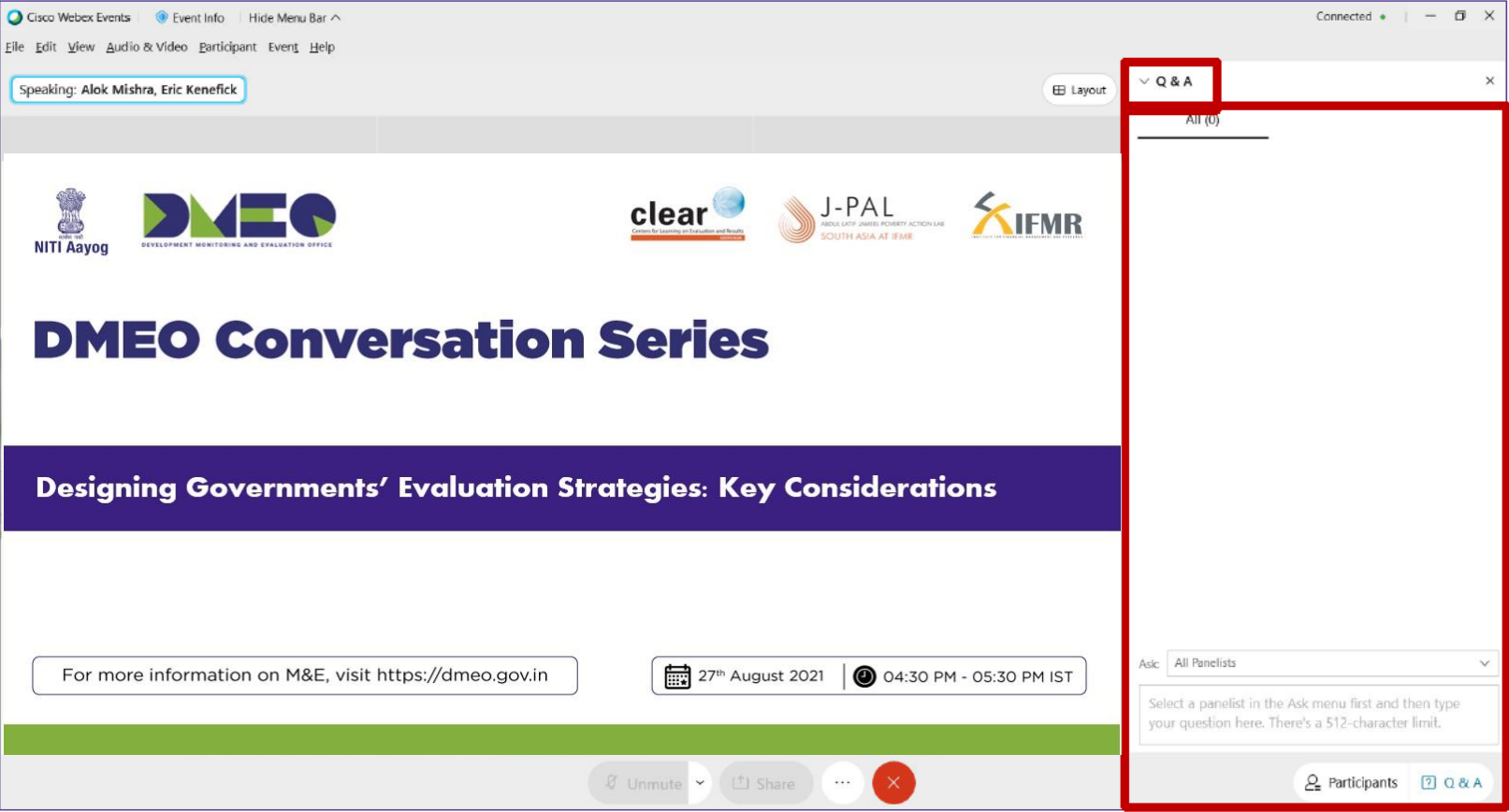
## Designing Governments' Evaluation Strategies: Key Considerations



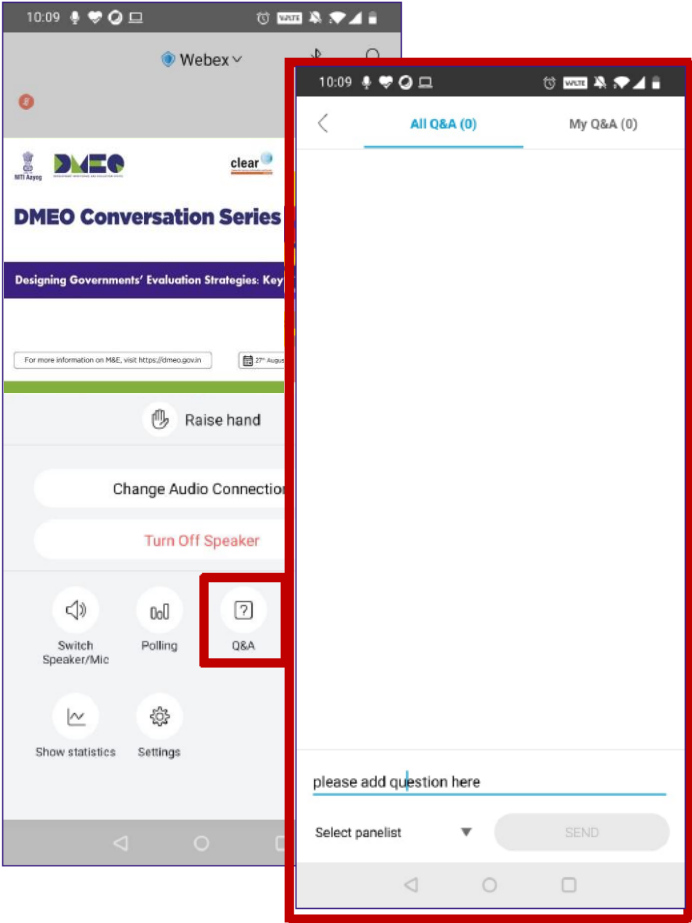
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and Director at CLEAR SA.

# Use Q&A Option for Posting Questions



Desktop Version  
Cisco WebEx



Mobile Version  
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# How is policy decided?



Opinion-based  
policy making



Evidence-based  
policy making



Research



Policy outreach

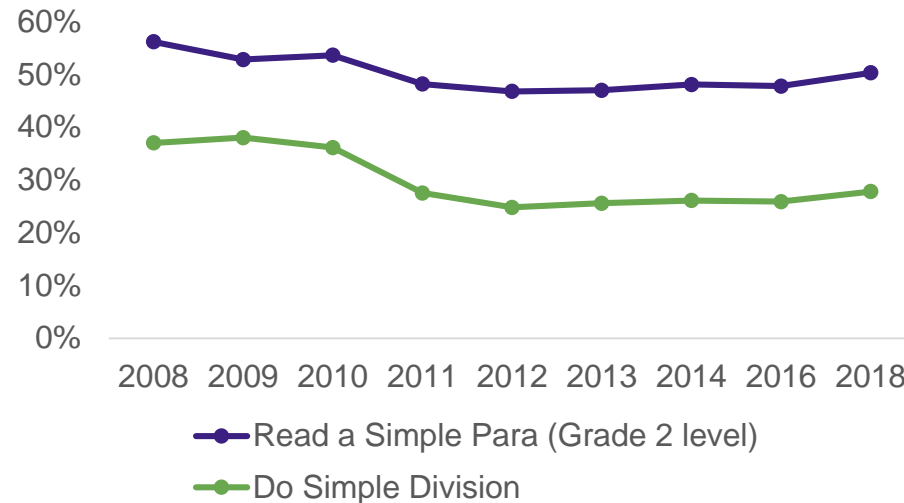


Capacity building

# Why evaluate policies?

- Large amounts of funding do not necessarily move the needle on outcomes we care about
  - For e.g. stagnating learning outcomes among children in India
  - Where should funds be redirected to improve outcomes?
  - First-order question: Which policies improve learning outcomes?
- Evaluating policies provides insightful answers to such questions
  - Major programmes not as effective as previously thought
  - Small interventions have been found to be surprisingly effective

## Children in Grade 5 who can:



Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), Rural India,  
Trends Over Time: 2008-18

## Knowing when to evaluate

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1. Learning: feed back into programme design and implementation
2. Accountability: answer key questions about what was done, why it was done, and how effectively – used to report upwards and downwards

**But**

- Evaluations are costly and complex
- Need to be strategic and evaluate right questions, at the right time, in the right manner

## Overview: Components of Evaluation Strategy

### What to evaluate

- Using the right type of evaluation to answer the given policy question

### How to evaluate

- Criteria for selecting evaluation method
- Rigour, feasibility, budget, etc.

### Who will evaluate

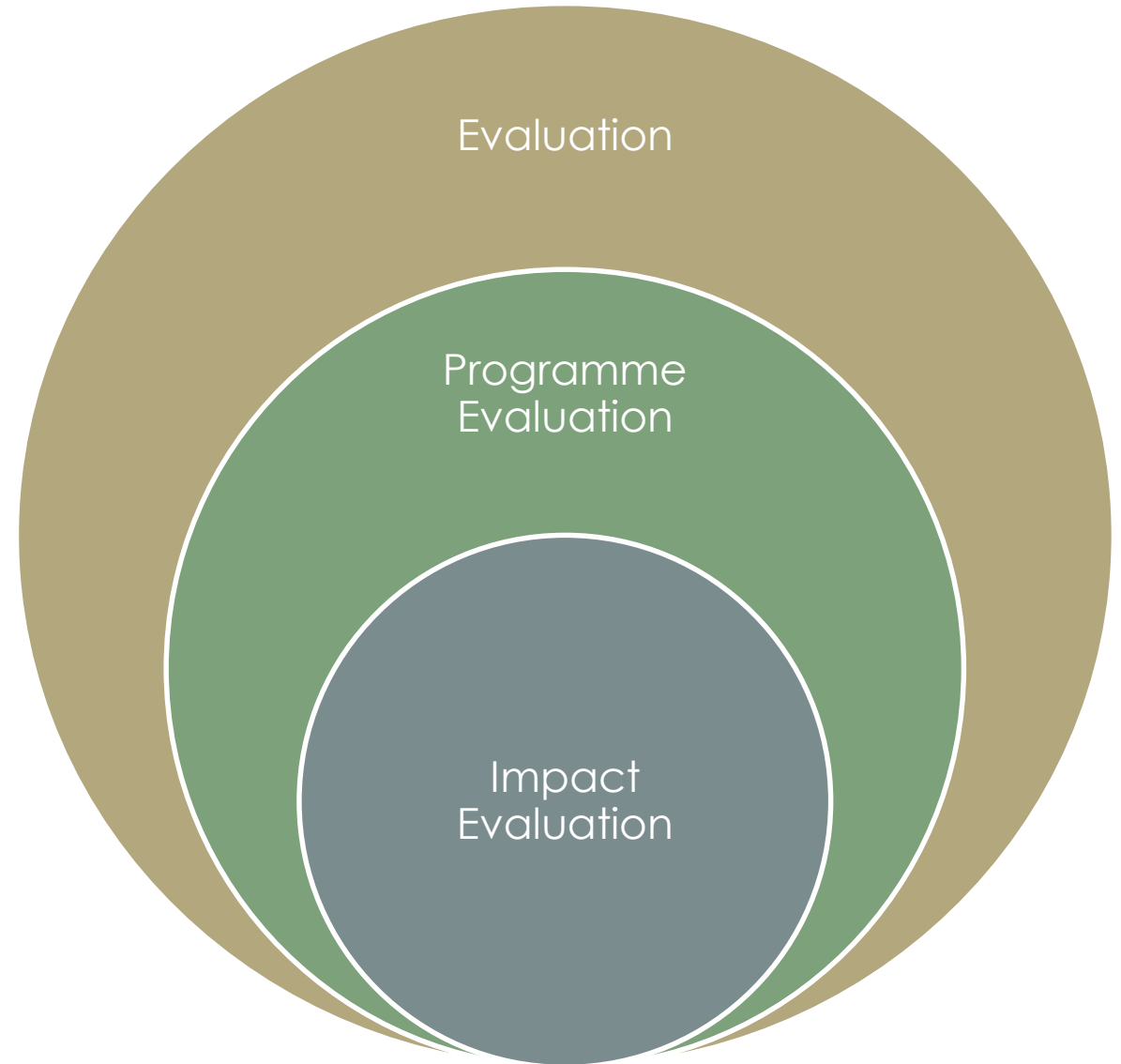
- In house vs. commissioned
- How to commission and manage evaluations

# What to Evaluate



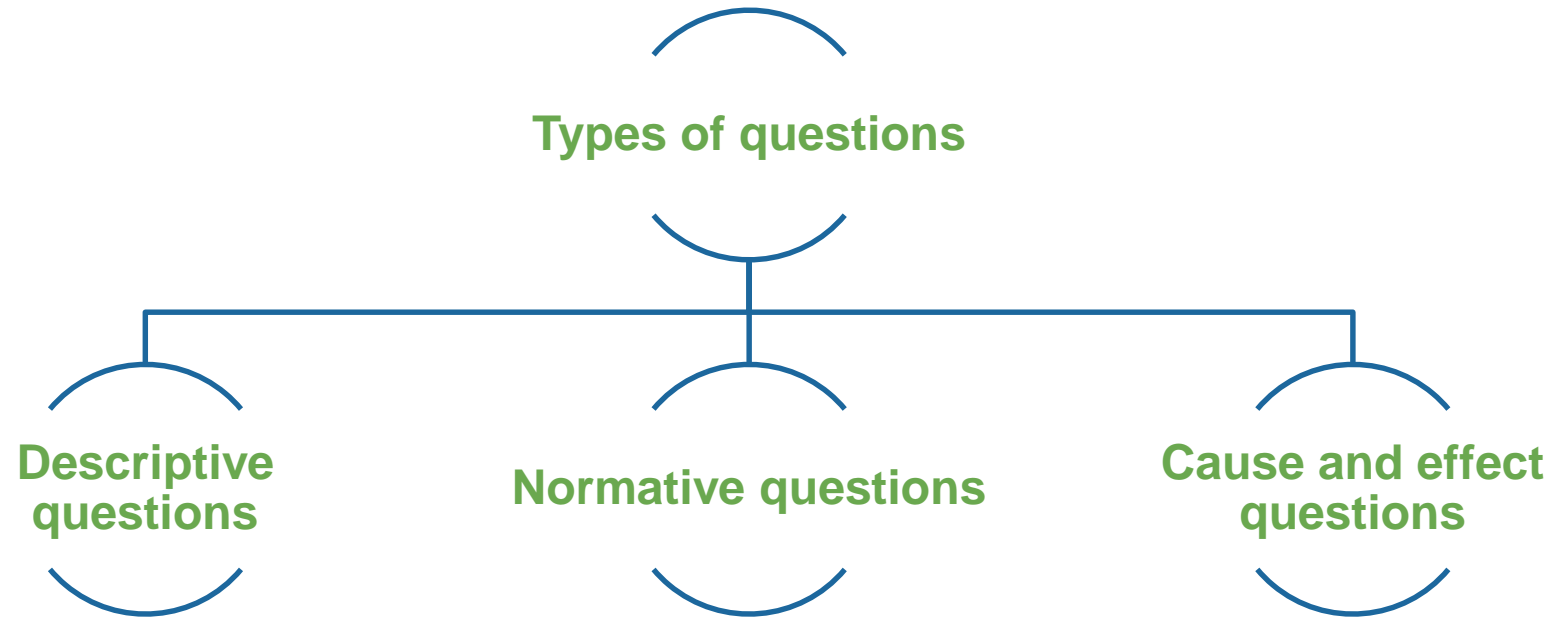
# Program Evaluation

- Program evaluation is the systematic and objective **assessment** of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results
- The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability
- “How is our program doing?”
- The intention is to provide information that is credible and useful, enabling incorporation of lessons learned into decision-making processes



# What types of questions can you answer with evaluations?

- Evaluations of all kinds can be thought to answer three types of questions (Imas and Rist 2009) :



Identifying the type of evaluation needed to answer a policy question is a key component of your evaluation strategy

# Different types of evaluations answer different types of questions

## 1. Needs Assessment

- What is the problem?

## 2. Theory of Change

- How, in theory, does the program fix the problem?

## 3. Process Evaluation

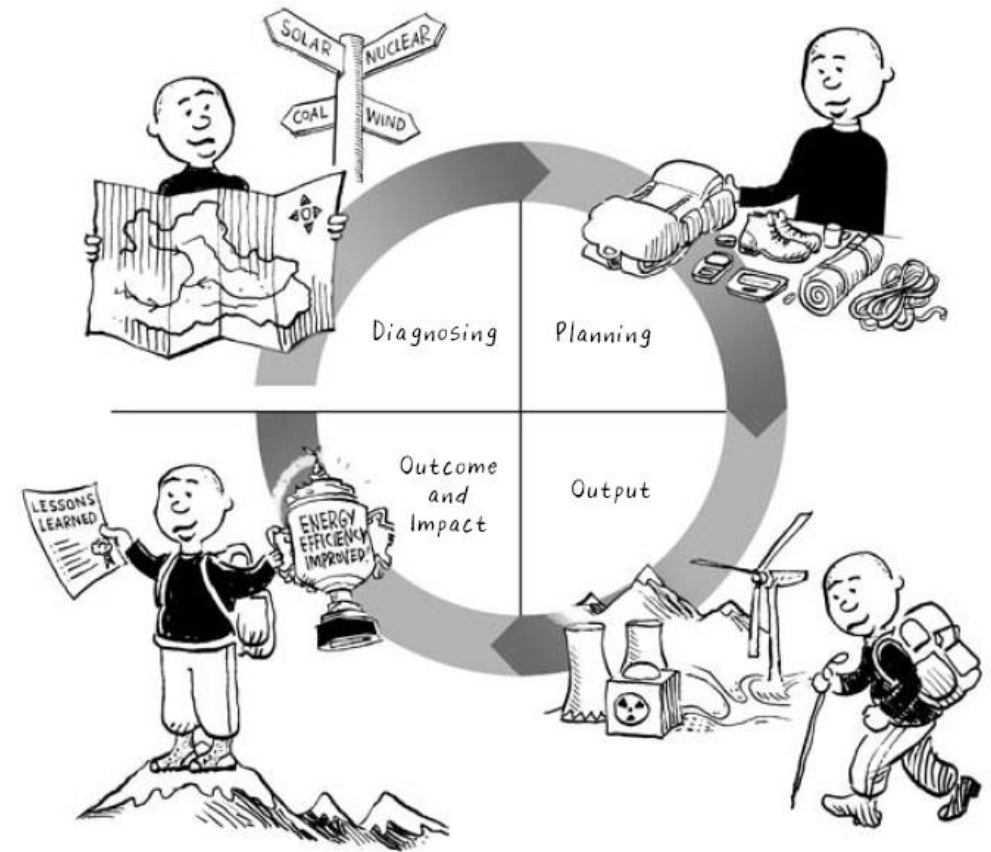
- Does the program work as planned?

## 4. Impact Evaluation

- Were its goals achieved? The magnitude?

## 5. Cost Effectiveness

- Given magnitude and cost, how does it compare to alternatives?



# **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

## **Identifying the problem**

# Needs Assessment

What is it

A systematic approach to identifying:

- nature and scope of a social problem
- defining the target population to be served
- determining the service needed to meet the problem

Policy questions it answers

- Does the problem we are proposing to solve actually exist?
- What is the likely source of the problem?
- Of the solutions proposed and tried, why are they failing?
- Who is in most need?

Needs assessment forms the basis of a good programme design

## Example



Problem: High incidence of water borne disease in XYZ district



A household survey to understand the source of drinking water and if the water is being treated before consumption



Structured interviews and data collection from water and health department officials to understand how many houses have tapped water connections and prevalence of water borne diseases



Focus group discussions with the target population to understand their knowledge on water borne diseases and what kind of interventions they would be open to adapting.



# **PROGRAMME THEORY ASSESSMENT**

## **Blueprint for Change**

# Programme Theory Assessment

What is it

Models the theory behind the programme: charting the causal pathway between the inputs of a programme and the programme's ultimate goal.

Policy questions it answers

How will the programme address the needs put forth in the needs assessment?

- What services will be offered in the programme?
- How will the programme improve the outcome of interest?
- How does the programme intend to address or avoid the existing programme's shortcomings?

Useful to understand causal links and forms the basis for a framework of subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the programme



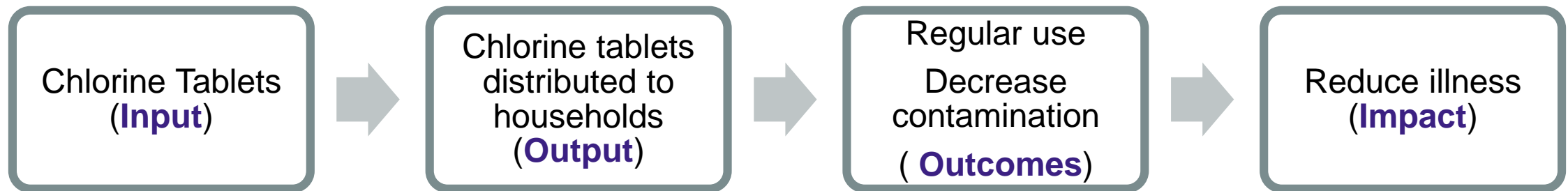
## Example



Problem: High incidence of water borne disease in XYZ district



Proposed intervention: Providing chlorine tablets to households to treat water



## **PROCESS EVALUATION:**

**Is the program implemented well?**

# Process Evaluation

What is it

Analyse the effectiveness of programme operations, implementation, and service delivery against work plans.

Policy questions it answers

- Was the programme carried out as planned?
- Is the intervention reaching the target population at the appropriate time?
- Is the intervention being completed well or efficiently and to the beneficiaries' satisfaction?
- Are programme staff well informed and working hard?
- Is all the money accounted for?

Process evaluations are necessary to understand fidelity of implementation

## Example



The Water and Sanitation department wants to understand how the programme is functioning and whether it is being implemented according to norms



Household survey conducted



- Distribution of chlorine tablets is reaching 80% of the intended beneficiaries each week
- About 75% of end-users indicate regular use of chlorine tablets to treat water

# **IMPACT EVALUATION**

**Measuring how well it worked**

# Impact Evaluation

What is it

**The singular effect of a programme on an outcome of interest, independent of any other intervening factors**

Policy questions it answers

- Does a programme lead to a change in an outcome(s)?
- What is the magnitude of the impact of a programme?
- Which elements of the programme matter the most?

Impact evaluations are necessary to understand if a program works

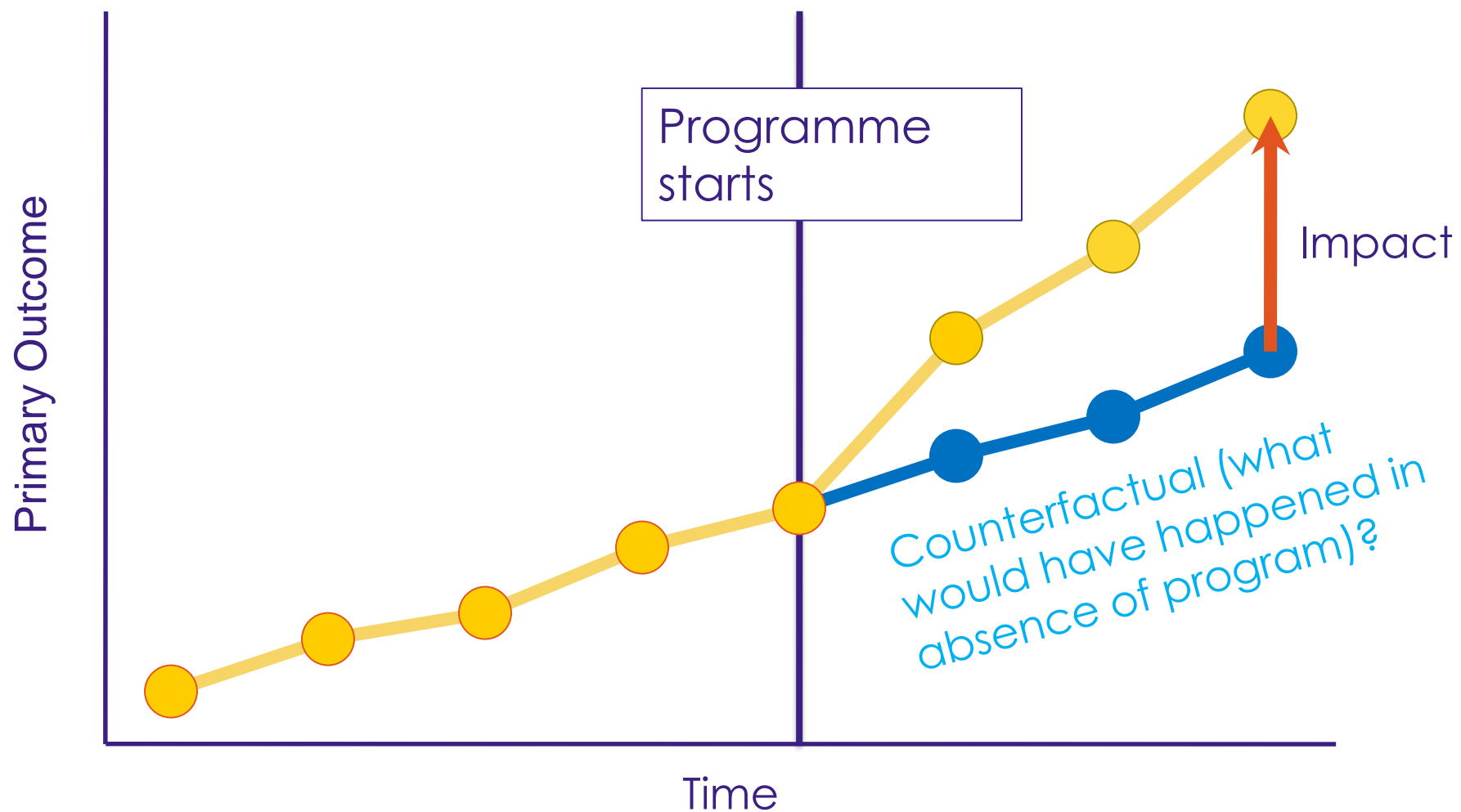
# Measuring Impact

*Impact* is defined the difference between:

1. the outcome some time after the program has been introduced (the “*factual*”)
2. the outcome at that same point in time had the program not been introduced (the “*counterfactual*”)

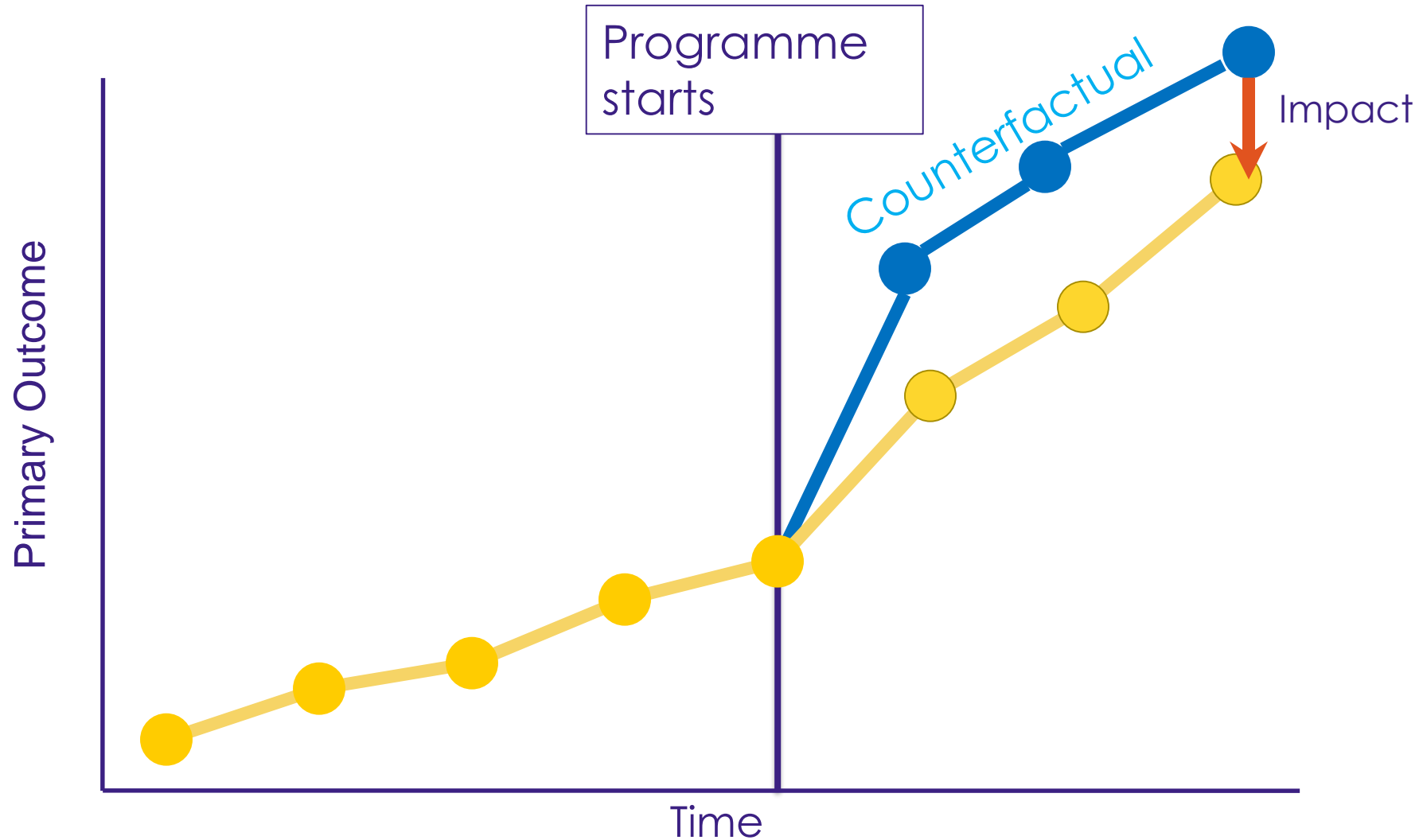


## What is the impact of this programme?





## What is the impact of this programme?



# **COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS**

## **Evidence-Based Policymaking**

# Cost Effectiveness

## What is it

Compares the impacts and costs of various programmes run in different contexts and time-periods aimed at achieving the same objective.

Comparative cost-effectiveness then compares this cost-effectiveness ratio for multiple programs evaluations

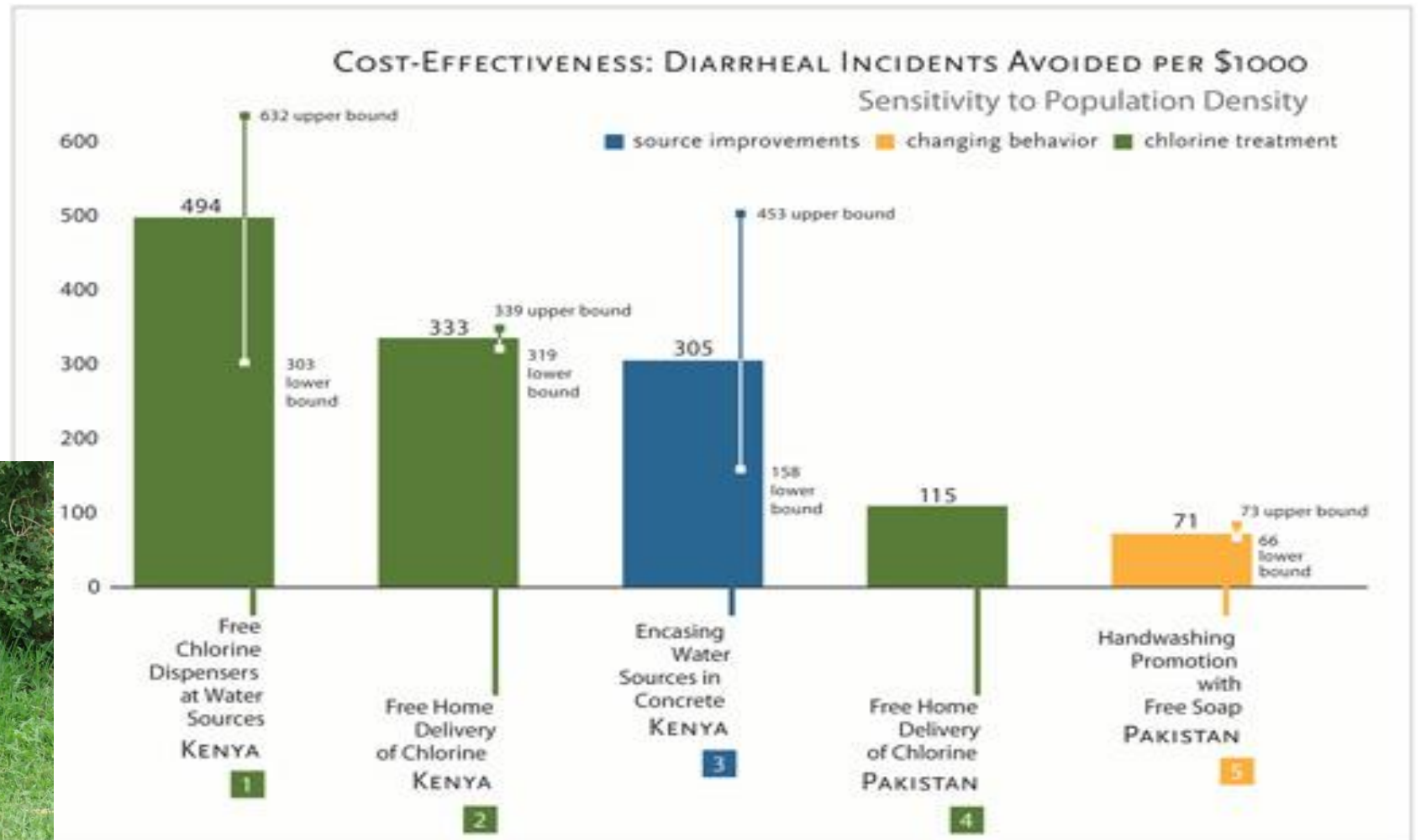
## Policy questions it answers

Choosing an ideal program when you have a specific outcome measure you want to affect and there are many possible interventions







How the cost-effectiveness of a programme could vary with contextual and implementation factors

CEA is a great way to decide upon which successful programs to scale

# Example

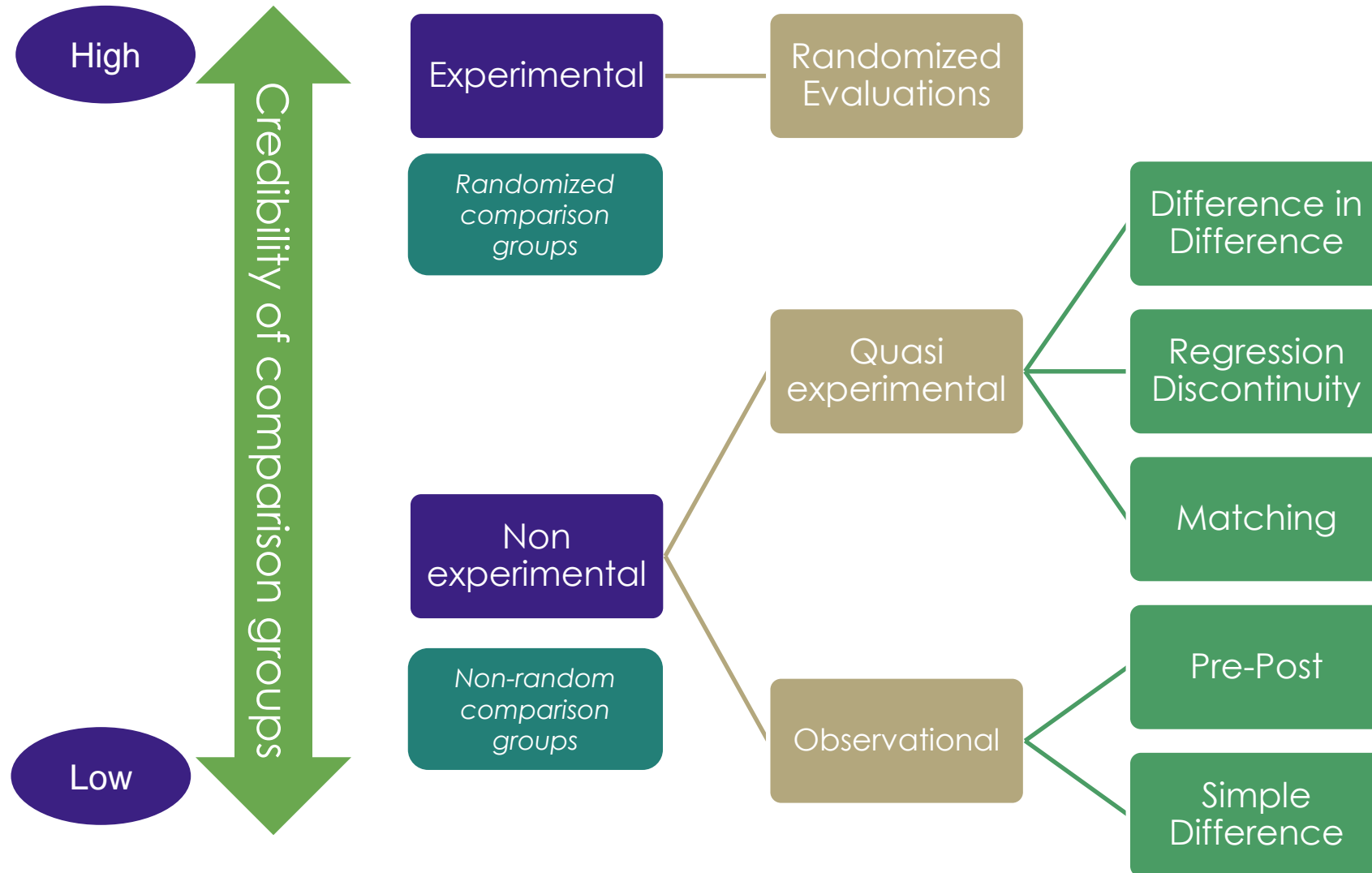


# Understanding when to use which kind of evaluation

|   | Types of decision making needs  | Types of evaluations   |
|---|---|--|
|    | Designing new programme   | Diagnostic/ needs assessment studies, impact evaluations (of pilots), feasibility studies, Evaluation of alternative means of delivery |
|    | Scaling up pilot initiative/ project  | Impact evaluation, feasibility studies, cost effectiveness studies, cost benefit analysis  |
|    | Improving implementation of existing programme  | Outcome tracking, impact evaluation, process evaluation, beneficiary satisfaction assessment   |
|    | Demonstrating success of programme<br>Discontinuation of flagship programme               | Impact evaluation, cost effectiveness, cost benefit analysis   |
|   | Targeting public spending with new activities<br>Strengthening existing programmes        | Impact evaluations, needs assessments, process evaluations, beneficiary satisfaction assessment  |
|  | Allocation and reallocation of financial and human resources to activities and programmes | Impact evaluation, cost effectiveness, cost benefit analysis   |

# How to Evaluate

# Impact Evaluation: A Range of Methods



## Potential criteria for selecting impact evaluation method

### Technical

- Nature of programme
- Data availability/collection
- Sample size
- Timeframe
- Budget

### Strategic

- Program feasibility
- Innovations
- Scale and/or transfer
- Ability to inform a global debate
- Large projects
- Program and evaluation timelines



## Who will Evaluate

## Determining mode of execution: in house vs commissioning



Technical expertise



Size and scope



External validation

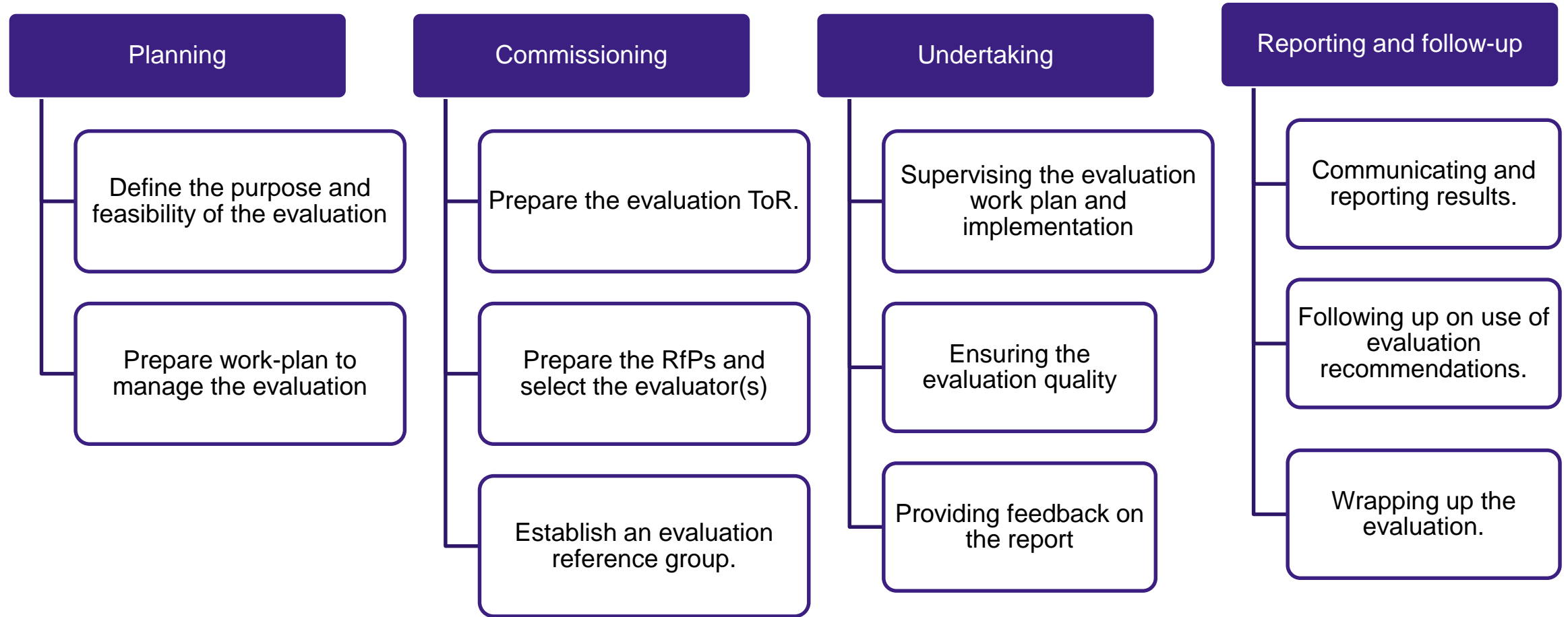


Sensitivities



Other considerations: resources, timeframe, etc

# Managing and Commissioning Evaluations



## Deciding what aspects of the study to commission

| Aspect   | Guidelines   |
|--|--|
| Objectives and scope   | Defined by the commissioning agency  |
| Methodology and sampling: Research methodology, sampling strategy, frame & size.   | Typically defined by the commissioning agency  |
| Questionnaire Development: Preparing theory of change/logframe, identifying indicators to measure/development of instrument. | Typically defined by the commissioning agency. But the commissioning agency can also give the broad outcomes indicators that are to be measured and questionnaire developed by agency. |
| Data collection: Recruitment and training of surveyors and survey implementation   | Typically commissioned out.  |
| Data quality checks: Spot checks and back-checks   | Typically commissioned out.<br>The commissioning agency could supplement quality checks.   |
| Data analysis: Cleaning, analysis and reporting writing  | Typically commissioned out with inputs on report.  |

# Defining the ToR

*“A ToR presents an overview of the requirements and expectations of the evaluation”.*

**This should be based on the decisions made on commissioning different aspects of the evaluation.**

## Terms of Reference

1. Objective and scope:
  - Define the background, objectives scope and key outcomes of interest
2. Research methodology:
  - For IE studies can define method [pre-post, matching, RCT]
3. Sampling strategy:
  - Provide details on sample size and distribution of the sample across geographies and other variables.
4. Data collection methods:
  - Define whether primary or secondary sources or both need to be used
  - Type of stakeholders to be interviewed and number of respondents
5. Questionnaire development:
  - Provide information on key indicators
  - No need to provide the logframe/ToC

# Convert ToR into Request for Proposal (RfP)

RfP is document that solicits proposals from an agency for a specialized service/commodity. Includes the following:

## **Eligibility criteria and scoring for selection:**

- Quality and cost-based selection is recommended
- Weigh experience, technical approach more than personnel qualifications
- Include quality assessment – presentation/written submissions

## **Clearly define the scope of work and responsibility of the agency on:**

- Finalizing methodology and sample design
- Designing, piloting and finalizing survey instruments
- Execution of data collection activities – training, logistics, execution
- On data management and security
- On data analysis and report submission

## **Quality control measures and penalties for poor performance and delays:**

- Provide a timeline and work-plan for finalizing sample design, data collection and report submission
- Independent quality checks like spot checks, reviewing incoming data & penalties for non-compliance

**Set contractual expectations** in accordance with provisions of the relevant government Act

## Guidelines on criteria for technical proposal

- Technical proposals should have at least the following five aspects:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Approach and methodology</b>                                | Methodology for sample selection<br>Field plans and timeline for completion of surveys |
| <b>2. Quality control measures</b>                                | Quality checks proposed by the agency<br>Field team structure                          |
| <b>3. Data collection experience</b>                              | Prior experience in data collection<br>Sector-specific experience                      |
| <b>4. Qualifications of assigned personnel</b>                    |  |
| <b>5. A Technical presentation made by the agency and Q&amp;A</b> | Agencies should be asked to present their proposals                                    |

- The weights accorded to these criteria should change depending on the ToR and the responsibility of the agency. For e.g. if agency is required to define the methodology then a higher weight should be assigned to #1.

# Supervising and Ensuring Evaluation Quality

- The role of the commissioning agency i.e. the government – very important
- Evaluation work plan and implementation
  - Light touch supervision / review
  - Share specific guidelines with the evaluator
  - Have a clearly established communication channels with the external agency

## Questionnaire development

- Provide inputs in the draft and during piloting

## Survey Implementation

- Closely monitor and supervise implementation of work plan and timelines
- Timely release of funds
- Quality checks

## Analysis and Report Writing

- Providing formats and guidelines



# Concluding Thoughts

# What makes a good evaluation system

## ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- Commitment to evidence-based policymaking
- Evaluation policy/guidelines
- Data policy
- Incentives to spur collaborations
- Integration of evaluation in the program life-cycle

## OPERATIONAL ASPECTS

- Capable staff
- External experts
- Adoption of technology
- Smooth commissioning processes
- Toolkits, manuals, templates etc.

# Audience Q&A

## Designing Governments' Evaluation Strategies: Key Considerations



## ABOUT CLEAR/J-PAL SOUTH ASIA

J-PAL South Asia is the regional office of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, a global research center founded at MIT by Nobel Laureates Profs. Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence.

CLEAR South Asia, hosted by J-PAL SA, is part of the Centres for Learning and Evaluation Results network coordinated by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group, and works to strengthen M&E systems and capacities and the use of evidence in the region.

Visit us at : [povertyactionlab.org/south-asia](http://povertyactionlab.org/south-asia)

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The Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), attached to NITI Aayog, is the apex monitoring & evaluation (M&E) office in the country, with a mandate to drive evidence-based policy making through M&E of government policies and programmes. Since its inception in 2015, the Office aims to shift the discourse of public policy towards rigorous, data-driven, citizen-centric, and decentralized policymaking, to improve governance and facilitate the formation of a New India.

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