

# Strengthening the culture of evaluation and Community of Practice: The New Zealand experience

A nighttime photograph of a city waterfront. In the foreground, a fountain with multiple jets of water is illuminated with bright blue light. The water reflects the lights. In the background, a hillside is covered with buildings, many of which are lit up with warm yellow lights. The sky is a deep blue, and the overall scene is a vibrant urban nightscape.

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**Principal Evaluator, Ministry of Education, NZ**

# My brief

- ❑ New Zealand experience in building a culture of evaluation and Community of Practice as a Director of ANZEA
- ❑ Experience as a Filipino evaluation specialist in the New Zealand public sector
- ❑ Key lessons and reflections

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Aotearoa Evaluations Competencies

Evaluator competencies

https://www.anzea.org.nz/aotearoa-evaluations-competencies/

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# Ministry Evaluation Strategy

## Ministry Vision



**We shape an education system that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes**

*He mea tārai e mātou te mātauranga kia rangatira ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga*

## Vision for Evaluation



**Create a genuine learning & improving system**

## High quality evaluation which...



**influences**  
development of an education system that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes



**improves**  
the quality and effectiveness of decision-making by policy-makers and sector stakeholders



**delivers**  
against education sector strategic priorities in a smart, timely and efficient way

## To achieve this vision we will need...



**Improve capability and capacity**  
to deliver high quality evaluation & monitoring



**Leverage existing governance mechanisms**  
to support decisions about where to invest evaluation resources



**A well governed work programme**  
reflecting key priorities for the Ministry



**Support/build the capability of the sector**  
to deliver high quality, timely and relevant evaluation & monitoring evidence



**Improve approaches to sharing**  
high quality evaluation & monitoring evidence for maximum impact

## Key Actions for 2017/18 and 2018/19

- ✔ Recruit and develop staff with evaluation skills
- ✔ Embed a strong culture of evaluation & monitoring
- ✔ Build a clear shared understanding of what constitutes good evidence and the need to be sensitive to differing cultural perspectives
- ✔ Continue to invest in people, process and technology to enable evaluation
- ✔ Establish evaluation planning and monitoring processes that:
  - help embed a learning culture and evidence-based decision-making
  - align with the Ministry's strategic planning process and operating model
- ✔ Build evaluation & monitoring into investment proposals including internal and external (Budget bid) investment decisions
- ✔ Invest and deliver on evaluation priorities aligned with the Ministry's agreed strategic direction and priorities
- ✔ Invest and deliver on commissioned research and data
- ✔ Develop and implement a stewardship plan for engaging with and influencing others in the sector
- ✔ Promote data literacy and a culture of monitoring and evaluation within the sector
- ✔ Continue to refine our approach to sharing evaluation and monitoring evidence
- ✔ Set in place a review process to monitor impact / influence achieved



Evaluation and monitoring are critical activities for a genuine learning and improving system which aims progressively to improve its performance and to achieve its vision and desired outcomes.

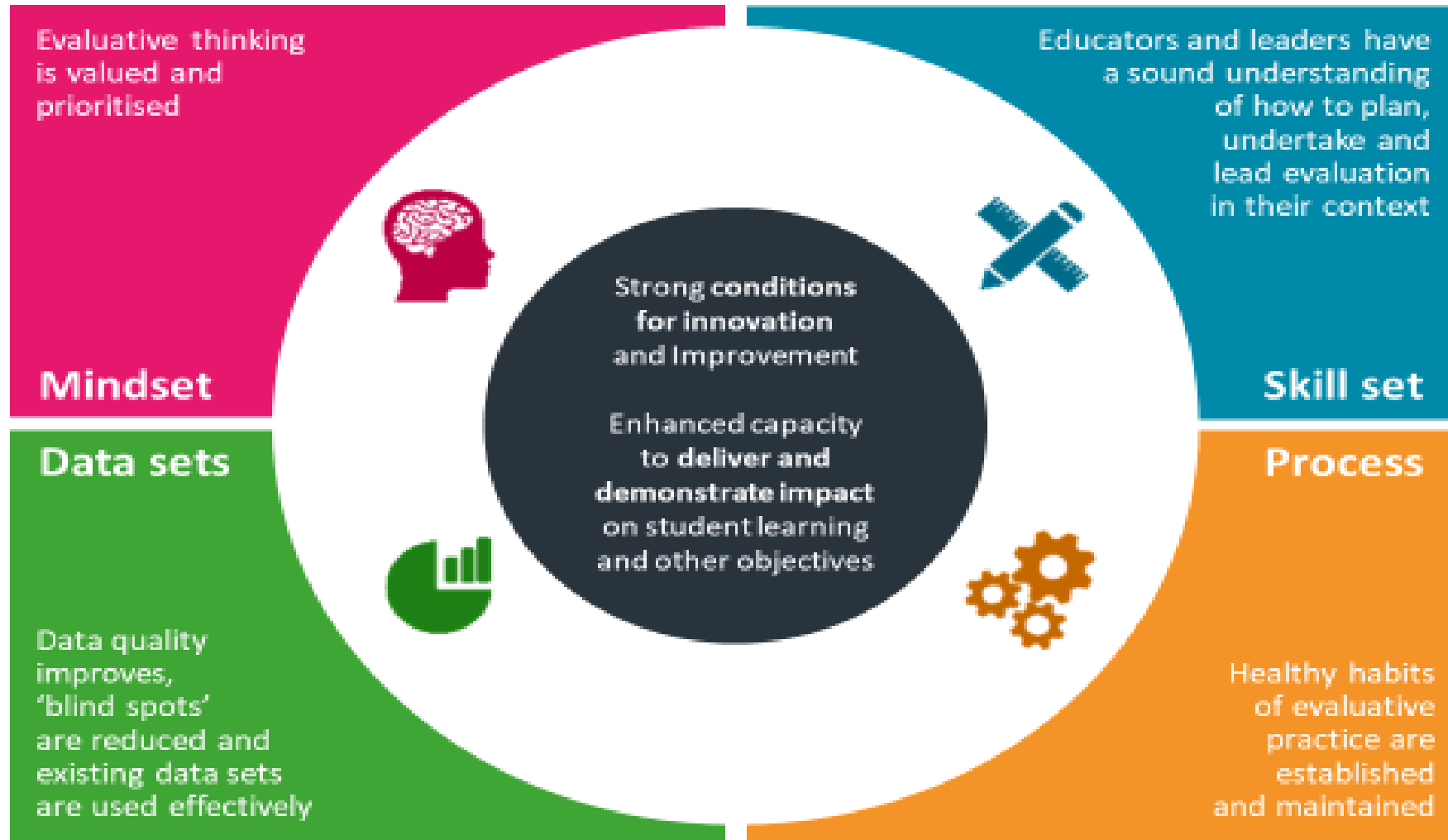


It allows systematic learning from past and current activities about "what works, for whom and in what circumstances". It supports coherent, evidence-based decision-making and wise investment of money and other resources.









A strong culture that values and acts on evaluation & monitoring evidence is required.

# Intended outcomes



# Building Evaluative Capability for Continuous Improvement

What does good look like and how would we know?

<b>Evaluative thinking</b> 	<b>Theory of change</b> 	<b>Evaluation design and planning</b> 	<b>Collecting and making sense of data</b> 	<b>Turning data into evidence</b> 	<b>Deciding what next</b> 
<p>We all make evaluative judgments. We will decide something is a good idea (<b>judgement</b>) because...(<b>evidence</b>).</p> <p><b>Evaluation is a form of critical thinking that involves examining evidence to make a judgement.</b></p> <p>Evaluation is more than collecting and collating data. It's about weighing it up.</p> <p>Evaluation helps us be more rigorous in how we reach these judgements.</p>	<p>Programs and initiatives should be designed to respond to a need, know what they want to achieve and how.</p> <p><b>A theory of change is a comprehensive description of how and why a desired change is expected to happen. This will tell us whether it has a good chance of working.</b></p> <p>Logic modelling is a visual tool that helps provide a clear line of sight between the needs, inputs, activities and intended results.</p>	<p>To help us decide what information we need to collect, we need to be clear about the purpose: - what do we want to find out?, how will this information be useful?, for whom? These frame the evaluation questions.</p> <p><b>Evaluation is used for finding out what's happening, improving the design of something, or determining whether we have reached our goal. It is also used to know whether something is cost effective.</b></p>	<p>Collecting and analysing data is a specialised skill.</p> <p><b>The data we collect needs to be able to answer our questions.</b></p> <p>This means having appropriate indicators and a robust method for interpreting and drawing meaning from them.</p> <p>Good evaluation requires choosing indicators which closely represent the change the programme or activity is trying to influence.</p>	<p>Evidence is the accumulation and analysis of data.</p> <p>Evidence from multiple sources (triangulation) provides us with more reliable information.</p> <p>Some sources of evidence are more credible and have more weight than others.</p> <p><b>Stronger evidence gives more confidence in our judgements about quality and effectiveness.</b></p>	<p>After weighing up the evidence we need to decide what should change, stay the same or be completely abandoned.</p> <p>Even when evaluation is done well it doesn't always make a difference</p> <p><b>Evaluation is only useful if we act on what the evidence tells us.</b></p>
<p><b>What this look like in practice?</b></p>					
<p>Work out what to do and how to do based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence of need</li> <li>evidence of effective strategies</li> <li>talking with the recipients</li> <li>co-developing an approach</li> <li>a clear line of sight between need, activities and goals</li> </ul>	<p>Decide what we need to know and what data will best answer our questions.</p> <p>Decide on criteria and standards for quality evidence.</p>	<p>Obtain pre-existing data and collect new data</p> <p>Look for patterns and trends in quantitative data and for themes in qualitative data</p>	<p>Use the data and the analysis to inform judgements.</p>	<p>Build on what's working and change what's not.</p> <p>Document this for future learning and evaluation.</p>	

# Key lessons and insights

- Establish a professional body that is the voice of, and give voice to, evaluation stakeholders (eg ANZEA)
- Build a pipeline of competent evaluators (via PDs, HEIs to offer a pathway, mentoring/coaching, secondment)
- Leverage existing processes and systems to develop, support and sustain a culture of evaluation (eg budget process, government policies)
- Strategic link with existing evaluation associations and expertise for initial support and on-going relationship

# Key lessons and insights

- Integrate the use of technology in evaluation (eg Project DIME, IDI, Ai)
- Cross-agency sharing of expertise/establish Community of Practice (M&E Forum and conferences, CREM, informal get-together)
- Nurture the buy-in and support from top-level officials (NEDA and Finance Secretaries)
- Adequate resourcing of a dedicated M&E Unit for each agency (plantilla position, budget)



# Open Forum

