

# Key concepts

This document outlines the key concepts of the interactive evidence map provided. It should be read only in conjunction with the interactive evidence map. For more information and the full technical report on the evidence map, please access: [The art and science of promoting evidence-informed decision-making: a global living evidence map](#). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

## 1. Distinguishing between the art and science of using evidence

The **art** of using evidence refers to evidence advocates finding their way through a muddle of changing contexts through quick adaptation, iterative programme design and politically sensitive approaches in the wake of political, social and cultural contexts that immensely shape the space for evidence to inform decision-making.

The **science** of using evidence implies the design of more linear and replicable pathways to evidence use in light of the many technical decision-making structures that are receptive to the use of evidence, as well as organizational management and governance systems that can be designed to incorporate an explicit mandate and space for evidence use.

## 2. Definition of evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) intervention mechanisms

EIDM intervention mechanism	Description	Example of linked activity
Awareness (M1)	Building awareness of, and fostering positive attitudes towards, evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social marketing of the norm to use evidence (e.g. Sense About Science)</li></ul>
	This mechanism emphasizes the importance of valuing the concept of EIDM by decision-makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Awareness-raising campaigns (e.g. March for Science)</li></ul>
Agree (M2)	Building mutual understanding and agreement on policy-relevant questions and the kind of evidence needed to answer them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-production approaches</li><li>• Delphi panels</li><li>• Interprofessional education</li></ul>
	This mechanism emphasizes the importance of building mutual	

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	understanding and agreement on policy questions and what constitutes fit-for-purpose evidence.	
Access (M3)	<p>Providing communication on, and access to, evidence</p> <p>This mechanism emphasizes the importance of decision-makers receiving effective communication of and convenient access to evidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge repositories</li> <li>• Communication campaigns and strategies</li> <li>• Policy briefs</li> <li>• Seminars/webinars</li> </ul>
Interact (M4)	<p>Interaction between decision-makers and researchers<sup>1</sup></p> <p>This mechanism emphasizes the importance of interaction between decision-makers and researchers to build trusted relationships, collaborate and gain exposure to a different type of social influence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks and communities of practice</li> <li>• Events and conferences (e.g. science cafés)</li> <li>• Knowledge brokers</li> <li>• Stakeholder dialogues</li> </ul>
Skills (M5)	<p>Supporting decision-makers to develop skills in accessing and making sense of evidence</p> <p>This mechanism emphasizes the importance of decision-makers having the necessary skills to locate, appraise, synthesize evidence, and integrate it with other information and political needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity-building (e.g. workshops and formal training courses)</li> <li>• Mentoring programmes</li> <li>• Adult learning</li> </ul>
Structure & process (M6)	Influencing decision-making structures and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondments</li> <li>• Embedded support (e.g. knowledge brokers)</li> <li>• Rapid response services</li> </ul>

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the term “researcher” denotes anyone conducting research and is not confined to appointed individuals in official research positions.

This mechanism emphasizes the importance of decision-makers' psychological, social and environmental structures and processes (e.g. mental models, professional norms, habits, organizational and institutional rules) in providing means for and barriers to action.

- Institutionalization (e.g. national evaluation systems)
- Evidence checklists
- Clearing houses
- Show me your workings

### 3. Definition of outcomes

Outcomes	Definition	Examples of indicators
Implementation feasibility, fidelity and uptake <sup>2</sup>	This refers to the degree to which the EIDM intervention is delivered as intended. <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerical data on intervention uptake, programme observation data, M&amp;E data</li> </ul>
EIDM intervention design	This refers to changes in the design of EIDM interventions based on stakeholder feedback and empirical data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variations in the intervention design such as length or location of the intervention</li> </ul>
Capability to use evidence	This refers to decision-makers having the required psychological and physical capacity to engage in EIDM. It includes having the necessary knowledge and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test scores evaluating respondents' knowledge of EIDM concepts or critical appraisal skills</li> </ul>
Motivation to use evidence	This refers to the brain processes that energize and direct behaviour, not just goals and conscious decision-making. It includes habitual processes, emotional responses, as well as analytical decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes towards evidence or decision-makers' reported intention to use evidence</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Grouped as they refer to process-related outcomes

<sup>3</sup> Breitenstein S, Gross D, Garvey C, Hill C, Fogg L, Resnick B. Implementation fidelity in community-based interventions. *Res Nurs Health*. 2010; 33(2):164–73. doi: 10.1002/nur20373 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3409469/>, accessed 23 August 2024).

Opportunity to use evidence	This refers to all the factors that lie outside the decision-makers' control that make the EIDM possible or prompt it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to evidence databases or organizational processes for EIDM</li> </ul>
Evidence use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for policy design</li> <li>• for policy implementation</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence use is defined as "a process whereby multiple sources of information, including the best available research evidence, are consulted before making a decision to plan, implement, and (where relevant) alter policies, programmes, and other services".</p> <p>Evidence use <i>for policy design</i> refers to the behaviour of using evidence in the policy design stage only.</p> <p>Evidence use <i>for policy implementation</i> refers to the behaviour of using evidence in the policy implementation stage only.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence being referenced in policy documents or utilized in programme or guideline development;</li> <li>• EIDM indicators, e.g. the Global EIDM index;</li> <li>• Evidence of decision-makers' behaviour change, e.g. accessing, appraising and considering evidence as part of a decision-maker's daily practice (as distinguished from the one-off measurement of these sorts of outcomes as part of a training programme).</li> </ul>
Development impact	This refers to the impact of increased use of evidence on development indicators. For example, a sustained practice of EIDM can be associated with better health outcomes, such as reduced mortality rates. Likewise, evidence use can affect educational outcomes such as increased test scores and grade pass rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicators of development impact are not prespecified and can be cross-sectoral, covering all 17 SDGs such as fetal distress in labour and mathematics scores.</li> </ul>

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