



National Audit Office

INSIGHT

Delivering value from major projects



Introduction to Insights

We identify good practice and lessons learned across government.



Our good practice guides make it easier for others to understand and apply the lessons from our work.



Our lessons learned publications draw together insights from our audits into public sector projects and programmes to help government improve in future.

Our expert insight teams look at these cross-cutting areas:

- Analysis
- Commercial
- Digital
- Financial & Risk Management
- Major Project Delivery
- People and Operations
- Environment and sustainability



INSIGHT

Lessons learned:
Delivering value from
government investment
in major projects

Cross-government



We returned to look at 6 long-completed projects to see how government, operators and stakeholders went about delivering value:

- Millennium Dome / O2 Arena
- High Speed 1
- The BBC's move to Salford
- The London 2012 Olympics
- Diamond Light Source
- The Hartree Centre



Start with the difference you want to make and the value you want to produce, not the project you want to do.

Our observations

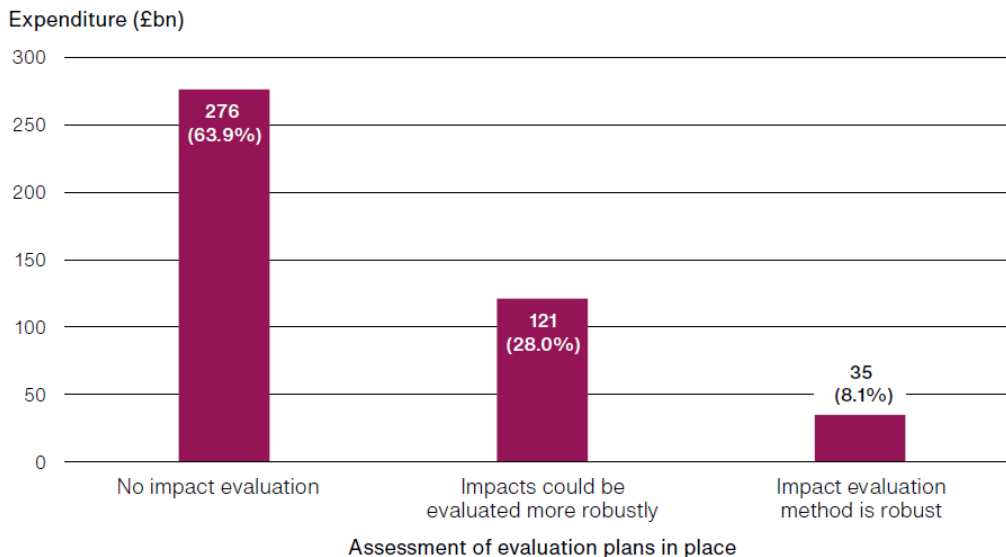
- In order to demonstrate value, projects need to be properly evaluated.

Much of government activity is poorly evaluated or not at all

Figure 2

Evaluation gap across the Government Major Projects Portfolio, December 2019

In 2019, the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit's assessment found that only 8% of £432 billion planned expenditure on the Government Major Projects Portfolio had plans for a sufficiently robust impact evaluation



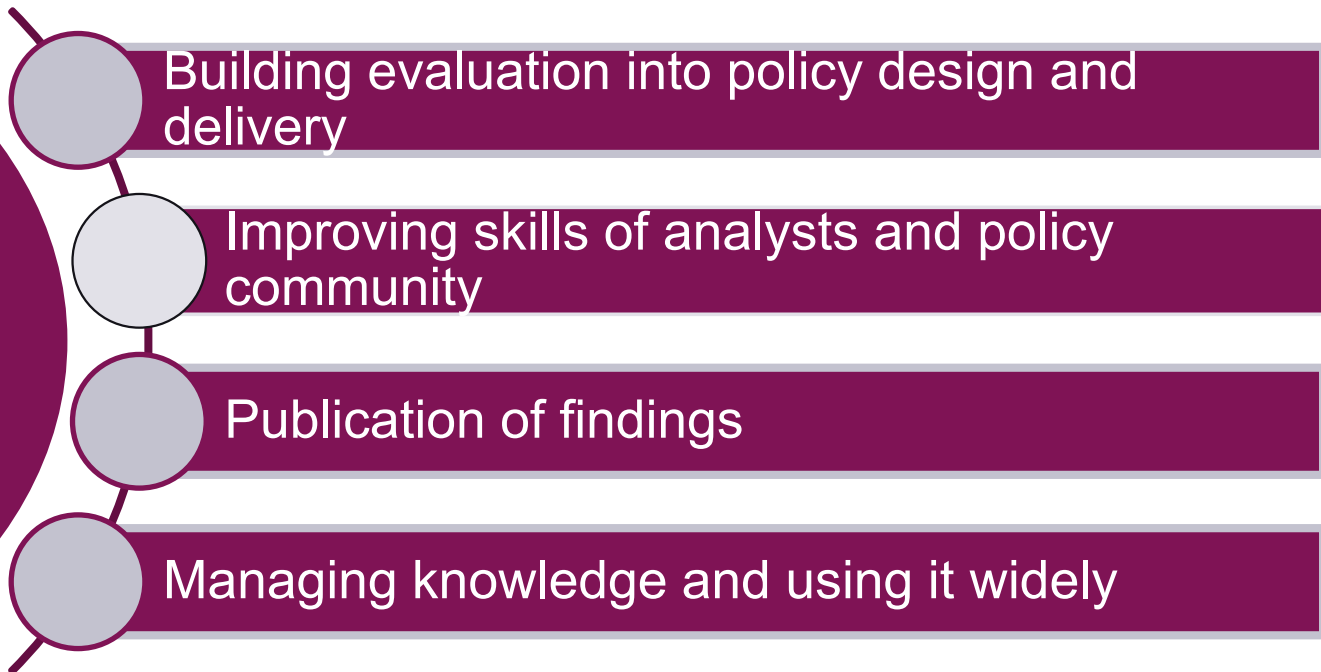
Key enablers for improving the provision and use of evaluation evidence

Taking a more strategic approach to evaluation



Embedding change and using evaluation findings

Key enablers



Our observations

- In order to demonstrate value, projects need to be properly evaluated.
- Major projects can act as a catalyst for growth.
- A clear vision, objectives and leadership culture focused on the intended value of the project are key.

Our observations



- Many organisations and stakeholders need to work in partnership, creating a shared vision, through delivery and beyond.
- It can take time and additional investment to realise value from major projects.
- The potential value from a project can go beyond the value that was originally intended.



Conclusions

- Start with the difference you want to make and the value you want to produce, rather than the project you want to do.
- Fully consider the wants, needs and concerns of stakeholders (those who will use, operate or benefit from the project) from design through to business as usual, and balance this against your strategic objectives.
- Once the asset or transformed service is complete, regularly review the contribution it makes to your strategic objectives and be willing to adapt if it would deliver more value



National Audit Office





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