

## Draft conclusion

**Public policy evaluation conducted by SAIs could be strengthened by a more assertive use of quantitative techniques.**

1. SAIs conducting public policy evaluations mainly resort to a qualitative approach to assess and understand the causal relationships between the actions of a policy and its effects on the targeted audience of the public policy.
2. This approach partly relies on statistical observation, but it also draws a lot from the humanities and social sciences and engagements with key stakeholders.
3. For each evaluation conducted by SAIs, the optimal combination of qualitative and quantitative methods should now be considered. When feasible and appropriate, quantitative techniques should be implemented in order to complement – without replacing – qualitative methods, which most probably better explain impacts but often come short measuring them.
4. The strengthening of evaluations by a quantitative approach, when applicable, should constitute a prime objective of SAIs. This approach requires having enough time to conduct the study, access reliable databases, implement often sophisticated mathematical tools, and analyze relevant counterfactual scenarios -including a baseline.
5. In order to conduct deeper quantitative analyses to better evaluate the impacts of public policies, SAIs could consider any of the following: statistical and econometric skills acquisition by their auditors, the recruitment of or contracting withof specialists in quantitative methods, and partnerships with universities or scientific associations.
6. Use of sophisticated quantitative methods (for example, big data analytics, difference-in-difference, randomized controlled experiment, regression discontinuity, matched comparisons, and instrumental variables, among others...) should be bolstered by the adoption of internal or external advisors, in order to make sure that the sophisticated quantitative work is appropriate and reasonable for the purpose at hand. As such, it is highly advisable that SAIs adopt one or several independent reviewers or an advisory or supervisory committee, some of whose members would be experts in quantitative methods so they can technically review the methodological choices and, when appropriate, the results.
7. Hence, INTOSAI GOV 9400 guidelines on the evaluation of public policies will be supplemented by methodological sheets on those issues.