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SWISS FEDERAL AUDIT OFFICE



Involving Stakeholders in Evaluation at the Swiss Federal Audit Office

INTOSAI Working Group on Evaluation of Public Policies
Vilnius, 12 – 13 June 2019 – Emmanuel Sangra

Overview

- 1. Importance**
- 2. Identifying Stakeholders**
- 3. Ways of Involving Stakeholders**
- 4. Advisory Groups**
- 5. Comparing INTOSAI GOV 9400 and ISSAI 300**
- 6. Conclusion**

1. Importance

- Usual goal of an evaluation = improving a policy
- Improving a policy = considering effects outside of the administration
- Considering effects = involving very different stakeholders
- Involving stakeholders = better results, higher legitimacy of the report, better implemented recommendations

Goal of this presentation: to motivate to better involve stakeholders!

2 . Identifying Stakeholders

Evaluation should pay attention to the full range of individuals and groups invested in the public policy and affected by it

Five main type of stakeholders:

- Politicians (legislative / executive)
- National, federal administrations implementing the policy
- Other actors implementing the policy (states, regions, local administrations, public or private organizations)
- Interest groups (professional, business, environmental organizations, trade unions, NGOs etc.)
- Citizens, firms



At the SFAO, we believe that the academic community and the media are stakeholders only if the topic of the evaluation concerns them! An academic expert engaged for a topic not related to university policy is not considered as a stakeholder.

3. Ways of Involving Stakeholders

1. Involving stakeholders as source of information for the evaluation

- Facts, points of view, perspectives
- Interviews, online, phone, postal survey etc.

2. Involving stakeholders in the organization of the evaluation

- Conception of the evaluation, discussion of the results and recommendations
- Meetings, advisory committee, possibility of taking a position in the report etc.
- Different levels of participation: information, consultation, decision...

=> Advisory group

Question



Do you involve stakeholders in the organization of your evaluations?

Involving Stakeholders at the SFAO



Stakeholders	As source of information for the evaluation	In the organization of the evaluation	
		Consultation	Advisory Group (if any)
Politicians (executive / legislative)	Rarely - only if : - deep knowledge of the policy - topic concerning role of the parliament or the government	Rarely (only if they commissioned the evaluation)	Never
Federal administrations implementing the policy	Always	Always (project start, concept, report draft, position on the report and recommendations)	Always
Other official actors implementing the policy	Always	Never	1 – 2 actors (if the federal administration is not implementing the policy alone)
Interest groups	Systematically	Never	Always (the most important groups – balanced representation of the actors)
Citizens, firms	Sometimes	Never	Never


4. Advisory Group

Importance

1. Knowledge holders
2. Door openers (access to information or data)
3. Quality assurers (credibility of the results)
4. Multiplier agents (use of the results)

An advisory group has no decision-making power and is not charged to find a consensus. SAI stays responsible for the evaluation and its results!

When should an Advisory Group be set up?

- Measuring impacts outside of the administration
 - Very technical topic (e. g. environment, health, pension fund, taxation)
 - Significant risk that results will be challenged regardless of their quality
 - Fear of not having access to all the necessary information
-  SFAO: an Advisory Group was set up for ~30% of realized evaluations (20 of 72 evaluations)

Advisory Group – Composition

1. Evaluated administrations
2. Other actors implementing the policy
(states, regions, local administrations,
public or private organizations)
3. Interest groups



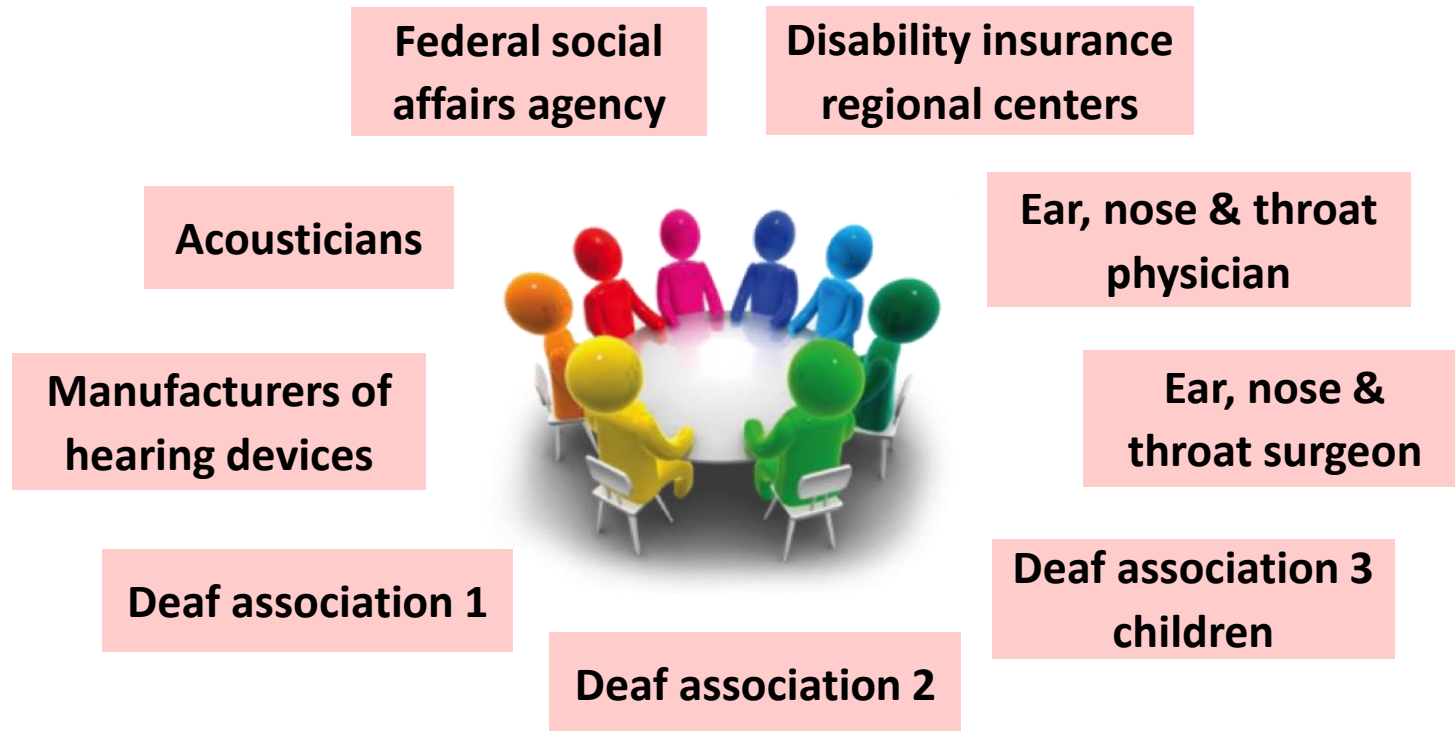
Question



Which stakeholders would you involve in the organization of a project evaluating state aids for hearing devices?

Advisory Group Composition – Example

Project evaluating state aids for hearing devices



Advisory Group – Administration



How many members?	8 - 18
Number of meetings?	2 – 3 per evaluation
Place of meetings?	at the SFAO
Time expenditure?	2-3 hours per meeting (without preparation!)
Possible compensation?	yes (150 € per meeting, reimbursement of transport costs)
Internal resources?	~ 10 days FTE (search, selection of members, contact, organization, documents, preparation of slides, sessions, minutes)

Experience with Advisory Groups

1. AG members are quite interested in evaluations and want to know exactly what is being done
2. AG members try to influence results! But inputs that are not based on proven facts are easy to identify...
3. AG are not difficult to lead
4. AG clarify ambiguities and identify mistakes in the reports or conclusions that are not sufficiently supported by the findings
5. AG expect consideration of their input. But SAI has the final say! SAI must clear communicate that it is responsible for the evaluation and its results

Advisory Groups: when?

1st meeting (at the end of feasibility study) – examples of subjects

- Questions
- Limits of the evaluation
- Criteria that can be used for answering the questions
- Way for getting data
- E.g. country which could be chosen for comparison
- Etc.

2nd meeting

- Mains results (slides)
- Possible recommendations
- Etc.

3rd meeting

- Reports and annexes
- Communication of the results
- Etc.

Topic
Identifi-
cation

Topic
Explora-
tion (5%)

Preparation
(25%)

Evaluation
(70%)

Follow-
up

5. Comparing INTOSAI GOV 9400 and ISSAI 300

- By usual performance audit the stakeholders are inside the audited organization!
- Some “stakeholders” mentions by ISSAI 300 (29), 3000 (55, 59, 133), 3100 (60, 172), 3200 (28, 63 105)
- ISSAI: It is advisable to... / but attention it can be dangerous...
“take care to ensure that communication with stakeholders does not compromise the independence and impartiality of the SAI“
- INTOSAI GOV 9400: “the association of stakeholders is a key point of the evaluation of public policies”
It is necessary to involve them – it will increase the independence of the SAI if all the different affected stakeholders involved

6. Conclusion

Involving all the stakeholders is necessary when collecting information

- Don't forget stakeholders! Ensure participation for affected groups that are typically overlooked or excluded!

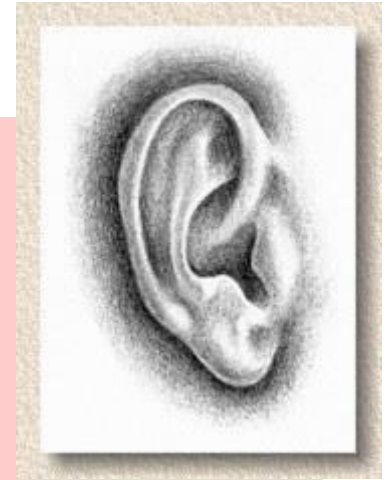
Working with Advisory Groups needs time!

AG give more importance to the stakeholders and less to the administration...

Advisory Groups are good for

- Opening the perspectives
- Accessing to information
- Creating transparency and building trust
- Quality insurance
- Supporting the results
- Testing the direction of the recommendations
- Disseminating the results

Thank you for listening!



Questions ?

