

Enhancing evaluation effectiveness to support transformational change – A discussion of examples from México, Costa Rica and Germany

Karina Barrios Sánchez, CONEVAL

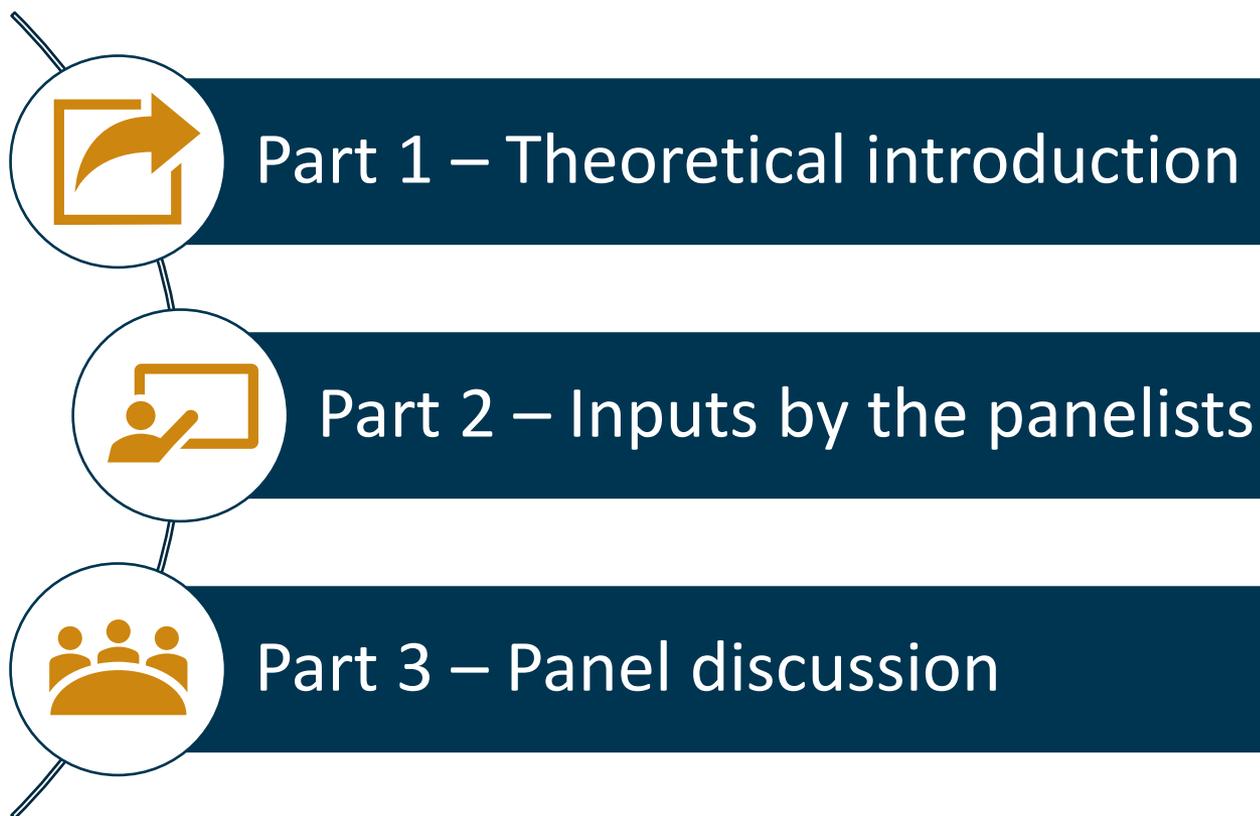
Carolina Zúñiga, MIDEPLAN

Magdalena Orth-Rempel, DEval

(panelists)

Jan Tobias Polak, DEval (moderator)

Ezra Bender, DEval (presenter)



Part 1 – Theoretical introduction: Theorizing evaluation effectiveness

Ezra Bender, Evaluator, DEval

Part 1 – Theoretical introduction

Guiding questions:

1) What is (transformational) change?

2) What role can evaluation play (in theory) for supporting this change?

3) What conditions need to be in place to make evaluations effectively contribute to (transformational) change? What are success factors?

Part 1 – Theoretical introduction

1) What is (transformational) change?

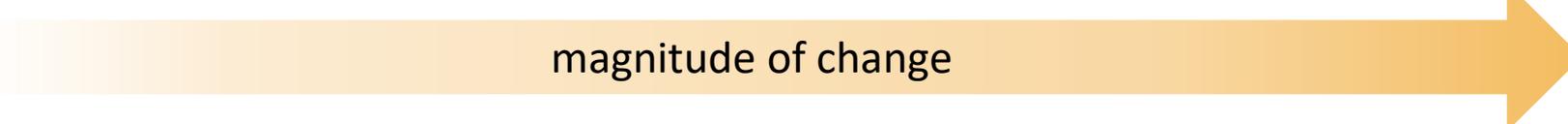


Incremental change

Reforms

Transformational Change

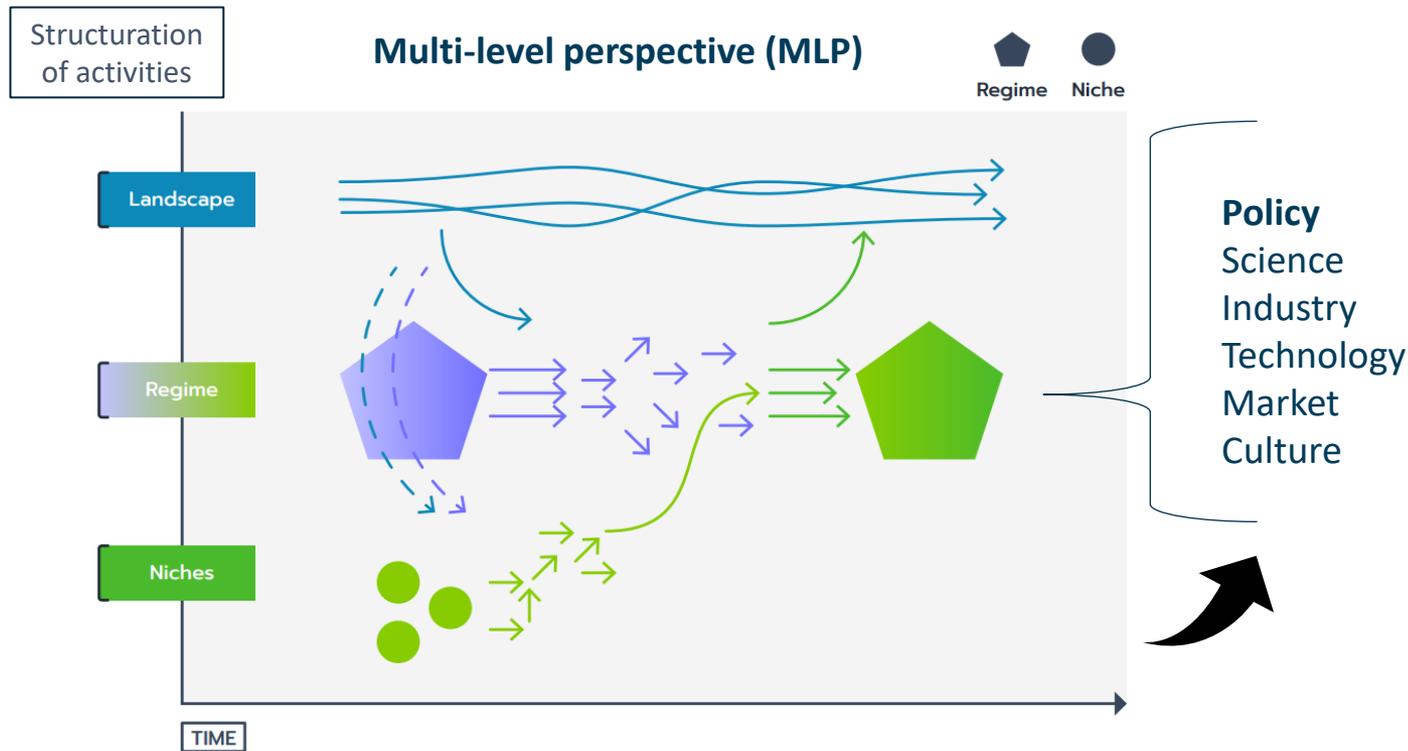
magnitude of change



Sources: Climate Investment Fund (2021); Kehrer, D. (2020)

Part 1 – Theoretical introduction

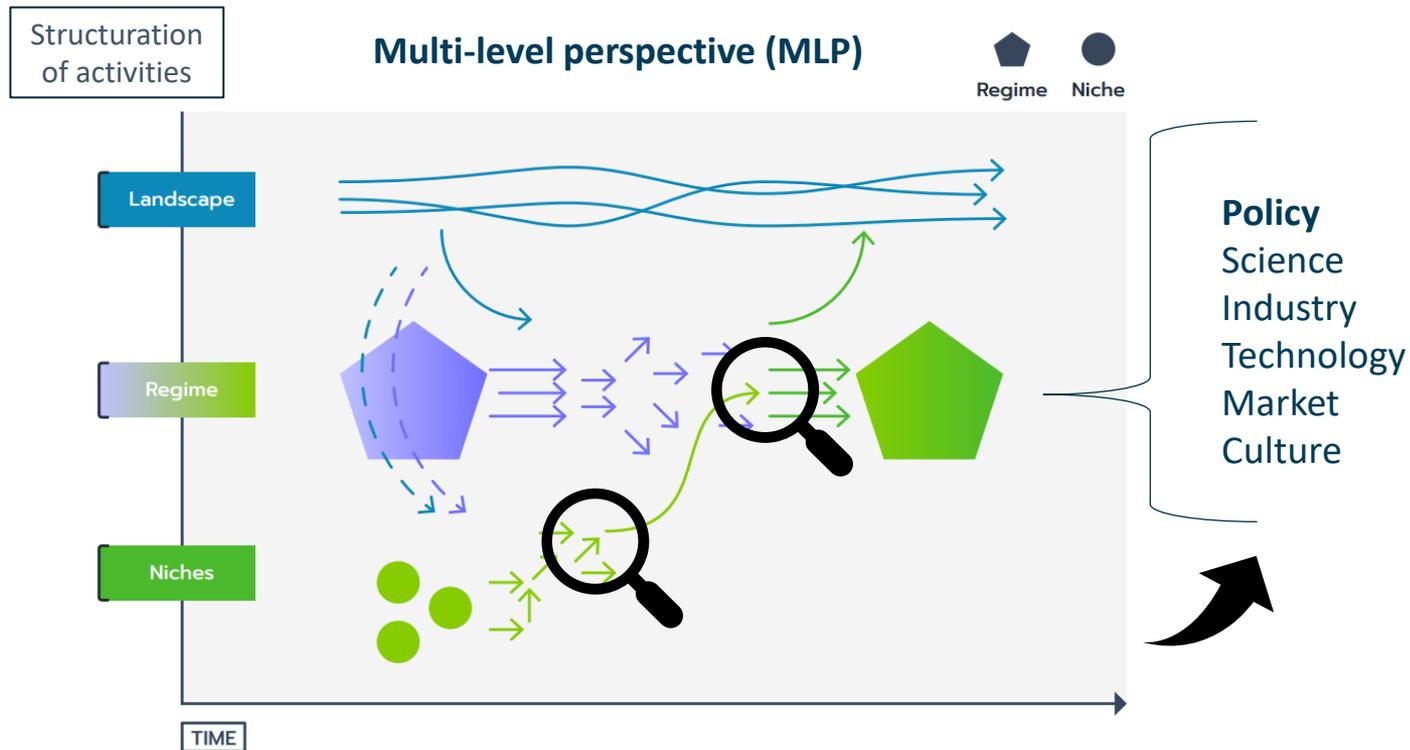
1) What is (transformational) change?



Sources: Geels and Schot (2007); Utrecht University Centre for Global Challenges/TIPC (2021)

Part 1 – Theoretical introduction

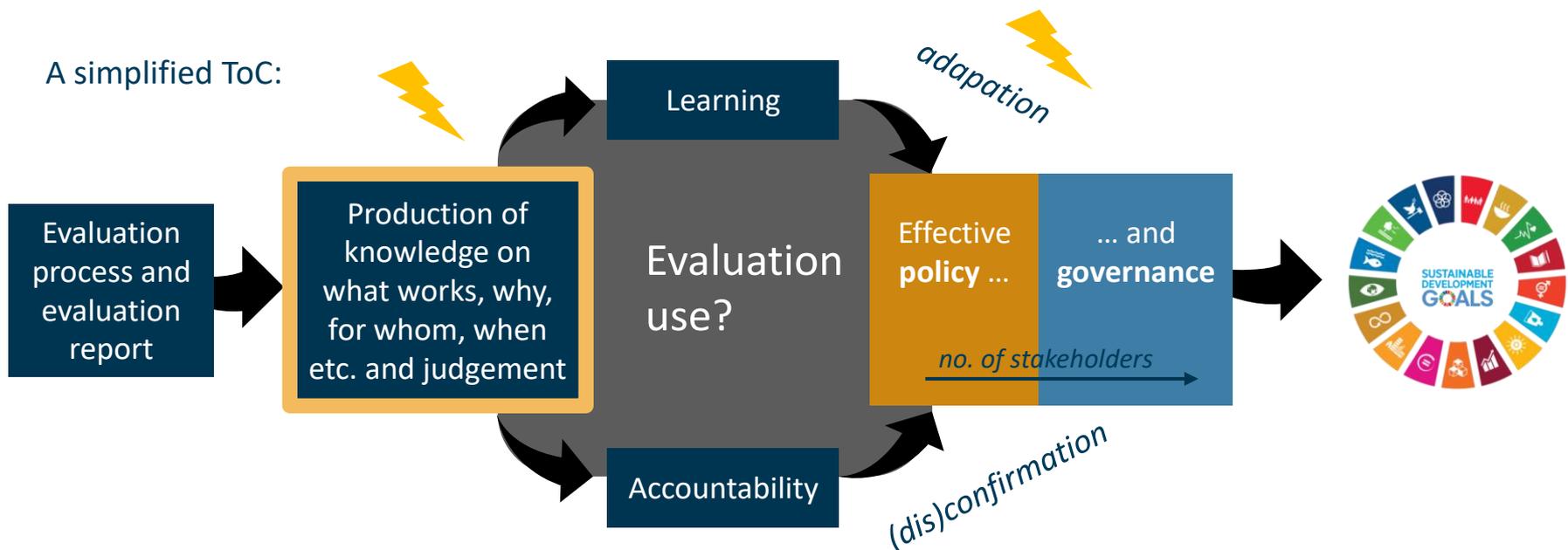
2) What role can evaluation play (in theory) for supporting this change?



Sources: Geels and Schot (2007); Utrecht University Centre for Global Challenges/TIPC (2021)

Part 1 – Theoretical introduction

2) What role can evaluation play (in theory) for supporting this change?



Sources: own illustration; cf. Appleton-Dyer, S. et al. (2012); cf. Mark, M. and G. Henry (2003, 2004)

Part 1 – Theoretical introduction

3) What conditions need to be in place to make evaluations effectively contribute to (transformational) change? What are success factors?

Necessary condition for evaluation use	Challenge for evaluation use
Evaluation users and other stakeholders are identified	Not all potential users are known at the beginning of an evaluation; unintended users are hard to identify
Evaluation users and other stakeholders are involved	Involvement is time consuming, limited to a small number of stakeholders and can be a challenge for maintaining independence/neutrality
Findings are available in time for decision making („timeliness“)	Evaluations tend to be commissioned when the evidence is already needed; evaluation take long and findings might become available when decisions are already made
Findings are well communicated and absorbed	Evaluation reports are long and scientifically written; science communication is art; absorption capacity of decision makers limited

Sources: cf. Mark, M. and G. Henry (2004); cf. Patton (2008, 2013)

Part 1 – Theoretical introduction

3) What conditions need to be in place to make evaluations effectively contribute to (transformational) change? What are success factors?

Necessary condition for evaluation use	Challenge for evaluation use
Findings are credible and accepted (“attitude”/“subjective norm”)	Methodological concerns or a lack of transparency when deriving conclusions and recommendations from evaluation results can hinder acceptance; whenever acceptance is low, actions for improvement are unlikely
Evidence plays a role for decision making (“attitude”/“subjective norm”)	Evidence competes with ideological beliefs as well as with political and individual interests
Actions are feasible within the (political) context („perceived behavioral control“)	Individual decision makers need to feel capable of implementing actions derived from evaluation findings

Sources: cf. Mark, M. and G. Henry (2004); cf. Patton (2008, 2013)

Part 1 – Theoretical introduction

Key messages:

1) What is (transformational) change?

- Transformational change is ambitious, but also incremental changes can transform a system

2) What role can evaluation play (in theory) for supporting this change?

- Evaluation can provide valuable knowledge and catalyse the identification and uptake of innovations

3) What conditions need to be in place to make evaluations effectively contribute to (transformational) change? What are success factors?

- There are many necessary conditions to be addressed for establishing an effective evaluation system

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- Utrecht University Centre for Global Challenges/TIPC (2021). Motion handbook – Developing a transformative theory of change. URL: <https://www.tipconsortium.net/de/publication/motion-handbook-developing-a-transformative-theory-of-change/>

Part 2 – Inputs by the panelists – Examples from from México, Costa Rica and Germany

Karina Barrios Sánchez, Head of Evaluation of Social Development
Policy and Programs, CONEVAL

Magdalena Orth-Rempel, Senior Evaluator/ Team Leader, DEval

Carolina Zúñiga, Evaluator, MIDEPLAN

Part 2 – Inputs by the panelists

México

Karina Barrios Sánchez, Head of Evaluation of Social Development Policy and Programs, CONEVAL

Part 2 – Inputs by the panelists

CONSEVAL

Consejo Nacional de Evaluación
de la Política de Desarrollo Social

**Evaluate the Social
Development Policy**

**Definition and
measurement of
poverty
(national, state,
municipal)**

- To provide valid and reliable information to support the analysis of social development policy, the continuous improvement of programs, and to help authorities articulate public policies that provide desirable results.
- Contribute to transparency and accountability by informing citizens about the results of social policy actions.

Relevance of the use of evaluations

Continuous improvement

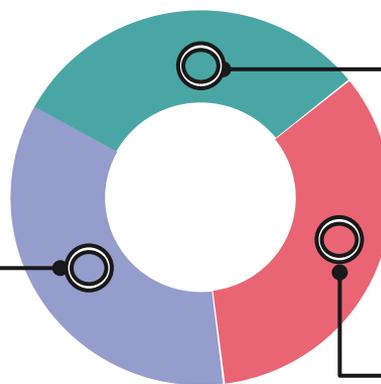
The evidence generated by evaluations constitutes an essential element for the **continuous improvement of government interventions** and the achievement of their objectives aimed at **improving the living conditions of the population.**

Learning

Evaluations **stimulate change and learning**, but also contribute to **accountability** by providing information on the use and destination of public resources.

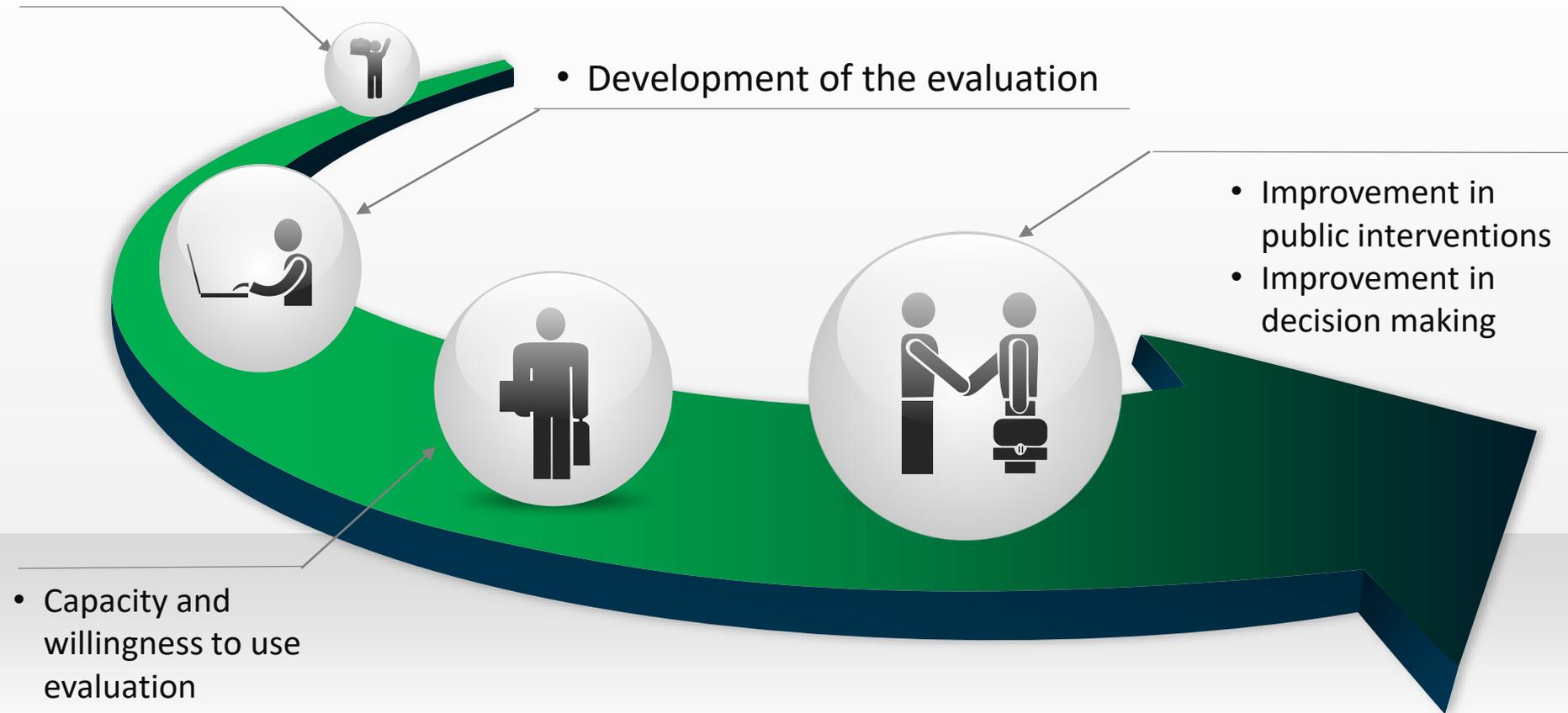
Use of evaluations

The use of evaluations implies taking ownership of the results and **participating** in the discussion of courses of action around the evaluation, i.e., in decision making or problem solving.

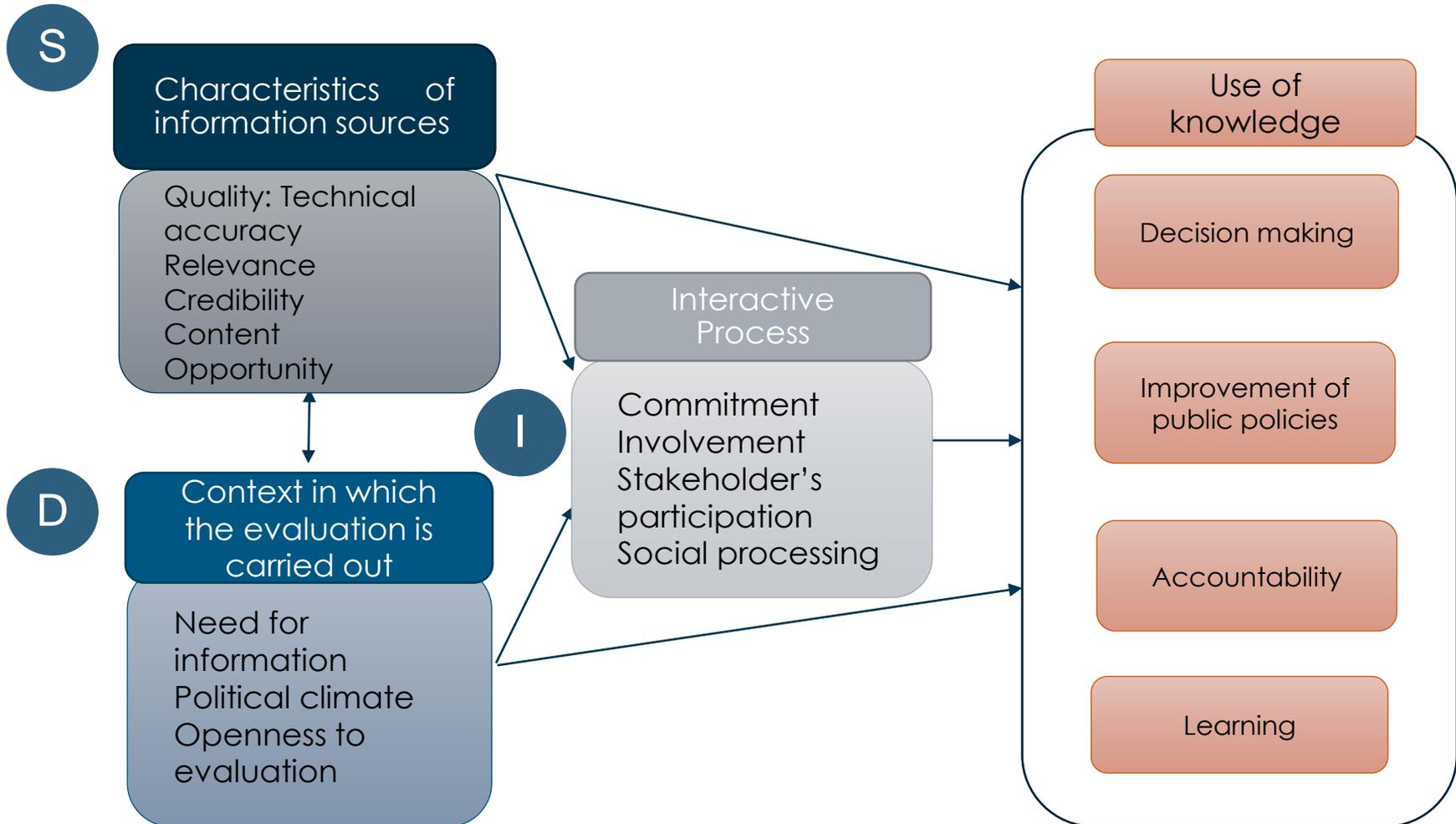


A theory of change for evaluation use

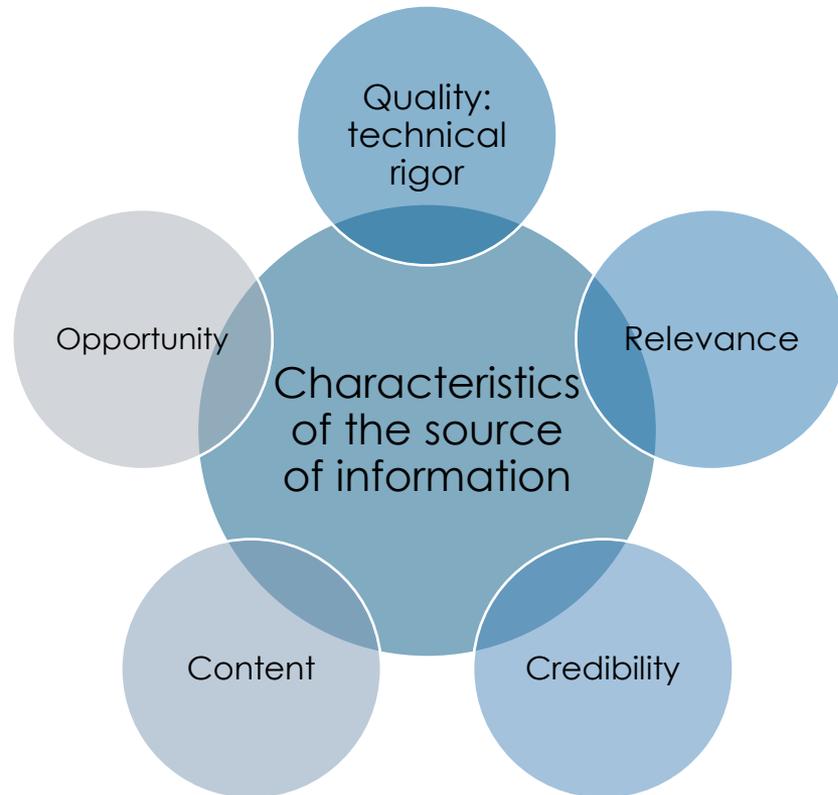
- Identification of evaluation needs



Factors that influence the use of evaluations



CONEVAL actions to fortify the evaluation supply



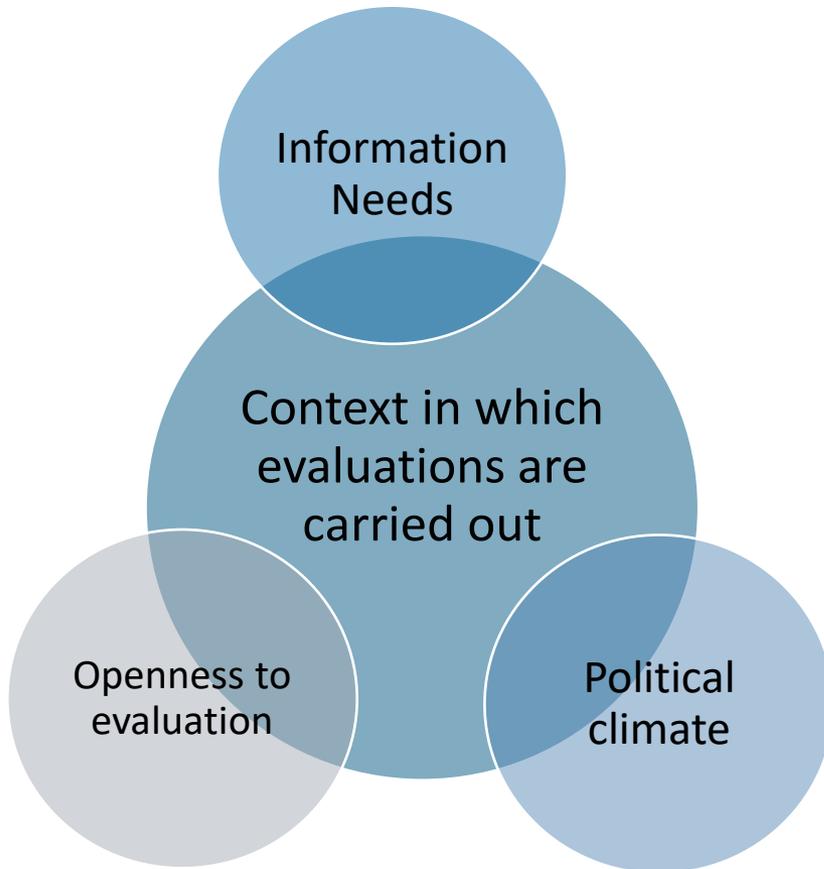
Quality: technical rigor - The evaluation instruments are elaborated based on quality assurance mechanisms such as review panels with experts, pilot tests, among others.

Relevance - The Evaluation Horizon was designed according to the stages of a program, helping the agencies to define and order the evaluation needs.

Credibility - The Social Development Law establishes that evaluations should be carried out by external evaluators.

Content and Opportunity - Each evaluation tool is constructed considering the information required by different users.

D CONEVAL actions to fortify the demand of evaluations



Information needs - In the integration of the Annual Evaluation Program, the requests of the agencies are considered.

Political climate - Specific evaluation requests derived from the context are taken care of.

Openness to the evaluation - Continuous courses, trainings and consultations are carried out with the evaluation areas in the agencies to raise awareness and develop effective channels of communication.

I CONEVAL actions to fortify the interaction process



Commitment - At the beginning of the evaluation, the game rules (calendar, links, information) are defined and the agencies commit to them.

Involvement - Training sessions on evaluation tools are conducted for all assessments.

Participation of relevant stakeholders - For all evaluations, mandatory meetings are established, policy makers are actively involved in the review process.

Social Processing - Outcome communication strategies are designed for the different audiences.

Criteria that guarantees the quality of evaluations



CONEVAL establishes **seven criteria** that constitute a reference framework that guarantees the quality during the design and development of evaluations

It was important that this selection of criteria accurately represented the level of quality that the evaluation process requires but also that is **adapted to the cultural context, as well as to the purpose and audience.**

Lessons and highlights

About the factors that influence the use of the evaluation:

- Generate new strategies of evaluation needs that are adapted to the social, political and economic context.
- Maintain the technical rigor of the evaluations considering the characteristics of the users.
- Continue to develop strategies to increase demand for evaluations.
- Support an interactive process where the parties are involved and agreements can be reached.

About the use of evaluation:

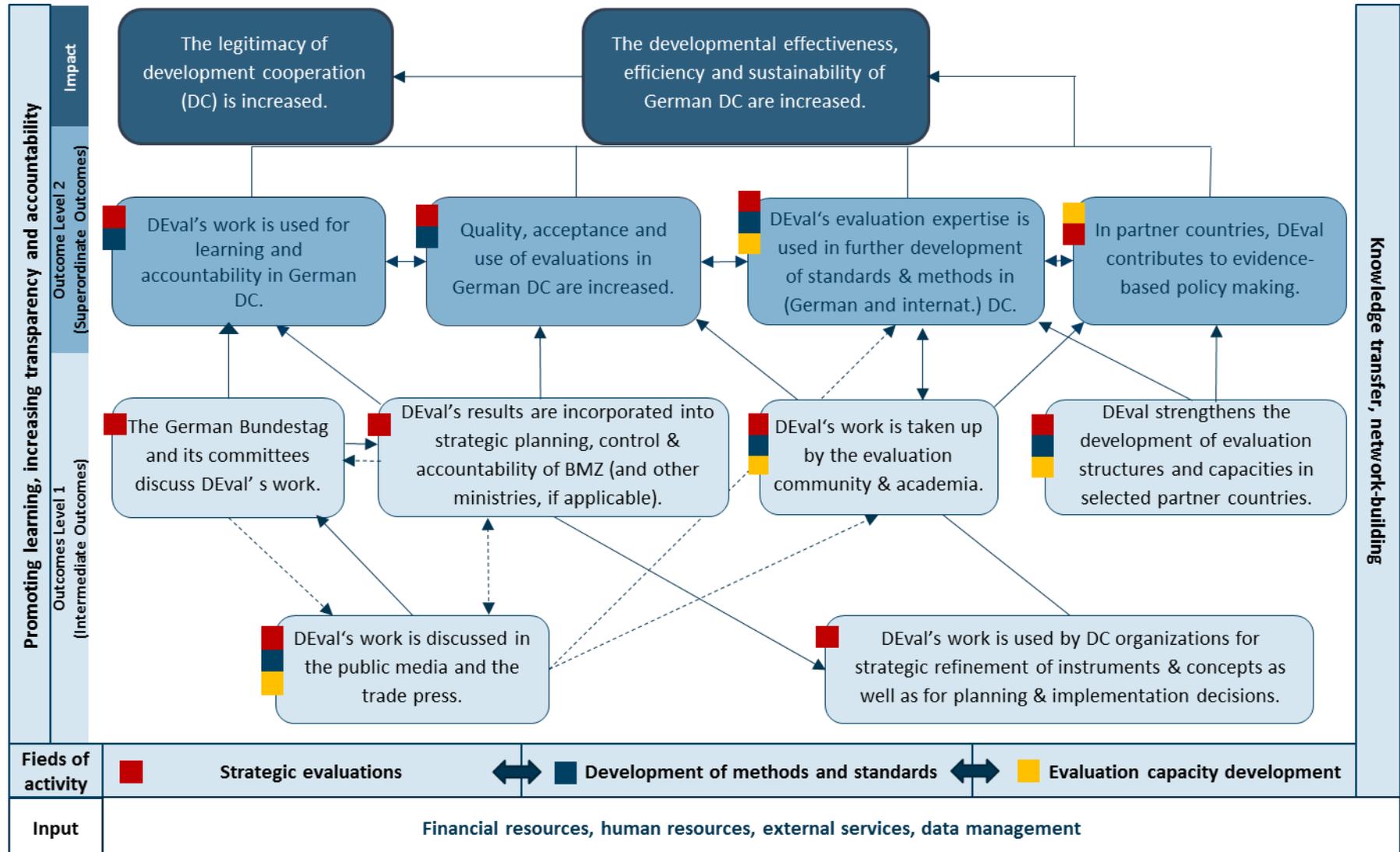
- Advance in the empirical study of the measurement of the use of evaluations to generate strategies that allow comparing and encouraging it.
- Refine the strategy and instruments to measure the different uses of evaluation in Mexico.
- Identify the causality and attribution of the factors and conditions that affect the use of the evaluation.
- Systematically increase the use of evaluations to develop evidence-based policies.
- Detonate participatory processes for the appropriation of the results of the evaluations.

Part 2 – Inputs by the panelists

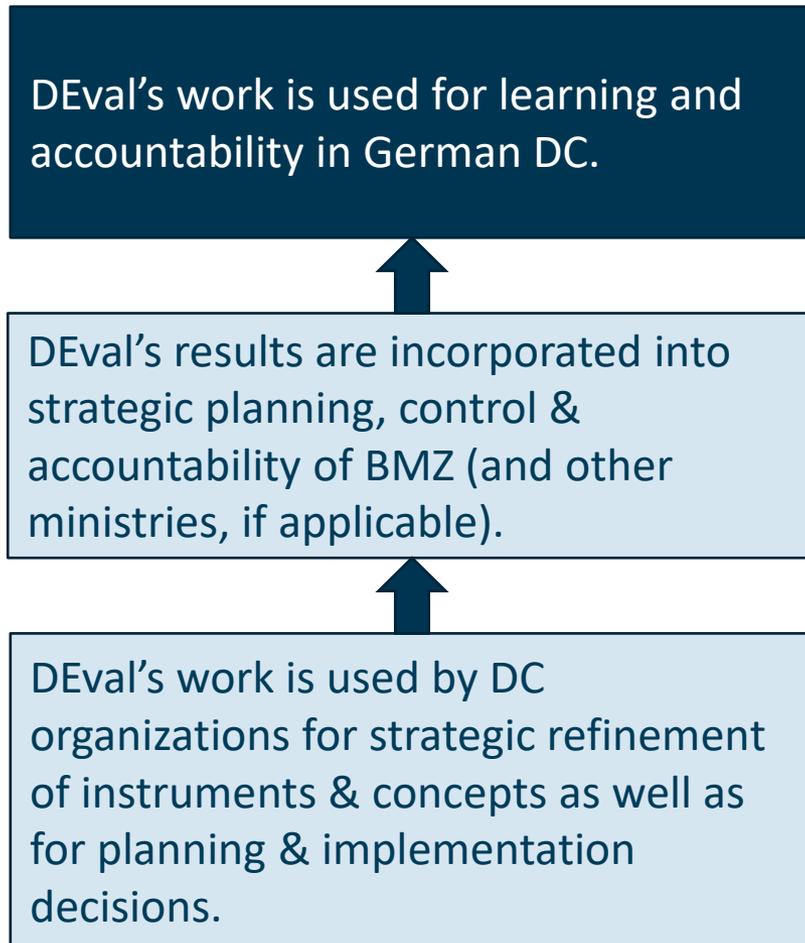
Germany – DEval's impact ambition

Magdalena Orth-Rempel, Senior Evaluator/ Team Leader, DEval

Impact ambition - DEval's Theory of Change



How to enhance evaluation effectiveness?



Success factors:

Increase acceptance of the evaluation through

- methodological soundness
- transparency and comprehensibility of assessments
- Identification and involvement of stakeholders

What concrete mechanisms, processes, methods or instruments have been put in place?

Methodological soundness

- internal & external peer reviewer
- methods workshop with methodological department at DEval
- support from consultants for complex methods
- preference for method integration and other triangulation
- presentation in inception and reporting phase to whole institute
- sharing experiences internally in coffee talks

Comprehensive assessments

- detailed evaluation matrix (detailing in the evaluation matrix for each assessment category the criteria for the selection of this category)
- dissemination products including description of assessment procedures

Stakeholder involvement

- clarification talks with broad number of stakeholders to find out interests and possible challenges
- reference group process including discussion and comments on concept note, inception report, evaluation report (see next slide)
- presentation of results for different stakeholder

Example: DEval reference group process



- DEval sets up a reference group for every evaluation with representatives from the policy level (usually BMZ selectively other ministries), the implementing level of development organizations (i.e. GIZ, KfW) and national or international experts
- RG discusses initial conclusions and recommendations and comments on draft evaluation report
- Afterwards the processes of planning and monitoring of DEval's recommendations begin:

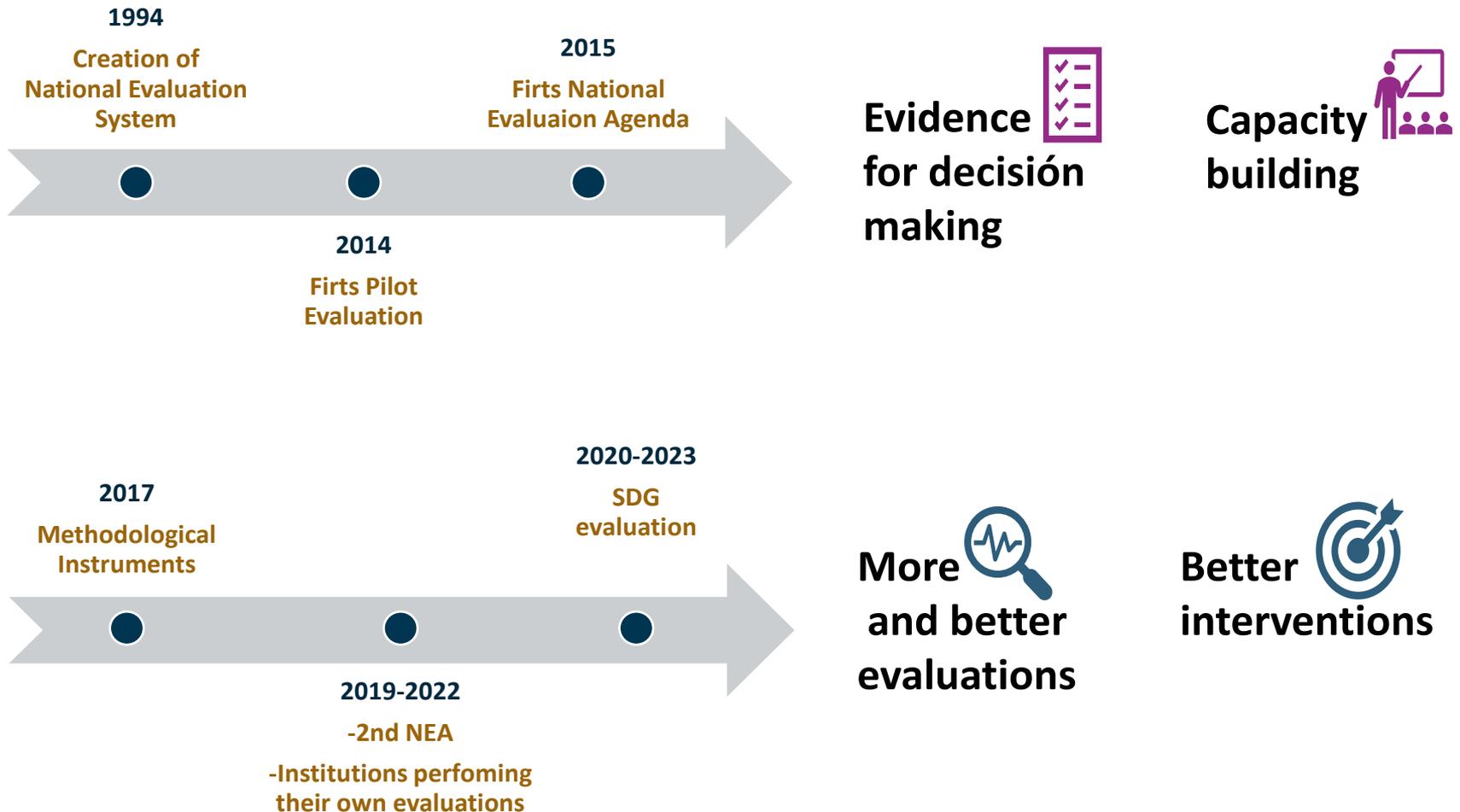
- (1) Parallel publication of evaluation report (by DEval) and management response by BMZ,
- (2) formalized, internal implementation plan (IP) with concrete, time-bound and verifiable sub-steps,
- (3) subsequent implementation monitoring (IM).

Part 2 – Inputs by the panelists

Costa Rica – Change at a country level

Carolina Zúñiga, Evaluator, MIDEPLAN

Transformational change is incremental!



What was necessary to achieve change at a country level?



Regulatory framework for evaluation

- Regulations at different levels,
- Mideplan: steering institution for the public sector

Evaluation Planning Instruments

- Alignment of the NEA with de NDP.
- Framing our work into a National Evaluation Policy.

Methodological guidelines to manage evaluations

- To structure de evaluation process for public interventions.

Evaluation capacity development

- Training processes
- Learning by doing
- Awareness
- Multi-stakeholder alliances

Institutionalization of evaluation in Costa Rica

What are we working on so evaluations can better support transformational change?

- Identify uses and users since the beginning of the process,
- Deepen the scope of evaluations to have better measurement and assessment of the impact of public interventions (databases and information systems),
- Integrate the participation of different publics in evaluation processes to strengthen capacities, transparency, accountability, and legitimacy of public actions,
- Promote the use of innovative methodologies,
- Accessible for all stakeholders (availability, understandable)

Part 3 – Panel Discussion

Karina Barrios Sánchez, Head of Evaluation of Social Development Policy and Programs, CONEVAL

Magdalena Orth-Rempel, Senior Evaluator/ Team Leader, DEval

Carolina Zúñiga, Evaluator, MIDEPLAN