



Successful NGO evaluation cultures

Literature scan

Using Evidence for Impact

AUGUST 2016



About

The Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit's (Superu's) purpose is to increase the use of evidence by people across the social sector so that they can make better decisions – about funding, policies or services – to improve the lives of New Zealanders, New Zealand communities, families and whānau.

The *Using Evidence for Impact* project takes a big picture approach and aims to inspire all those working in the New Zealand social sector to use evidence in decision-making.

The objectives behind the programme are to drive:

- greater accessibility to evidence
- greater transparency of evidence
- capability development and good practice in using evidence.

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Superu commissioned this report as part of our ongoing work to help Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) develop their evaluation capacity and inform funders about where they can best assist NGOs with building evaluation capacity.

This useful report is a review of current international and New Zealand literature on what enables NGOs to successfully build their evaluation capacity. We are publishing it so you can see where some of our later work originated.







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01_Introduction

Evaluation capacity and culture are important to a Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) overall ability to deliver high-quality services that meet the needs of clients and their whānau. To date, however, there has been very little attention paid to what makes up evaluation capacity in New Zealand NGOs, and how it might be developed and supported.

This literature scan has been carried out to inform the project *Developing an effective evaluation culture in NGOs*, being undertaken for Superu by Research Evaluation Consultancy Limited – a member of the Kinnect Group. The aim is to inform the development of a tool and a process that will support NGOs to:

- Self-assess their evaluation culture and capacity, including their capacity to measure, analyse and report on outcomes, and
- Develop plans for improving their evaluation culture and capacity that Superu and other government agencies can use to target and tailor support.

The remainder of this section provides the backdrop and rationale for this work by describing the New Zealand policy and NGO contexts in which the ability to evidence outcomes is becoming more pertinent. Section 2 provides an outline of the scope and methods used in the literature scan. This leads to the overview of the literature which: defines evaluation capacity building (ECB) (Section 3); discusses capacity development for Māori and Pacific NGO providers (Section 4); identifies key elements of evaluation capacity (Section 5); looks at evaluation capacity assessment tools and relevant indicators (Section 6); and explores how development of evaluation capacity can be supported (Section 7). Section 8 provides a summary of key findings and includes points to consider for assessing and developing ECB in New Zealand NGOs.



1.1. The policy context

In recent years a feature of government agency management in New Zealand (and many other countries) has been the use of results or outcome-based frameworks as mechanisms of accountability. The New Zealand Government's desire to build a more evidence-based approach to policy and investment in social services can be seen in the Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) *Community Investment Strategy* (CIS) (2015) and the (2012–2014) Investing in Services for Outcomes (ISO) policy. This CIS, which is being implemented over a three-year period from July 2015, clearly signals a focus on identifying and assessing results. The result the Ministry wants to be able to demonstrate is, "things are getting better for individuals, families, whānau and communities because of the services being delivered" (Ministry of Social Development, 2015, p4).

Results or outcomes-focused public management relies on high-quality performance data, reporting and assessment (Bourgeois and Cousins, 2013; Boston and Gill, 2011). Recent research indicates that although there is more performance data being applied in government systems, there are still many remaining questions about the use and usefulness of the data for decision-making and budget allocation (SSC, 2011b). It is now being suggested by researchers that there may be a need for support for organisations delivering services to increase their capacity to collect and use data to make decisions (Bourgeois and Cousins, 2013).

1.2. The NGO context

The increasing emphasis by governments on outcomes is replicated in the NGO sector. There are growing expectations among funders (government, private and philanthropic) of NGOs that they will be able to clearly articulate their intent and purpose, understand the needs they are addressing and their theory of change, and be able to measure and report on their activities, results and effectiveness (Cousins et al, 2008).

Accountability to funders is very much about demonstrating programme and service results, and value for money. This is a matter of survival for NGOs. Without evidence of programme and service intent, quality of delivery and results, hopes of ongoing financial support are much less realistic.

Recent dialogue with the community sector found that NGOs and community organisations have come a long way in the past few years in developing reporting on outcomes, with some having good levels of understanding of tools and approaches. However, there remain many organisations that are uncertain as to what is required or how to go about reporting on outcomes.¹

There is strong support in the NGO sector for building cultures of learning and improvement in ways that recognise the diversity of the sector and the many needs of whānau and individuals. While there is scepticism about measurement, there are also high levels of interest in developing the capacity to use a range of tools and approaches in ways that are practically useful and proportionate to the size and scale of organisations (Nowland-Foreman, 2013).

¹ See Social Development Partners <http://www.socialdevelopment.org.nz/featured/having-community-dialogue/>



There is a growing body of evidence that having evaluation capacity contributes to improved learning, adaptation and sustainability of organisations (including the ability to attract resources) (Labin et al, 2012; Forti & Yazbak, 2012). The literature is clear that for organisations to continue to effectively meet the needs of their clients and whānau, they need to be learning organisations. This means being capable of inquiring daily about their progress, as well as the value of what they do, and using their learning to improve, adapt and renew (Suarez-Balcazar et al, 2010; Preskill and Torres, 1999).

It is also clear in the literature that in cases where organisations have built this evaluation capacity primarily to ensure they are meeting clients and whānau needs, they have found they are also able to meet funders' and other stakeholders' needs (Forti & Yazbak, 2012).

02_Scope and methods

A rapid scan of the literature was undertaken to inform the development of a tool and a facilitated process to support NGOs to build their evaluation capacity. It was not an in-depth or exhaustive review of the literature, and the methods used reflect the exploratory nature of the exercise. The scan focused on addressing the following research question:²

What are the key elements that support the building of evaluation capacity within an NGO setting, with reference particularly to both Māori and Pacific evaluation and tools?

Literature from the decade between 2005 and 2015 was scanned for any that directly explores the research question (or a variation of it). Literature from the same time period was also scanned for discussion about the five components of the research question: 1) key elements; 2) evaluation capacity; 3) NGO settings with particular reference to Māori and Pacific NGOs; 4) Māori evaluation and tools; and 5) Pacific evaluation and tools. Methods used for the literature scan are described in more detail in Appendix B.

Overall, the types of research questions explored in the mainstream literature focus on needs, strategies and outcomes of ECB efforts; tools for assessing evaluation capacity and measuring the outcomes of ECB processes; and predictors of and interrelationships between evaluation capacity outcomes (Labin, Duffy, Meyers, Wandersman, & Lesesne, 2012; Taylor-Ritzler, Suarez-Balcazar, Garcia-Iriarte, Henry, & Balcazar, 2013). There is some literature that discusses organisational capacity building for Māori and Pacific providers, which includes ECB.

2. It should be noted that the research question originally included components such as key "infrastructure" elements and "evaluation culture". However, as these terms did not occur or were not defined or commonly used in the literature, the question was revised. Appendix A outlines the process and rationale for doing so.



The literature scan does not engage with the implications of the information gleaned (that is, take a position) and does not specifically cover strategies for building evaluation capacity. Another limitation to this scan is it focuses particularly on Māori and Pacific provider contexts³ and does not explore what ECB could look like for mainstream providers that also cater for Māori and Pacific populations. Future research could be done to look at ECB in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi in the first instance, rather than specific provider contexts.

03_ Defining evaluation capacity building (ECB)

Recent definitions of ECB highlight intentionality, the ability to both do and use evaluation, individual and organisational capabilities, and routine and sustainable evaluation practice. The review done by Labin et al. of ECB definitions found agreement that ECB is an activity in and of itself – “separate from actually conducting evaluations” (2012, p. 308). The differences are whether ECB is focused at the organisational level or at the individual and organisational levels. Despite the different definitions of ECB, scholars agree that it is a multidimensional and complex process that involves organisational, networking, programmatic and cultural activities (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2010, p. 308).

The definition of ECB most commonly referred to is the one developed by Compton, Baizerman and Stockdill in the 2002 publication *New Directions for Evaluation Special Issue: The Art, Craft, and Science of Evaluation Capacity Building*, which states it is:

A context-dependent, intentional action system of guided processes and practices for bringing about and sustaining a state of affairs in which quality programme evaluation and its appropriate uses are ordinary and ongoing practices within and or between one or more organisations, programmes and sites (2002, p. 8).

The significance of this definition is its focus on the ability to use evaluation, not just do *quality* evaluation (Cousins et al., 2004). This broadens ECB from a focus on training and development for undertaking evaluation to building the capacity to use evaluation results (Cousins, Goh, Elliott, & Aubry, 2008, p. 2).

Sustainability is also highlighted in definitions or descriptions of ECB (Stockdill et al; Preskill & Boyle, 2008). Preskill and Boyle (2008, p. 444) identify sustainable evaluation practice, meaning that evaluation activities are undertaken and findings used for decision-making and action on a regular basis, as the ultimate goal of ECB. They argue that for evaluation to be sustained, staff need leadership support, incentives, resources and opportunities to enable and encourage them to apply their newly learnt evaluation skills in their everyday work. Meanwhile, appropriate processes, systems, policies and plans that support embedding evaluation practices in the organisation, such as linking evaluation to strategic goals, are mutually important.

³ The project ‘Developing an effective evaluation culture in NGOs’ originally focused on Māori and Pacific NGOs, thus providing the focus for the literature scan. The project later expanded to include mainstream NGOs.



None of the definitions of ECB in the literature specifically address cultural factors in terms of values, beliefs, world views, traditions, and behavioural norms of different ethnic and cultural groups. This absence was documented by Hopson in 1999, and Frierson, Hood and Hughes in 2002 (In Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2010). In 2010, Suarez-Balcazar et al. identified the need for a culturally and contextually grounded ECB framework that considers how individual and organisational factors interact with the culture of the community (such as predominant language, or ethnicity or race of community members) and the organisation (such as traditions, language spoken by staff or communication style). They describe cultural and contextual factors as:

- Cultural factors – values, beliefs, traditions and behavioural norms
- Contextual factors – such as organisational policies and procedures, and history of the organisation within the community.

This section has identified some different perspectives on ECB, which suggest that ECB supports evaluation activities, including both the doing and using evaluation, to become routine practice within an organisation or other context. Despite a range of different definitions of ECB in the literature that touch on contextual, intentional and sustainability factors, there is little said about ECB and cultural factors. This is particularly so for cultural factors relevant to Aotearoa New Zealand.

04_ Capacity development for Māori and Pacific NGO providers

Given the lack of definitions of ECB that address cultural factors and a need for ECB to be relevant to Aotearoa New Zealand and Māori and Pacific NGOs, this literature scan drew on the broader area of organisational capacity building, specifically work undertaken in relation to building the organisational capacity of Māori, iwi and Pacific social service providers (Cram, 2006; Cram & Wehipeihana, 2007; Sheehan, 2006, 2008; The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2015).

4.1. Māori and iwi providers

Cram found very few definitions of capacity building referring specifically to indigenous peoples (2006). However, Cram's literature review has many elements that are pertinent to the current project, with key findings including the need for gains in an organisation's capacity to be sustained and sustainable. In relation to capacity building in Māori and iwi NGOs, the following findings (provided as summaries) are relevant:

- Cultural values and the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination⁴ need to be taken into account. In order to support these, funding agencies need to develop their own capacity to engage in effective capacity-building partnerships with indigenous provider organisations (2006, p. 26).

⁴ The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* contains 45 articles that acknowledge critical issues for indigenous peoples, including the right to identity, to self-determination and to the maintenance of traditions, languages and religious practices as well as intellectual and cultural properties.

- Growth of Māori and iwi provider capacity will mean these providers come to recognise their own specific cultural needs, decide their own capacity-building response, and then monitor whether or not their capacity and performance improve as a result. That is, capacity building results in strong and capable providers that are able to engage collaboratively with funding agencies and negotiate the services and programmes that the providers know are most suited to their communities (Cram, 2006, pp. 37–38).
- The influence of the external environment on providers should be taken into account. These are things that providers have little or no control over and range from under-funding of contracts through to a political environment that challenges the value of by-Māori-for-Māori services and programmes (Cram, 2006, pp. 37–38).
- Funding agencies should ask themselves whether they are interpreting Māori and iwi provider independence as a management or bureaucratic issue, or whether they are acknowledging and working toward honouring Māori and iwi provider calls for self-determination in terms of Tino Rangatiratanga and the Treaty of Waitangi. The former approach means providers will be constrained in their ability to give full voice to cultural priorities and aspirations. If providers are to really contribute to ‘better economic and social outcomes for Māori a broader, rights-based understanding of independence is needed, accompanied by a truer partnership relationship between the [funding agency] and Māori and iwi providers’ (Cram, 2006, pp. 37–38).

Simply put, “Māori development through state interventions cannot take place unless there is active Māori buy-in” (Cram, 2006, p. 34).

These themes are echoed in the recent Productivity Commission 2015 draft report *More effective social services*. While the discussion in that report is focused on the role of Māori and the Government in commissioning and delivering social services, the principles appear equally applicable to government agencies working with Māori NGOs to develop their evaluation capacity. The following statements are offered for consideration (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2015, p. 20):

- “The objectives Māori as a client group have for social services are broader than just effectiveness and efficiency – social services have an important role to play in ‘Māori succeeding as Māori’. In this context, it includes Māori being able to exercise duties of care that arise from tikanga.”
- “[Māori have] development aspirations... desire to improve the outcomes of whānau, and... [observe] tikanga around manākitanga, whanaungatanga, and rangatiratanga...”
- “Enabling greater rangatiratanga within social services inherently requires the Crown to step back from ‘deciding for’ and often ‘doing for’ Māori. Yet if the Crown steps back too far, or in the wrong way, it risks leaving iwi to deliver the Crown’s Article Three Treaty duties and this would be inappropriate. What matters is not so much whether any given activity is a kawanatanga or rangatiratanga responsibility, but instead who should hold mana whakahaere over that activity (translated variously as the power to manage, governance or authority) to achieve the objectives of both parties.”
- “A better process for social services should feature – the nature of the proposed process coming from Māori, rather than being a model that Māori groups are co-opted into, or have imposed on them.”



4.2. Pacific providers

A presentation done by Sheehan in 2008, *Ensuring a Pasifika Future: Building organisational capacity on social capital*, contains a number of elements (provided as summaries) relevant to the current project. It highlights the need for:

- An explicit understanding of what motivates Pacific provider organisations, including:
 - > The need for Pacific communities to be seen, acknowledged and heard, and
 - > Appreciation of the current realities for Pacific peoples' communities that are serviced by these providers.
- Recognition that Pacific organisations share key socio-cultural values with the communities that they serve: reciprocity, communal contribution (to serve) and strength in identity.
- For Pacific people the importance and interplay of culture, family and church to support the sense of health and wellbeing for Pacific communities. All three weave a tight social fabric that gives them their identity and sense of place, as well as informing a Pacific world view. These cultural and social structures hold strong norms of social cohesion, favourable consideration, recognition and accorded prestige in return for the blessings for conformity.

Drawing on the broader area of capacity building for Māori, iwi and Pacific social service providers, a number of factors relevant to ECB have emerged. When working with Māori or iwi providers, cultural values and rights to self-determination need to be considered. Active Māori buy-in is paramount, and providers should be able to identify their own needs and ways to address these. Meanwhile, external factors that may have an influence on their ability to do so need to be acknowledged. Similarly, for Pacific providers there needs to be an explicit understanding as to what motivates them in their work, and recognition of socio-cultural values they share with their communities and the factors that define them.



05_ Key elements of evaluation capacity

ECB, along with capacity building generally, is discussed in the literature as both a process and an outcome, with many interrelated, interacting elements. As mentioned in Section 3, ECB is variously described as dynamic, complex, multidimensional and contextual (time and space-specific) (Suarez-Balcazar et al, 2010, pp308, 310; Labin et al, 2012, p328; Taylor-Ritler et al, 2013, p191). Baser et al. (2008) recognise this as they discuss the concept of capacity from a systems perspective, drawing on the complex adaptive systems (CAS) literature.⁵

Similarly Cram (2006) and Morgan (2005) promote a systems or holistic approach as it helps us to understand the interrelationships between and among the different elements of capacity and capacity building rather than reducing it to its component parts. This approach is also more in line with indigenous views of the world that are about holism – that separate parts cannot be understood without reference to the whole.

The development of frameworks, models and assessment tools are promoted as a means of integrating key concepts to assist with designing, carrying out and measuring NGO capacity building and ECB efforts. Table 1 overleaf outlines four recent evaluation capacity models or frameworks.

⁵ The term *complex adaptive systems* (that is, ideology and social systems, and global macroeconomic networks) or *complexity science* is often used to describe the loosely organised academic field that has grown up around the study of such systems.



**TABLE
01**
Four recent
evaluation capacity
models or
frameworks

**Integrative evaluation capacity building model
(Labin et al., 2012)**

Needs: reasons, goals, context, resources and strengths

Activities: strategies, implementation, evaluation

Outcomes: individual level, organisational level, programme, negative lessons

Individual level ECB outcomes:

- Attitudes
- Knowledge
- Skills/behaviours

Organisational level ECB outcomes:

- Processes, policies and procedures (PPP)
- Leadership
- Culture
- Mainstreaming
- Resources

**Bourgeois and Cousins (2013) Evaluation Capacity Framework
(Ontario's Public Health Units, 2015)**

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| CAPACITY TO DO EVALUATION | HUMAN RESOURCES Staffing Technical Skills Communication Skills Professional Development Leadership | ORGANISATIONAL RESOURCES Budget Ongoing Data Collection Infrastructure | EVALUATION PLANNING Evaluation Plan Use of Consultants Information Sharing Organisational Linkages External Supports |
| | EVALUATION LITERACY Results-Management Orientation Involvement/ Participation | ORGANISATIONAL DECISION-MAKING Management Processes Decision Support | LEARNING BENEFITS Instrumental/ Conceptual Use Process Use |

Evaluation Capacity Building: A Cultural and Contextual Framework
(Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2010)

Organisational factors:

Individual level ECB outcomes:

- Leadership
- Learning climate
- Resources and support
- Organisational context and culture

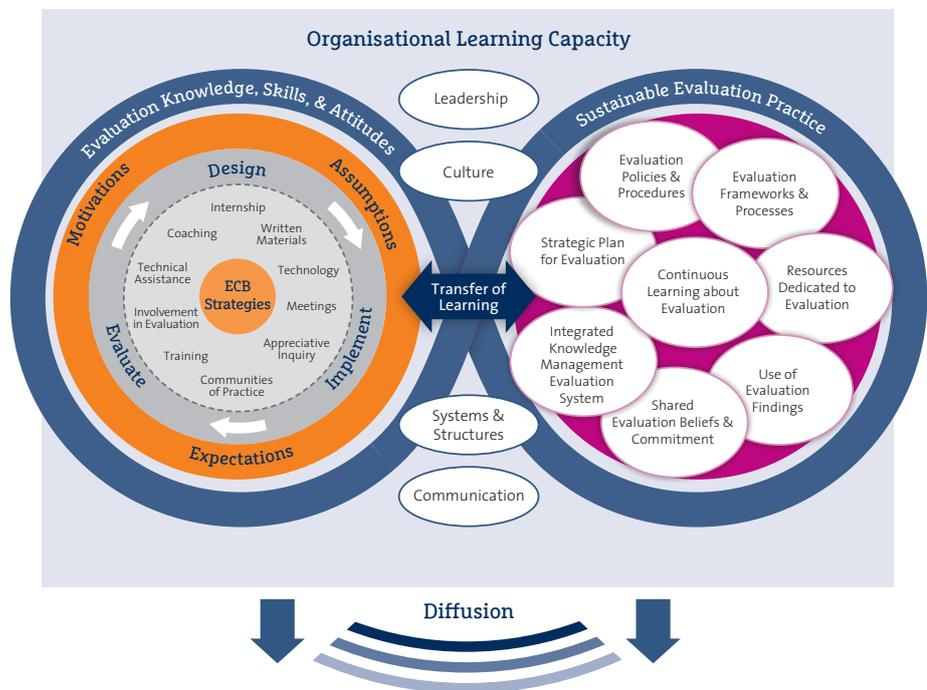
Individual factors:

- Personal readiness (willingness and motivation)
- Knowledge and skill competencies
- Personal cultural and contextual factors (cultural competence and contextual awareness)

Cultural and contextual factors described as:

- > Cultural factors – values, beliefs, traditions, and behavioral norms
- > Contextual factors – organisational policies and procedures, history of the organisation within the community, and so on.

A multidisciplinary model of evaluation capacity building
(Preskill & Boyle, 2008)



(Refer to Appendix C for a full-sized version of this model)



Suarez-Balcazar and colleagues (2010) developed a synthesis model, which has similar elements to the four outlined in Table 1. Taylor-Ritzler et al. described the key characteristics of the model as follows:

This model includes **individual and organisational factors that are believed to predict evaluation capacity outcomes** as well as the outcomes themselves. These are (a) individual factors that contribute to evaluation capacity, including awareness of the benefits of evaluation, motivation to conduct evaluation, and competence (knowledge and skills) to engage in evaluation practices; (b) organisational factors that contribute to evaluation capacity, including leadership for evaluation, a learning climate that fosters evaluative thinking, and resources that support evaluation; and (c) critical evaluation capacity outcomes, including mainstreaming evaluation practices into work processes and use of evaluation findings (2013, p. 192).

Taylor-Ritzler et al (2013) tested the model and found that without organisational factors, such as leadership, support, resources and a necessary learning climate, individuals were less likely to undertake evaluation activities, even if they had the knowledge and motivation to do so. They concluded that the interplay between organisational and individual factors is key to the mainstreaming of evaluation practices into the day-to-day work of organisations and use of evaluation results to understand and improve programmes. This mirrors agreement by scholars that it is the combination of individual and organisational factors that facilitates evaluation capacity, which in turn supports the actual use of evaluation by those involved (Taylor-Ritzler et al., 2013, p. 192).

Each of the evaluation capacity models or frameworks presented in this section is quite different, reflecting differing influences and purposes.⁶ However, they all highlight that individual as well as organisational factors need to be taken into account when building evaluation capability.

6.0_ Evaluation capacity assessment tools and relevant indicators

6.1. Evaluation capacity assessment and measurement tools

Four recent (that is, developed in the past two years) mainstream evaluation capacity assessment and measurement tools are summarised in Table 2.^{7,8} Two tools use a rubric (qualitative matrix that includes, for example, important ideas, concepts, values and principles) measurement approach (tools 1 and 2), one a mixed rubric or rating scale approach (tool 3) and one a rating scale (tool 4). An advantage of the rubric approach is that the descriptors for each level of each dimension show the steps required to move between levels of capacity (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2013).

6 The Bourgeois and Cousins model draws on evaluation utilisation while Preskill and Boyle's multidisciplinary model of ECB is influenced by adult and workplace learning. The Suarez-Balcazar et al. model is influenced by community capacity building and cultural competency learning.

7 Given the timeframe of the past 10 years for this literature scan and a focus on recent developments, earlier influential tools such as *The Readiness for Organizational Learning and Evaluation Instrument (ROLE)* developed by Preskill and Torres (1999), and subsequent iterations (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001) have not been included. More recent tools include the *Capacity And Organizational Readiness for Evaluation (CORE) Tool* (Morariu, 2012) and *A Checklist for Building Organizational Evaluation Capacity* (Volkov & King, 2007).

8 No evaluation capacity assessment tools developed by indigenous NGOs were located.

TABLE
02
Recent evaluation
capacity assessment
tools

| Tool | Assessment approach, dimensions, levels or scale |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Organisational capacity – A tool for self assessment (McKegg, 2014)</p> | <p>Assessment approach – Rubric</p> <p>Dimensions – 8 dimensions categorised into three sets of core capabilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demand based <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Attitude to investigation, learning, risk-taking and change 2. Supply based <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluative skills, competencies and experience 3. Systems and structural based <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes framework • Performance indicators for individuals and programmes • Systematised monitoring, evaluation and reporting • Information systems • Organisational structures and systems <p>Levels: emergent development, beginning development (compliance), consolidating development (competency), maturity (continuous improvement).</p> |
| <p>2. Understanding Dimensions of Organisational Evaluation Capacity (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2013)</p> | <p>Assessment approach – Rubric</p> <p>Dimensions – 19 sub-dimensions, grouped in six areas, across two categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity to do evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing • Technical skills • Communication skills • Professional development • Leadership Organisational resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Ongoing data collection • Infrastructure Evaluation planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation plan • Use of consultants • Information sharing • Organisational linkages • External supports 2. Capacity to use evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results-management orientation • Involvement/participation Organisational decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management processes • Decision support <p>Levels: low, developing, intermediate exemplary.</p> |



| Tool | Assessment approach, dimensions, levels or scale |
|---|--|
| <p>3. The Organisational Self-Assessment Evaluation Capacity Instrument (Bourgeois, Toews, Whynot, & Lamarche, 2013)</p> | <p>Assessment approach – Rubric</p> <p>Dimensions – Based on Bourgeois and Cousins’ framework listed in the above row.</p> <p>Levels – Low, developing, intermediate, established.</p> <p>Scale: The Bourgeois instrument then “measures, on a four-point Likert scale, the current state of an organisation’s evaluation capacity. Each sub-dimension identified in the framework is described using a number of specific items, which provide the foundation for the self-assessment. The instrument then automatically provides a mean score for each sub-dimension, which is rolled up into a mean score for each dimension. The means are translated into capacity levels and enable referencing to the original framework descriptions” (Ontario’s Public Health Units, 2015, p. 18).</p> |
| <p>4. Evaluation Capacity Assessment Instrument (ECAI) (Taylor-Ritzler et al., 2013)</p> | <p>Assessment approach – Scale</p> <p>Dimensions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. About You <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Thoughts about evaluation b. Motivation to engage in evaluation c. Evaluation knowledge and skills 2. About your organisation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leadership b. Learning climate c. Resources for evaluation 3. About your work <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evaluation as part of your job b. Use of evaluation findings <p>Scale – The ECAI tool features 68 items (questions under each of the above dimensions) that were rated on a 4-point scale, either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree • or to a very great extent, to a considerable extent, to some extent, not at all. |



6.2. Māori and Pacific capacity indicators

Māori and Pacific organisational capacity-building workbooks have been developed for Child Youth and Family provider organisations in the past decade (Cram & Wehipeihana, 2007; Sheehan, 2006). These were part of a wider Government strategy for building capacity in Māori, iwi and Pacific providers.

Both workbooks include indicators for monitoring and evaluation, and research and planning. They focus on the assessment process enabling action to build capacity and acknowledge that mainstream capacity measurement tools may not measure things of importance to Māori, iwi and Pacific providers. Additionally, they encourage discussion – beginning with locating capacity building within the cultural context and values important to Māori, iwi and Pacific providers.

Cram and Wehipeihana's (2007, p. 17) workbooks suggest that Māori and iwi providers identify core cultural values that they want to see reflected in their capacity indicators. For example, these may include:⁹

- Whakapapa (kinship, genealogy)
- Manākitanga (hospitality, ethic of care)
- Whanaungatanga (relationships)
- Te Reo Māori me ōna tikanga (Māori language and customs)
- Te Kotahitanga (unity, working as one)
- Pukēngatanga (skills, expertise)
- Rangatiratanga (leadership)
- Kaitiakitanga (guardianship, stewardship).

Key Pacific (in this case Tongan) values could be (Tu'itahi, 2009):

- Sino (physical), Atamai (mental), Laumalie (spiritual), Kainga (community-relational) and Atakai (environment – both built and natural)
- Taautaha (individual), Kaina (family), Kolo (village), Fonua (nation)
- Fe'ofa'ofani (love); Fetokoni'aki (reciprocity); Fefaka'apa'apa'aki (respect); Fakapotopoto (wise leadership and management).

⁹ Other frameworks, such as The Takarangi Competency Framework, also draw on Māori concepts to structure what is important (Matua Raki National Addiction Workforce Development, n.d.).



6.3. NGO capability assessment tool

MSD developed an Organisational Capability Self-assessment Tool for use by providers, as part of its Community Investment Strategy and ISO programme. This is a tool that many MSD-funded providers are now familiar with. While it does not specifically assess evaluative capacity as such, it does clearly locate the Government's interest in ECB in terms of an outcomes focus and being able to evidence the effectiveness of provider services and programmes (Ministry of Social Development, 2013; Office of the Minister for Social Development, 2015).

The tool uses a strengths-based, rubric approach that invites providers to assess themselves across the following six good-practice elements in the outcomes focus area:

- We know and understand the needs of our communities and the people using our services, and draw on this information in setting our organisation's outcomes and performance measures.
- The outcomes our organisation is seeking are clearly defined and include clear, measureable and meaningful performance measures.
- We collect qualitative and quantitative information in order to measure progress on achieving client outcomes and review our organisational performance.
- Our approach to outcomes monitoring and evaluation is well matched to the cultural context of our organisation, its people and communities.
- We regularly monitor and assess the effectiveness of our services for Māori and other groups we work with, or may work with in the future.
- We use the outcomes information we collect to demonstrate the positive difference our organisation is making for people using our services and community wellbeing.

The ratings are:

1. Aspirational – We want to be able to do this well.
2. Emerging – We're developing, but we need more capability.
3. Consolidating – We do this well, but we are looking to improve.
4. Transformative – We do this really well and are open to sharing with others.





7.0_ Supporting the development of evaluation capacity

7.1. Focus on organisational factors

As discussed elsewhere, both individual and organisational factors are key to developing evaluation capacity. Labin et al. (2012) suggest that more attention needs to be paid to the human relation dimensions of ECB, such as positive attitudes to evaluation, leadership and supportive organisational culture. The 2013 Taylor-Ritzler et al. study found that ECB efforts have traditionally targeted individual factors such as motivation and skills (p. 201), and they suggest the emphasis should now be on developing organisational leadership, a learning culture and resources devoted to evaluation.

In 2013, Bourgeois and Cousins identified and classified organisational factors contributing to the success of ECB under four categories (p. 301):

- **External environment** – External accountability requirements often create a demand for evaluation results and so act as a motivator for developing evaluation capacity.
- **Organisational structure** – Flexibility in organisational roles is needed to allow individuals to step away from their main responsibilities and take part in evaluation activities.
- **Organisational culture** – The culture of an organisation involved in ECB needs to encourage questioning of organisational processes and experimenting with new approaches.
- **Organisational leadership** – Managerial support is necessary for the implementation and sustainability of evaluation capacity in an organisation.

7.2. Facilitation and support

The literature suggests that having an intermediary or outside support is important for developing both individual and organisational evaluation capacity. For example, the Easy Evaluation Initiative for the public health workforce¹⁰ is based on the logic that in addition to facilitated training for individuals to build evaluation capacity (such as workshops) and support (such as mentoring, in-house training and advice), it is necessary at the organisational level too (Adams & Dickinson, 2010).

Albeit outside ECB specifically, it should be noted that another feature of the CIS and ISO programme mentioned above is the Capability Investment Resource (CIR). CIR provides grants for social service providers to work with capability mentors to review and plan for their own capability development or to put capability development plans into action. Feedback from grant recipients has highlighted the opportunity to work with these skilled and experienced mentors as making a difference to achieving increased capability.¹¹

¹⁰ The initiative is delivered by Massey University's Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation/ Te Ropu Whariki.

¹¹ <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/community-investment-strategy/capability-investment-resource.html> Retrieved 16 May 2016.



7.3. Potential principles for building Māori and iwi NGO evaluation capacity

Following a review of local and international literature, Cram and Wehipeihana developed a set of principles for building Māori and iwi provider organisational capacity (2007, p. 18). These could be considered and translated for the purpose of building evaluation capacity:

- **Don't rush** – Capacity building is a long-term process. It avoids delivery pressures, quick fixes and the search for short-term results.
- **Respect the local value system and foster self-esteem** – The imposition of foreign values can undermine confidence. Capacity builds upon respect and self-esteem.
- **Scan locally and globally; reinvent locally** – There are no blueprints. Capacity building draws upon voluntary learning, with genuine commitment and interest. Knowledge cannot be transferred; it needs to be acquired.
- **Challenge mindsets and power differentials** – Capacity building is not power-neutral, and challenging mindsets and vested interests is difficult. Frank dialogue and a collective culture of transparency are essential steps.
- **Think and act in terms of sustainable capacity outcomes** – Capacity is at the core of development; any course of action needs to promote this end.
- **Establish positive incentives** – Motives and incentives need to be aligned with the object of capacity building, including through governance systems that respect fundamental rights.
- **Integrate external inputs into local needs, priorities, processes and systems** – External inputs need to correspond to real demand and be flexible enough to respond to local needs and agendas. Local systems should be reformed and strengthened, not bypassed.
- **Build on existing capacities rather than creating new ones** – Use local expertise, and revitalise and strengthen existing institutions.
- **Stay engaged under difficult circumstances** – The weaker the capacity, the greater the need.
- **Remain accountable to the ultimate beneficiaries** – Any responsible organisation or partnership is answerable to the people it affects and should foster participation and transparency as the foremost instruments of accountability.

7.4. Considerations from local and international experience

In line with the aim of this literature scan, the above principles (and some associated “lessons”) have been integrated with an additional area, “focus of ECB efforts”, and supplemented with findings from the recent ECB literature to give the following 12 considerations when building evaluation capacity and undertaking subsequent ECB activities.¹²

¹² The ECB additions have been referenced.

TABLE
03
Twelve
considerations
in building
(evaluation) capacity

| Tool | Assessment approach, dimensions, levels or scale |
|--|---|
| 1. Partnership between NGO and funder of capacity building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for self-determination • Local ownership, that is, acknowledge NGO expertise and understanding of own capacity needs and how best to fulfill these • Establish a foundation of trust (enable discussion of strengths and weaknesses, ability to learn from failure) • Hands-off approach where there is high trust, good communication, stable organisation and strong leadership • Define clear roles and responsibilities • Work collaboratively, supported by recent ECB research synthesis, along with the inclusion of funders as participants in ECB (Labin et al., 2012) • Acknowledge the power differential between NGO and funder, and role of internal power and micro-politics (Cousins et al., 2004; Cram, 2006) |
| 2. Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge communication as critical to relationship building • Fund organisations to be culturally competent |
| 3. Readiness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO is clear about where it stands, what it is trying to achieve, and the values and principles underlying its work; and is able to articulate its mission • Good match between evaluation capacity building (ECB) efforts and organisation's stage of development (understanding of organisation's needs, strengths and goals) • Recognise that timing ECB effort will affect how well participants learn from and about evaluation (Preskill & Boyle, 2008) |
| 4. Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough assessment of needs and assets required • NGO itself conducts the assessment • Honest assessment is dependent on relationship between NGO and funder |
| 5. Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership is identified as key in ECB literature • Involve managers directly in evaluation knowledge production as a trigger or stimulus for experiencing use of evaluation (Cousins et al., 2008) |
| 6. Find intermediaries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO able to choose intermediaries (consultants, technicians) to provide support. They are often interested in using locals • Competence-based relationship – well-trained intermediaries, knowledgeable and sophisticated consumers • Use independent intermediaries (not from the funding agency) |
| 7. Independence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funder needs to deeply respect NGO expertise and ability to build own capacity • Importance of independence or self-determination |
| 8. Networking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-to-peer networking, mentoring and information sharing • Financial support, facilitation and access to technical support • Consideration of household and kinship networks • Collaboration between funding agencies |



| Tool | Assessment approach, dimensions, levels or scale |
|--------------------------|--|
| 9. Time, money and space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient start-up time • Space to build relationships and network with others • Space to get used to the idea of ECB and how it will impact on the organisation • Staged process – ECB is developmental and occurs in stages, so there may be optimal sequencing in targeting particular organisational outcomes (Labin et al., 2012) • Resource ECB efforts and evaluation appropriately, both in terms of money and time (<i>Community Solutions Planning and Evaluation</i>, 2011; Labin et al., 2012) • Technical assistance may be critical to develop and sustain organisational changes, which has implications for ongoing resourcing (Labin et al., 2012) |
| 10. Evaluate outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes and expectations are negotiated jointly between NGO and funder • Set up evaluation early in the process • Clarity required about how ECB is defined and its purpose and goals • Evaluation should include ECB efforts, funder efforts and organisational outcomes • While not covered in this report, ECB literature scanned emphasises the importance of evaluating ECB efforts • Evaluate ECB efforts using common terminology, indicators and rigorous measures (Labin et al., 2012) |
| 11. Contextualised | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity is only one component of an organisation’s performance (that is, performance is not a proxy measure for capacity) • External environmental factors include the social, economic and political context • Internal factors include an organisation’s motivation (such as, organisational structure and culture) • As previously canvassed in this report, understand the history of the organisation or programme and its culture, as this is critical for understanding ECB (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2010) |
| 12. Focus of ECB efforts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orient ECB efforts to the ultimate goal of improving programmes and programme outcomes • Experiential learning will occur through involvement or participation in evaluation • Pay attention to which evaluation skills are most important and feasible (such as planning and designing evaluation, collecting or analysing data) • Combination of experiential, training and technical assistance needed to achieve individual knowledge and behavioural outcomes (Labin et al., 2012) • Multiple strategies may be optimal for achieving organisational outcomes, such as policies, procedures, processes, culture and mainstreaming (Cousins et al., 2008) • Frame evaluation as an organisational learning system (that is, process use) • Connect ECB with organisational development, and capacity-building focused on the organisation’s propensity to learn (<i>Community Solutions Planning and Evaluation</i>, 2011) • Start with small successes (such as simple, informal evaluations to demonstrate benefits and worth) • Focus more on qualitative data (acknowledging staff’s fears that not everything can be reduced to quantitative data) • Be subversive (such as informally collect data of interest to demonstrate areas needing improvement) • Model evaluation at every opportunity |

08_ In summary

The aim of this literature scan was to inform the development of a tool and a facilitated process to support NGOs, particularly Māori and Pacific NGOs, to self-assess their evaluation culture and capacity, and develop plans to *improve* their evaluation culture and capacity. It was also to inform decisions about how Superu and other government departments might provide support for ECB to occur. This aim has been accomplished by: gaining an understanding of the definition of ECB; exploring its relevance for Aotearoa New Zealand; and identifying key elements that make ECB work, including factors that can support its success in Māori and Pacific contexts. Evaluation capacity assessment tools and relevant indicators have also been reviewed and exemplified. Key learnings are summarised below.

8.1. The literature

The field of ECB is emergent, with several reviews and syntheses of the ECB theoretical and empirical literature having been done recently, and the development (and testing in some cases) of evaluation capacity assessment tools underway. Although ECB is an expanding field of research and activity, there is very little literature available on how it is defined, understood and might be used or applied in New Zealand. There is less still about what ECB might look like for Māori and Pacific NGOs. As such, this project will be breaking new ground.

Mainstream definitions of ECB highlight intentionality, the ability to both do and use evaluation, the need for individual and organisational capabilities, the need for routine and sustainable evaluation practice, and a focus on evaluating things that matter.

Four evaluation capacity assessment tools have been outlined in this review. These apply a mix of rubric or rating scale approaches. The use of such tools is promoted for assessing needs, planning and measuring progress in building evaluation capacity.

No recent literature was found that covered indigenous and other ethnic or cultural group ECB definitions, frameworks or assessment tools. There is some reference to cultural factors but more commonly this is located (or assumed) within a discussion of the importance of understanding contextual factors.

New Zealand has some literature and workbooks on building organisational capacity for Māori, iwi and Pacific providers. These encourage providers to explicitly consider and build into projects values that are important to their organisations and communities. For Māori and Pacific, this will pick up on values that are underpinning philosophies for them in all they do. In these contexts, capacity-building is located in the broader discussion and consideration of sustainable development and self-determination.

ECB is widely understood to be dynamic, complex, multidimensional and contextual, both a process and outcome, and with many interrelated, interacting elements. As such, it may be useful to adopt a systems approach to understanding and building evaluation capacity.



Both individual and organisational factors facilitate evaluation capacity. Recent studies are highlighting an emphasis on the organisational factors, for example, developing organisational leadership, a learning culture and resources devoted to evaluation. This is because without addressing organisational factors, ECB efforts aimed at individual workers will not be sustainable. Literature suggests that providing support, such as facilitated workshops or mentoring, is necessary to develop both individual and organisational factors.

While not directly covered in this review, evaluation of ECB initiatives is an area that (paradoxically) needs enhancing and should be explicitly planned for at the beginning.

8.2. Way forward for assessing and developing ECB in New Zealand NGOs

The literature reviewed suggests that when assessing and developing NGO evaluation capacity, the process needs to fit the context and culture of the NGO. A number of pre-conditions for success in assessing ECB include:

- The NGO is clear about the purpose of ECB and that purpose aligns with their values, principles and wider aspirations
- The NGO knows what values and principles they want to see reflected in their assessment and subsequent capacity-building processes
- There is a relationship of trust between the NGO and those supporting and helping them to undertake the ECB assessment and the subsequent planning and capacity-building processes
- There are sufficient resources (time, people, funding) to do the assessment as well as to do something useful with the results of the assessment
- People at all levels of the organisation are on board, especially the leadership who will visibly model their support for the assessment process.

Three key areas emerged that are important to consider when assessing and developing evaluation capacity – context, organisational and individual areas.

- Context:
 - > The organisation's values and principles and its history and kaupapa
 - > The purpose of the ECB
 - > Elements of the enabling environment such as funders' cultural competence.
- Organisational area:
 - > Leadership – mindset, attitude, commitment and behaviours
 - > Learning culture – attitudes within the organisation towards taking risks, reality testing, reflecting on organisational practices and change
 - > Communication and information sharing
 - > Resources, technical and human infrastructure and other support for gathering evidence and learning.
- Individual area:
 - > Readiness of people in the organisation – their willingness and motivation to engage with ECB
 - > Skills and knowledge
 - > Opportunities for, and level of, involvement.

Once the dimensions of evaluation capacity have been agreed, it is important to develop a framework for assessing how well or how much each of these dimensions exists or has been developed in an organisation. Common frameworks used in capacity assessment processes usually include a numeric scale (for example 0–10) or a qualitative scale (such as, emerging, developing, consolidating or highly developed). A qualitative scale can be more detailed and include important ideas, concepts, values and principles relevant to each context – sometimes referred to as rubrics. A rubric for the dimension of evaluation leadership might be:

TABLE
04
Rubric example
for evaluation
leadership

| |
|---|
| Emerging – There is little to no encouragement or support available for evaluation. Individuals generate any monitoring, evaluation or performance development. |
| Developing – Leadership recognises the need to comply with funders’ evaluation expectations and ensures that this is achieved. |
| Consolidating – Leadership sets a direction for evaluation and performance development and strongly encourages stakeholders to participate. |
| Highly developed – Leadership shares a clear vision for performance, results, improvement and development, demonstrates a commitment to learning, evaluative thinking and practice, and models an insatiable curiosity to improve. |

The literature highlights that the key elements to getting started on an ECB assessment include:

- **Ensure participation and transparency so the process is honest and accountable**
 - › Begin by making sure everyone is clear on why the assessment is being done and that you have all the right people in the room. The assessment process needs to take account of the organisation at all levels – governance, leadership, management and staff. Having some way of representing the voices of clients or whānau in the process could be of benefit.
- **Take a strengths or assets-based approach**
 - › NGOs have experience and knowledge, and this need to be reflected in the assessment and subsequent ECB development process. Building on strengths is more likely to lead to positive engagement and subsequent learning.
- **Take one step at a time and don’t rush**
 - › Evaluation capacity assessment, planning and development is not a quick fix, or even a one-off event. It takes time to make it part of business as usual; to embed it into the organisational culture and way of doing things.

Overall, it should be considered whether appropriate support (preferably independent) to facilitate the above processes can be provided.



Appendix A

The original research question

The initial guiding research question for this literature scan was:

What are the key infrastructure elements that support a successful evaluation culture within an NGO setting, with reference particularly to both Māori and Pacific evaluation and tools?

The term ‘infrastructure elements’ did not occur in the literature that was scanned. ‘Infrastructure’ is commonly understood as the basic or fundamental elements necessary for a system or organisation to function. The *Encyclopedia of Evaluation* uses the term twice when describing evaluation capacity building. First; “ECB [is] focused on the infrastructures and practices necessary to create and sustain in an organisation an evaluation presence and the performance and use of quality studies”; and later a goal of ECB is “to build an infrastructure for data collection, analysis, and presentation that would support program evaluation ...” (Mathison, 2005, pp. 38–39).

Similarly, the term ‘evaluation culture’ was neither defined nor commonly used.¹³ Reference to ‘organisational culture’ was more common, for example as a factor contributing to organisational evaluation capacity outcomes (e.g. Labin et al., 2012), or in relation to “integrating evaluation inquiry into organisational culture” (e.g. Cousins, Goh, Clark, & Lee, 2004). Organisational culture was described by Bourgeois and Cousins as reflecting “the traditions, values and basic assumptions shared by its members and that establish its [organisational] behavioral norms” (2013, p. 301), or put more succinctly by Deal and Kennedy, “the way things are done around here” (2000, p. 4).

Where the term evaluation culture was used, it was not defined nor discussed as a specific concept. For example, a one-page resource document was titled *Building a Culture of Evaluation* (Community Solutions Planning and Evaluation, 2011). This document provides a raft of suggestions and strategies for working with staff, managers and Board members, and how and where to incorporate evaluation into organisational processes. Preskill and Boyle refer to evaluation culture three times in their journal article *A Multidisciplinary Model of Evaluation Capacity Building*, for example, “in an effort to create evaluation cultures” and “as an organisation develops an evaluation culture” (Preskill & Boyle, 2008, p. 444 and 455). Labin et al. (2012) used the term similarly, for example, “building evaluation culture” or as a description of an organisational-level ECB strategy, strength or barrier.

A further search outside of the 10-year parameter located two 2003 documents that explicitly referred to evaluation culture in their titles – *Evaluation culture: a definition and analysis of its development* (Owen, 2003) and *Program Evaluation: An Evaluation Culture and Collaborative Partnerships Help Build Agency Capacity* (United States General Accounting Office, GAO, 2003).

Given the discovery about the lack of common usage and definition of the terms key infrastructure elements and evaluation culture, the literature scan then focused on addressing a rephrased research question as outlined in the introduction of this report.

¹³ Evaluation culture is also not described in the *Encyclopedia of Evaluation* (Mathison, 2005).

Appendix B

Methods

The **first search strategy** was to collectively source and search out peer-reviewed and other literature and material on evaluation capacity building (ECB), evaluation capacity assessment, and Māori and Pacific capacity assessment. This strategy resulted in 34 items.

Because of the growing international interest in ECB and development as well as assessment, the **second strategy** was to search the following journals for recent syntheses of the literature:

- American Journal of Evaluation
- Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation
- Evaluation
- Evaluation and Program Planning
- Evaluation Journal of Australasia
- Journal of Multi Disciplinary Evaluation.

The most recent synthesis of literature identified was:

Susan N. Labin, Jennifer L. Duffy, Duncan C. Meyers, Abraham Wandersman and Catherine A. Lesesne (2012). A Research Synthesis of the Evaluation Capacity Building Literature. *American Journal of Evaluation* 2012 33: 307.

The **third strategy** was to search well-known evaluation resource sites such as Better Evaluation (BE) <http://betterevaluation.org> and Evaltalk (a listserv¹⁴ run by the American Evaluation Association) for resources and discussions about ECB and assessment.

This strategy turned up a very recent publication by the Ontario Public Health Unit, *Building Evaluation Capacity in Ontario's Public Health Units*. This publication describes an initiative called the Locally Driven Collaborative Project (LDCP), Building Evaluation. The LDCP project had objectives very similar to this project, that is, to identify or develop a tool to assess evaluation capacity of organisations (in this case public health units); to use this tool or instrument to assess evaluation capacity more widely; and to identify strategies for building evaluation capacity.

The LDCP team conducted a very extensive search of the literature, and identified six existing evaluation capacity assessment instruments. The key evaluation capacity building and evaluation capacity assessment literature identified by the LDCP team was found to already include most of those items found in the first internal search strategy used by this team. Two further items were added to the original list.

¹⁴ A Listserv is a method of communicating with a group of people via email. A member sends one email message to the "reflector" email address, and the software sends the email to all of the group's subscribers, i.e. the people on the list.



In consultation with the evaluation project team, the list was narrowed to 20 items to be more fully scanned and reviewed.

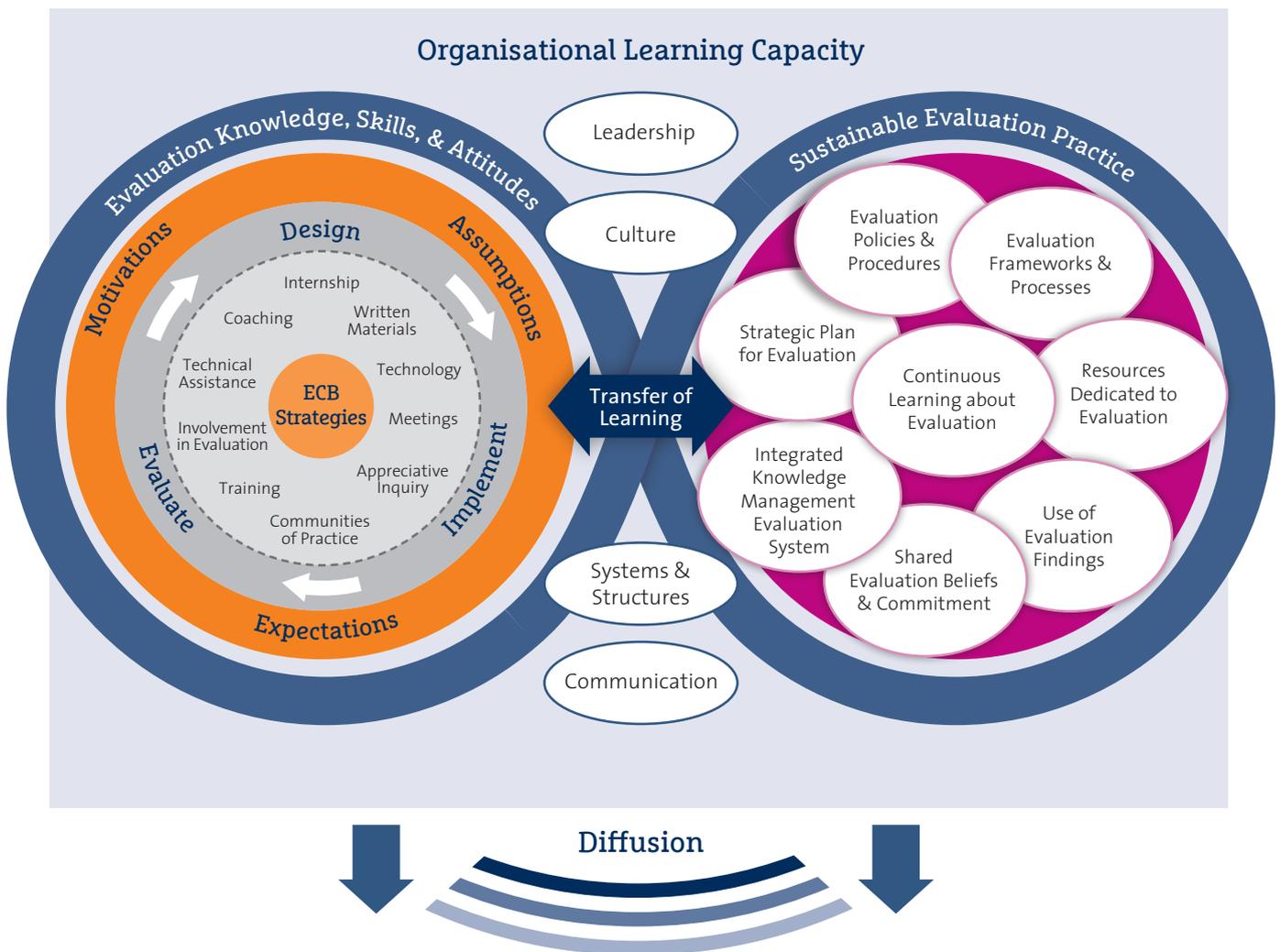
A summary and full version of the draft literature scan was shared with the three non-government organisations participating in the *Developing an effective evaluation culture in NGO's project*. We sought their feedback on the literature scan and suggestions about other literature. We reviewed the two articles suggested and included one in this scan.¹⁵ Two additional articles were suggested from external peer reviewers and we included one¹⁶ of the articles in this scan.

15 Tu'tahi, S. (2009). Fonua: A Pasifika Model for Health Promotion. Presentation at the Collaboration between Pasifika@Massey and the Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://www.hauora.co.nz/resources/FonuaaPasifikmodel.pdf>

16 Adams, J & Dickinson, P (2010). Evaluation Training to Build Capability in the Community and Public Health Workforce. *American Journal of Evaluation* 31(3) 421-433.

Appendix C

A multidisciplinary model of ECB





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