

Institutionalisation of policy evaluation systems

Policy evaluation can be understood as the structured and objective assessment of the design, implementation and/or results of a future, ongoing or completed policy initiative. The goal of an evaluation could be to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, impact or sustainability of a given policy. Evaluation provides an insight into why and how a policy was successful or not, and can lead to understanding how the links between decisions and outcomes can be strengthened. As such, it is a crucial element of evidence-informed policy making, and thus of good governance.

The importance of policy evaluation can be gauged by its inclusion in legal frameworks. Germany, Mexico and Switzerland have embedded it in their constitutions. The United States has framed it as part of the 2010 GPRA (Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act), which was a large public management reform aimed at improving performance.

Institutional arrangements vary across countries, as policy evaluation can be embedded in the public sector through the executive branch, the legislative branch and/or Supreme Audit Institutions. The majority of OECD and partner economies have explicitly allocated the responsibility for policy evaluation across government to one or several institutions within the executive, except Denmark and Sweden. Twenty-one OECD countries have assigned competencies to more than one institution in the executive, and another twelve have allocated them to a single one. In particular, France and the Slovak Republic have assigned responsibilities to several institutions.

The centre of government (CoG) is where policy evaluation is the most institutionalised. Greece, Korea, Latvia and Turkey assigned it exclusive overall competence for policy evaluation across government. The Ministry of Finance was selected by 22 countries, out of which Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland singled it out as the sole institution with responsibilities in this area. Austria, Belgium and Japan have assigned the competency of policy evaluation across government only to the Ministry of Public Sector Reform (or equivalent), and the Czech Republic has chosen the Ministry for Regional Development to carry out this function. Beyond the previously mentioned institutions, France, Mexico, Poland and the United States have also assigned competencies at the level of one or more autonomous agencies.

From those countries that assigned responsibilities for government wide policy evaluation to the CoG, 19 have tasked it with promoting its use across government. In Canada and New-Zealand, this is the only responsibility of the CoG. This institution was assigned the task of defining and updating the evaluation policy in 16 countries. Further, 14 countries indicated that this institution is in charge of developing guidelines and 13 indicated that providing incentives for carrying out evaluations falls under its duty. Iceland has only assigned the CoG the role of serving as a knowledge centre and providing a platform for exchange across government.

Portugal has assigned the CoG the widest range of responsibilities on policy evaluation among OECD countries, with 14 duties falling under it. These include undertaking evaluations, training evaluators, promoting stakeholder engagement, following up on reports, among others. Ministries of finance have received the duties of promoting the use and of defining guidelines in twelve countries, while Ministries of public sector reform serve as a knowledge centre, provide a platform for exchange and develop guidelines in seven countries.

Methodology and definitions

The data come from the OECD Survey on Policy Evaluation launched in May 2018. The survey seeks to assess the main features and the maturity of a country's policy evaluation system through three main components: nature and degree of institutionalisation (trends, practices and, challenges); promotion of the quality of policy evaluations; and, promotion of the use of policy evaluations.

Survey respondents were OECD countries and selected economies, from the centre of government and line ministries (health ministry, public sector reform ministry, and a third, optional line ministry). In March 2019, 37 OECD and partner economies have responded to the survey.

Responses represent countries' own assessments of current practices and procedures. Data refer only to central/federal governments and exclude policy evaluation practices at the state/local levels.

Further reading

OECD (forthcoming), *Institutionalisation, Quality and Use of Policy Evaluation: Governance Lessons from Countries' Experience* OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2018), *Survey on Policy Evaluation*, www.oecd.org/gov/policy-monitoring-evaluation.htm.

Figure notes

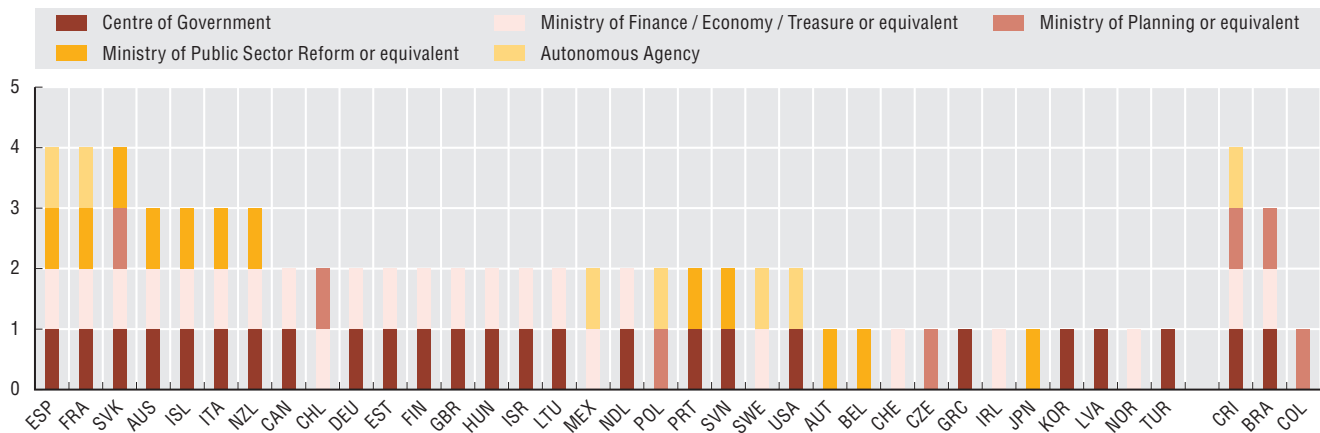
Denmark and Sweden are not displayed because they have not attributed competences related to policy evaluation across government to an institution within the executive. On data for Israel, see <http://doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>. Data is not available for Luxembourg.

4.8 Answers reflect responses to the question "Which of the following institutions within the executive have competences related to policy evaluation across government?"

4.9 Answers reflect responses to the question "Please list the duties and responsibilities of this/these institution(s) related to policy evaluation across government"

4.10 (Legal frameworks guiding policy evaluation across government) is available online on Annex F.

4.8. Institutions within the executive with competences related to policy evaluation across government, 2018



Source: OECD (2018) Survey on Policy Evaluation

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934032206>

4.9. Duties and responsibilities of key government bodies related to policy evaluation across government (selected), 2018

Country	Defining and updating the evaluation policy	Developing guideline(s) for policy evaluation	Providing incentives for carrying out policy evaluations	Requiring government institutions to undertake specific policy evaluations	Ensuring quality standards of evaluations	Promoting the use of evaluation	Serving as a knowledge centre and providing a platform for exchange
Australia	○	■	○	●	○	●■	▲
Austria	▲	▲	○	▲	○	▲	▲
Belgium	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Canada	■	■	○	■	○	●■	■
Chile	■◆	■◆	○	■	◆	◆◆	■◆
Czech Republic	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Denmark	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Estonia	●	●■	●	○	○	●	○
Finland	○	●	●	○	●	●	●
France	●	●■▼	●	●■	●	●■▼	○
Germany	●	●■	●	○	●	●■	●■
Greece	●	●	○	●	●	●	○
Hungary	●	●	●■	●	■	●	●
Iceland	○	○	○	○	○	○	●▲
Ireland	■	■	■	■	○	■	■
Israel	●	●	●■	●■	●	●	●
Italy	●▲	●▲	●	●	○	●■	●
Japan	▲	▲	○	○	▲	▲	▲
Korea	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Latvia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lithuania	●	●■	●	●■	○	●■	●
Mexico	■▼	■▼	○	■▼	■▼	■▼	○
Netherlands	■	■	■	○	○	●■	■
New Zealand	○	○	■	○	○	●	○
Norway	■	■	○	○	○	■	■
Poland	◆	◆	○	○	◆	◆	◆
Portugal	●▲	●▲	●▲	●▲	●▲	●▲	●▲
Slovak Republic	■◆	■◆	●■	■▲	■▲	●■	●■
Slovenia	●▲	▲	●	●	●	●▲	▲
Spain	●▲	▲	■▲	■▲▼	▲	▲	▲
Sweden	○	○	○	○	○	■▼	○
Switzerland	■	○	■	○	■	○	■
Turkey	●	○	○	●	○	○	○
United Kingdom
United States	●	●	●	●	●▼	●▼	●▼
OECD Total							
● Centre of Government	15	13	14	13	10	19	12
■ Ministry of Finance or equivalent	9	12	8	9	4	13	9
▲ Ministry of PSR or equivalent	6	7	2	4	4	5	7
◆ Ministry of Planning or equivalent	4	4	1	1	3	3	3
▼ Autonomous Agency	1	2	0	2	2	4	1
○ No institution	7	7	14	13	15	5	9
Brazil	○	●	●◆	●◆	○	○	○
Colombia	○	◆	○	○	◆	◆	○
Costa Rica	●■◆▼	●◆▼	■◆	●◆	◆▼	●■◆▼	◆

Source: OECD (2018) Survey on Policy Evaluation.

StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934032225>



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