



Making Evaluation Relevant for the SDGs



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KNOWLEDGE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NETWORKING

Overview

- Sustainable Development Goals: aspirational and reflecting experiences
- Development evaluation emerged in aid organizations
- OECD/DAC Criteria for evaluation recognized all over the world, but need to be updated
- Challenge to take sustainability issues into account
- Shift to country ownership of evaluations needs to be taken into account
- OECD/DAC and World Bank are undertaking a consultative process





ARGUMENT

The SDGs Should Stand for Senseless, Dreamy, Garbled

Play sports! Be in harmony with nature! And end all preventable deaths! Only the U.N. could have come up with a document so worthless.

BY WILLIAM EASTERLY

SEPTEMBER 28, 2015



2015 marked a historic turning point. The sustainable development goals (SDGs) unanimously adopted by the United Nations last September provide an aspirational narrative and specific targets for human development: a world free from hunger, injustice and absolute poverty; a world with universal education, health and employment; a world with inclusive economic growth, based on transparency, dignity and equity.

The 17 SDGs' call for "global citizenship and shared responsibility" and provide legitimacy for a new global social contract for a grand transformation toward a sustainable future. They fully acknowledge the scientific advances achieved during the last three decades that have established compelling evidence that otherwise, as the UN general assembly warned, "the survival of many societies, and of the biological support systems of the planet, is at risk." Humanity has pushed the Earth system and its global commons to their limits and the SDGs provide us with the long-needed paradigm shift towards realising the opportunity of a sustainable future for all.

Source: The Guardian (accessed 31 March 2018). *Leave no SDG behind* <https://goo.gl/L1WCoM>

Evaluation as emerging profession

- Evaluation is *“the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results”*
 - 2002 Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results based management – OECD/DAC
- Evaluations tend to undertake or outsource studies which differ in depth and intensity and take from 3 months to 6 years
 - End of project evaluations: 2-3 months
 - Programme evaluations: from 3 months to 2 years
 - Comprehensive evaluations: from a year to 3 years
 - Historical evaluations: up to 6 years

Principles and Standards

- While there is a great variety of evaluation approaches there is also converging agreement on principles and best practices
- Professional standards have been adopted in associations, networks and institutions
 - 1981 Standards for Program Evaluation (Joint Committee US/Canada)
 - 1991 Principles for Evaluating Development Cooperation (OECD/DAC)
 - 1994 Guiding Principles (American Evaluation Association)
- Multiplication of guidelines and theoretical perspectives
 - Evidence based movement promotes RCTs as “golden standard”
 - Mixed methods recognized as most appropriate for complex evaluandum
 - Theory based approach is increasingly common

Evaluation Criteria – OECD/DAC 2002

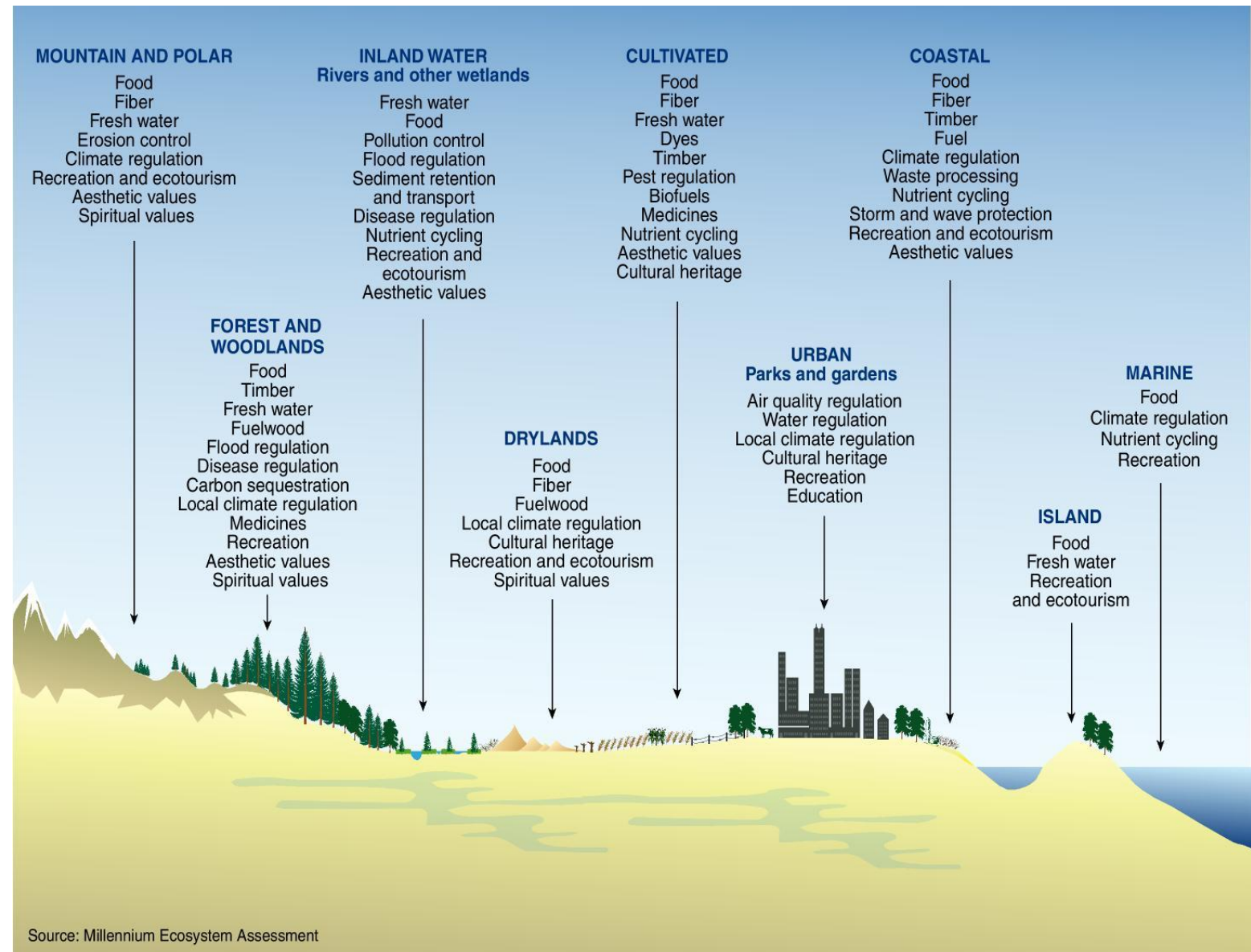
- Relevance
 - Efficiency
 - Effectiveness
 - Impact
 - Sustainability
 - Worth or significance
 - Examination of performance against standards
- Objectives consistent with policies?
 - How inputs are converted into results
 - Extent to which objectives were achieved
 - Paradigm war on what impact means:

Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Counterfactual analysis: a comparison between what actually happened and what would have happened in the absence of the intervention

Ecosystem Services

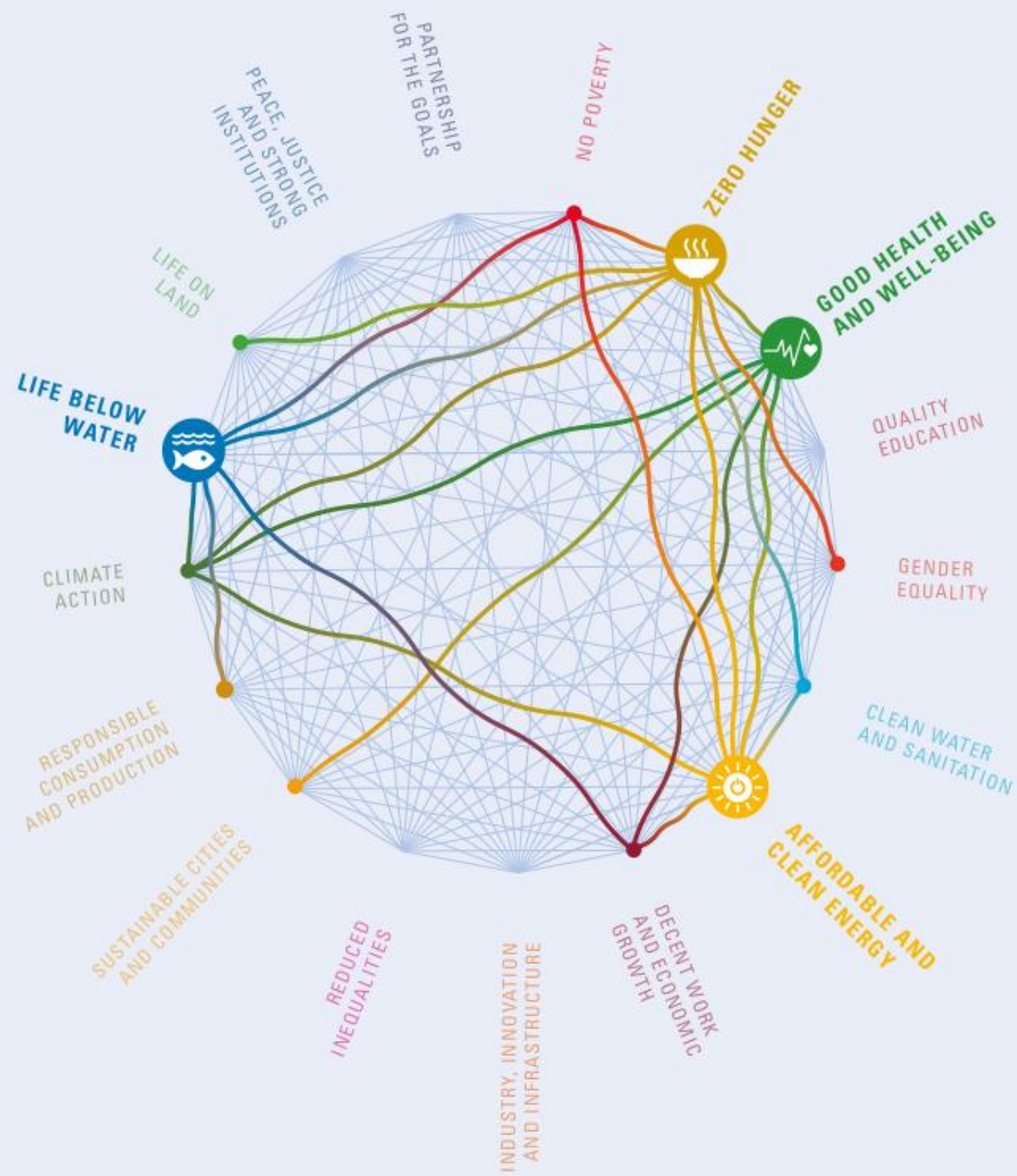
Integrating environmental concerns into sustainable development means adopting a systems perspective – including in evaluations



**A GUIDE TO
SDG INTERACTIONS:
FROM SCIENCE
TO IMPLEMENTATION**



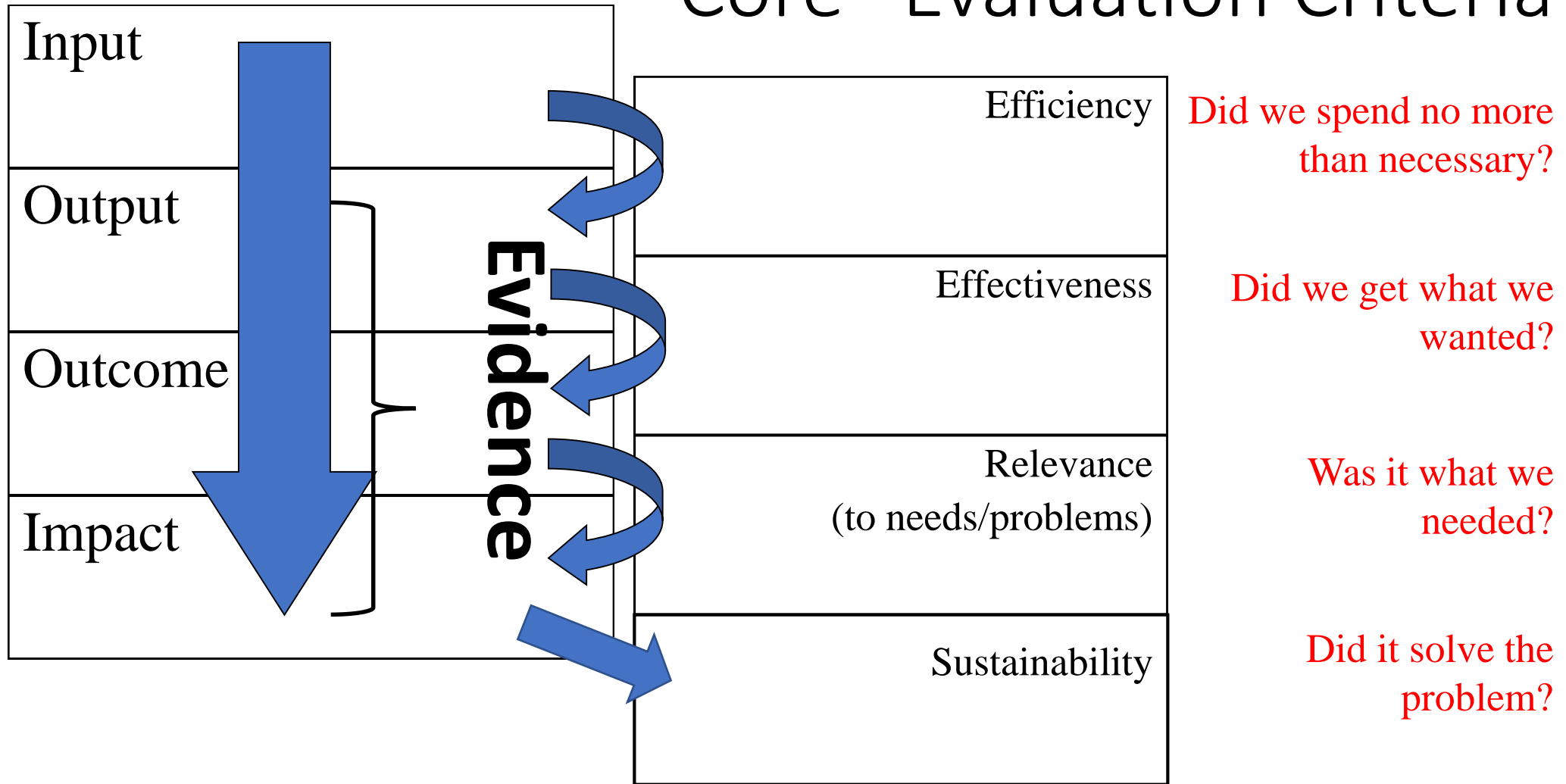
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From aid to country ownership

- Paris declaration on aid effectiveness (2005), followed by Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and the Busan agreement (2012)
 - Ownership of development priorities by developing countries
 - Focus on results
 - Partnerships for development
 - Transparency and shared responsibility
- The shift from donor to recipient is completed in the Sustainable Development Goals
 - Evaluation should be country-led
 - National evaluation systems are taking over... Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, South Africa, Benin, Uganda, Sri Lanka, Malaysia

“Core” Evaluation Criteria



Complemented by “focused” criteria

- ALNAP has formulated additional criteria for evaluation on humanitarian assistance
- UN developed guidelines for human rights and gender evaluations
- Countries may develop their own criteria
 - Bhutan: human happiness index
- Environment is working towards frameworks for calculating carbon sequestration, GHG emission reductions etc.
- Areas in development: influencing, soft power, partnerships, social entrepreneurship, impact investing, etc.

Emerging issues / criteria and approaches

- Increased emphasis on systems approaches
 - Shift from what works here and now to what achieves impact there and then
 - From linear interventions to complex multi-actor partnership efforts
 - From frequency statistics to Bayesian approaches
 - Introduction of risk, resilience and adaptation
- Sustainability perceived as an adaptive, resilient balance between the social, economic and environmental domains
- Increased emphasis on social criteria: human rights, gender, equity, inclusion, diversity
- Realist perspective in evaluation

Consultative process

- OECD/DAC, UNEG, World Bank and IDEAS sponsor website with survey running until 31 October: www.dacevaluationcriteria.org.
 - What should we keep as is?
 - What should we change or adapt?
 - New criteria to be added?
- Webinars and discussion groups
- Input during this CDI seminar

Comments and suggestions very welcome!



Thank you!

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