



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

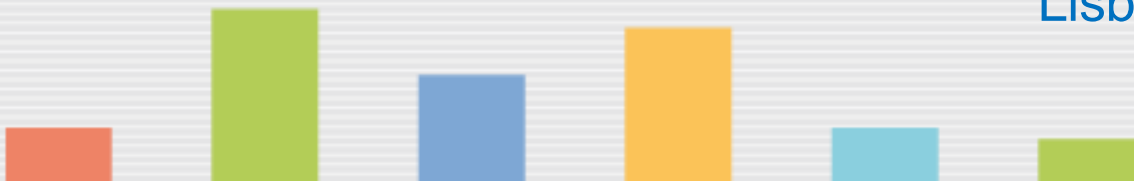
Using Supply Indicators in Evaluation – Challenges & Opportunities

Nicola Singleton¹, Andrew Cunningham², Teodora Groshkova²,
Luis Royuela², Roumen Sedefov², Paul Griffiths²

¹ Independent researcher & Visiting researcher, National Addictions Centre, IoPPN, King's College London, UK

² European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), Lisbon, Portugal

Lisbon Addictions Conference
November 2022



Acknowledgements

This presentation draws on two longstanding areas of work by colleagues at EMCDDA:

- (a) improving the supply-related monitoring and analysis; and
- (b) Support for drug policy evaluation.

Source

Singleton, N., Cunningham, A., Groshkova, T. et al (2002) “Using Supply Indicators in the Evaluation of Drug Supply Reduction – Challenges and Opportunities” in Rossi, C. and Conti, S (eds) *Evaluating the impact of Laws Regulating Illicit Drugs on Health and Society*, Bentham Books



Context

- Supply reduction a standard “pillar” of illicit drug policy
- Supply reduction activities a major element of drug-related public expenditure
- An increasing commitment to evidence-based policies
- Evidence base for effectiveness of supply reduction interventions weak
- Work to improve supply indicators on-going but use in drug policy evaluations remains limited



Main challenges in using supply indicators

- **Many use routine data collected for administrative purposes – seizures, arrests/convictions**
 - **Influenced by**
 - wider operational priorities
 - non-drug related activities
 - structural changes to enforcement
 - **Variability in recording and reporting practices**
 - between areas
 - over time
 - **Timeliness issues**
- **Leading to:**
 - **Gaps/discontinuities in data availability**
 - **Attribution problems**
 - **Exacerbated by lack of culture of evaluation in enforcement**



Opportunities

EMCDDA activities addressing these issues:

- **Strategy for improving current indicators**
 - Improve quality of existing supply indicators
 - Extending the range and scope of data collected
 - Enhancing the analysis of the data collected
- **Support to policy evaluation**
 - Focus on commissioners/users of evaluations
 - Realistic, pragmatic, incremental approach
 - Importance of logic models/theories of change



Opportunities – Improving supply indicators

A strategic approach

1. **Improve quality of existing indicators**
eg promoting protocols for data collection;
indicators by market level (seizures by weight bin)
2. **Extending the range and scope of data collected**
 - 3 thematic areas
 - quantitative and qualitative data





Core data

Quantitative

Seizures

Numbers
Quantities
Country of production/manufacture, transit and destination

Drug law offences

Possession/use
Supply
Production

Prices

Purity/potency

tablet content

Production

Precursors
Synthetic drug laboratories
Cocaine laboratories
Cannabis cultivation sites
Dump sites

Drug-related homicide

(plot data collection)

RETAIL, MIDDLE AND WHOLESALE

Qualitative

Annual description of national profiles of trends and developments in the three thematic areas.

Composite indicators

Market size est.

Drug affordability

RETAIL

Early Warning System

Detection of new psychoactive substances
Monitoring detected NPS for signals of health or social harm, in:
Seized, collected biological samples



Non-routine data and information

Open source information

Targeted monitoring of clear web
Social media platforms
Ecommerce websites Darknet markets

International databases

Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS)
International Operations on NPS Incident Communication System (IONICS)

Complementary methods

Drug residues in wastewater
Hospital emergency presentations
Drug residues in used syringes
Drug checking services
Web surveys on drugs

Key periodical analysis

Ad hoc research

Studies: fieldwork, contracts
(e.g. satellite imagery, cryptocurrency)



Key data providers

- Reitox national focal points
- European law enforcement drug experts
- European Network of Forensic Science Institutes
- Reference Group on Drug Supply Indicators

- Legal correspondents
- EWS correspondents
- Group of Experts on Drug Precursors
- Group of Experts on Policy Needs for Data on Crime
- European Homicide Monitor

Thematic areas

- Drug markets, drivers and facilitators
- Drug-related crime, harms and other consequences
- Drug supply reduction and responses

Opportunities – Improving supply indicators

A strategic approach

1. Improve quality of existing indicators
eg promoting protocols for data collection;
indicators by market level (seizures by weight bin)
2. Extending the range and scope of data collected
 - 3 thematic areas
 - quantitative and qualitative data
3. **Enhancing the analysis of the data collected**



Opportunities – support to policy evaluation



[Introduction](#) [EU evaluations](#) [National evaluations](#) [Resources](#) [Glossary](#)

What is drug policy evaluation and why is it important?

Evaluation is essential for effective policymaking, helping ensure that policies and programmes have the desired effect, provide value for money and do not have negative unintended consequences. The importance of evaluation has been recognised in all EU drug strategies and in the strategies of many Member States.

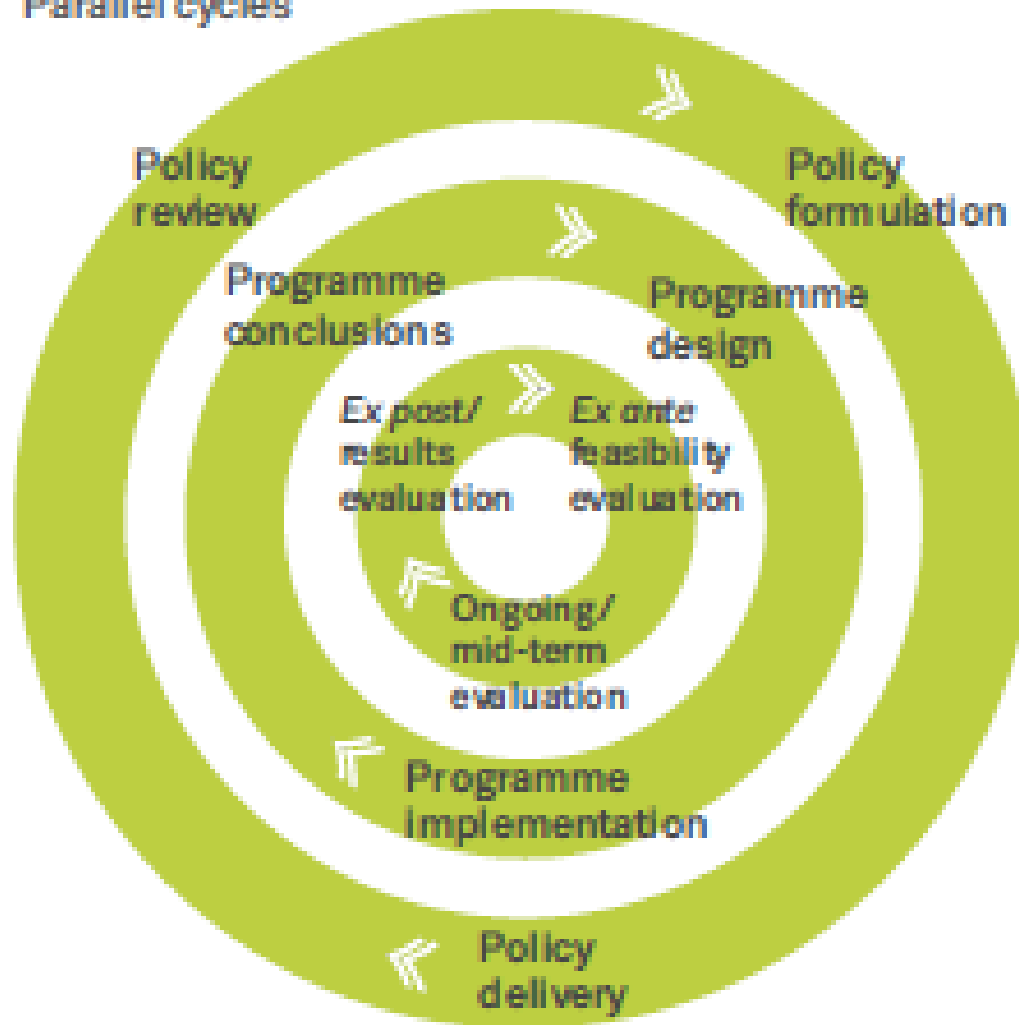
To support those considering or involved in commissioning, managing or undertaking policy evaluations, this page provides access to a range of materials, including a 7-step guide, examples of strategies and evaluations in Europe and potentially useful data sources.

Spotlight: Evaluating drug policy: a seven-step guide to support the commissioning and managing of evaluations



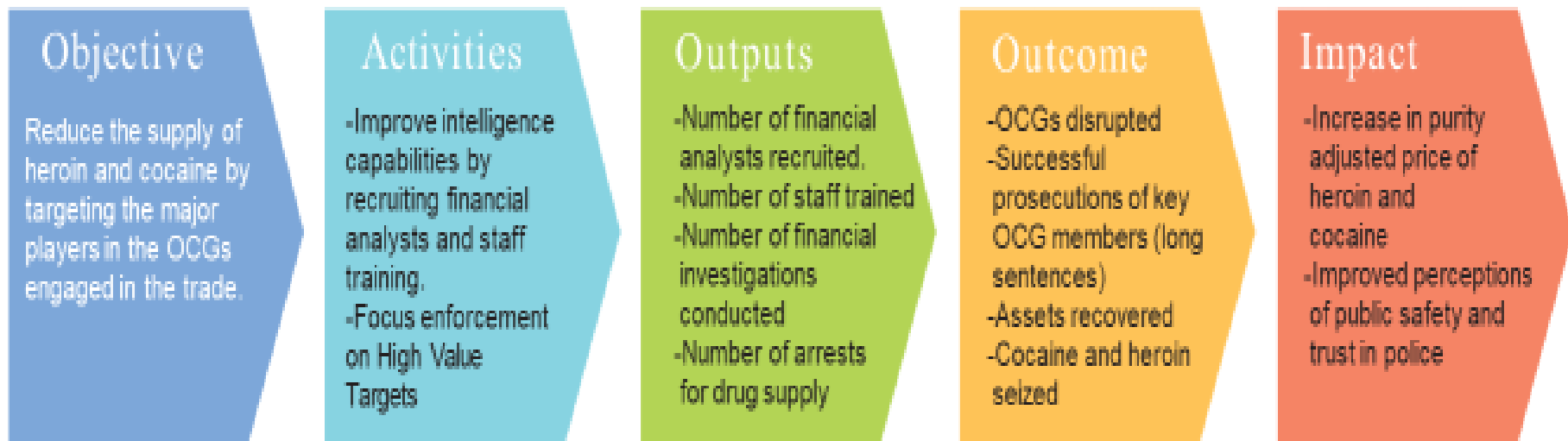
Monitoring and Evaluation essential part of a wider Policy Cycle

Parallel cycles



Opportunities – logic models in evaluation

A simplified logic model



- Clarifies aims, activities needed & sets expectations – short & long term
- Identifies broader range of indicators
- Helps to support cause and effect attribution
- Promotes discussion about unintended / alternative consequences

Summary / conclusions

- **Evaluation essential to effective policy & supply reduction indicators a key element of policy evaluation**
- **Challenging to collect and interpret**
- **Improving and extending the range and use of supply indicators essential for policy development, monitoring & evaluation**
- **Logic models/ToC a useful tool to both identify indicators and support attribution**
- **Strategic, incremental, long-term approach required**






European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction


Thank you for your attention!
Any questions?

Nicola Singleton

emcdda.europa.eu

 twitter.com/emcdda

 facebook.com/emcdda

 youtube.com/emcddatube

 flickr.com/photos/emcdda

To end on a positive note ...

“it is difficult to bring improvement in long-standing stubborn problems as poverty, violence...(drugs).
Evaluation contributes to make small continuing improvements in current policies... so that is worth the efforts”
(Weiss 1993)

‘It’s in the interaction and not in the moment of the delivery of the final report that lies the usefulness of an evaluation process’
(Patton 1982)

