



in less than 1000 words...



What is an evaluation, and what is it not?

Evaluation is a tool supporting an objective, in order to understand how an intervention has been planned and implemented. It provides a realistic assessment of how the goals have been met, results delivered and to whom. It deals with the assessment of the intervention's impacts.

Evaluation is interpretative (comparing different considerations) not merely analytical, like a monitoring that collects data to determine the extent to which output and outcome indicators have been achieved at a certain point of the intervention process.

It is not as normative as an audit, which is a formalised, official examination of financial statements produced during the implementation of an intervention, as well as its compliance with normative standards.

What is the new intervention logic?

The Council of Europe's Strategy 21 applies a **new intervention logic** of heritage policy with an innovative approach to achieving goals.

The intervention logic is the chain of causes and effects that logically leads from the definition of the needs to the intended results (this is sometimes called the impact pathway). Each intervention follows specific intervention logic.

First, policy-makers identify needs and problems, then they formulate goals, inputs (financial and human resources) and action. Following this chain, the logic of the results can be envisaged.

The new intervention logic proposes cross-sectoral cooperation with core heritage stakeholders. Thus, heritage interventions should integrate other concerns, such as social and employment policies, spatial planning and environment, economic development and tourism, education, research, innovation and technological improvement. This also means that these sectors should be involved in the heritage policy planning and implementation stages at national, regional and local levels.

The integrative approach of the Strategy 21 is best conducted with the participation of relevant stakeholders. Therefore, the evaluation should also follow the principle of stakeholders' participation.

When should we evaluate?

Evaluation takes place at ex-ante, mid-term or ex-post stages.

The **ex-ante evaluation** should be applied in the planning stage because the evaluation can contribute to the quality of the intervention logic selected. When a heritage-oriented intervention is being prepared, it is even more urgent to take on board evaluation concerns as early as possible, as evaluation can improve the intervention logic adapted to the cross-sectoral nature of heritage policy.

The aim of the ex-ante evaluation is to assess:

- Relevance of the planned intervention in relation to the needs the intervention addresses;
- Internal consistency of all elements of the intervention logic (problem definition, goal setting, planning activities and resources, setting monitoring system and performance indicators – outputs, outcomes, impacts);
- External consistency (with policy measures originating from non-heritage sectors);
- Horizontal consistency (with cross-sectoral policies such as gender equality, social inclusion, innovation);
- Logical consistency (of the selected intervention logic);

Ex ante evaluation also assesses probable outcomes, impacts, sustainability and synergies of planned interventions. It aims to refine performance indicators (outputs and outcomes) and thus guide how monitoring is designed. Output indicators refer to the goods and services that users/beneficiaries would receive. Outcome indicators target the effect on users/beneficiaries, and impact indicators reveal the long term, social-wide effects of interventions.

The **midterm (or intermediate) evaluation** stage is conducted during the implementation of the intervention at pre-defined points in time.

The findings of the midterm evaluation demonstrate if the intervention progresses towards the intended targets with assessing:

- Outputs, outcomes and impacts, sustainability and synergies;

- Effectiveness (achievements relative to goals);
- Efficiency (achievements relative to used resources);

The **ex-post evaluation** follows once the intervention is implemented. It encompasses all elements elaborated at the previous evaluation stages and at the same time focuses on the overall, long term social impacts of the intervention and the general lessons learned.

The midterm and ex-post evaluations should also address the question of efficiency of implementation structures and evaluate how they are supporting learning and are open to change.

Whom should the evaluation serve?

The final user of the evaluation is the general public. From a functional point of view, the evaluation informs decision makers about their performance. It also serves stakeholders who deal with heritage-related policies, beneficiaries, heritage service providers and other interested parties. When an intervention is aligned with the national/subnational heritage policy, the evaluation benefits decision makers at operational level (funding bodies, investors and donors, for example) to demonstrate that a project they fund is in-line with the intervention in question. The learning implication of the evaluation is important.

Who should evaluate Strategy 21?

Everybody is encouraged to get involved in the ex-ante evaluation because S21 serves the public at large. Participating in the process from the beginning teaches us to work in a more targeted, inclusive and efficient way.

