

Evaluation Culture

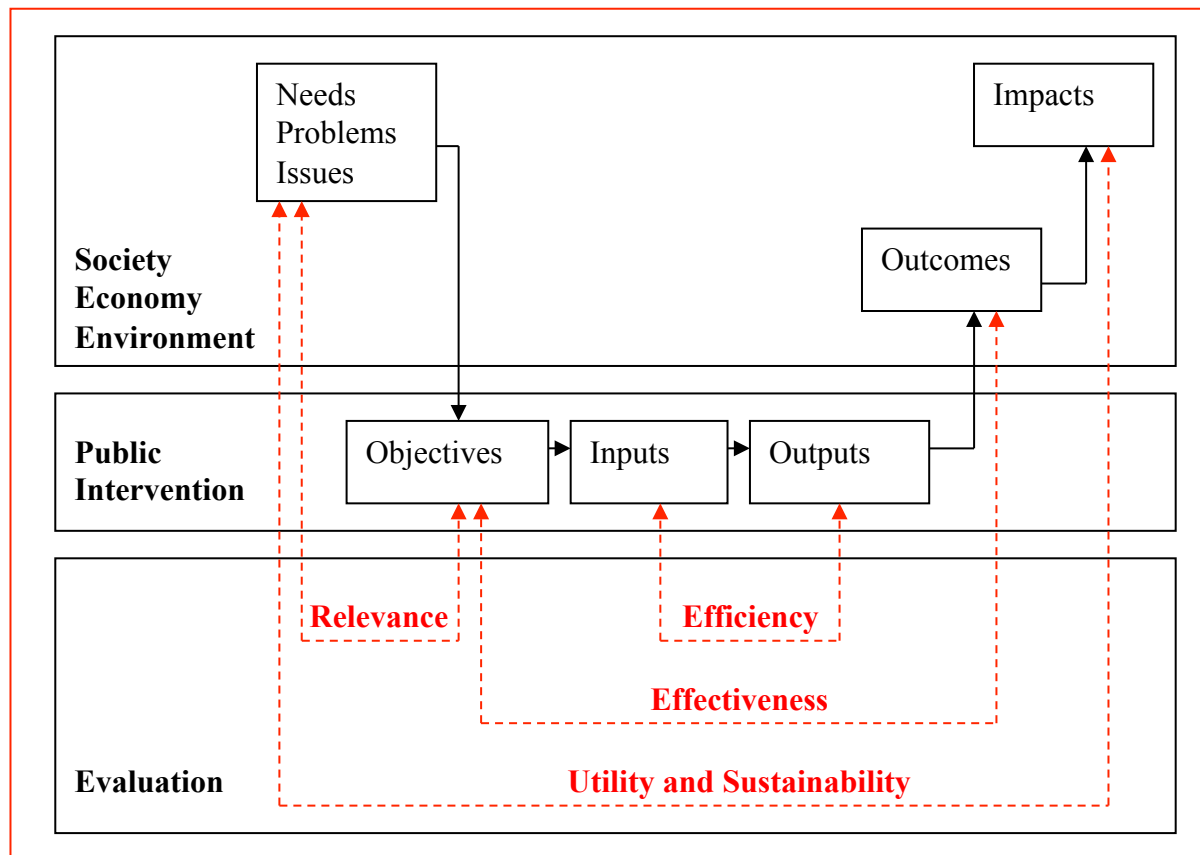
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What is evaluation? Answers from international practice

- Definition of evaluation
 - *“Evaluation is the systematic acquisition and and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some object” (Bill Trochim)*
 - *Evaluation = Evidence + Judgement*
- Objectives of evaluation
 - *To monitor the progress towards objectives*
 - *To assess the achievements of the objectives*
 - *To act as a tool for policy learning*
- Main types of evaluation
 - *Formative evaluation: geared towards learning and improvement (of programme, policy or institution)*
 - *Summative: aimed at accountability. Examines the outcomes and impacts of of an object (policy, programme, institution) for different groups of people*

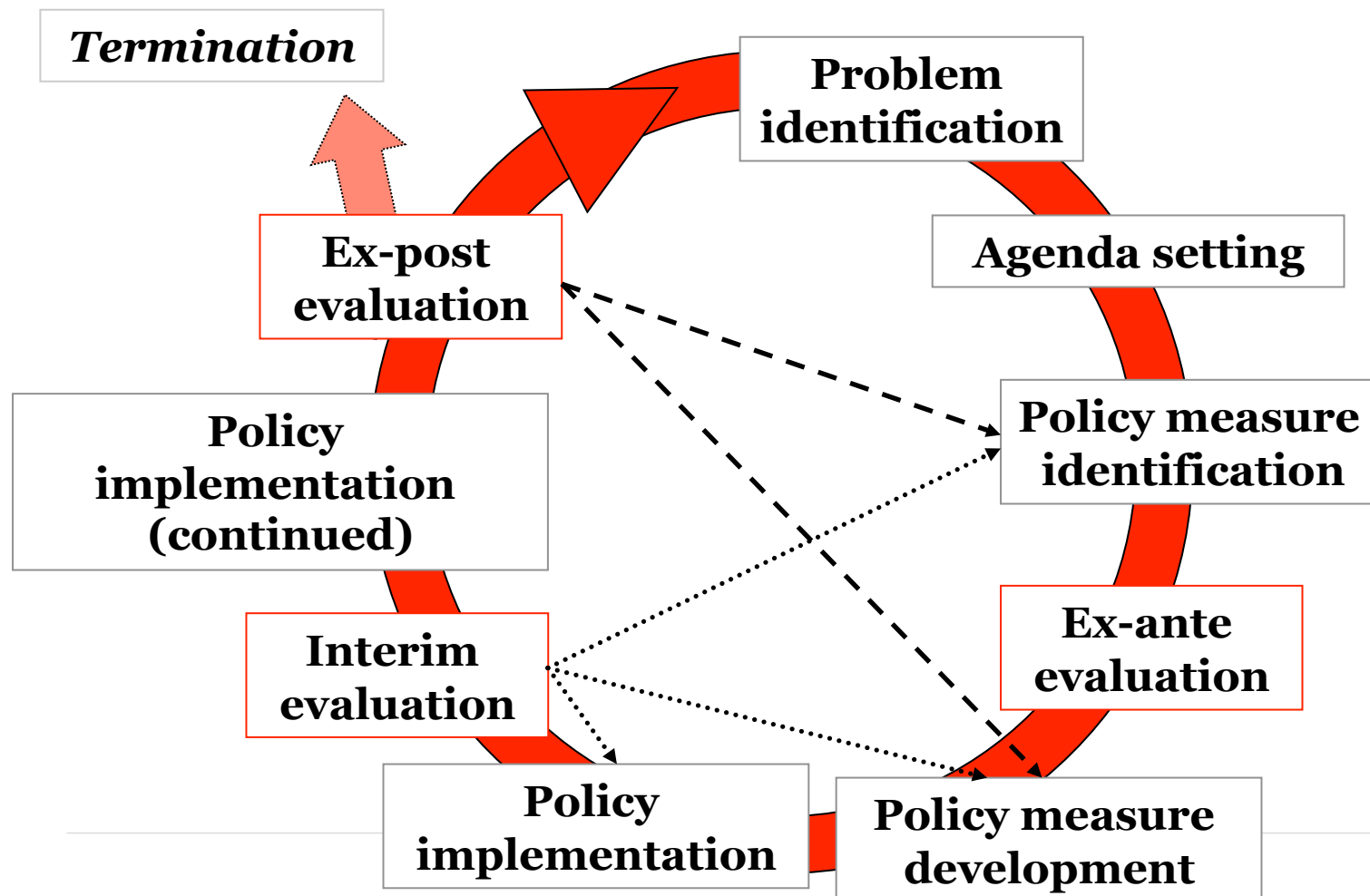
Evaluation and the Intervention Logic



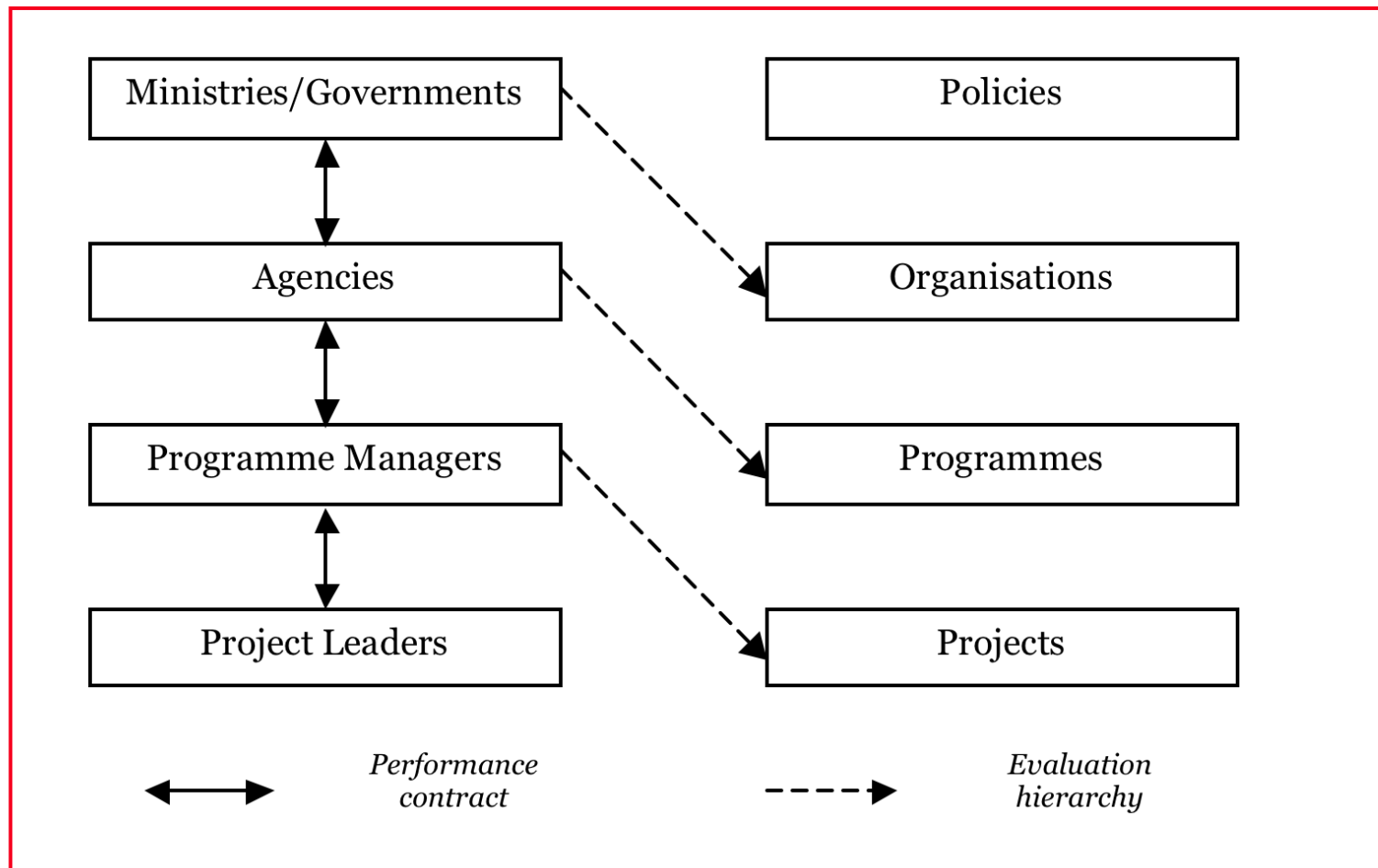
Evaluation and evaluation culture

- Evaluation culture
 - *Shared understanding of what evaluation is, what it can be used for, how it has to be done in order to be a useful instrument*
 - *“[...] evaluation culture is a way of looking at the world – a broad-based, forward-looking point of view that sees the crucial evaluation feedback function as an integral part of our everyday life.” (Bill Trochim)*
- Evaluation is part of a wider performance management frameworks
 - *Part of policy cycles*
 - *Tool supporting the development of (research) organisations*

Evaluation informs the whole policy cycle



The waterfall principle for evaluation



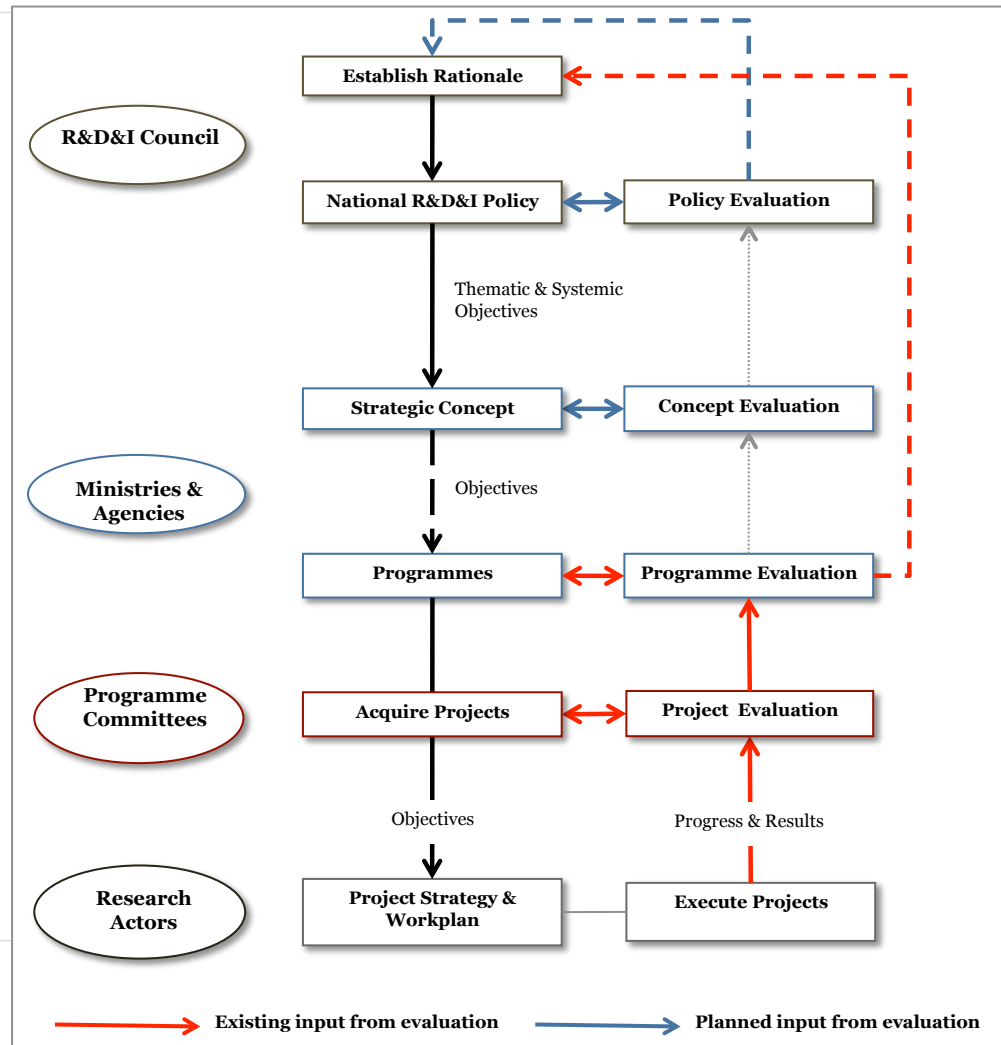
Evaluation practices in the CR

- We have assessed Metodika hodnocení (EM) in its two functions
 - *Evaluation of results of **research organisations***
 - *Evaluation of results of completed **research programmes***
- Main driving forces behind EM
 - *To de-politicise and to de-personalise, i.e. use objective criteria for the allocation of funding*
 - *To increase the production of concrete R&D results*
- EM fails to meet international good practice in evaluation in both cases and threatens to harm the Czech RDI system
- Alternative evaluation methods are used in institutional evaluation
 - *Academy of Science of the CR*
 - *Operational Programme R&D for Innovation (selection of Centres of Excellence and Regional Centres)*

Programme evaluation in the CR

- “Collective evaluation“ looks at efficiency only
 - *Ratio: total points of all F&D outputs reached in a given programme/ total funding provided from the national budget*
 - *Core criterion average SR value of a given programme*
 - *Completed programmes ranked into three groups*
 - Above-average programmes (SR Index > 130%)
 - Average programmes (SR between 70% and 130%)
 - Below-average programmes (SR < 70%)
 - Comparing apples with pears
- Conclusions drawn from findings often not justifiable
- No recommendations to policy-makers, value for policy learning practically nil

Evaluation in the Czech system – plans for the near future



What does programme evaluation tell us about the prevalent evaluation culture in the CR?

- Evaluations are predominately monitoring exercises
 - *Absence of ex-post evaluations at all levels*
- Programme evaluations dominated by Evaluation Methodology
 - *Over-accentuation on measurement of outputs*
 - *Over-accentuation on proving efficiency in implementation*
- Changes foreseen in the near-future based on the National Policy 2009-2015 in line with the prevalent evaluation culture
- Credibility of evaluations undermined by each level in the hierarchy evaluating its own activities
- Current evaluation practice does not – and cannot – reflect the concept of policy cycles

Institutional Evaluation: Differences EM – Informed Peer Review (i)

Scope and content covered

- *EM: one-dimensional. Numbers of defined research outputs in some 20 categories*
- *Informed peer-review: multidimensional. Structured quantitative & qualitative information*
 - research programme
 - critical infrastructure
 - staff (numbers, composition, qualifications, roles)
 - strategic partnerships
 - achievements and users of results
 - management and HR policy
 - research funding
 - perceived barriers to development
- *Compared to informed peer-review, the EM looks at a tiny section of a research organisation's reality*

Institutional Evaluation: Differences EM – Informed Peer Review (ii)

Type of feedback given

- *EM: assigns a defined number of points to each output and adds points to a total point score per unit of evaluation; output is **not** assessed against objectives*
- *Informed peer-review: structured written report, typically several pages long, containing verbal feedback on each of the evaluation dimensions; output and achievements are assessed against each organisations mission and objectives*
- *Compared to informed peer-review, EM provides no feedback in support of learning and institutional development*

Why are these differences a problem?

Key challenges for the development of Czech research organisations

- Lack of focused, coherent research programmes
- Low research productivity
- Dominance of supply-side orientation vis-à-vis poor understanding of the target group
- Overly complicated management and governance models.
- Underdeveloped human resource policies.
- Limited awareness for organisational and managerial issues as one of the major bottlenecks and shortcomings

→ EM does not provide the information needed in order to understand and address these challenges

How to evaluate? Some recommendations

- Discontinue the Evaluation Methodology
- Institutions: introduce informed peer-review to develop research organisations
 - *No mechanistic link from evaluation to allocation of funding*
 - *The issue of research institutes with low productivity can be addressed with informed peer-review*
- Programmes: develop common evaluation standards
 - *Look beyond R&D outputs and focus on the outcomes and impacts of projects, programmes, departmental policies and national policies*
 - *No mechanistic link from indicator value to (funding) decisions*
 - *Apply „waterfall principle“*
- Build up an evaluation culture ...

How to build an evaluation culture? Some recommendations.

- “Just do it” – focus on formative evaluation.
- Build on existing experience nationally and internationally
- Get and share information – do not reinvent the wheel, but build one that fits the track gauge in your country
- Train: policy makers, administrators and research managers – basics about principles and standards of evaluation
- Share experience as you move along!
- Developing an evaluation culture for the best means embedding it in a quality culture

Evaluation can be useful to individuals and institutions – provided it is understood, executed and embedded properly!

Thank you!

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