How can we monitor and evaluate policy influence?

Toolkit Nº4

Defining how to measure short, medium and long term results

This toolkit is part of a series addressing the various steps to be followed in the process of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of policy influence.

Once the levels and objectives on which the M&E effort will be focused are defined, and once there is consensus on the theory of change which guides the influence effort, it is time to establish the criteria and indicators which will allow for monitoring and evaluation of the work.

Key questions for M&E of policy influence: the advantages of using an evaluation matrix

Before selecting specific indicators by which we can track progress towards our policy objectives, it is useful to define which aspects of our interventions will be monitored and evaluated, since these criteria will guide the selection of what will be measured and of how the measurement will be carried out.

In this sense, one may seek an evaluation matrix, which is a planning tool to support an evaluation. The matrix is a way to structure thinking, since it helps the evaluator to transform a complex situation into a series of logical and "manageable" sections. For this, it establishes a series of main questions which must be answered by the evaluation, and later defines the appropriate instruments to carry it out.

For example, ITAD[1] developed a valuable matrix which highlights five criteria:

- **Relevance**: alignment of the intervention with the priorities, needs and public policies of the country/region/etc.
- **Efficiency**: evaluation of quantitative and qualitative products and results in relation to the invested resources.
- **Efficacy**: the measure in which the intervention reached the proposed objectives.
- **Impact**: positive and negatives changes derived from the intervention, directly and indirectly, intentionally and non-intentionally.
- **Sustainability**: probability of continuity of intervention benefits.

These criteria, or to establish some key questions, will allow us to more easily detect the most appropriate indicators to measure the progress towards the established objectives.

1 For more information, see www.itad.com.

Indicators

There is much t alk about their importance, however seldom do we understand exactly what we are talking about when we refer to them and, even more problematic, how they are designed or constructed in the case of monitoring and evaluating public policy influence.

Indicators are instruments that allow measurement of inputs, processes, products, results and outcomes of interventions. They may be used for 1) setting performance objectives and evaluating the progress achieved, 2) identifying problems through an early warning system, to be able to adopt corrective measures, and/or 3) determining whether it is necessary to carry out an in-depth evaluation or examination.

Indicators will be linked with the types of change desired, and will help us determine how close we are to the result we are looking for, according to the previously established evaluation criteria. Naturally, there are different temporary horizons for policy changes. Therefore, it is useful to distinguish the more immediate indicators which are utilized to track result of: **(I) products and activities**, from those utilized to measure **(II) impact**, which are medium and long term. Consequently, the frequency of applications of collection and information methods for different type of indicators will vary as well. We will probably collect information on product and activity indicators during a monitoring process; while the data to measure impact indicators will probably originate during the intermediate or final stages of an evaluation.

(I) Product and activity indicators

The following tables exemplify the aspects and indicators which might be evaluated in relation to some products and activities that are usually developed in policy influence processes.

Evaluation focus	What can be evaluated	Aspects to evaluate	Indicators (examples)	Example of tools
Activities	Promotion of new public policies	- Growth levels or interest generated - New opportunities - Efficacy	- Number of meetings granted by relevant policymakers , number of presentations in external events, profile of participants of those events, etc.	- Impact of comments
	Training of public officials and other relevant actors	- Relevance - Quality - Usefulness	- Quantity and level of public officials, degree of application of disseminated knowledge	- Self-evaluation of participants - In-depth interviews
	Technical assistance for the implementation of public policies	- Quality - Usefulnees - Efficiency - Efficacy	- Degree and reach of policy implementation - Sustainability - Degree of acknowledgement from those affected by the policy - Quality and level of participation from bureaucrats	- Participant observation - Analysis of official documents
	Monitoring and evaluation of public policies	- Quality - Usefulnees - Efficacy	- Inquiries from public officials - Consultation and/or contracts to assist in the reform of the policy under evaluation - Degree of public dissemination of the M&E results	- Peer assistance - Focus groups with relevant public officials

Evaluation focus	What can be evaluated	Aspects to evaluate	Indicators (examples)	Indicators (examples)
Outputs	Papers or research reports	- Quality - Clarity - Relevance - Usefulness	- Quotes in legislative sessions - Feedback from external evaluators - Inquiries from public officials	- External Committee of Evaluation
	Policy Briefs or public policy documents	- Clarity of identified problem - Suitability of proposed solution - Relevance and opportunity for public policy	- Quote or use in a program of law - Public official inquiries - Organized or called meetings to discuss the problem in depth	- Interviews with targeted public officials
	Blogs/web sites	- Website browsability - Quality of content - Feedback from relevant actors	- Number and profile of visitors - Number of downloaded documents	- User interviews
	Publications	- Quality - Clarity - Relevance - Usefulness	- Invitations to present publications - Quotes in public documents - Inquiries from public officials	- Analysis of quotes in academic or specialized - publications - Reader surveys
	Seminars/events	- Level of assistance - Quality of the debate - Profile of external presenters	- Number and profile of assistants and presenters	- Post-event participant and presenter surveys - After action review

Source: Learners, practitioners and teachers (CIPPEC, 2010).

(II) Impact indicators

Measuring the general impact of projects, programs, or of our organization is a little more complex for various reasons: the changes are more difficult to detect and measure; they often exceed the temporary horizons of any M&E exercise; and it is difficult to attribute them to the daily work of only one organization, since they are often multi-causal and the fruit of the actions of several actors. Nevertheless, it is possible to select certain indicators to identify how our organization contributed to the medium and long term changes in public policy.

A valuable way to face this challenge is to consider the different types of **changes**[2] (Jones and Villar, 2008) which we would like to promote and, in relation to these, select the corresponding indicators:

1. Framing debates and getting issues on the political agenda: this is about **attitudinal change**, drawing attention to new issues, affecting the awareness, attitudes or perceptions of key stakeholders.
2. Encouraging **discursive commitments** from states and other policy actors: affecting language and rhetoric is important, for example promoting recognition of specific groups or endorsements of international declarations.
3. Securing **procedural change** at the domestic or international level: changes in the process through which policy decisions are made. For example, opening new spaces for policy dialogue.
4. **Affecting policy content:** while legislative change is not the sum total of 'policy change', it is an important element.

2 Jones, Nicola and Villar, E. (2008): "Situating Children in International Development Policy: Challenges involved in Successful Evidence-Informed Policy Influencing", *Evidence and Policy*, vol. 4, no.1.

5. Influencing **behaviour change** in key actors: policy change requires changes in behaviour and implementation at various levels in order to be meaningful and sustainable.

Another possible path is to establish different desired long term outcomes (taking into account the changes in the above mentioned levels, as well as other changes linked to recurrent policy influence objectives such as establishing strategic alliances). Following, we illustrate this approach with examples based on documents produced by Julia Coffman[3] and Organizational Research Services[4].

As shown above, there is a wide variety of potential indicators to track progress of policy influence work. These must be strategically selected based on the desired type of changes or mid-term outcomes and always considering how data on them can be collected, taking into account organizational resources and knowledge. In fact, selection of methods for data collection will be the topic of the next guide.

Objective	Long-term outcomes	Types of indicatoros
Delivering political and policy change	Shift in social norms: • Changes in awareness. • Changes in beliefs. • Changes in attitudes. • Changes in values. • Changes in the salience of an issue.	Quantity and profile of policy-makers trained, level of satisfaction and use of training. Quantity and profile of decision-makers that required, or were exposed to, new evidence. Type and relevance of research produced, profile of partnering institutions.
	Increased interest on an issue or proposal.	Quantity, quality, clarity, relevance and usefulness of policy proposals.
	Increased alignment of campaign goal with core societal values.	Quantity and profile of new partners; quantity and quality of response to campaign.
	Increased knowledge on an issue.	Number of meetings and educative interactions with policy-makers, profile of engaged policy-makers, level of satisfaction and demand for information, support or related services, new joint initiatives, diversification of links with different political parties.
	Increased number of partners supporting an issue.	Quantity and profile of new partners; degree of alignment Quantity and profile of coalitions; degree of alignment of goals, focus, strategies, etc
	Improved alignment of partnership efforts (eg, shared priorities, shared goals, common accountability system).	Interest and willingness of policy-makers to work jointly; new and profile of new alliances.
	Strategic alliances with important partners.	Number and profile of cross-sector partners, quantity and quality of response to campaign.
	Increased ability of coalitions working toward policy change to identify the process (eg, venue of policy change, steps of policy change based on strong understanding of the issue and barriers, etc).	Number and type of presentations in debates, number and type of meetings with relevant policy-makers.
	Increased media coverage (eg, quantity, prioritisation, extent of coverage, variety of media "beats", message echoing).	Quantity and quality of coverage generated in print, broadcast or electronic media.
	Increased visibility of the campaign message (engagement in debate, presence of campaign message in media).	Level of visibility in media, quotes from policy-makers, quotes for use in draft programme or legislation.

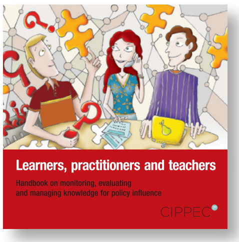
Fuente: CIPPEC, sobre la base de Julia Coffman y Organizational Research Services.

3 Coffman, Julia. (2009): *A User's Guide to Advocacy Evaluation Planning*, Harvard Family Research project, Fall, pp. 9-10.

4 Organizational Research Services (2007): *A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy*, pp. 16-20.

I need help!

Recommendations for reading or consultations by CIPPEC´s Civil Society Directorate for the M&E of policy influence.



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- *A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Policy Influence*, Harry Jones, ODI Background Notes, 2011. Available at: www.odi.org.uk.
- *A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy*, Organizational Research Services, 2007. Available at: www.organizationalresearch.org.
- *Overview of Current Evaluation Practice*, Julia Coffman, Center for Evaluation Innovation, 2009. Available at: www.innonet.org.
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Next Toolkit:

Data collection methods

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Other guides from the series:

How can we monitor and evaluate policy influence?

Toolkit Nº 1. Why should we monitor and evaluate policy influence?	**Toolkit Nº 2.** How can we monitor and evaluate policy influence?	**Toolkit Nº 3.** Establishing the basis for the M&E strategy.	**Toolkit Nº 4.** Defining how to measure short, medium and long term results.
Toolkit Nº 5. Data collection methods.	**Toolkit Nº 6.** Using knowledge to improve policy influence.		

Other series:

How to design a policy influence plan?

Tools for policy influence

Available at www.vippal.cippec.org

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CIPPEC
Av. Callao 25, 1° C1022AAA, Buenos Aires, Argentina
T (54 11) 4384-9009 F (54 11) 4384-9009 ext. 1213
info@cippec.org www.cippec.org