

DECI-2

Developing Evaluation Capacity &
Communication in Information Society

Research through Capacity Development

You may you want to partner with DECI-2 if....

you want to have a say in the design and use of an **Evaluation** of
your research project...

and

you want mentoring in designing a **Research Communication**
strategy for your project

DECI-2 is a research project funded by with IDRC.

Outputs from DECI 1...

- 3 regional evaluation mentors trained in UFE
- project staff and contractors exposed to UFE
- 5 Evaluation Reports that were utilized
- 5 Case studies
- The UFE Primer

DECI-2 research objectives

1. To develop and test-drive a combined approach to UFE and Research Communication mentoring.

Utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) emphasizes evaluations that are utilized. UFE begins by identifying the users of an evaluation and engaging them in its design.

Research Communication is an applied field that services the different outreach and networking functions of projects; it is the basis of Communication Strategies that combine active listening with targeted dissemination action.

DECI-2 research objectives

2. To build capacity among regional evaluation consultants to the concepts and practices of UFE and Research Communication.

DECI-2 builds on the experience of the previous project that provided UFE capacity among Asian evaluation professionals.

DECI-2 expands the scope to a global team and adds the Research Communication dimension.

DECI-2 research objectives

3. To provide technical assistance to I&N project researchers and evaluators towards improving their evaluation and communication knowledge and skills.

DECI-2 will mentor the I&N project teams in charge of evaluation and communication, be they staff of the implementing organizations or contracted consultants.

DECI-2 research objectives

4. To contribute towards the the completion of UFE evaluation and communication strategies for designated I&N flagship projects.

DECI-2 is a research project that operates through capacity development. For I&N projects, DECI-2 is a support project that mentors in the related fields of evaluation and communication.

You provide us with the laboratory, we 'action-research' in collaboration with your team.

DECI-2 research objectives

5. To communicate the DECI-2 project findings and training approach to practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

DECI-2's own research communication strategy begins by identifying a circle of potential users of our research, and engaging them to advise on the best methods, media and events to share our research findings.

What this means to you...

An opportunity
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An opportunity to learn-by-doing *at your own pace* in the evaluation and communication fields.

Taking control over your evaluation efforts; adding rigour to your communication strategy.

Being part of research that pioneers mentoring in two complementary fields.

What the partnership looks like.

The I&N project provides:

- The staffing of the evaluation and communication team (be they internal or contracted).
- The funds to implement all steps of the evaluation plan and the communication strategy.
- A commitment to allocate time during the project cycle to both areas.
- Funders' commitment to UFE.
- Leadership commitment.

We refer to this as READINESS

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DECI-2 provides:

- Introductory briefings.
- **30 person days of mentoring in UFE and Communication over an agreed project calendar.**
- Travel for 2 face-to-face sessions to be timed with the partner.
- Additional mentoring by co-Principal Investigators.
- Lesson sharing among projects.
- Process documentation.

DECI-2 is open to variety in:

- Types of projects: umbrella, sub-projects responsive to calls, directive sub-projects, non-umbrella
 - Geography: regional Vs one-country or sub-region
 - Levels of readiness to UFE and Communication: some new to one topic, others new to both (readiness has more connotations)
 - Advanced Vs in preparation: possible to aim for two tranches
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The criteria described above do not signal which I&N projects are eliminated. Rather they serve as a guideline for our selection, which we will finalize in consultation with IDRC.

A taste of UFE

A decision-making framework for enhancing the utility and actual use of evaluations. (Patton, 2008a: slide 9)

Premises of UFE

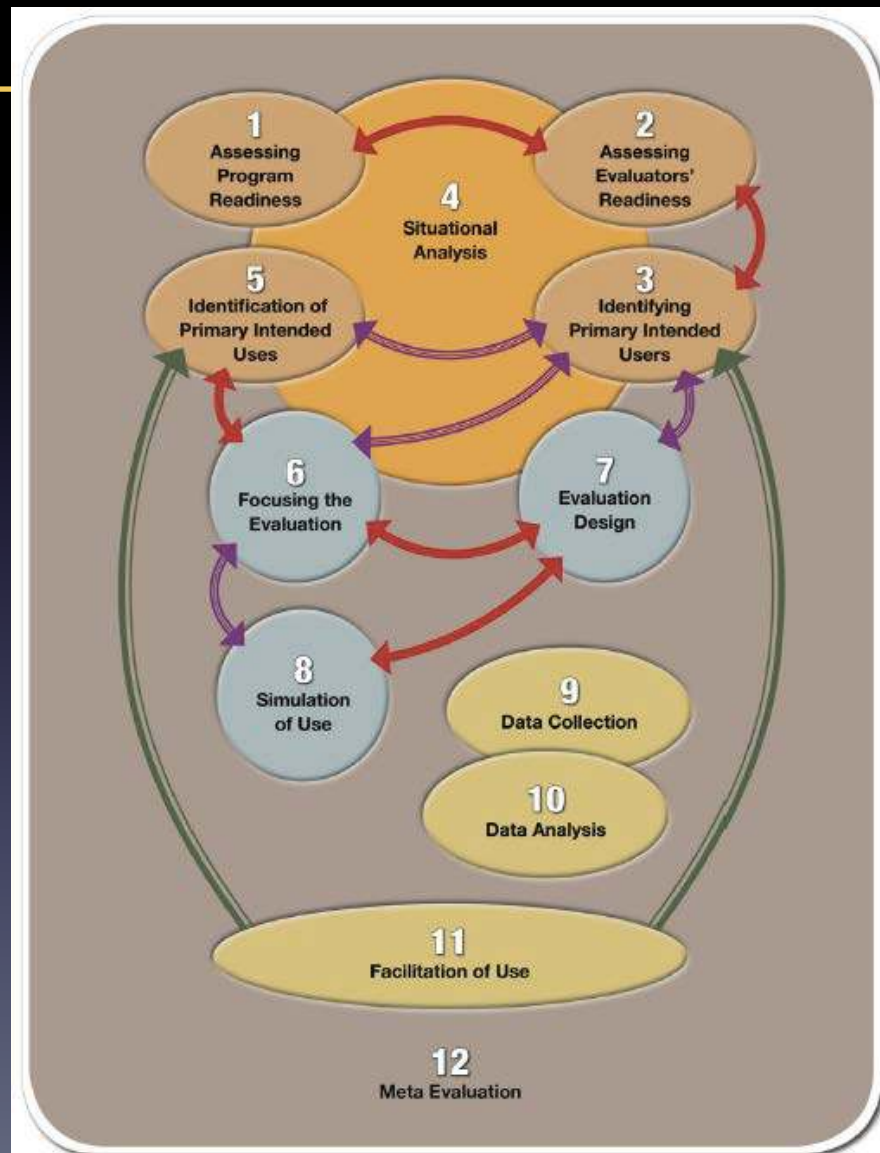
- No evaluation should go forward unless and until there are **primary intended users** who will use the information that can be produced.
- Primary intended users are **involved in the process**.
- Evaluation is part of **initial program design**. The primary intended users want information to help answer a question or questions.
- **Evaluator's role is to help intended users clarify their purpose and objectives.**
- **Make implications for use a part of every decision** throughout the evaluation – it is the driving force of the evaluation process.

(Patton, 2008a: slide 20)

UFE Steps 12 originally

1. Project / network readiness assessment.
2. Evaluator readiness and capability assessment.
3. Identification of primary intended users.
4. Situational analysis.
5. Identification of primary intended uses.
6. Focusing on evaluation.
7. Evaluation design.
8. Simulation of use.
9. Data collection.
10. Data analysis.
11. Facilitate use.
12. Meta-evaluation.

An iterative process

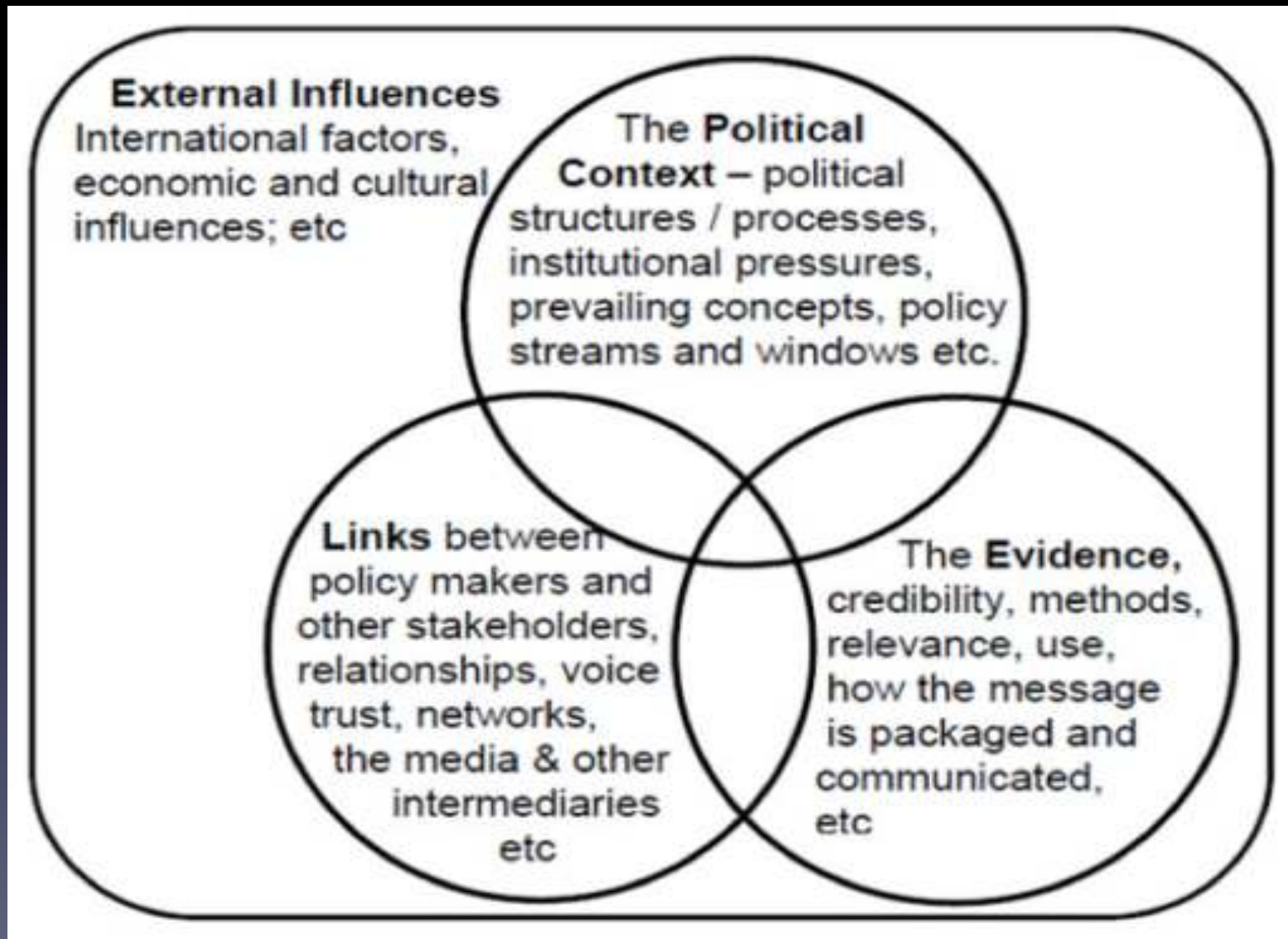


A taste of Research Communication

An applied field that rests on the premise that successful development calls for the conscious and active participation of the intended beneficiaries at every stage of the development process.

Communication and participation can be seen as two sides of the same coin.

What does it take to "get your findings out"?



Themes in Research Communication

- Understanding the nature of the issue(s);
- Mapping out who needs to be involved and what each group already knows along with their preferred communication channels;
- Introducing communication functions that respond to needs;
- Working with affordable, accessible, and tested methods and media;
- Pretesting materials before dissemination;
- Determining a range of outputs and outcomes;
- Implementing, monitoring, and revising.

ResCom Steps 12 adjusted to match UFE

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|-----|--|-----|--|
| 1. | Organizational readiness assessment. | 1. | Project / network readiness assessment. |
| 2. | Communication team readiness assessment. | 2. | Evaluator readiness and capability assessment. |
| 3. | Stakeholder and audience analysis. | 3. | Identification of primary intended users. |
| 4. | Situational analysis. | 4. | Situational analysis. |
| 5. | Defining communication purposes. | 5. | Identification of primary intended uses. |
| 6. | Defining communication objectives. | 6. | Focusing on evaluation. |
| 7. | Methods and media. | 7. | Evaluation design. |
| 8. | Field testing. | 8. | Simulation of use. |
| 9. | Implementation of strategy. | 9. | Data collection. |
| 10. | Assess effectiveness. | 10. | Data analysis. |
| 11. | Institutionalization of ResCom. | 11. | Facilitate use. |
| 12. | Tell the story. | 12. | Meta-evaluation. |

DECI-2: Next steps during 2012

- In the coming months DECI-2 will confirm I&N Project partners
 - Readiness: senior management buy-in; allocation of dedicated budget and personnel; expressed interest in both fields by staff; willingness to learn, experiment and share
 - We will explore implementation modalities that are realistic (considering our limited mentoring and travel resources)
 - We will assemble a “User Circle” made up of stakeholders who are interested in the DECI-2 research findings (evaluators, researchers, communication professionals and funders)
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DECI-1 outputs and outcomes:

<http://evaluationinpractice.wordpress.com>

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Communication Vs. Uptake Strategies

Issue	Communication strategy (as described in DFID guidelines)	Uptake strategy (as defined by review team)
Duration	Starts with inception, continues until project ends	Starts with research prioritisation, continues (through partnerships with relevant stakeholders) until (long) after the project ended
Underlying paradigm	Communications approach	User engagement approach
Underlying assumption	Research findings are potentially useful to intermediate and end users	Unless users are involved in defining the research agenda, there is a risk that research is not relevant, in which case even the best communication strategy will not be able to trigger wide scale use
Main research uptake mechanisms used	Strong focus on targeted dissemination mechanisms (but also collaboration with users)	Main mechanism is collaboration with users at different levels (including governance of research programmes, and M&E)
Key actors	Researchers and communication experts, who package research findings in ways appropriate to different users	Uptake pathway actors: Private sector, government agencies, NGOs who are partners in the research process
Main challenge	Finding the most appropriate communication method for each target group	Strengthening demand for research and building capacity of users
 <p>Communication strategies and uptake strategies are closely linked and combined for maximum effect</p>		

Table 1: Differences and commonalities between 'research communication' and 'research uptake' strategies. Adapted from Adolph *et al* 2010, p 62.