

A glossary of selected terms

Additionality: The net measured or observed changes to outcomes or impacts from an intervention over and above what was expected.

Attribution: Analysis within impact evaluation which determines the extent to which the intervention being assessed was responsible for outcomes and impacts being measured.

Before and after analysis: A non-experimental method of measuring counterfactual evidence (see below) which quantitatively contrasts observed outcomes for selected impact indicators during or after an intervention with directly parallel data on the same indicators before the intervention took place.

Causal analysis: An analysis which isolates that part of an observed impact from an intervention which can be directly attributed to the implementation. An impact analysis which identified significant impact from an intervention is not necessarily evidence that the intervention (set against other influences on change) caused these change to occur.

Control and control analysis: A central element of experimental designs, data collection and their analysis which assesses the causality (see above) of observed outcomes or impacts related to an intervention by establishing a comparative analysis of change in a non-intervention group. A non-intervention group(s) may be a 'fully-experimental' randomly selected matched sample (a Randomised Control Trial) or a quasi-experimental comparison or non-random control group.

Counterfactual analysis: An analysis within an evaluation design which identifies what would have occurred if an intervention or activity had not been implemented and comparing this to the measured outcomes after the intervention. This alternate reality is called the 'counterfactual'.

Deadweight: An identified effect within an (evaluated) activity and where influences beyond those delivered directly through the intervention accounts for, or supports, some of measured outcome or impact. Isolating deadweight in overall (gross) impacts is an important feature for isolating 'net' from gross 'impacts' (see below).

Gross value/impact: An overall and non-attributed outcome or impact resulting from an (evaluated) intervention or activity (see impact below).

Impact: An observed consequence of an (evaluated) intervention related to delivering specific activities or 'outputs'; usually associated with measurement of intended longer term changes and set against high-level expectations of the intervention rather than specific goals or targets.

Knock-on impact: An unexpected, unintended or indirect consequential effect of an (evaluated) intervention (see impact above).

Leakage: Effects within measured outcomes or impacts which support others outside the targeted or expected intervention group.

Meta-analytic: Analytical methods for contrasting and combining results from different research or related studies aimed at identifying recurrent patterns among study results,

sources of disagreement among those results, or other interesting relationships that may come to light in the context of multiple studies.

Net value/impact: An outcome or impact attributed to a specific intervention or activity which discounts changes (through counterfactual estimation or measurement) which would have otherwise have taken place or occurred without the (evaluated) intervention or activity having taken place.

Outcomes: An early (short term) or medium term effect resulting from an (evaluated) intervention and usually resulting as a consequence of delivering or achieving specific activities or 'outputs' (see also impact above).

Proportionality: The principle of evaluation design which sets out that in addition to the need for reliable information, the choice and mixture of evidence gathering and analytical methods to be used should be 'proportionate' to the objectives, scale and nature of the programme being evaluated.

Randomisation: The application of probability theory through a pre-determined and structured process of random selection usually within a defined population group or sample and where each unit has a known probability for non-biased selection within, for example, experimental (intervention and non-intervention) groups.

Sensitivity analysis: Analysis of the effects on an appraisal of varying the projected values of important variables.

Spill-over effects: Unplanned consequences arising from (evaluated) interventions and activities and which can be positive (adding to the quality and range of expected impacts) or negative (detracting from programme achievements and impacts).

Substitution: Measured outcomes or impacts (or aspects of them) on an intervention group which are realised at the expense of others outside the intervention group, often as unintended consequences from the intervention (see below).

Unintended consequences: Unexpected impacts and effects of (evaluated) interventions and activities which need to be identified and taken into account in any assessment of net impacts. See also spill-over effects.

Value for Money: Value for money (VfM) measures the extent to which an intervention (or sets of activities) has provided the maximum benefit for funding bodies from the resourcing of activities, benefits secured and outcomes and impacts arising. VfM provides a quantitative measure, typically for specific goods or services, or combinations of these, although VfM assessment typically combines quantitative analysis with qualitative assessment of subjective values which may be difficult to measure or intangible and misunderstood.