



INTOSAI

Working Group on Evaluation of Public Policies and Programs (WGEPPP)

EIDGENÖSSISCHE FINANZKONTROLLE
CONTRÔLE FÉDÉRAL DES FINANCES
CONTROLLO FEDERALE DELLE FINANZE
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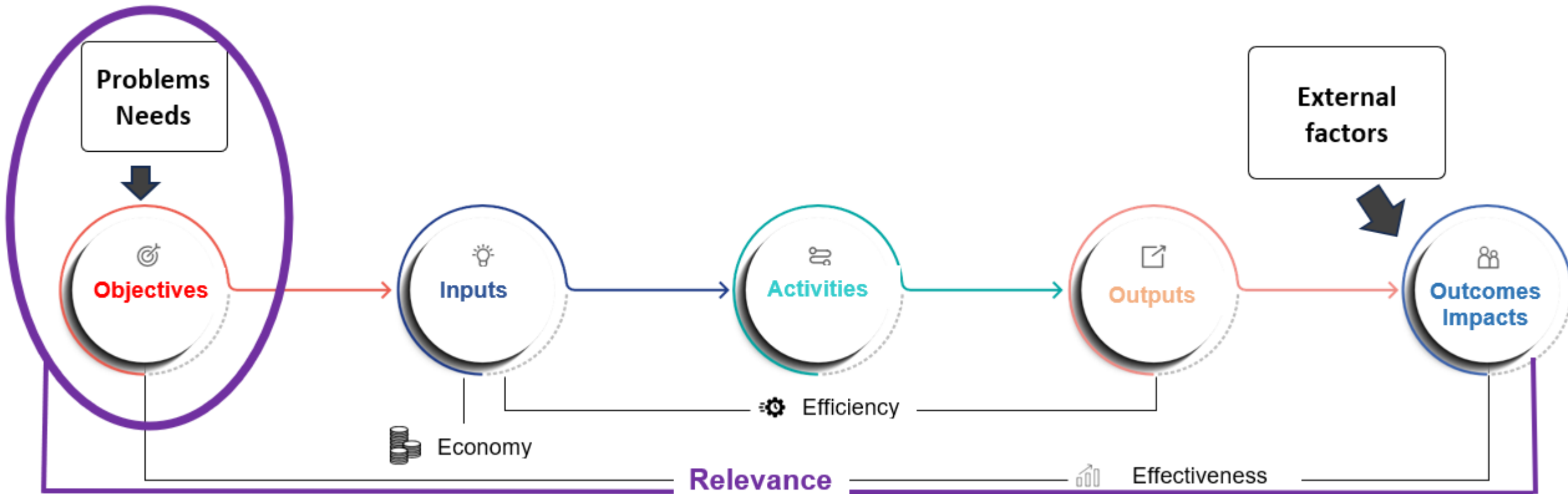
Synthesis

Assessing the Relevance of Public Policies

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1. Understanding relevance...



1. Effectiveness and relevance

1. A policy can be **effective** (in the sense that it achieves its objectives), while being **irrelevant** if its objectives no longer matter, address the wrong problem, or fail to respond to current priorities.
 - Solidarity Subsidy (Algeria),
 - National Health Insurance Scheme (Maldives)
2. The reverse can also be true and is in fact much more common: a policy may be highly **relevant** to an important problem but **ineffective** at solving it!
 - Solid Waste Management and Waste-to-Energy Project (Thailand)
 - Implementation of inclusive education for children with disabilities (Madagascar)



**Effective but
irrelevant...**

2. The institutional setting should not hinder SAIs to address relevance

- Good news! Experience shows that Parliament, Government and Administration rarely object to SAI addressing an issue on relevance. Maybe because we give the voice to the end users.
- The legislation must not explicitly authorize the assessment of relevance. It should not prohibit it!
- It seems legitime that SAIs assess whether a policy achieves its intended purpose and whether its original assumptions remain valid.

3. Major risks for SAls...

Dear Parliament and Government,

- 'your policy or measure is irrelevant... '
- 'the way in which you have defined the beneficiaries is inadequate'
- 'you use irrelevant criteria '.

To criticize the relevance of a policy or measure is harsh, and the consequence can be to scrap it or totally revise its legislation.

SAls risk to lose credibility if...

- Weak or inaccurate evidence
- Ineffective communication of results
- Perceived lack of independence and political neutrality

4. Being credible...

- **Consider all the political spectrum**

Select topics that are of interest to the full spectrum of political parties represented

- **Integrate systematically stakeholders**

Our survey show that this is still not the case in many SAIs. The more we engage with stakeholders, the greater the quality and acceptance of the results, and the fewer dangers for the SAI...

- **Use relevant methodology**

4. Being credible...

- **Don't interfere with Parliament's role**

SAls should be careful not to interfere with Parliament's role (ex.: what society's objectives ought to be, which of two legitimate political choices is preferable...)

- **Communicate factually**

Use neutral, logical and objective language; avoid exaggeration. The result of an evaluation is never black and white. We must accurately describe what is more of a dark or a light grey. Clearly describe the limitations of our results.



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**Thank you
for your attention
your contribution
your energy!**