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2026 Barometer of Public Policy Evaluation

February 2026



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Foreword



Arnaud BERTRAND
EY Public Sector Partner

Faced with the growing and legitimate need for information on public action among citizens, in the face of their questioning of the effectiveness of the policies implemented, and in the face of the need to provide decision-makers with objective analyses that facilitate difficult trade-offs, evaluation is an essential tool for steering performance and transparency of public policies.

- Evaluation analyses the relevance of a policy by questioning its objectives and modes of intervention (is it the best response to a given situation?),
- It measures the effectiveness of public intervention (has the objectives set been achieved?),
- It analyses the efficiency of interventions (what resources are mobilised for what results?),
- It highlights its impacts (lasting impacts for the beneficiaries as well as for society as a whole?).

It is therefore a discipline that is increasingly integrated into modern public management.

15 years ago, we carried out a first study on the practice of evaluating public policies. It noted an increase in evaluation practices, particularly under the impetus of regulatory constraints (particularly related to European programmes), but pointed to an added value to be strengthened and the need for greater repercussions on the decision-making process.

Fifteen years later: Progress and Remaining Challenges?

While public debt has exploded, from 80% of GDP in 2010 to 114% in 2025, satisfaction with public services seems to be increasing (from 73% in 2010 to 77% in 2024 according to the Paul Delouvrier Barometer) but French society seems more fragmented than ever after episodes such as the Yellow Vests movement or urban unrest (“societal fragmentation” mentioned by Jérôme Fourquet of IFOP), we wanted to question public actors about their evaluation practice and its impact on decision-making.

It is with this concern to promote evaluation and to participate in the debate on its inclusion in public governance, that EY wanted to draw up an overview of the practices and perspectives of public policy evaluation in France and internationally in 2026.

Key findings

68% of respondents conduct **more than three evaluations per year**, reflecting the strong anchoring of public policy evaluation in public sector management.

Evaluations are **mainly initiated by the public executive** (policy or senior management), placing evaluation at the right strategic level.

Organisations expect an increase in evaluations, motivated by a **need to rationalise public spending and to provide information for decision-making**.

The Barometer highlights a **reduced use of external evaluation**, even though evaluator independence appears to be a key success factor.

Cultural and political barriers persist, including a lower culture of evaluation, followed by a lack of political sponsorship, thus holding back engagement in evaluation.

Two weaknesses affect both public policies and their evaluation: **poorly defined objectives, and incomplete data** and monitoring indicators.

Although the recommendations are considered relevant and often co-created, their implementation seems to be **hampered by the lack of publication of evaluative reports and the lack of systematic monitoring** of the implementation of the recommendations.

Public policy evaluations have **significant impacts** both on the policies implemented and on the organisation of services.

Introduction

Objectives of the barometer

In a context of budgetary tensions, growing questions about the effectiveness of public policies and slow public-sector transformation, EY has taken the initiative **of a barometer on public policy evaluation practices in France and abroad.**

Convinced that the management of public action is the condition for its effectiveness, this study focuses on three main themes:

- An overview of public policy evaluation practices within public organisations.
- An analysis of the perceived objectives of public policy evaluation.
- The ability of evaluation to establish itself as an effective support tool for public decision-making

Methodology

The results of this 2026 barometer are based on **the consultation of more than 100 stakeholders** from the combination of three sources of collection and analysis:

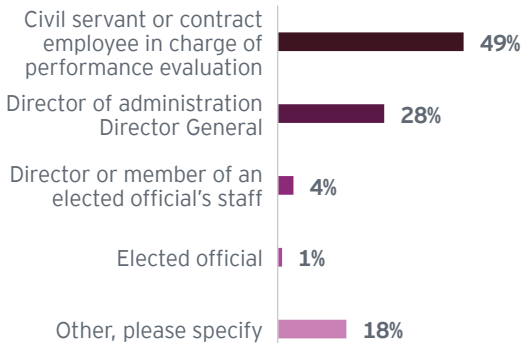
- **Qualitative interviews** conducted with local and central administrations from France and abroad, as well as with regional (European, African) and international organisations (OECD, International Financial Institutions, United Nations Organisations).
- **A survey** available online for two months (from April to July) and disseminated through different channels (emails, LinkedIn, Public Actors).
- **A benchmarking exercise** identifying good practices.

Respondent profiling

A panel of respondents with significant expertise in public policy evaluation at the operational and decision-making levels.

- **Almost half (49%) of the respondents are civil servants or contractors specialising in evaluation, a quarter hold management positions.**

Function of Respondents



- **The majority of respondents come from local organisations** (60% of respondents), 23% from central administrations and their operators and 17% from international organisations.

Evaluation is rooted in public management

THE ORGANISATIONS ANTICIPATE AN INCREASE IN EVALUATIONS, motivated in particular by a need to rationalise public expenditure and provide information to support decision-making.

“

After being the worst performer in Europe, the practice of evaluation has exploded in France. An illustration lies in the work programme of the Court of Auditors, which now wishes to devote 20 to 25% of its resources to evaluation missions. With close collaboration with the High Commission for Strategy and Planning.



Cédric AUDENIS

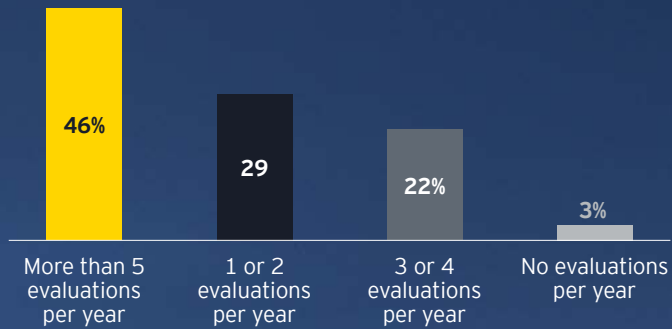
Director of Economic Studies and Syntheses at INSEE, former Deputy Commissioner General of the High Commission for Strategy and Planning



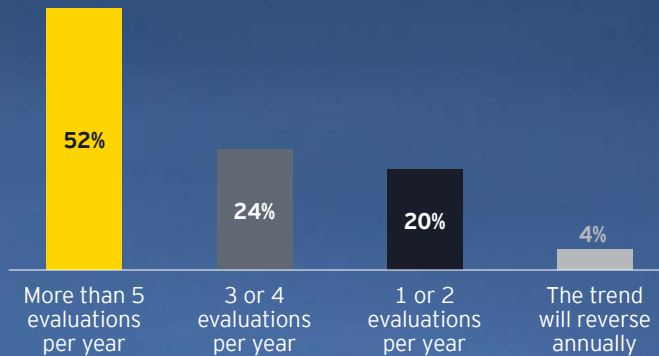
A desire to intensify evaluation

Nearly half of the respondents conduct more than five evaluations per year and 22% of them more than three evaluations per year, testifying to a strong culture of evaluation of public action. This frequency seems likely to be maintained and even to increase slightly, even if budgetary constraints could lead some players to revise downwards the use of evaluations.

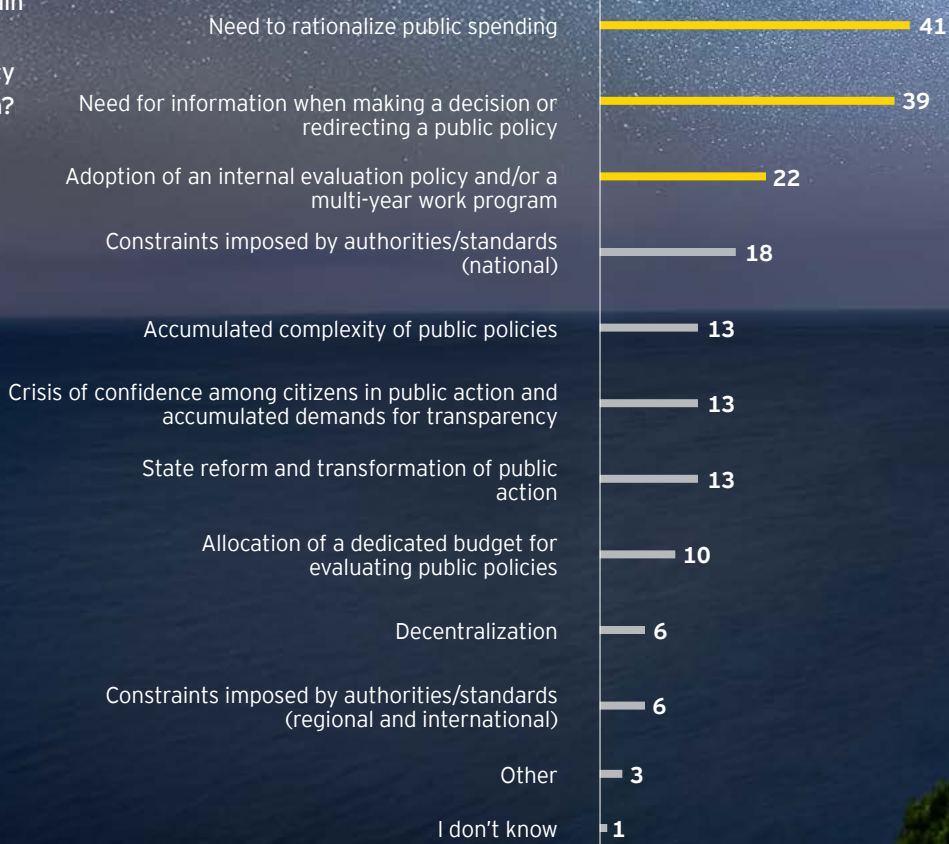
How often has your organisation used public policy evaluation in the past two years?



How often do you think your organisation will use public policy evaluation over the past two years on an annual basis?



What do you think are the three main reasons that would encourage a growing mobilisation of public policy evaluation within your organisation? (multiple choice)



The rationalisation of public spending appears to be the main motivation for the mobilisation of evaluation, followed by the need to inform a decision:

while regulatory constraints (particularly related to European programmes) appeared to be the first factor triggering an evaluation fifteen years ago, today it is the need to rationalise public spending and to support public decision-making that motivates public actors to launch evaluations.

In one out of two cases, evaluations are initiated by the public executive (policy or directorate-general), which

seems to confirm the strategic role that evaluation takes today in public management (21% by the political decision-maker, 35% by the directorate-general, 13% by the evaluation unit or the management unit in charge of the programme being evaluated, and 11% through various channels).

Increasingly more numerous and more frequently used to inform decision-making, evaluation is now embedded in the process of public policies.

The dual context of budgetary tensions and questions about the effectiveness of public policies probably reinforces this trend. The reform of the State and the transformation of public action on the other hand generate few evaluations to support their projects.



DIVERSE ASSESSMENTS IN TERMS OF PREFERRED SECTORS, SPONSORS AND RESPONSIBLE STRUCTURES

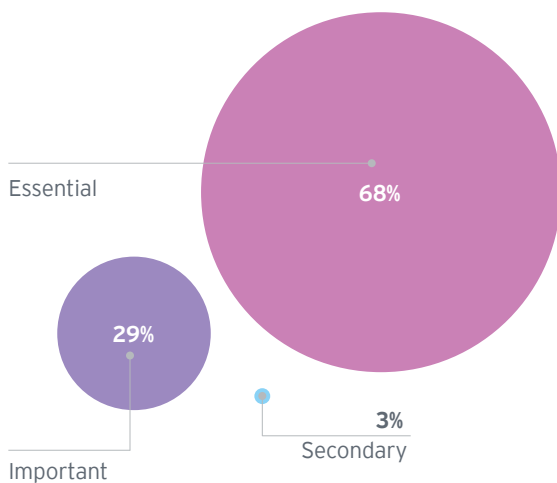
Of the priority sectors to be evaluated, the health sector clearly comes out on top, with two areas that are the most popular choices of respondents (social protection and health policy). The environment sector follows next with 22 out of 72 responses, tied with economic development and employment (it should be noted that the latter appeared as one of the two priorities along with urban policy and land use planning policies in our previous barometer). On the other hand, compared to the other sectors, justice and culture, youth and sport do not appear to be priority sectors for evaluation (four responses out of 72).

AN ESSENTIAL INDEPENDENCE OF EVALUATION, THOUGH INCREASINGLY CARRIED OUT INTERNALLY

The independence of the evaluator is considered

essential (nearly 70% of respondents) to guarantee reliable results, raising the question of whether evaluations are carried out by internal or mixed structures (half of respondents prefer internal structures, and a third a hybrid internal/external model).

Do you think that the independence of the evaluator is a criterion ...?



Nearly half of respondents entrust the conduct of evaluations to internal structures of their organisation

29% use a hybrid method (both internal and external), and only 21% to external experts from the private or academic sectors. This situation may be surprising in view of the importance given to the independence of the assessor (see above). It should also be noted that the 2021 Barometer of the Evaluation of Public Policies in France published by the French Society for Evaluation (SFE) indicated that 70% of evaluations were carried out by private firms. This decline may be linked to the debate triggered by the “McKinsey affair” which led to a bill regulating the intervention of private consulting firms in public policies, as well as to the budgetary constraints that push some public organisations to internalise their evaluation activities.



The independence of the evaluator (or, in the case of internal evaluations, the conduct of the work under the supervision of a steering committee largely open to State representatives and independent researchers), together with the publication of the findings (including a clear presentation of the methodology used, and its limitations) are essential conditions for a successful evaluation.



Philippe MURICY

Director of Evaluation of Studies and Foresight - Bpifrance

Significant progress seems necessary to definitively anchor evaluation at the heart of public management:

- Develop the culture of evaluation (the lower culture of public policy evaluation is identified as the main obstacle to the mobilisation of public policy evaluation).
- Raise awareness among political decision-makers of the dual contribution of evaluation: accountability and objective clarification of the necessary political arbitrations.
- Provide more training for staff in evaluation and more resources to prepare for and monitor an evaluation.
- Develop a multi-year programme systematising the use of evaluation.

On the other hand, what do you think would be the main obstacles to mobilising the evaluation of public policies within your organisation? (maximum three choices)



“

A third avenue for regenerating representative democracy, perhaps more technical, at least on the surface, is to create a genuine culture of evaluating implemented policies within our public life. We constantly pile up laws and regulations without truly considering whether the preceding texts were actually applied and what results they produced.



Alain JUPPÉ
 former Prime Minister
 (Excerpt from *“The Hour of Choice”* - Tallandier Essays (2025))

FOCUS

Benchmarking of good practices to strengthen the culture of public policy evaluation

The OECD Recommendation on the Evaluation of Public Policies, which was adopted in 2022, recommends guidance around three pillars for countries wishing to effectively integrate public policy evaluation into their public governance : (i) institutionalisation of public policy evaluation; (ii) the quality of public policy evaluations; (iii) the impact of public policy evaluations.



By focusing on the institutionalisation of evaluation practices, it operates according to a diversity of approaches. It can take the form of integrating the evaluation of public policies into a law, as has been the case for Japan (since 2001), Spain and Côte d'Ivoire (2022).

“

As part of the institutionalisation of public policy evaluation, Côte d'Ivoire has strengthened its legal and regulatory system: December 2022 law on evaluation, ongoing establishment of the support fund for the internal evaluation of public policies, strategic partnerships with reference institutions, including AFD, ENAP-Québec and the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), Certification Program in Public Policy Impact Assessment, Evaluation Methodological Guide, National Evaluation Policy.



Oumar SAKO

Expert in Strategic Planning,
Monitoring and Evaluation

¹ As highlighted in the [Toolkit for the implementation of the OECD Recommendation on the Evaluation of Public Policies \(FR\)](#) (2025), which highlights several good practices internationally (some of which are included in this barometere).



Other countries have appointed national coordinators such as the Ministry of Finance of the Netherlands, the new PlanAPP created in 2021 in Portugal or an Office for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies and Programs at the Presidency of the Republic in Senegal (since 2024).



Different structures participate in the culture of evaluation and learning. For example, the “What Works” network² in the United Kingdom, created in 2013 and managed by the Evaluation Task Force attached to the British government, plays a role as a knowledge broker by facilitating access to information for administrations, decision-makers and public sector bodies on “what works” in the design and implementation of public policies by providing analyses and syntheses of evidence. A Task Force attached to the Cabinet Office and the Treasury has been working since 2021 to improve citizens’ lives by ensuring that robust evidence on the effectiveness of policies and programmes informs financial and policy decisions.

² [What Works Network](#) - GOV.UK

Evaluation objectives and management

IMPROVING THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC POLICIES IS SEEN AS THE OVERARCHING OBJECTIVE, BUT METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES REMAIN

Priority to improving impact: Supporting public decision-making and improving the impact and quality of public policies appear to be the main objectives of the evaluation, underlining the importance of tangible results at a time when available public funding may be scarce.

The production of knowledge on public policy (which was the first place fifteen years ago) comes in second place but far behind in the priority objectives of evaluation. However, the qualitative interviews identified a strong interest in learning and the capitalisation of knowledge through the use of evaluation.

Significant methodological challenges:

- **It is quite worrying to note that the ill-defined objectives of an evaluated policy are the major problem limiting the impact of an evaluation according to the people surveyed.** In a context of budgetary deterioration and while France is on the top step of the podium in terms of public spending (in relation to GDP according to the OECD), this situation encourages us to ensure clear and evaluated objectives, particularly for the most costly or strategic public policies.
- **The question of data quality, the definition of relevant performance indicators and the solidity of management mechanisms** seems to be a second priority to be seized in order to ensure high-impact public policies.

Among the challenges that evaluations are increasingly facing is the use of artificial intelligence, a source of opportunities, but also of challenges to ensure its ethical and responsible use.

“

BPI has invested heavily since 1999 to develop structured and reliable databases (access to more than 10 million pieces of data) to facilitate the conduct of evaluations of public policy systems by using the best standards among the econometric methods identified by the OECD and the University of Maryland scale.

Philippe MUTRICY

Director of Evaluation of Studies and Foresight - Bpifrance

What are the main methodological or project management difficulties and problems you have already encountered?



Public organisations mobilise the different types of assessment available to them:

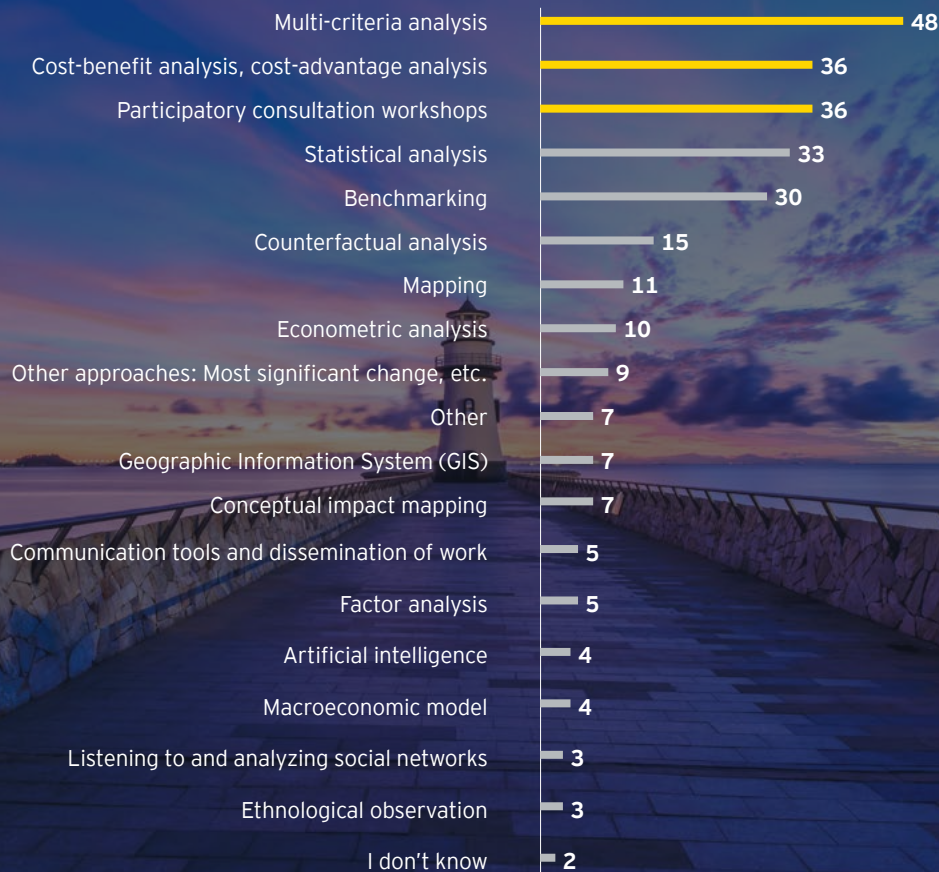
- Ex-ante evaluations to best frame a public policy (and define precise objectives responding to the problems identified)
- Mid-term or in-itinere evaluations to monitor the early stages of its implementation and to correct course if necessary or to adapt it to any change in context
- Ex-post evaluations ensuring a final analysis of its effectiveness and impacts and informing the public decision to continue/renew the system or to stop/adapt it.
- Meta-evaluations, on the other hand, are not very common in France, consisting of aggregating the results of many other evaluations, generally focusing on a specific theme that cuts across different programmes and their evaluations.

The interviews carried out confirmed that the mid-term evaluation is very much appreciated because it allows us to act along the way by promoting corrective measures and to reflect on things

Among the evaluation tools used by evaluators, first and foremost are multi-criteria analyses, cost-benefit analyses and participatory consultation workshops.

The plebiscite for these tools seems to corroborate the appeal of comprehensive evaluations, making it possible to justify the usefulness of an intervention as well as to promote a participatory approach. The interviews confirmed that there is a broad consensus on the involvement of stakeholders throughout the evaluation process and is a guarantee to promote the ownership of the results and the follow-up given to an evaluation.

What are the main advanced assessment tools typically used by assessors?



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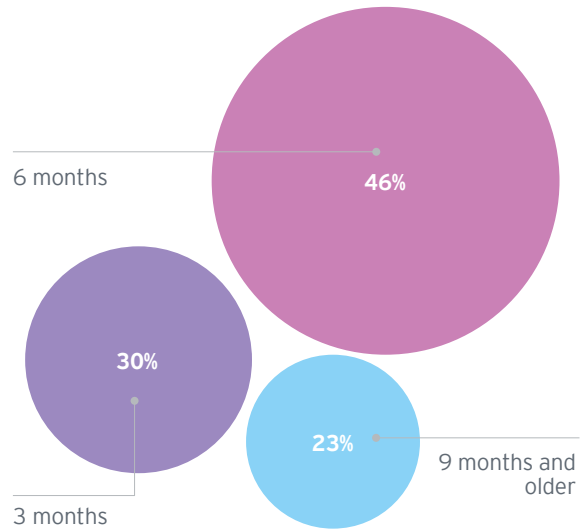
Evaluation gains in usefulness and legitimacy when **stakeholders and beneficiaries are involved and actively participate in the evaluation process and the interpretation of results.** Rigorous evaluation methods must be combined with **consultative and/or participatory approaches** to integrate the issues of the context in which the interventions are actually implemented.



Jörg FAUST

Director of the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval)/ Chair of the OECD's DAC Evaluation Network (EvalNet) (2021-2025)

In your opinion, what is the desirable duration of a public policy evaluation?



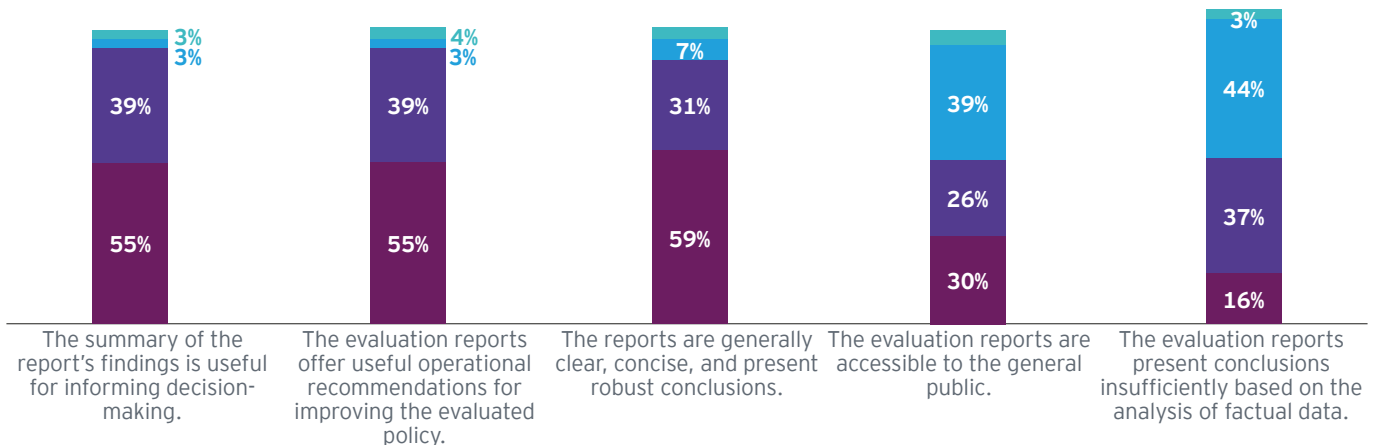
More than three-quarters (76%) of respondents to our survey believe that evaluations should be carried out in less than six months, thus demonstrating an appetite for evaluations that are very operational (as opposed to academic evaluations that are more advanced but longer) and more aligned with the short time frame of political decision-making (a more marked observation at the local level). Mixed work between consultants and academics can combine operational evaluation and academic evaluation using advanced quantitative techniques (econometrics, construction of counterfactuals, etc.).

Respondents are convinced of the usefulness of the evaluations and have a very positive perception of the evaluations produced. Almost all respondents testified to the clarity and precision of the evaluation reports produced, as well as they considered the synthesis useful to inform decision-making regarding the policy being evaluated.

However, there is room for improvement in communication and accessibility to the general public: only half of respondents consider evaluations to be publicly available. It should be noted that in France, the Court of Auditors launched in 2023 a **platform for public policy evaluations**, listing evaluations published since 2008.

What is your opinion on the following proposals?

■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely ■ Never



Is evaluation a true lever for decision-making?

EVALUATIONS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC POLICIES

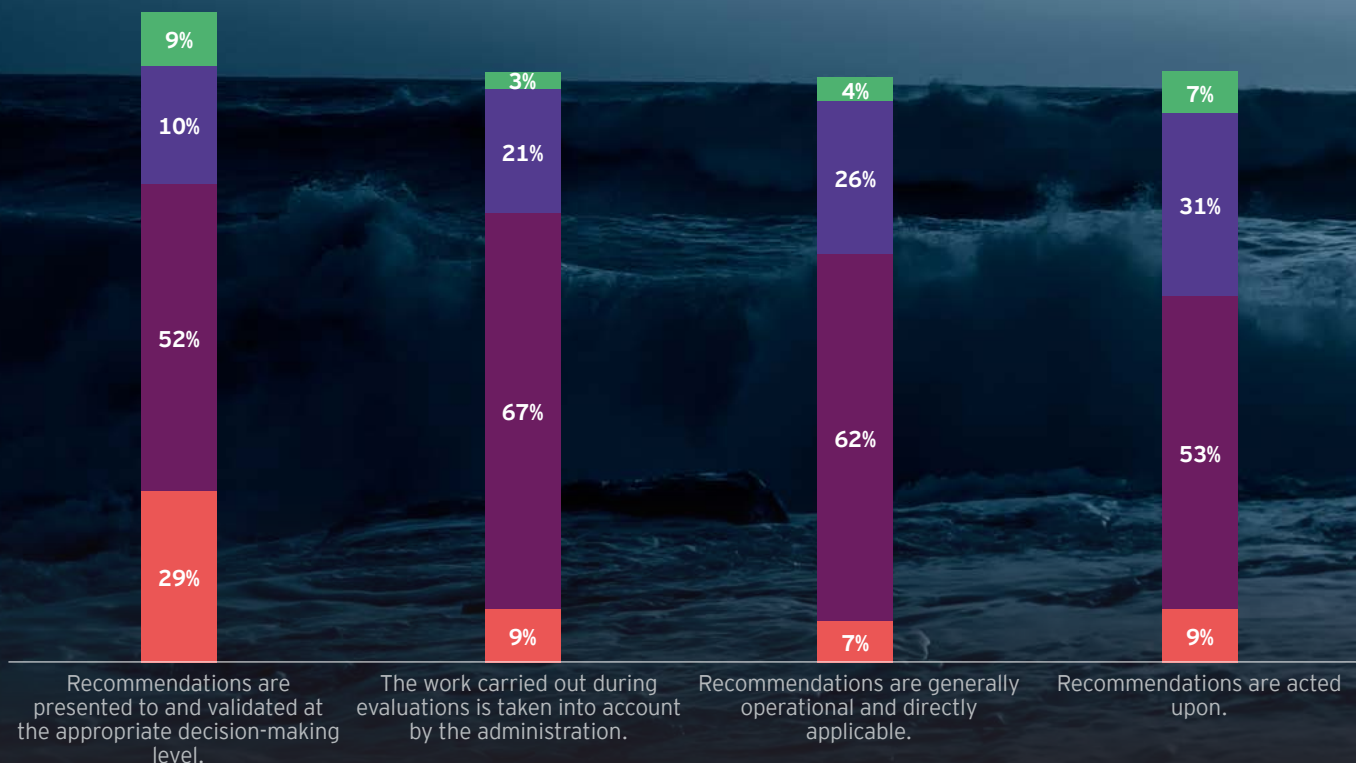
More than three-quarters (76%) of respondents indicate that the results of evaluations are taken into account by the administrations (compared to only a quarter of cases 15 years ago) **and nearly two-thirds (62%) that the recommendations are followed up.**

This very positive result results from the fact that:

- The recommendations presented are mostly operational and directly applicable.
- They have often (59%) been co-created with the actors in charge of the policy being evaluated.
- They were very generally (81%) presented at the right level of decision-making

What is your opinion on the following statements?

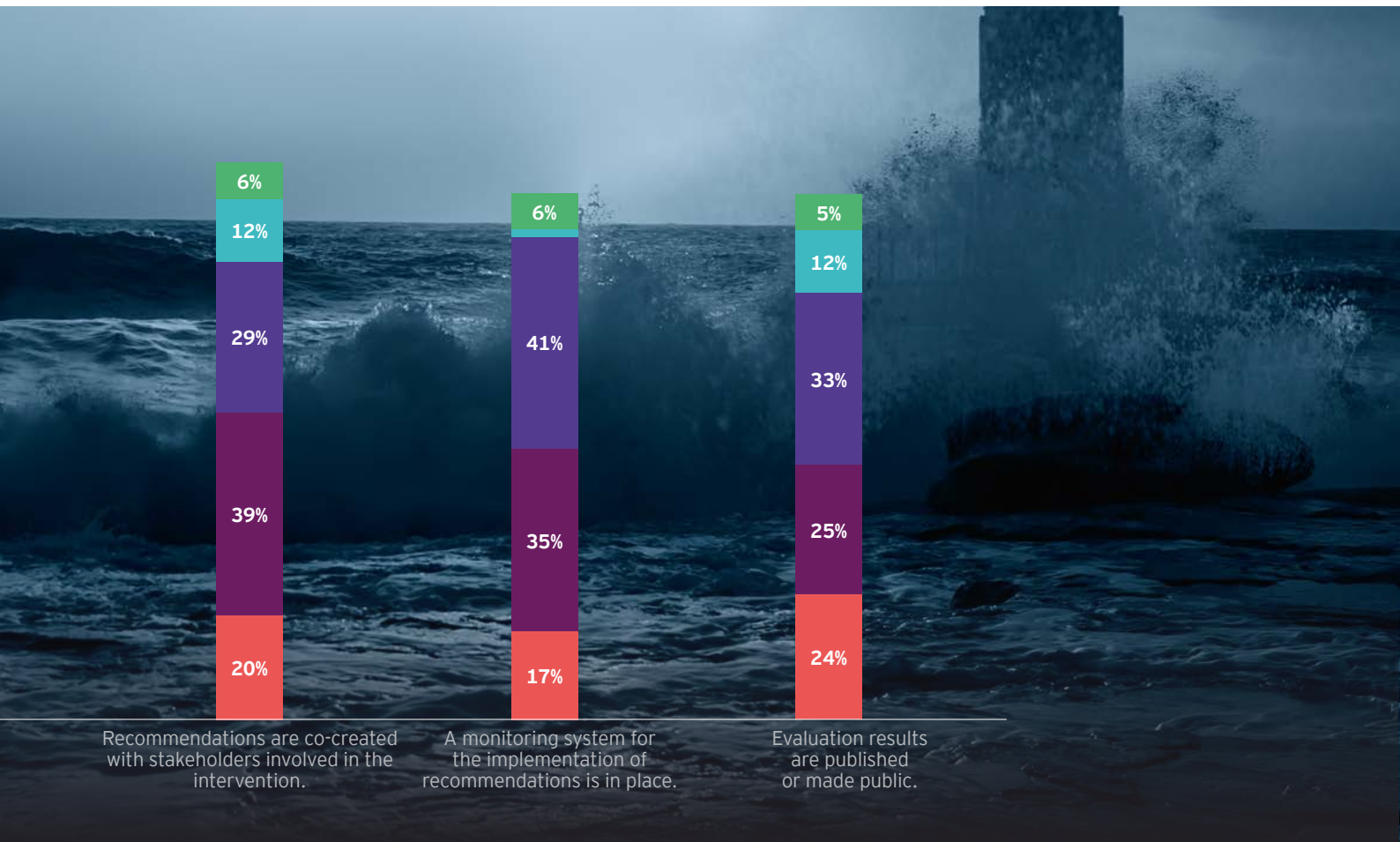
Systematically Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know / I won't comment



However, two significant avenues for progress appear:

- **The publication of work appears to be progressing but still uneven:** while half of the respondents consider that these reports are systematically or often published or made public (compared to 27% fifteen years ago), nearly a third believe that they are rarely published, and 12% never. Good practices in this area should be highlighted (see Focus p.22).

- **The follow-up of the implementation of these recommendations is considered insufficient:** in 41% of cases, the follow-up appears to be incomplete and in 31% of cases the recommendations are rarely followed up.



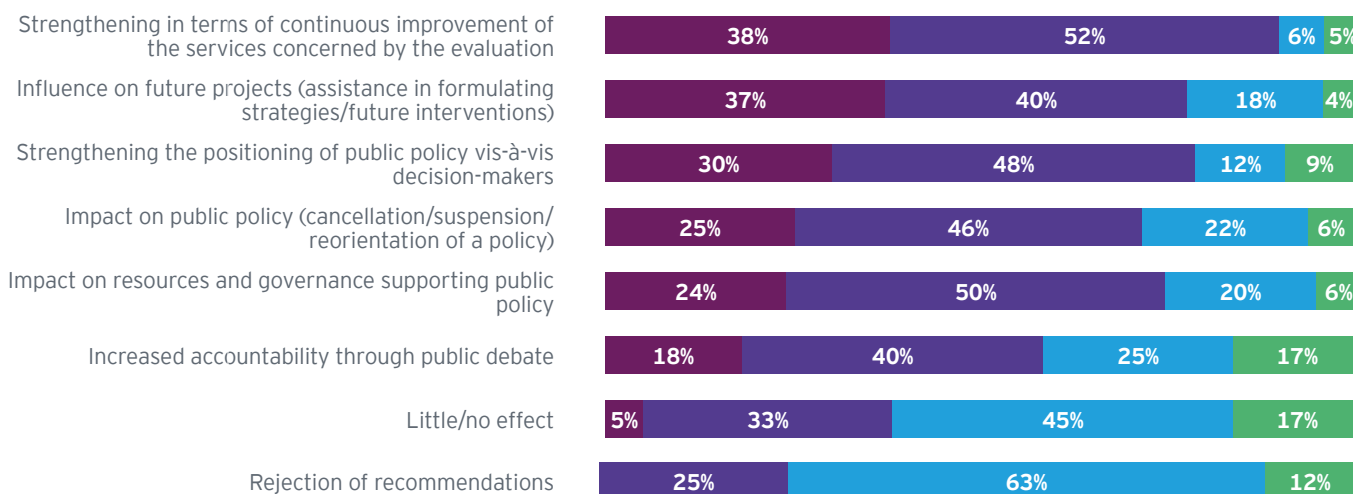
PUBLIC POLICY EVALUATIONS HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON BOTH THE POLICY CONDUCTED AND THE ORGANISATION OF SERVICES

The consequences of evaluations are first of all reflected in a strengthening of the services concerned (in 90% of cases), which shows the importance of evaluation in the continuous improvement of the efficiency of the administration.

Evaluations also have a significant impact (in 71% of cases) on public policies which they influence in 77% of cases (in particular on the formulation of future strategies or interventions).

What are the most common consequences of the findings of an evaluation report?§

■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely ■ I don't know / I won't comment



“ Evaluation systems must combine methodological rigour, institutional learning dynamics and accountability mechanisms. **In the absence of a framework for the follow-up and implementation of recommendations, even the most successful evaluation will remain an isolated exercise.** The value of evaluation lies not only in the quality of its methodology, but in its ability to foster accountability, inform public decisions and promote learning.

Jörg FAUST
 Director of the German Institute for Development Evaluation (Deval)/ Chair of the OECD's DAC Evaluation Network (EvalNet) (2021-2025)

“ Recommendations sometimes struggle to be translated into operational actions. The challenge now is **to monitor their implementation and improve their operationalisation.** The impact of the recommendations depends heavily on their formulation, their strategic dissemination, and the dialogue between the actors involved in the evaluation. **In reality, the effectiveness of evaluation depends as much on the ability to build trust, dialogue and humility as on methodological rigour.**



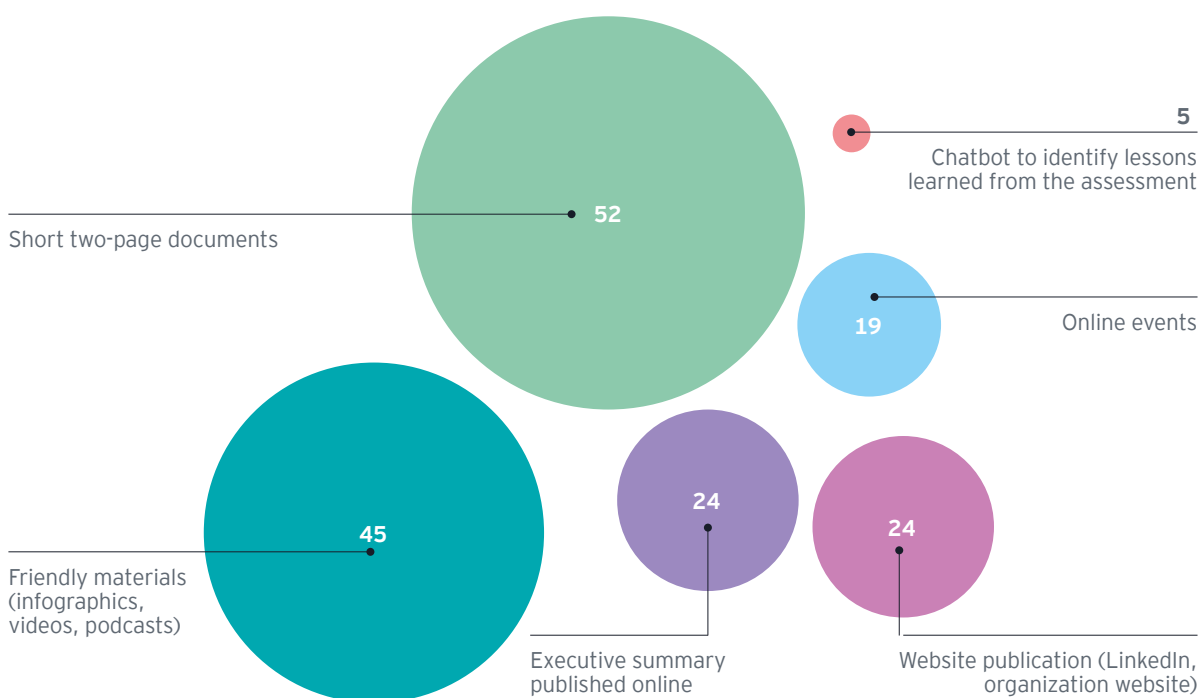
Dugan FRASER
 Global Evaluation Initiative (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG))



CONCISE DOCUMENTS AND FUN MEDIA ARE FAVOURED TO PROMOTE THE DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

The popular formats raised by respondents are short two-page summaries, as well as user-friendly materials. Chatbots for identifying the lessons of evaluation are still only rarely identified as a support conducive to accessible format.

Which accessible format do you think is the most appropriate to promote the use and influence of evaluation?



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Good practices in terms of methods of publication, dissemination and monitoring of evaluation results

Restitution or participatory workshops for co-construction/reflection on the recommendations are generally appreciated methods of dissemination and promote the appropriation of the conclusions and recommendations by decision-makers.

For example, an event to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the National Council for Development and International Solidarity (CNDSI) and to present its evaluation was organized in March 2025 at the Quai d'Orsay, in the presence of the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Minister Delegate for Francophonie and International Partnerships. The event brought together nearly 200 people (current and former members of the CNDSI, representatives of civil society organizations, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), the Directorate General of the Treasury and the French Development Agency)¹.

Accountability of evaluation work to Parliament is also a good practice. The Special Evaluation Service of the Belgian Development Cooperation also presents its report and the main lessons learned from the recommendations to parliament every year. Annual follow-up is carried out on the implementation of the recommendations of the reports already completed. At the local level, local authorities, such as the Île-de-France present an annual evaluation report to the political executive.

¹ CNDSI: celebration of the 10th anniversary and presentation of its evaluation (18.03.25) - Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères

“

The Evaluation and Performance Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides post-evaluation support to the CND SI Secretariat in the operational implementation of several recommendations and is increasingly positioning itself in a position of support, in the service of continuous improvement, in a logic of internal advice.



Anaïs PAUL-VENTURINE

Head of the Evaluation and Performance
Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Recommendations

Our firm makes four key policy recommendations.

Establish a multi-year evaluation programming on the main public expenditure programs.

Implement systematic biennial evaluations at the state level of the most significant programmes (aligned with government priorities or representing substantial budgetary weight) to strengthen integration of evaluation into decision-making processes.

Strengthen communication around evaluations and set up systematic follow-up of recommendations

- Continue efforts to enhance accessibility of evaluations (short and operational summaries, presentations to stakeholders) and their communication (briefs, user-friendly materials, dissemination to mainstream media)
- Improve alignment with decision-making (involvement of the executive, co-construction of evaluation work, develop short evaluations) and systematize the follow-up of recommendations (produce an annual follow-up report).

FOCUS



Italy has introduced a framework for evaluating public policies concerning the administration as a whole. Since 2024, each ministry has been called upon to design an evaluation plan including the policies to be evaluated, the themes to be addressed, the timetable and the costs. Italy also includes evaluation in the national budgetary programming.



For years, the European Commission has systematically planned an evaluation of its main programmes and impact assessments of new programmes questioning its strategy, objectives and proposed actions.

Strengthen stakeholder involvement and intermediation between providers and users of evaluation results

- Ensure strong political sponsorship of evaluations and involve stakeholders throughout the evaluation to encourage uptake of conclusions and recommendations
- Drawing inspiration from the British “What works” network to strengthen the sharing of knowledge and good practices

Developing meta-evaluations

Better capitalise on existing evaluative work related to the policy in evaluation. Such meta-evaluations provide an aggregated overview of multiple evaluations.

Abbreviation

3ie	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
AFD	French Development Agency
Bpifrance	Public Investment Bank France
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
CNDSI	National Council for Development and International Solidarity
DEval	German Institute for Development Evaluation
ENAP	École Nationale d'Administration Publique (Québec)
EvalNet	OECD-DAC Evaluation Network
AI	Artificial Intelligence
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group (World Bank)
MEAE	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SFE	French Evaluation Society



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