



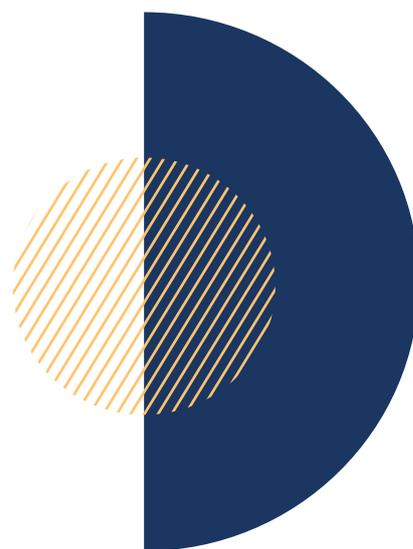
European
Commission



PRACTICAL GUIDELINE

for policy-makers
and practitioners
regarding
Evaluations
in tertiary
prevention

**IN THE FIELD OF
ISLAMIST EXTREMISM**

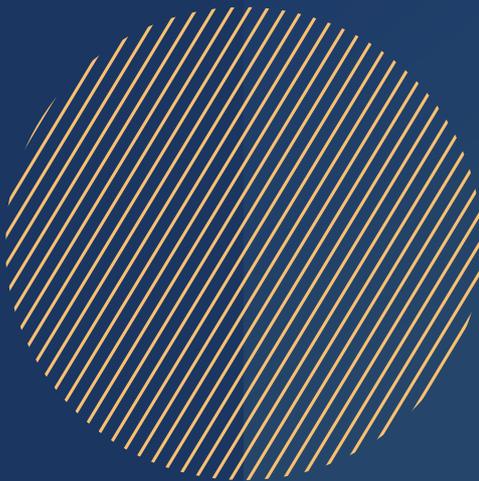


*Migration and
Home Affairs*

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION



General introduction

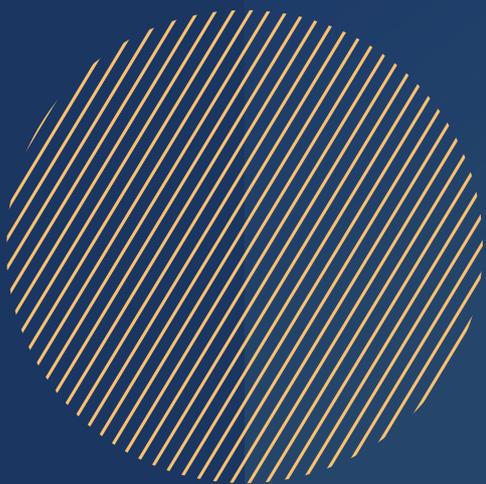
In its final report of 18 May 2018, the high-level Commission expert group on radicalisation (HLCEG-R) recommended creating a new collaborative format: 'project-based collaborations', led by Member States with the support of the Commission.

The purpose and added value of project-based collaborations was to allow like-minded Member States to collaborate through a series of meetings to produce specific deliverables that helped implement better policy responses.

Following input received from the Member States, the Commission organised in 2019 seven projects with various formats: study visits, workshops or combination of study visits and workshops.

Each group working on a project validated a final report with guidance and recommendations.

**PRACTICAL GUIDELINE FOR POLICY-
MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS
REGARDING EVALUATIONS
IN TERTIARY PREVENTION IN THE
FIELD OF ISLAMIST EXTREMISM**



I. Introduction

The goal of evaluations is to learn, thereby improving our approaches to tertiary prevention of Islamist extremism. Evaluating allows us to assess the fruitfulness of interventions in order to be able to justify, adjust and rectify our approaches. Different types of evaluation focus on different aspects of the work being done. Some look into the plans developed in order to understand whether, based on current knowledge, the interventions and instruments that are being lined up promise to be executable and effective under the applicable conditions (plan evaluation). Others focus on the working processes of a programme or project, aiming to understand their underlying logic (process evaluation) or analyse their impacts (effect evaluation), helping to address challenges that a programme or project encounters, and, not least, assessing the justification of what is being done, ensuring that taxpayers' money is not wasted.

Evaluations help practitioners reflect on what they are doing by providing an outside perspective, and give policy-makers valuable insights into the inner workings of a programme or project. They also allow for the acquisition of valid and reliable data that enable practitioners and policy-makers to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of implemented measures and policies. In recent years, evaluation has emerged as a bigger topic on the P/CVE agenda, with discussions mainly trying to answer the question of what works in tertiary prevention – for whom, when, how, under which circumstances, also addressing sustainability and the cost of interventions. This is a pertinent question, especially in light of the specificities of this line of work. Since tertiary prevention measures are applied within a context of a variety of factors influencing the individual they are targeted at, it is not easy to clearly discern cause and effect. On top of that, without a control group, it is not possible to reliably assess how the situation would have developed without the intervention. This makes it difficult to relate an implemented measure to a specific outcome and, in turn, to measure the impact of the intervention.

In spite of these difficulties, an evaluation can provide empirical insights and solid understanding of the work being done. It not only helps identify good practices, it also provides a structured process of learning from approaches that did not yield the desired result, thereby avoiding ineffective practices. Possible backfiring can be identified and remedied/mitigated. If implemented during the active phase of a project, evaluation enhances its success by providing instruments for monitoring and intervening while it is still running. Measures already implemented can thus be refined and adjusted. Newly introduced measures can profit from lessons already learned, thereby saving resources by not having to start from scratch. Being able to coherently explain the logic of a programme or an implemented measure, and show how and why prevention works (and also demonstrate the pitfalls, challenges and limitations of work in tertiary prevention, and its evaluation) will help ensure continued political and public support. At the same time, it lays the groundwork for increased efficiency of public expenditure.

In this relatively new field of work, with a relatively small body of thoroughly analysed practical experience, evaluation helps determine whether the theories of change on which a project operates and its working principles are in line with the project's projected outcomes. It is thus a crucial part of quality assurance and professionalism in tertiary prevention, and will assist in the further development of commonly agreed joint professional standards.

Evaluation can improve not only practice, but also policy, since it is a necessary part of designing, executing and taking stock of policies. As such, it is a prerequisite for carving out a working, coherent strategic approach to P/CVE. In order to make the most of evaluation results and structured assessments of experience in implementing P/CVE policies, evaluation and policy-making should together be seen as a circular process, not a linear one. The results of evaluations of a certain measure/project/policy should inform the preparation of the next steps. When evaluation becomes part of the concept/measure/project/policy cycle, knowledge can accumulate of which kind of effect the concept/measure/project/policy has, and under what conditions. This increases the chance that the concept/measure/project/policy will be as effective and efficient as possible in countering (violent) extremism.

To achieve this, the practical and the strategic levels need to be aligned as far as possible. This means understanding learning and policy as cycles, not as linear processes, with feedback loops that allow for structured targeted reflection. These cycles should integrate the outcomes of evaluations, as well as the outcomes of other practical research and the effects these outcomes have on policy. To further this goal, evaluations should be performed not just once, but in a series of consecutive evaluations, each evaluation taking on the results of the previous one. Implications for policy arising from this process of reflection should be given special attention. Next to improving practical knowledge, this will encourage the further development of a constructive culture of self-critical evaluation.

Evaluation and structured exchange about good practice and lessons learned in P/CVE work, including the dos and don'ts of planning, implementing and following up on an evaluation, allow us to learn from one another and from our experience. As a result, we will be able to target our different measures and approaches more effectively and adjust them to new challenges in fighting radicalisation. This practical guideline, a collaborative effort by a number of EU Member States, aims to provide practical assistance for policy-makers and practitioners working with this challenging task. It aims to improve compliance with evaluation standards, and good practice when evaluating measures in tertiary prevention of Islamist extremism while taking account of and respecting local, regional and national contexts and differences.

The guideline aims to highlight points requiring special attention when planning, implementing and following up on evaluations. It thus raises awareness of the challenges in conducting a purposeful evaluation with meaningful outcomes. It also offers practical advice on how to deal with these challenges, and helps policy-makers and practitioners make informed choices when it comes to evaluation. It can be applied to measures carried out by state actors and CSOs. We hope that the guideline will provide added value especially for those who have not yet had much exposure to this topic and will appreciate a starting point

for deciding what to do, when and how, based on a literature review and an overview of relevant public policies.

This practical guideline was developed as part of the European Commission's initiative for a project-based approach involving representatives from interested Member States, practitioners and researchers, in projects focused on certain topics. The project-based approach aims to share experiences and knowledge in order to find important common elements for preventing radicalisation to violent extremism and terrorism.

The project on 'Evaluations in tertiary prevention (in the field of Islamist extremism)', led by the European Commission and Germany, brought together experts from seven Member States (Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Czechia, Denmark, Italy and Germany), the European Commission (DG-HOME), the Radicalisation Awareness Network's Centre of Excellence (RAN CoE) and the European Expert Network on Terrorism Issues (EENeT). The guideline reflects a holistic approach that combines the perspectives of practitioners, researchers and policy-makers.

In parallel with the development of the guideline, the Centre of Excellence (CoE) of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) developed the 'Peer and Self Review Manual for Exit Work'¹. The Manual's goal is 'to facilitate the process of improving exit work and assessing its impact by means of looking at the work of colleagues, or one's own work in a structured way'². It is therefore an evaluation tool to be used by practitioners in tertiary prevention. The guideline's target group is practitioners and policy-makers. Its goal is to raise awareness of the challenges of conducting an evaluation, of which practitioners and policy-makers should be aware. The guideline also offers practical advice on how to deal with these challenges. It has been developed with the involvement of the RAN CoE and the RAN EXIT working group. Both documents, therefore, complement each other.

I. Participating Member States

Representatives from Germany (DE), Belgium (BE), Czechia (CZ), Denmark (DK), France (FR), Italy (IT) and the Netherlands (NL) were present at the meetings, as were experts from the European Expert Network on Terrorism Issues (EENeT), the European Strategic Communications Network (ESCN) and the German Youth Institute. A representative of the Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence (RAN CoE) also participated to ensure that the results of the project would take into account the work already done by the RAN.

¹ van de Donk, M., Uhlmann, M. & Keijzer, F. (2019). Peer and Self Review Manual for Exit Work.

² Ibid., p 3.

II. Main insights

BEFORE THE EVALUATION (PLANNING PHASE)

A) Evaluation basics

First things first: understanding the basic logic of radicalisation and tertiary prevention

Radicalisation processes are influenced by a diverse mix of factors such as peer groups, extremist actors and the criminal milieu, problems in the family, psychological issues, (social) media, (geo)political events and of course ideology. Tertiary prevention measures therefore have to take this multifacetedness into account, and must be adjusted individually to each case, which includes assessing risks and needs. The success of these measures greatly depends on developing and maintaining a trusting personal relationship between the different actors involved.

This is especially true for the relationship between an exit worker and a client. Often, a case involves more than one person – a multidisciplinary team, at times assisted by professionals from other institutions, such as psychologists, youth welfare officers or police. This interplay of factors, actors and different working processes poses a specific challenge when evaluating the implemented measures. It is also difficult in this context to identify the demarcation between a project and its environment. Moreover, processes of deradicalisation and of disengaging from extremism usually take a long time, so it is hard to adequately gauge the sustainability of the processes. Research on recidivism, its causes and specific features is still nascent in this field.

Resist the temptation to do snap evaluations on the cheap

Policy-makers need to be aware that a quality evaluation takes time. It is therefore necessary to think ahead and develop an appropriate timeline for an evaluation as early as possible. The reward is a solid evaluation yielding meaningful, reliable and valid results, instead of a superficial study that will only be able to scratch the surface.

The earlier the better

Evaluating a commissioned project is crucial to ensuring that the objectives of the project are met. Putting an evaluation process in place from the outset is the best way to ensure that the project can be evaluated and that the data needed to conduct the evaluation can be collected on time. Concept, process and effect evaluations should be included in the project proposal/project design (note: the organisation implementing the project can also be the one commissioning the evaluation). This can be facilitated by including the need for evaluation in project procurement, by allocating a budget line to that purpose (approximately 5%-15% of the total project budget) and by taking account of the time that practitioners will have to allot to participating in the evaluation.

Mandatory evaluation of a project can be included in the call for proposals or in the contract between the commissioning government and the organisation carrying out the project. If evaluation is part of the project from the very beginning, the decision as to which data should be collected, in what form and using which methods, can be made at an early stage. This greatly enhances the informative value of the data that can be acquired through the evaluation, and enables baseline measurements that act as a prelude to the intervention.

The clearer the framework and the goals of the evaluation, the more meaningful its outcome

The goals, process, research questions, scope and limitations of the evaluation have to be clear and agreed from the outset, especially regarding different partners' involvement and expectations, time frame and budget considerations. This will help the evaluators collect the relevant data and focus their analysis on the topics of interest.

Be clear on what will be used for the evaluation report and how (e.g. only aggregated data, using pseudonyms for both clients and practitioners, how and whether to present quotes). Give clear information, especially to the practitioners, on what the evaluation is about and discuss with them what they will be able to contribute in terms of both data and time. If the partners involved are burdened by too many requests for interviews and participation in research, they may be reluctant to cooperate in research and evaluations. Consider whom to approach and how, and how participating in this evaluation might benefit them.

The more realistic the goal of the evaluation, the more useful its results

Based on your analysis of the framework and goals of the evaluation, accept the limits of what you cannot analyse or 'prove', and focus on what you can do.

Be aware of and account for the translational aspects of evaluation

Evaluation entails not only analysing data, but also translating the results of the analysis into language that the audience interested in the outcome of the evaluation can understand. It must also present the logic underlying an implemented measure and the different professional cultures of the actors involved in an intervention (e.g. social workers, police officers) in understandable language. Taking into consideration the fact that different actors have different tasks makes it possible to explain the different logic they follow. This is important, as each actor has his or her own perspective on tertiary prevention and evaluation. In an evaluation, the different logic and perspectives need to be taken into account in order to accurately picture the context within which a certain programme, project or measure is being implemented.

Furthermore, the different actors frequently use different terminology or different definitions for the same terms. In an evaluation, it is necessary to address the fact that actors speak different languages not only because of their professional cultures, but also with regard to terminology and specific definitions. Evaluations can help to develop a common language and understanding among the different actors. This is necessary to further professionalise the field.

A monitoring process agreed upon by the different partners should be put in place from the very beginning in order to adjust the evaluation if required

Evaluations in tertiary prevention are demanding. To avoid the evaluation going off-topic, it helps if the partners take a step back every once in a while and assess the evaluation process thus far, along with possible interim results.

B) Cooperation framework of involved stakeholders

Integrate relevant stakeholders and let them have their say as early as possible

To maintain trust and create a sense of owning the process and outcome, the stakeholders involved must openly exchange views on the work being done and on the evaluation. Such exchanges are absolutely necessary for obtaining meaningful evaluation results. The

different stakeholders must discuss and agree on the objectives, the framework and the design of the evaluation process.

Increase acceptance among the stakeholders

Evaluation processes often seem overwhelming for those involved, especially in the beginning. It is helpful to make room for questions that the different stakeholders might have already in the planning phase, and later throughout the evaluation process. The stakeholders should be asked whether the right questions are being addressed in the evaluation and whether the outcomes will be useful.

Invest sufficient resources in building trust

The key to obtaining a reliable, conclusive evaluation is a relationship of trust between the relevant stakeholders, all of whom have different perspectives on evaluation. A solid basis of trust is needed to establish an 'evaluation culture' that encourages open and (self-)critical analysis of the results of an evaluation.

Developing and maintaining trust and fostering open exchange between the partners to establish an evaluation culture faces various challenges. Among them is the imbalance of power between funding authorities and the funded projects. Projects often have to fulfil high expectations while receiving only short-term financing. Thus, building trust needs to openly reflect on such difficulties, and their effects on the structural framework and the sustainability of tertiary prevention.

Manage stakeholders' expectations

What an evaluation process can provide is directly linked to the evaluability of the project/measure, the time and resources allocated for the evaluation, and the capacities and specific expertise that the evaluators bring to the evaluation project. As stated above, it is important for all stakeholders involved to bear in mind that tertiary prevention is a challenging task, and so is evaluating it. Not all demands regarding what the evaluation should show or 'prove' can, or will, be met.

Manage information proactively

Inform stakeholders that an evaluation is planned. Avoid leaving it to researchers to do this themselves or allowing rumours to spread. Introduce researchers by writing a letter, or have a kick-off meeting. Specify the aim of the evaluation and how its outcomes will be used (e.g. whether they may affect the budget). Transparency while the evaluation is being planned and implemented is crucial. Active communication between the stakeholders involved should be maintained at all times.

C) Designing an evaluation

Be clear about the questions you want the evaluation to address

First of all, it is important to have a concrete understanding of the context, i.e. to know what the initial situation (baseline) is that the project/measure is intended to change. If no baseline is available for the evaluation, it is much harder to assess the project's results.

Moreover, the insights an evaluation can give can only be as good as the questions that will be asked. Therefore, be specific regarding what you want to know. For example: does the project reach the target audience? Did the project produce the desired effects – why/why not? Does the project operate according to a coherent underlying logic (theory of change)?

Are the right protocols in place? Are the protocols being followed? The degree of relevance and specificity correlates with what the institutions commissioning the evaluation know about the topic. Specificity without such knowledge will lead to irrelevant questions. Use the knowledge and expertise of practitioners to formulate the questions – they have the insights that might help the researchers to be more concrete. The more specific the question for the evaluator, the more useful and cost-effective the research will be.

Tailor the evaluation to the measure/project to be evaluated

Evaluation is not one-dimensional. Just as there is no ‘silver bullet’ approach to exit/intervention measures/projects, there is no one-size-fits-all design for evaluating the measures/projects. In order to be accurate, the design of the evaluation needs to take account of the specificities of the measure/project to be evaluated. There are many types of evaluation, e.g. concept, process, mechanism, impact, summative and formative evaluation, just to name some of the most common. They require different sets of data, different sets of instruments for analysis (methods) and serve different goals.

When designing an evaluation, the right methods need to be chosen to achieve the desired – and realistic – goal. It is possible to use different methods at different stages of an evaluation, but when processes and effects at different implementation locations need to be evaluated, maximum similarity in the methods used across locations should be used whenever possible to prevent differences in results having to be attributed to differences in the research methods used. The evaluation process should be tailored to each project and its objectives, the level of accuracy, reliability and validity that the results need to achieve, and its target audience. It should take into account the stakeholders’ capacities, expertise and resources. A poorly designed evaluation will yield superficial and/or inaccurate results.

Carefully assess the nature and quality of the available data

Not all available data can be analysed in the same way. Some data will be structured in such a way that they can be used only in a qualitative research design. Reasons for this can be that the data are too ‘bulky’ – information-rich, but difficult to streamline without losing too much relevant information, since they are too diverse to fit into the same analysis grid. Variable-oriented research designs (often referred to as quantitative designs) require that the data can be analysed using such a grid. They are useful for creating statistics pertaining to how variables are related, aiming at identifying causal inferences. Case-oriented research designs using qualitative data are useful for taking an in-depth, illustrative look at the case or process of interest and its inner workings.

A mixed-methods design using both case-oriented and variable-oriented research designs (e.g. narrative interviews that allow for bringing up all sorts of topics with a low level of standardisation, and questionnaires with a standardised set of questions addressing specific topics of interest) is the most useful, as such designs can combine the advantages of each approach. A transparent, multi-methods design is helpful for carving out a common methodological approach to evaluations in the field of tertiary extremism, which will enable a certain comparability of approaches (always taking into account the respective contexts) and thus a coherent meta-analysis of evaluations.

Depending on the evaluation design: break down goals of the measure to be evaluated into measurable indicators

The breakdown should be tailored to the objectives of the projects. One example of a goal of (part of) an exit programme and how to relate it to a measurable indicator is described in the following: one often-used intervention is counselling, which aims to help someone

develop a different, non-extremist worldview. However, a worldview is not something that can be measured directly. Therefore, we should identify a behaviour that indicates that someone is changing their view in a particular direction (away from extremism). The question is, which indicator(s) may show this happening? In this case, we could say an indicator is the extent to which someone denounces his or her extremist ideology or group. Transcripts or observation reports of the counselling session in which the individual has claimed to 'now object to extremist group X', support the indicator, and thus the likelihood someone is changing their worldview.

Caution is to be applied when trying to measure effects of a project/measure. Doing so requires a very sophisticated approach with sophisticated data collection instruments and differentiated interpretive frameworks and will not be possible in every case because the available data might not be sufficient in quality and/or quantity, or because the nature of the work as such does not allow its effects to be measured. In such cases, it will be helpful to focus on a qualitative assessment of the project/measure rather than a quantitative one.

Carefully assess whether it is possible to include clients in the research design, and if so, under which conditions

To provide insights into the impact of approaches, the effectiveness of methods and the setting of interventions, it might be useful to design evaluation formats in which clients can provide feedback, especially if new approaches are developed and modification is expected. Particularly concerning tertiary prevention, it is necessary to ensure that the intervention takes precedence over the evaluation. Any interference in deradicalisation or rehabilitation must be avoided. This rules out formats in which preliminary surveys can be compared to post-intervention surveys.

Like interventions, evaluations require trust (between clients and researchers). Distrust concerning the misuse of information before any intervention has started is to be expected. Clients should only be integrated into the evaluation design if they agree to give feedback about their personal development or their assessment of approaches, staff and impact of interventions. It has to be taken into account that even after successful interventions, clients might not be able to assess their own development on a meta level. Setting and language have to be adjusted to the interviewees, and their answers have to be compared to the assessments of e.g. consultants and prison staff regarding the individual interviewed.

Aim for the best possible level of validity of the evaluation outcomes

Farrington maintains, regarding the validity of an evaluation, that we should focus on five dimensions: internal validity, descriptive validity, statistical conclusion validity, construct validity and external validity. Which dimensions of validity apply depends on the evaluation design (variable-oriented or case-oriented).

Internal validity refers to the extent to which the evaluation demonstrates unambiguously that the intervention caused a change in the outcome measure.

Descriptive validity refers to the adequacy of reporting of key features of evaluations, e.g. design, sample sizes, characteristics of experimental units, descriptions of experimental and control conditions, outcome measures, effect sizes.

Statistical conclusion validity focuses on whether the presumed cause (the intervention) and the presumed effect (the outcome) are related, and how strongly they are related (the effect size).

Construct validity refers to the adequacy of the operational definition and measurement of the theoretical constructs that underlie the intervention and the outcome.

External validity refers to whether causal relationships can be generalised across different persons, places, times and operational definitions of interventions and outcomes.

While it will not be possible in most cases to provide results for all five dimensions, e.g. because of a lack of appropriate data or because of the project design or the nature of the implemented measure, this is a useful set against which to examine which dimension and level of validity can be obtained with the evaluation project.

Plan for regular feedback loops with relevant stakeholders

The time frame should factor in regular feedback loops and discussion of interim results with the practitioners concerned and with other relevant stakeholders. This ensures that the evaluation stays on track and does not lose focus. Furthermore, feedback loops offer the opportunity to assess the usefulness of the instruments and methods used in the evaluation, including the analysis of interim results. As experts in their own fields, practitioners can contribute aspects from their daily work that evaluators will not be aware of. This can be very useful for a realistic assessment and for the informative value of the evaluation.

Take account of the state of the art and involve experienced practitioners and researchers

Experienced practitioners, academia and the private sector can contribute crucial insights and expertise, e.g. regarding the baseline and in procuring, analysing and interpreting data within a set of ethical standards.

Provide for quality assurance regarding the evaluation

Evaluations should be carried out according to the highest academic and ethical standards. To maintain such standards, it is useful to have policy officers who are familiar with the topic of evaluation and who help to strategically plan for it and help execute it. It is also useful to appoint an advisory board to monitor the evaluation process. This advisory board should be consulted when designing the evaluation. It could consist of stakeholders (though this might have an impact on the board's independence and would therefore have to be carefully assessed) and experts from academia and practice.

The advisory board should include practitioners from outside the organisation to be evaluated, so as to avoid partisanship. An ethical charter should be developed and agreed upon by all stakeholders before the evaluation process starts. The present practical guidelines support compliance with evaluation standards and good practice when evaluating exit facilities/intervention measures.

D) Commissioning an evaluation

Select organisations/researchers with relevant expertise and a track record of conducting high-quality evaluations

Planned evaluations in tertiary prevention are ideally performed together with (or by) the agencies that are responsible for the plans themselves. The evaluations require a high level of expertise regarding the specifics of Islamist extremism, the phenomenon of radicalisation, the evaluation methodology and the work being done in tertiary prevention. It requires familiarity with a certain set of evaluation instruments and knowledge of the contexts in

which they can and cannot be used. Evaluation tools need to be calibrated in such a way that they detect ideological markers in a reliable and valid way without falling into religious stigmatisation or allowing for false positives. Furthermore, in a field as sensitive as tertiary prevention, a high level of personal and institutional integrity is a must, as is a do-no-harm approach.

The researchers need not in every case be employed by an external partner. Several Member States employ researchers within state bodies who are experienced in matters of evaluation. Where this is applicable, state bodies could also be considered/consulted when commissioning an evaluation. Particularly when opting for this possibility, the issue of possible bias of the researcher will have to be addressed, as this is an issue often raised in this context.

Communicate clearly what is asked of the evaluators and what the scope and aim of the evaluation are

In order to meet the expectations of the party commissioning the evaluation, it is important to clarify from the start what is needed in terms of time and resources to put in place a purposeful evaluation process.

DURING THE EVALUATION (IMPLEMENTATION PHASE)

E) Implementing an evaluation

Support the evaluating organisation/researchers by facilitating access to stakeholders

Evaluators will not be able to conduct a meaningful study without access to stakeholders who need to be taken into account in the context of the evaluation. Evaluators will usually need the commissioning party to identify the relevant stakeholders and provide their contact details. At times, it will be necessary to vouch for the evaluators, e.g. if they want to approach a security agency or when first contacting the practitioners. This could be organised by a steering or advisory board.

Allow for flexibility to adjust the evaluation to conceptual, practical and political challenges that might evolve during the course of the evaluation

Evaluating exit facilities/intervention measures is demanding. Different kinds of challenges, such as obstacles to the initial conceptual approach, lack of required data or shifts in political strategies may arise while an evaluation is being carried out. A policy-maker/practitioner who commissioned the evaluation or is involved in its implementation should anticipate such challenges and allow for enough leeway to adjust the approaches and/or methods of the evaluators, e.g. by adjusting the evaluation goal, using additional data sources or addressing sensitivities in a protected space. However, this should not result in a general bias and reluctance to evaluate projects that seem difficult to assess. The adjustment should be explained, should be reasonable and should not appear to 'change the rules during the game'.

Monitor the evaluation performance as well as interim outcomes and feedback from stakeholders

Immediately gathering feedback concerning the evaluation is a useful way to ensure that the evaluation will yield the desired informative outcome, as the evaluation strategy can be adjusted. For the practitioners, it will be equally useful to inform them of interim findings so

that they can adjust their measures accordingly as early as possible. Ensure that adjustments are being communicated.

Contribute to building an evaluation culture while carrying out an evaluation

Don't conduct an evaluation simply out of a sense of obligation. The discussions of what you have learned through the evaluation can yield a common understanding on a meta-level of topics such as goals and consequences of evaluating, what place evaluation has in the policy cycle and what is asked of each stakeholder. This fosters a culture of learning and constructive criticism, which is crucial for the further development of programmes and projects.

F) Preparing for what comes after the evaluation

Discuss the evaluation results with the practitioners concerned before making the results available to a broader public

Be clear what the goal of the meeting is: to give the practitioners a preview, a chance to signal possible mistakes and reflect on some of the outcomes so they can be contextualised, or to provide input for improvement. Inform them of the next steps in the process, e.g. when and how results will be published. The discussion of results and possible consequences should be carried out in agreement with the project management.

AFTER THE EVALUATION (FOLLOW-UP PHASE)

G) Communicating the outcomes of an evaluation

Work out a communication and dissemination strategy on why, and how, you will share the results of the evaluation, and which results

Neither practitioners nor policy-makers tend to read long reports. Providing a good summary is therefore advised, taking into account the information needs of the respective target groups. Apart from the official report, issue side letters with recommendations/action points for the organisation delivering the exit work and for the body that commissioned the evaluation. Anticipate media reactions and have a media strategy in place. Formulate ready-to-use answers to possible frequently asked questions regarding the evaluation. Develop a strategy for publishing the evaluation. Together with the organisation carrying out the evaluation, determine the specifics in the contract. Do all of this while ensuring as much transparency as possible.

Prepare to follow up on reactions to the evaluation

The reactions to the evaluation can be very helpful, as they may offer suggestions for improvement and constructive criticism that should be dealt with.

Share what you have learned with partners in your country and abroad

In order to improve P/CVE work nationally and across the EU, it is key to communicate not only the achievements but also the lessons learned and the limits of projects. Recommendations on how to further improve evaluation efforts will be of equal interest. Sharing the results with relevant partners and stakeholders will furthermore help establish a certain consistency between evaluations led by different institutions and at different levels nationally and internationally. This should always accommodate the diversity that characterises the different local, regional and national contexts. Have a good summary in place also for non-experts, that can be used e.g. for media representatives and the policy sphere.

H) Implementing the results of an evaluation

Make sure that results of an evaluation are taken into account when developing future policies and projects

Evaluation is largely about developing, managing and transferring knowledge, and making this knowledge available in the future. As stated above, the policy-making process ought to be seen as a cycle with recurring events, rather than a linear process. Existing evaluations should be referred to when launching a new call for proposals. Attention should be drawn to the underlying mechanisms that led to promising outcomes, or important contextual conditions that need to be met for the programme or intervention to work. It is easier to integrate these general mechanisms into future projects than to make claims based on single/unique evaluations. Results and recommendations can be used in policy papers and strategic documents.

After the evaluation is before the evaluation

Put the evaluation on the agenda for a targeted follow-up assessment to see if the recommended changes were made to the evaluated project/measure. Furthermore, establish a meta-perspective on the evaluation. Adjust instruments so that they fit future evaluations better, e.g. concerning assessment of new challenges in CVE practice.

