

**The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety**

**EVALUATION GUIDANCE**

**Revised March 2004**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is recognised by Government as an indispensable component of Value For Money (VFM) assessment. DFP recommend that it is good practice for an evaluation to be conducted at least once for every major policy area within a Department over a five-year period. It is a way to determine whether or not policies are achieving what they were originally intended to achieve and, if so, whether they are doing so as efficiently, economically and equitably as possible.

**For those working in the policy area being evaluated, it is an excellent opportunity to take a strategic look at their work with a view to making their future efforts even more productive. This can be evidenced through either an improvement in policy outcomes and / or improved levels of funding for the policy in light of good Value for Money arguments with DFP.**

Evaluation is important for determining the extent to which a policy has met or is meeting its objectives and that those intended to benefit have done so. It can identify ways in which the policy can be improved or developed to increase its impact. Evaluation can also help departments learn lessons and share good practice in policy design and implementation.

**Evaluation is a disciplined inquiry that applies, wherever possible, scientific procedures to the collection and analysis of information about the content, structure and outcomes of programmes, projects and planned policy interventions.**

Evaluation should aim to:

- **Improve policy design implementation and decision-making;**
- **Help resource allocation;**
- **Enhance accountability in terms of assessing what taxpayers' money achieves (ensures Value for Money); and**
- **Promote organisational learning and good practice.**

This guidance is not definitive and is not intended to be. Rather, it is meant to provide a ‘lay’ introduction to more detailed DFP <sup>1</sup> and Treasury <sup>2</sup> guidance on evaluation. For those tasked with completing an evaluation, we recommend that you familiarise yourself with the more detailed guidance. The DFP guidance, *Evaluation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service – a Guide for Departments* can be accessed by clicking on

[http://www2.dfpni.gov.uk/economic\\_appraisal\\_guidance/evaluation-guide.htm](http://www2.dfpni.gov.uk/economic_appraisal_guidance/evaluation-guide.htm)

the treasury guidance can be accessed at

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic\\_data\\_and\\_tools/greenbook/data\\_greenbook\\_index.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/greenbook/data_greenbook_index.cfm)

and the Northern Ireland Practical Guide to the green book can be accessed at

[http://www2.dfpni.gov.uk/economic\\_appraisal\\_guidance](http://www2.dfpni.gov.uk/economic_appraisal_guidance)

DFP and departmental economists (who are located in Economics Branch, Information and Analysis Directorate, in the case of our own DHSSPS) have an important quality assurance role in the government’s evaluation process and it is recommend that they are kept fully informed of the progress of each evaluation. DHSSPS Economics Branch have their own web-pages for the dissemination of good practice guides and information regarding economic appraisals and evaluation

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/stats&research/economicapp.asp>

They are available to offer advice and guidance. Ideally their advice ought to be sought prior to evaluation so that an evaluation plan, outlining methods and stages of evaluation can be agreed. Such

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<sup>1</sup> ‘*Evaluation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service: A Guide for Departments*’. DFP, December 1994 and “*The Northern Ireland Practical Guide to the Green Book: DFP’s guide to the appraisal, approval and management of policies, programmes and projects*” DFP 2003

<sup>2</sup> ‘*Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government*’. “The Green Book”. London TSO, 2003

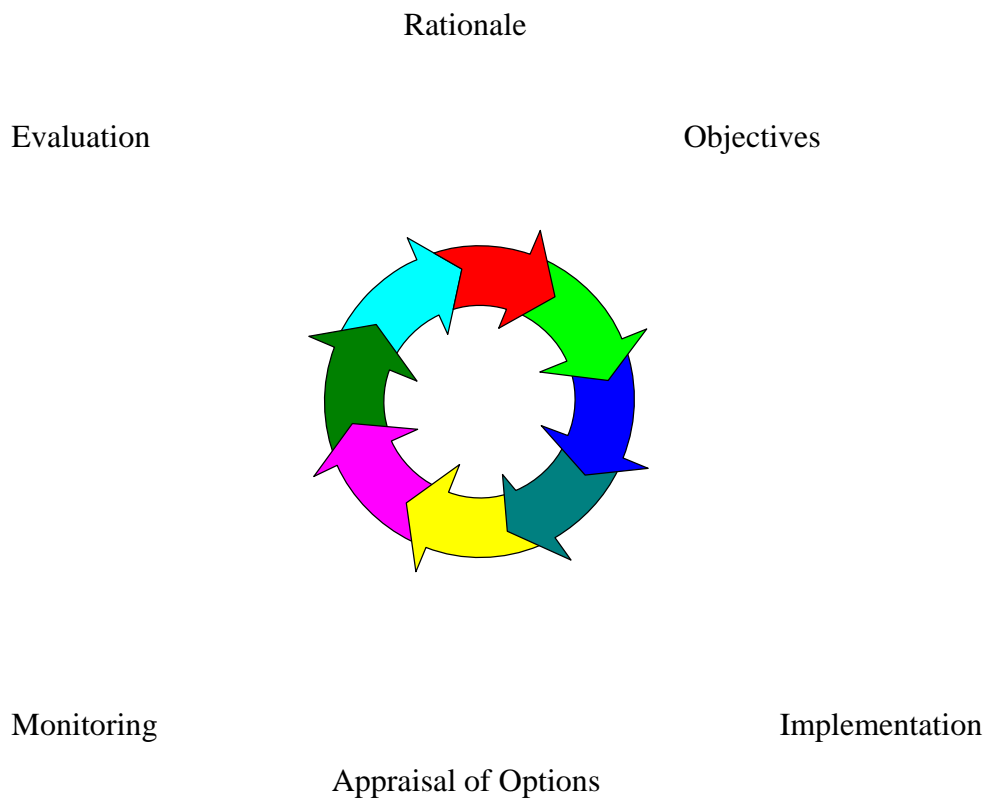
an evaluation plan will already have been agreed as part of any approved economic appraisal undertaken for your policy, programme or project. To achieve optimal use of this expertise during the evaluation process will require a ‘main contact’ be designated for each evaluation who will assume responsibility for ongoing liaison.

Evaluation should be undertaken by ensuring the following:

- Establishing the objectives of the policy under evaluation - ‘What was it for and how was it going to achieve its purpose?’
- Deciding how success against these objectives could be demonstrated - i.e. deciding on benchmarks;
- Applying these benchmarks to the actual workings of the policy – i.e. testing its effectiveness in achieving its objectives and the efficiency with which it did so;
- Forming a judgement on the degree of success or failure as indicated by the chosen benchmarks. In particular, deciding whether the benefits produced by expenditure linked to the policy outweighed the costs;
- Identifying the reasons for the degree of success actually achieved. Policies are rarely implemented exactly as planned due to a range of reasons (e.g. changes in the circumstances in which they were conceived to operate). The purpose in doing this is not, however, to attribute blame but to decide whether the policies should continue and, if they should, to decide how to improve them;
- Determining the accuracy of the original estimate of the resources required to implement the policy in the light of the actual experience, and explaining any variance;
- Re-considering the purpose and approach of the policy in the light of the success or failure factors so identified.

**The questions asked in an evaluation are fundamental and should be considered in all review exercises.**

The **policy process** can be seen as a continuous feedback process with evaluation as an integral part.



*“ the prime motive of evaluation is designed to identify lessons which can be applied to improve policy in the future”<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>3</sup> ‘Evaluation in the Northern Ireland Civil Service: A Guide for Departments’, section 1.4, p3.

## 2. THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process can be broken down into a number of stages as follows:

- i. **Evaluation Plan**– Programmes to be evaluated should be prioritised on the basis of importance, openness to influence and adequacy of information. Evaluation should be planned before a programme starts. It is necessary to decide what questions the evaluation will address and who should undertake it, and to ensure that the costs of evaluation are outweighed by the lessons to be learnt.
- ii. **Establish scope and purpose of the evaluation** – This might depend on whether the objective is to identify weaknesses which need to be addressed (a process evaluation) or to assess the overall success of a programme with a view to continuing, expanding or reducing it (an outcome evaluation).
- iii. **Establish rationale, aims and objectives of the policy or programme** – These should be clearly defined prior to programme implementation, but if not, the evaluator should determine them. Is the policy instrument the most effective to address the rationale? This stage also involves identifying indicators of need and establishing the more specific targets, which underlie the objectives.
- iv. **Specify measures and indicators** – effectiveness and efficiency measures, and input, output and outcome/impact indicators, in order to assess the value for money of policies. As far as possible, these should allow international comparison.
- v. **Establish a base case for comparison with actual outcome** – What would have happened if the programme had not been implemented? It may be possible to set up a control group for comparison with a group affected by the policy. Alternatively, ‘before and after’ comparisons can be made.
- vi. **Define assumptions** – These may involve assumed causal relationships between a policy and outcomes, or may relate to the external environment.
- vii. **Identify side effects and distribution effects** – effects (beneficial or otherwise) beyond those originally envisaged for the policy; equality/equity impacts and impacts on voluntary activity, the voluntary sector, new TSN and rural proofing.
- viii. **Analysis** – This will depend on whether it is a process or outcome evaluation. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis may be important. The key measure is net additional output. Cost Benefit Analysis provides a useful framework as does Health Impact Assessment.
- ix. **Outcome of Evaluation** – Recommendations such as programme continuation, modification, succession or termination. This leads into reappraisal and appraisal of new proposals. Sensitivity analysis should be carried out.
- x. **Presentation and dissemination of results** –The evaluation process and outcome should be adequately documented. The report must reach senior management and be widely disseminated to staff concerned with future project design, planning, development and management.

## 2.1 The Evaluation Plan

Any evaluation involves an investment of resources, which requires that the required resources should only be committed to it in anticipation of achieving genuine improvements in policies and programmes. The Evaluation Plan **justifies** and **controls** the evaluation exercise and provides an opportunity to lay out the objectives, outputs, expected outcomes and key measures of success in one, succinct document. Annex A demonstrates how the objectives of a policy on alcohol related harm might be laid out in an Evaluation Plan.

In establishing an Evaluation Plan there are **five** key aspects to consider:

### (i) Which policy to evaluate?

Policies are not necessarily neatly framed in a policy or strategy document. Often, it is a case of defining a policy area on a *de facto* basis by **selecting** a programme or an area of spending. From DFP's perspective, the extent to which monies are being used effectively will be of prime importance and evaluations should always address the effectiveness of spend associated with a policy area. When a policy area has been defined, selection should be made in consideration of:

Its **importance** - i.e. the size of its budget or its influence on the community;

Whether it actually can be **influenced** or whether it is too constrained to be significantly altered;

The **availability of information** relevant to the evaluation and the cost of acquiring this if it is not to hand or readily available.

In cases where no explicit statement of a policy exists, one must be constructed for the purpose of creating an Evaluation Plan. What was the policy area intended to achieve? What would have been sensible **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bounded) targets for the policy area (had they been developed)?

**(ii). When should it be done?**

Evaluations are frequently rendered less effective and more expensive than they should otherwise have been because pre-implementation evaluation planning has been inadequate. It is extremely important that the evaluation plan, stating objectives and targets, and the required resources, is in place at the start of the policy or programme. In this way the monitoring arrangements can be integrated into the implementation and a baseline position established which will permit meaningful before and after comparisons. The creation of an evaluation plan post hoc, when a policy or programme is up and running, is very likely to be a more difficult and expensive task since, at that stage, appropriate information may not be available and the methods of collecting it may be difficult to establish.

**(iii). How to do it?**

The methodology of evaluation, and in particular the information requirements, will be determined both by the commissioning body, who decide on the scope and purpose of the evaluation, and by the nature of the particular policy under examination. Essentially, what an evaluation seeks to determine is the success of a policy in terms of its:

- **Effectiveness** - the degree to which it has achieved its original objectives;
- **Efficiency** - whether the objectives were achieved on the most efficient basis possible;
- **Economy** - whether the objectives were achieved on a cost effective basis and, in particular, whether the costs outweigh the benefits;
- **Equity** - whether the policy impacts differentially against particular groups within society for example:
  - between persons of a different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
  - between men and women generally;
  - between persons with a disability and persons without;  
and
  - between persons with dependants and persons without.

**(iv). Who should do it?**

The choices will likely be:

- **In House Branch Staff**, who may be best, placed in terms of detailed knowledge but who may lack relevant evaluation experience or, indeed, the required time.
- **People outside the Department**, who can bring the appropriate independent angle in the interests of objectivity to the process but are likely to be more expensive and who, in most cases, will tend to rely on in house expertise for close guidance.

A working Group comprising in house people and a range of outside expertise, commensurate with the complexity of the investigation, would, be ideal but the direct costs and management overheads of such a group must be weighed against any possible gain.

**The person responsible for ensuring that the evaluation is completed should always seek to involve the Evaluation and Equality Unit along with DHSSPS Economics Branch from the beginning of the evaluation, preferably through representation on a steering group.**

**(v). How much will it cost?**

An evaluation study is an investment. The overall cost of an evaluation, including the opportunity costs, must be weighed against the possible gain. Costs should be minimised by using existing information, where possible, and ensuring that any additional data required is collected in a focused and cost effective manner.

It will be part of the effective management of an evaluation that the full cost of carrying out the evaluation exercise is properly monitored. These costs must include all activities directly attributable to the project and should include the following: secretariat expenses; hire of facilities; consultation costs and consultancy exercises. However, the essential costs are likely to be those of the project team members.

**How will it be managed?**

If an evaluation is to achieve its aims and objectives, it will require clear and effective management. The Department's preferred project methodology is **Projects IN Controlled Environments (PRINCE)** and for major projects, where the designated Project Manager is unfamiliar with the principles of project management, formal training<sup>4</sup> in the methodology should be considered.

However, evaluation projects will vary considerably in scale and complexity and the application of PRINCE is always flexible and proportionate. The most essential feature of effective project management is the development of a **Project Initiation Document**. This process will focus attention on the scope of the project, the specific Terms of Reference, the work packages which comprise the project and the resources needed to complete this work. It should also define the overall project management structures, identify milestones and products and set out a plan for their delivery. EEU are available to assist in drawing up or quality assuring PIDs and, providing advice on any aspects of project management.

A similar focus is also necessary where an evaluation is outsourced. It is essential to achieving value-for-money in outsourced assignments that consultants operate within clearly defined Terms of Reference. Again, EEU are content to assist in the development of standards to control the award of contracts and subsequent monitoring of consultant's performance.

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<sup>4</sup> CIPFA offer a one day course.

## 2.2 Establish Scope and purpose of the evaluation

This is the most crucial stage in ensuring that an evaluation is successful. Since many policy areas are not framed in policy or strategy statements, it is important to define what is being evaluated very carefully. Although evaluations tend to be thought of as examinations of fully drafted policies, one of their primary purposes is to ensure that the effectiveness of spend is established. So, for example, in evaluating a strategy on alcohol it is necessary to look at the effectiveness of treatment centres and health promotion campaigns as distinct features of the strategy's delivery, in addition to simply identifying the impact of the strategy document per se.

There are basically two ways in which an evaluation can be approached. It could concern itself with how the policy is being delivered and, for example, with current weaknesses in that delivery. This is known as a '**process evaluation**' and is usually more appropriate to a policy in its early stages.

The second type is known as an '**outcome evaluation**' and in this type the focus is on the overall success of the policy with regard to its continuation, reduction or possible cessation

## 2.3. Establish rationale, aims and objectives of the policy or programme

Not all policies will have a clear statement of aims and objectives. Some policies will have been in place for so long that their inception is no longer clearly remembered. Others might owe their origin to a statement of intent, which was perhaps indirect or, merely implicit. In these two latter cases the aim of the policy would have to be convincingly retrieved or reconstructed.

In any case, a clear statement of the policy, which is a direct answer to the question – '**What is it for?**' - must be formulated and is essential to the whole evaluation process. Any policy area must, in order to justify the resources required for its implementation, have a **rationale**, which expresses the social value it intends to achieve. Generally speaking, a rationale is understood as being the justification for government action undertaken to overcome some form of 'market failure' or to address some identified social or equity issue. In the area of health policy the rationale is often expressed in the form of '**merit goods**', i.e., goods whose consumption will benefit individuals but which, left to themselves, they might not consume in appropriate amounts.

In any case, a sound rationale will require a clear expression of need and it is obviously important that this need can be demonstrated through relevant indicators. Clearly a vague answer to the question of rationale will make it difficult, even impossible, to determine a selection of evidence, which would be required to indicate its success or failure.

When a rationale has been correctly defined, it immediately leads to an overall aim. This overall aim will be mediated through a number of lower level or **intermediate** objectives, from which outputs and longer-term outcomes can be derived. These intermediate objectives should be expressed in terms of **targets**, which, in turn, will help determine what data should be collected in the monitoring process.

Targets also should meet the **SMART** criteria: that is, they should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-bounded.

#### 2.4. Specifying Measures and Indicators

The central concern here is to **identify** indicators, which can be used to assess the policy on Value For Money grounds, that is, in terms of its effectiveness, efficiency, economy and equity. Objectives and their associated indicators can be specified on a number of levels (see also the **Specimen Evaluation Plan** attached at **Annex A**):

**Primary aims.** These are the overall aims of the provision and are usually expressed in quite broad terms. Their purpose is to define the general direction of the policy area and to answer in direct and simple terms the question: *What is it for?* Primary aims tend to have macro-level indicators associated with them. In the case of a strategy on alcohol the primary aim might be *‘to reduce alcohol related harm in Northern Ireland’*. Relevant indicators (of need) would be *‘Percentage of people drinking above sensible levels’* or *‘number of deaths attributed to alcohol misuse’*

**Intermediate Objectives.** These are derived from the Primary Aim(s) and refer to the specific activities of the policy implementation and often have **intermediated** or **activity** indicators attached, such as *‘to have sensible drinking guidelines widely accepted’*. The resources used to achieve this intermediate objective, e.g. the costs of an Alcohol Awareness Campaign, can be considered as inputs. These should be readily available. It is part of the concern of an

evaluation is to show that inputs been obtained as the least possible cost and inputs will also be used in the calculation of value for money indicators (see below).

It might be expected that for each primary aim there would be a number of intermediate objectives and these could refer to throughput, money spent or numbers of people employed in implementing the policy area i.e., as **inputs** to the policy or programme. For each objective moreover, it should be possible to identify a number of **targets**, which are a way of unpacking the objectives into more concrete deliverables, and giving them a more specific and measurable focus. For example, *x% more places available in treatment centres; x% more trained primary care professionals.*

**Outputs.** These are the goods or services produced as a direct result of the policy. They can be both quantitative and qualitative. For example, in the case of alcohol treatment centres, an output indicator might be *‘the number of people successfully completing treatment’*.

Sometimes outputs are hard to identify and measure but some output measures should always be possible. The **efficiency** measure of a policy is, standard, **inputs** over **outputs**.

**Outcomes.** These refer to the longer-term **impacts** and are usually harder to measure. They are also extremely important and attempts should always be made to measure them. In the case of alcohol treatment, for example, this might mean monitoring clients for, say, some five years following treatment to ascertain the long-term success rates. It will often be necessary to conduct additional survey research to establish both output and outcome indicators and, to this end, early involvement with the Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency (NISRA) is also strongly recommended. NISRA are well placed both to identify the types of data available from existing government sources and to advise on the best approach to the collection of any additional information required <sup>5</sup>.

As will be clear from above, there are alternative categories available when evaluating a policy. The choice of alternative categories will have implications for the identification of relevant indicators. In all cases however, these indicators will be used together to provide a meaningful and coherent assessment of the overall **value for money** of the programme. The indicators mentioned, no matter what categories are employed, will be structured to form the basis of a Cost/Benefit Analysis (CBA).

A successful CBA will have all such assumptions made explicit and will use the overall costs against relevant indicators of success or failure to derive a sound estimate of the accrued benefits of the policy.

It is relatively easy to calculate costs; calculating benefits is more difficult. There is sometimes a certain amount of subjectivity or judgement in producing these. Also, indicators can be both quantitative and qualitative and sometimes it can be particularly difficult to link intermediate objectives, outputs and outcomes with the overall primary aims and associated primary aims. In the case of our alcohol strategy, for example, it might be the case that overall drinking levels reduce but, in fact, it turns out that this is due to an extraneous change in societal behaviour (i.e. it was nothing to do with the strategy). These caveats should be considered in the evaluation plan.

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<sup>5</sup> Including the seeking of Survey Unit Approval for Business surveys.

## 2.5. Establish a Base Case for comparison with actual outcome

The Base Case (or counter-factual case) allows a comparison with what would otherwise have happened had the policy not been introduced (i.e. what would have happened, had we done nothing). The difference between what would have otherwise happened and what has actually been achieved is taken to show the net gain or **additionality** of the policy's implementation.

Constructing the Base Case can be quite complex and further guidance is available from the DHSSPS Economics Branch. In all instances, however, the aim is to identify and discard those factors, which would have occurred anyway, and to isolate and quantify the effects due solely to the policy.

## 2.6. Define assumptions

Any policy will have been based upon certain assumptions. Some assumptions will be concerned with the **causal relationships** that connect the components of a policy, for example the efficacy of particular outputs, which are believed to be determinant in meeting a primary objective. Other assumptions will have taken a view about the **external environment**. For example, the impact of a particular demographic pattern. Both types of assumption are revisable, and where a revision is required, by virtue of a development of knowledge or some social change or shift, making this explicit is a key function of the evaluation process.

## 2.7. Identify side effects and distribution effects

Obviously, the effects of any policy might be felt beyond the boundaries that were drawn at its initiation and these unintended side effects could have become significant during the period under evaluation. These side effects can be either benefits or additional costs and, if any are identified, they should be included in the cost-benefit equation. Any displacement of current provision must be avoided.

In addition, it will be necessary to consider how far the implemented policy and its outcomes are consistent with broad governmental socio-economic initiatives. In particular, an evaluation should consider whether the policy:

- Is in line with the statutory equality obligations arising from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It will be important to ensure that activities resulting from a policy area does not impact

unfairly on any group in terms of the categories identified in the Act. For example, in reviewing an alcohol strategy, it might be particularly important to consider the specific needs of women and whether, under current arrangements, they can be seen as having equal access to treatment services.

- Supports the Government's declared intention to encourage **effective voluntary activity**. Have the voluntary sector been appropriately involved/included?
- Is in line with Government's commitment to ensure that the rural dimension is routinely considered as part of the policy implementation. **Rural Proofing** is defined as a process which ensures that all relevant Executive policies are examined carefully and objectively to determine whether or not they have a different impact in rural areas from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas: and where necessary, what policy adjustments might be made to reflect rural needs and in particular to ensure as far as is possible public services are accessible on a fair basis to the rural community.
- Contribution to implementing the Executive's **New Targeting Social Need (New TSN)**<sup>6</sup> policy which has the aim of tackling social need and social exclusion by targeting efforts and available resources within existing Departmental programmes towards people, groups and areas in greatest social need. In the example of the alcohol strategy, if particular areas were shown to suffer from higher ratios of alcohol misuse, it would be important to show that resources had been targeted towards those areas. In New TSN, those in greatest need must be identified objectively and targeted fairly, regardless of attributes such as gender, religion or race. New TSN does not discriminate against any section of the community but by consistently addressing the problems of people who are objectively shown to be in greatest social need, it should, over time, contribute to the erosion of inequality among different sections of society. The Department and its associated HPSS bodies have drawn up Action Plans identifying a wide range of actions and targets aimed at

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<sup>6</sup> See also 'Appraising and Evaluating New Targeting Social Need', DFP, November 2001 and the DHSSPS specific of this Guidance: 'Appraisal and Evaluation of New Targeting Social Need; Guidance for HSSPS Bodies, July 2003.

achieving their New TSN objectives. Action Plans are regularly reviewed and rolled forward and progress is reported at six monthly intervals.

- Meets policy developments concerning so-called ‘**Green Issues**’. This is an extremely important area for which the Department is accountable and which is further outlined in *Policy Appraisal and the Environment: Policy Guidance*, which is produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). When evaluating policy areas, people tend not to consider impact on the environment. However, many policies will have a potential impact on the environment in unexpected ways. For example, in the example of the alcohol review a recommendation on all night opening hours might well have a range of impacts such as: increased use of electricity, increased use of fuel/cars, litter and noise. For this reason, the DEFRA guidance notes that:

*“Environmental appraisal is not a formal, rigid system. Rather it is a common sense approach to policy making and programmes to ensure that significant direct and indirect impacts on the environment are properly considered.”*

Evaluations should determine whether the policy area consumes natural resources. If, for example, it: impacts on greenfield sites; causes an increase in demand for natural resources (e.g. water, energy or aggregates); requires additional infrastructure such as water, gas, electricity supplies, or new transport links. They should also consider whether the policy area produces waste or pollution or contributes to climate change (e.g. by increasing greenhouse gasses) Potential second order environmental effects include: construction work, the reclamation of derelict land, the effects of noise and disturbance. Although it may be difficult to quantify costs, a ranking should be attempted using monetary values or calculating physical quantities. Where possible, existing research should be used in quantifying impacts.

## 2.8. Analysis

The analysis is concerned primarily with determining **at what cost** the policy is being achieved (outcome evaluation); or **how effective** the policy is (process evaluation), and whether it can be improved. The approach could be either quantitative or qualitative, depending on what information it

is feasible and cost-effective to collect. In all cases the concern is whether the policy is providing value for money.

For outcome evaluations the key measure is that of **Net Additional Output**, which is, in effect, the total difference the policy (alone) has made. The calculation of Net Additional Output should include consideration of:

#### **Estimated Output**

- **Minus**  
**Deadweight** – any costs incurred to achieve an outcome which would have occurred anyway;  
Minus
- **Displacement** – any benefit, which results in an offsetting cost being incurred elsewhere;  
Plus
- **Multiplier Effects** – any benefits arising as a further second-stage consequence, e.g., programme expenditure creating demand leading to further jobs.

Equals

#### **Net Additional Output**

For process evaluations, where possible, a comparison between a **policy-affected** group and a control or **policy-unaffected** group should be made. Where this is not possible, a **before-and-after** comparison of the policy-affected group alone could be made. In both cases, of course, any comparison will only be effective for the output indicators which it is possible to measure and thus may not capture the whole net additional output achieved. A Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) can be used to model both qualitative and quantitative information in a common framework and can be made relevant to both process and outcome evaluations.

### **2.9. Outcome of Evaluation**

The main options should include one of the following:

- **Continuation** – where the policy is clearly yielding a benefit (but will still require another review at some stage) and achieving its intended aim;
- **Modification** – where the net outcome of the CBA can be improved significantly by some relatively minor alteration e.g., ensuring a cheaper input;

- **Succession** – where a fundamental change is required e.g., an extension of the target group or avoidance of a major side-effect, to ensure the policy’s viability;
- **Termination** – where the policy is irretrievably flawed. In this case the consequences of termination must also be calculated and an **exit strategy** identified.

If the evaluation data, for whatever reason, cannot deliver a definite outcome, it might be useful to conduct some **sensitivity analysis** on the data against the particular assumptions made e.g., what would happen if alternative assumptions were employed. This should highlight the most important assumptions and allow more informed decision-making.

## **2.10. Presentation and dissemination of results**

The evaluation report should cover the following:

- (i) Description of the programme and its rationale, main objectives and expenditure
- (ii) Evaluation design methodology used
- (iii) The type of analysis and measures/indicators used
- (iv) The main assumptions contained in the analysis
- (v) The results should indicate:
  - the costs and benefits of the programme (both quantifiable and unquantifiable)
  - the net additionality of the programme
  - an overall assessment of value for money.
- (vi) Recommendations for the future of the programme.

The potential value of evaluation can only be realised when action is taken upon it. Evaluation reports must reach senior management and all results of substance should be widely disseminated following well-defined lines of communication. Reports and/or their future recommendations, should be circulated widely to those staff concerned with future project design, planning, development and management.

**The objective is not scientific perfection but is to ensure that decisions are made on the basis of the best information which can be obtained within**

**the time and resources allocated for the evaluation.**

### **Help and Advice**

3. Staff in the Evaluation and Equality Unit are available to assist colleagues conducting evaluations. For information about attaining and utilising statistical data please contact staff in the Information and Analysis Directorate (IAD). DHSSPS Economics Branch (also IAD) should be consulted prior to the evaluation plan and kept informed of progress/asked for advice & comments throughout the evaluation process.

**Post Hoc Evaluation Plan for the Strategy on Alcohol Related Harm in Northern Ireland**  
 (Associated quantitative indicators in italics)

PRIMARY AIMS	INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
<p><b><u>To reduce alcohol related harm in Northern Ireland</u></b></p> <p><i>Percentage of people drinking above sensible levels</i></p> <p><i>Percentage of people drinking at harmful levels</i></p> <p><i>Number of deaths attributed to alcohol misuse</i></p> <p><i>Number of Liver Cirrhosis cases</i></p> <p><i>Number of violent incidents related to alcohol misuse</i></p> <p><i>Number of road traffic accidents related to alcohol misuse</i></p>	<p><b><u>Health Education</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informed public debate;</li> <li>• sensible drinking guidelines widely accepted;</li> <li>• binge drinking addressed;</li> <li>• young people targeted;</li> <li>• Health Promotion Agency to develop a health education programme</li> </ul> <p><i>Cost (money, persons) of programmes</i></p> <p><i>Number of organisations involved</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Health Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the sensible drinking guidelines</li> </ul> <p><i>Drinkwise evaluation figures on campaign awareness</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Health Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of binge drinking behaviour</li> </ul> <p><i>Health and Wellbeing Survey</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in young people misusing alcohol</li> </ul> <p><i>Survey data on drinking patterns of young people</i></p>

**Post Hoc Evaluation Plan for the Strategy on Alcohol Related Harm in Northern Ireland**  
**(Associated quantitative indicators in italics)**

PRIMARY AIMS	INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
	<p align="center"><b>Primary Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate training for primary care professionals</li> <li>• Greater exchange of information at all levels</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Cost (money, persons) of training primary care professionals</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Surveys of medical students</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Health Promotion Agency seminars</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Primary Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of alcohol related problems among primary care professionals</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Primary Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved primary care response to those with alcohol misuse problems</li> </ul>

<p align="center"><b>Post Hoc Evaluation Plan for the Strategy on Alcohol Related Harm in Northern Ireland</b>                      (Associated quantitative indicators in italics)</p>			
PRIMARY AIMS	INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
	<p align="center"><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making HPSS staff aware of Board policies and plans in relation to alcohol</li> <li>• comprehensive in-service training programme for those putting policies into effect</li> <li>• making maximum use of voluntary agencies and educational establishments in providing this training</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Costs (money and people) of Board promotion campaigns</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Money paid to voluntary agencies to carry out training of HPSS staff</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of staff trained</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>HPA data?</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved HPSS response to those with alcohol misuse problems</li> </ul>

**Post Hoc Evaluation Plan for the Strategy on Alcohol Related Harm in Northern Ireland**  
**(Associated quantitative indicators in italics)**

PRIMARY AIMS	INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Treatment Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flexible and comprehensive</li> <li>• easily accessible</li> <li>• support for problem drinkers’ families</li> <li>• services which reflect demand</li> <li>• an expansion of community services</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Numbers of people with alcohol dependency problems treated by type of treatment</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Percentage of estimated demand</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Costs of treatment services</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Costs of services for problem drinkers’ families</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Treatment Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people successfully treated</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>estimates based on research and throughput figures</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Treatment Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduction in alcohol related harm as a result of alcohol dependency problems</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Almost impossible to track although a broad indicator might be morbidity related to alcohol consumption. A possible indicator is the number of people who have stopped drinking because of health reasons</i></p>

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PRIMARY AIMS	INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
	<p align="center"><b>Workplace Policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of workplace policies</li> <li>• development of workplace policies within Health and Social Services Boards</li> <li>• encouragement by the Boards of other employers to develop workplace policies</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Number of employers having/implementing workplace policies</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Workplace Policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace policies put in place</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Number of workplace policies put in place</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Workplace Policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved health among employees as a result of addressing alcohol related harm</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Percentage of employee absences as a result of alcohol misuse</i></p>

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PRIMARY AIMS	INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
	<p align="center"><b>Role of the Voluntary Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development and enhancement of relationships between the Boards and other statutory services and voluntary agencies</li> <li>supplementing and support of voluntary agencies' services</li> <li>involvement of the voluntary sector in planning programmes</li> <li>voluntary agencies should ensure that their roles are understood</li> <li>rationalisation of activities within the voluntary sector</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>Role of the Voluntary Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved perception of co-operation by the relevant parties</li> <li>Development of new partnership initiatives</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Qualitative evidence</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Role of the Voluntary Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effective use of resources</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Evaluation of new initiatives developed</i></p>
	<p align="center"><b>Influencing the Wider Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-operation between HPSS and Police, Probation etc</li> <li>influence on advertising</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Qualitative evidence</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Influencing the Wider Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceptions of co-operation improved</li> <li>Perception of influence on advertising by relevant parties (i.e. Industry and interest groups)</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Qualitative evidence</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Influencing the Wider Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better co-ordination between HPSS, Police Service etc. in dealing with individual cases.</li> <li>Responsible advertising</li> </ul> <p align="center"><i>Qualitative evidence</i></p>