



Impact Evaluation of the Department of Labor and Employment's

Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES)

Presented by: Heather Richmond, Research Coordinator, IPA
7th M&E Network Philippines Forum
November 21, 2018

Presentation Overview

- Introduction & IPA-DOLE Engagement
- Overview of SPES
- Research Design
- Findings
- Policy Recommendations & Influence
- Key Takeaways



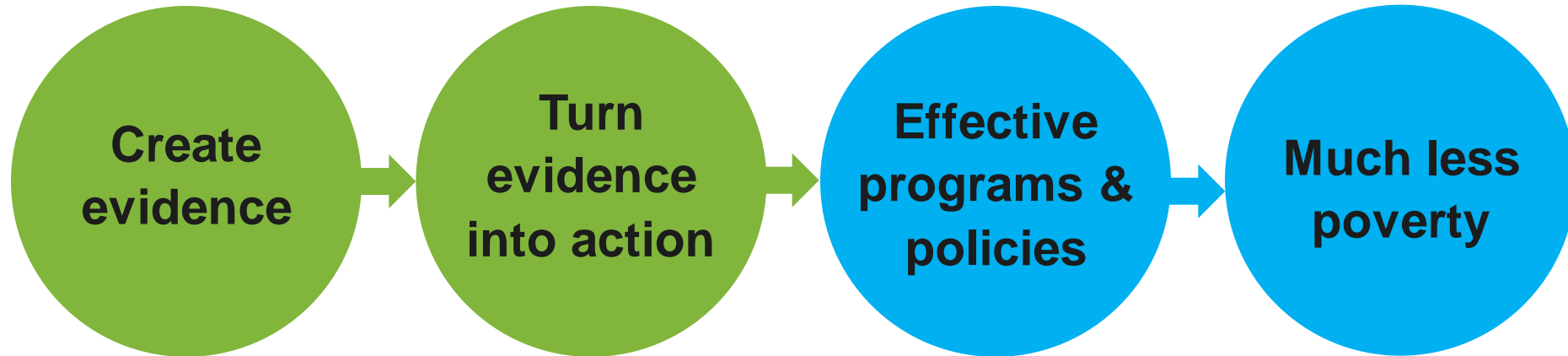
Introduction



About Innovations for Poverty Action

More Evidence, Less Poverty

Lack evidence on what works best + Lack of usage of existing evidence → Ineffective programs, Wasted money!



WHAT WE DO

OUR VISION



Introduction

- Conducted by: **Innovations for Poverty Action - Philippines**
- Principal Investigators:
 - Dr. Emily Beam (University of Vermont)
 - Dr. Stella Quimbo (University of the Philippines)
- Implementing partner: **Department of Labor and Employment**
 - Bureau of Local Employment (BLE)
 - Institute for Labor Studies (ILS)
- Funder:
 - **International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)** and
 - the **Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)**



IPA – DOLE Engagement

- General engagement began in 2014 with previous administration's strong interest in impact evaluation
- **Evaluations:** IPA has 3 ongoing and completed evaluations (RCTs) with DOLE
 - SPES evaluation part of 3ie policy window
 - DOLE-IPA evaluation technical working group
 - Assistant Secretary, BLE Director, BLE SPES Manager and Coordinators, Institute for Labor Studies, Regional Directors, and Regional SPES Focal Persons
 - Involved in design, implementation, survey instrument design, enumerator training, analysis, and dissemination
- **M&E Capacity Building:** IPA conducted series of M&E capacity building workshops with DOLE national and regional staff across offices/bureaus



Overview of SPES

Special Program for Employment of Students



SPES: Special Program for Employment of Students

Low-income youth



Formal employment

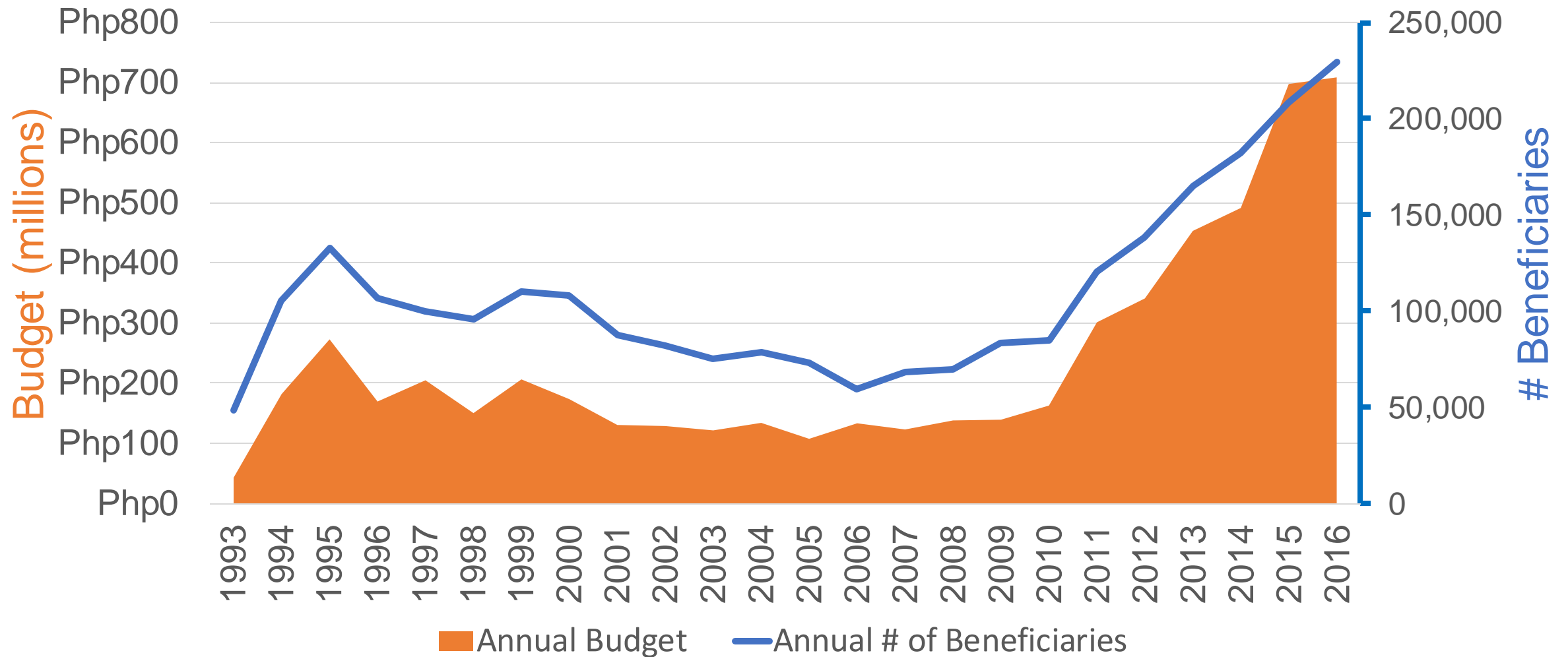


Basic Components of SPES (prior RA 10917)

- Targets “poor but deserving” youth enrolled or intending to enroll
- 20-52 working days during vacation
- Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs) facilitate matching
- DOLE provides 40% wage subsidy to employer



SPES Budget and Beneficiaries Per Year



SOURCE: Department of Labor and Employment Bureau of Local Employment



Research Design

Special Program for Employment of Students



Research Questions

RQ1: What is the causal impact of SPES on youths' **academic outcomes**?

RQ2: What is the causal impact of SPES on youth employability?

RQ3: What is the impact of SPES on youth employment and job search?



Research Questions

RQ1: What is the causal impact of SPES on youths' academic outcomes?

RQ2: What is the causal impact of SPES on youth **employability**?

RQ3: What is the impact of SPES on youth employment and job search?



Research Questions

RQ1: What is the causal impact of SPES on youths' academic outcomes?

RQ2: What is the causal impact of SPES on youth employability?

RQ3: What is the impact of SPES on youth **employment and job search**?



Research Questions

RQ1: What is the causal impact of SPES on youths' **academic outcomes**?

RQ2: What is the causal impact of SPES on youth **employability**?

RQ3: What is the impact of SPES on youth **employment and job search**?



Research Design

Public Employment Service Office (PESO) – SPES implementers

- Municipal and Provincial Local Government Units

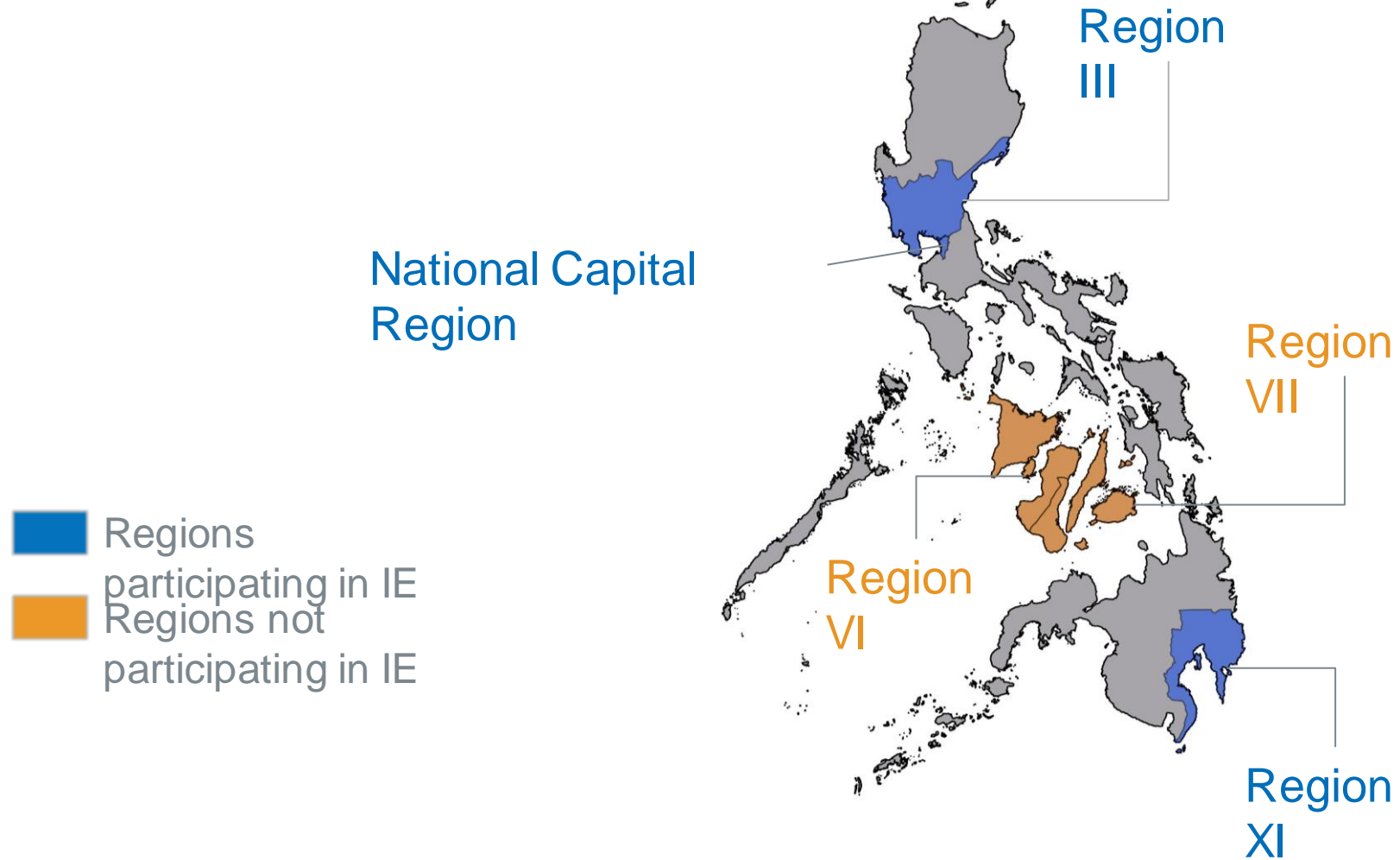
Invitation to LGU to participate in the research

1. Agree to accept more applications than available positions
2. Agree to IPA selection of SPES beneficiaries

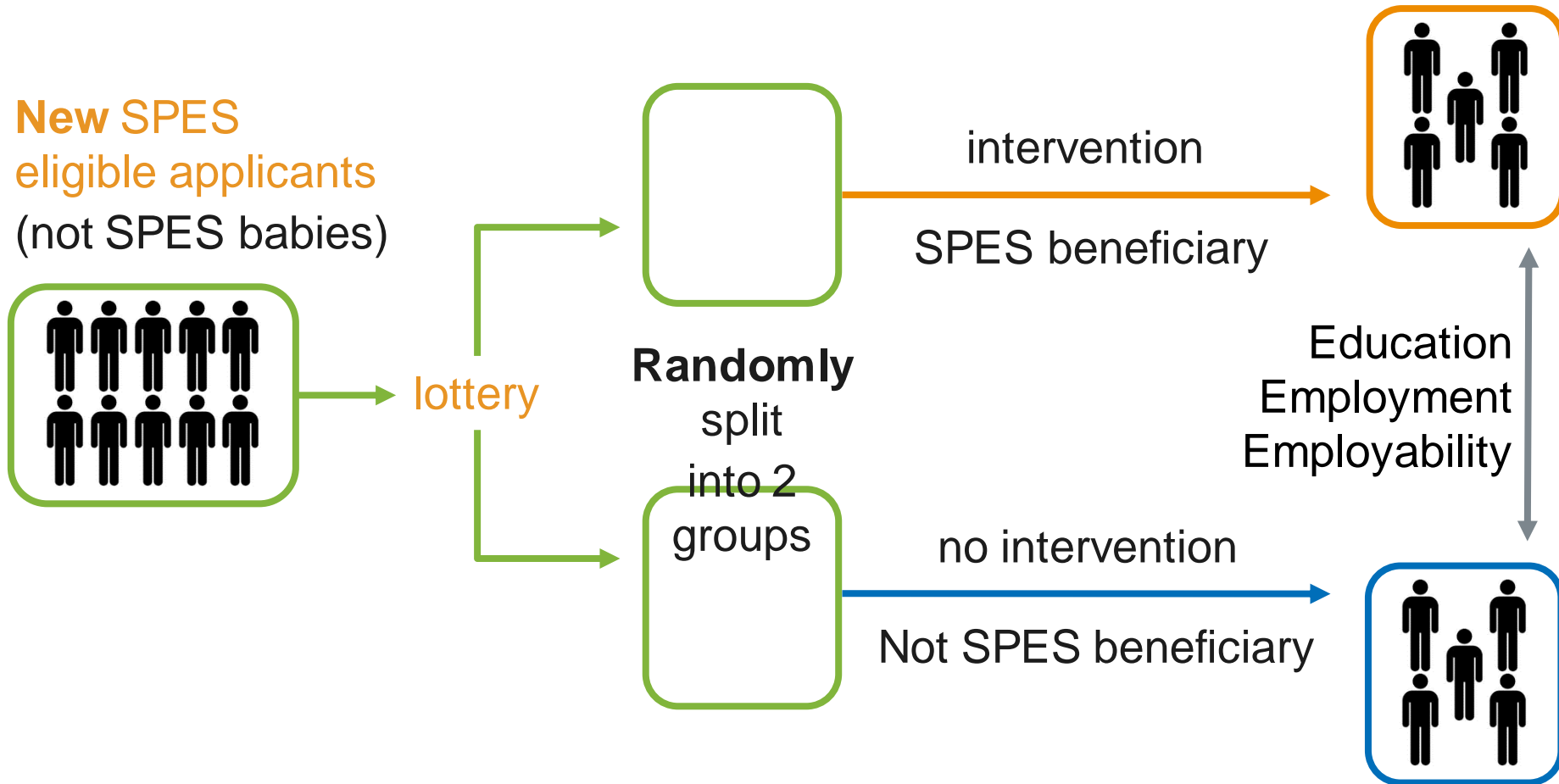


Research Target Regions

Target Regions



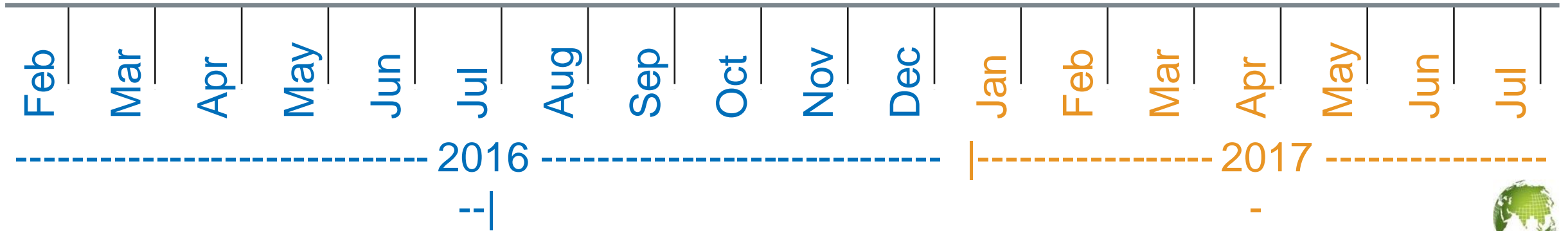
Research Design



Research Timeline

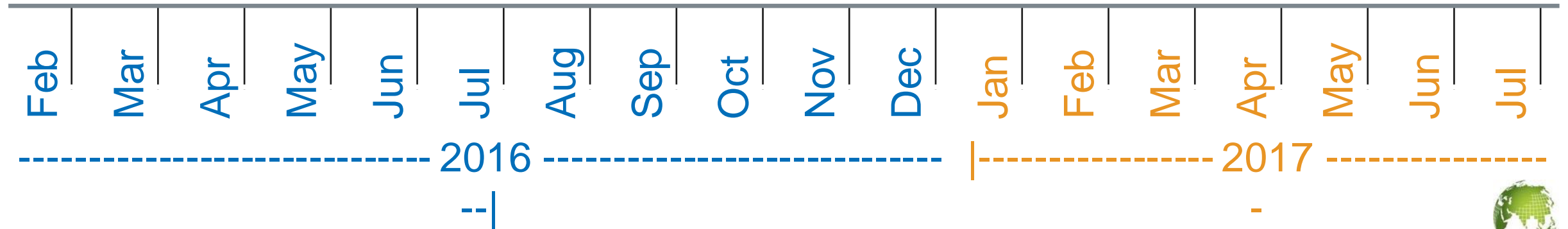
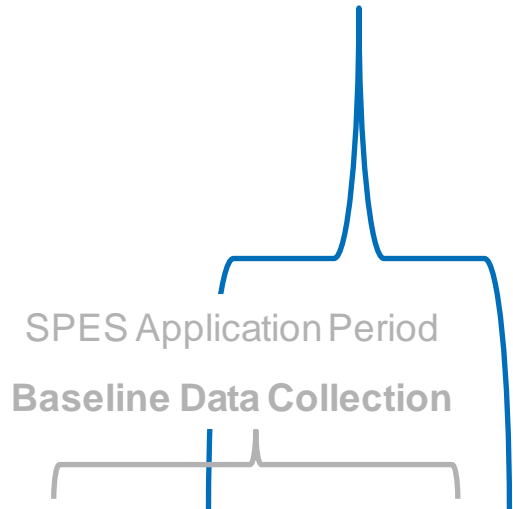


SPES Application Period
Baseline Data Collection

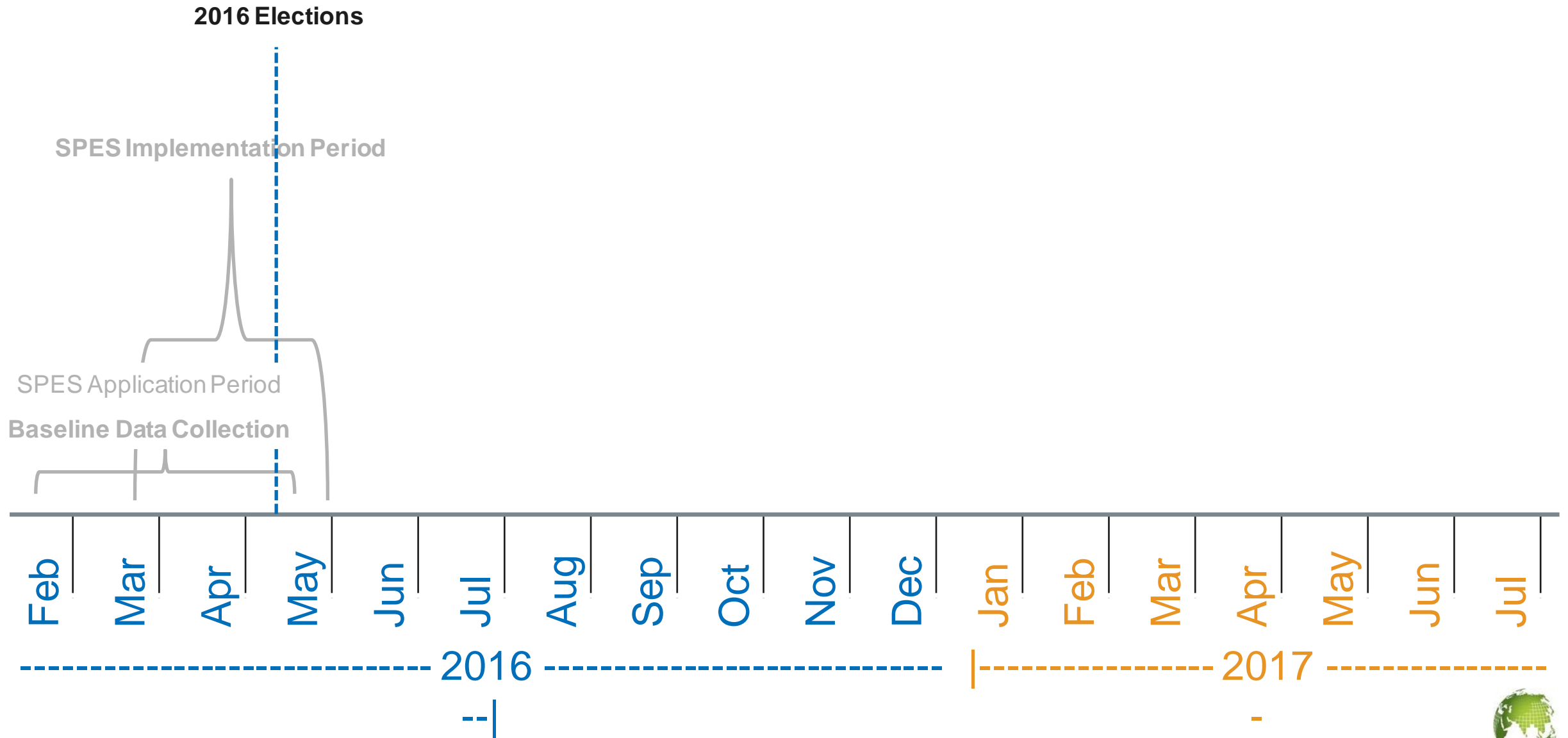


Research Timeline

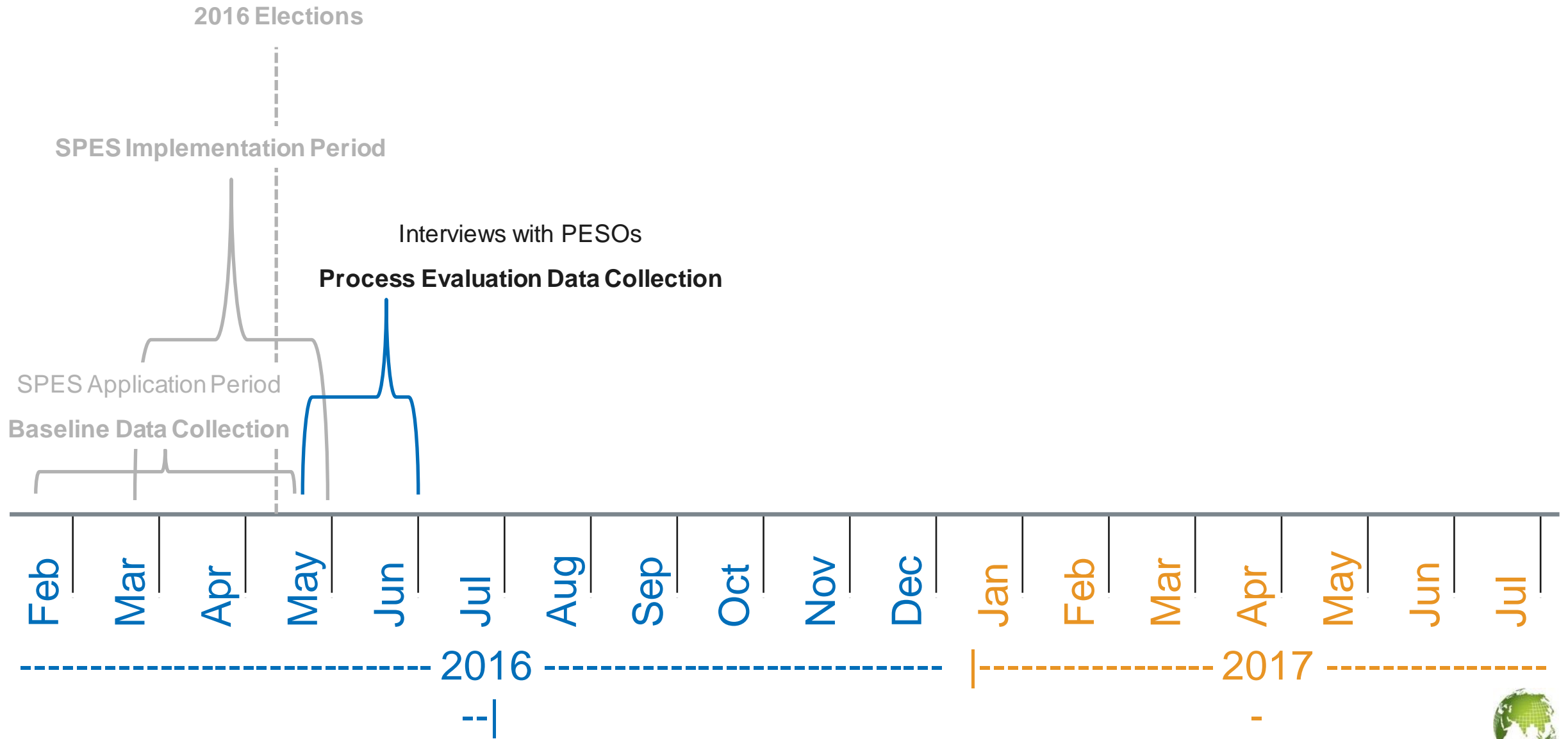
SPES Implementation Period



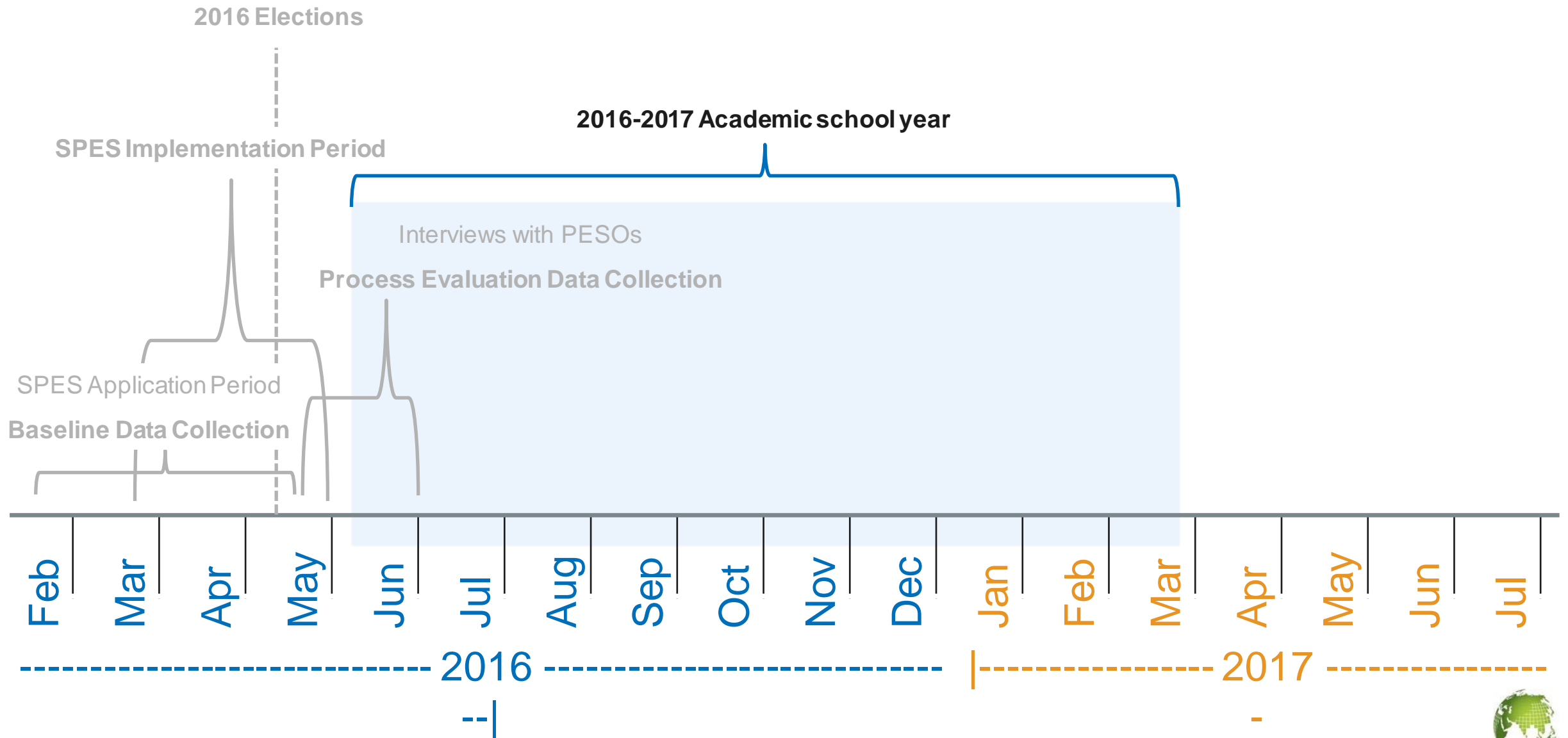
Research Timeline



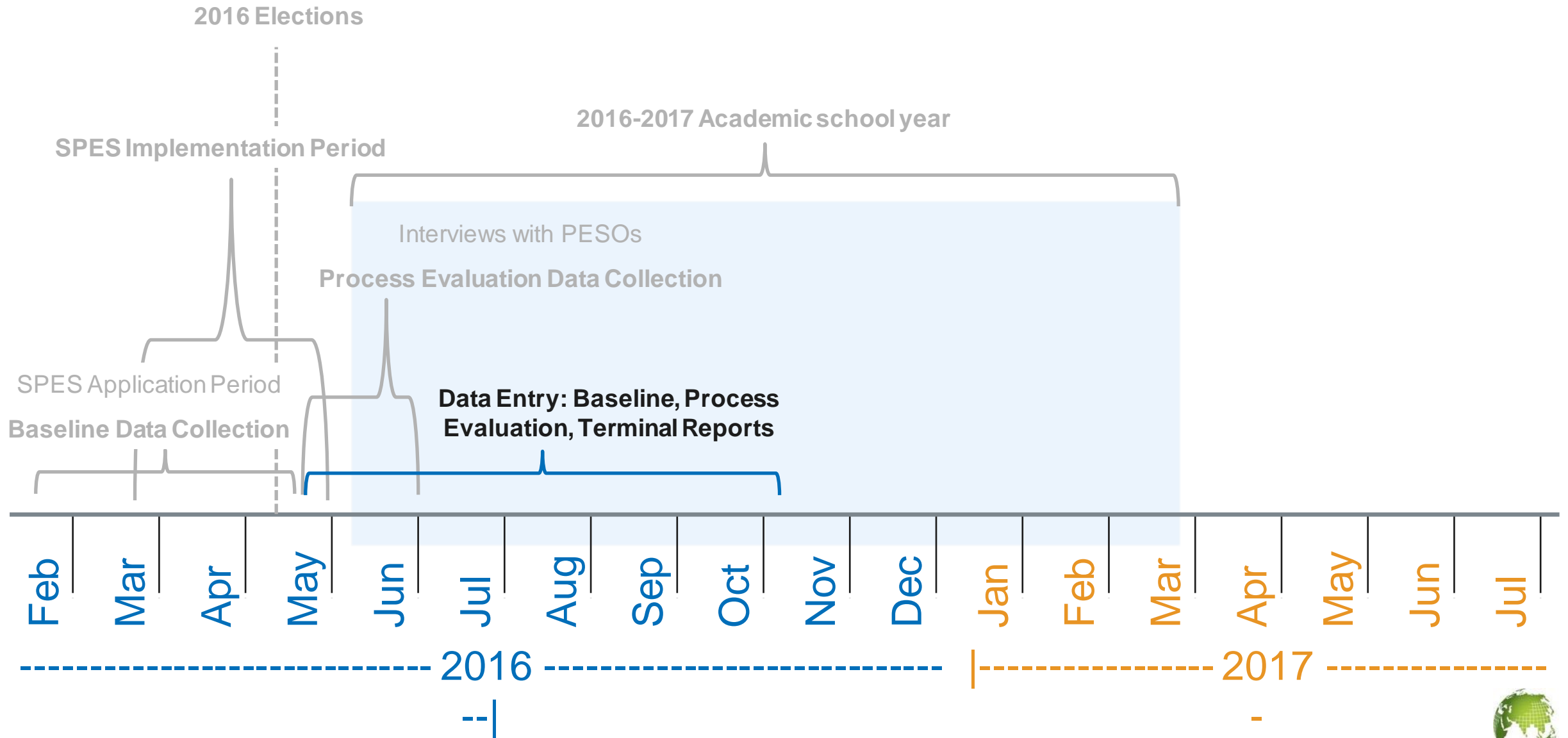
Research Timeline



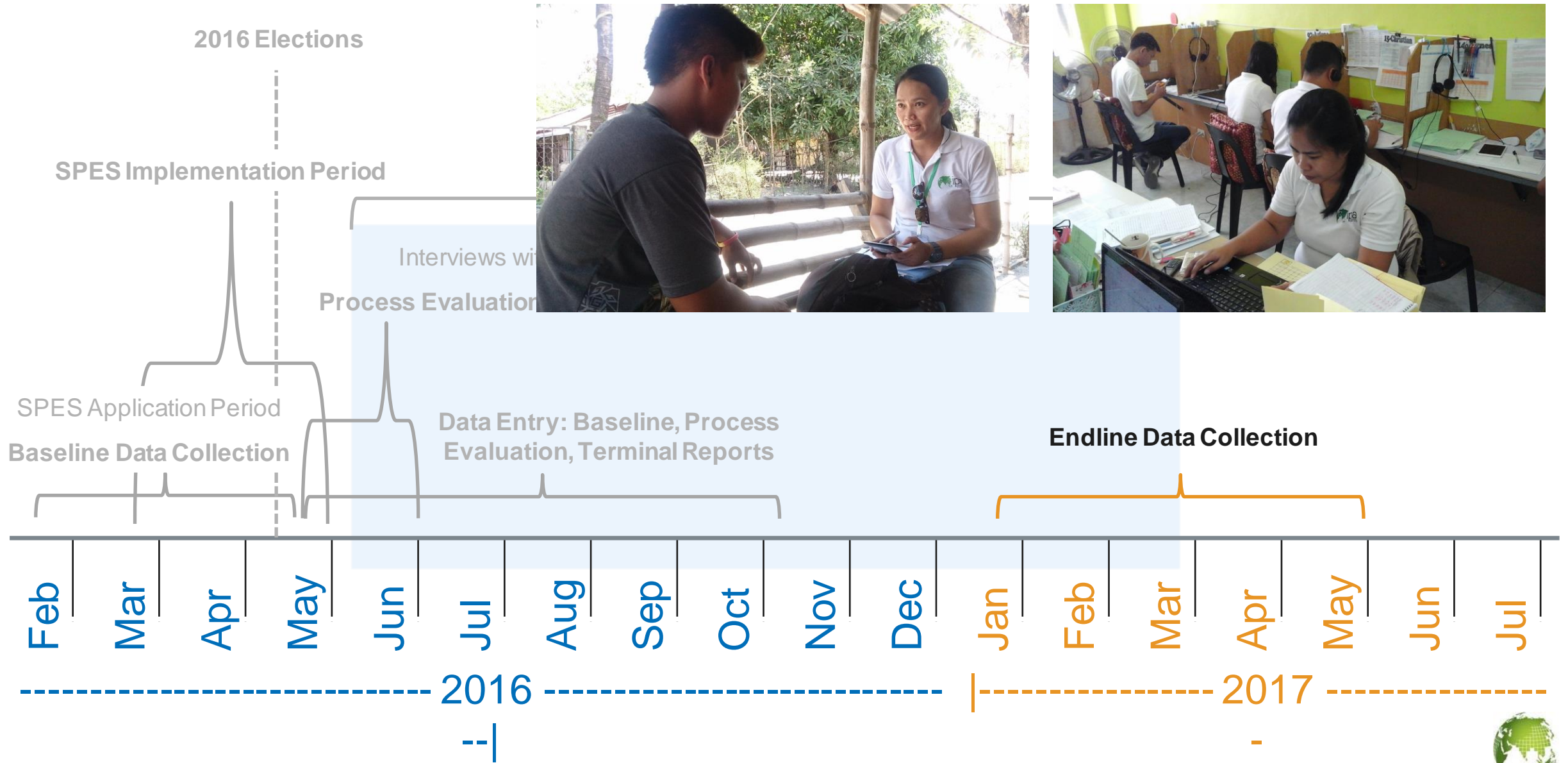
Research Timeline



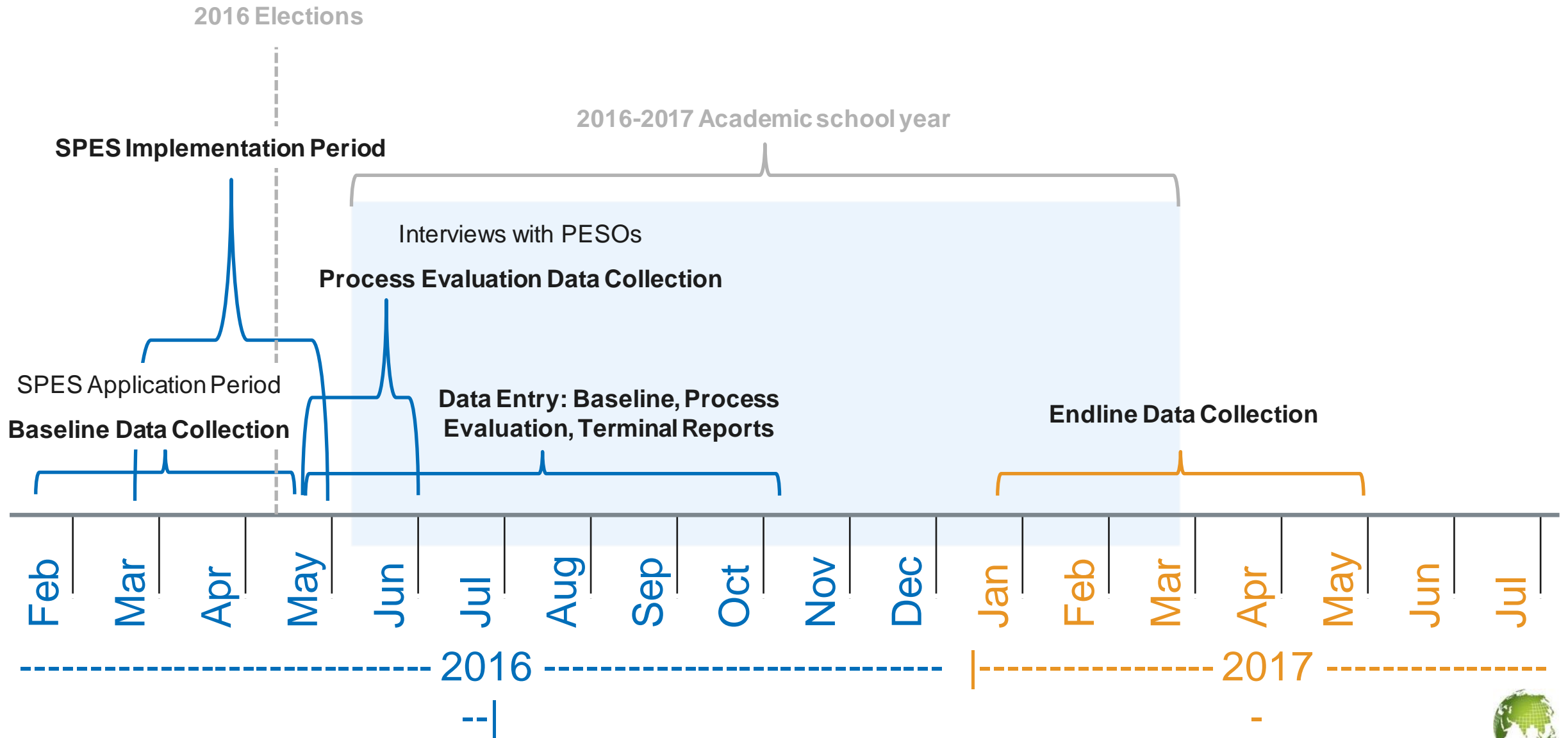
Research Timeline



Research Timeline



Research Timeline



Research Implementation Considerations

- Political objections to participation → smaller sample size
- One-year control group → 8-12 month results
- K-12 implementation → no high school graduating class in 2017
- Prior to most recent implementing guidelines (RA 10917)



Impact Evaluation Findings

Special Program for Employment of Students



Targeting of SPES Beneficiaries

- SPES applicants came from families that are **relatively poor**.¹
 - 63% were likely to live below 200% of the Philippine national poverty line (Php95 per person per day).
 - 4% were likely to live below 100% of the national poverty line (Php47 per person per day).
 - 26% were DSWD 4Ps beneficiaries.

¹ Based on the Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI) and calculations are based on the 2009 Philippine national poverty line of approximately P47.35 /person/day.



SPES Work Experience

- For most beneficiaries (78%), **SPES lasts only 20 days**
 - Very few (<5%) worked the maximum of 52 days
 - Earnings over 20 days: P6,800-P9,800
- **Most perform office work** at local government unit
 - Surveying (30%), encoding (25%), and organizing and filing (24%).
 - **About 14% do purely “make-work” tasks**, maintaining the orderliness of the office.



Distribution of Primary SPES Tasks

Rank	Assignment	# of students	Share	Cumul. share
1	Surveying	802	25.8%	25.8%
2	Encoding or updating records	572	18.4%	44.3%
3	Filing and organizing documents	466	15.0%	59.3%
4	Cleaning, sweeping, or planting	281	9.1%	68.3%
5	Maintain cleanliness/orderliness of office	178	5.7%	74.1%
6	Messenger/errands/distributing flyers	140	4.5%	78.6%
7	Processing and preparing forms	137	4.4%	83.0%
8	Customer service, sales, or organizing	122	3.9%	86.9%
9	Typing letters or documents	97	3.1%	90.0%
10	Other	81	2.6%	92.7%



Education

RQ1: What is the causal impact of SPES on youths' academic outcomes?

Education

- **With or without SPES, SPES applicants will enroll in school:**
 - In the medium-run, SPES participation does not increase school enrollment – school enrollment is roughly 95% regardless of whether applicants were chosen to receive SPES.
- However, **SPES increases enrollment for men**, who are at higher risk of dropping out of school.
- SPES participation **does not increase college graduation rates** in the medium-run.
- Among those not enrolled, the most common reason was **financial problems (57%)**.



Education

- **With or without SPES, SPES applicants will enroll in school:**
 - In the medium-run, SPES participation does not increase school enrollment – school enrollment is roughly 95% regardless of whether applicants were chosen to receive SPES.
- However, **SPES increases enrollment for men**, who are at higher risk of dropping out of school.
- SPES participation **does not increase college graduation rates** in the medium-run.
- Among those not enrolled, the most common reason was **financial problems (57%)**.



Education

- **With or without SPES, SPES applicants will enroll in school:**
 - In the medium-run, SPES participation does not increase school enrollment – school enrollment is roughly 95% regardless of whether applicants were chosen to receive SPES.
 - However, **SPES increases enrollment for men**, who are at higher risk of dropping out of school.
- SPES participation **does not increase college graduation rates** in the medium-run.
- Among those not enrolled, the most common reason was **financial problems (57%)**.



Education

- **With or without SPES, SPES applicants will enroll in school:**
 - In the medium-run, SPES participation does not increase school enrollment – school enrollment is roughly 95% regardless of whether applicants were chosen to receive SPES.
 - However, **SPES increases enrollment for men**, who are at higher risk of dropping out of school.
 - SPES participation **does not increase college graduation rates** in the medium-run.
- Among those not enrolled, the most common reason was **financial problems (57%)**.



Education

Why no impact on education in medium-run?

- **High enrollment**
 - SPES population not at high risk of dropping out
- **Time frame**
 - School year had not yet ended for many
 - Lower levels would not graduate for several more years
 - May see greater attrition in the following school year
- **K-12 implementation**
 - No high-school graduates in 2017



Employability

RQ2: What is the causal impact of SPES on youth employability?

Employability

- SPES participants **engage in a variety of office tasks**, but **do not gain skills**:
 - Aside from answering phones, SPES participants do not gain experience in office related work tasks
- SPES participation **does not affect students' self-esteem or self-reported life skills** in the medium-run.
- SPES **improves students' confidence about their work prospects** after graduation, but it **did not affect their wage perceptions**.



Employability

- SPES participants **engage in a variety of office tasks, but do not gain skills:**
 - Aside from answering phones, SPES participants do not gain experience in office related work tasks
- SPES participation **does not affect students' self-esteem** or **self-reported life skills** in the medium-run.
- SPES improves students' confidence about their work prospects after graduation, but it **did not affect their wage perceptions.**



Employability

- SPES participants **engage in a variety of office tasks**, but **do not gain skills**:
 - Aside from answering phones, SPES participants do not gain experience in office related work tasks
- SPES participation **does not affect students' self-esteem** or **self-reported life skills** in the medium-run.
- SPES **improves students' confidence about their work prospects** after graduation, but it **did not affect their wage perceptions**.



Employment

RQ3: What is the impact of SPES on youth employment and job search?

Employment

- SPES participation **increased the likelihood of being currently employed** with a private employer, LGU, or NGO compared to control group (70% increase).
- For every 100 SPES beneficiaries, 3.9 beneficiaries are moved into employment because of SPES.
- Without SPES, **very few applicants would have worked during the summer.**
- SPES participation reduces the likelihood of summer work, but only 18% of those not chosen for SPES report either formal or informal summer work.



Employment

- SPES participation **increased the likelihood of being currently employed** with a private employer, LGU, or NGO compared to control group (70% increase).
- For every 100 SPES beneficiaries, 3.9 beneficiaries are moved into employment because of SPES.
- Without SPES, **very few applicants would have worked during the summer.**
- SPES participation reduces the likelihood of summer work, but only 18% of those not chosen for SPES report either formal or informal summer work.



Specific Findings for Policy and Practice

Special Program for Employment of Students



Reactions from DOLE

- “This study serves as an eye opener for us.” - BLE Director Tutay
- “We need to re-think this program.” - Secretary Bello
- Found sub-group analyses helpful
- Interest in conducting future evaluations
- SPES enacted through law, so program changes will take time



Specific Findings for Policy and Practice

In the medium run, *SPES may be more effective as a work program than an education program*, but costs remain high.

- SPES costs roughly P90,000 per job found and P220,000 per drop-out avoided in that academic year.



Specific Findings for Policy and Practice

Resolve payment delays to help students use earnings to fund their education.



Specific Findings for Policy and Practice

Explore ways to help work experience provide meaningful skills.

- Nearly all students are engaged in office work in the LGU, but SPES did not improve students' experience with specific office tasks, nor changed their general attitudes or motivation for work.
- DOLE looking to develop more concrete approach to types of skills to be acquired
- Consider increasing the *minimum* number of working days required



Specific Findings for Policy and Practice

Consider adding training to help students build life skills.

- Directly providing students with life-skills training or job-search training may be low cost and more successful.



Specific Findings for Policy and Practice

Improved targeting may maximize program effectiveness.

- 7% of beneficiaries below the poverty line
- Male students from poorer families, and high-school students get greatest educational benefits from SPES.
- Refining program targeting through adjustments to screening criteria or outreach methods may help SPES reach those who benefit the most.
- Challenge: political patronage inherent to the program



Specific Findings for Policy and Practice

Strengthen program monitoring and communication between regional and local PESOs.

- Currently difficult to ensure SPES is carried out in accordance with the national implementing guidelines.
- Monitoring data is very limited.
- Include additional indicators in terminal report.
- Evaluation increased desire to strengthen DOLE's M&E systems.



Key Takeaways

- Building capacity in impact evaluation helps secure buy-in and enables the partner to participate in evaluation decision-making
- Engagement throughout the evaluation helps give ownership and builds trust while also enabling more successful implementation
- Avoid “black box” evaluations if you want to influence policy
 - Answering the “why” and “how” are key
 - Measure key steps along theory of change
 - Importance of conducting process evaluations alongside impact evaluations
 - Analyze how intervention impacts various groups differently
- Craft a narrative to help explain findings
- Cost-effective analysis important
- Integrating evidence in programming requires good M&E



Further Reading

www.3ieimpact.org

www.poverty-action.org



Thank you



ipa
INNOVATIONS FOR
POVERTY ACTION