

METHODS BRIEF

Choose an evaluation design around the programme decision

Monitoring, performance evaluation and impact evaluation answer different questions. The appropriate approach depends on the programme, the decision and the evidence available.

Executive takeaways

1. Distinguish implementation, outcome and causal questions.
2. Choose a credible comparison strategy when estimating impact.
3. Plan use, ethics and dissemination before collecting data.

Specify the question

A monitoring system tracks delivery and indicators. A process evaluation examines implementation. A performance evaluation reviews results and contribution. An impact evaluation asks what difference an intervention made compared with a credible counterfactual.

Design for credibility and feasibility

Review the theory of change, available data, timing, sampling and ethical constraints. Experimental and quasi-experimental methods require appropriate design conditions. Qualitative evidence can explain mechanisms, implementation and who is included or excluded.

Support programme learning

Present findings, uncertainty and limitations together. Distinguish evidence from interpretation and connect recommendations to decisions about targeting, delivery, design or scale. Study-specific consent and confidentiality arrangements should protect participants.

From evidence to a decision

Define the decision	Build the evidence	Test assumptions	Compare options
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Conceptual research framework; no quantitative results are represented.

Scope and method

Research-design guidance based on IDER's supplied service framework; no empirical study or market forecast.

This is practical research-design guidance, not an empirical market report, client-study finding or investment recommendation.

Citation

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Discuss the evidence your next decision needs.

info@iderafrica.com | +233 302 955 289 | www.iderafrica.com