



IMPROVING THE GOVERNANCE OF EVALUATION

*Key findings from
an OECD study*

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European Commission, DG REGIO
Evaluation network meeting, December 10th 2020



WHY POLICY EVALUATION?

A key component of good public governance:

- ✓ Ensuring **accountability to citizens** when restoring trust is a priority in many countries
- ✓ **Improving the quality** of public interventions, laws, expenditure.
- ✓ **Improving** the effectiveness, responsiveness and accessibility of **public services**
- ✓ Helps to **take full advantage of the digital and data revolution**
- ✓ Contributes to **reducing the risk of policy capture**

Accountability and **Effectiveness** are key when evaluating transfers, foreign aid or support programmes



HOW CAN WE COMPARE POLICY EVALUATION ACROSS COUNTRIES ?

The 5 key objectives of the OECD survey on policy evaluation were to understand:

- ✓ What are the **key objectives of evaluation**?
- ✓ **How do countries mobilise evaluation** towards these objectives?
- ✓ What are the **evaluation practices** and how do countries conduct policy evaluation?
- ✓ What are the **challenges** they face ?
- ✓ What are the **good practices** ?

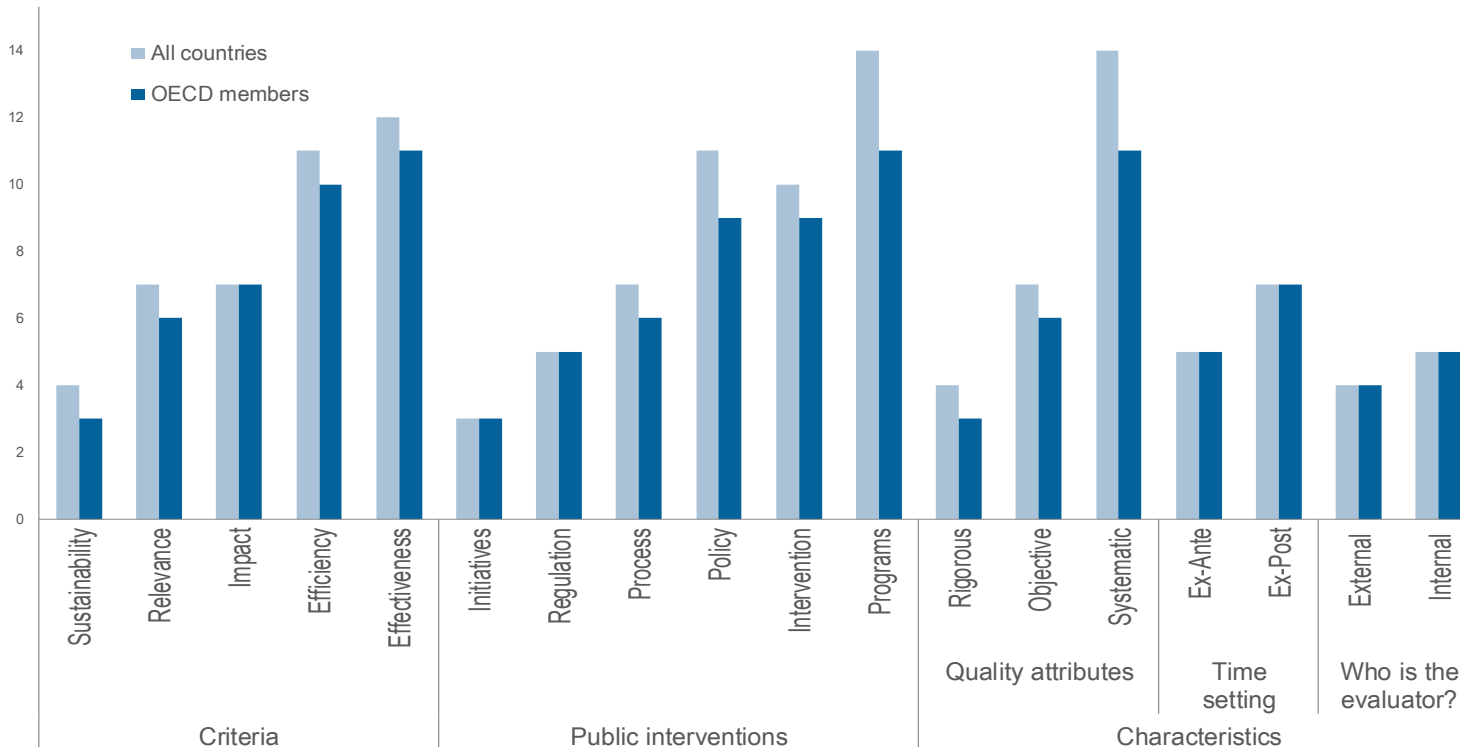
The survey covered 42 countries in 2018-19. Results were complemented with other OECD surveys on budgeting, regulation and centres of government.

The Survey did not cover the European Commission as a jurisdiction



HOW DO COUNTRIES DEFINE POLICY EVALUATION?

A single definition in 27 countries. Several definitions in 13 countries out of 42. Five main clusters can be identified:



The most prevalent notions are:

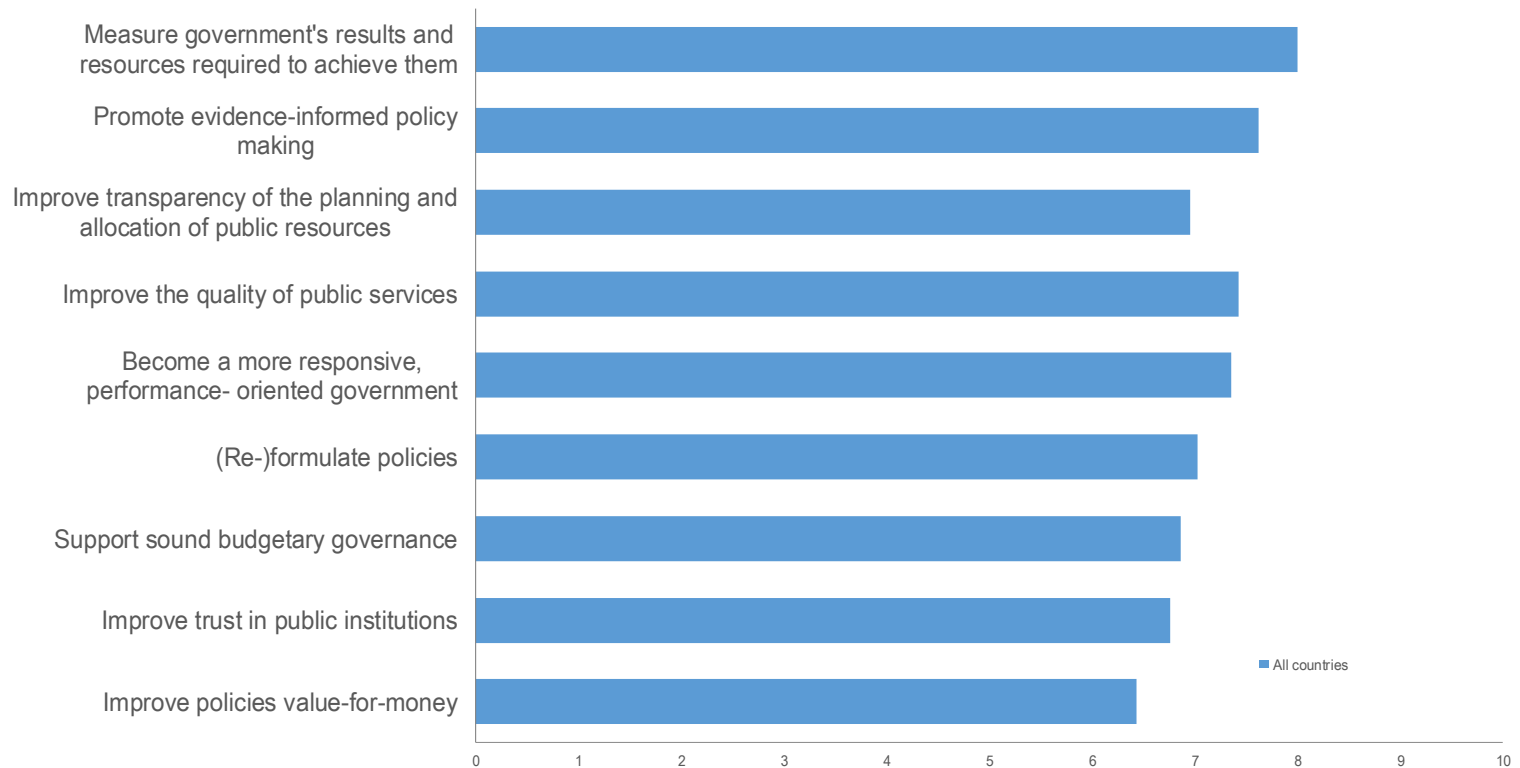
- efficiency,
- effectiveness,
- programmes
- impact
- Systematic

Links to budgets and regulation



WHAT ARE GOVERNMENTS' KEY OBJECTIVES?

Perceived main objectives for conducting evaluation out of 10



Measuring results and resources comes top. Promoting Evidence informed Policy Making.



WHAT ARE THE PERCEIVED CHALLENGES ?

Perceived main challenges for evaluation out of 10



Use is the greatest challenge along with capacity constraints.



TOWARDS A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO POLICY EVALUATION

A holistic evaluation systems contributes to good public governance across the full policy cycle. 3 dimensions.



The Institutional Framework

- a) offers the legal base to perform policy evaluations*
- b) provides a macro orientation as to when and how to perform policy evaluation;*
- c) identifies and gives mandates to institutional actors with corresponding resources for supervising, controlling and performing policy evaluations*

*An evaluation driven **culture**, which promotes **QUALITY** and **USE***



THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

3 main components of the institutional framework.

THE EXISTENCE OF A LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- **Supra-national requirements: EU Structural Funds**, development banks, etc.
- **Evaluations embedded in legal frameworks:** Constitution, law or regulation
- **Evaluations embedded in policy frameworks** : E.g. Policy on results Canada (2016)
- **Evaluation clauses in laws**

INSTITUTIONS WITH A MANDATE IN THE EXECUTIVE

- *Centres of Government* (27 countries)
- *Ministries of Finance* (26 countries)
- *Ministries of Planning or Public Sector Reform*

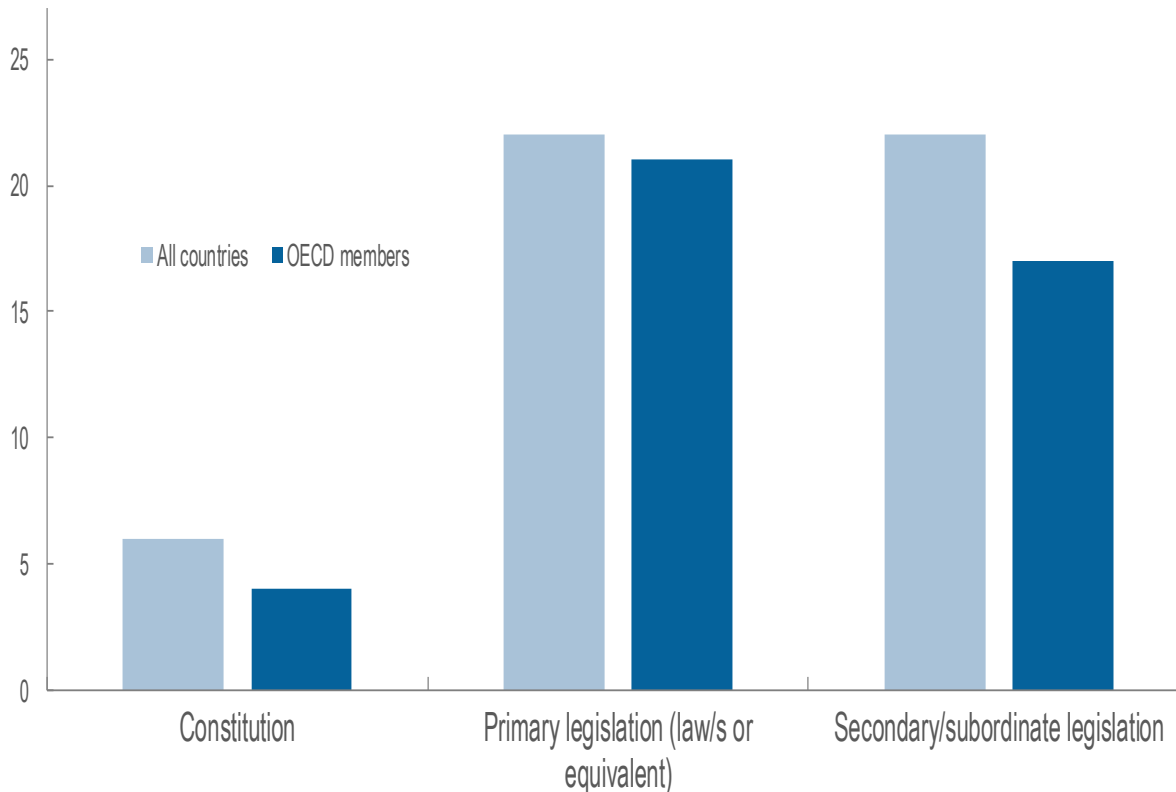
INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE THE EXECUTIVE

- Key role of **Supreme Audit Institutions**
- **Parliaments** : French “Spring of Evaluation”,
- PBOs are also discussed in the analysis.



WHAT LEGAL BASIS FOR EVALUATION?

2/3 of responding countries have created a legal basis for evaluation, only 6 countries have embedded evaluation in their constitution.

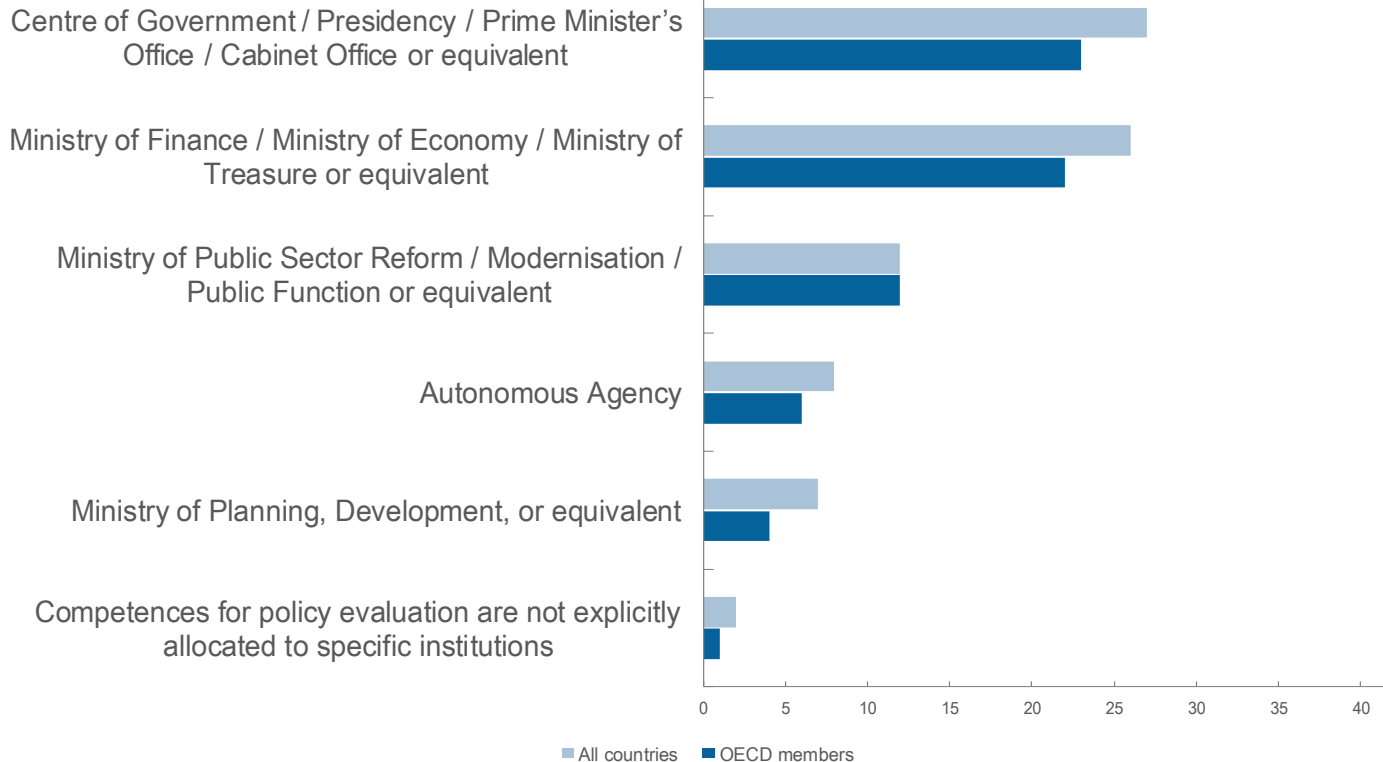


- Beneficial to creating a **common understanding**
- Legal frameworks **differ substantively across countries:** public management laws; specific legislations on policy evaluation; budgetary governance framework
- In a number of countries, **regulatory impact assessment** plays a role in promoting evaluation across government (Italy, Germany, Hungary, Latvia)



WHO IS IN CHARGE?

Institutions within the Executive with competences related to policy evaluation across government



Question: How do the EU Structural Funds Managing Authorities fit within these national evaluation frameworks? They are often one of the actors mentioned in the survey.



A FOCUS ON THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR COHESION POLICY

A solid framework for evaluations of structural funds...

- **Cohesion Policy (CP) is the most evaluated EU policy:** the CPF 2014-2030 requires ex ante, in itinere and ex post evaluation.
- Substantial efforts have been made in recent years by the EC to support Member States by providing **guidance documents** and **soft support** (e.g. promoting impact evaluation approaches).
- MS develop evaluation plans to encourage managing authorities to adopt a long-term strategic approach to CP evaluations.

Varying practices at the member state level.

- **The quality of these evaluations varies**, in part due to the heavy reporting burden and strict rules related to these evaluations.
- A strong focus on external evaluation impacts the capacity for evaluation findings to feed into the policy process.
- The next generation CPR aims at simplifying the rules and reducing the number of mandatory evaluations.
- But, will it be enough to allow evaluations to serve as wider learning tools for member states?



WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CENTRES OF GOVERNMENT?

Responsibilities related to policy evaluation across government in the centre of government

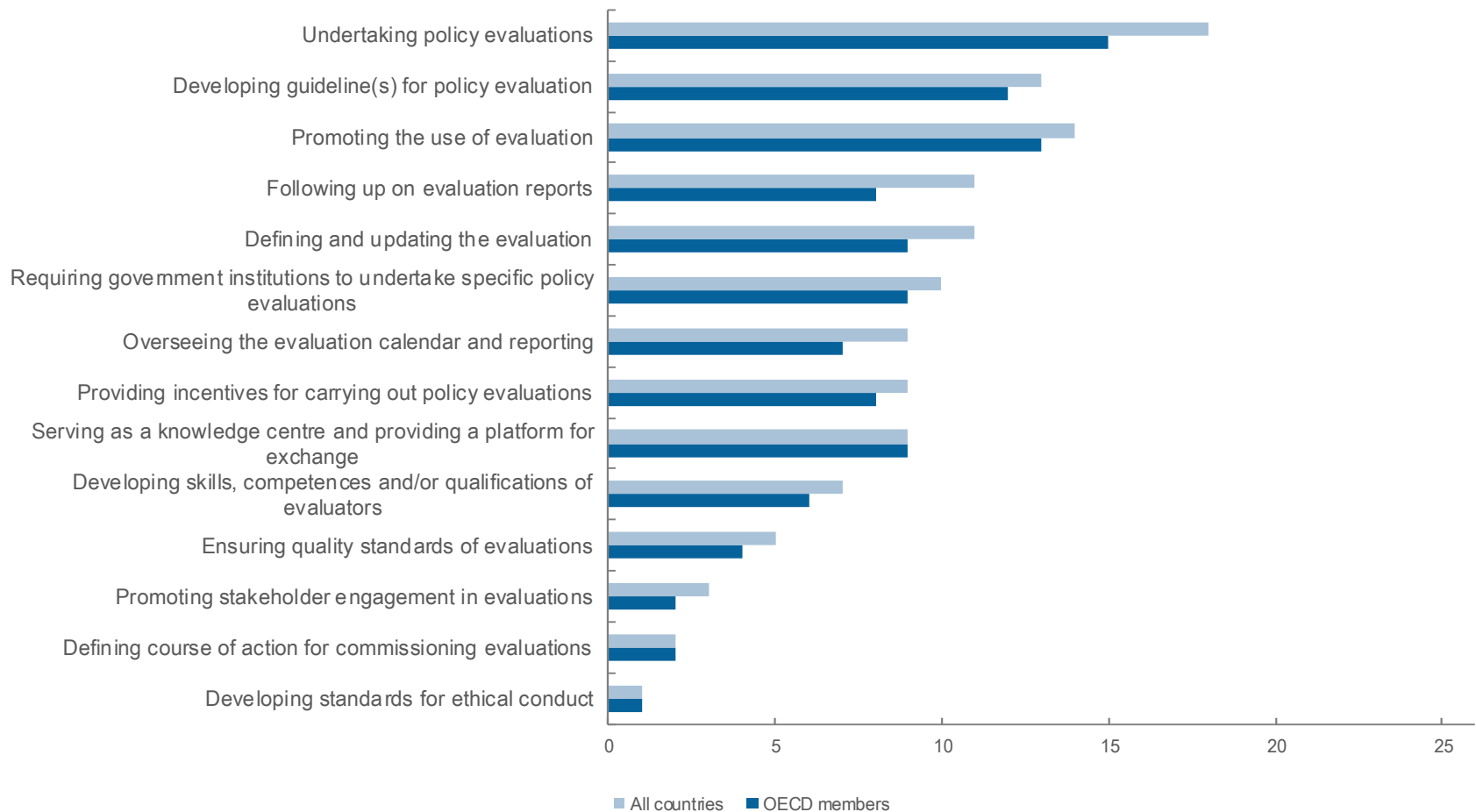


Question: which of these functions are performed with regard to the evaluation of Structural Funds ?



WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINISTRIES OF FINANCE?

Responsibilities related to policy evaluation across government in the ministry of finance





ALL JURISDICTIONS NEED TO FACE THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP!

Some of the major challenges facing governments wishing to promote policy evaluations today:

- Do we want **evaluation on paper or in practice** ?
- Institutionalisation and legal frameworks matter, but how can we embed the tool in the machinery of government?
- Success is contingent on **quality** and **impact**
- Quality and use **cannot be written in law**:
 - They need a **supporting environment**
 - They require **skills**
 - **And attention from politicians, the press and the media!**
- **Significant political dividends** can be expected:
 - *Improved trust and the capacity to implement reforms*
 - *explain to citizens why reforms are decided and what the rationale is.*



HOW CAN COUNTRIES PROMOTE QUALITY?

Two main determinants of quality...

To be credible, a policy evaluation should be:

- **technically and methodologically sound:** proper design, sound data collection, rigorous methods, adequate resources, etc.
- **well-governed:** importance of the political context of evaluations, their oversight, etc.



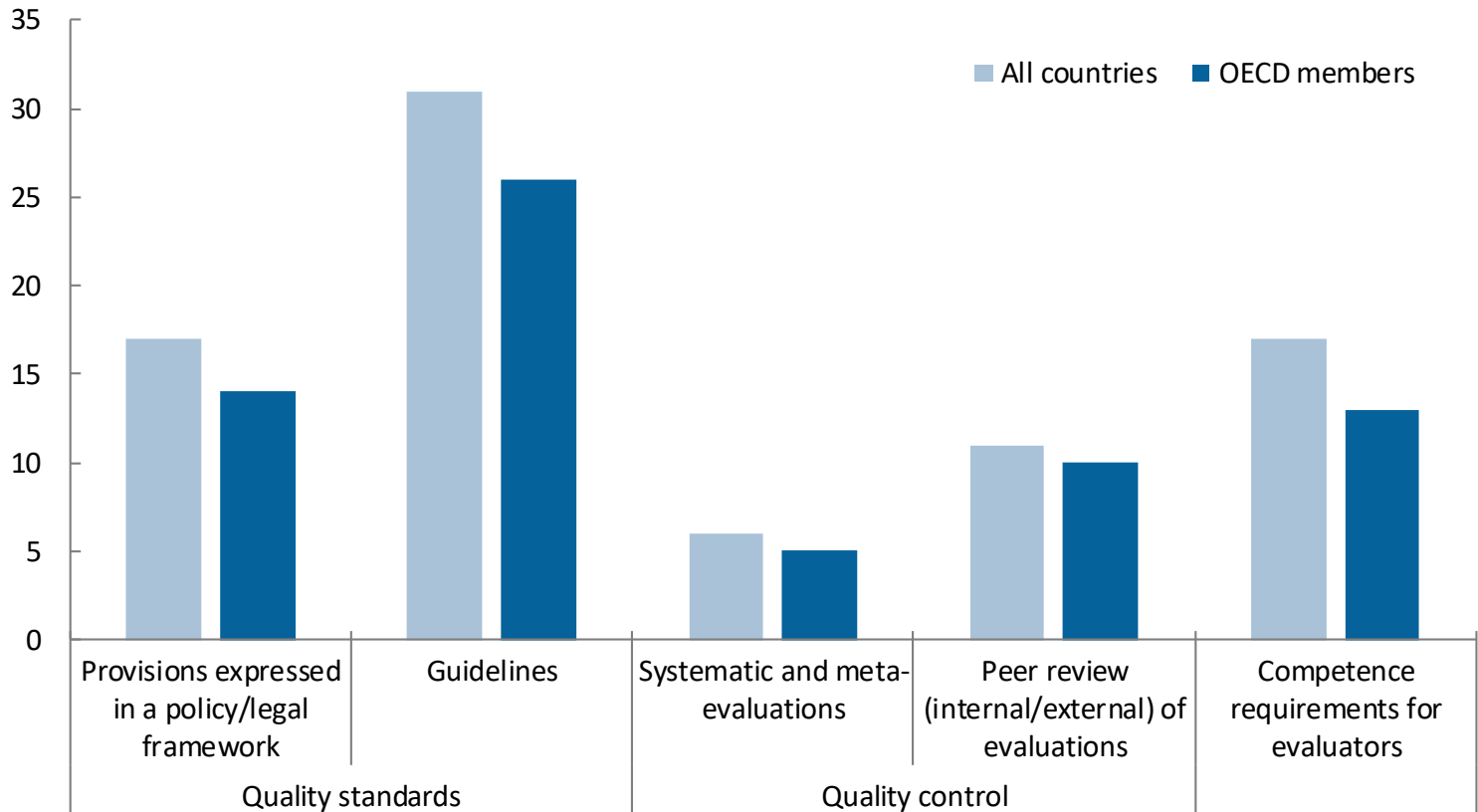
Countries are promoting quality through

- developing **standards** on the quality of the **evaluation process**, embedded in:
 - evaluation guidelines
 - Embedded in legal/policy frameworks
- **controlling** the quality of the **evaluation end product**;
- supporting and promoting **evaluators' competences**;
- fostering quality at an institutional level, specifically *via institutions outside of the executive*.



QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL MECHANISMS

Mechanisms implemented by countries to promote quality



EXAMPLES:

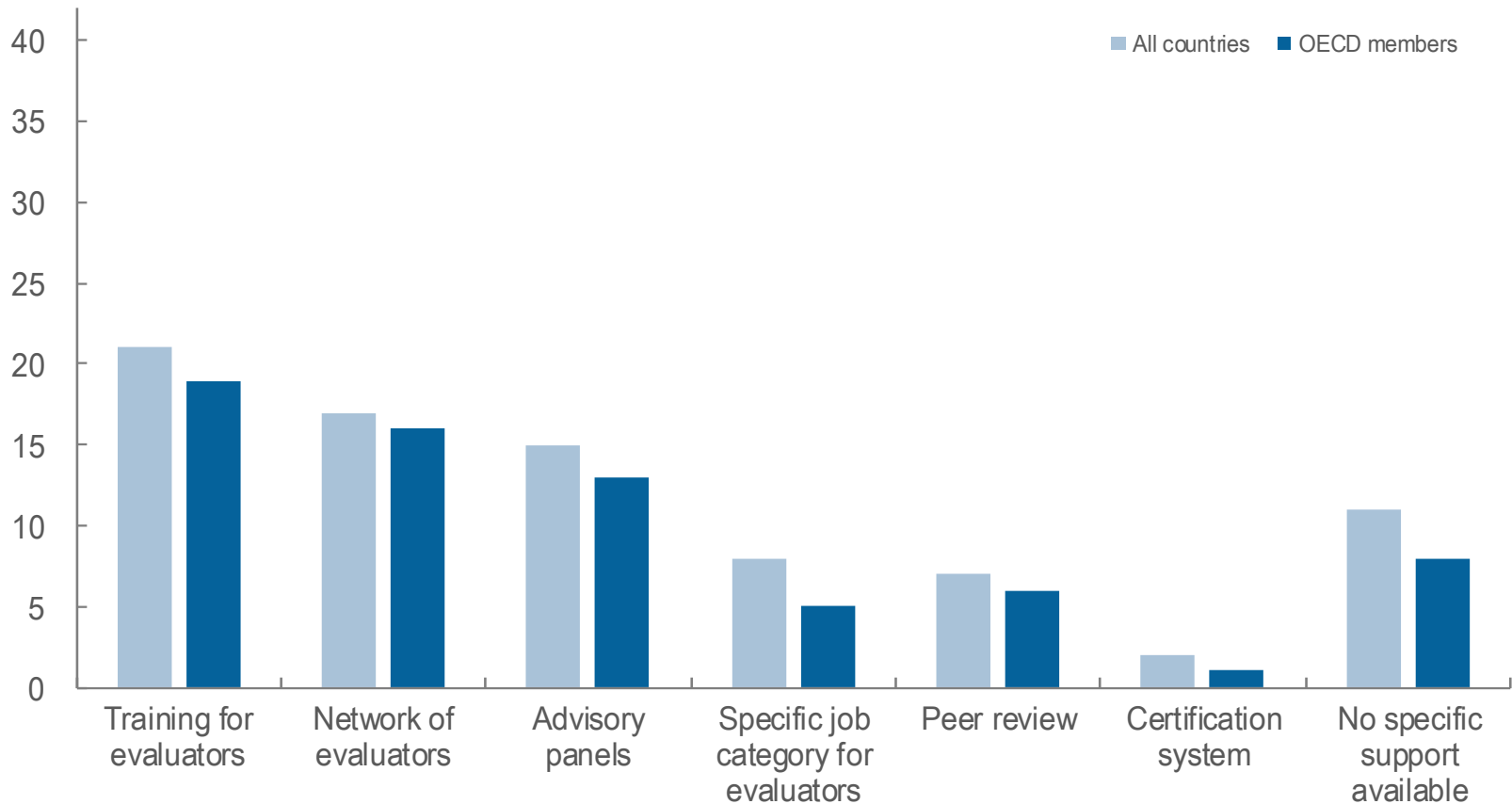
- A country can foresee that all evaluations are subject to peer review through a joint committee of ministries' experts, practitioners and representatives of civil society;
- The European Commission has developed a map of competences that are necessary to increase the quality of evaluations





INVESTING IN SKILLS AND TRAINING FOR QUALITY EVALUATIONS

Mechanisms implemented by countries to promote competences for policy evaluations





HOW CAN COUNTRIES PROMOTE USE?

3 main types of use...

- **Symbolic use:** when the results of evaluations are taken up to justify or legitimise a pre-existing position;
- **Conceptual use:** when evaluation results lead to an improved understanding of the subject of evaluation;
- **Instrumental use:** when evaluation recommendations inform decision making and lead actual change in the policy being evaluated.

5 main types of mechanisms.

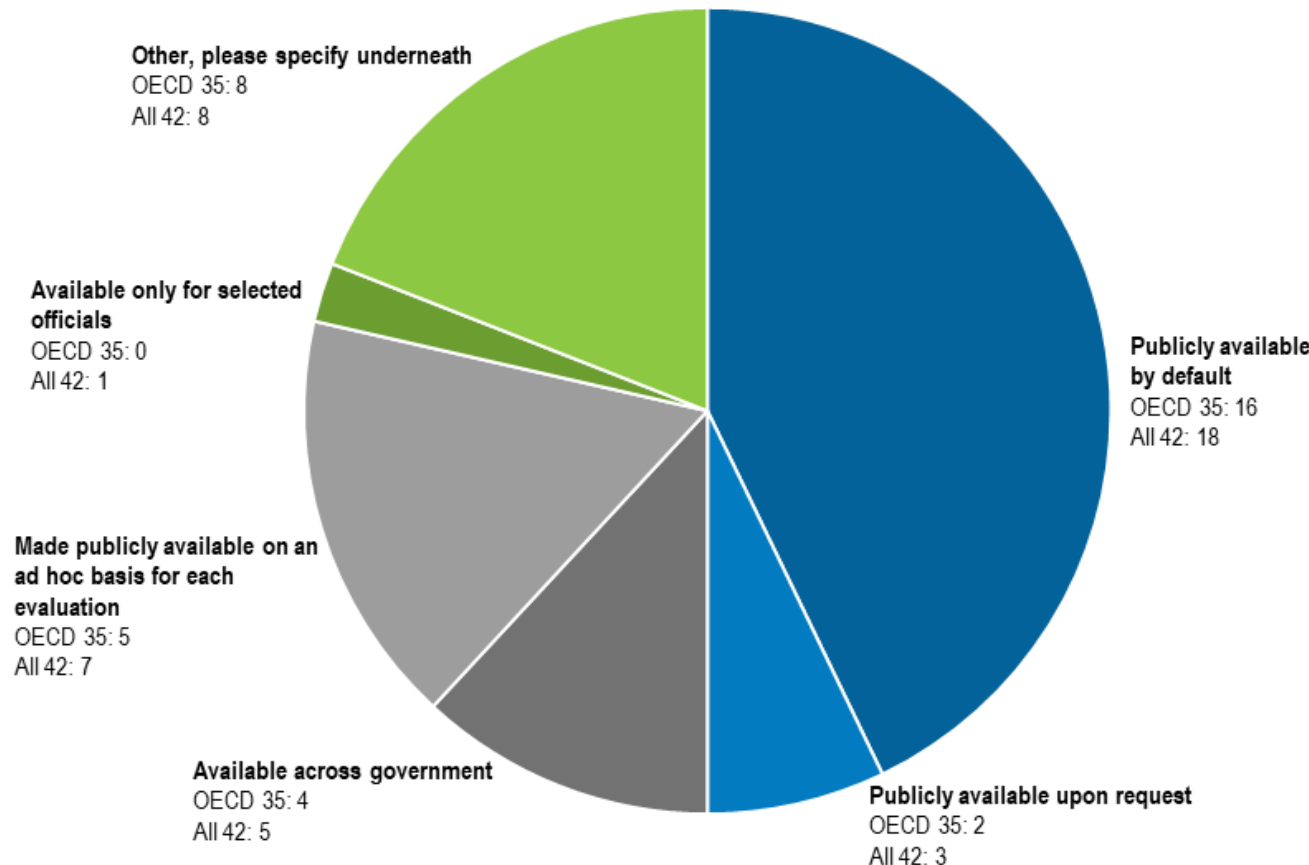
Countries have sought to promote the use of evaluations by:

- utilisation-focused evaluations;
- promoting **access to evaluations results**;
- supporting the **uptake of evaluations results**;
- increasing demand for evaluations through **competency development**;
- embedding use in the **institutional set-up**, within and outside of the executive.



PROMOTING ACCESS TO RESULTS AND ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Are evaluation results made public?



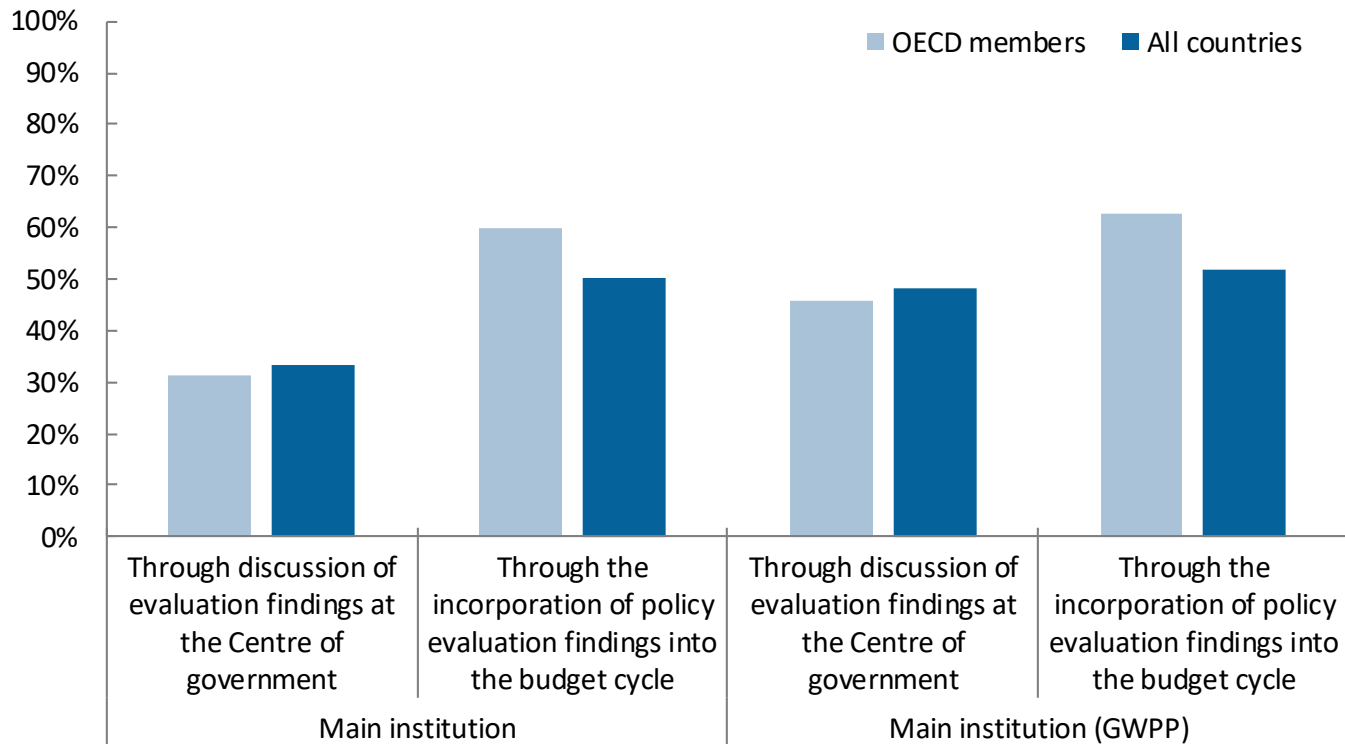
ENGAGING USERS:

- 2/3 of countries adopted formal requirements for stakeholder engagement in their legal/policy framework
- But full transparency of the results is not yet the common practice
- Very few countries use tailored communication strategies and tools.



INCORPORATING FINDINGS IN THE POLICY CYCLE

How are the results of policy evaluations incorporated into the policy cycle?



Practiced more for government wide policy priorities.



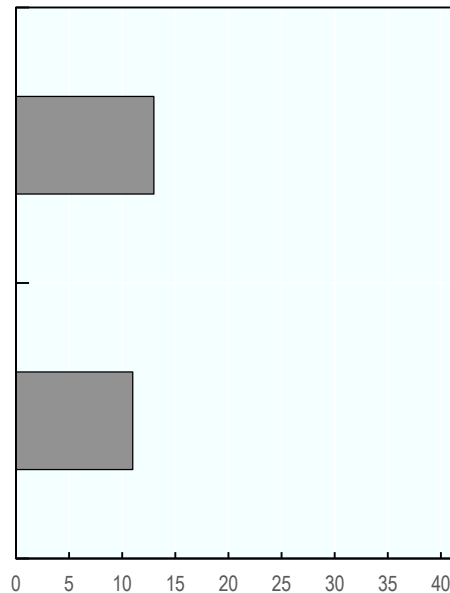
OTHER METHODS OF PROMOTING USE – THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE BROKERS

Countries have set-up knowledge brokerage mechanisms at the level of individual institutions and across government to promote use.

Knowledge brokerage mechanisms to promote use of evaluations

Through a coordination platform across government to promote the use of evidence (produced by policy evaluations) in policy...

A management response mechanism at the level of specific institutions is in place.



KEY MESSAGES AND GOOD PRACTICES:

- Management response mechanisms at the level of specific institutions are relatively infrequent (11/42) (e.g. MEX)
- Some evaluation units in Ministries take on the role of knowledge brokers, but often an institution at arm's length of government. (e.g. FRA, AUS)
- Coordination platforms or units across government (13/42) also play a knowledge broker role, by ensuring evaluations inform policy design, ensuring production of evidence matches demand, sharing evaluations to users, etc. (e.g. USA)



THE CHALLENGES OF ACHIEVING TRUST AND IMPACT

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Trusting the results of evaluation is essential

- ✓ Addressing conflict of interest, need for professional integrity
- ✓ Transparency of the process

Relevance matters and requires proximity to power!

- ✓ While autonomy makes evaluation more thorough, distance from policy makers risks making the results less usable.
- ✓ Agencies' at arms' length from government or core skills within government?

Capacity and resource gaps

- Human resources, institutional and financial set ups

Impacts of COVID:

- Speed vs. methodological integrity, accountability of spending packages

Role of the evaluation of cohesion policy within national evaluation systems and frameworks

- Strong requirements
- Speed vs. methodological integrity, accountability of spending packages



Dilemmas are faced by many and no one size fits all



THANK YOU

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