Evaluation framework, strategy, design or plan — what is really wanted?

Australasian Evaluation Society
International Conference 2010

Chris Milne
Troublesome terms in tender requests

evaluation framework
evaluation strategy
evaluation design
evaluation plan
Evaluation has loose language
A program is

A set of coordinated activities and resources designed to achieve a desired result

“program”, “sub-program”, “project”, “initiative”, “strategy”
### exhibits:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>to develop an Evaluation Framework for the ABC initiative and to conduct the evaluation, in accordance with the Evaluation Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>to develop a framework and methodologies for evaluating the processes and outcomes of this national service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>to design and execute the evaluation of the XYZ Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more exhibits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The cross-agency Action Plan requires ... the development of a meta evaluation strategy to provide a framework to evaluate projects and initiatives under the Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to develop an Evaluation Strategy that is aligned with the organisation’s 5-year Strategic Plan ... and to develop an evaluation activity plan for 2010-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The evaluation strategy will develop a more coordinated and strategic approach to evaluation across the agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
framework

framework / / (say 'fraymwerk) noun
1. a structure composed of parts fitted and united together.
2. a structure designed to support or enclose something; frame or skeleton.
### Evaluation Framework

**Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health** — six-step framework for conducting evaluation of public health programs:

- Engage stakeholders
- Describe the program.
- Focus the evaluation.
- Gather credible evidence.
- Justify conclusions.
- Ensure use and share lessons learned.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1999
The Kirkpatrick Evaluation Framework for Training and Development programs has a four-stage evaluation process:

1 - reaction
2 - learning
3 - job behaviour
4 - results
### The Evaluation Framework for the BBD Strategy

The Evaluation Framework for the BBD Strategy identifies key child, family and community outcomes, and includes suggestions for minimum data collection for outcome indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>The Evaluation Framework for the BBD Strategy identifies key child, family and community outcomes, and includes suggestions for minimum data collection for outcome indicators.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes framework</td>
<td>Outcomes framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two senses of evaluation framework

1. **Outcomes framework**  
   A representation of the program that shows key outcomes and related performance information

2. **Framework for evaluation**  
   A model of an evaluation process
OUTCOMES
The world is full of outcomes
Each day delivers more
At breakfast time there's only two
By lunchtime there are four
By dinner time there will be eight
At bedtime there's sixteen;
So many, many outcomes and
I don't know what they mean
And so we live our lives away
With outcomes big and small
Until the final outcome comes
With no outcome at all.
# Outcomes framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Performance information</th>
<th>Possible methods &amp; data sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy / longer term outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immediate outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service delivery (activities and outputs)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources (inputs)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example - framework for evaluation

The MERI Framework incorporates four important concepts:

» an integrated approach to investment and program design, the planning process, evaluation and adaptive program management involving partners across jurisdictions

» an asset-based approach to evaluation that promotes target setting for the key asset classes that contribute to sustainable NRM

» monitoring program performance in addition to the state of and change over time in the condition of assets

» reporting with an emphasis on outcome and impacts, including at an intermediate outcome stage

strategy

strategy // (say 'stratuhjee) noun
1. generalship; the science or art of combining and employing the means of war in planning and directing large military movements and operations.
3. skilful management in getting the better of an adversary or attaining an end.
   [Greek stratēgia generalship]
The evaluation strategy comprises seven distinct, yet inter-related projects mapped within a program logic model that address the service objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National telephone support service</th>
<th>program evaluation strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
evaluation strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E</th>
<th>to develop an Evaluation Strategy that is aligned with the organisation’s 5-year Strategic Plan ... and to develop an evaluation activity plan for 2011-2012</th>
<th>organisation evaluation strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large health NGO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Evaluation Strategy

... a National Evaluation Framework to evaluate both the SPC Strategy as a whole and each of the three strands ... including the roles of the local evaluators. The Evaluation Framework is to address the various elements of the Outcomes Framework that is aligned with the key priority areas of the National Agenda for Youth.
Two senses of evaluation strategy

1. Program evaluation strategy
2. Organisation evaluation strategy
2. Program evaluation strategy

The purpose (why), focus (what) and stakeholder information needs (what evidence, by when)
The main evaluation activities/studies (outline of design, methods)
Timing, responsibilities, resources.
Reference to the program outcomes framework. Links with other frameworks, strategies.
2. Program evaluation strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time and resources</th>
<th>Report 1</th>
<th>Report 2</th>
<th>Final Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Organisation evaluation strategy

The organisation's priorities for evaluation and the overall approach, management of evaluation studies
Responsibilities, funding
Capacity building, knowledge resources, info systems
Reference to organisation's evaluation policy
2. Organisation evaluation strategy

- Objectives
- Programs
- Risks and accountabilities
- Priorities for program evaluations
- Capacity, systems and resources for evaluation
exhibits: what do you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>What do you think?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>to develop an Evaluation Framework for the ABC initiative and to conduct the evaluation, in accordance with the Evaluation Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>to develop a framework and methodologies for evaluating the processes and outcomes of this national service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>to design and execute the evaluation of the XYZ Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more exhibits: what do you think?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>The cross-agency Action Plan requires ... the development of a meta evaluation strategy to provide a framework to evaluate projects and initiatives under the Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>to develop an Evaluation Strategy that is aligned with the organisation’s 5-year Strategic Plan ... and to develop an evaluation activity plan for 2010-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>The evaluation strategy will develop a more coordinated and strategic approach to evaluation across the agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
design

/ / (say duh'zuyn) –noun)

8. an outline, sketch, or plan, as of a work of art, an edifice, or a machine to be executed or constructed.
9. the combination of details or features of a picture, building, etc.; the pattern or device of artistic work.
11. a plan; a project; a scheme.
12. a hostile plan; crafty scheme.
13. the end in view; intention; purpose.

[French désigner designate, from Latin dēsignāre mark out]
evaluation design

Combination of research methods to achieve evaluation purpose

Credibility of methods and evidence

Appropriateness of methods for the program’s scope and status, ethical safeguards

Feasibility to meet time and budget

Rationale for the design - the purpose of the evaluation
plan

\(\text{plan}\)

\(\text{say plan}\) noun

1. a scheme of action or procedure: a *plan of operations*.
2. a design or scheme of arrangement.
3. a project or definite purpose: *plans for the future*.
4. a drawing made to scale to represent the top view or a horizontal cut of a structure or a machine, as a floor plan of a building.
5. a representation of a thing drawn on a plane, as a map or diagram: a *town plan*. 
evaluation plan

Project plan where the project is an evaluation

Puts evaluation design into practice

Sets out tasks and responsibilities to implement an evaluation project/study

Feasibility - time, budget, people

Tactics for specific tasks

Sign off on agreed tasks
evaluation map
evaluation anxiety
An outcomes framework provides a structure for an evaluation strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Methods &amp; data sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy / longer term outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service delivery (activities and outputs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (inputs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Program logic**
- **Information matrix**
- **Impact study**
- **Process evaluation**
- **Monitoring system**
- **Evaluation strategy**
An evaluation strategy can include evaluation studies with different designs

**Impact study**

- **Design:** Client case studies
- Outcomes measures
- Comparisons

  Pattern of impact – summative

**Process evaluation**

- **Design:** Interviews and observations
- Client satisfaction measures
- Monitoring data – participation

  Extent and quality of implementation - formative
Towards a typology - these terms are used across three areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program evaluation</th>
<th>Organisational strategy</th>
<th>About evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes framework</td>
<td>“Outcomes framework”</td>
<td>Framework for evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program evaluation strategy</td>
<td>organisation evaluation strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation design</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Working with loose language

- Recognise that these important concepts may be labelled differently
- Expect lack of clarity with language in the evolving discipline of evaluation
- Recognise that loose language costs time and money
- Look for values behind the language eg “strategy” involves commitment towards a goal whereas “framework” is just descriptive
What do we do about this?

- Look beneath the terms to see what is really wanted
- Talk it through – dialogue between evaluation commissioners and evaluators that goes beyond the terms
- Always write some explanation when you use these terms (adjectives, phrases, definitions)
Right – I see what they want!!