

“Utilization-focused Evaluation (UFE): A decision-making framework”

MEET OUR SPEAKERS



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MODERATOR

WEDNESDAY | 21 FEBRUARY 2024 | 20:00-21:30 ULAT

A. Organizational context

DECI-AM

DESIGNING EVALUATION & COMMUNICATION FOR ADAPTIVE
MANAGEMENT

<https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/>



Canada

DeSIRA LIFT



A research project in capacity development in evaluation & communication – since 2009

Current focus is on how evaluation & communication help adaptive management by project teams

A team of mentors based in Canada, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Jordan and India

A learning laboratory for IDRC; an action-learning space for the mentors; a space for reflection and structured learning for our partners

Welcome to Evaluation & Communication in practice

This site contains evaluation and research communication mentoring tools, articles and case studies. Our work is relevant to practitioners, to commissioners of evaluation & communication, and to scholars in both fields.

WHAT WE DO



We provide **Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE)** mentoring as a decision-making framework that helps organizations improve their strategies.



We provide **Research Communication (ResCom)** mentoring to help organizations communicate their findings more effectively.



The **U-FE and ResCom hybrid** enables project leaders to become adaptive managers.



We do research on how to better use evaluation and communication to **influence public policy**.



We enjoy sharing our findings with other people and organizations who are also **keen learners**.

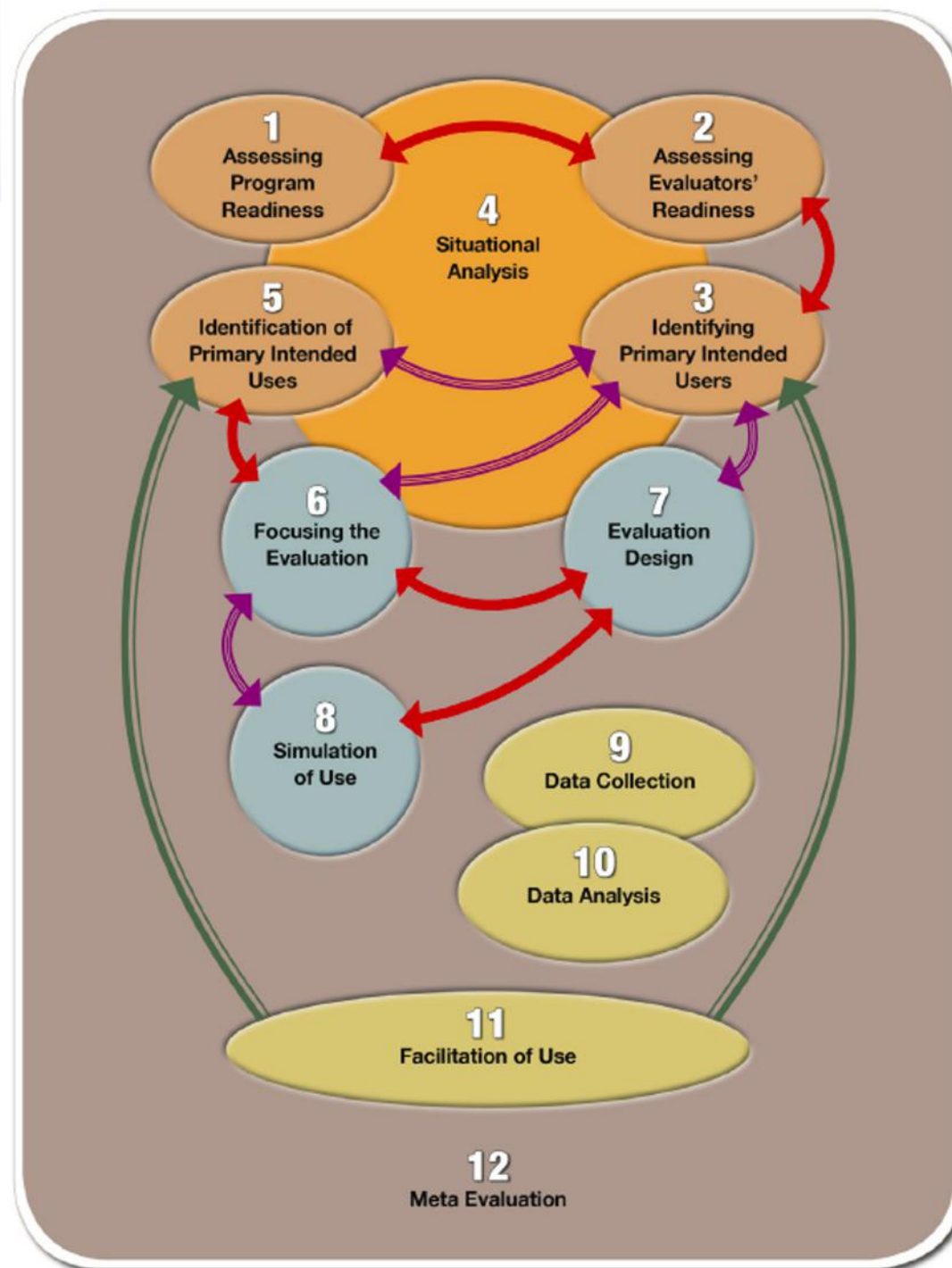


Our **knowledge base** offers a wide range of materials that can help you learn more about our experience.

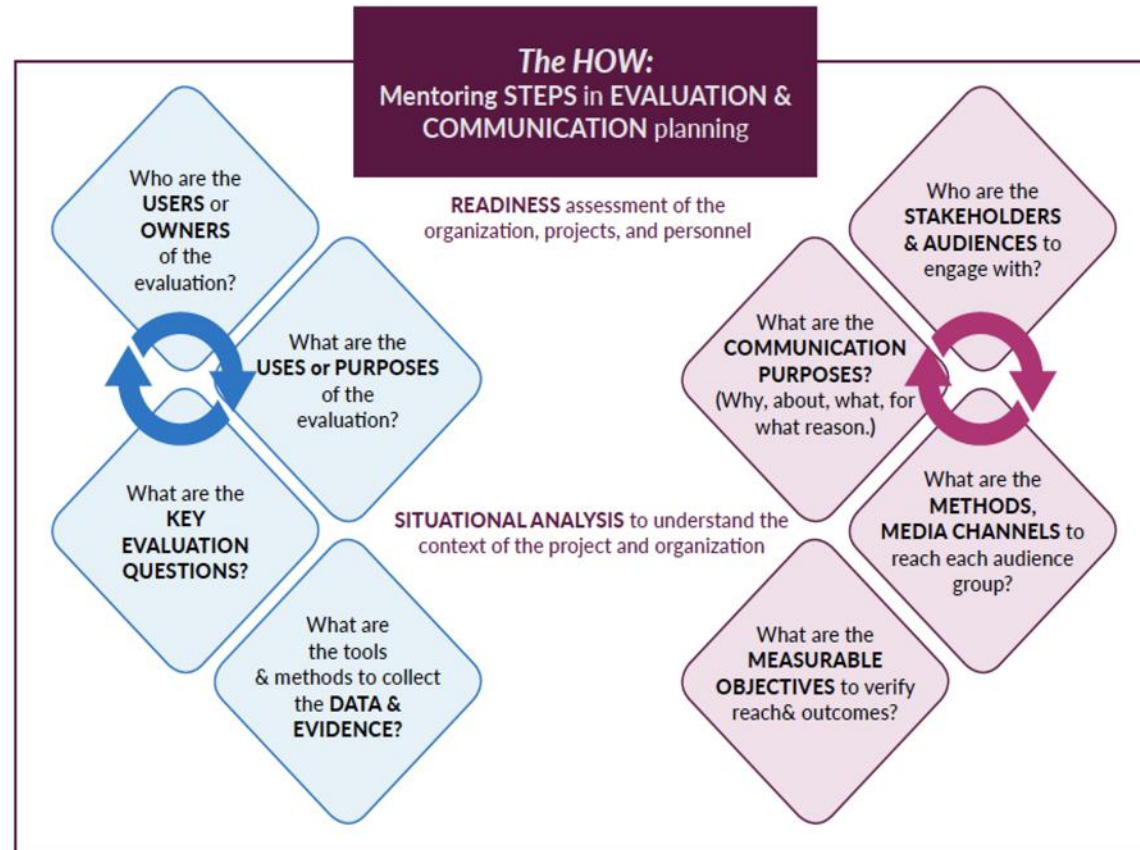
DECI-AM

DESIGNING EVALUATION & COMMUNICATION FOR ADAPTIVE
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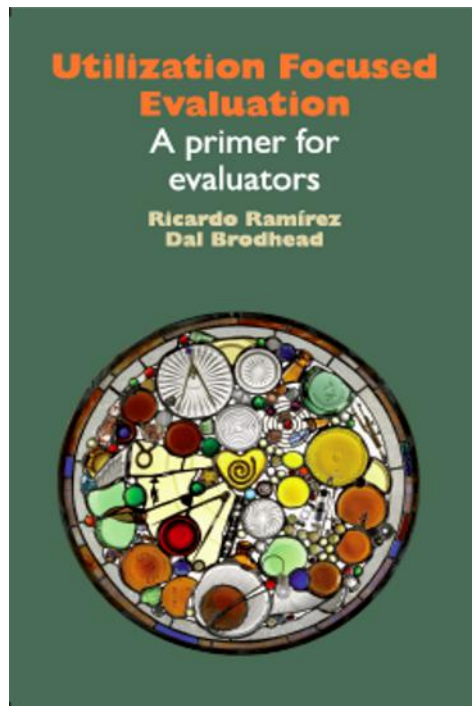
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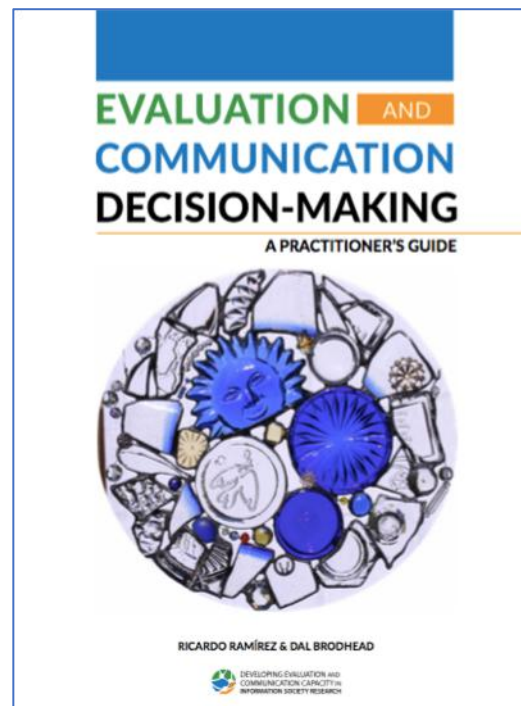
steps in the DECI hybrid



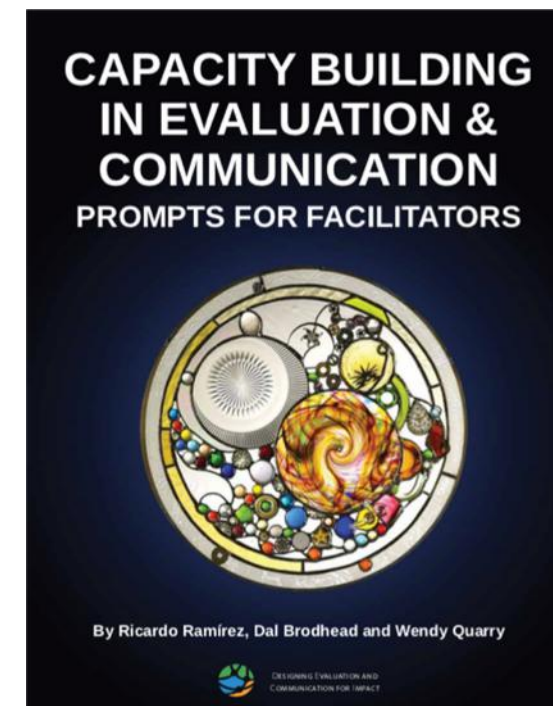
Three guides in a series, available in English,
French and Spanish at
evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net



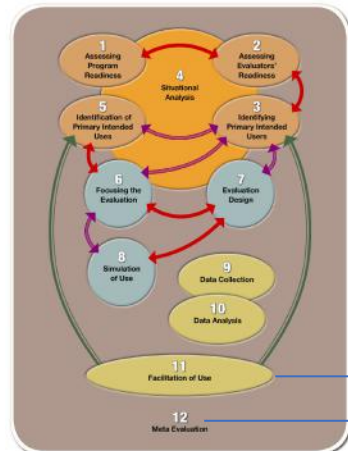
2013



2017



2022



THE MEGA MONGOLIA PROJECT

Utilization Focused Evaluation for Development Research to Empower All Mongolians through Information Communications Technology

UFE researcher: Bazar Chimed (Ph.D)
UFE Consultant: Sonal Zaveri, (Ph.D)
UFE Facilitator: Batpurev Batchuluun

Ulaanbaatar 2011

Case Study: DREAM-IT — Development Research to Empower All Mongolians through Information Communications Technology in Mongolia

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This case study provides a summary of the Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE) experience that DREAM-IT completed in collaboration with the DECI Project.

1. Utilization Focused Evaluation

"Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use" (Patton, 2008: 37). In UFE, evaluators facilitate a learning process with attention on how real people in the real world apply evaluation findings and experiences. The focus of utilization-focused evaluation is on intended use by intended users. UFE does not prescribe any specific content, method or theory. It is a framework, as opposed to any other methodology. It can include any purpose of interest to the user: it is a process for making decisions in consultation with those who can benefit from the evaluation. It is based on the observation that intended users will more likely utilize an evaluation that they have ownership of.

About the DECI Project

DECI stands for Developing Evaluation Capacity in ICTD (Information and Communication Technology for Development), and it is an IDRC-funded evaluation research and capacity development project. This case study is one of the five UFE experiences supported by DECI. The project built an evaluation capacity among IDRC-funded projects in the field of Information and

DeSIRA

- Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture, (DeSIRA) funded by the European Commission.
- DeSIRA aims to bridge the gap between research and policy making towards resilient, sustainable and equitable agri-food systems in the Global South.

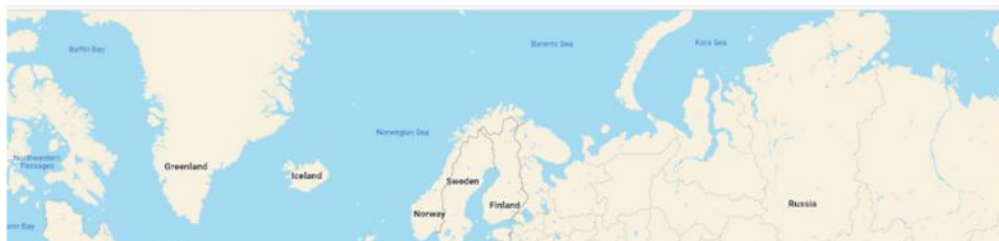
DeSIRA LIFT – area 1

- Support to the country-based DeSIRA projects to enhance their impacts by promoting Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) thinking and the use of developmental evaluation approaches.

DeSIRA LIFT – area 1



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Innovation Domains

Innovation Domains are the technical or sectoral areas targeted in the Action Documents of the DeSIRA Initiative.

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STREAM - Mongolia

GIZ

STREAM - Mongolia



giz.de

GIZ

Promoting better sustainable use and management of Mongolia's forests

STREAM Mongolia : SusTainable Resilient Ecosystem and Agriculture Management in Mongolia



Objectives of the project
To strengthen the Mongolian communities' capabilities in sustainable management and conservation of their natural resources, to address local, national and global challenges.

Background
Mongolia's natural resources development is an essential strategy for its economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. The country's natural resources are rich in biodiversity, and the government has a long history of managing them. However, the country's natural resources are facing many challenges, including climate change, land degradation, and overexploitation. The project aims to address these challenges by promoting sustainable management and conservation of natural resources.

The project is implemented by GIZ, the German Development Cooperation, in cooperation with the Mongolian government and local communities.

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Collaboration with the University consortium



YouTube

STREAM Их сургиулуудын
консорциумтай хамтын ажиллагаа

Forest and fields fire prevention



YouTube

STREAM Ой, хээрийн түймрээс
урьдчилан сэргийлэх нь

Animation on Forest thinning



YouTube

STREAM Ойн арчилгааны огтлол
гэж юу вэ?

Animation on forest fire prevention



YouTube

STREAM Ойн түймрээс урьдчилан
сэргийлэх нь

B. Utilization focused Evaluation - (UFE)

Content:

1. Introduction to utilization-focused evaluation
2. UFE as a foundation for MEL
3. Premises and steps
4. Readiness
5. Engaging stakeholders

*Some contents in this module are based on the DECI project under CC license.
This document was developed with the financial support of the European Union.
Its contents are the sole responsibility of DeSIRA-LIFT and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.*

A. Introduction to utilization focused evaluation (UFE)

- A decision-making framework for enhancing the utility and actual use of evaluations (Patton, 2008)
- UFE is a decision-making framework to design MEL
- UFE makes MEL design highly collaborative
- In this approach, primary intended users of the evaluation are the **owners** of evaluation design

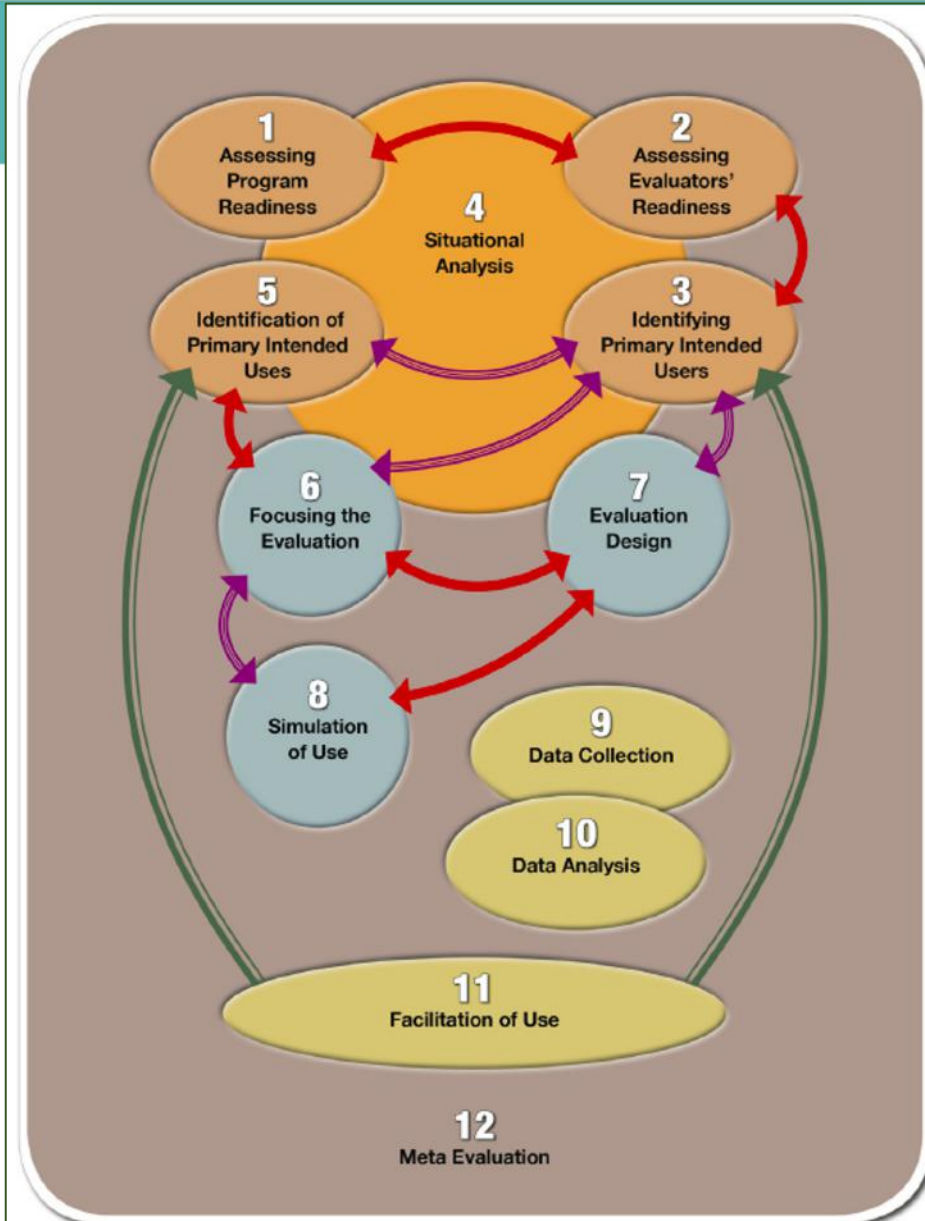
B. UFE as the foundation for MEL

- A decision-making framework that invites project team members to become primary intended users of the evaluation
- The PIUs define the uses or purposes of a MEL system
- Externally-required tools for accountability represent only one use of MEL
- The MEL system will be broader and more able to capture the unique context of each project

C1. Premises

- Evaluations should be judged by their actual use
- 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 of evaluation are involved in the full process – commitment
- Ideally, evaluation is part of initial program design. The primary intended users want information to answer key evaluation questions
- The evaluator's role is to help intended evaluation users clarify the uses and key evaluation questions
- Implications for use are part of every decision through the process – it is the driving force behind UFE

C2. Steps

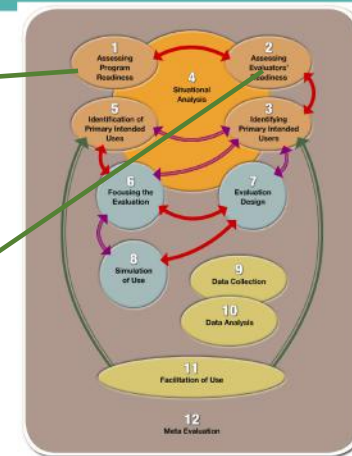


C3. Principles for collaborative practice

- UFE is a **PROCESS** for helping primary intended users select the most appropriate content, model, methods, theory, and uses for their particular situation.
- UFE is a **COLLABORATIVE APPROACH** that seeks to generate learning.
- Evaluation should be **JUDGED** by its utility and **USE** in the real world.
- Evaluation plan needs to be part of the **INITIAL DESIGN** of project.
- The evaluator's role is to **COLLABORATE** with those engaged in the design of the evaluation process.

1-2. Readiness

- Management buy-in
- Designated resources and MEL staff
- Ability to manage MEL in addition to accountability requirements (OPSYS)
- An organizational culture open to change
- Curiosity within the team to adapt
- Evaluator readiness



3. Engaging stakeholders



- Engaging stakeholders contributes to:
- Personal LEARNING among them
- More CONFIDENCE and direct APPLICATION of evaluation findings to program practices
- A reduced POWER DIFFERENTIAL between evaluators and program practitioners
- More NEGOTIATED DECISION MAKING and learning

3. Confirming primary evaluation users: the owners of the evaluation design

Primary evaluation users are people who will use and apply the findings of the evaluation.

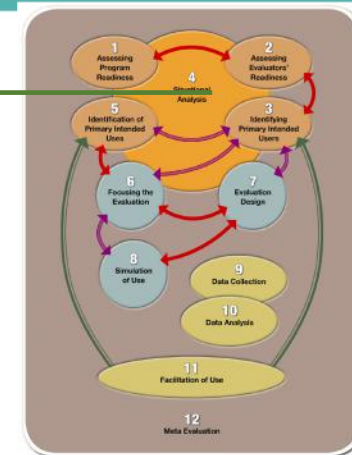
They have the following attributes:

- Interested
- Knowledgeable
- Open mind
- Represent an important interest group
- Have credibility
- Teachable
- Available for ongoing interaction throughout the evaluation process (*)

** Senior project managers are often unable to play this role...*

4. Situational analysis

- ☐ Examine program's prior experiences with evaluation.
- ☐ Look for possible barriers or resistance to use.
- ☐ Identify factors that may support and facilitate use.
- ☐ Get clear about resources available for evaluation.
- ☐ Identify any upcoming decisions, deadlines, or time lines that the evaluation should meet to be useful.
- ☐ Assess the evaluation knowledge level and experiences of primary intended users.
- ☐ Understand the political context for the evaluation, and calculate how political factors may affect use.
- ☐ Make sure that important constituencies and diverse stakeholder groups for the evaluation are represented among the primary intended users and assess the consequences of any omissions for use.



5. Possible evaluation uses / purposes

- Documenting outcomes, impact
- Reflecting and learning about process and methodology
- Making decisions and adapting strategy (Developmental Evaluation)
- Contributing to generating knowledge
- Improving the communication strategy

6-7. Focusing the evaluation, design

USE [<i>purpose</i>]	Key evaluation question (sample)	remarks
To describe / explain achievements [accountability; summative]	To what extent did farmers adopt the technology?	Focus is on pre-determined change (high-level outcomes)

6-7. Focusing the evaluation, design

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To provide information on key issues that require managerial attention [monitoring; formative]	To what extent and in what ways is implementation of the initiative progressing?	Focus on those elements that are likely to need adjustment

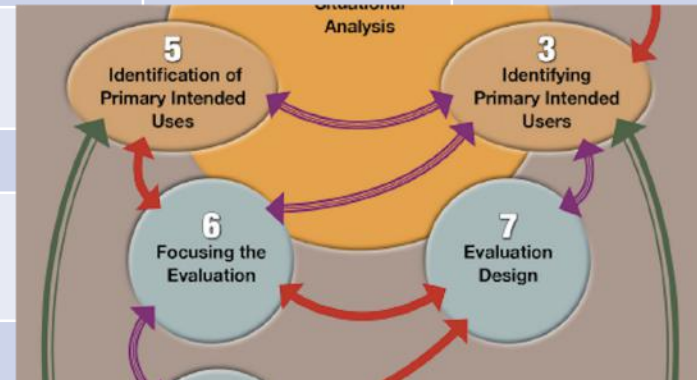
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To compare findings across different sites to identify patterns of effectiveness [learning]	To what extent have outcomes emerged? What factors appear to enable the changes?	Focus is on trends, process and context

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To compare findings across different sites to identify patterns of effectiveness [learning]	To what extent have outcomes emerged? What factors appear to enable the changes?	Focus is on trends, process and context
To provide data to adapt interventions under emergent conditions [developmental]	What have been the main forks in the road and on what basis did we change the strategy? What drivers are enabling the process?	Acknowledges complexity, emerging properties, and systemic change

Evaluation USE	Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)	Evidence needed (*)	Sources of evidence	Data collection (tools, frequency, etc.)
Why to do evaluation? Broad purposes Practical, urgent To inform decisions	Narrow down to specific components; this requires discussion and consensus	A good KEQ "speaks" to the evidence needed	People, reports, existing data, multi-media, etc.	Priorities to be set based on budget and human resources
Aim for 3-5 different uses (impact, process dimensions, learning topics, coordination, methodology, communication.....)				Details will be specific to each KEQ
Different primary evaluation users will have unique uses to propose				



(*) Indicators being an example, but other evidence will be needed (narratives, etc.)

8. Simulating use

- Plan *before collecting data*.
- Prepare *possible* 'positive and negative' findings on the main issue.
- Ask – what do these results mean? How it will affect use?
- Primary users get a chance to check expectations against the 'real world' and review KEQ and focus.
- Helps to define 'desirability' of findings.

9. Data collection tips

- Are primary users informed of the progress?
- Make a special note of important interim findings
- If primary users are involved in data collection, include time for reflection and debriefing

All standards and criteria for evaluation apply.

Based on the MEL design matrix, the evaluation plan includes details on:

- *data collection methods*
- *ethical protocol*
- *sources of information (individuals, groups, documents, etc.)*
- *data collection timing and frequency*
- *dates and locations*
- *data storage*
- *persons responsible, and*
- *budget*

10. Data analysis tips

- Users are involved actively in analysis
- How can findings be used for use?
- What interpretation and recommendations are possible from the analysis?

11. Facilitating use

- What is the primary user plan to use the findings?
- Disseminate according to plan but also look at other opportunities
- Have you found unexpected results – how will you use them?
- CAUTION! Check for possible misuse

DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW UP!

12. Meta Evaluation

- Follow up – how was intended use by user achieved?
- Did additional users/uses emerge?
- Reflect – what actually happened? Were there misuses or other unintended consequences?

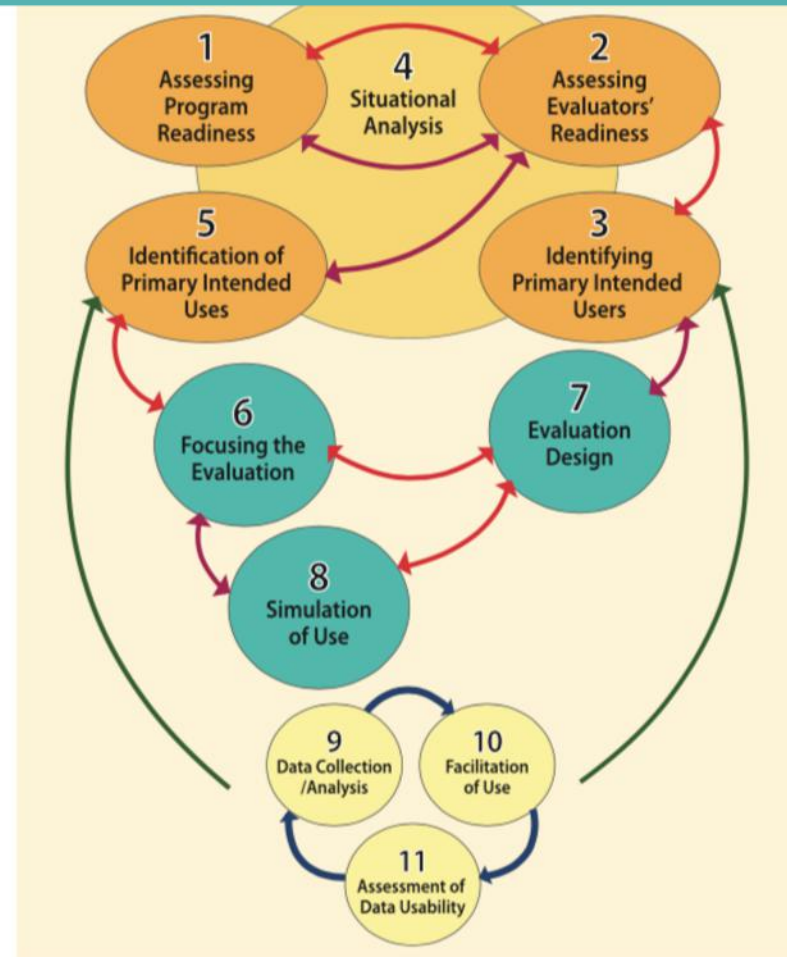
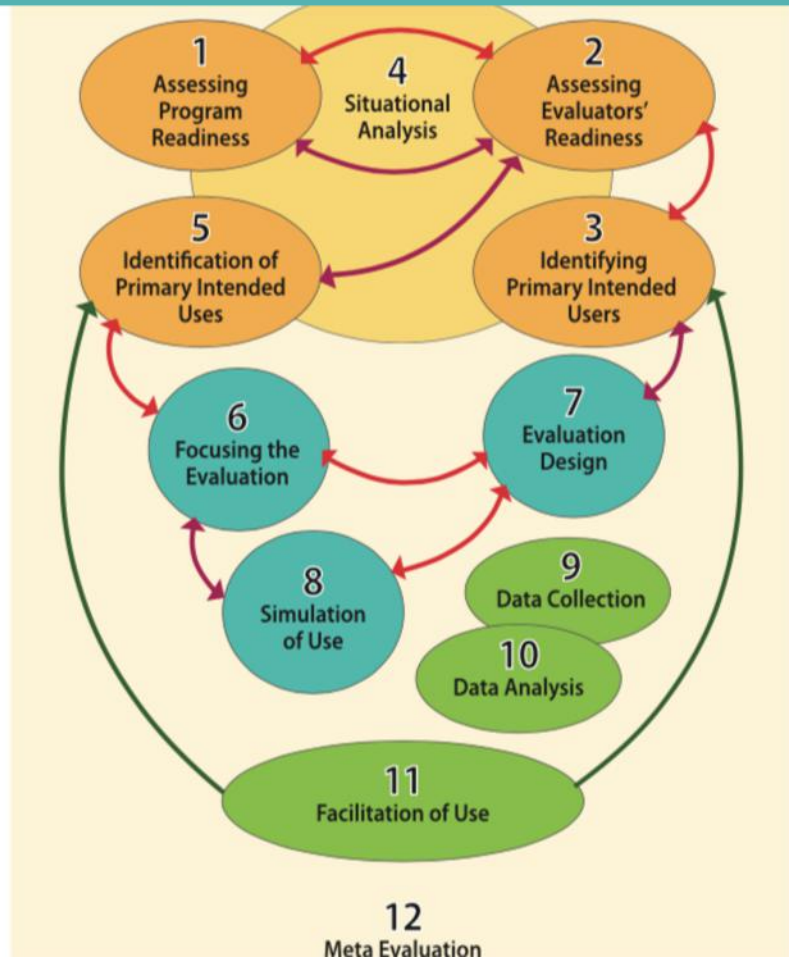
UFE IS A LEARNING PLATFORM – TO DO BETTER NEXT TIME

Traditional (conventional) Vs Developmental Evaluation

- Render definitive judgment of success or failure
- Measure success against predetermined goals
- Position the evaluator outside the assure independence and objectivity
- Design the evaluation based on linear cause-and-effect logic models
- Aim to produce generalizable findings across time and space
- Accountability focused on and directed to external authorities, stakeholders and funders
- Accountability to control and locate responsibility
- Evaluator determines the design based on the evaluator's perspective about what is important. The evaluator controls the evaluation
- Evaluation results in opinion of success or failure, which creates anxiety in those evaluated

- Provide feedback, generate learnings, support changes in direction
- Develop new measures and monitoring mechanisms as goals emerge and evolve
- Position evaluation as an internal, team functions integrated into action and ongoing interpretive processes
- Design evaluation to capture systems dynamics, interdependencies, models and emergent interconnections
- Aim to produce context-specific under-standings to inform ongoing innovations
- Accountability centred on the innovators' deep sense of fundamental values and commitment
- Learning to respond to lack of control and stay in touch with what's unfolding and thereby respond strategically
- Evaluator collaborates with those engaged in the change effort to design an evaluation process that matches philosophically with an organization's principles and objectives
- Evaluation support ongoing learning

UFE Vs UF Developmental Evaluation (UFDE)

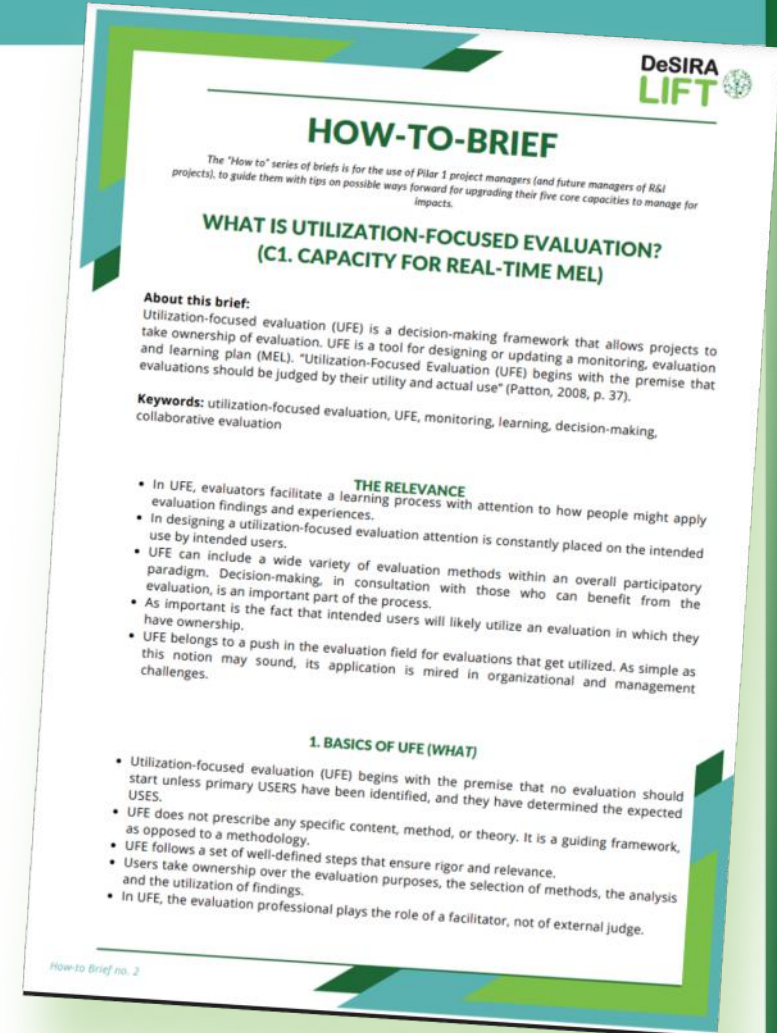


Learning UFE

- Experiential learning (workshops for awareness raising)
- Just-in-time mentoring
- Learning by doing
- Nurturing readiness
- The 'aha' moment comes later
- Defining methods and tools comes later

DeSIRA LIFT MEL Services

- Mentoring clusters projects in Asia, Latin America, East and West Africa (theory of change, UDE)
- Offering MEL seminars and master classes on specific methods (Outcome Harvesting, Contribution Analysis, etc.)
- Providing help desk support for individualized project support
- Providing How-to-Briefs
- Integrating MEL with multi-stakeholder platforms
- Introducing MEL into communication planning



DeSIRA Project MEL capacity outcomes


- Reviewing readiness to confirm when projects are able to received MEL mentoring
- Evaluative thinking: broadening evaluation beyond a focus only on deliverables
- Collaborative evaluation design: engaging project stakeholders in MEL planning
- Theory of change: updating & improvement (introducing assumptions)

EMBRAPA ToC

5.3 Degraded forest area restoration technology with a focus on community

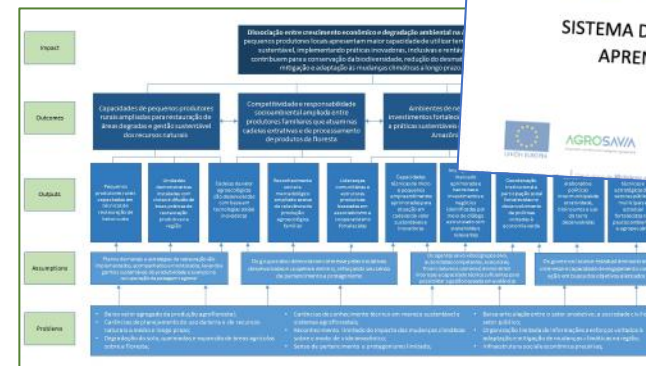
activity	assumption	output	assumption	Expected outcome
1.1.1 Formulation of local restorative groups	Group interaction leads to collaborative behavior; stakeholders discover common interests; the people with leadership skills are able to attend groups	1.1.1 Increased community interaction with the environment	1.1.1 Increased community interaction and leadership is not other	1.1.1 Strong community leadership
1.1.2 Training and capacity development	Validation of traditional knowledge; plus power new knowledge; change behavior	1.1.2 Acquired knowledge of seeds and seedlings; marketing and innovation	Increased knowledge is socially accepted; leads to changes in attitudes by local stakeholders	1.1.2 Change mental and technical abilities; change behavior
1.1.3 Activity monitoring				

Fortaleciendo las capacidades territoriales para apoyar innovaciones en agroecología, pesca artesanal responsable y bioeconomía circular para la adaptación y mitigación al cambio climático en zonas costeras y fronteras forestales en Colombia
DeSira 2020 – CO ABRIGUE



SISTEMA DE MONITOREO, EVALUACION Y APRENDIZAJES SME&A ABRIGUE

Logos: European Union, AGROSIVA, CIRAD, and others.



Resources

- Utilization-focused evaluation: A primer for evaluators (2013) – (English, French & Spanish)
<https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/featured-publications/>
- Video: Benefits and challenges of U-FE_ Operation ASHA (Cambodia)- (2018) 2.36 min
<https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/video-benefits-and-challenges-of-u-fe-operation-asha-cambodia/>
- Video: DECI-1 evaluation support to DREAM-IT (Mongolia)- (2018) 2.16 min
<https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/video-deci-1-evaluation-support-to-dream-it-project-mongolia/>
- Webinar: Utilization-focused evaluation – Steps 1 through 3 (2014) 29.06 min.
<https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/utilization-focused-evaluation-steps-1-through-3/>
- Utilization-focused evaluation: A primer for evaluators (2013) – (English, French & Spanish)
<https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/featured-publications/>
- Webinar: Utilization-focused evaluation – Steps 4 through 8 (2014) 29.06 min.
<https://evaluationandcommunicationinpractice.net/knowledgebase/utilization-focused-evaluation-steps-4-through-8/>
- Norman, C. & Navas, J. (2014). *Exploring developmental evaluation: Reflections on two case studies*. Prepared for IDRC.
- Patton, M. (2011). *Developmental Evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. Gilford Press: pp. 308-313)

Questions & Answers



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