



The Elusive Nature of Evaluation Capacity Building

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- Growing interest in ECB since 2000: Leviton American Evaluation Association conference presidential address
- In 2014: ECB
 - American Journal of Evaluation Forum: ECB
 - New Directions for Evaluation: Organisational capacity to do and use evaluation
 - Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation: Developing evaluator competencies
 - AfREA conference: Plenary session on ECB





The concept of ECB is elusive

Definitions:

- Define capacity
- Define evaluation capacity
- Define capacity building or capacity development
- Then only define ECB

Capacity building is a complex human process that involves changes in relationships between elements of open systems, involves shifts in power and identity, and is an endogenous process that involves the main actor taking responsibility for change. Outsiders can only facilitate the development process. (Walters 2007)





A comprehensive definition

ECB involves the design and implementation of teaching and learning strategies to help individuals, groups and organisations learn about what constitutes effective, useful and professional evaluation practice.

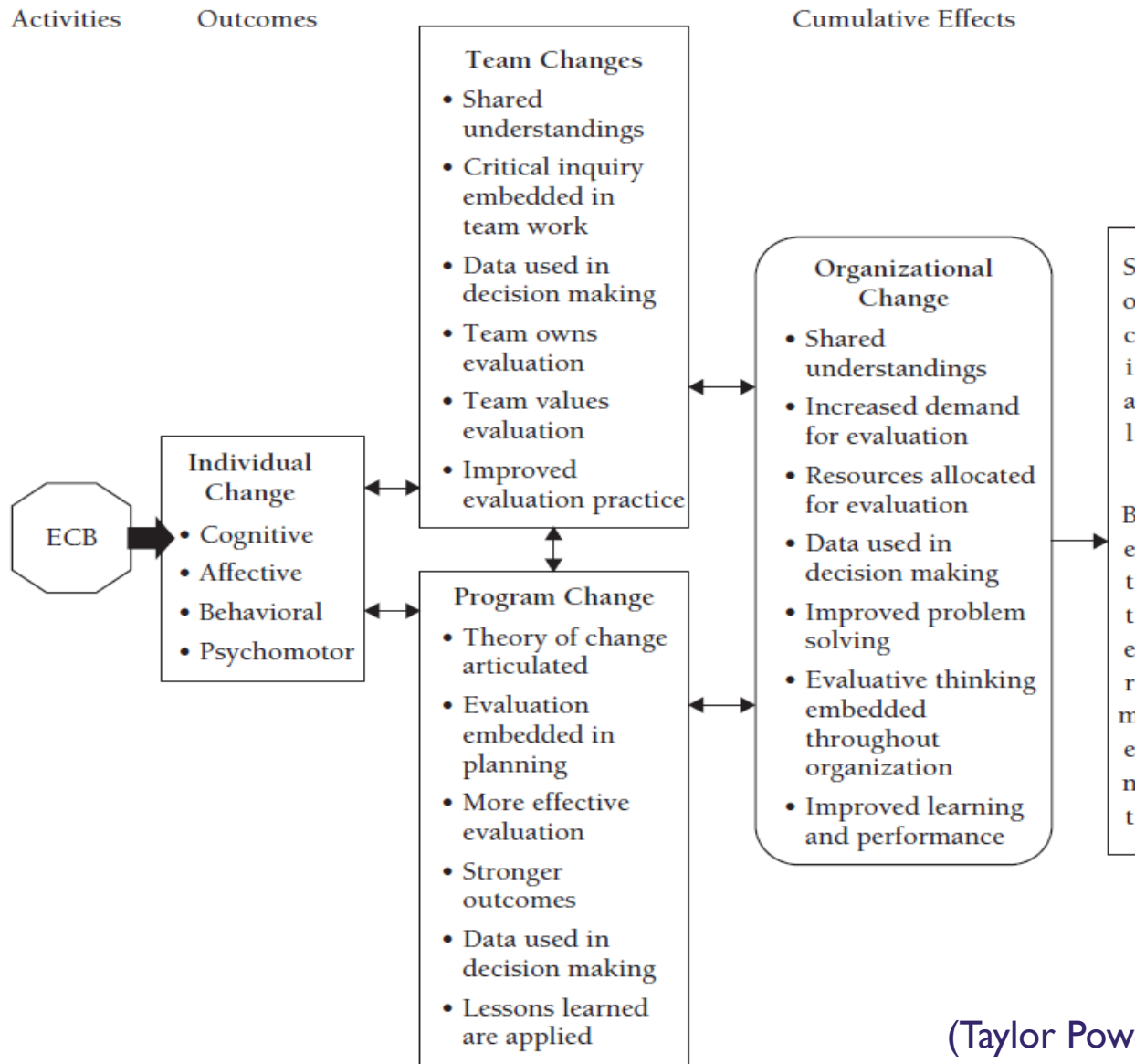
The ultimate goal is sustainable evaluation practice...

- Where members continuously ask questions that matter, collect, analyse and interpret data, and use evaluation findings for decision making and action...
- ... Sustainable evaluation practice also requires the development of systems, processes, policies and plans that help embed evaluation work into the way the organisation accomplishes its mission, and strategic goals.

(Preskill and Boyle, 2008)



A Theory of Change for ECB



(Taylor Powell and Boyd, 2008)





Questions

- *How does one become an evaluator i.e. gain competence?*
- *What is the nature of this capacity or competence?*
- *Who decides when a person has 'enough' competence to call him or herself an evaluator?*

How?

- Academic programmes, short courses, informal ways (our digital world)
- Some people become evaluators accidentally e.g. through their jobs
- Through participation in evaluations

Lack of uniformity: This leads to a spectrum of competencies.... From low to high





What capacity/ competencies?

‘The essential knowledge, skills and dispositions that evaluators need to conduct evaluations effectively’ (Ghere et al, 2006)

- Knowledge: Easy to transfer
- Skills: Need opportunities
- Dispositions: Can these be developed?

Who decides on competencies?

Academic institutions

Evaluation practitioners

Professional practice, systematic enquiry, situational analysis, project management, reflective practice, interpersonal competence

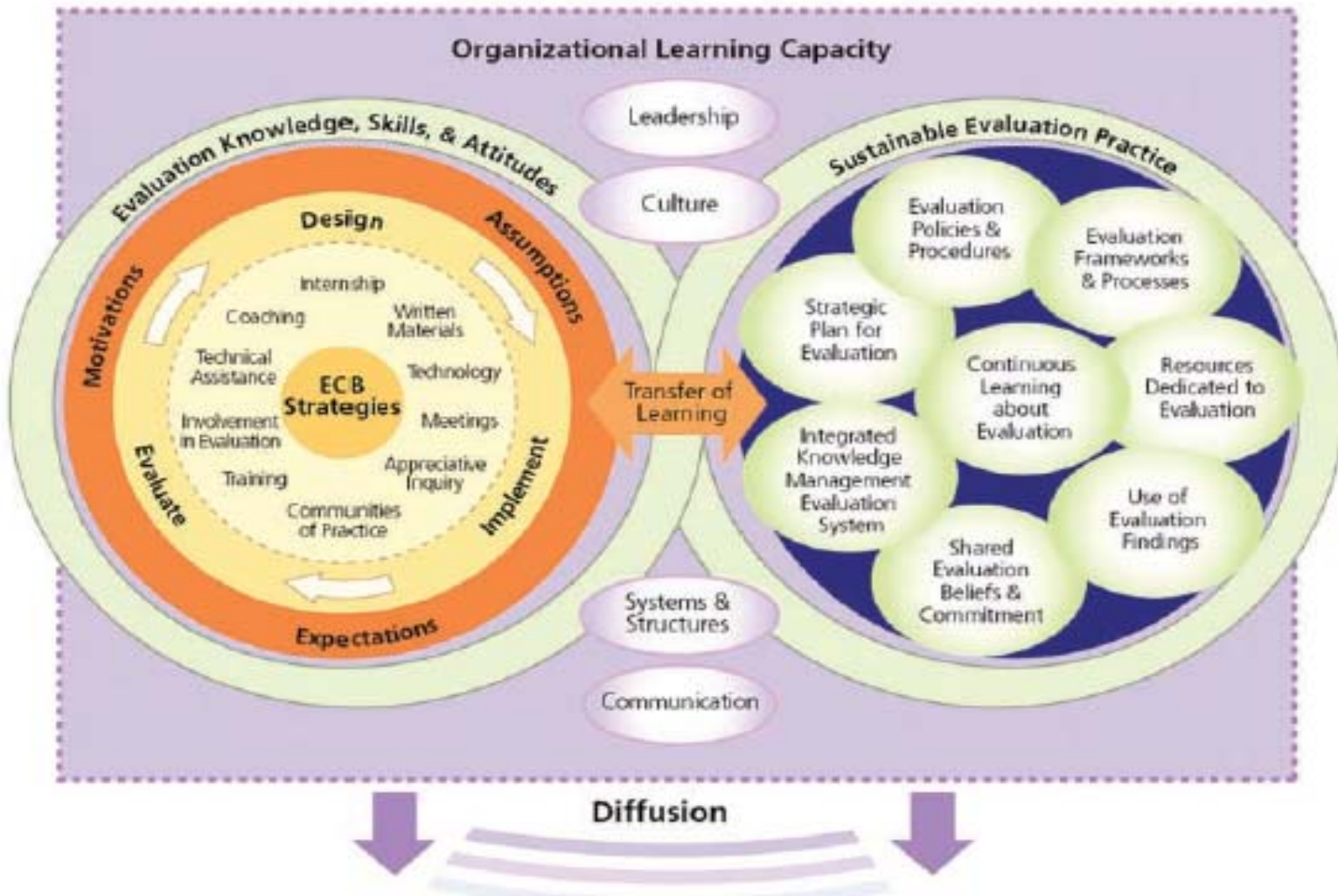
SA government: Evaluator competencies:

Overarching considerations (contextual knowledge/ ethical conduct/ interpersonal skills), leadership, evaluation craft (evaluative discipline and practice, research practice), implementation of evaluation (planning, management, reporting, improvement)



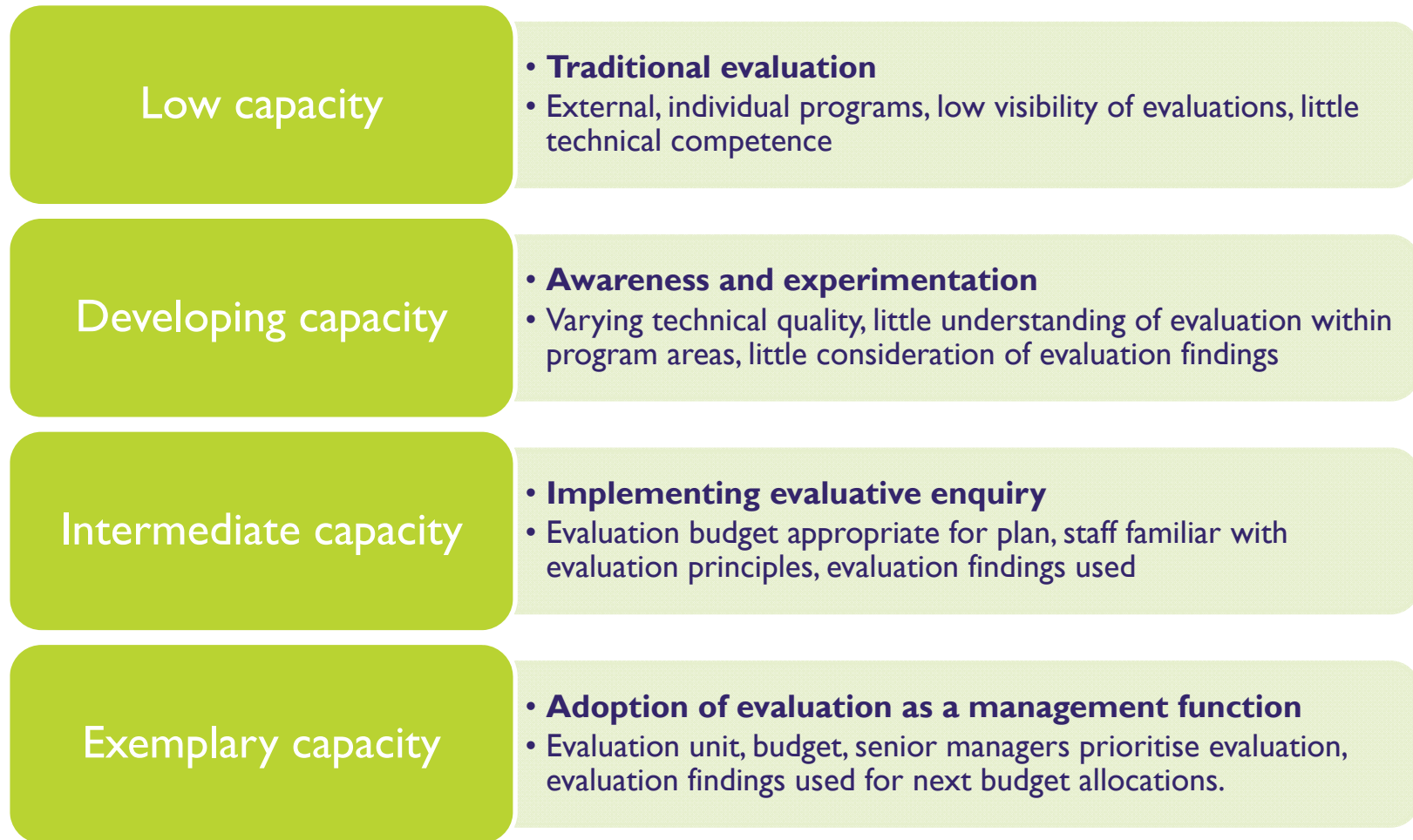
Who decides what is valuable? Cultural competence

ECB at the Meso-level: Organisations, Departments



Multidisciplinary model of ECB
 (Preskill and Boyle, 2008)





**Levels of organisational evaluation capacity
(Bourgeois and Cousins, 2008)**





EvalYear

Origins: Measuring of MDGs

VOPEs (Voluntary Organisations For Professional Evaluation):

4 international: IOCE (International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation), IDEAS (International Development Evaluation Association), EvalPartners, and RFE (Reseau Francophone de Lévaluation)

Regional VOPEs such as AfREA (African Evaluation Association):

- Focus is to counter the (hitherto) limited evaluation opportunities by building strategic bridges for African evaluators to connect, network and share experiences.
- Move away from evaluation capacity building efforts driven mainly by international development organisations.

Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation:

Case studies of national evaluation capacity, NEP (National Evaluation Policy)

CLEAR: 6 Centres for Learning on Evaluation and Results: Strengthening partner countries' capacity for evaluation





Assessment of national capacity:

South Africa: Survey with national and provincial government departments (Podems et al, 2014, DPME, 2014)

	Percentage
Departments: Capacity for M&E is weak, managers do not have skills to carry out their M&E functions	32
Confident in monitoring and reporting	Provincial/ National 78 / 92
Confident in managing evaluations	42 / 52
Focus on monitoring and outputs, rather than outcomes and impacts (barrier to use of M&E for decision making etc.)	61
Participants felt they should have training in evaluation policy and practice	72
Departments not planning or conducting evaluation of any of their major programmes	81





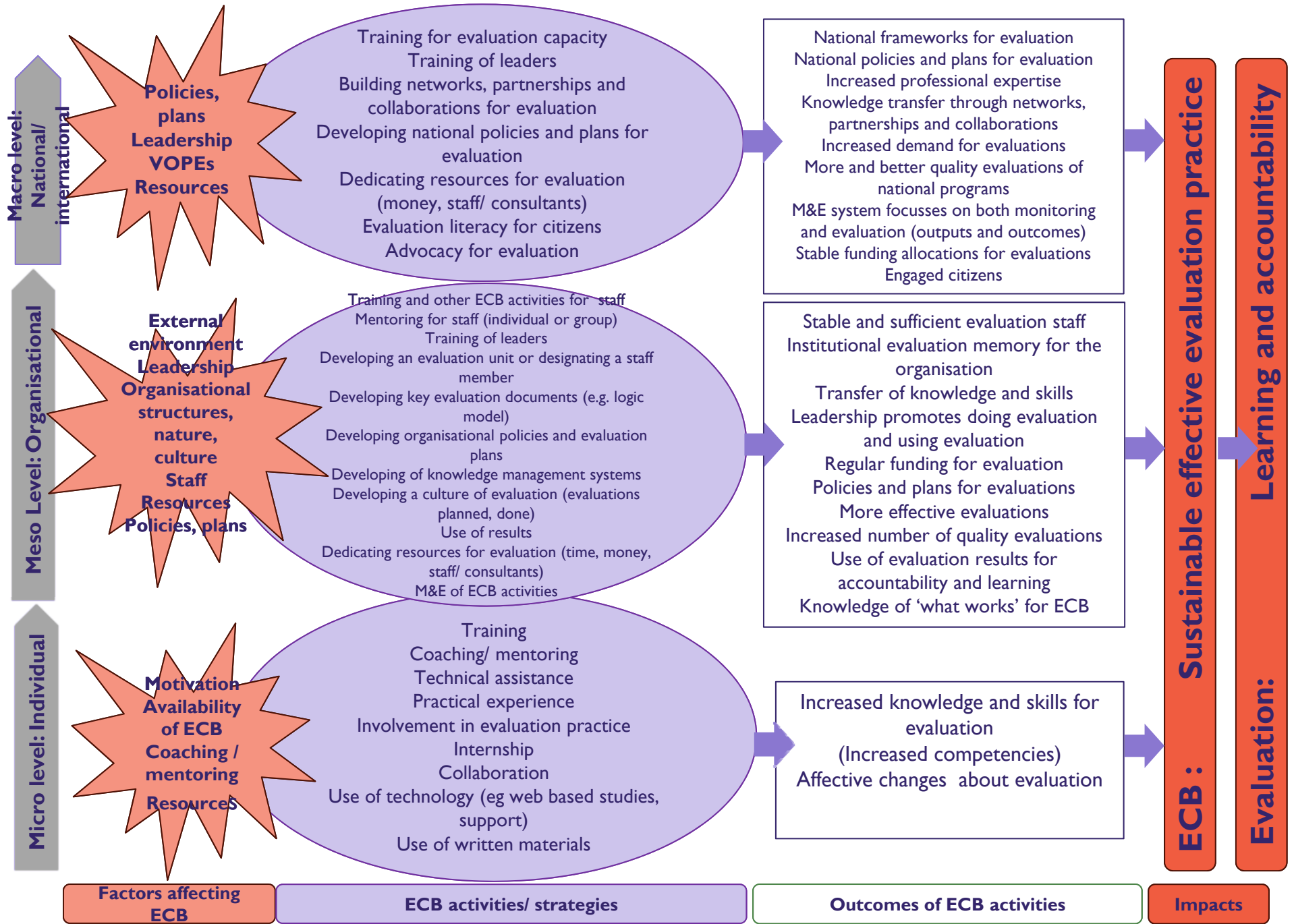
At national level: What capacity?

Capacity to manage, conduct and use evaluations

Strategies for ECB:

- Training, mentoring , coaching
- Developing leadership
- Building networks, partnerships and collaborations
- National evaluation policies and plans
- Allocation of funds for ECB and evaluations
- Evaluation literacy of the general population
- Technology





In conclusion: Where to from here?



ECB at micro (individual) level:

Fundamental to ECB at all other levels:

Transferring knowledge: Old and new technologies

Transferring skills: Opportunities for gaining experience (participation), internships etc.

Soft skills, attitudes: Identification of these?

ECB at meso (organisational, departmental) level:

Making assessment tools available (stages of development)

Opportunities for development (link with macro level)

Orientation (and training) of senior managers, leaders, board members etc. about benefits of M&E ('Sell' M&E: What value add is there from M&E? What inhibits leaders from using evaluation findings?)

ECB at macro (national and international) level:

Continue with **purposeful** ECB activities e.g. through academia, VOPE such as SAMEA and AfREA (Who is to lead these initiatives?)

Research key questions: e.g. How do we judge the effectiveness of ECB activities?

Transferable evaluation capacity?

There is a need to forefront non- western worldviews and values in evaluation theory and practice.



THANK YOU!