EPATEE

Guidelines on how to integrate evaluation into the policy cycle

Report D4.2

Project Coordinator: Austrian Energy Agency – AEA

Work Package 4 Leader Organization: TNO

February 2019

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 746265.

Authors

Jean-Sébastien Broc, IEECP

Vlasis Oikonomou, IEECP

Mia Dragovic, IEECP

Project coordination and editing provided by Austrian Energy Agency.

Manuscript completed in [February, 2019]

This document is available on: www.epatee.eu

Document title	Guidelines on how to integrate evaluation into the policy cycle
Work Package	WP4
Document Type	Deliverable
Date	15 February 2019
Document Status	Draft version

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The EPATEE project

Several barriers limit energy efficiency policy evaluation. This results in a lack of quantitative data, and impedes evidence-based analysis required to distinguish effective from ineffective energy efficiency policies. EPATEE aims at tackling this problem by raising the capacity of policymakers and implementers. The project provides them both with tools and with practical knowledge to make effective impact evaluation an integral part of the policy cycle. EPATEE makes use of existing evaluation experiences in a range of instruments, such as energy efficiency obligation schemes, regulations, financial incentives and voluntary agreements. Experience sharing is the core of the project. Lessons learnt from other EU initiatives and good practices in how to successfully evaluate the impact and cost-effectiveness of such energy efficiency policies will provide the basis for the development of guidelines and good practice evaluation tools. For further information please visit our website: www.epatee.eu

Executive Summary

Experience feedback collected in the EPATEE case studies show that performing evaluation is not only about practical (e.g., data collection) or methodological (e.g., defining a baseline) issues. Organizational issues can be as important, and particularly when considering the planning and use of evaluation.

This report thus aims at investigating the connections between evaluation and the policy cycle, and how to make evaluation an integral part of policy management. This is assumed to ultimately result in optimised and effective evaluation practices leading to improvements in policies.

As a starting point, the report briefly reminds why and how doing evaluation can help improve policies, and provide sources for general guidance on how to plan and prepare evaluations.

Then, the concept of policy cycle is introduced, explaining how it can be used to plan and analyse the different phases of policy development, and analysing how evaluation can be related to it. This shows how an integrated approach can be fruitful for both, policy developments and evaluation.

Based on usual ways to describe policy cycle and evaluation process, a simplified joint representation has been developed to illustrate how both processes could interact (see figure next page).

This integration does rarely occur naturally, due to barriers. Feedback from stakeholders enabled to characterize and structure them into categories. This framework was then used to present good practices in the form of actions that can be done by persons or units in charge of evaluation within public bodies, to tackle these issues and facilitate the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle. These actions have been summarized in two tables in the annex.

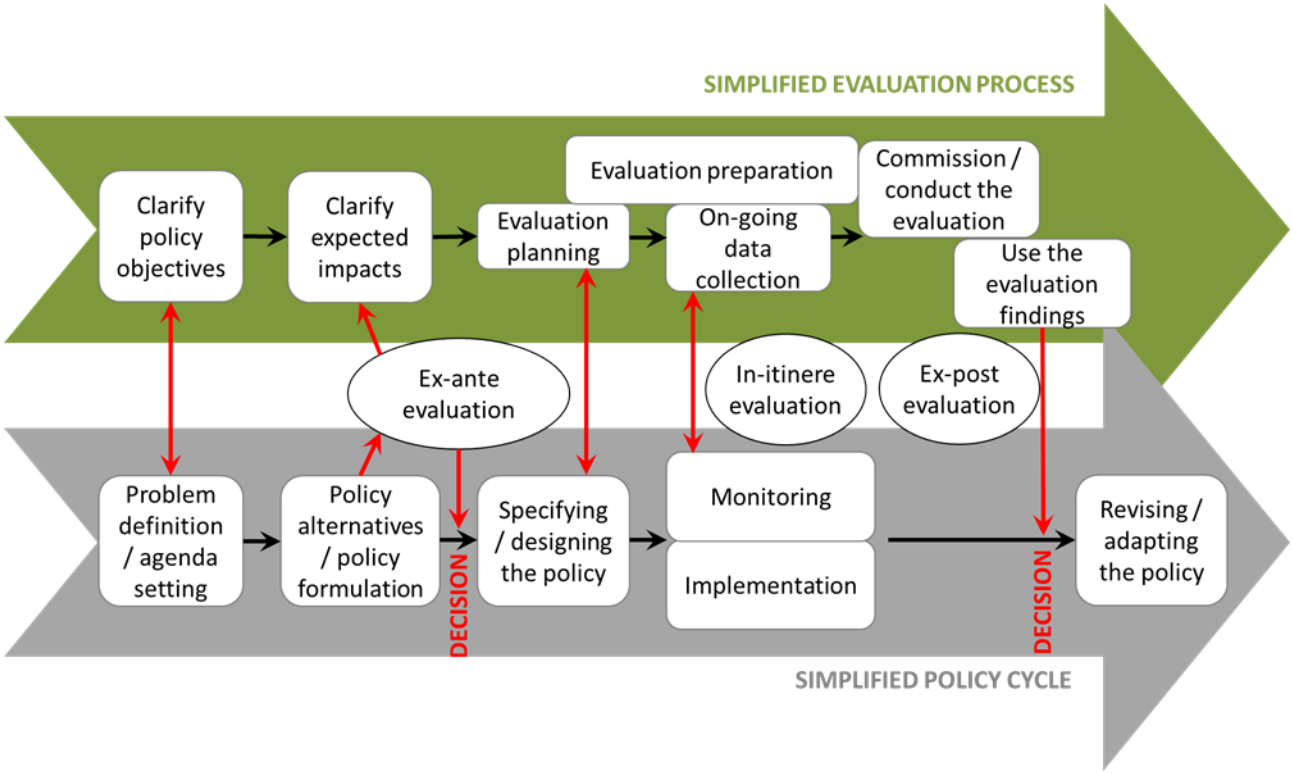
Short-term actions have been grouped according to the stages of the policy cycle or evaluation:

- from the start of the policy cycle;
- when preparing the evaluation;
- along the evaluation process;
- towards the end of the evaluation process.

Medium-term actions have been grouped according to ways to facilitate the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle:

- raise awareness about evaluation;
- linking policy and evaluation frameworks;

- guidelines and tools for the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle;
- good practices for transparency, legitimacy and credibility.



Simplified joint representation of the policy cycle and evaluation process.

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1 | Introduction

Experience feedback collected in the EPATEE case studies shows that performing evaluation is not only about practical (e.g., data collection) or methodological (e.g., defining a baseline) issues. Organizational issues can be as important, and particularly when considering the planning and use of evaluation.

This report thus aims at investigating the connections between evaluation and the policy cycle, and how to make evaluation an integral part of policy management.

Part 2 | reminds the rationale of doing evaluations, providing hands-on examples about how evaluations have been used to improve energy efficiency policies.

Part 3 | provides a general starting point and sources about guidance on how to plan and prepare evaluations.

Part 4 | presents the background of the main topic of this report, by clarifying what "policy cycle" means, how and for what this concept can be useful, and how evaluation can be related to it.

Part 5 | discusses the barriers to evaluation and its integration into the policy cycle, as identified through the exchanges with stakeholders along the EPATEE project (interviews, online surveys, case studies). These sources of experience are complemented by similar analysis done by Giorgi (2017).

The output is a categorization of the main issues identified.

Part 6 | uses this structure to present good practices in the form of actions that can be done by persons or units in charge of evaluation within public bodies, in order to tackle these issues and facilitate the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle. This is assumed to ultimately result in optimised and effective evaluation practices leading to improvements in policies.

Finally, the **Annex** provides two summary tables, respectively for short-term and medium-term actions to facilitate the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle.

This report is an input to the **EPATEE toolbox**, and more specifically for the section [Process of evaluation] in the part [Evaluation principles & methods]. It provides general guidance about the management of evaluation. The EPATEE toolbox then provides [Specific evaluation guidance] for the evaluation of energy savings, taking into account the specificities of combinations of policy measures, sectors and evaluation methods.

2 | Why doing evaluations?

2.1 General evaluation objectives and criteria

The reasons and objectives to do evaluation can be presented according to the two dimensions classically used to characterize general evaluation objectives:

- the summative dimension, "**what are the results or impacts?**": assessing and reporting results, effectiveness and efficiency of the policies;
- the formative dimension, "**what can we learn or improve?**": examining what works, what does not work, looking for improvements and questioning new ideas.

Most evaluations cover both dimensions to some extent (as observed in the evaluations analysed for the EPATEE case studies, see Broc et al. 2018). The main difference lies in the focus or priorities of the evaluation, as shown in the examples listed below.

Summative dimension:

- accountability (e.g., to the Ministry of Finance, the Parliament or the Court of Auditors),
- monitoring target achievement,
- assessing cost-effectiveness of the policy measure,
- etc.

Formative dimension:

- getting a feedback on the satisfaction about the scheme,
- understanding what worked (or did not work) as planned,
- providing inputs to the redesign or improvement of the scheme,
- etc.

Most of the evaluations have **multiple objectives**. However, evaluations rarely aim at covering all the evaluation criteria, such as the ones listed in the Better Regulation toolbox of the European Commission (2017a):

1. **Effectiveness**: "*Effectiveness analysis considers how successful [a policy measure] has been in achieving or progressing towards its objectives*."
2. **Efficiency**: "*Efficiency considers the relationship between the resources used by an intervention and the changes generated by the intervention (which may be positive or negative)*."
3. **Relevance**: "*Relevance looks at the relationship between the needs and problems in society and the objectives of the intervention and hence touches on aspects of design*."
4. **Coherence**: "*The evaluation of coherence involves looking at a how well or not different [policy measures] work together. It may highlight areas where there are synergies which improve overall performance (…) ; or it may point to tensions e.g. objectives which are potentially contradictory, or approaches which are causing inefficiencies*."

Other evaluation criteria can be used (e.g., viability, utility) as represented in the figure below linking intervention logic, objectives and evaluation criteria.

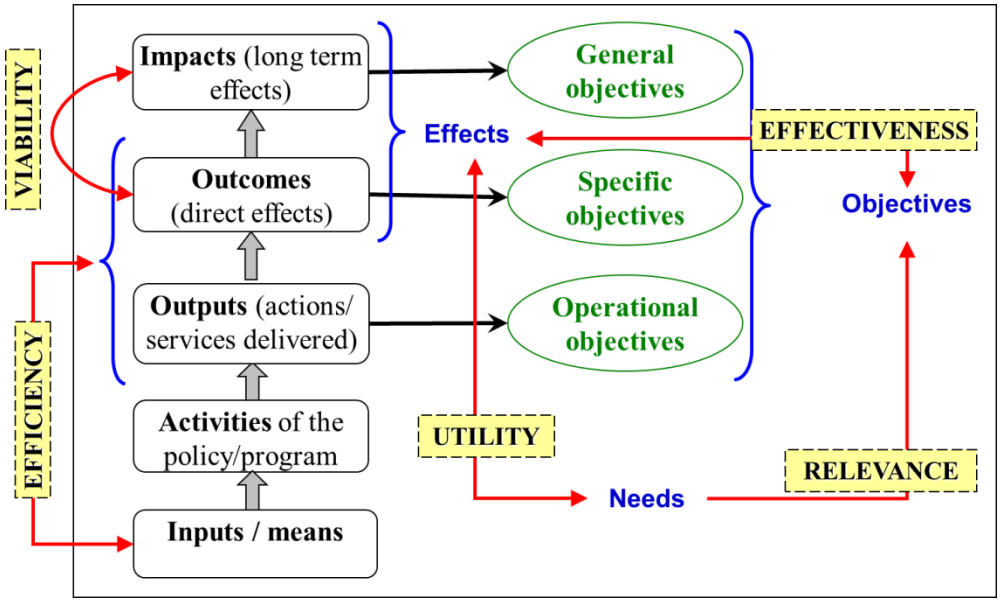


Figure 1. Intervention logic, objectives and evaluation criteria.

Evaluation criteria are usually selected according to priorities of the evaluation commissioners (e.g. linked to policy agendas) or to regulatory or reporting requirements (e.g. linked to governance rules). This selection has also often to take into account practical constraints (e.g. time and means available for the evaluation, data limitations).

2.2 From general evaluation criteria to specific evaluation questions: prioritizing

Evaluation criteria correspond to general questions that then needs to be transcribed in questions specific to the policy measure(s) evaluated and their background. In practice, evaluation questions most often have to be prioritized.

Example: the feedback about the evaluation of the Environmental Support scheme in Austria highlighted that all the evaluation objectives initially considered would have required a budget three times higher than the one available (Thenius and Böck 2018, pp.5-7).

Evaluation priorities can depend on its audience. The review of who was involved in the evaluations analysed in the EPATEE case studies confirmed the diversity in the organisation and role of evaluation, as shown in Figure 2 below.

The interviews done for the EPATEE case studies also confirmed that evaluation questions could be prioritized according not only to the needs of the evaluation customers, but also to the perspective of the audience. For more details, see also sections 3.1 and 4.1 of the Volume II (background report) of (Broc et al. 2018).

Example: when the evaluation is reported to the Ministry of Economy or Finance, the evaluation can have a focus on cost-effectiveness or related indicators. Likewise, when the Court of Auditors is involved, questions related to value for money is often on the agenda.

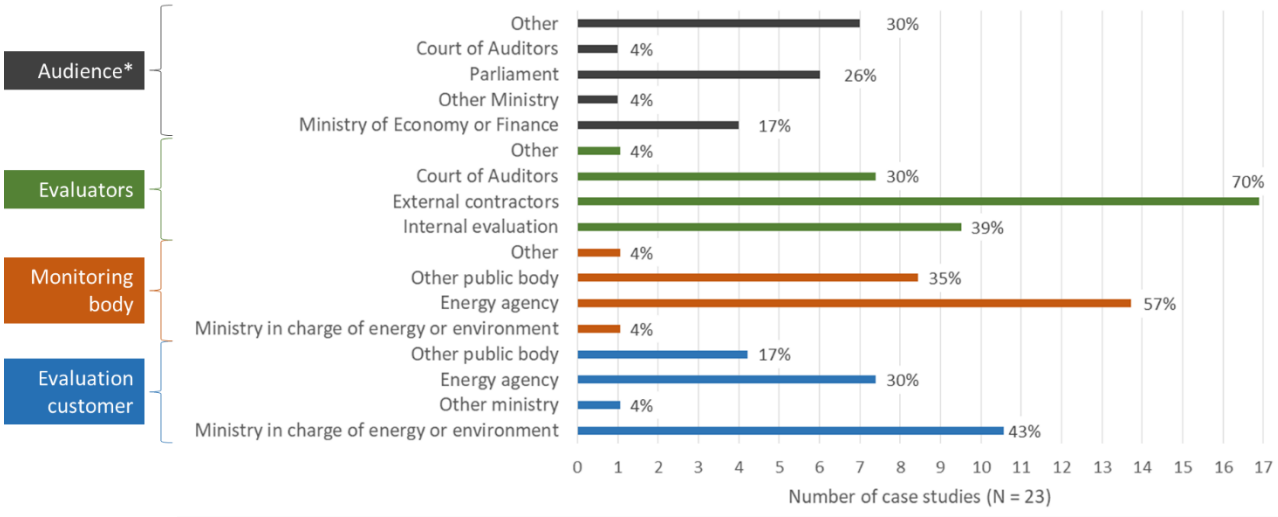


Figure 2. Who is involved in evaluations (and how) (source: Broc et al. 2018).

**: audience = bodies other than evaluation customers, monitoring body and evaluators*
Note: one case can include several evaluations/evaluators and different actors in the audience. Only one case study includes two different evaluation customers (for different evaluation studies). Only one case study includes several monitoring bodies, because the policy was a portfolio of programmes.

2.3 Practical examples of the added value of evaluation

As suggested by some stakeholders interviewed for EPATEE (see Bini et al. 2017), a way to understand the role of evaluation is to think about what happens when no evaluation is done: in such a case, it becomes impossible to say if the money spent was used in a profitable way and produced the desired effects. This highlights why evaluation is a valuable resource for policymakers, especially in times of scarce resources.

The first EPATEE experience sharing webinars were dedicated to the **added value of evaluation**, with examples from:

- Ireland and Sweden: https://epatee.eu/events/webinar-1-part-1-how-energy-efficiency-policy-evaluation-can-produce-benefits-and-add-value
- Denmark and Finland: https://epatee.eu/events/webinar-1-part-2-how-energy-efficiency-policy-evaluation-can-produce-benefits-and-add-value

Table 1 below provides **practical examples** from the EPATEE case studies about the **use of evaluation results, conclusions or recommendations**. For more details, see the section 2.1 of Volume II (background report) of (Broc et al. 2018).

To get other examples of the added value of evaluation (beyond the scope of energy efficiency policies), see the blog created during the International Year of Evaluation (2015) about "**evaluations that make a difference**": https://evaluationstories.wordpress.com/

Table 1. Examples of use of evaluation results, conclusions or recommendations (Source: Broc et al. 2018).

Examples of outputs/outcomes from the evaluation	Case studies where these examples are mentioned
Political outputs	
Evidences/accountability for decision-making (particularly about funding)	Better Energy Homes (IE), EE Fund (DE), Environment Support Scheme (AT), Individual heat metering (CR), Voluntary energy audits (FI), White Certificates scheme (IT), WAP (US)
Reinforcing support from policymakers and other stakeholders	Better Energy Homes (IE), Voluntary agreements (FI), Voluntary energy audits (FI), Nordsyn, WAP (US)
Improving policy management	
Optimising the programme management	EE Programmes of Vienna (AT), Renovation programmes (LT), Supplier Obligation (UK)
New components added to increase scheme participation	Voluntary agreements (FI), Renovation programmes (LT), Supplier Obligation (UK)
Improving the application process	Primes Energie (BE), Environment Support Scheme (AT)
Improving monitoring and conditions for future evaluations	EE Programmes of Vienna (AT), EEO scheme (DK), Agreement for freight companies (FR), "Future Investments" programme (FR), Better Energy Homes (IE), Nordsyn, WAP (US)
Adapting the scheme and its rules	
Redesign of the incentives	Energy renovation of public sector buildings (CR), Individual heat metering (CR) Environment Support Scheme (AT), Renovation programmes (LT)
Improving data collection and verification processes	EEO scheme (UK), Environment Support Scheme (AT), Agreement for freight companies (FR), "Future Investments" programme (FR), Supplier Obligation (UK)
Updating the list of eligible actions	Primes Energie (BE), EEO scheme (DK)
Improved technical recommendations/requirements	Warm Front (England), Environment Support Scheme (AT), Voluntary energy audits (FI), EE Fund (DE), Multi-year agreements (NL), Warm Front (UK), WAP (US)
Better understanding of how the scheme works	
Reactivity of households to changes in the incentive design	Primes Energie (BE)
Detecting new trends and changes	Environment Support Scheme (AT)
Better understanding of interactions between policies	Voluntary energy audits (FI)
Better understanding of the reasons to participate (or not participate) to the scheme	Agreement for freight companies (FR), Renovation programmes (LT)

Understanding of interactions between policies	Voluntary energy audits (FI)
Understanding reasons of innovations success and failures	Agreement for freight companies (FR)
Understanding impacts and side-effects of the policy	Purchase tax on new cars (NL), Supplier Obligation (UK), Warm Front (UK), WAP (US)

The European Commission's Better Regulation Toolbox (European Commission, 2017b) also includes a section dedicated to "**Why do we evaluate?**":

"*Evaluation at the Commission serves several purposes. Although the importance may differ, most evaluation results will contribute to:*

- ***Timely and relevant advice to decision-making and input to political priority-setting**: Evaluation supports decision-making, contributing to strategic planning and to the design of future interventions. The Commission applies the "**evaluate first**" principle to make sure any policy decisions take into due account the lessons from past EU action. Thus for instance, lessons learned from evaluation should be available and feed into impact assessment work from the outset.*
- ***Organisational learning**: The results of an evaluation can be used to improve the quality of an on-going intervention. Evaluations should identify not just areas for improvement but also encourage the sharing of (good and bad) practices and achievements. Evaluation also provides the opportunity to look for the unintended and/or unexpected effects of EU action.*
- ***Transparency and accountability**: All stakeholders and the general public have a right to know what the EU has done and achieved.*
- ***Efficient resource allocation**: Evaluation results contribute to a more efficient allocation of resources between interventions, the separate elements of a specific programme or activity, or between activities*."

3 | How to plan and prepare evaluations?

The international initiative BetterEvaluation (betterevaluation.org)[1] has defined a general framework to structure general guidance about the evaluation process into seven colour-coded clusters: this is the so-called Rainbow framework, shown in Figure 3 below.

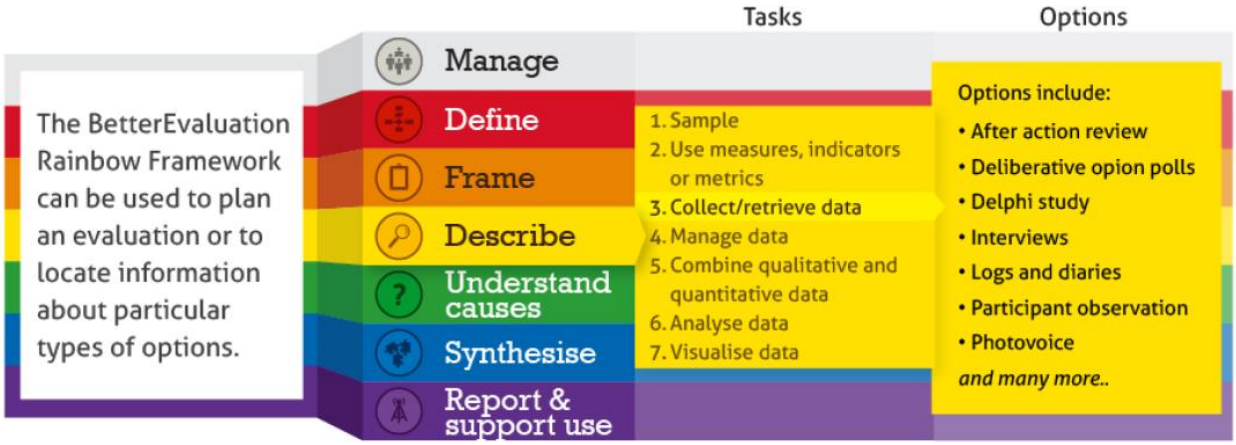


Figure 3. Rainbow framework for evaluation (source: BetterEvaluation 2014).

For each cluster, the framework explains the different options (methods or processes) that can be used for each task in an evaluation. It was designed as a planning tool that can be used to: "*commission and manage an evaluation; plan an evaluation; check the quality of an ongoing evaluation; embed participation thoughtfully in evaluation; develop evaluation capacity*".

Table 2 below presents the brief descriptions of each cluster. For more details, see: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/rainbow_framework

[1] BetterEvaluation is an "*international collaboration to improve the practice and theory of evaluation by creating and curating information on choosing and using evaluation methods and processes, including managing evaluations and strengthening evaluation capacity*". The founders are Australia's and New Zealand's public bodies. For more details, see https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/about

Table 2. Clusters of the Rainbow Framework (source: BetterEvaluation 2014).

Cluster	Brief description
1.MANAGE an evaluation or evaluation system	Decide how the evaluation will be managed, including clarifying stakeholders, roles and decision making processes, and ensure processes for these are transparent and well-managed.
2. DEFINE what is to be evaluated	Develop a description (or access an existing version) of what is to be evaluated and how it is understood to work.
3. FRAME the boundaries for an evaluation	Set the parameters of the evaluation – its purposes, key evaluation questions and the criteria and standards to be used.
4. DESCRIBE activities, outcomes, impacts and context	Collect and retrieve data to answer descriptive questions about the activities of the policy measure, the various results it has had, and the context in which it has been implemented.
5. UNDERSTAND CAUSES of outcomes and impacts	Collect and analyse data to answer causal questions about what has produced outcomes and impacts that have been observed.
6. SYNTHESISE data from one or more evaluations	Combine data to form an overall assessment of the merit or worth of the intervention, or to summarise evidence across several evaluations.
7. REPORT AND SUPPORT USE of findings	Develop and present findings in ways that are useful for the intended users of the evaluation, and support them to make use of them.

The UK Department in charge of energy (now BEIS, formerly DECC) has developed an evaluation guide that provides a complementary view of an evaluation plan in eight steps whose the first six steps are about planning and preparing the evaluation, as shown in Figure 4 below.

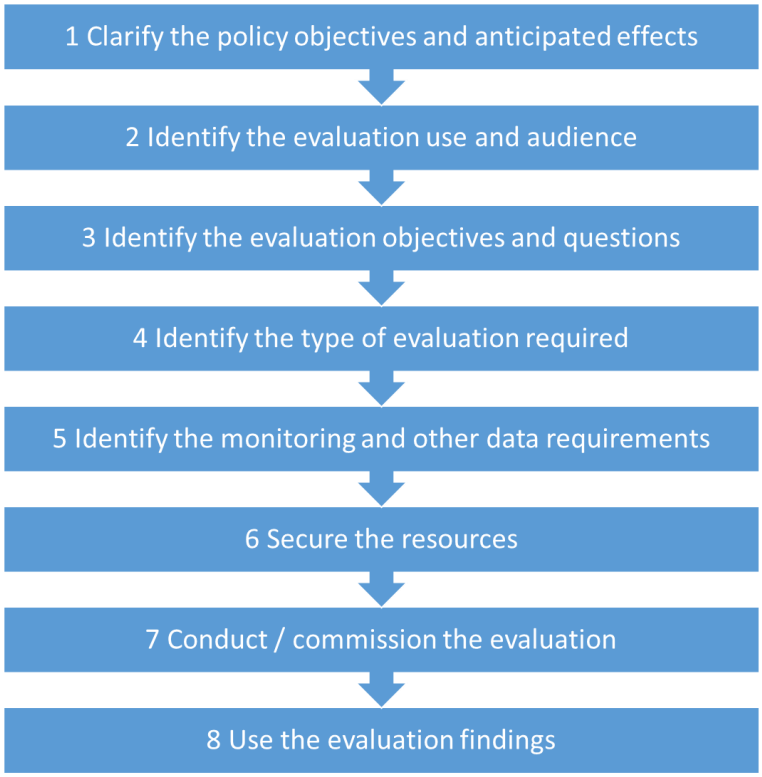


Figure 4. Steps to plan and undertake evaluations (source: DECC 2011).

The EPATEE toolbox will complement both general sources of guidance (BetterEvaluation's Rainbow framework and DECC evaluation guide) with practical examples specific to the evaluation of energy efficiency policies, based on the EPATEE case studies and other sources.

Feedback collected along the EPATEE case studies shows that **the preparation of the evaluation is very important for its success**.

Example: quote from the presentation made by Michael Aumer about the evaluation of the Austrian Environment Support Scheme (Thenius and Böck 2018, pp.5-7):

*"To ensure that the evaluator will have a good knowledge of the scheme, the evaluator has then to gather all the information that can be spread in various sources and over time. Checking and sorting the information is often needed to make them clear and usable by the evaluator. And this should often be complemented by discussions with the evaluator along the evaluation, when further clarifications might be needed. This work on the side of the evaluation customer can be time-consuming. But experience shows that **it is essential** for the analysis of the evaluation to be consistent with the actual implementation of the scheme (and not disconnected from the ground). Moreover, Michael Aumer emphasised that this also provides policy officers with a **better understanding of the programme**."*

4 | Evaluation and the policy cycle

4.1 Policy cycle: what it is, and what it is used for

The **policy cycle** is an approach used to **plan and analyse the different phases of policy development** (Giorgi 2017; HM Treasury 2011; Young and Quinn 2002). There are many ways to represent the policy cycle (see examples in Figure 5 and Figure 6 below). As highlighted by Young and Quinn (2002), "*it is important to emphasise that policy processes are never as linear, or cyclical, as implied in the model. But, looking at the policy process in terms of these stages or functional elements can help us to understand how this process does (or should) work*."

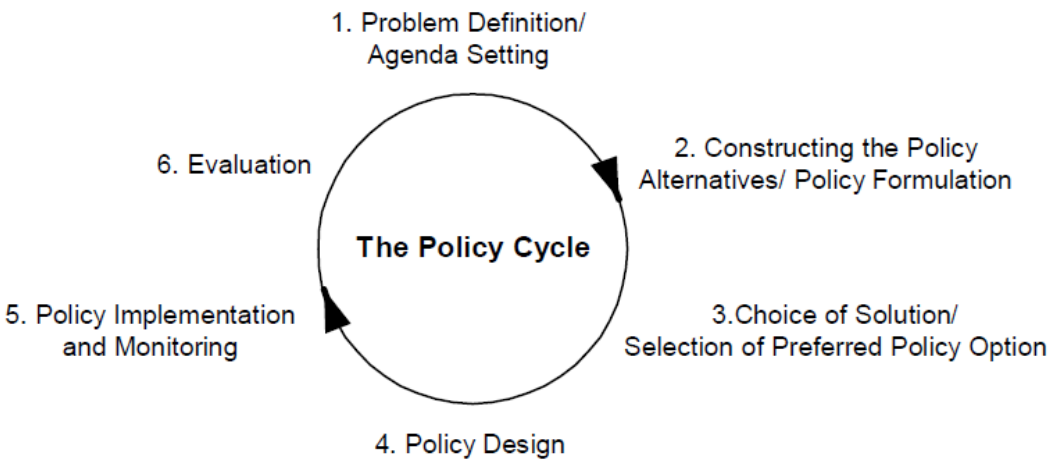
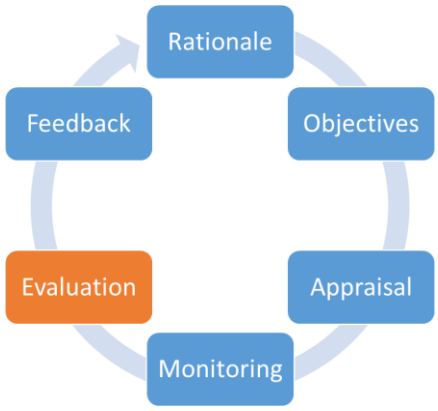


Figure 5. The policy cycle (Source: Young and Quinn 2002).



Note: this policy cycle is named ROAMEF cycle (based on the initial of each step)

Figure 6. The ROAMEF policy cycle (Source: HM Treasury 2011).

As emphasised by Giorgi (2017), "*the number and names of each phase can vary but the essence behind each step remains consistent*". Giorgi then summarizes the main general steps of a policy cycle as follows:

1. **Agenda setting**: "*The general approach starts out with agenda setting which identifies the problem or issue that needs addressing. This first step often has specific phases of 'defining the issue' and 'understanding the situation'*."
2. **Considering and formulating policy options / alternatives**: "*This is then followed by steps which formulate and assess the different alternative courses of action and preparation for delivery*."
3. **Choosing and specifying (designing) the preferred option**: "*In the following phase, Government decides on the course of action (which includes maintaining the status quo i.e. taking no action)*."
4. **Implementing and monitoring**: "*The decision made in the previous step will then be put into practice through implementation and monitoring*".
5. **Evaluating and providing feedback for next period**: "*The final phase (which is the first step in the next cycle) is about assessing the effectiveness of the policy in terms of its intended objectives, outcomes and impacts. This 'assessment of effectiveness' is done through evaluation and adapting lessons learned into the future delivery of the policy*."

As reminded in the UK Magenta Book, "*in practice this one-directional relationship rarely holds, the process is often **iterative** and there are significant **interdependencies** between the various elements*" (HM Treasury 2011).

The qualitative feedback collected from policy stakeholders by Giorgi (2017) confirms that they usually know about policy cycle's representations, but that they don't necessarily use it. Mostly because it describes "*how things should work in theory rather than how they actually worked in practice. Though the steps in the cycle were depicted as neat and compact, the real world was much messier and complex*". Still, most of the stakeholders interviewed in this study acknowledge that the policy cycle provides a basis to present, analyse and discuss a policy and particularly the process of its development.

4.2 How evaluation fits into the policy cycle

(*this section's title is taken from the UK Magenta Book: see pp.14-15 of HM Treasury 2011*)

In the above representations of the policy cycle, evaluation is shown as one step of the cycle, being the last one and closing the loop. This indeed corresponds to the usual definition of ex-post evaluations. However, evaluation practices and the policy cycle are much more interrelated in practice, as pointed in the UK Magenta Book:

> *"evaluations can, in fact, occur at practically any other time. And importantly, decisions affecting and relating to any evaluation will almost always be taken much earlier in the policy process"* (HM Treasury 2011)

This point is essential. In the qualitative survey done by Giorgi (2017), "*interviewees often stated that, though evaluation was embedded throughout the policy cycle, having it as the final step suggested it is something you only think about at the end*." **Thinking about evaluation only at the end of the policy cycle is a major source of difficulties to conduct evaluations**: not enough time available to get evaluation results for the decision making process, problems with data collection, difficulties to find or reconstitute the initial policy theory and objectives, etc.

At the opposite, Giorgi's interviewees recommended a more **integrated approach**: " *'preparation for evaluation' and 'evidence gathering' happened or should happen at each phase while the completion of a formal evaluation happened at the final step 'evaluate & adapt' "* .

Several stakeholders interviewed for EPATEE (see Bini et al. 2017) also pointed that integrating evaluation in the policy design was a good practice: results from previous ex-post evaluations and/or ex-ante evaluations of policies under consideration can inform the design process. Then thinking

about evaluation from the start (i.e. when designing a policy) helps ensuring the feasibility of future ex-post evaluations, particularly by optimizing data collection.

"Through evaluation we can address several issues in the policy cycle, such as how a policy has been implemented, who, how and why has it been affected, if savings have been achieved and determine where it needs to be adapted, continued or ended"

"Evaluation should follow the whole policy cycle and be used in the planning as well as in the controlling (results) of the policy. Systems that incorporate this comprehensive approach seem to be more successful"

"During the design of a policy, an evaluation advisor should be present to ensure a good ex-post evaluation (e.g. if the data collection is not well design it is somewhat very difficult to evaluate the policy or at a large cost - which is somehow the reason for a lack of evaluation), the design should be 'evaluation-friendly' ".

Quotes from the EPATEE interviews (Bini et al. 2017)

Beyond the usual good practice of planning evaluation early in the policy cycle, the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle should thus be seen in the **two ways**, as shown in Figure 7 below.

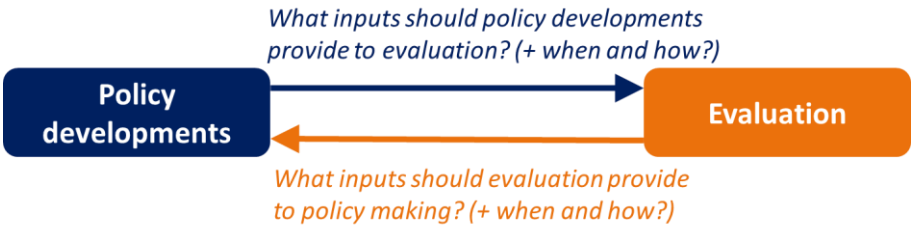


Figure 7. Two-way integration of evaluation into the policy cycle.

Using the descriptions of evaluation process (see Figure 3 and Figure 4 in part) and policy cycle (see Figure 5 and in part Figure 6), Figure 8 represents them in a simplified way as joint processes with key interactions (red arrows in the figure), in order to illustrate more in details how they can be integrated.

Figure 9 and Figure 10 then provide a zoom about the stages of evaluation planning/preparation and conducting/using evaluation respectively.

As reminded above about the policy cycle, these processes are not necessarily linear. In particular, a good integration of evaluation into the policy cycle would mean multiple, and almost on-going, interactions between both.

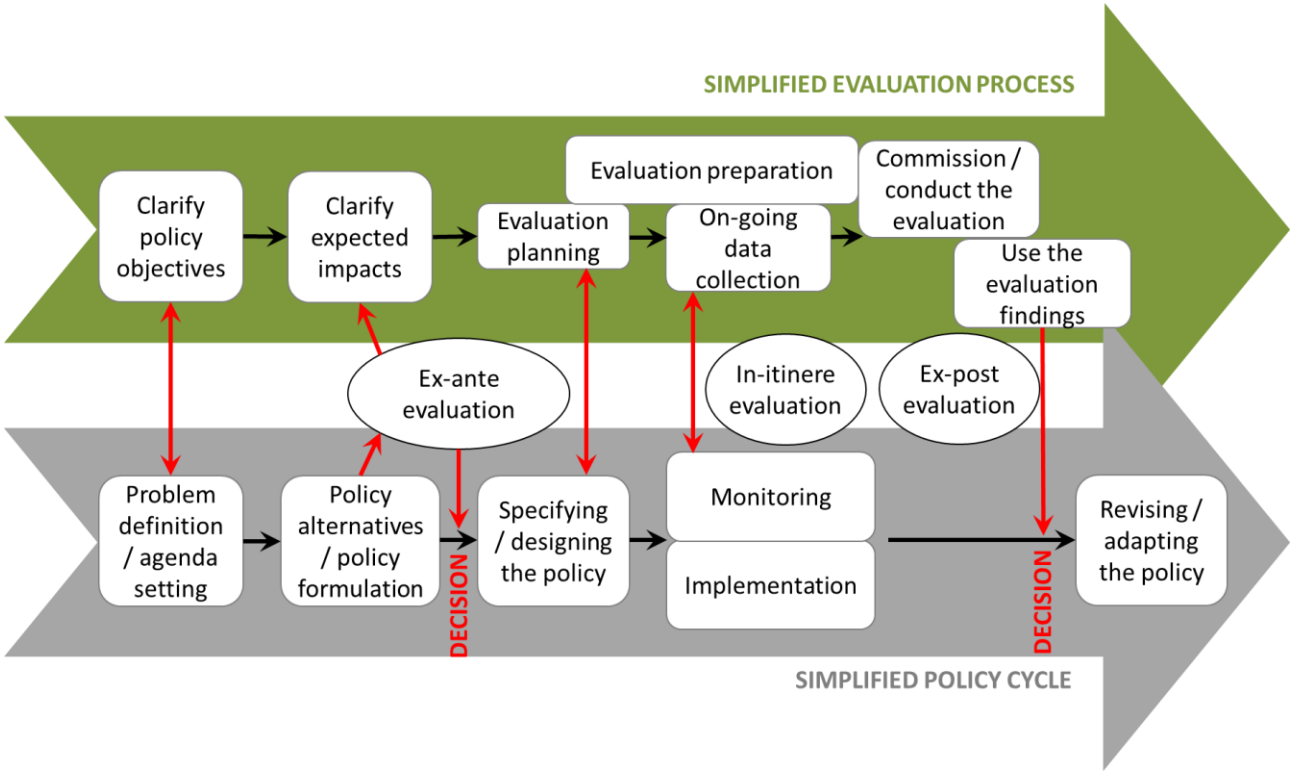


Figure 8. Simplified joint representation of the policy cycle and evaluation process.

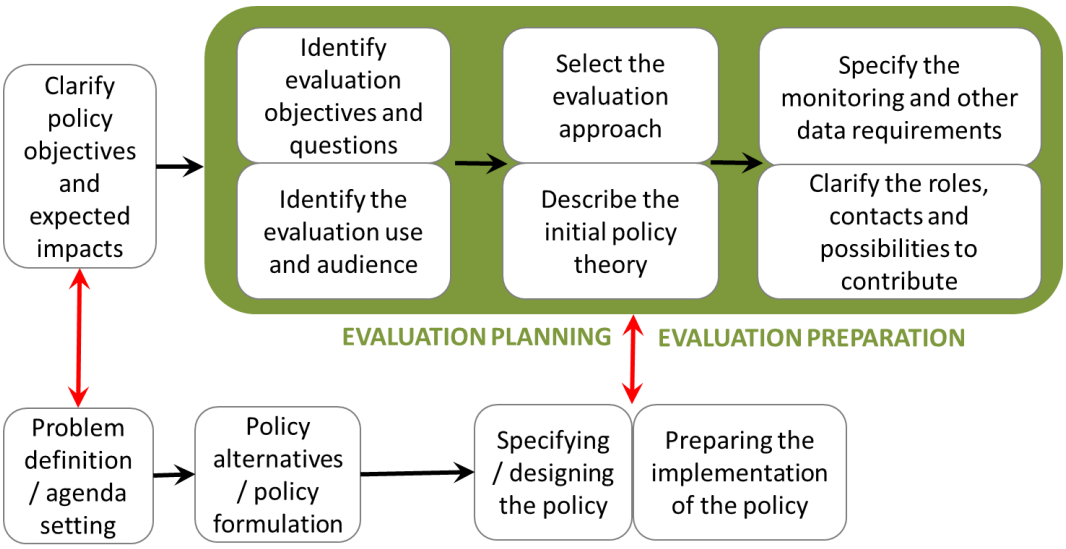


Figure 9. Zoom on the evaluation planning/preparation stage (linked to specifying/designing the policy).

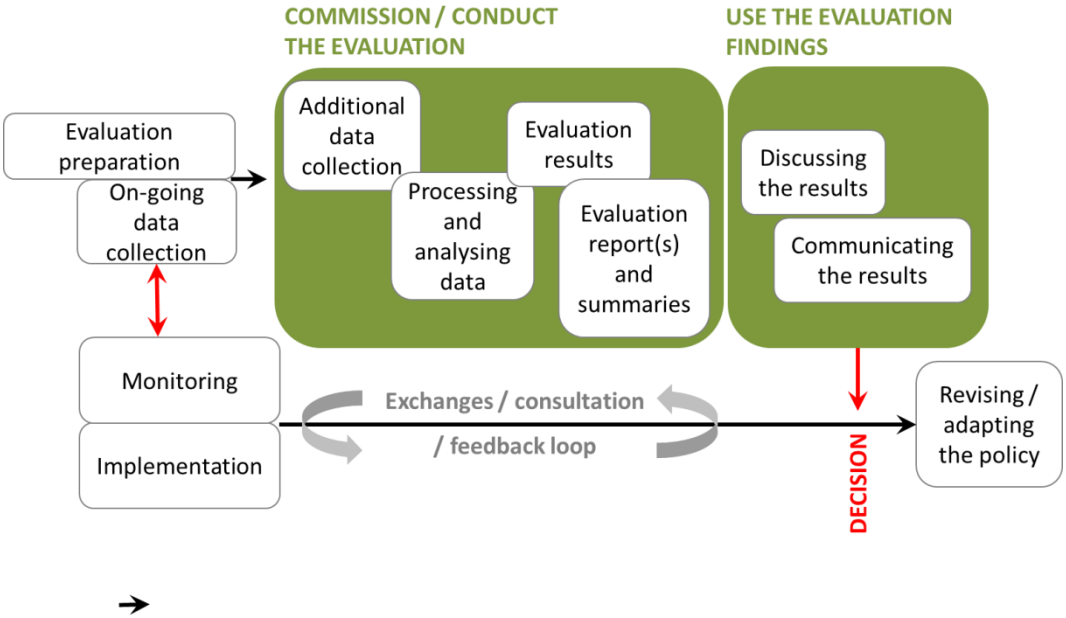


Figure 10. Zoom on the conducting/using evaluation stage (linked with revising/adapting the policy).

Based on the interviews with policy stakeholders, Giorgi (2017) identified possible conflicts between the desired ideal of how evaluation should fit into the policy cycle and how things work in practice. She summarized this in the following key points on how does/should evaluation fit into the policy cycle:

- "*Evidence gathering and preparation for evaluation is going on in different ways across all phases; this is/should be adapted and fed back to the relevant phase;*
- *Evaluation cannot delay policy development; there needs to be a timely input with quick feedback loops;*
- *Co-produced working between policymakers and analysts at each phase automatically embeds evaluation in each step, challenging the view that evaluation is done separately by the evaluation team and is, therefore, something that happens to policy rather than a way of working; and*
- *The policy cycle is/should be a 'cycle'; the 'final' step in one wheel is the 'first' step in the next wheel ad infinitum*."

Based on this analysis and the review of the EPATEE case studies (see Broc et al. 2018), a set of key issues for integrating evaluation into the policy cycle could be identified.

Table 3. Key issues for integrating evaluation into the policy cycle.

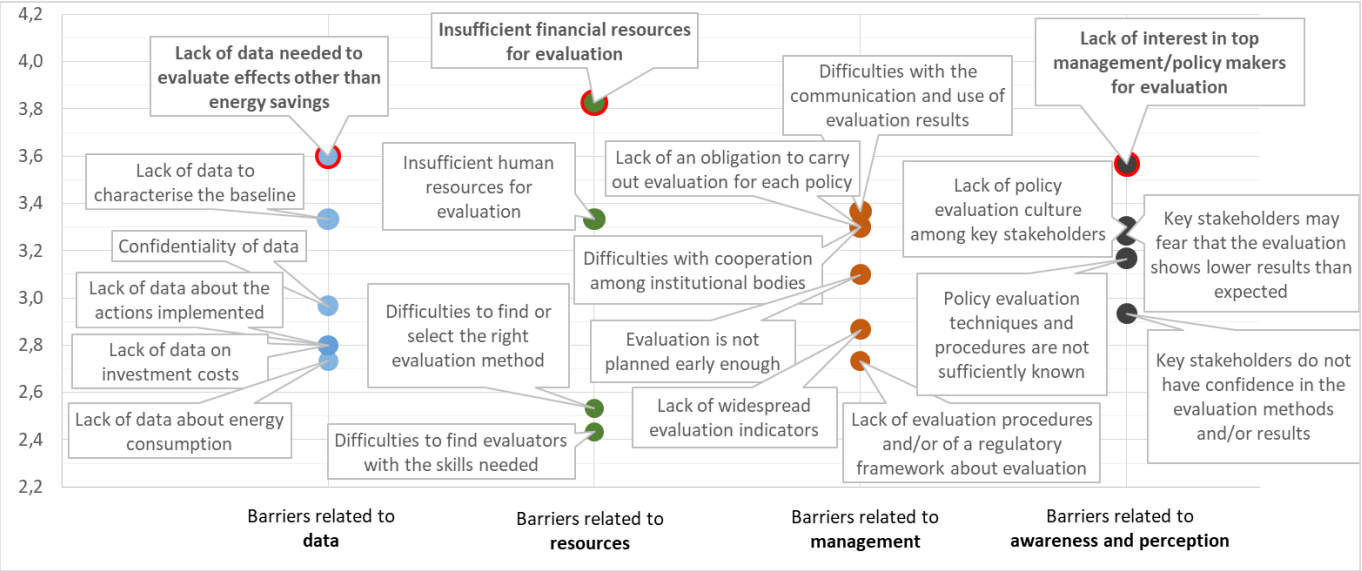
Issue	Links between evaluation and policy cycle	Why it is important
Political will (top-management commitment)	Interest of the top management in the evaluation process, and clear commitment about the role of the evaluation in the decision making process.	A clear political will about the evaluation process is essential to ensure sufficient resources will be dedicated to evaluation, and to support the legitimacy of the evaluation (see below).
Resource allocation (time, people, budget)	Balance between resources dedicated to policy implementation and to evaluation. Possible synergies to optimise resource use and limit the risks of "evaluation burden" (e.g. about data collection).	Lack of resources is one of the most frequently reported barrier to evaluation, leading to a lack of evaluation or evaluations done in bad conditions leading to unreliable results. Good integration of evaluation into the policy cycle can minimize evaluation costs, and shows added value of evaluation.
Evaluation planning and preparation	Timing of evaluation vs. decision-making process. Policy design → policy theory → starting point of the evaluation. Evaluation objectives should be based on policy objectives. Data needs and collection vs. monitoring system.	If the evaluation is not planned/prepared early enough, this will make it more difficult (and costly!), and will make it challenging to get results when needed. Early or embedded planning helps evaluation to be reliable, timely and focused on relevant priorities. In other words: to be effective and useful.
Legitimacy	Involvement of policy stakeholders in the evaluation process. Stakeholders' perception (and reception) of the evaluation. Conditions for evaluation results to be accepted and used for communication, consultation and/or decision making.	If the evaluation (and its process) is not seen by stakeholders as legitimate, then there is low chances that its results be considered and used. Stakeholders may refuse to share information needed for the evaluation, oppose to the communication of the results, or contest them.
Organisation	Definition of roles for each party (policy officers, evaluators, other stakeholders) in the evaluation process. Interactions (synergies and conflicts) between policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation.	An explicit and agreed organisation is essential for an effective implementation of the evaluation, and particularly for exchanges of information and data collection. It is also related to the legitimacy of the evaluation (see above).

Issue	Links between evaluation and policy cycle	Why it is important
Communication and mutual understanding	Communication and mutual understanding between policy implementers/officers and evaluators (and also among different services, departments or institutions).	Lack in communication creates difficulties in the information flows (both ways: information needed by the evaluators from the implementers, and information provided by the evaluators to the implementers and decision makers). Mutual understanding is also needed in both ways: for evaluators to understand the policy background and elements, and for policy officers or makers to understand the evaluation results (including their limitations).
Communication about the evaluation and its results	Audience of the evaluation vs. parties involved or interested in the policy. Timing and forum to discuss evaluation results.	These aspects are essential to create the conditions for the evaluation to be acknowledged and used.

5 | Practical barriers to evaluation and its integration into the policy cycle

5.1 Barriers to evaluation

The interviews and first online survey of stakeholders done at the beginning of the EPATEE project made possible to identify the main barriers to evaluation, as perceived by the stakeholders (see Bini et al. 2017). The barriers qualitatively mentioned by the interviewees could be grouped in four categories (data; resources; management; awareness and perception), that were then used in the online survey to grade the importance of the various barriers identified.



Note: scale from 1 (barrier with low influence) to 5 (very important barrier)

Figure 11. Question "*Please grade the importance of the barriers to evaluation*" (Source: Bini et al., 2017).

The three main barriers show a **mix of organizational, financial and technical issues**:

- insufficient financial resources, for example due to public budget restrictions and priority given to funding implementation;
- lack of interest from policymakers and public managers, for example due to priority given to action or a fear that evaluation finds unexpected effects or raises unwanted issues;
- lack of reliable data to evaluate non-energy effects, for example because the data needed is not in the scope of the monitoring of the policy measure.

Interviews done for the EPATEE case studies also showed that performing evaluation is not only about practical (e.g., data collection) or methodological (e.g., defining a baseline) issues. Organizational issues can be as important, and particularly when considering the planning and use of evaluation.

Another key barrier to evaluation pointed by some interviewees is the **lack of trust** that stakeholders may have in evaluation results. The credibility of the evaluation results is indeed essential for

policymakers and other stakeholders to take them into account. Trust may depend on how stakeholders perceive the legitimacy or credibility of the evaluators and their methodology, the quality of the evaluation itself, whether they were involved in the evaluation process and whether results are transparent.

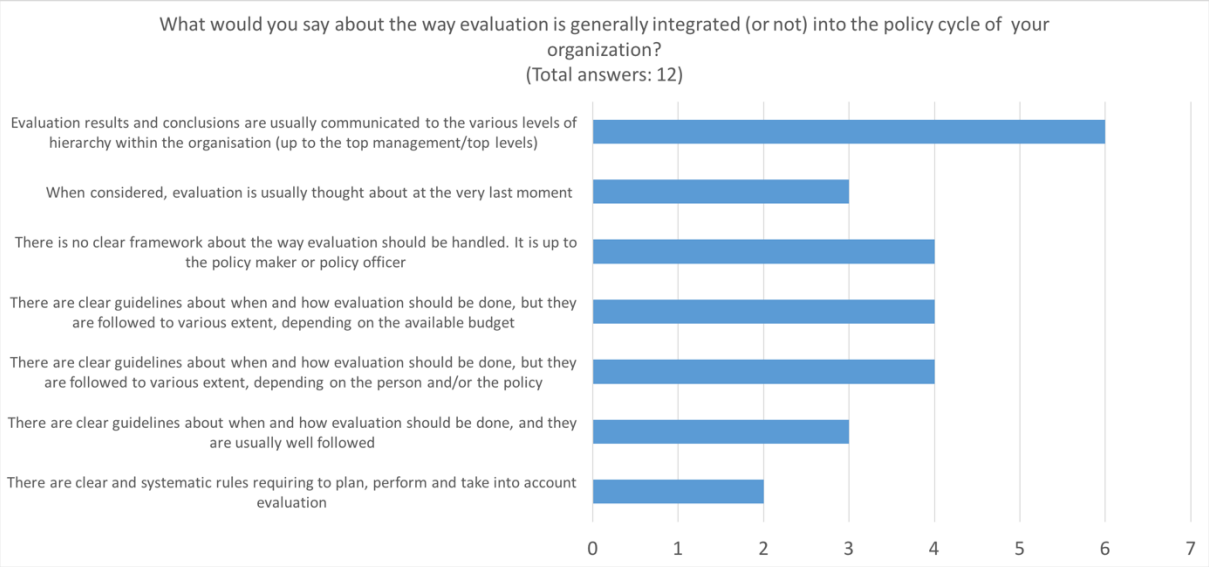
The lack of interest in evaluation sometimes shown by the top management and the fear to see results less good than expected can explain the **lack of priority/resources** dedicated to evaluation. This may also explain why some respondents consider that the lack of an obligation to perform evaluation can be a major barrier. However, if there were a stronger support from the top management to do evaluations, there would be no need to push for an obligation to evaluate. Mandatory evaluations can indeed lead to reports filling shelves.

5.2 Barriers to the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle

The many issues (e.g. financial, technical, organisational, political, etc.) that can impede an effective evaluation or reduce its scope are also affecting the capability of evaluation to be integrated in the policy cycle, thereby contributing to **continuous improvement**.

The interviews done for the EPATEE case studies confirm that by introducing and integrating evaluation in the policy cycle, policy effectiveness can be improved.

The second EPATEE online survey of stakeholders investigated, among other issues, challenges for the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle (Bini et al. 2018). Answers about current practices were analysed according to the profile of the respondents (evaluation customers, Figure 12, and evaluators, Figure 13).



Note: multiple answers possible

Figure 12. What evaluation customers answered about the way evaluation is generally integrated (or not) into the policy cycle of their organization (Source: Bini et al. 2018).

Half of the 12 evaluation customers answered that the evaluation results and conclusions are usually communicated to the various levels of hierarchy within the organisation (up to the top management / top levels).

This was confirmed by another question for which only 1 (out of 12) respondent said that evaluation results were rarely discussed in his or her organisation. Whereas 2 said it was systematically the case, 5 that evaluation results were frequently discussed, and 2 that they were sufficiently discussed. So overall, when an evaluation is done, evaluation results would be discussed. This result should be taken with caution, due to the small sample size and the possible risk of bias that respondents could be considered front-runners in terms of evaluation practices.

As point of comparison, the qualitative survey done by Giorgi (2017) provides a more mixed picture: "*Policy stakeholders all stated that evaluation was and ought to be key to good and open policymaking. Evaluation, often indirectly and in certain circumstances, was believed to inform policy; however, interviewees stated that policy is not driven by evaluation outcomes. Often policy interviewees highlighted two facades of evaluation: an external, formal, independent assessment carried out for accountability purposes and an internal more iterative and reflective dialogue of what works*."

The other criteria included in Figure 12 show that the situation varies a lot among the respondents when dealing with practices for planning and undertaking evaluations. A sign that very different practices are found among countries and/or institutions, from the absence of clear evaluation framework or guidelines to the systematic use of clear rules.

This was confirmed by another question about the practices related to early planning of evaluation (i.e. plan the evaluation from the start of the policy measure): 6 respondents said that this practice is either frequent (3), systematic (1) or sufficient (1) in their organisation, 3 that it was rare, and the remaining 3 that they don't know.

The answers from evaluators also showed a diversity in the practices they encountered, from purely administrative evaluations to evaluations well linked to the policy process.

Note: multiple answers possible

Figure 13. Evaluation and its links with the policy process and decision-making, from the evaluators' point of view (Source: Bini et al. 2018).

More specifically about evaluation planning, 34% of the 29 evaluators said that the evaluations they made were either mostly (24%) or completely (10%) planned in advance. Whereas 25% said that they were mostly (21%) or completely (4%) decided and managed at the last moment. 38% mentioned a mix situation (partly planned, partly managed at the last moment). Evaluators' point of view would

thus reflect more "late planning" than evaluation customers. However this point is to take with caution due to the small size of both samples.

A large majority of the surveyed evaluators (73%) said that their evaluation results were discussed by the policymakers or officers, either systematically (17%), frequently (21%) or sufficiently (35%). However, compared to the feedback from surveyed evaluation customers, the share of surveyed evaluators saying that this was rarely the case is higher (24% vs. 8%, i.e. only 1 evaluation customer).

At the end, the results of the survey showed a **diversity in the practices**, and that if good practices are sometimes applied, they are not systematically used.

The second EPATEE online survey also provided insights about barriers that can impede an effective integration of evaluation into the policy cycle.

Many answers about the barriers to integration of evaluation into the policy cycle raise issues similar to the barriers reported in the first EPATEE survey about evaluation practices (see Figure 11 above). Particularly about resources. But some are more specific to the links between evaluation and the policy cycle.

This was an open-ended question in the survey. So the results are mostly qualitative. Nevertheless, similar answers were grouped to analyse if some issues stand out, and to see if the answers could be matched with the issues identified in Table 3.

4 issues (Political will; Resource allocation; Evaluation planning and preparation; Communication and mutual understanding) are clearly present in the answers to the survey. The 3 other issues (Legitimacy; Organisation; Communication about the evaluation and its results) were not explicitly reflected in the answers to the online survey. However these issues were clearly raised in several of the interviews done for the EPATEE case studies, and more generally (i.e. about evaluation but not specifically related to energy efficiency policies) in the interviews done by Giorgi (2017).

*Answers related to **Political will (top-management commitment)***

7 answers emphasised that **policymakers' lack of interest** in evaluation and/or priority given to launching new policies or implementation could be one reason for other barriers to happen (financial and time resources, timing and planning, cultural aspects). Some of these answers pointed that these issues can be related to the turnover in the policymakers.

These answers raised another issue: the lack of interest in evaluation could be because policymakers would assume that they know well the impacts of the policies. 4 other answers go even further on this line, mentioning that **policymakers might sometimes not be willing to see results different from what they are expecting**. This feedback is moderated by another answer reporting a positive experience of public authorities that showed clear interest in the evaluation results and in using them.

Another answer to the second EPATEE survey brought a complementary view about policymakers' interest or will to evaluate, pointing that **evaluation is not always necessary from a decision making point of view** (which echoes to some extent some of the answers above about cultural aspects).

Some answers indeed highlighted that decisions can be the result of political compromise that do not necessarily take into account evidences brought by evaluation.

*Answers related to **Resource allocation (time, people, budget)***

The **financial barrier** is mentioned in a straightforward way in 6 answers, also emphasising that the resources available for evaluation can depend on the size (or budget) of the policy measure. Other answers raise **cost-related issues** rather than budget constraints (e.g. costs for data collection and analysis, administrative burden for participating parties).

Time as a resource is also directly mentioned in 3 answers (so less frequently than financial resources).

Giorgi (2017) mentioned that the issue of time resource is not only about having enough time to collect data, perform analysis, etc. It is also about not having enough time to involve people in the evaluation process or to set up agreements, partnerships to facilitate the evaluation.

The lack of budget allocated to evaluation can be a prominent barrier when there is no legal requirement to do evaluations (or that the scope of such requirements is limited to a few policy), especially in times of austerity, as pointed by Giorgi.

*Answers related to **Evaluation planning and preparation***

2 answers raise issues related to **evaluation planning** (e.g. data collection not planned early enough). More answers (5) deal with timing in terms of **difficulties to match timeframe for evaluation and timeframe for decision processes**.

Giorgi (2017) also found from her interviews with policy stakeholders that timing is one of the main issues to achieve evidence-based policy making. She highlighted that "*policy and evaluation have two distinct tempos*". Policy implementation needs to be dynamic and reactive. Whereas evaluation requires to stand back and take time for analysing. Hence the challenge to coordinate both.

Another issue raised by Giorgi's interviewees is the fact that policies are "*not being designed from the onset as 'evaluable' policies taking place in an interrelated system with a myriad of intervening factors impacting a non-linear process*".

*Answers related to **Communication and mutual understanding***

Answers related to evaluation planning also pointed that problems with evaluation planning might be due to **differences in the cultures or habits between decisional level** (policymakers) **and operational or technical level** (policy officers and other implementers). These differences, or usual routines in decision making or policy management, are raised in 6 other answers pointing out **communication issues** within or between institutions, specifically between political and operational levels, as well as the need of **knowledge transfer and capacity building** for the different persons to be involved in the evaluation process and use of evaluation. Capacity building (for both sides, policymakers and evaluators) was also mentioned in 6 other answers.

Connected to the cultural aspects, 4 answers raised issues related to the **definition or selection of evaluation indicators or criteria**. This issue was also connected to the differences in viewpoints between operational agents, policymakers and evaluators who could be interested in different evaluation objectives or metrics, and have different understandings of the policy.

In a few cases, the respondents ranked the barriers they mentioned. These four rankings are different. This would suggest that the **hierarchy of barriers might depend on the context, or on respondents' own experience**.

The qualitative survey done by Giorgi (2017) provides complementary insights, including about the issues not raised in the answers to the second EPATEE survey.

About the communication and use of the evaluation results, Giorgi highlighted that "amongst respondents there was a sense of realism that, at times, circumstances and data do not allow for evaluation outcomes to influence policies."

About the organisation of evaluation, one finding of Giorgi's survey is that the usual steps of an evaluation[2] are not really linked up as the theory would suggest. In practice, they often operate separately. Mostly because they are managed by different persons, services or bodies. Each person might then have a limited view about the other steps (issue related to possible lack of time, or lack of communication between services or organisations). For example, the planning & design step can be managed by a service dedicated to policy analysis or research. Whereas the decision to commission an evaluation and the evaluation priorities were set by the directorate general. Both services might be interested in different questions, which might lead to conflicting views or inconsistencies in the evaluation specifications.

This is summarized by Giorgi: "**having phases operate in isolation or in silos is not conducive to better evaluation practice**".

Two other points highlighted by Giorgi can be linked to the issue of communication (between services or organisations): "***not having access to colleagues*** *(e.g. policymakers not having access to policy analysts); and the high* ***turnover of staff*** *due to how career paths get forged*".

Another issue pointed in Giorgi's survey is that the **expectations or objectives of the policy stakeholders might change between the very beginning of the evaluation process and its end**. This can be due to evaluation priorities firstly based on a kind of wish list instead of being based on an analysis of the policy theory and needs for decision-making. But this can also be due to a change in the top management or even government. Such experience was for example mentioned in the EPATEE case study about the evaluation of the Primes Energie scheme in Wallonia.

About allocation of resources, some practitioners interviewed by Giorgi reported tensions between implementers and evaluators, because implementers saw evaluation as "*taking time, resources and energy away from delivery*".

[2] Giorgi uses the following steps to depict the evaluation process: design & plan; commission & detailing; implement & analyse; complete & use results.

6 | Good practices for the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle

The overall approach of aiming at integrating evaluation into the policy cycle can be summarized as follows:

"Evaluation needs to be an integrative, continuous process not a one-off exercise at the end or a series of self-contained steps, it needs to become a way of working" (Giorgi 2017)

This part presents examples of good practices collected in the EPATEE case studies, the second EPATEE online survey (Bini et al. 2018) or in the survey done by Giorgi (2017). They are not meant to be exhaustive, but to reflect empirical findings from the analysis of current practices for samples of evaluations. The objective is to contribute to experience sharing and capacity building.

The good practices are presented as actions that can be done by persons or units in charge of evaluation within public bodies. But they can also be considered by evaluators, private stakeholders or more generally anyone interested in the development of evaluation practices.

These actions are structured according to the main issues identified in Table 3, and grouped in two categories, respectively short-term and medium-term actions.

The first category can be considered whenever launching a new evaluation (or better whenever launching a new or revising an existing policy). The second category includes suggestions to improve practices and facilitate the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle over time.

Some of the actions presented in the following sections can overlap as the different issues are often linked. The Annex provides two summary tables, respectively for short-term and medium-term actions.

The actions presented below should be seen as suggestions. They do not necessarily apply to all contexts and situations. Their relevance also depends on the "magnitude" or ambition of the evaluation activities, the political stakes, size of the policy evaluated, history of the policy, etc.

6.1 Political will (top-management commitment)

6.1.1 Clarify expectations, what evaluation can bring and how it can be used

Political will to do evaluations is often linked to policymakers' interest in what they can get or learn from an evaluation. This can thus depend on their background and previous experience with policy making and evaluation. Ensuring that all parties involved in the evaluation are on the same line about what it can (or cannot) bring can thus be critical for the decision to launch an evaluation or the success of the evaluation.

Another key issue is policymakers' willingness to accept risk and failure. Extreme cases being to reject doing evaluation either because one may be sure that the policy is successful (so no need to

verify it), or because one may be afraid of the results that the evaluation could show. Experience sharing is then a way to overcome preconceived ideas. Particularly by showing that understanding reasons of failures, weaknesses or limitations is the best solution to learn how to design successful policies.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Organise an exchange between the person in charge of the evaluation internally and the top-management of the institution in charge of the policy	• identify top-management's expectations towards evaluation; • agree on realistic expectations about what evaluation can and cannot achieve (Giorgi 2017)
Ensure that the evaluation includes indicators or metrics in line with policymakers' priorities	• ensure that the evaluation will bring findings that policymakers will be interested in • speak the same language as the policymakers

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Communicate about what evaluation can bring to policymakers, and share experience about how to handle "bad" results Raise awareness of policymakers about evaluation approaches (e.g. organising experience sharing workshops; preparing briefing notes that present testimonies from policymakers)	• highlight findings and examples that will resonate with the priorities of the policymakers contacted; • overcome preconceived ideas about evaluation • avoid evaluation to be instrumented • get support from the top-management to evaluation activities
Providing a clear view of the evaluation process (and particularly of the means involved) and relate the evaluation budget to the whole budget of the policy (e.g. explaining that the evaluation process will be embedded in the policy cycle, and will use synergies with the policy implementation and monitoring; explaining that evaluation can help to optimize policy design and implementation, thereby generating cost savings)	• provide hands-on examples that will have an echo for the policymakers; • demystify the evaluation process, its costs, etc.; • answer to concerns/fears creating reluctance to evaluation

6.1.2 Analyse the current policy framework and processes, how evaluation can fit in, and what stakeholders can ask for evaluations

There is an overall trend to institutionalize evaluation processes. This can take various forms, for example:

- legal provisions to ensure that evaluations will be done for certain types of policies, at certain stages of the policy cycle, etc.;
- creation of services or institutions dedicated to evaluation (e.g. evaluation unit or evaluation body);
- expanding the role or missions of existing institutions (e.g. Court of Auditors, Parliament).

More generally, an evaluation will occur in a given policy framework that is important to take into account to identify the stakeholders who can be involved in the evaluation process, what the timing of the evaluation should be to be in line with decision processes, etc. It is therefore useful to analyse the main policy frameworks, which is mostly related to medium-term actions.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Review how policy and evaluation processes are supposed to be organised, and identify possible gaps between framework and practice	• anticipate how evaluations can be planned and connected to the policy cycle; • raise issues related to gaps in the evaluation practices
Identify what stakeholders can request or initiate an evaluation	• identify the institutions or persons to contact when considering evaluation plans or priorities; • help to coordinate evaluation plans (e.g. when different institutions can initiate evaluations)
Identify what legal provisions are in place about evaluation processes or methodologies (at national or EU levels)	• anticipate legal requirements for evaluation; • identify legal provisions that can help to initiate an evaluation process
Analyse for what policies there would be a public or political pressure to make evaluations (and about what questions)	• help prioritize evaluation plans; • help prioritize evaluation questions

6.1.3 Mandatory provisions for evaluation

In the interviews and online surveys done for the EPATEE project, several stakeholders pointed that how many policies are evaluated (and to what extent) sometimes depends on the national laws and regulation. Systematic evaluation requirements were reported for some countries (e.g., Germany, Sweden, UK). Such requirements were sometimes mentioned to apply mostly for ex-ante evaluation or impact assessment (e.g., Austria), or to be focused on “large budget” policies (e.g., Italy). Some stakeholders also told that the lack of evaluation requirements and/or guidelines was a key reason for the lack of evaluation in their country.

This point goes beyond the previous one, in case a general lack of evaluation is observed. It should indeed be noted that obligations to evaluate can have counterproductive effects, for example: making that evaluation is perceived as a burden, leading to evaluation reports that are not read or used.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Advocate (at national or EU level*) to include requirements about ex-post evaluation in the laws establishing new policies or amending existing policies.	• Ensuring that evaluation is considered when a policy is decided or revised
Review if EU requirements about evaluation and reporting are well identified and taken into account by national (or regional) policymakers	• Anticipating reporting needs

** several stakeholders have highlighted that EU requirements are often considered as a "must" by national bodies (which is not always the case for national requirements)*

6.2 Resource allocation (time, people, budget)

6.2.1 Discuss evaluation means when deciding the budget for the policy measure

As pointed by one interviewee during the interviews done for EPATEE, evaluation costs are usually very small compared to the cost of implementing the policies. Still, it was a recurring feedback that not enough budget was available for evaluation. This can be partly explained because evaluation is sometimes considered late in the policy cycle, at a time where most of the budget for the policy has already been used.

Beyond budget, this issue also encompasses other types of means that can be needed for the evaluation, for example the time needed from implementing staff to collect and report data.

One way to tackle this issue can thus be to ensure that the means needed for the evaluation are discussed when deciding about the overall means committed to the policy.

This issue is also related to evaluation planning (see 6.3.1) and organisation (see 6.5). Particularly, several stakeholders pointed that doing evaluation should as much as possible avoid to create new administrative processes and work including new information collection systems (see 0 about identifying synergies).

Likewise, actions to show the added value of evaluation (see 6.1.1) can help to get adequate evaluation means.

The discussion about evaluation means can therefore be an opportunity to discuss the cost-efficiency of evaluation efforts: what the evaluation can bring vs. what means it would require. Experience shows that stakeholders involved in policy implementation are more inclined to contribute to

evaluation (e.g. for data collection), when they have a clear view about what their contribution (e.g. data) will be used for.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Put evaluation means on the agenda when the budget of the policy is decided	• Initiate early enough the discussions about the evaluation means (to avoid cases where no budget is left when considering evaluation too late)
Clarify what the evaluation means will be used for, and what the evaluation will bring	• Get support or commitment from the stakeholders that will be involved in the evaluation

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Analyse the decision processes about budget/means	• Identify the opportunities to discuss evaluation means

6.2.2 Define criteria to assess the needs in evaluation means

The previous point shows that it can be useful to have criteria or guidelines at hands to have quick insights about the means that can be needed, depending on the type of evaluation objectives. Such tools can then help for evaluation means to be taken into account in budgetary discussions. It can also contribute to enable an early planning of evaluation (see 6.3.1).

Developing such criteria or guidelines is usually a medium-term action.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Prepare hands-on guidelines summarizing what means are usually needed depending on the type of evaluation objectives	• Provide quick insights about needs in evaluation means related to common evaluation objectives

6.3 Evaluation planning and preparation

6.3.1 Make early planning of evaluation a common practice

Taking into account future evaluation needs when designing or revising a policy is a usual no-brainer of the recommendations about evaluation practices. However, feedback from stakeholders confirms that it is not yet a common practice.

This could be due to various reasons: priority given to action/implementation, different stages of the policy cycle being managed by different services or institutions, etc.

Based on the experience from past evaluations and the feedback from stakeholders, the two tables below include examples of respectively short-term and medium-term actions that can help to ensure that evaluation will be considered along the policy cycle, and not perceived or delivered as a one-off standalone activity or a collection of self-contained steps (risks identified by Giorgi 2017).

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	**Purpose(s)**
Clarify from the start of the policy cycle what the evaluation will be used for. Discuss the evaluation objectives (and their prioritisation).	• Clarify the evaluation objectives • Get an agreement on the purposes of the evaluation, and thereby an acknowledgement of its usefulness
Consult evaluation experts when setting up the policy	• Identify what evaluation approaches could be relevant (depending on evaluation objectives) • Identify most common data needs (depending on the evaluation approach) from the outset
Clarify the expectations for monitoring and evaluation requirements (particularly about data collection). Explain what the contributions (particularly the data) to the evaluation expected from practitioners/stakeholders will be used for.	• Tackle the negative perception of evaluation taking resources away from delivery; • Get support or commitment from the practitioners/stakeholders to be involved in the evaluation
Making the organisation of the evaluation clear before the policy (or its new period) starts	• Facilitate coordination / cooperation along the evaluation process • Ensure that stakeholders are aware of when and how they can be contacted for or take part in the evaluation
Set up a working group to organise data collection, discuss ICT issues, etc. (when relevant)	• gather the various expertise and different viewpoints that can be needed to organise the data collection; • anticipate practical problems that can be encountered for data collection • identify possible synergies (particularly about data that can be used for several purposes)

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Adopt a general framework to plan evaluation activities (e.g. defining guidelines to facilitate early planning of evaluation)	• Provide conditions for evaluation to be more systematically taken into account at the beginning of the policy cycle
Define a set of usual evaluation indicators, and guidelines about how they can be used in practice	• Facilitate the discussion and selection of evaluation indicators
Use past experiences to prepare guidelines about planning data collection (depending on the evaluation method) (e.g. identifying usual data sources; asking participants' approval for further surveys when providing financial incentives; ways to handle data privacy)	• Facilitate the discussion about early planning of data collection • Anticipate risks or difficulties commonly encountered for data collection

6.3.2 Timing issue

Matching the timeframes of evaluation and decision (or consultation) processes is a recurrent challenge for evaluators, who often mention the lack of time as one of the key difficulties they face.

Giorgi (2017) analysed that one way to tackle this challenge is to work on a mutual understanding between policy officers and evaluators.

> *"With an open acknowledgement from both sides, this timing mismatch, according to interviewees, can be addressed. External evaluators, researchers and/or civil service analysts, on the one side, need to be confident in sharing emerging findings and insights live at that point in time through outlets such as learning sessions. The idea being that emerging findings are 'good enough' and tell the narrative of the 'impact at this point in time' to feed into policy development decisions. Policymakers, on the other side, need to feel comfortable with these caveats and with the risk that final results and end conclusions may differ when all the data has been collected and analysed."* (Giorgi, 2017)

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Ensure that policy officers consult evaluation experts about realistic timelines for evaluation (depending on the evaluation objectives) And reciprocally, ensure that evaluators are fully aware about the timeline and time constraints of the policy (and particularly about the timing of consultation and decision processes)	• Ensure that evaluation commissioners have realistic expectations, taking into account time constraints • Ensure that evaluation findings will be available early enough to be taken into account in the consultation or decision processes
Consider the use of regular intermediate feedback loops	• Ensure timely inputs for policy management • Enable to adapt data collection, evaluation questions, etc. if needed

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Consider alternative to classical ex-post evaluations, depending on the evaluation objectives and time constraints (e.g. consider "accompanying" or mid-term evaluations that are done while the policy measure is still running)	• Facilitate the adaptation of evaluation planning to the needs and priorities of policy making

6.3.3 Preparation

For general guidance about how to prepare an evaluation, see the sources mentioned in part 3 |. We deal here with aspects of the preparation that can have an interaction with the policy cycle, and that were highlighted by stakeholders about their experience with evaluations. See also section 6.5 about the aspects related to the organisation of the evaluation.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Make sure that the relevant information will be available for evaluators to understand how the policy was supposed to work (description of the policy theory) Keep track of the main changes (or decisions) made along the policy developments	• Ensure that the evaluators will know the background, key elements and changes of the policy • Avoid that the analysis from the evaluation be disconnected from the reality of the policy • Avoid the risks that the memory of the policy be lost (e.g. due to staff turnover)

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Prepare guidance about how to describe the policy theory and what information to keep track of when aiming at documenting a policy and its changes over time	• Facilitate the information flows between policy officers and evaluators
Define simple procedures in case of staff turnover about information and experience transfer	• Build an organisational memory of the policy

6.4 Legitimacy and credibility

As mentioned in section 6.1, a successful integration of evaluation into the policy cycle requires political will or stakeholders' interest in evaluation. Another key factor is how evaluation is perceived by stakeholders, and particularly in terms of legitimacy and credibility. Both are needed for stakeholders to have confidence in the evaluation results (see part 4 of Broc et al. 2018).

The legitimacy of the evaluation and the credibility of its results are essential for evaluation findings to be discussed fairly by the different parties, and then to be used when considering changes in the policy or other decisions.

When stakeholders have confidence in the evaluation results, this also helps strengthening the legitimacy of the policy and related decisions. This can then translate into securing or increasing the funding for the scheme (see Irish case study) or the involvement of stakeholders such as participants to voluntary agreements (see Finnish case study).

The level of confidence may depend on how stakeholders perceive the credibility of the evaluators, the relevance and reliability of the evaluation methodology, if they were involved in the evaluation process, if the results are transparent (not only public, but also well documented).

The two tables below suggest actions to create conditions to ensure legitimacy and credibility.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Consider what different points of view about the policy should be taken into account, what stakeholders should be included in the discussions about the evaluation	• Identify key stakeholders for the discussions about the evaluation • Favour a pluralist approach (i.e. taking into account the differences in viewpoints)
Inform stakeholders about the evaluation process, from the decision of launching an evaluation (and particularly about the rationale to do an evaluation, the evaluation objectives and the selection of the evaluators)	• Transparency and legitimacy of the evaluation process
Create opportunities of discussion or commenting along the evaluation process (e.g., create a group gathering stakeholders' representatives, with meetings for the key milestones: evaluation objectives, evaluation methodology, evaluation results)	• Involve stakeholders in the evaluation process • Collect the different points of view • Ensure a common understanding (of the evaluation objectives, methodology and results) • Identify if adaptations (of the objectives of methodology) should be considered • Avoid late comments that would question the legitimacy or credibility of the evaluation
Organise an external review of the evaluation methodology and results (e.g., appoint a scientific committee including evaluation experts and academics)	• Provide guarantee about the quality of the evaluation methodology and results • Identify possible shortfalls or limitations, and how to overcome them
Use of conservative assumptions or correction factors in case of missing or incomplete data	• Avoid over-estimations of the results (and particularly for energy savings)
Test the robustness of the results (e.g. plausibility checks, comparison of different calculation methods, benchmarking)	• Credibility of the results
Ensure a minimum level of documentation of the evaluation methodology and results	• Transparency of the evaluation and its results

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Define transparent criteria to select the evaluators	• Transparency of the evaluation process • Credibility of the evaluators
Define transparent procedures for verifying the quality of the data. And when relevant, define guidelines and organise training for stakeholders involved in data collection.	• Transparency of the evaluation process • Ensure quality of the data (thereby credibility of the results)
Consider how to facilitate the use of measured or metered data for the evaluation of actual energy savings	• Credibility of the results
Ensure that the means and time available for the evaluation are adequate vs. the evaluation objectives / ambition	• Credibility of the evaluation process
Clarify what criteria are used to ensure the independency* of the evaluators	• Transparency of the evaluation process • Legitimacy of the evaluation • Credibility of the evaluators
Define templates to ensure a systematic and minimum documentation** of the evaluation methodology and its results	• Transparency of the evaluation results

** About the **independency issue**, feedback from the interviews and online surveys done for the EPATEE project has shown different points of view and interpretation of what an independent evaluation would be, and how to ensure independency of the evaluators. To summarize, commissioning external evaluations is one, but not the only way. Alternatives can be that evaluations be done by a distinct service or institution than the one(s) in charge of deciding, funding and implementing. The possibility for an independent public body (e.g. Court of Auditors) to do evaluations on its own initiative also proved to provide good guarantees.*

*** About the **documentation issue**, in most cases, evaluators will not publish all the details of their methodology (e.g. about modelling, sampling technics). Either due to intellectual property, commercial confidentiality, or because this would lead to too long and indigestible reports. However, a minimum documentation is always possible to provide a view on the main aspects of the methodology and data issues. This is essential to keep the memory of the evaluation, avoid misinterpretation of the results, and enable a review by external experts.*

6.5 Organisation

6.5.1 Clarify the roles, responsibilities, contacts and possibilities to contribute

A clear organisation helps the evaluation process to be well identified by the different services, bodies, stakeholders involved in the policy cycle. This is thus a prerequisite to facilitate the integration of evaluation activities into the policy cycle. Aspects about planning are dealt with in section 6.3. This section is focused on the roles and responsibilities of the different parties who can be involved in the evaluation process.

Experience shows that clearly assigning the role to coordinate or supervise the evaluation to a central contact creates favourable conditions for a partnership between evaluators and practitioners (i.e. persons in charge of or involved in implementing the policy).

> *"Such a set-up ensured a clearly defined role and set of responsibilities providing a sense of ownership and a 'stake in' the outcomes to those running the evaluation. This mutually beneficial partnership approach seemed to work best with clear delegation, factoring in evaluation into delivery activities from the onset and, where relevant and appropriate, using specialist organisations."* (Giorgi, 2017)

Another key aspect of the organisation of the evaluation is the way the different parties (policymakers, policy officers, delivery practitioners, etc.) will be involved in the evaluation process. As reminded by Giorgi (2017), "*the policy cycle is not the sole responsibility of the policymakers, it needs to be shared and owned across all relevant parties*." Which also applies for evaluation that is not the sole responsibility of the evaluators (or evaluation commissioners).

This implies to clarify the roles and responsibilities, but also to create favourable conditions for interactions between parties, opportunities for discussions, etc.

Such organisation leads to the evaluation not being perceived as a process separate from the policy cycle or developments, but as a part of it. Moreover, as highlighted by Giorgi (2017), "*a wider sense of purpose and belonging in an evaluation can help nurture buy-in*".

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Nominate an evaluation coordinator or supervisor	• Create a central contact, well identified by all parties involved in the policy cycle or in the evaluation process • Facilitate the coordination of the evaluation process
Identify the stakeholders to be involved, and clarify the roles and responsibilities. Clarify when and how discussions about the evaluation will be organised.	• Involve stakeholders in the evaluation process • Transparency of the evaluation process
Clarify what contributions to the evaluation are expected from each party, and how and what they will be used for	• Facilitate stakeholders' participation in the evaluation process • Transparency of the evaluation process

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Consider if this would be relevant to set up an evaluation unit, working group or alike (for example to define evaluation plans, prioritize evaluations to be done)	• Ensure a general supervision of the evaluation activities
Identify the different services, public bodies, subcontractors (when relevant) that can have interactions with the evaluation process (particularly for information sharing or data collection). Use past experiences to define guidance for coordination / cooperation between services or bodies.	• Facilitate information flows • Ensure good coordination / cooperation along the evaluation process
Establish a general mapping of the stakeholders involved in energy efficiency policies	• Facilitate the identification of stakeholders
Define guidelines about involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process	• Facilitate the organisation of the evaluation

6.5.2 Identify possible synergies with existing processes

A frequent feedback from stakeholders about evaluation is that it should avoid to create additional administrative burden. And that it should as much as possible take advantage of existing tools, processes, etc.

Discussions with all parties (on short term) and a review of the different processes of the policy cycle (on medium term) can help identify opportunities of synergies. Synergies can be particularly helpful to optimize data collection. See also section 6.3 about planning.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Discuss the evaluation process with parties that could be involved in it, to identify existing tools, processes, etc. that can be used for the evaluation	• Facilitate synergies • Minimize the needs/means that would be used solely for this evaluation
Prepare data collection so that data needed for the evaluation can be collected as much as possible along policy implementation	• Optimize data collection

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Review existing tools (e.g. ICT platforms), processes (e.g. for reporting or monitoring), interactions, etc. that could be used for evaluations, and identify how this would be possible	• Facilitate synergies • Minimize the needs/means that would be used solely for evaluations
Analyse if the interactions between monitoring and evaluation could be improved*. Analyse if problems of interoperability need to be solved (e.g. between different data platforms).	• Facilitate information flows • Optimize data collection

** About interactions between monitoring and evaluation, see (Maric et al. 2018).*

6.6 Communication and mutual understanding

An evaluation can involve people with different backgrounds (e.g. statistics, economics, engineering, sociology) and having different experience / connections with the policy evaluated. They can thus have different perceptions or views about what evaluation means, what it should be. Likewise about the objectives of the policy, its delivery scheme or its results. Ensuring a good communication can therefore be challenging, while it is essential for information sharing and to get a complete picture of

the policy. Interactions / exchanges between the different parties, and particularly between policy officers (and policymakers whenever possible) and evaluators or policy analysts, are ways to favour the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle, and to avoid evaluation to be perceived as a fully separate process.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Make sure the right contacts* are identified for each party to be involved in the evaluation process	• Ensure an easy communication along the evaluation process
Clarify the evaluation objectives, and organise a feedback loop (when relevant) (e.g., put evaluation on the agenda of the steering committee of the policy; create an email that stakeholders can use to ask questions about the evaluation)	• Ensure a shared understanding of the evaluation objectives (and thereby realistic expectations)
Facilitate exchanges between policymakers, practitioners/implementers and analysts/evaluators (e.g., plan meetings at the key stages of the evaluation; create a steering committee of the evaluation)	• Maintain regular contacts between the evaluation team and evaluation recipients • Ensure a mutual understanding (which does not necessarily mean a consensus or agreement) • Favour a pluralist approach of evaluation (taking into account differences in viewpoints) • Foster closer collaboration between policymakers/policy officers and analysts/evaluators)

** the "right" contact is not only about finding the contact for the communication link. It is also about finding the contact that is open to the evaluation process, as explained by one of the respondents to the second EPATEE online survey:*

"Finding the right people to work together as a team. One person can easily dominate discussions; you need people who are willing to learn, rather than to say that they already know the answers." (see Bini et al. 2018)

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Maintain an updated list of contacts from the different services and bodies involved in the different stages of the policy	• Maintain regular contacts • Facilitate an easy communication • Avoid missing or outdated links in the communication loops
Facilitate capacity building and experience sharing about evaluation issues (e.g., targeted workshops or trainings; technical briefs; testimonies about past evaluations)	• Increase awareness and knowledge about evaluation

6.7 Communication about the evaluation and its results

The review of the EPATEE case studies highlighted that the communication about the evaluation and its results can be as important as doing the evaluation (see part 12 of Broc et al. 2018).

Making it clear from the start of the evaluation, what the audience will be, to whom the evaluation report will be communicated, to whom the main findings will be communicated (and how), and most importantly what the evaluation findings will be used for, all this has proven to be effective ways to motivate the different parties (including the evaluators) to take actively part in the evaluation process.

Anticipating debates or misinterpretations of the results is also important to avoid misuse of evaluation findings. At the opposite, adapting the communication format to the targeted audience can increase the attention given to the evaluation findings, thereby increasing their use.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Clarify how evaluation results will be communicated and to whom Clarify what the evaluation findings will be used for	• Transparency of the evaluation process • Foster the involvement of stakeholders • Avoid to generate frustrations
Ensure that anyone who contribute to the evaluation (e.g. interviewees, data providers) will get a feedback about what their contributions have been used for	• Foster the involvement of stakeholders • Avoid to generate frustrations
Plan opportunities to discuss results with stakeholders at the main stages of the evaluation, and above all before they are presented to a larger audience	• See if adaptations are needed in the way to present the results to ensure they are well understood (e.g. adding explanations) • Avoid any effect of surprise or shock (especially in case of unexpected results) • Ensure consistency in the communication that can be done by different channels and parties
Prepare different communication formats according to the types of audience (when relevant) Prepare an executive summary	• Ensure that the key messages can be easily caught
Make it clear the validity / limitations of the results	• Transparency of the evaluation results • Ensure that the results are well understood
Ensure that the main evaluation report includes a minimum documentation of the evaluation methodology and results	• Transparency of the evaluation results • Keep the memory of the evaluation • Enable external reviews • Facilitate further experience sharing

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
Analyse how evaluation results can be used as part of the general communication about the policy	• Raise awareness about the policy, its objectives, impacts, etc.
Share general findings beyond the policy silo (share findings about evaluation practices and policy making that can be useful for other policy fields, and get insights from other policy fields)	• Foster interactions between policy fields, services, institutions, etc. • Stimulate experience sharing and capacity building

7 | References

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Figures

Tables

Annex: summary of actions to favour the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle

The two tables below summarize the actions presented in part 6 |, respectively for short term and medium term. Overlapping actions were merged.

Short-term actions

Short-term actions have been grouped according to the stages of the policy cycle or evaluation:

- from the start of the policy cycle;
- when preparing the evaluation;
- along the evaluation process;
- towards the end of the evaluation process.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
FROM THE START OF THE POLICY CYCLE	
Nominate an evaluation coordinator or supervisor	• Create a central contact, well identified by all parties involved in the policy cycle or in the evaluation process • Facilitate the coordination of the evaluation process (itself and with the policy cycle)
Consult evaluation experts when setting up the policy	• Identify what evaluation approaches could be relevant (depending on evaluation objectives) • Ensure that evaluation commissioners have realistic expectations, taking into account time constraints • Identify most common data needs (depending on the evaluation approach) from the outset
Organise an exchange between the person in charge of evaluation internally and the top-management of the institution in charge of the policy	• Identify top-management's expectations towards evaluation; • Agree on realistic expectations about what evaluation can and cannot achieve

Discuss the evaluation objectives (and their prioritisation) Clarify from the start of the policy cycle what the evaluation will be used for Clarify what the evaluation means will be used for, and what the evaluation will bring	• Clarify the evaluation objectives • Get an agreement on the purposes of the evaluation, and thereby an acknowledgement of its usefulness • Get support or commitment from the stakeholders that will be involved in the evaluation
Ensure that the evaluation includes indicators or metrics in line with policymakers' priorities	• Ensure that the evaluation will bring findings that policymakers will be interested in • Speak the same language as the policymakers
Put evaluation means on the agenda when the budget of the policy is decided	• Initiate early enough the discussions about the evaluation means (to avoid cases where no budget is left when considering evaluation too late)
WHEN PREPARING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY	
Making the organisation of the evaluation clear before the policy (or its new period) starts	• Facilitate coordination / cooperation along the evaluation process • Ensure that stakeholders are aware of when and how they can be contacted for or take part in the evaluation
Clarify the expectations for monitoring and evaluation requirements (particularly about data collection). Explain what the contributions (particularly the data) to the evaluation expected from practitioners/stakeholders will be used for.	• Tackle the negative perception of evaluation taking resources away from delivery; • Get support or commitment from the practitioners/stakeholders to be involved in the evaluation
Prepare data collection so that data needed for the evaluation can be collected as much as possible along policy implementation Set up a working group to organise data collection, discuss ICT issues, etc. (when relevant)	• Gather the various expertise and different viewpoints that can be needed to organise the data collection; • Optimize data collection • Anticipate practical problems that can be encountered for data collection • Identify possible synergies (particularly about data that can be used for several purposes)
Define a simple procedure to keep track of the main changes (or decisions) made along the policy developments	• Avoid the risks that the memory of the policy be lost (e.g. due to staff turnover)

WHEN PREPARING THE EVALUATION	
Ensure that policy officers consult evaluation experts about realistic timelines for evaluation (depending on the evaluation objectives) And reciprocally, ensure that evaluators will be fully aware about the timeline and time constraints of the policy (and particularly about the timing of consultation and decision processes)	• Adapt evaluation objectives / ambition to the time constraints • Ensure that evaluation findings will be available early enough to be taken into account in the consultation or decision processes
Consider what different points of view about the policy should be taken into account, what stakeholders should be included in the discussions about the evaluation	• Identify key stakeholders for the discussions about the evaluation • Favour a pluralist approach (i.e. taking into account the differences in viewpoints)
Make sure the right contacts are identified for each party to be involved in the evaluation process	• Ensure an easy communication along the evaluation process
Clarify the evaluation objectives, and organise a feedback loop (when relevant) (e.g., put evaluation on the agenda of the steering committee of the policy; create an an email that stakeholders can use to ask questions about the evaluation)	• Ensure a shared understanding of the evaluation objectives (and thereby realistic expectations)
Inform stakeholders about the evaluation process, from the decision of launching an evaluation (and particularly about the rationale to do an evaluation, the evaluation objectives and the selection of the evaluators) Discuss the evaluation process with parties that could be involved in it, to identify existing tools, processes, etc. that can be used for the evaluation	• Transparency and legitimacy of the evaluation process • Facilitate synergies • Minimize the needs/means that would be used solely for this evaluation
Clarify what contributions to the evaluation are expected from each party, and how and what they will be used for Clarify each party's roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process Clarify when and how discussions about the evaluation will be organised.	• Involve stakeholders in the evaluation process • Transparency of the evaluation process
Clarify how evaluation results will be communicated and to whom	• Transparency of the evaluation process

Clarify what the evaluation findings will be used for	• Foster the involvement of stakeholders • Avoid to generate frustrations
Make sure that the relevant information will be available for evaluators to understand how the policy was supposed to work (description of the policy theory)	• Ensure that the evaluators will know the background, key elements and changes of the policy • Avoid that the analysis from the evaluation be disconnected from the reality of the policy
Organise an external review of the evaluation methodology and results (e.g., appoint a scientific committee including evaluation experts and academics)	• Provide guarantee about the quality of the evaluation methodology and results • Identify possible shortfalls or limitations, and how to overcome them
ALONG THE EVALUATION PROCESS	
Consider the use of regular intermediate feedback loops between the evaluation commissioners and the evaluators	• Ensure timely inputs for policy management • Enable to adapt data collection, evaluation questions, etc. if needed
Facilitate exchanges between policymakers, practitioners/implementers and analysts/evaluators Create opportunities of discussion or commenting (for stakeholders) along the evaluation process (e.g., plan meetings at the key stages of the evaluation; create a steering committee of the evaluation)	• Maintain regular contacts between the evaluation team and evaluation recipients • Foster closer collaboration between policymakers/policy officers and analysts/evaluators) • Involve stakeholders in the evaluation process • Collect the different points of view / Favour a pluralist approach of evaluation • Ensure a mutual understanding (which does not necessarily mean a consensus or agreement) • Identify if adaptations (of the objectives of methodology) should be considered • Avoid late comments that would question the legitimacy or credibility of the evaluation
Ensure that anyone who contribute to the evaluation (e.g. interviewees, data providers) will get a feedback about what their contributions have been used for	• Foster the involvement of stakeholders • Avoid to generate frustrations
Plan opportunities to discuss results with stakeholders at the main stages of the evaluation, and above all before they are presented to a larger audience	• See if adaptations are needed in the way to present the results to ensure they are well understood (e.g. adding explanations) • Avoid any effect of surprise or shock (especially in case of unexpected results)

	• Ensure consistency in the communication that can be done by different channels and parties
Use of conservative assumptions or correction factors in case of missing or incomplete data	• Avoid over-estimations of the results (and particularly for energy savings)
TOWARDS THE END OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS	
Test the robustness of the results (e.g. plausibility checks, comparison of different calculation methods, benchmarking)	• Credibility of the results
Prepare different communication formats according to the types of audience (when relevant) Prepare an executive summary	• Ensure that the key messages can be easily caught
Make it clear the validity / limitations of the results	• Transparency of the evaluation results • Ensure that the results are well understood
Ensure that the main evaluation report includes a minimum documentation of the evaluation methodology and results	• Transparency of the evaluation results • Keep the memory of the evaluation • Enable external reviews • Facilitate further experience sharing

Medium-term actions

Medium-term actions have been grouped according to ways to facilitate the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle:

- raise awareness about evaluation;
- linking policy and evaluation frameworks;
- guidelines and tools for the integration of evaluation into the policy cycle;
- good practices for transparency, legitimacy and credibility.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	Purpose(s)
RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT EVALUATION	
Communicate about what evaluation can bring to policymakers, and share experience about how to handle “bad” results Raise awareness of policymakers about evaluation approaches	• Highlight findings and examples that will resonate with the priorities of the policymakers contacted; • Overcome preconceived ideas about evaluation

(e.g. organising experience sharing workshops; preparing briefing notes that present testimonies from policymakers)	• Avoid evaluation to be instrumented • Get support from the top-management to evaluation activities
Provide a clear view of the evaluation process (and particularly of the means involved) and relate the evaluation budget to the whole budget of the policy	• Provide hands-on examples that will have an echo for the policymakers; • Demystify the evaluation process, its costs, etc.; • Answer to concerns/fears creating reluctance to evaluation
Facilitate capacity building and experience sharing about evaluation issues (e.g., organise targeted workshops or training sessions; prepare technical briefs; share testimonies about past evaluations)	• Increase awareness and knowledge about evaluation
Share general findings beyond the policy silo (share findings about evaluation practices and policy making that can be useful for other policy fields, and get insights from other policy fields)	• Foster interactions between policy fields, services, institutions, etc. • Stimulate experience sharing and capacity building
LINKING POLICY AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORKS	
Review how policy and evaluation processes are supposed to be organised, and identify possible gaps between framework and practice	• Anticipate how evaluations can be planned and connected to the policy cycle; • Raise issues related to gaps in the evaluation practices
Consider alternative to classical ex-post evaluations, depending on the evaluation objectives and time constraints (e.g. consider "accompanying" or mid-term evaluations that are done while the policy measure is still running)	• Facilitate the adaptation of evaluation planning to the needs and priorities of policy making
Consider if this would be relevant to set up an evaluation unit, working group or alike (for example to define evaluation plans, prioritize evaluations to be done)	• Ensure a general supervision of the evaluation activities
Identify the different services, public bodies, subcontractors (when relevant) that can have interactions with the evaluation process (particularly for information sharing or data collection). Use past experiences to define guidance for coordination / cooperation between services or bodies.	• Facilitate information flows • Ensure good coordination / cooperation along the evaluation process

Review existing tools (e.g. ICT platforms), processes (e.g. for reporting or monitoring), interactions, etc. that could be used for evaluations, and identify how this would be possible	• Facilitate synergies • Minimize the needs/means that would be used solely for evaluations
Analyse if the interactions between monitoring and evaluation could be improved. Analyse if problems of interoperability need to be solved (e.g. between different data platforms).	• Facilitate information flows • Optimize data collection
Establish a general mapping of the stakeholders involved in energy efficiency policies	• Facilitate the identification of stakeholders
Identify what stakeholders can request or initiate an evaluation	• Identify the institutions or persons to contact when considering evaluation plans or priorities; • Help to coordinate evaluation plans (e.g. when different institutions can initiate evaluations)
Identify what legal provisions are in place about evaluation processes or methodologies (at national or EU levels) (when needed) Advocate (at national or EU level) to include requirements about ex-post evaluation in the laws establishing new policies or amending existing policies	• Anticipate legal requirements for evaluation; • Identify legal provisions that can help to initiate an evaluation process • Ensuring that evaluation is considered when a policy is decided or revised
Analyse for what policies there would be a public or political pressure to make evaluations (and about what questions)	• Help prioritize evaluation plans; • Help prioritize evaluation questions
Review if EU requirements about evaluation and reporting are well identified and taken into account by national (or regional) policymakers	• Anticipating reporting needs
Analyse the decision processes about budget/means	• Identify the opportunities to discuss evaluation means
Analyse how evaluation results can be used as part of the general communication about the policy	• Raise awareness about the policy, its objectives, impacts, etc.
GUIDELINES AND TOOLS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF EVALUATION INTO THE POLICY CYCLE	
Adopt a general framework to plan evaluation activities (e.g. defining guidelines to facilitate early	• Provide conditions for evaluation to be more systematically taken into account at the beginning of the policy cycle

planning of evaluation)	
Prepare hands-on guidelines summarizing what means are usually needed depending on the type of evaluation objectives	• Provide quick insights about needs in evaluation means related to common evaluation objectives
Define a set of usual evaluation indicators, and guidelines about how they can be used in practice	• Facilitate the discussion and selection of evaluation indicators
Maintain an updated list of contacts from the different services and bodies involved in the different stages of the policy	• Maintain regular contacts • Facilitate an easy communication • Avoid missing or outdated links in the communication loops
Define guidelines about involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process	• Facilitate the organisation of the evaluation
Use past experiences to prepare guidelines about planning data collection (depending on the evaluation method) (e.g. identifying usual data sources; asking participants' approval for further surveys when providing financial incentives; ways to handle data privacy)	• Facilitate the discussion about early planning of data collection • Anticipate risks or difficulties commonly encountered for data collection
Prepare guidance about how to describe the policy theory and what information to keep track of when aiming at documenting a policy and its changes over time	• Facilitate the information flows between policy officers and evaluators
Define simple procedures in case of staff turnover about information and experience transfer	• Build an organisational memory of the policy
GOOD PRACTICES FOR TRANSPARENCY, LEGITIMACY and CREDIBILITY	
Define transparent criteria to select the evaluators Clarify how the independency of the evaluators is ensured	• Transparency of the evaluation process • Credibility of the evaluators • Legitimacy of the evaluation
Define transparent procedures for verifying the quality of the data. And when relevant, define guidelines and organise training for stakeholders involved in data collection.	• Transparency of the evaluation process • Ensure quality of the data (thereby credibility of the results)
Consider how to facilitate the use of measured or metered data for the evaluation of actual energy savings	• Credibility of the results

Ensure that the means and time available for the evaluation are adequate vs. the evaluation objectives / ambition	• Credibility of the evaluation process
Define templates to ensure a systematic and minimum documentation of the evaluation methodology and its results	• Transparency of the evaluation results