

Analyzing and Evaluating Healthy Public Policies: Tools and Resources

Webinar

February 13, 2015



Introductions

Presenters:

Kim Bergeron

Health Promotion Consultant



Florence Morestin

Research Officer, National Collaborating Centre
for Healthy Public Policy



Assisted by:

Laura Bellissimo

Health Promotion Coordinator



Webinar Features

- Adobe Connect technology
- Use landline for audio
- Chat function to ask questions or if you need help
- Lecture mode



Health Promotion Capacity Building

We provide training and support services to Ontario's public health and health care intermediaries to assist them to plan, conduct and evaluate interventions which improve health and prevent chronic disease and injury at a community and population level.



Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- **Understand** three types of healthy public policy evaluation
- **Recognize** the importance analyzing and evaluating policies
- **Reflect** on how the information provided can be applied to their own work



Poll:

Your level of familiarity with evaluating healthy public policies

How would you rate your level of familiarity with policy evaluation concepts?

- a) I'm a beginner
- b) I have some idea of what the key concepts are
- c) I am very familiar with evaluating healthy public policies





Types of policies

- **Government** (e.g. federal, provincial, municipal)
- **Policies adopted within public institutions** (e.g., hospital, child care centres, schools)
- **Workplace** (e.g., policies that govern employees)

What is policy evaluation?¹

- Applies evaluation principles and methods to examine the **content, implementation or impact** of a policy
- Helps us develop an understanding of the merit, worth and utility of a policy



Three types of policy evaluation¹

1. Content

- Can happen any time after the policy has been written.
- Can be used to compare policies.

2. Implementation

- Can happen any time after the policy has been enacted.

3. Impact

- Can happen anytime after the policy has been enacted and implemented.

START WITH DETERMINING YOUR EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluating Healthy Public Policies: Selecting Relevant Evaluation Questions

Florence Morestin
National Collaborating Centre
for Healthy Public Policy



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Imagine...

- Policy: locally-grown fruits served in schools
- Funding: provincial govt.
- Implementation: non-profit organizations
- After 5 years, time to evaluate



WHAT would you evaluate?

(type answers in chat box)



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Examples of evaluation questions

- Effectiveness at raising children's awareness of the positive benefits of fruits?
- Effectiveness at increasing their intake of fruits?
- Varying effects depending on the children's age?
- Impact in rural schools, as opposed to urban schools?
- Implementation methods and partners involved?
- Costs worthwhile for the benefits obtained?
- The public's perception of this policy?
- Indirect impacts on parents, on local agriculture?



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Sorting through evaluation questions

- Not possible to evaluate everything
- The NCCHPP's analytical framework:

Effects	Effectiveness
	Unintended effects
	Equity
Implementation	Cost
	Feasibility
	Acceptability

Major sources of inspiration:
Salamon, 2002; Swinburn et al., 2005

- Uses:

A priori assessment / A posteriori evaluation

Focus of
today's
webinar



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Structure of the framework

- Two main groups of questions:
 - Did it work? => Effects
 - How did we make it work (or not...)? => Implementation
- With a focus on particularities of public policies and on policy makers' concerns

- 6 dimensions,
broken down into
more precise
evaluation questions

Effects	Effectiveness
	Unintended effects
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Summary list – Dimensions for analyzing public policies

Reminder: For each dimension, consider the associated durability.

Effectiveness

- What are the effects of the public policy under study (positive, neutral, negative) on the targeted health problem?
- How effective is this policy in terms of its intermediate effects?
- Is the intervention logic of this policy plausible?
- How does the implementation context influence this policy's effectiveness?
- How much time is needed before effects can be observed? Do the effects persist over time?

Unintended effects

- Does the policy under study produce unintended effects, whether positive or negative?
- How can the negative unintended effects be mitigated?

Equity

- What are the effects (intended or unintended) of the policy under study on different groups?
- Does this policy create, reinforce or correct social inequalities in health?

Cost

- What are the financial costs and gains for the government? For other actors (industry, community organizations, consumers, taxpayers, etc.)?
- How are the costs distributed over time?
- To what extent are the costs apparent?
- How do the costs of the policy under study compare with those of other potential policies, including that of inaction? What is the cost-effectiveness of the policy under study for the government, for society?

Feasibility

- Are the required human, material, and technological resources available?
- Does the policy being studied fall under the legal jurisdiction of the authority who wishes to adopt it? Is it in conformity with existing legislation?
- Is this policy a follow-up to a pilot program?
- Can this policy be administered by pre-existing mechanisms?
- Is the authority promoting this policy also the one that will implement it?
- If not, how many different actors are involved in implementing this policy? Are they effectively guided by the policy's promoters? Do they cooperate well?
- Do the opponents of this policy have the ability to interfere with its adoption, its implementation?

Acceptability

- Which actors are or would be affected by the public policy under consideration?
- Is the problem targeted by this policy considered a social issue that requires intervention? What are stakeholders' reactions to the idea of intervening to address this problem?
- How do stakeholders think the issue should be addressed?
- What do stakeholders think of the proposed policy? Of its effectiveness, its unintended effects, its equitability, its cost, and its feasibility? Of the degree of coercion it involves?
- What do stakeholders think of the conditions surrounding adoption and implementation of this policy?
- Can the policy's acceptability evolve during the period in which it is being implemented?

List of questions to consider for each dimension



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Overview

Evaluating the **effects** of a public policy

Effects	Effectiveness
	Unintended effects
	Equity
Implementation	Cost
	Feasibility
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Effectiveness

Possible aspects for evaluation:

- Effects on the targeted problem
- **Intermediate effects – The logic model**
- Effectiveness and implementation context
- Effectiveness over time



	Effectiveness
Effects	Unintended effects
	Equity
Implementation	Cost
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Focus on: Intermediate effects



- Difficult to assess the ultimate effects of a public policy:
 - Time
 - Cause-effect relationship???
- Evaluation of intermediate effects
=> with the help of a logic model



An example of a logic model: Nutrition labelling

Nutrition Facts	
Per 125 mL (87 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 80	
Fat 0.5 g	1 %
Saturated 0 g + Trans 0 g	0 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Carbohydrate 18 g	6 %
Fibre 2 g	8 %
Sugars 2 g	
Protein 3 g	
Vitamin A 2 %	Vitamin C 10 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 2 %

Source: Health Canada

PUBLIC POLICY

Nutrition labelling

INTERMEDIATE EFFECTS



EFFECT ON THE PROBLEM

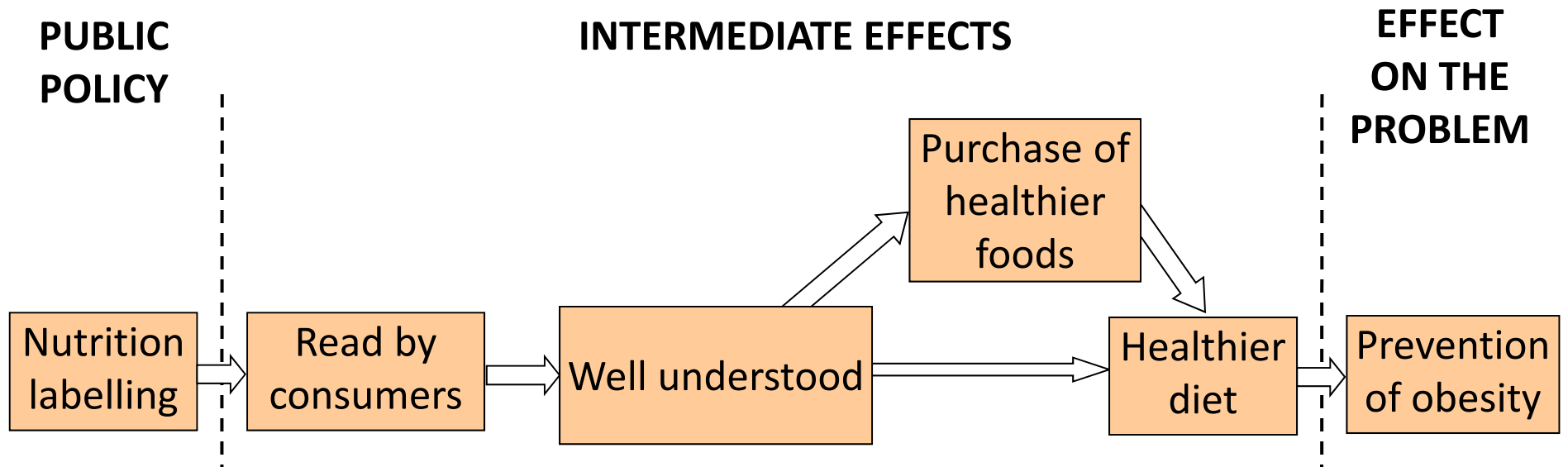
Prevention of obesity



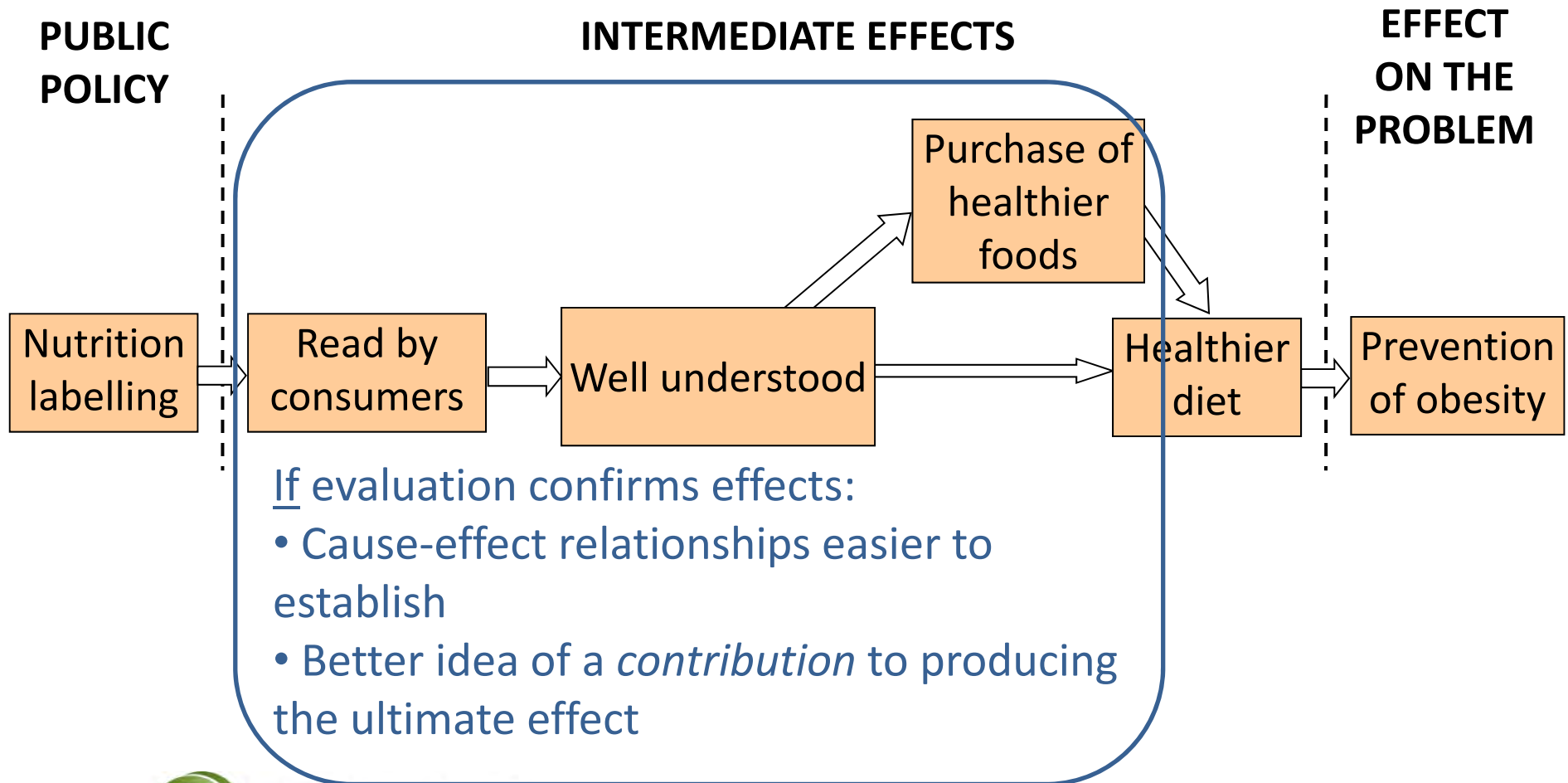
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An example of a logic model: Nutrition labelling



An example of a logic model: Nutrition labelling



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Unintended effects

- Unrelated to the objective pursued
- Effects in all sorts of areas
Health (aspects other than the targeted problem), economic, political, environmental, tied to social relations, etc.
- Positive or negative

Effects	Effectiveness
	Unintended effects
	Equity
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Equity

Watch out for policies that improve the overall average but increase inequalities

=> Different effects on various groups, with an impact on social inequalities in health?

Depending on the policy: groups defined by age, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, language, place of residence, sexual orientation, functional limitations, etc.

Effects	Effectiveness
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Questions?


(Please type in chat box)



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Overview

Evaluating the **implementation issues** associated with a public policy

Effects	Effectiveness
	Unintended effects
	Equity
Implementation	Cost
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Cost

Possible aspects for evaluation:

- Costs and gains for the government and other stakeholders
- Distribution of costs over time
- Visibility of costs
- Relative cost



Effects	Effectiveness
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Feasibility

What elements facilitated/hindered implementation?

Possible aspects for evaluation:

- Availability of the resources required
- **Conformity with existing legislation** 
- Existing pilot programs
- Existing administrative mechanisms
- **Organization and supervision of the implementation process**
- **Cooperation among stakeholders involved** 
- Interference of opponents

Effects	Effectiveness
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Focus on: Delivery arrangements



- Policy directly implemented by the policy's promoters?
- Number of stakeholders involved in implementing the policy
- System of incentives and sanctions
- Quality of the cooperation among stakeholders
- Conformity with all relevant legislation
In the case of healthy public policies: mandate of sectors involved



Acceptability

- How stakeholders view the policy
- Influenced by their knowledge, beliefs, values, interests, etc.
- Acceptability influences the adoption, implementation and potential for success of a policy

Effects	Effectiveness
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Evaluation of acceptability

First: identify relevant stakeholders, e.g.:

- Groups directly targeted by the policy
- General population
- Policy makers (ministers, members of Parliament, mayors, municipal councillors...)
- Professionals from the relevant public sectors (for example, health, education, or transportation)
- Industry
- Financial institutions
- The media
- Political organizations
- Unions
- Community organizations
- Etc.



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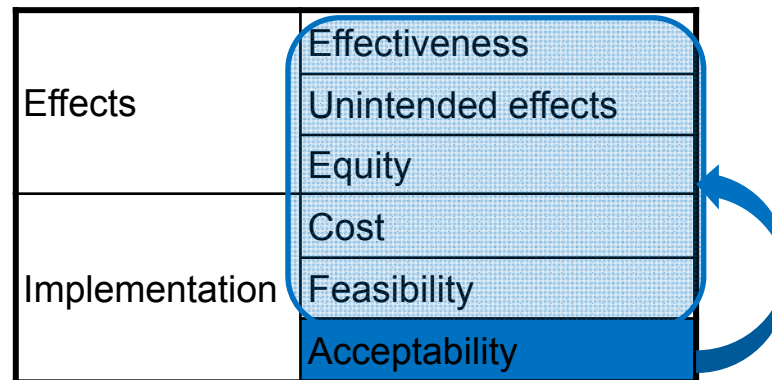
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Evaluation of acceptability (cont'd.)

Second: For each **major** stakeholder, possible aspects for evaluation:

- Acceptability of acting on a problem
- Acceptability of different interventions
- Assessment made by stakeholders of effects, cost and feasibility (i.e., how do *they* assess them):

Effects	Effectiveness
	Unintended effects
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Evaluation of acceptability (cont'd.)

Second: (Continued) For each **major** stakeholder, possible aspects for evaluation:

- Acceptability and coercion
(information vs. incentives vs. regulation)
- Acceptability of conditions surrounding adoption and implementation
Sometimes the *content* of a policy is accepted, but the *process* surrounding it is not
- Evolution of acceptability over time



Poll

Do you see relevance in evaluating policies by focusing on these different dimensions?

- a) Not applicable in my practice
- b) Yes, mostly “Effects” dimensions
- c) Yes, mostly “Implementation” dimensions
- d) Yes, all dimensions
- e) Other (please specify in chat box)

Effects	Effectiveness
	Unintended effects
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Selecting evaluation questions given the context

- Commissioned evaluation?
- Context surrounding the public policy, e.g.:
 - Information needs of policy makers
 - Other stakeholders' concerns
 - Hints about successes or problems (anecdotal evidence)
- Resources and time available for the evaluation
- Availability of data



Resources – Analytical framework

Briefing Note
For us to learn, knowledge is critical to healthy public policy

A Framework for Analyzing Public Policies Practical Guide

September 2012

Preliminary version – for discussion

Public health actors in public, community and academic networks may be called upon to work on public policies and, within the context of this work, to interact with policy makers at different levels (municipal, provincial, etc.). However, they often find that the content of their discourse does not meet all the information needs of these decision makers.

This document presents a structured process based on an analytical framework that reflects a public health perspective, while at the same time integrating other concerns of policy makers. The document addresses four questions:

- What public policies does this analytical framework apply to?
- In what types of situations is it useful?
- Which policy facets does it focus on?
- How is the analysis carried out?

An analytical framework for what type of public policy?

"Public policy" here refers to "a strategic action led by a public authority in order to limit or increase the presence of certain phenomena within the population" (National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy [NCCCHPP], 2012). More specifically, the proposed framework is designed to analyze healthy (or presumed to be healthy) public policies.

Definition of healthy public policy proposed by Milio (2001, p. 822):

Healthy public policy improves the conditions under which people live: secure, safe, adequate and sustainable livelihoods, lifestyles, and environments, including, housing, education, nutrition, information exchange, child care, transportation, and necessary community and personal social and health services.

Healthy public policies can be generated by and implemented in various sectors. Their expected impact on health derives from their impact on living conditions, which in turn strongly influence health.

Carrying out an analysis of public policies: in which situations is this useful?

Usually, public health actors do not have the power to make public policy decisions, and they represent only one voice among many; policy making is influenced by numerous groups and organizations with an interest in the outcome (Milio, 2001). It is therefore important to present the public health perspective while remaining aware of the other perspectives being expressed and how these may resonate with policy makers. Given this context, the analysis of public policies proves useful, particularly in the following situations:

- 1) Before the decision to adopt a public policy is made

There are several possible scenarios:

- You must inform a decision maker about the relevance of adopting a particular public policy. You do not have a particular bias with regard to this policy and the aim is simply to provide the decision maker with the information needed to make an informed decision. The proposed framework allows for such a structured analysis.
- To address a public health problem, you wish to promote the adoption of a public policy; you are thus consciously playing the role of advocate, guided by your organization's mission. Applying the analytical framework to the policy clarifies its implications, which helps you prepare your supporting arguments and advocacy strategy.
- You wish to compare public policies. The goal may be to inform the decision making process when there are several competing options, or earlier in the process, to decide which policy should be the focus of in-depth

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Briefing note

➤ Including a list of possible evaluation questions

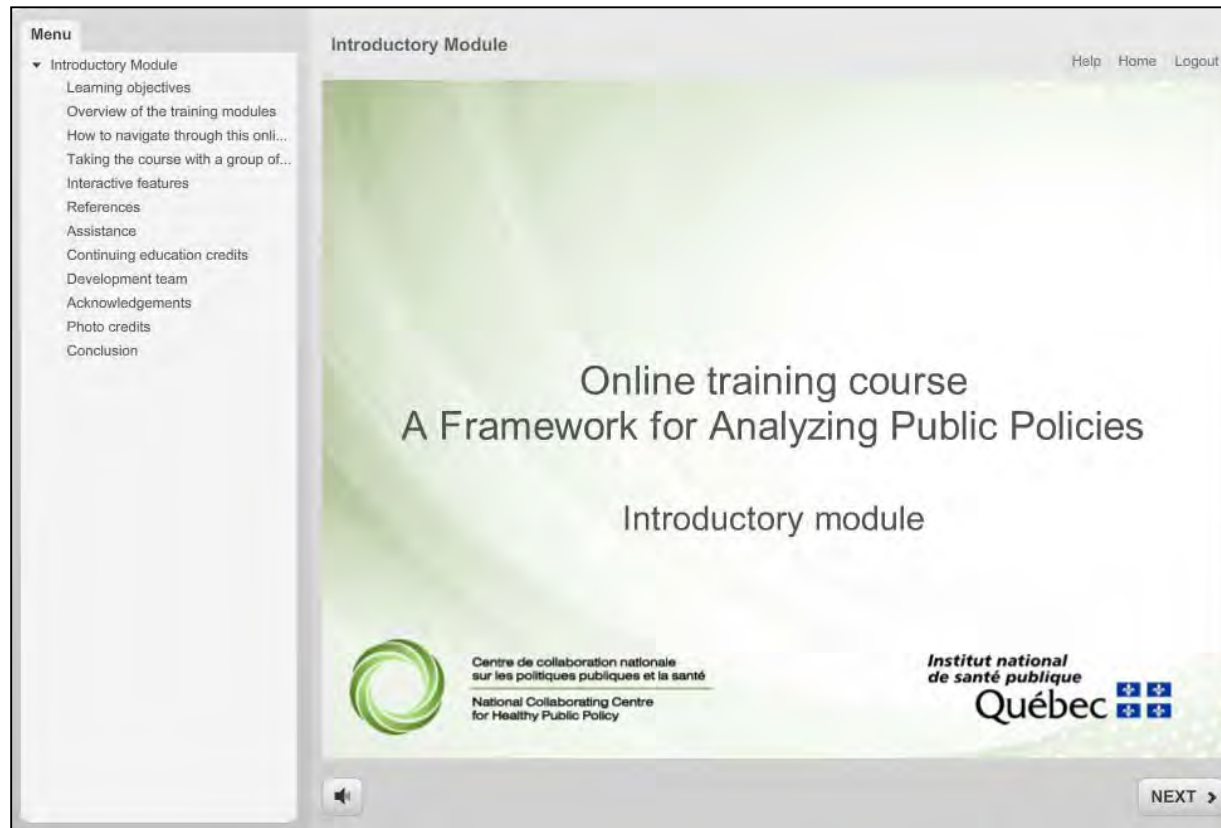
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Resources – Analytical framework

Online training course

(Duration: 6 to 8 hours)



The screenshot shows a web-based training course interface. On the left is a vertical menu with the following items: Introductory Module (expanded), Learning objectives, Overview of the training modules, How to navigate through this onli..., Taking the course with a group of..., Interactive features, References, Assistance, Continuing education credits, Development team, Acknowledgements, Photo credits, and Conclusion. The main content area is titled 'Introductory Module' and features a large green graphic with the text 'Online training course' and 'A Framework for Analyzing Public Policies'. Below this, it says 'Introductory module'. At the bottom of the main area, there are logos for the 'Centre de collaboration nationale sur les politiques publiques et la santé' (National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy) and the 'Institut national de santé publique Québec' (National Institute of Public Health Québec). A 'NEXT >' button is located in the bottom right corner of the main content area.

Information: http://www.ncchpp.ca/438/Online_Course.ccnpps

Resources – Logic models

Constructing a Logic Model for a Healthy Public Policy: Why and How?

March 2013

Preliminary version – for discussion

This briefing note outlines the process for constructing a logic model as proposed in the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy's (NCCHPP's) method for synthesizing knowledge about public policies (Morestin, Gauvin, Hogue & Benoit, 2010). It also shows the use of this type of logic model in applications other than knowledge synthesis, as a tool that public health actors can use to analyze public policies.

The process of constructing a logic model is useful in many respects for professionals who are called upon to advise policy makers or to implement and evaluate public policies, in the interest of promoting informed decision making. Logic models can be developed for public policies and interventions of all kinds. For the purposes of this briefing note, we will be focusing specifically on healthy public policies, as the selected examples will show.

In the following pages, we will attempt to answer three questions:

- What is a logic model for a healthy public policy?
- Why construct a logic model for a healthy public policy?
- How does one construct a logic model?

What is a logic model for a healthy public policy?

Logic models have been used widely for decades for planning and evaluation purposes. In the past few years, authors have also been recommending that they be used to guide the production of knowledge syntheses (Morestin et al., 2010; Anderson et al., 2011). It is important to note that different authors use different terms to describe tools that often turn out to be similar: logic models, theoretical models, conceptual frameworks, logical frameworks, etc. Some authors include resources and activities within these tools whereas others concentrate solely on effects. We do not wish to quibble about

terminology or definitions. What is important here is to understand the nature of the tool that is described in this document, which represents one possible approach among many. The term we have chosen is "logic model," but our focus here is on the tool and not on the label.

A logic model as it is defined here represents the chain of expected effects that link a public policy to a health problem it aims to solve. It goes beyond the question "Does it work?" to gain a better understanding of *how* it works, i.e., how the policy being studied is meant to operate.

Often, when a public policy is put forward with the goal of obtaining a specific effect on a health problem, there are no details as to how the effect is intended to occur. The proposal is based on general assumptions about the effectiveness of the policy (does it work?), sometimes supported, to the extent possible, by evidence. But the thinking about the policy's precise mechanisms of action remains at the "black box" stage (Figure 1). For example, nutrition labelling (e.g., the nutrition facts table found on food labels) is a public policy that has been proposed to prevent obesity. But what are the mechanisms of action by which changing a product label is supposed to have an impact on an individual's weight?

A black box situation is inadequate to inform decision-making with regard to adopting a new public policy or evaluating an existing one. As pointed out by Weiss (1998, p.57), the mechanisms of change are not the intervention per se, but the response that the intervention generates. It is therefore this response that needs to be the focal point, especially in the case of public policies. The scope of public policies is vast and complex, as are the problems these policies target. Accordingly, a public policy does not directly tackle a given problem; it activates a

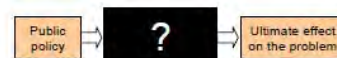


Figure 1 The black box

Briefing Note

For up-to-date knowledge relating to healthy public policy



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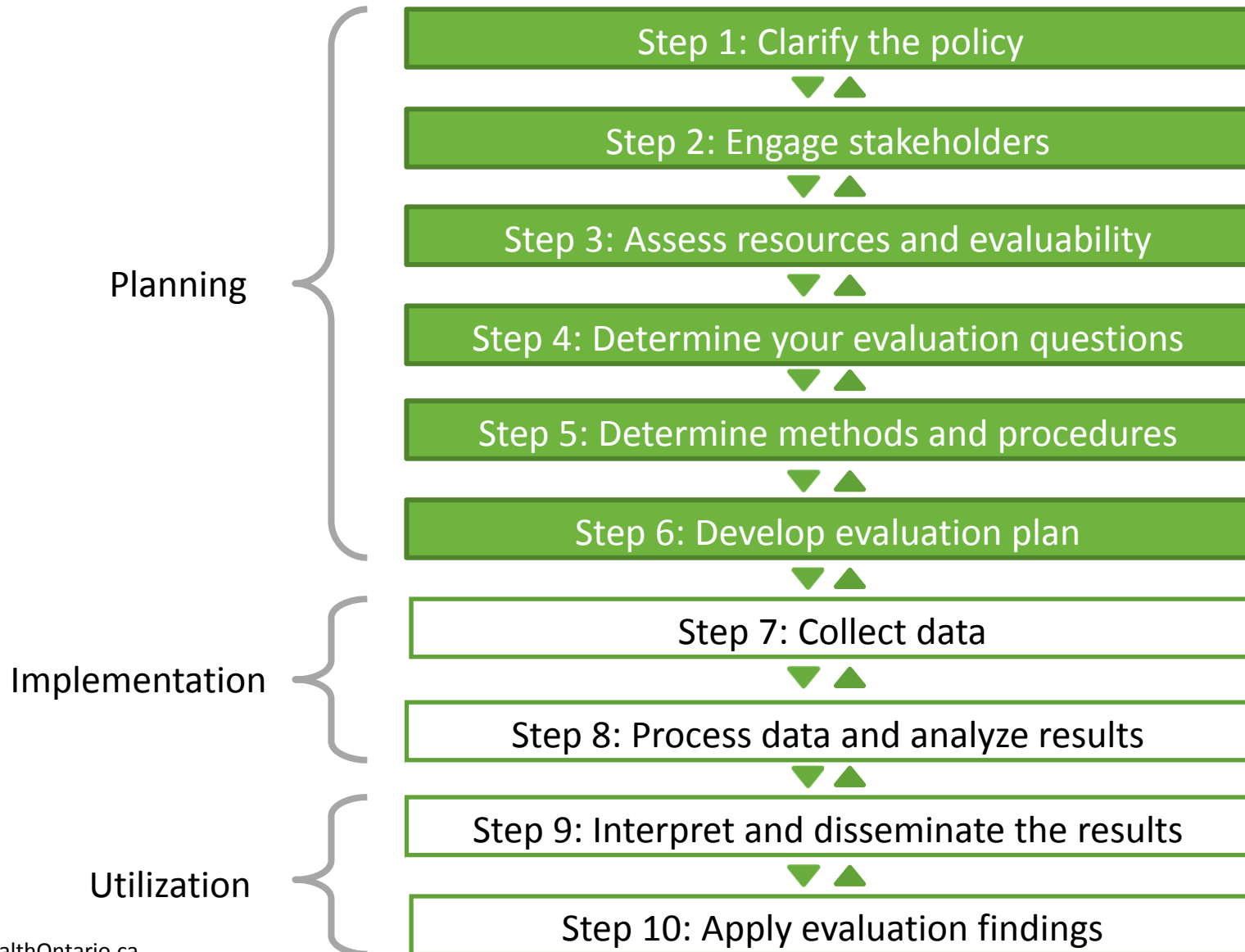


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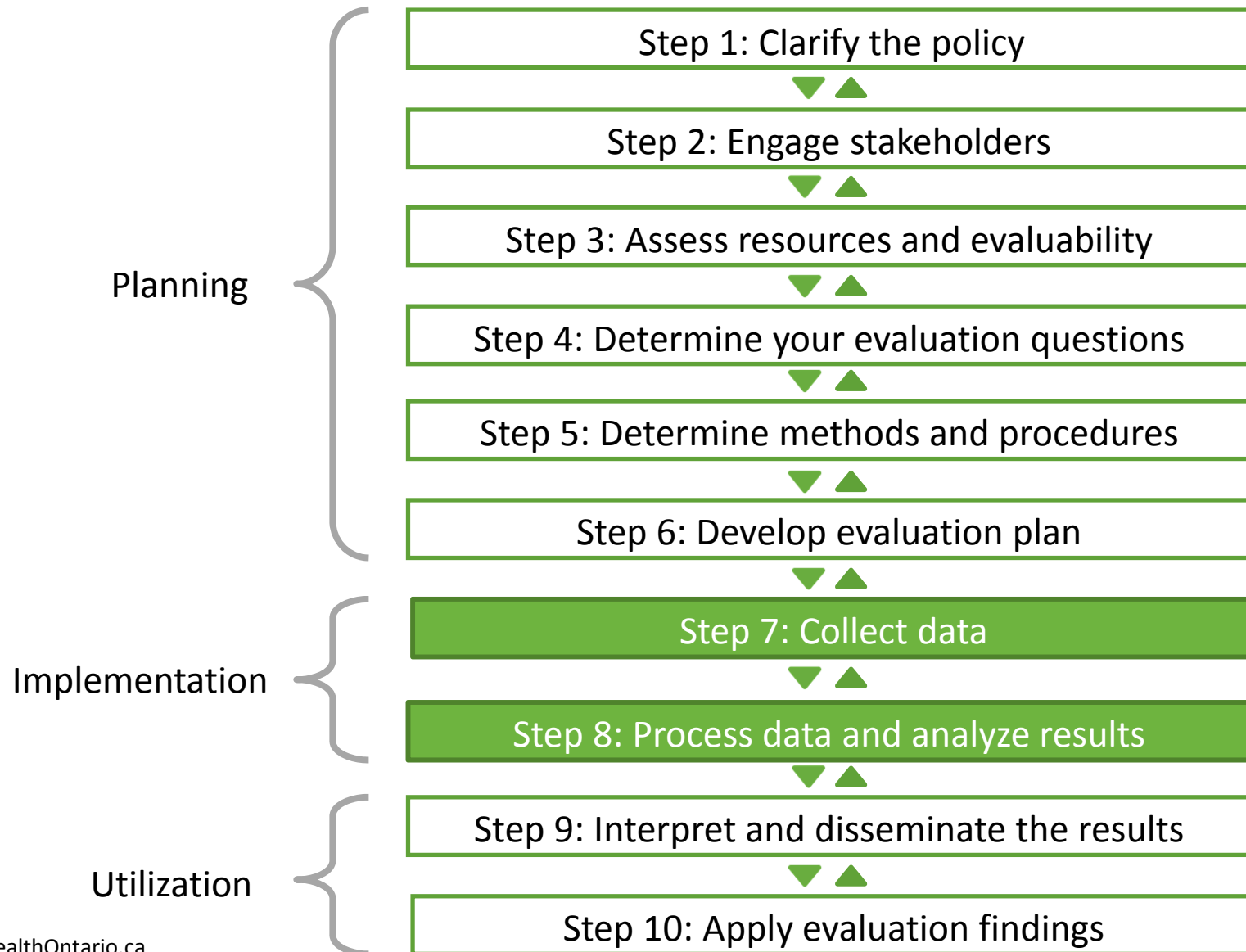
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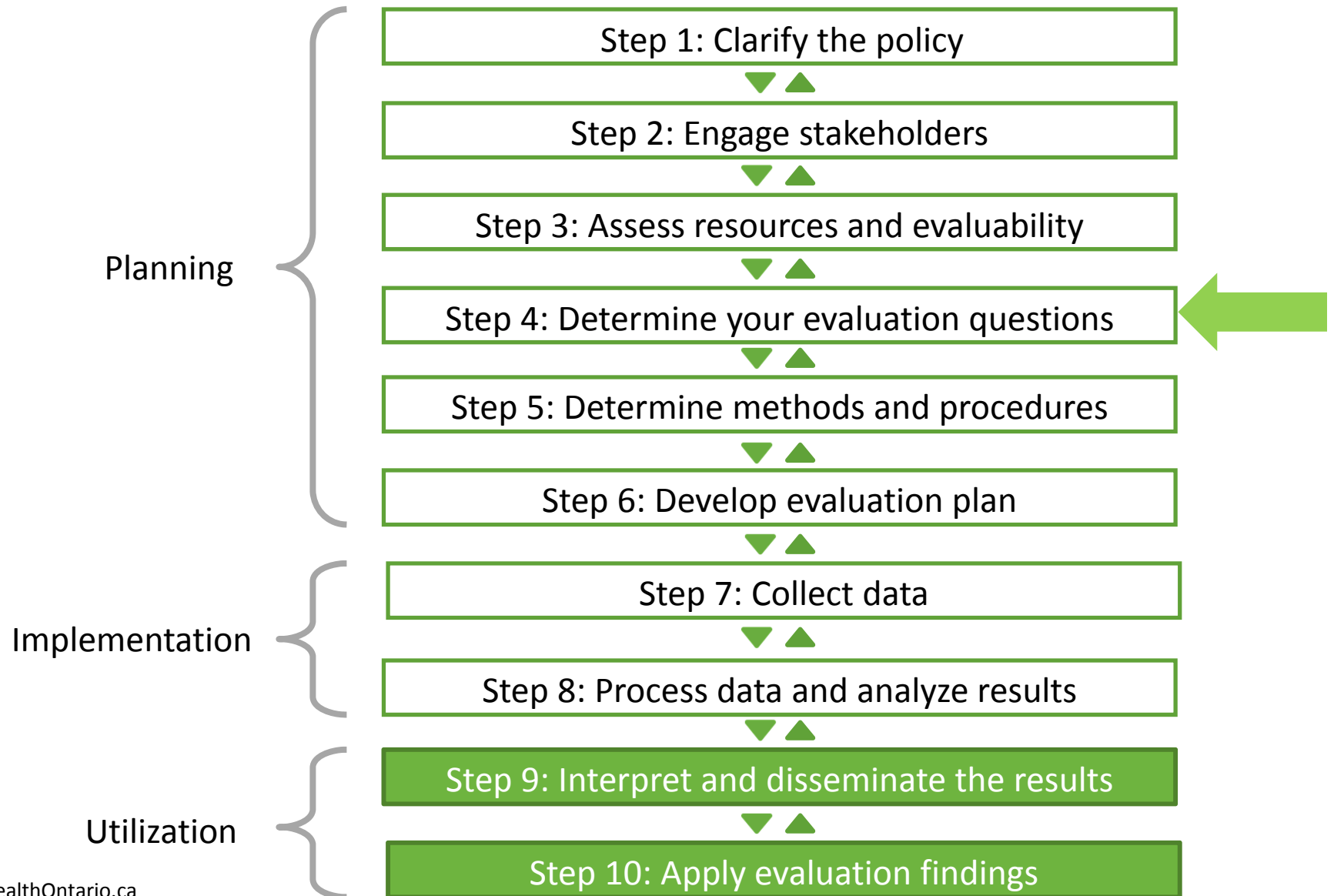
Ten steps for conducting an evaluation²



Ten steps for conducting an evaluation²



Ten steps for conducting an evaluation²



Questions?



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Thank you!

Kim Bergeron

kim.bergeron@oahpp.ca

Florence Morestin

Florence.Morestin@inspq.qc.ca



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