Government
Communication
Service

The new GCS Evaluation Cycle

19 November 2024

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➔ **Communication is one of the four main levers government has to effect change, alongside legislation, regulation and taxation.**

➔ The Government Communication Service (GCS) is the professional body for more than 7,000 public service communicators in government departments, agencies and arm's length bodies.

➔ **The GCS goals are to:**

◆ improve the ability of government communications to work together to tackle the biggest challenges the country faces

◆ harness rapid technological changes in communications for the public good

◆ build public trust in government communications

➔ *More details on* https://strategy.gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/
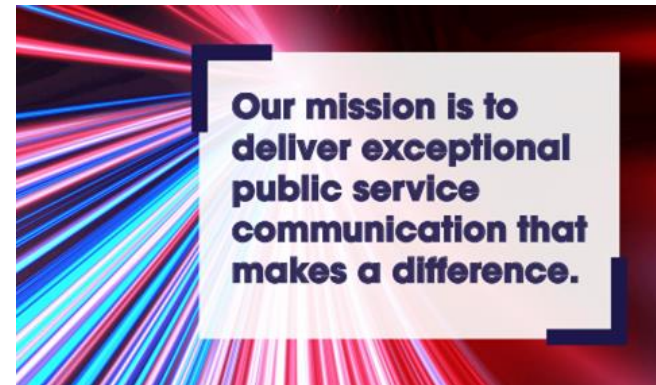
Evaluation

Framework 2.0

Embedding evaluation since 2018
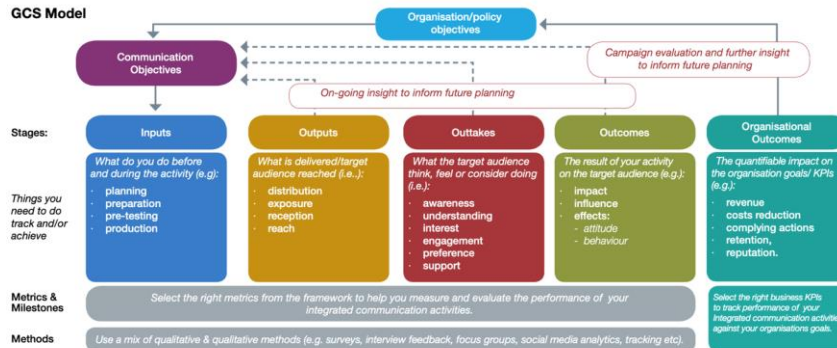
Innovation

Encouraging continuous learning, strengthening digital evaluation and inclusivity of diverse audiences

Our mission is to deliver exceptional public service communication that makes a difference.

Working towards published recommendations - Time for looking forward

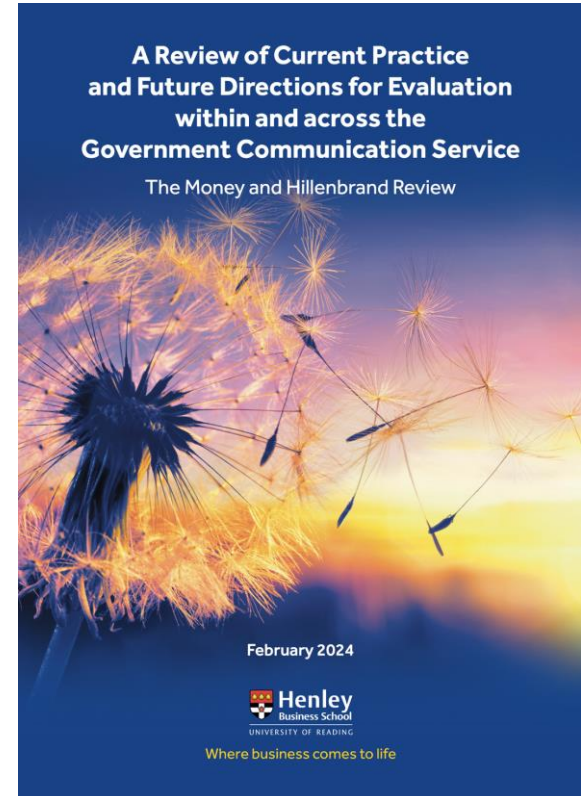|	
Recommendation 1. Encourage collaboration	→ Share and showcase best practice across multidisciplinary teams and departments
Recommendation 2. Enable innovation	→ Ensure all evaluations include lessons learnt for the future
Recommendation 3. Focus on great people	→ Utilising the EC as a structure for up skilling and development

A Review of Current Practice and Future Directions for Evaluation within and across the Government Communication Service

The Money and Hillenbrand Review

February 2024

Henley
Business School
UNIVERSITY OF READING

Where business comes to life

Money, K., & Hillenbrand, C. (2024). A Review of Current Practice and Future Directions for Evaluation within and across the Government Communication Service. Henley Business School: The John Madejski Centre for Reputation. https://assets.henley.ac.uk/v3/fileUploads/Money-Hillenbrand-Review.pdf

The new GCS Evaluation Cycle

- Moving from a linear to a cyclical process
- Core elements remain consistent

Available here:
https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/publications/gcs-evaluation-cycle/

Link to OASIS Framework
- **O**bjectives
- **A**udience insights
- **S**trategy/ideas
- **I**mplementation
- **S**coring/evaluation

Link to COM-B Model
- **C**apability
- **O**pportunity
- **M**otivation
- **B**ehaviour

1. Inputs
Evidence-based planning

What you have to do before the activity e.g.
- **O**bjectives Consider policy/organisation objectives and ensure inclusivity
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- Consider conducting activites in partnership
- Embed outcome-focused innovation
- Pre-test
- Ensure inclusivity of audience groups

Ensuring inclusivity and engaging audiences:
> Perceived characteristics of target audience(s)
> Audience segmentation

2. Outputs
Audience experience

Implementation What is delivered and audience reach e.g.
- Distribution
- Exposure
- Stakeholder engagement

Consider how these influence **C**apability, **O**pportunity and **M**otivation to change behaviour

3. Outtakes
Audience belief/feelings

What the target audience think, feel or intend as a result of the intervention e.g.
- Awareness
- Understanding
- Attitudes
- Emotions
- Intentions

> Perceived characteristics of the messenger

> Sub-cultural norms

4. Outcomes
Audience behaviour

The response of your target audience in terms of behaviour e.g.
- **B**ehaviour Maintain, stop and start
- Decrease barriers
- Contribution to communication and policy objectives

5. Impact
Linking inputs, outputs, outcomes and ROI

Scoring/evaluation Quantifiable impact on communication, policy and organisational objectives e.g.
- Revenue
- Cost reduction
- Compliance
- Retention
- Recruitment
- Physical and mental health
- Measurements of KPIs

6. Learning and innovation
Strategic insights

What can you learn from now and in the future? Could this be scaled up or applied more generally? e.g.
- Process
- Theory of change
- Value for money
- Case Studies
- Benchmarks

Continuous learning and improvements by responding to real-time metrics
Digital (hourly, daily, weekly)
Campaign tracking (monthly, yearly)

Link Outputs, Outtakes and Outcomes to develop and test Theory of Change

Government Communication Service

5 Key Changes ...

Government Communication Service

1. **Embedding continuous learning** through formalisation of the learning and innovation stage, to capture what does or doesn't work.

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2. Integration with OASIS ensuring evaluation is 'built in' from the start and not a 'bolt on'.

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Government Communication Service

3. Continuous learning and improvement at its centre

- Capturing real-time data to respond dynamically and optimise frequency.

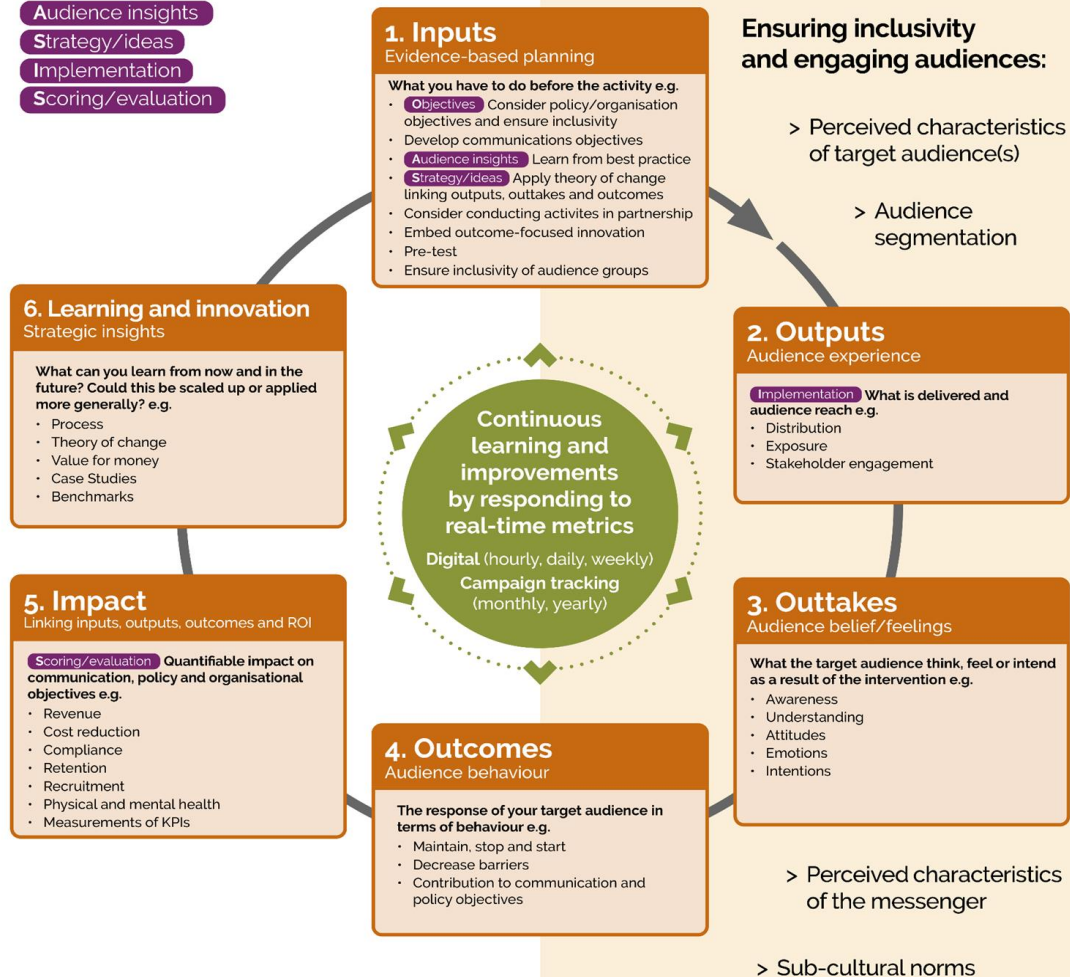- Generating digestible lessons to feed back into the cycle.

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4. Audience Inclusivity incorporated throughout the stages to better understand and target audiences effectively

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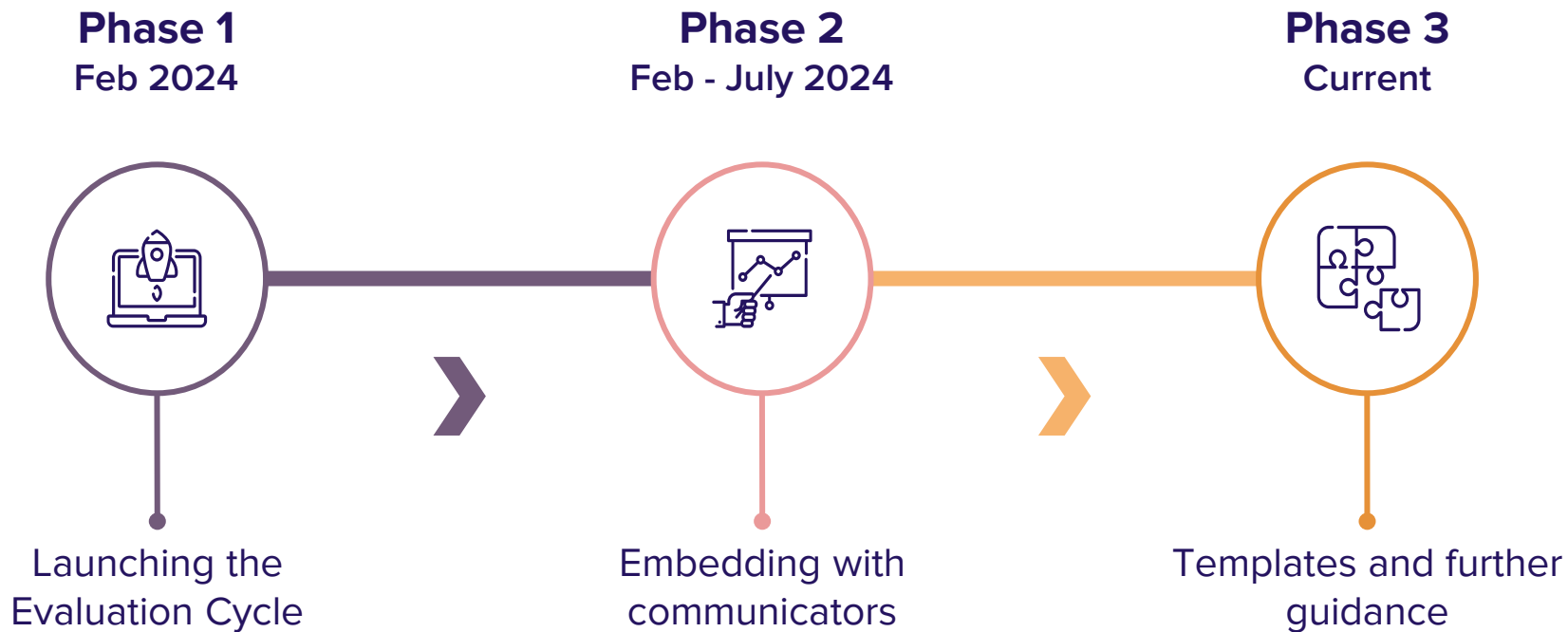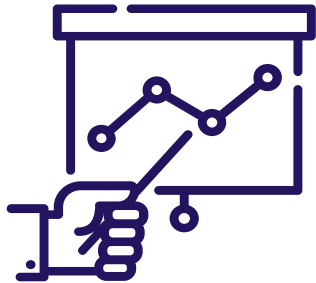> Perceived characteristics of the messenger

> Sub-cultural norms

Government Communication Service

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5. Integration with behavioural frameworks to better demonstrate the behavioural barriers addressed and clarity of behavioural Outcomes

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Phase 1
Feb 2024

Phase 2
Feb - July 2024

Phase 3
Current

Launching the
Evaluation Cycle

Embedding with
communicators

Templates and further
guidance

Record engagement with launch comms

Teach-in Roadshow

- ○ 1000 attendees from across 21 Departments

- ○ Majority felt confident applying Evaluation Cycle in their work

Government Communication Service

Feedback

"Most of our comms are low/no-cost – how do we evaluate them effectively?"

"What metrics should we use if we can't measure everything?"

"I know the principles now but how do put them into practice?"

"What should I do if we can't track actual behaviour change with COM-B?"

"How do we clearly report evaluations?"

"Can we see case study examples of how this is done?"
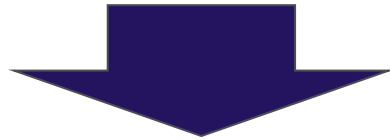
Action taken

Further guidance for low/no cost comms
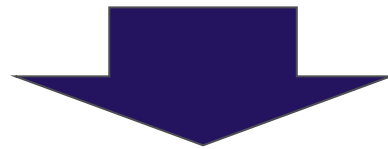
Case study examples of best practice

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The GCS Evaluation Cycle

February 2024
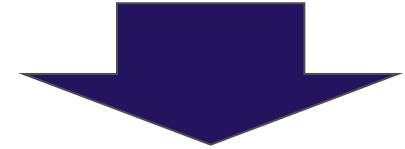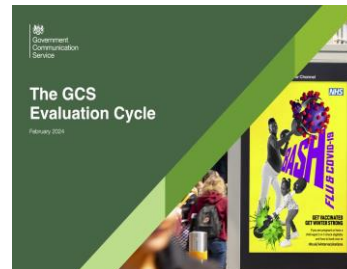
Campaign Evaluation Template

Shift in behaviour

Shift in focus

Shift in culture
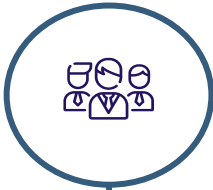
Using the Evaluation Cycle to support continuous learning and improvement in what works (and what doesn't)

Building on our data and insights to drive creative and bold innovation, make new discoveries and exceed current performance

Encouraging greater sharing of data and insights across GCS, learning more about audiences and how our communications works in greater detail

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- **Strong appetite to embrace changes but need for long-term upskilling** - Incorporation into the GCS learning offer

- **Skill sets vary across department**s - templates and case studies are key to demonstrating best practice.

- **It will take time to shift the culture** - our work is not done yet
  - Further guidance
  - Publishing case studies

- **Include the Evaluation Cycle in contracts and bids**

- **It is publicly available - can you make use of it?**

- **We are open to feedback**

https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/publications/gcs-evaluation-cycle/

Thank you

Questions?

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