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Evidence

LESSONS FROM ABROAD

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO
PROMOTING EVIDENCE-BASED
SOCIAL POLICY

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This is a paper for discussion.

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The paper presents the views of the author and these do not necessarily reflect the views of the Alliance for Useful Evidence or its constituent partners.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Many international bodies seek to promote the use (and improve the utility) of evidence¹ in the policymaking process. The ‘rise’ in such efforts also coincides with a greater ‘receptiveness’ towards research evidence on the part of some governments (Davies et al. 2000, p.1).² But the relationship between the supply and demand for evidence remains far from perfect.³ The true question is how to marry the two in a useful and consistent way that provides a smooth transition between knowledge and practice – and getting this relationship right may be even more important (and difficult) in times of economic austerity.⁴

As the UK Government seeks to create an evidence infrastructure to provide policy guidance across a broad range of social issues,⁵ it is clear that many of the challenges faced by its architects and future contributors are not necessarily unique to the UK context, or social policy alone.⁶ The purpose of this brief, therefore, is to outline some of the different approaches taken by foreign and international institutions seeking to advance evidence-based policy (EBP),⁷ and to identify innovations and best practices emerging from their designs that might translate well to the UK context and the realm of social policy. It is hoped that this paper will thus be useful not only to those policymakers involved in building the new UK ‘What Works Network’⁸ of six independent evidence centres going forward, but also to those elements of the evidence community generally seeking to create stronger institutions for the advancement of EBP. This brief is not meant to be an exhaustive examination of every existing EBP institution across the globe, but rather an exploratory discussion of some of the prominent institutions at the forefront of translating evidence into action.

Those seeking to advance EBP, or act as evidence ‘brokers,’ can adopt a variety of basic organisational structures. These include: EBP networks, research institutes and centres, corporate research groups, foundations, national government and intergovernmental organisations, as well as some hybrid organisations and partnerships. (See Appendix 2 for a typology of these structures.) For each of these organisational types, I focus on those that are active players in the EBP process, and at the forefront of global efforts to integrate evidence into the decision-making process of (inter)national leaders. These were located through an extensive literature review, an examination of the available independent and self-evaluations of the EBP institutions in the countries and international organisations named below, as well as phone and email interviews where possible with the directors and staff of these organisations and others within their broader evidence/policy communities. Over 25 interviews were conducted in all, and the anonymity of those individuals has been respected to allow them the freedom to speak candidly about sensitive political and organisational issues. Again, the point of this brief is not to list every academic network or research institute that claims to produce policy-relevant research, but rather to highlight the nature of those rare organisations that have successfully found ways to communicate and translate their findings to policymakers, and who have managed to become engaged in the policymaking process itself.

This brief proceeds as follows. The next section explores foreign institutional approaches to EBP. First, I look at a series of cases of developed democratic western nations with strong academic and independent research systems that are in positions of relative economic strength within their regions.⁹ In order of examination these are: Germany, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the Netherlands, and Belgium. I then look briefly at approaches taken by five major intergovernmental organisations: the European Union, International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the World Bank. Other nations and the organisations are omitted only due to space constraints, although a number of interesting programmes could be cited that would provide relevant cases for further

research, such as the UN Evaluation Group. (Newer organisations such as the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Education, officially launched in May 2013, may also prove to be an interesting body for future inquiry.)¹⁰

The final section highlights some of the organisational elements and best practices that emerged from the most innovative international bodies examined here (such as the Australian Productivity Commission, the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis, or Germany's Leibniz Association), and which the author believes might prove informative for the UK. In brief these elements are: 1) openness to different methodological approaches, and all forms of rigorous evidence, 2) independence of structure, budget, and findings, 3) diversity of funding, 4) leadership and institutionalisation of good practice, 5) wise use of resources, 6) effective and targeted communication, 7) transparency and co-operation with other EPB institutions, and 8) a commitment to self-evaluation.

2 NATIONAL APPROACHES

GERMANY

The **Bertelsmann Stiftung** (BS) is an independent think tank and non-grantmaking foundation that offers an interesting starting point to examine the transmission mechanisms between knowledge and policy action in Germany. The BS has an ‘Evidence-Based Strategies Program’ that runs several diverse kitemarking projects: one on ‘Benchmarking Germany’ (BG – until 2004), one that assesses economic development and governance in developing and emerging countries (Transformation Index, or TI), and one that examines the governance capabilities of the OECD countries (Sustainable Governance Indicators, or SGI). These projects are multi-method in nature (using quantitative and qualitative measures to rank countries on a series of factors), and tend to focus on overall performance in a given category rather than evaluate single policy interventions. While each of these project’s findings are determined independently, their experience of interacting with policymakers has had different results and impacts at the national and international levels. The SGI and TI are known to be utilised by national governments and intergovernmental organisations, for example for the purposes of evaluation, and even for the allocation of development funds (TI). In fact, since its independent inception, the OECD has recognised the value of the SGI, and now provides some support and co-operation in the development and communication of the project.

For our purposes here, the SGI index also helpfully includes an assessment of the general approach to scholarly advice and research taken in the OECD countries, thereby providing an excellent way to begin our discussion of each of the six countries examined in this section. With regard to Germany, it points out that *“in some policy fields, expert commissions provide regular expert advice... [and] ad hoc commissions are convened to review issues related to complicated policies or major reforms... most ministries (also) have external advisory bodies and finance more or less scientific studies”* (Rüb et al. 2011, p.41-42). This is followed by two points of caution. First, not all of these bodies may be as independent and well comprised as the ones discussed below; and second, the German political context means that despite the commitment of policymakers to seek regular expert counsel and commission individual evaluations of particular policies, it remains difficult to assess the impact of this evidence on the final decisions of German policymakers (Rüb et al. 2011, p.42).¹¹ The SGI does note, however, that nonetheless, *“there are many issues faced by the government which are not ideologically driven, and on which the government and the ministries listen to advisors,”* giving the examples of active labour market policy and tax reform (Rüb et al. 2011, p.42).

In Germany, expert commissions often take the form of **Scientific Advisory Boards** (or *Wissenschaftliche Beiräte*), which are employed by both the private (e.g. – universities) and public (e.g. – government departments and ministries) sectors. These boards are usually fixed institutions, comprised of highly qualified experts in their fields, who provide advice and may also produce formal reports for set terms, before board members are rotated. For example, the **German Advisory Council on Global Change** (*Wissenschaftlicher Beirat der Bundesregierung Globale Umweltveränderungen – WBGU*) is currently composed of nine academic experts (it can have up to 12), each with a dedicated research analyst. WBGU council members serve four-year terms, meeting 11 times a year. The council was formed before the Rio Summit in 1992 in order to *“periodically assess global environmental change and its consequences,”* and to *“help all [German government] institutions responsible for environmental policy as well as the public to form an opinion on these issues.”* (WBGU 1992). They are tasked (among other duties) with producing an annual ‘flagship report’ covering their assessment of the latest developments of import, as well as policy papers and special reports that can be commissioned by the government ministries on urgent or special topics. The board is considered to be fully independent, but it should be noted that

its members are nominated by the two federal ministries that also provide its funding: the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (WBGU 2012). Similarly, the **Advisory Council for Family Matters** (Wissenschaftlicher Beirat für Familienfragen – WBF) was established in 1970 to advise the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (the BMFSFJ), which also appoints its members. The WBF acts as an independent body, and currently comprises 13 academic experts (it can have up to 21), who serve for three-year terms. Members are tasked with helping to bring scientific rigour and evidential analysis to a broad array of family related social policy areas ranging from education to parenting (BMFSFJ 2012).¹² The Council's reports usually include *“recommendations for further research and policy actions”* (BMFSFJ 2012). Likewise, the **Advisory Council for Migration** (Beirat für Forschungsmigration) advises the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees on policy issues related to migration and integration in an annual report (BAMF 2012).

As mentioned above, some German Federal and State ministries also commission ad-hoc academic research to perform evaluations on a specific policy or set of policies. The most striking example of this is the ‘Hartz reforms’ to labour market policies, which sought to address the unemployment problem in Germany, and offers one of the most interesting cases of EBP making in recent German history. These reforms marked *“the first major reform in the history of the German welfare state [to be] accompanied by a comprehensive scientific evaluation”* that was both mandated by, and carried out *“on behalf of the government”* (Jacobi and Kluve 2007, p.52). The first four Hartz reforms occurred between 2003 and 2005, and by 2007 *“more than 20 economic and sociological research institutes with about 100 researchers [were] involved in the evaluation”* process, after successfully tendering for the role (Jacobi and Kluve 2007, p.52). This process and the resulting evaluations seem to have been successful. The SGI claims (as do many in the academic community) that *“the in-depth academic evaluation of various [labour market] instruments has had a real impact”* on German policymaking in the area, *“with ineffective instruments being phased out”* over time (Rüb et al. 2011, p.42). After researchers found the effects of reforms in the area of job creation, for example, to be *“detrimental,”* they were largely dropped (Jacobi and Kluve 2007, p.45). Similarly, when the German government passed the Elterngeld law in 2006 (which changed the policy surrounding parental support after childbirth), it included a provision mandating that the new policy be evaluated and its effects reported to the German Parliament within two years. In that case, evaluators found the effects of the reform to be positive,¹³ and the law has remained essentially unmodified (Jacobi and Kluve, 2007; and Kluve and Tamm, 2012). Once again, it is difficult to determine whether or not this is as a direct result of the evaluation. However, these rather expensive reforms have remained despite the fiscal arguments later made against them by some conservative politicians (2012, pers. comm., 31 August).

There is also a vibrant community of research centres in Germany tied together by **The Leibniz Association** (LA). The LA acts as an umbrella organisation to 86 member research institutions that cover a wide range of scientific, economic, and social issues. Some of these institutions stand out as actively bringing evidence to bear on social policy issues. One clear example is **RWI Essen** (Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung), which was awarded the tender to evaluate the Elterngeld policies, discussed above, by the BMFSF (See: Kluve et al. 2008). RWI is an independent research institute with a ‘Special Research Topic’ area of ‘Evidence-based Policy Advice’ that engages in both self-initiated research and projects commissioned by the EU and the German government. Other institutes engaged in similar work, and active in advising policymakers, include the **DIW Berlin** (Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung), and the **WZB** (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung). In total, Leibniz member institute budgets have reached €1.4 billion, and are composed of German Federal, Länder, and third party funding.

The Leibniz Association itself serves an important function to the EBP community in Germany, by ensuring each of its member institutions is independently evaluated at least once every seven years, and by co-ordinating with the government ministries/departments

that host these institutes to produce a status report. Evaluations examine issues ranging from the coherence of the Institute's research programme, to the quality of its research and consulting products and its 'transfer of knowledge' beyond its walls (LA 2012). Evaluation reports also address forward planning, and whether or not continued funding and 'promotion' of the institutes by their Länder and Federal governments makes sense (LA 2012). The Leibniz Association is thus a very interesting organisation for the purposes of this brief, as its umbrella and evaluative functions appear to help co-ordinate a more coherent and smoother transfer of knowledge between policymakers and the broader German research community.

AUSTRALIA

The Australian approach to incorporating evidence into the policymaking process relies primarily on formal government-sponsored bodies through which policy evaluations and research-based knowledge are relayed to decision makers. As noted in the SGI, the Australian "*federal government has funded a range of specialist centers and institutes*" over the past three decades that are "*aimed at undertaking fundamental research and planning,*" and "*feed into government policy*" (McAllister et al. 2011, p.33). The Government also frequently employs mechanisms such as parliamentary committees, expert taskforces, and public inquiries in order to obtain needed policy advice and analysis on an ad hoc basis (Banks 2007, p.3). Utilisation of research and evaluation by the academic and private sectors more generally, however, has not yet become widespread.¹⁴

The Australian **Productivity Commission** (PC) appears to be one of the most innovative mechanisms within their national system not only for supporting EBP making, but also for its impact on the decision making process. It has a unique role as the only statutory body tasked with conducting public inquiries within Australia, complete with its own budget stream and federally appointed chair and commissioners (Banks 2007).

The PC was established by the Australian Parliament with the passing of the Productivity Commission Act of 1998. It is primarily tasked with addressing economic and regulatory issues, but effectively acts as the "*Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians*" (PC 2012a). It openly seeks to 'use all available evidence,' and employs a multi-method approach, which it believes is important for the analysis and improvement of social policy (PC 2009, p.17-22). This ranges from the use of RCTs, experiments, and regressions analyses on large-scale datasets, to qualitative case studies, depending on what is appropriate and feasible (PC 2009, p.17-22). The PC's tasks of inquiry come directly from government, and include a variety of requests from research studies to regulation reviews and benchmarking (PC 2012a).

Despite this level of government direction – and an internal discretion to avoid engaging in 'supporting research' studies into politically charged and sensitive topics – the Commission retains a marked amount of independence in terms of its research and findings (PC 2012a). This is partly attributable to its structure – since it is a legal entity in its own right, with control over its own budget, and its own dedicated team and leader, who are "*appointed for fixed terms ... and can only be dismissed in prescribed circumstances*" (Banks 2007). It is also partly due to the organisation's culture, which seems highly transparent and was led from its establishment in 1998 until January 2013 by a Chairman, Gary Banks, who is an outspoken advocate for the better use of evidence in public policy decision making.

Although its influence is neither perfect, nor predictable, the PC is able to demonstrate an impact on Australian policy. The Commission's Chairman, though cautious in recognising that it is "*hard to be conclusive*" about the PC's impact, notes that the government does "*typically adopt a substantial majority of the recommendations and generally endorse[s]*

its other findings,” and that on occasion those *“proposals that were not accepted initially have been implemented [later]”* (Banks 2007, p.15). While there have been no external evaluations of the PC’s policy impact itself, the Commission does self-evaluate its role regularly as part of its public annual reports, which are subject to the scrutiny of the Australian Parliament. These self-monitored measures of performance include:

“*quality and usefulness indicators, drawing on: formal Government responses to Commission reports (required under the PC Act); Government acceptance of Commission findings and recommendations (both in the short term and longer-term influence); feedback surveys and feedback from email, online surveys, and survey forms included in publications or issued to participants in the Commission’s public hearings; reference to [PC] work in Parliament and by Parliamentary committees; use of Commission work by the Audit Office; Commission appearances before Senate Estimates Committee; proposals by the Opposition or influential stakeholders for the (PC) to take on specific work; (and) citations in journals and elsewhere”*
(PC 2012, pers. comm., 7 September).

The Commission’s work undertaken in its role as the Secretariat to the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (RoGS) has, however, been externally evaluated. As the RoGS Secretariat, the PC is tasked with developing and reporting indicators for the evaluation of the *“effectiveness and efficiency”* of the Government’s provision of services to the Australian public, as well as analysis of potential reforms (PC 2012b). In this capacity, some of the work undertaken by the PC has been externally evaluated, and the Government’s response to the PC’s recommendations is made publically and transparently. For example, in 2002 the PC was asked to produce a report every two years for the RoGs on Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID). The recommendations of the 2009 OID report were endorsed in December of that year by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). In addition, the 2011 OID report was externally reviewed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), which found that its work *“reflect[s] international ‘best practice’ in several respects, most notably in its reporting against specific targets”* (ACER 2012). ACER raised questions, however, regarding the ‘tension’ between stakeholders and the Government over the focus of the report itself.¹⁵

As part of its 2009 Annual Report, the PC published an appraisal of its experiences in the EBP business, offering insights that it hopes will ‘strengthen’ the role of evidence in the Australian policymaking process. A number of the points that they identified may prove useful in other contexts, including the UK, and are worth mentioning here. The Commission highlighted:

- The importance of *“clearly defining the problem”* of inquiry.
- The distinct need for *“higher quality data,”* and the long-term value (both monetarily and in terms of outcome) to investing in more extensive data gathering and sharing despite initial layout costs.
- The importance of including *“all available evidence”* in the analysis process.
- The need to incorporate evaluation assessments into policies at inception to serve as evidence to improve policies in the future.
- The need to focus on *“building evaluation skills”* within Australia, while also increasing the use of *“academic expertise”* by policymakers (PC 2009, p.5-13).¹⁶

One of the reasons that the PC would prefer to see greater utilisation of academic experts and independent research institutes across the Australian system is that their findings are often more ‘frank’ than those delivered by evaluation units that exist within government, and whose reporting may be constrained for political and organisational reasons (PC 2009). The PC also found that highly useable and useful data were too often

compartmentalised within different government departments, and that “*unlocking data silos*” would vastly improve not only evaluation of policies across jurisdictions, but also help to improve the existing methodological and analytical skill base within their country over the long term (PC 2009, p.10-12).

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand generally takes a positive approach toward the incorporation of evidence in the policymaking process, and is considered on a par with Australia with regard to its utilisation of expert advice.¹⁷ Much of this advice appears to come from internal government initiatives or ad hoc requests made of external academics. (It should be noted that the landscape of formal public research institutions in New Zealand is relatively small, comprised primarily of seven Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) focused on scientific research in areas such as nuclear science and agriculture. While the CRIs do “*inform public policy*,” they are attentive to the goals of private sector industry in addition to those of the government (OECD 2011, p.72). In 2011, the SGI reported that “*the importance of scholarly advice has [generally] increased*” in New Zealand, but noted that “*the relevance ... of external academic experts on governmental policymaking*” varies by “*subject area*” (Kaiser et al. 2011, p.22). It found specifically that “*non-governmental academics with technical expertise can have a significant role in policy areas such as health, energy and tertiary education*” (Kaiser et al. 2011, p.22). The OECD similarly reports that one of the areas where “*there is a strong commitment to evidence-based policy and practice*,” is in the area of education (Nusche et al. 2012, p.30).

For the purposes of this brief, one very interesting EPB body in New Zealand is an initiative run through the Ministry of Education (MOE), called the **Iterative Best Synthesis Programme** (BES) (Nusche et al. 2012, p.30). The OECD named BES as one “*the most prominent examples*” of the “*commitment*” to EPB in New Zealand (Nusche et al. 2012, p.30), but this highly innovative EPB programme – which is used widely by front-line educators – still appears to face a number of challenges in terms of the systematic uptake of its findings by policymakers.

As an initiative of the Ministry of Education, BES’ mission is to build and “*strengthen the evidence base that informs education policy and practice in New Zealand*” (BES 2013). It is a lean organisation (with a very small staff),¹⁸ run largely as a web-based knowledge broker of successful education interventions, and its audience is both educators and policymakers. BES was originally “*designed*” to provide an evidence base for the government’s “*medium-term (education) strategy, but its mandate was contested and inherent tensions arose as the findings of the programme were in conflict with existing policies, perspectives, approaches, and programmes*” (Alton-Lee 2012, p.23). After this, it “*was resituated*” within the MOE, moved from a strategic advisory role to an “*information and analysis function*” (Alton-Lee 2012, p.23). Unlike the Productivity Commission, BES does not possess the type of legal mandate that would afford it operational independence. It does not have full budgetary control, and its freedom to communicate is also likely curtailed by the need for diplomacy indicated by the current *Code of Conduct for the State Services*. The Code applies to all of New Zealand’s public service departments and crown entities (including the Ministry of Education), and curtails sustained criticism of government policy by those working for these entities – creating a difficult environment for any government body performing evaluation and analysis of existing public policy (See: SSC 2007; and SSC 2010, p.16-17, 30).

Yet, BES remains an innovator in the world of education policy, providing useful, comprehensive, and academically rigorous assessments of ‘what works’ in education, despite these challenging constraints. This is due in part to its leadership under Adrienne Alton-Lee, who has been proactive in supplementing her organisation’s budget through the solicitation of pro bono work by world-renowned scholars, partnering with international

bodies, and working to situate the BES as a ‘catalyst’ for evidence-based change.¹⁹ It is also due to the quality of the BES’ work, which has been endorsed by a wide variety of scholars for its multi-method approach to synthesising evidence on education interventions, as well as its provision of clear ‘exemplars’ and guidance for educators.²⁰

The utilisation of BES evidence and exemplars by front-line educators (including both teachers and principals) is quite high. This is most likely because of the BES strategy to actively engage and involve stakeholders, resulting in the support of teachers unions and teaching associations. While the BES does not have the budget allocation for formal independent external evaluations of its work, it frequently seeks and learns from ‘critical friend’ reports, and questions on the initiative were included in the national *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the New Zealand Curriculum* (BES Staff 2013, pers. comm., 8 March).²¹ Tellingly, that report:

“revealed that by 2009 teachers and principals valued the best evidence syntheses highly as the most useful of all resources available to them to advance curriculum goals in practice (Sinnema, 2011). At the time of the survey in 2009, 51 per cent of the primary sample and 49 per cent of the secondary sample of teachers and principals had engaged with a best evidence synthesis. Those in leadership roles had referred to a BES more frequently than teachers. Slightly more than half of the principal respondents and other leadership team members (58 per cent) had used a BES more than three times” (Alton-Lee 2012, p.21).

The New Zealand Post Primary Teacher’s Association, the Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand, the New Zealand Educational Institute, the Te Akatea Maori Principals Association, the New Zealand Area Schools Association, the New Zealand Principals’ Federation, and other sector representatives – have written forwards for BES synthesis reports (Alton-Lee 2012, p.8-9). There is also a high demand for hard copies of these reports to distribute at schools, and reprints have been both required and requested (Alton-Lee 2012, p.20-21). BES syntheses are also used internationally, and some have been translated into multiple languages.²²

Given this context, it is interesting that the Ministry of Education does not appear to have utilised this evidence in a widespread, systematic way. In a recent paper, BES’s Director points out that “*use of the what works evidence to inform policy and implementation has been variable,*” as “*other priorities have prevailed*” within the MOE (Alton-Lee 2012, p.23). A 2008 audit of the MOE by the Controller and Auditor General reported that “*various stakeholders told [them] that the Ministry did not consistently base its decisions about funding and providing professional development initiatives on the evidence it has*” (Controller and Auditor General 2008, p.24). This was followed by a recommendation to the MOE to more widely embrace BES evidence, laying out particular programmes where this could and should be done (Controller and Auditor General 2008, p.24). A 2011 external government review of the MOE additionally noted that “*more use could be made of ... evidence for policy development*” (SSC 2011, p.8). Most recently, a 2013 report by the Education Review Office (ERO), determined that an important steps for the MOE in addressing the needs of the national mathematics curriculum, would be to “*access and use research findings, such as that in the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) publications.*” The ERO argued that ‘particular’ attention should be paid to “*the BES exemplars, [in order] to introduce different teaching practices that have been shown to accelerate learners’ progress in New Zealand schools*” (ERO 2013, p.3).²³

This case is instructive for EPB supporters and practitioners in other countries, highlighting the practical difficulties that can arise from EPB bodies that sit directly in government without clear regulatory provisions for their operational independence. Risk-averse ministries may publicly promote expanding an evidence base, but without a fully open public discourse on policy options, or a culture that regularises the transfer of knowledge to policy, such evidence may be underutilised in the policymaking process.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

There is an increasing emphasis on the use of ‘evidence’ in the US system and, though it has long been an established element of the policy process in certain areas, the Obama administration has made a point of supporting its use in a series of new policy initiatives (Falke et al. 2011, p.30–31; Haskins and Baron 2011). The SGI describes the uptake of scholarly advice within the US political system as being somewhat dependent on the political and ‘value’ affiliations of the academics and think tanks or research centres in question; pointing out that ideational affinity with those in power makes it more likely that their ideas will be heard, that their own ‘research networks’ will become influential, or that they will be appointed as advisors to the government in some capacity (Falke et al. 2011, p.30–31). A broad spectrum of active, engaged, and influential EBP institutions exists in the US, however, and this section provides a brief overview of some the more innovative American examples, including some that manage to be influential despite their non-partisan nature.

Networks and Coalitions. There are a few notable active and successful EBP networks in the US, namely the **Coalition for Evidence Based Policy** and the **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab** (or J-Pal). In the interest of space, it will suffice to note some distinct organisational elements that contribute to the success of one of these organisations, as other studies discuss the impact of these networks at length (See, e.g. Puttick, ed. 2011). The Coalition for Evidence Based Policy is a fairly lean non-partisan and not-for-profit body, with only five in lead staff (including their President Jon Baron, who founded the organisation in 2001), supported by a 16-person advisory board. The Coalition is fundamentally an advocacy organisation, promoting the increased use of “*rigorous evidence*” in the policymaking process with the stated mission of improving “*government effectiveness*” in the area of social policy (CEBP 2012). As a grantee of the MacArthur Foundation, the Coalition works with federal government officials and departments, to “*support,*” “*accelerate,*” and “*institutionalise*” the use of evidence by those actors, and offers services such as the Evidence Based Policy Helpdesk and the Top Tier Evidence Initiative (CEBP 2012; MacArthur Foundation 2012). Notably, it has reviewed and evaluated existing evidence for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and claims a role in helping to “*inform and/or shape*” the Obama Administration’s major EBP policy initiatives, such as the Social Innovation Fund (CEBP 2012).

The Coalition has had two external evaluations, demonstrating impact and influence on EBP. The most recent review (2011) found that the Coalition had been most successful in:

“educating policymakers in the executive branch and Congress on the credibility, utility and value of randomised controlled experiments; sponsoring careful reviews of existing evaluations to assess their strength and validity, and well communicating the results of these reviews; and providing one-on-one feedback and advice to policymakers in response to specific evaluation-related requests.”

The review emphasised the importance of the “*independence*” and “*honesty*” of the organisation, which it found heightened its “*trustworthiness*” among decision makers, as well as its effective programme of communication with policymakers, which has enhanced its impact in recent years. Quoted interviews attributed much of this success to the dedication and skills of a strong leader, and often referred explicitly to his role and work (Wallace 2011, p.1–4).

It should be noted, however, that although these reviews were on the whole positive, they also discussed areas where the Coalition’s activities could be improved or expanded. The 2011 review suggested that the organisation might also try greater communication with/ education of the general public, or seek to address new issue areas, though it recognised

limited budget/resources might preclude such moves (Wallace 2011, p.4-5). The 2009 review pointed out that an overly exclusive focus on RCTs as constituting rigorous evidence might hinder the organisation in the long term (Herk 2009, p.7-9). The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) drew a similar conclusion in its 2009 report on *Program Evaluation*, which examined the Coalition's criteria for determining what constitutes 'Top Tier Evidence' against the criteria used by six evidence initiatives within a variety of government agencies (such as the *Model Programs Guide* used by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention). The GAO found that, in contrast to the Coalition at that time, the agency based initiatives "accept well-designed, well-conducted, non-randomised studies as credible evidence," and moreover, that "requiring evidence from randomised studies as sole proof of effectiveness will likely exclude many potentially effective and worthwhile practices," as would a failure to examine the associated costs and feasibility of policies under consideration (GAO 2009, p.31).

Research Institutes and Foundations. The US is home to numerous research institutes, centres, and foundation-led and funded initiatives that are focused on the advancement of EBP, and who actively work with and target government policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels. One of the most frequently discussed examples of excellence in this area is the **Washington State Institute for Public Policy** (WSIPP).²⁴ The Institute is a non-partisan organisation that addresses a range of social and public policy issues. Its function is to provide evidence to Washington State legislators, either through its own targeted research initiatives, or by "*manag(ing) reviews and evaluations of technical and scientific topics as they relate to major long-term issues facing the state*" (WSIPP 2010). The WSIPP's work is primarily directed and funded by the state legislature that established it, although it will, on a case-by-case basis, consider outside requests for access to its databases and research services, which must follow a process in accordance with its bylaws designed to ensure its mission is not adversely affected.²⁵ It currently comprises 16 Board members from state government and academia, and 13 members of staff. Perhaps one of the most interesting and innovative research 'products' of the Institute is its *Return on Investment* reports, which evaluate evidence-based policies that the state legislature requested the WSIPP to assess. These reports use meta-analysis of existing rigorous evaluations of these policies to provide an easy to follow cost-benefit analysis of EBPs in the areas of criminal justice, mental and physical health, education, and public housing.²⁶ WSIPP's work is credited with helping the state to "*improve*" its "*crime and juvenile arrest rates,*" "*lower*" its incarceration rate, and achieve a "*biennial savings of \$1.3 billion*" (Pew Charitable Trusts 2012a).

Perhaps the clearest sign of the impact of the WSIPP's work is the fact that this cost-benefit model of evaluation has been reviewed by an "*independent panel of experts*" for use in other states by the **Results First** (RF) project. The RF project is run by the Pew Center on the States (funded by the Pew Charitable Trust in conjunction with the MacArthur Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation). It is now working with 13 states (including New York, Massachusetts, and Texas) seeking to adopt the WSIPP model (Pew Charitable Trusts 2012b). Results First will also help these states "*share information and lessons learned*" from their experience, and is undertaking a "*review of current efforts to make policy decisions based on comparisons of costs and benefits*" (Pew Charitable Trusts 2012a). This project was also highlighted in a recent OMB memo as an exemplar of programme/policy evaluation that "*can improve agency resource allocation and inform public understanding*" (Zients 2012, p.2).

Independent and Corporate Bodies. A number of independent research organisations in the US are able to have a clear impact on EBP, and their independence helps them to take risks and innovate. One such group, the **MDRC** (originally known as the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation), was established in 1974 by US government agencies in conjunction with the Ford Foundation, and is now a non-profit, non-partisan, corporation with over 50 senior policy experts on staff and a budget of \$80 million. This funding comes from a range of sources including "*federal, state, and international*

government contracts” as well as “*foundations, corporations, universities, individuals, and other sources.*”²⁷ The group “*helped pioneer the use of random assignment*” in EBP, and conducts evaluations of ‘what works’ in social policies for low income and impoverished groups.²⁸ Its work today is multi-method (both qualitative and quantitative approaches), and is communicated using a multimedia approach, both of which it credits with helping its success in the EBP field. The MDRC is also at the cutting edge of EBP methodologies and instruments. It runs the Research Methodology Initiative, which seeks to contribute to methodological innovation and deal with issues often faced by EBP bodies, such as the frequent lack of ‘available’ control groups for examining established policies.²⁹ The MDRC announced in summer 2012 that it would be providing oversight for the Adolescent Behavioral Learning Experience (ABLE) programme, designed to lower recidivism rates among youth offenders in New York. The project has an innovative funding source: a \$9.6 million social impact bond (SIB) held by Goldman Sachs, and partially guaranteed by the Bloomberg Philanthropic foundation (Chen 2012). In the same category is the **Mathematica Policy Research** group (which is non-partisan and 100 per cent owned by its 800 plus employees). In addition to other services, it evaluates policies and conducts research across a range of social policy issues and works (like the MDRC) with both government and private sector clients. This group, for example, performed the literature reviews for two of the Obama administrations EBP initiatives in the health and human services sector, and has undertaken experimental impact evaluations for the Department of Labor. It is currently tasked with refining and running the next iteration of the Department of Education’s *What Works Clearinghouse* (see: Haskins and Baron 2011; Mathematica 2012a and 2012b).³⁰ Mathematica “*conducted the first social policy experiment in the US,*” and has now started its own Center for Improving Research Evidence (CIRE) which provides training and technical assistance to policymakers and other members of the public and private sector engaged in EBP (Mathematica 2012c).

Government Bodies. Finally, it is important to highlight a number of formal elements of the US Government now committed to EBP, and working to advance and institutionalise the use of evidence more widely within the US system. As mentioned above, the Obama administration’s efforts to increase the use of evidence and continuous evaluation in the social policymaking and budgetary decision-making process have been well documented, as have those of the OMB (see: Haskins and Baron 2011). Administrations may come and go, but the institutionalisation of these processes within government departments can produce more lasting change. While the OMB is an executive branch department, whose top leadership is made up of political appointees, the vast majority of its hundreds of employees are career civil servants. The role of the OMB is to prepare the annual federal budget, and oversee the management of the government’s executive branches and agencies. Beginning with the Bush Administration and the work of Robert Shea on developing the OMB’s Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), a renewed emphasis has been placed on the use of rigorous evidence by OMB that has continued with the Deputy Directors of Management serving under Obama (including Peter Orzag and now Jeffrey Zients). In an OMB memo dated May 2012, Zients stressed that evidence such as impact evaluations and cost-benefit analysis would assist the OMB in making funding decisions and setting priorities. Specifically, the OMB stated that the 2014 budget would be “*more likely to fund requests that demonstrate a commitment to developing and using evidence,*” such as those which seek to use existing administrative data or new technological tools to engage in “*low-cost evaluations,*” or which adopt cost-benefit analysis along the lines of the WSIPP model (Zients 2012). Efforts such as this can have a long institutional memory and impact that should outlast any existing administration.

It is also important to note the work of the **Government Accountability Office (GAO)**, the large independent federal watch dog government agency tasked with ensuring federal funds are spent efficiently, effectively, and in accordance with ethical and legal obligations. GAO reports cover issue areas from social policy to defence spending, but the impact of its evaluations and assessments on decision makers is undeniable. It is claimed that by “*the end of fiscal [year] 2011, 80 per cent of the recommendations GAO made five years earlier*

had been implemented” by the government (GAO 2012). Its publications range from the 2004 *Best Practices* guide on *Using A Knowledge-Based Approach To Improve Weapon Acquisition* to the January 2012 general guide on *Designing Evaluations* for assessing government programmes. Replication of the GAO in a foreign context would be difficult on the same scale because of budgetary considerations (the agency has a budget of over \$560 million). However, its independence and highly public and transparent nature are features that would be useful in any national ‘what works’ agency.

NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands has a more formal approach to the inclusion of evidence in the policymaking process than many states, scoring in the top ten countries on the SGI in terms of the uptake of scholarly advice. As a constitutional monarchy with a diverse population and over ten political parties, “*the traditional Dutch approach to public governance is based on [corporatism]*” and “*emphasises the principles of consensus building and the use of expert advice*” as a means of “*promoting the legitimacy of regulation and trust in government*” (OECD 2010, p.13). The Dutch system has a large number of public research institutions,³¹ and though these were somewhat reduced and rationalised during reforms in the late 1990s and 2000s (Hoppe et al. 2011, p.29–30; see also: OECD 2011, p.71–72), the remaining bodies continue to play an active role in supplying research, analysis, and evaluations that contribute to the Dutch policymaking process. The Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy (AWT) and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), for example, act as general advisory bodies in their areas of expertise for both chambers of the Parliament and the Dutch government more broadly (see: Erawatch 2013; Rathenau Institute 2012). There are also over 13 research institutes that sit directly within various government ministries, including the influential planbureaus – the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB), the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP), and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL). Some of the more innovative and instructive elements of the Dutch evidence infrastructure are examined below.

The Planbureaus. The **Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis** (also called the CPB)³² was established in 1945, and has since made a name for itself as the key supplier of economic evidence used in many areas of the Dutch policymaking process. The CPB, for example, provides economic forecasts and projected data used as the evidential basis for decisions made in the government’s annual budget and often in socio-economic policies more broadly. It also undertakes analysis and evaluations of existing government policies (ranging from cost-benefit analyses of infrastructure projects to the economic impact of social policies) and evaluates potential future policies, including those put forward by the parties in their election platforms. In these ways, the CPB can have a very real, and often very direct, impact on the Dutch policy discourse and debate.³³

Organisationally, the CPB sits within the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, and is therefore not a formally independent body. It has the equivalent of 115 people in full-time staff, 80 of whom are research analysts divided into five primary sectors of economic research (public finance, macro-economics, labour and education, competition and regulation, and climate and regional economics).³⁴ Its employees are civil servants, including its Director, who is appointed for a seven-year term by the Dutch cabinet.³⁵ It receives 80 per cent of its annual budget (of roughly €13 million a year) from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, with the remainder coming from “*external assignments*” for governments and government organisations, such as the European Commission, IMF, and OECD.³⁶

The CPB, however, both aims to be – and is widely perceived as – a trusted provider of independent analysis, with operational independence in terms of its methods, content, and ability to communicate its findings.³⁷ This “*tradition and practice*” of scientific and

operational independence (CPB 2003, p.9) in the CPB was formally protected by the Dutch prime minister in February 2012, with a new set of regulations applicable to all of the Planbureaus (Aanwijzingen voor de Planbureaus).³⁸ Public trust is augmented by the CPB's openness and neutrality. They make their data and all publications publically available online, counting their audience not only as members of government, but also the public more widely. There is also a conscious effort *"to avoid being an arbiter without a mandate"* (CPB 2009, p.18), by providing analysis of potential effects and *"trade-offs,"* and allowing voters to make their own judgements on the evidence, and only offering recommendations *"on request."*³⁹ Moreover, it is an *"unwritten rule"* that directors of the CPB are politically neutral and chosen on the grounds of academic excellence (CPB 2003, p.11). And in perhaps one of the most important signs of independence, the CPB can perform analysis upon request for opposition parties as well as those in power, *"without having to inform the Minister or other members of cabinet"* (CPB Staff Member 2013, pers. comm., March 14, 18).

In a 2010 external evaluation of the CPB, the review committee noted the CPB's *"unique"* position of being operationally *"independent,"* while simultaneously *"well embedded in the policymaking process"* as a *"part of government"* (CPB Review Committee 2010, p.3, 7).⁴⁰ *"Being part of the government"* not only provides close access to information in terms of data and policy relevance, but also *"generates trust on all sides that could otherwise be easily lost"* (CPB Review Committee 2003, p.15; CPB 2003, p.11). When interviewed, more than one member of the CPB's research staff highlighted that they are able to regularly interact with policymakers, and that this allows them a clearer understanding of both what will be policy relevant, and how to make their analysis more policy relevant (CPB Staff Members 2013, pers. comms., March 8, 12, 18). Such knowledge can enhance independence as well, by allowing the CPB to provide their analysis of a given issue before it becomes a political hot potato.⁴¹ Sitting within the Ministry also allows its analysts regular contact with policymakers and key decision makers, which can be important to ensure good timing and impact of their reports.⁴² Making the most of such access, however, still takes work on the part of CPB staff members to maintain their networks and reputation.⁴³ But this position also comes with its own challenges. The CPB's outgoing Director Teulings, who served from 2006–2013, reports that even though he *"never experience[d] any pressure on [their economic] forecast,"* there are nevertheless *"regular attempts to influence [the CPB's] stance by ministers or civil servants," "on behalf of their political bosses ... or on their own behalf"* (Teulings 2012, p.4–5). The CPB's strong and pervasive culture of independence is clearly necessary to buffer against such inevitable pressures.⁴⁴ It is also important for their independence that, though the government can make requests for analysis or recommendations, the CPB is able to refuse these requests (CPB Staff Member 2013, pers. comm. March 14, 18).

Interviews with members of the CPB may hold some important lessons for staff, architects, and managers of EPB organisations in other countries, like the UK. As a testament to the organisation's independence and integrity, CPB staff members were highly responsive when asked what factors positively or negatively affected their impact on policy. One staff member noted three clear general factors as: *"the scientific quality of our work," "the policy relevance of our publications,"* and *"expectations among politicians."* Elements noted as negatively effecting impact included organisational awareness of mistakes, such as: *"errors"* in analysis, *"bad timing of analysis"* when political interests are high, poor communication with media, and *"publications without any clear policy relevance."* Elements that were reported to positively affect the CPB's impact on policy included: clear and effective *"communication skills,"* well-timed reports, *"building up and maintaining"* relevant networks, *"presentation of multiple policy options in analysis," "quality of the analysis and forecasts," "expertise," "experience," "reputation,"* and *"academic credentials."*⁴⁵

The CPB also offers one of the best examples in this brief of an organisation that undertakes a process of consistent external and self-evaluations of its operations and output. The CPB's independent advisory committee (the Central Planning Committee, or CPC) commissions external review boards to separately evaluate its scientific quality and

its policy orientation, and has done so for each topic every five years since the late 1990s.⁴⁶ In preparation for these reviews they also conduct a thorough self-assessment, most recently in 2003 and 2009. Interestingly, the new 2012 Planbureau regulations seem to enshrine CPB best practice in this regard, delineating that all planbureaus shall review both quality and policy orientation on a regular basis. CPB staff members have pointed out that these separate assessments make sense, as their organisation exists at the nexus of the policy and academic worlds, but also often overlap, as it is difficult to sometimes separate the two realms. Significantly for the purposes of this brief, the 2013 evaluation of the CPB's policy orientation addresses the challenge of facing an increasing demand for their analysis (because of their success thus far) with fewer resources, as they face budget cuts in the coming years as a result of broader austerity measures.⁴⁷

The two other planbureaus are the **Netherlands Institute for Social Research** (SCP) and the **Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency** (PBL). The PBL is a relatively new institution, formed in 2008 from a merger of the original Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (MNP) and the Netherlands Institute for Spatial Research (RPB). Sitting within the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, its mission is to provide the government with evidential 'analysis in the fields of environment, nature and spatial planning' (PBL 2013). The SCP was founded in 1973 to provide the government with social science research on a broad range of issues – from health to public opinion – and evaluations of government social policies, for example concerning the elder care or minorities (SCP 2013). (Please see Annex 3 for further organisational details of the PBL and SCP.)

Like the CPB, the PBL and SCP are operationally independent, but sit within government (the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, and the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport respectively). They are also regulated by the new Planbureaus regulations protecting their independence and requiring regular external evaluations of the nature discussed above. Both face some similar challenges to the CPB, such as finding a new balance between scope and budget given funding cuts (PBL 2012; SCP 2010, p.7). And though the SCP's evaluations are only available in Dutch, staff members were helpful in discussing some of their successes, as well as the challenges they faced. In terms of the SCP's impact on policy, its reports receive "*extensive [media] coverage,*" "*are referred to in cabinet papers*" and often utilised by opposition parties (SCP Staff Member 2013, pers. comm., March 26). Other factors affecting the SCP's impact on policy include the receptivity of the policymaking audience, whether or not recommendations are "*financially attractive/feasible,*" and the extent to which their reports are perceived as "*convincing*" by their intended audience (SCP Staff Member 2013, pers. comm., March 24). The PBL's most recent external evaluation highlights its "*commit[ment] to its independence,*" but also the challenges it faced in consistently addressing its role at the nexus of "*science-society-policy relations*" (PBL Audit Committee 2013).

Knowledge Chambers. Many Dutch ministries now also employ high-level meetings called **kenniskamers** (translated as knowledge 'chambers' or 'forums') to exchange ideas and address distinct policy issues. Interestingly, planbureau members will often participate in these, as representatives of each planbureau sit on the National Strategic Council (Strategieeraad Rijksbreed) that organises them (CPB Staff Member 2013, pers. comm., March 18; SCP 2010, p.57). They are not permanent bodies, but rather day (or half-day) long meetings with varying degrees of impact. In 2012, there were at least three kenniskamers organised by the Strategic Council – on innovation, the environment, and infrastructure respectively (CPB Staff Member 2013, pers. comm., March 18). According to the SGI, "*the idea is that*" such chambers allow ministries to "*flexibly mobilise the required sciences and scientists, instead of relying on fixed advisory councils with fixed memberships*" (Hoppe et al. 2011, p.29–30).

The Dutch Court of Audit. The **Court of Audit** acts independently of government to audit its policy performance. It retains the position of a 'High Council of State' (like the Dutch Senate or House) meaning that it is "*a central government body created to ensure that*

the democratic system works properly,” and is therefore fully and formally independent of other government bodies (Court of Audit 2013a). The policy issue areas it addresses are divided into eight broad thematic areas, ranging from the central government’s finances to education and culture. Under the thematic umbrella of *“healthcare and welfare,”* for example, the court of audit examines policy performance related to healthcare, youth, the aged, the disabled, and social services (Court of Audit 2013b). Like the US GAO, the Dutch Court of Audit provides assessments of policy impact and implementation, in addition to formal auditing of government expenditures and revenues. In order to increase its own learning and improve its methods, the Court established an ‘Innovation Lab’ in 2010. As part of this, they have looked at new modes of knowledge dissemination (including a new website to promote public debate and accountability), as well the use of social media and crowd sourcing *“to tap into the public’s and industry’s knowledge and experience of certain issues”* (Court of Audit 2011).

BELGIUM

The 2011 SGI finds the uptake of scholarly advice by the central Belgium government to *“depen[d] on the subject matter,”* and that *“in most policy areas”* the *“influence”* of *“academic experts”* is *“relatively limited”* (Castanheira et al., p.26–31). It is reported that *“in most matters, some academic experts are included in the minister’s team of collaborators,”* though these may not be, or be able to stay, politically independent (Castanheira et al., p.26–31). And though the Belgian government will request the advice of *“academic experts who hold independent views,”* this is not done *“systematically”* (Castanheira et al., p.26–31). Yet, it is important to note that Belgium scores the same as Germany on the SGI in terms of the utilisation of scholarly advice. Moreover, the demand for the use of evidence in the Belgian and Flemish policy processes have greatly improved over the last decade (De Peuter 2007, pp.1–30; Fobé et al. 2012, p.1–25). After public criticism of the quality of Belgian national statistical data in the 1990s, and accompanying *“external pressure ... from the European Union,”* there was a movement to improve the Belgian evidence base (De Peuter 2007, pp.10–11). This movement seems to have been strengthened by the most recent economic crisis, though it appears that elements of the government embrace EBP in different ways and at varying rates. The overall emphasis in the Belgian policymaking process appears to focus more on the inclusion and consultation of stakeholders and *“social partners,”* over evaluative research and *“academic expert opinion”* (Castanheira et al. 2011, p.26–31; Fobé et al. 2012, p.1–25).⁴⁸ Nevertheless, there are some interesting and, in some cases, new EBP institutions in Belgium outlined below.

The **Federal Planning Bureau** (FPB) is a Belgian government agency, which by law provides research *“on economic, social and environmental policy issues,”* ranging from long and short-term economic forecasting to questions of social protection, poverty, and aging. There are distinct similarities with the Dutch CPB. It has 61 research staff members (87 total employees) and a 2012 budget of €9.5 million, of which a small portion is sourced from outside contracts with intergovernmental organisations or other Belgian government bodies. It is a government agency, but is generally recognised by other organisations (such as the EC, OECD, and IMF) as *“an independent organisation”* (FPB staff member 2013, pers. comm., March 25). All of its papers are published and made publically available in order to contribute to the national debate. Also like the CPB, a number of FPB publications are legally mandated (such as its short and medium-term economic forecasts and works on sustainable development). And while *“there is no direct link between these reports and policy,”* some policies are *“directly based on FPB work,”* such as *“federal government budget (and the) stability programme”* (FPB staff member 2013, pers. comm., March 25). Other FPB publications, however, have a *“more indirect”* impact on policy. The difference in many ways between the CPB and FPB comes down to wider cultural divergences in the uptake of scholarly policy evaluations and analysis, which can have a knock on effect (in terms of audience receptivity, regularity and consistency of access to policymakers, and wider communication) for reports beyond those that are required by law.

The Flemish regional government established a series of novel EPB bodies in 2001, called **Policy Research Centres** (or Steunpunten), which are temporary bodies funded for a set number of years to undertake policy-relevant analysis and research (often as partnerships between university departments and/or foreign institutions) on a given policy issue area (De Peuter 2007, pp.13). According to De Peuter, *“their role is threefold: data gathering, analysis and diffusion of policy relevant information; to conduct policy relevant research; [and] delivery of scientific services, [such as]... workshops.”* There were 14 Steunpunten in the second generation of these bodies established in 2007, and 21 in the third generation of Steunpunten running from 2012–2015 (Steunpunten 2013). The second generation of policy research centres were evaluated as part of *“a learning process,”* and the *“new list of research themes”* was determined by Flanders in accordance with *“current policy needs”* and *“priorities”* (Steunpunten 2013). One research group is chosen from among a series of applicants to form the policy research centre for each new *“theme,”* which range topically from *“traffic safety”* to *“foreign policy, international entrepreneurship and development co-operation”* (Steunpunten 2013). As this programme continues to grow and learn from its evaluations of each generation, it will be interesting to see the long-term impact that they have on Flemish policy outcomes.

3 INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES

The approach of the **European Commission** to the use of evidence is primarily focused on policy co-operation and for monitoring compliance with EU standards and legislation, over the evaluations of individual policy interventions or implementation. While the EU largely takes a different approach from what would be needed in a national context, it is nonetheless an approach worth noting here, as EU research itself may be helpful in supplementing the information base of existing and new national evidence infrastructures. In the area of social policy, for example, the **Social Protection Committee** (SPC) is a treaty-based body that *“serves as a vehicle for co-operative exchange between Member States and the European Commission in the framework of the Open Method of Co-ordination [OMC] on social inclusion, healthcare, and long-term care, as well as pensions”* (EC 2013a). It is *“composed of two delegates from each Member State and the Commission”* and *“prepares reports, formulates opinions or undertakes other work ... at the request of either the Council or the Commission or on its own initiative”* (EC 2013a). Many of the SPC’s current functions were previously undertaken by High Level Groups of experts, or by Observatories on individual issue areas with representatives from each member state.⁵⁰

There are a number of other important bodies within the European Commission currently contributing to monitoring effectiveness of EU policies (rather than their efficiency), including the EC statistical office (EUROSTAT) and the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (PROGRESS). The EC’s Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG-EMPL) also conducts regular analysis of the employment and social situation within the EU, producing among other works an Annual Report and Quarterly Review assessing developments in these areas. In order *“to collect ... evidence and determine whether policy objectives have been met, the European Commission,”* through DG-EMPL, *“conducts both its own and outside evaluations to ... assess [policy] impact”* (EC 2013c). These evaluations examine each stage of a policy intervention *“implementation life-cycle”* (*“ex ante”* to *“ex post”*), so that the resulting information may then be *“used to fine-tune subsequent policies and actions”* (EC 2013c). Another example of the Commission’s use of evidence-based policy is the work of the European Alliance for Families, which started in 2007 as *“a platform for exchange and knowledge concerning [family] policies and best practices in the [EU] Member States”* (EC 2007). The Alliance has developed and implemented a set of *“tools to facilitate the systematic change of best practices and research”* (EC 2007), incorporating evidence-based criteria for assessing *“effectiveness, transferability, and sustainability;”* and these tools are now being employed by the Evidence-Based Practices section of the European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC 2013).

Additionally, the **7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development** (FP7) seeks to encourage and facilitate co-operation among academic researchers within the EU in order to create a more coherent and competitive **European Research Area**. The FP7 acts as the umbrella for all EU initiatives related to research, providing research support in targeted issue areas through a budget of over €50 billion between 2007 and 2013. Again, there appears to be a clear emphasis on the need to reduce duplication and enhance co-operation between national research programmes in order to improve the evidence base within Europe, as well as enhance its effectiveness in reaching decision makers. It may, therefore, be that lessons learned from this experience over the coming years could be applied to a national context, where governments may also be faced with issues of replication, or inefficiencies.

For the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** (OECD), the use of evidence in its research and policy advice, in addition to the maintenance of the independence of its findings, is considered a core value of the organisation (OECD 2012). It

is an international organisation comprised of 34 member states with a deep commitment to development; seeking to improve global economic and social welfare and well-being, by promoting evidence-based policies and reforms. The OECD is an important primary data collector, gathering valuable information on a wide range of social and economic issues that it both uses for the purpose of its own analysis and recommendations, and that it disseminates for global use through a series of publications (such as the OECD Economic Outlook) and its statistical online database (the OECD iLibrary). The OECD analyses and conducts research on this wealth of data to fulfil its primary purpose of facilitating the discussion and agreement among its members that may lead to better policy. Importantly, the OECD also monitors compliance and implementation with the new policies and reforms, providing a further source of evidence for governments wishing to evaluate policy impact and outcomes.

Within the OECD, subsidiary bodies provide important support for EPB in their particular sectors. One example is the **Centre for Educational Research and Innovation** (CERI), which gathers and analyses data on formal and informal aspects of education, in order to produce policy advice in a particular area, especially on innovations in policy and practice. Notably, CERI conducted a series of country reviews, consultations, and workshops with researchers, decision makers, and stakeholders that culminated in its 2007 report on *Evidence in Education: Linking Research and Policy*, which included detailed examinations of what constitutes 'evidence,' and different organisational approaches to knowledge/evidence 'brokerage' agencies, in the field of education globally (CERI 2007).

Some intergovernmental organisations actively engaging in the implementation of international policies and programmes on behalf of national governments have created internal evaluation systems designed to review key performance indicators of not only its programmes, but also its management practices. The **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's** (OSCE) Secretariat developed, and (with the help of its Programming and Evaluation Support Unit) introduced a system of Performance-Based Program Budgeting (PBPB), now used by each head of mission and programme manager within the organisation. This system provides evaluations used to set priorities and improve results and budgeting within the organisation.

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the **International Monetary Fund** (IMF) operates independently within the organisation to provide "*objective evaluations of Fund policies and activities*" (IEO 2012a). The office is fairly lean, with 12 permanent staff – and its independent position is helped by the fact that most of these staff are recruited from outside the IMF, and its Director cannot join or rejoin the IMF after the completion of his tenure with the IEO. The IEO's reports thus far have included a number of instructive and recurring findings, including the importance of "*better integrat[ing] analytical and operational work across departments, promoting more co-operation, fewer turf battles, and less silo-behavior*" (IEO 2012c). Its evaluations tend to take a multi-method approach ranging from the use of statistical data, to in-depth case studies. The organisation is also dedicated to evolving its own practices through 'learning,' and is currently undergoing an independent external evaluation of its work. And after a similar "*external evaluation in 2006, the IEO... sought to place more emphasis on big policy issues; to target messages more carefully to the Executive Board and authorities; and to prepare more concise reports*" (IEO 2012c).

At **The World Bank** (WB), research and analysis is housed primarily in the **Development Research Group** (DECRG), with eight separate programmes ranging in focus from Environment and Energy to Poverty and Inequality. The DRG distinguishes between academic and bank research, believing the latter to be more clearly "*directed toward recognised and emerging policy issues and [to be more] focused on yielding better policy advice*" (WB 2012a). The Human Development and Public Services programme, for example, publishes a series on 'what works' in international development policy, called *From Evidence to Policy*. The Finance and Private Sector Group has a number of projects

for gathering important evidence and data for targeted policy use. An innovative example is the new Global Financial Inclusion Index (the Global Findex), which examines how *“the poor, women, and rural residents – save, borrow, make payments and manage risk”* (see: Demirguc-Kunt and Klapper 2012). The project, which entails gathering household level data of these difficult-to-survey groups in 148 countries through the Gallup World Poll, is funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Finance and Private Sector Group also publishes impact evaluation notes on many policies (from financial literacy and microfinance to bankruptcy reform), often employing a field experiment method (WB 2012b). The WB also produces a biennial internal evaluation of its impact using citation analysis (see: WB 2012c).

4 CONCLUSION

Whatever type of organisational model is chosen by the UK for its evidence infrastructure (or by other nations seeking to advance the use of evidence in their policymaking processes), I believe a number of clear ‘lessons learned’ can be drawn from the exploratory sample of organisations and institutions examined in this paper (and supplemented by verbal and electronic interviews conducted with many of their practitioners). These elements of organisational ‘best practice’ could be applied in most national contexts and cultures.⁵²

- 1. Be open to multiple methods, and all forms of rigorous evidence.** Whether an analyst is a ‘regressionista’ or a ‘randomista’ (see: Deaton 2010; and Ravallion 2012), it is important to recognise that, while not all evidence is good evidence, it is equally damaging to have a shuttered and overly narrow view of what ‘counts’ in determining ‘what works.’ As the experiences of all the organisations examined here, but especially the US Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, the Productivity Commission, and BES, show that a multi-method approach to rigorous evidence can help establish greater influence with both stakeholders and policymakers. It can also open areas of inquiry beyond RCTs which may not always be feasible, and which can raise ethical considerations and political sensitivities in some areas of social policy (see: Ravallion 2012).
- 2. Safeguard your independence** – of structure, budget, and findings. The organisations that are most successful in linking the demand for evidence to its supply are those whose opinion is trusted beyond reproach. Organisational independence can take many forms, and can be achieved even for in-house, or in-government, bodies. The independence of the IMF’s IEO is assisted by strict hiring practices that ensure its members are not influenced by career concerns. The mandate for Australia’s PC is established by its own law, ensuring budget independence and placing limitations on the situations in which its officials can be terminated; protecting them from political manoeuvres. Federal regulations help ensure that the Dutch planbureaus, like the CPB, maintain widespread operational independence, protecting their unique position in the national policy discourse. Even when governments commission ad hoc research, the German system shows how a strong culture of academic EBP research institutes can have a great degree of latitude. Because German EBP institutes do not sit directly within a government department, their researchers are able to express their findings more freely.
- 3. Diversify funding where possible.** Operational independence is possible without diversification of funding (especially if the organisation in question is a foundation, or able to exhibit a level of budgetary independence in another way). However, multiple sources of funding (ranging from government to foundation grants and private sector contracts) can assist young EBP institutions in maintaining their independence. In cases like the WSIPP, which was created specifically by and for government purposes, it is helpful that their budget is biennial and administered through a state university, and that they have the ability to take on outside projects in proscribed circumstances. The case of the MDRC shows that in special cases even government created EBP organisations can – over the long term – increase their longevity, independence, and funding prospects by going private, without dampening their prospects for impacting policy change. In the Dutch model, the planbureaus are not allowed to compete on the open market against private research bodies, but they are able to take on outside projects for IGOs and other national and local government bodies that can constitute up to 20 per cent of their total funding. This can help buffer against the impact of wider national austerity programmes that can impact core government funding.

- 4. Leadership is key, but institutionalisation of good EBP practices is equally important.** A strong leader can have a huge impact on organisational culture, and effective communication to the public and policymakers. A well-respected leader can assist in the process of knowledge transfer in a unique way. Continuity of leadership in an EBP organisation beyond short political term limits (even if they are political appointees) can also further institutional independence, allowing them to outlast political shifts and changes in national leadership. However, organisational directors do leave – and an over-reliance on a strong leader can hurt an institution in the long term, especially if the good practices that have made them so effective are not institutionalised into the organisation for the long term.
- 5. Budget size is not as important as using resources wisely.** Streamlined umbrella or co-ordinating organisations that use deep and wide academic and private sector research networks can stretch budgets and reduce overhead. For example, the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Indices are run by small compact teams, but they pull information and contributions from a very wide network of scholars.⁵³ Organisations like the WSIPP do the same, maintaining large academic networks and a small, dedicated staff base. Creativity can also help stretch funding, such as the use of pro bono work of well-respected scholars by New Zealand's BES.
- 6. Effective communication is paramount.** Findings should be communicated not only to policymakers, but also more widely to the general public to enhance support for policy change (as the PC, the CPB, FPB, and others have found). Communication efforts that are targeted, clear, and concise are often the most powerful (as the IEO has found). Multimedia approaches are also helpful. The World Bank, for example, uses this to great effect, increasing the impact of their research globally. In addition, the small teams of the BS (which also take a multimedia approach) are active in presenting their work and getting it in front of policymakers, as well as making it highly accessible through easy-to-use websites and downloadable reports. These factors are likely to impact their ability to get the word out about their work, creating a buzz in the ear of a receptive policymaking audience that actively seeks usable evidence.
- 7. Stay transparent, avoid data 'silos,' and promote co-operation among EBP Institutions.** Transparency and public provision of data not only help get the public onside, but also (as seen in the Australian case) contribute to a stronger and more methodologically diverse national research base over the long term. Numerous EBP institutions (such as the EU, Australian PC, and IMF) have also shown the danger of keeping data in 'silos', rather than co-ordinating a free flow of information that is often useful across a range of social policy areas. Fostering co-operation more generally among EBP institutions can help ensure effective and useful knowledge transfer to decision makers that is both targeted, and achieved without costly duplication.
- 8. And, finally, evaluate your own organisation.** Ironically, many organisations focused on the evaluation of policy interventions do not employ external evaluations of their own work. A number of the institutions discussed above, however, demonstrate the value of external evaluations (and self-monitoring) to promote learning and organisation adaptation. Where the budget does not exist to undertake independent external evaluations (as is the case with BES), other means of evaluation (such as critical friend reports) can be used to aid institutional learning. Where possible, regular mandated independent external evaluations, (like those employed by the Dutch planbureaus) are useful not only to the EPB organisations themselves, but also to the societies that benefit from their institutional evolution.

APPENDIX 1

Conceptions of 'Evidence'

Like the old adage about success and failure, evidence too can mean many things to many people. As Geoff Mulgan points out: there are many forms of knowledge, but those “*that matter to modern government*” run the gamut from “*statistical*” and “*scientific knowledge*” to “*professional knowledge and practitioner views*” based on personal experience (Mulgan 2003, p.4). Indeed, “*research is often seen as one form of evidence, and evidence as one form of knowledge*” (Nutley et al. 2010, p.133), but the literature on EBP usually uses the term evidence to refer broadly to ‘research’ (Davies et al. 2000, p.3).

Different forms of research, and individual research methods, might also be considered by some observers to have a higher level of validity and/or utility for the policymaking process in certain areas of social policy.⁵⁴ Randomised Control Trials (RCTs), for example, are often held up as a ‘gold standard’ for research into healthcare interventions and policy, and some even use the phrase ‘EBP’ as a synonym for policy that takes RCTs into account (see: Ravallion 2012, p.104). In other sectors, methodological preferences may range from natural experiments to large-n statistical studies.

Finally, the evaluation of existing policies can also play an evidential role in future policymaking processes. Before a set of reforms or individual policy action is taken, policymakers might base their decision on myriad forms of evidence and knowledge. Once that policy is in place, however, there is also an opportunity to evaluate the success of the policy’s outcomes, its implementation, and its cost-effectiveness, and to use research on those evaluations as evidence for later decision making processes. (Though some find policymaking to be a ‘messier’ process than such a linear view suggests.)⁵⁵ As discussed above, some states and international organisations are demonstrating their commitment to EBP by legislating and/or integrating the evaluation process into new policies as they are made, providing a formal and useful continuum between evidence, policy and evaluation.⁵⁶

APPENDIX 2

Notional Typology of EBP Organisations

EBP Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be international in scope (like the Cochrane or the Campbell Collaborations) or more nationally focused (like the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy in the US). • May be housed within an university department (like J-Pal at MIT), by a private entity (like the Promising Practices Network run by RAND or the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative (SFAI), operated by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). • Funding can come from a variety of sources (including government grants, foundations, and endowments).
Research Institutes/Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be tied to a university department (like the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University, or the Flemish Steunpunten) or act as an independent think tank or think tank initiative. • Funding again can come from a variety of sources.
Corporate Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes groups like Mathematica Policy Research in the US, and Applica in the EU, whose mainstays are government contracts to evaluate policies and individual interventions. • Some, like Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) in the US, emerge from entities originally created by governments. • Funding is usually contract based.
Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Evidence-Based Policy Strategies Project, foundations often enjoy a rare degree of independence.
(Inter) Government Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes internal research groups within IGOs aiming to provide useable evidence and evaluation of that group's policies (like the IEO). • Includes internal national government groups (like the US Government Accountability Office, and the Dutch Planbureaus).
Hybrids and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes public/private partnerships (like the Center for Court Innovation), or initiatives (like ABLE).

APPENDIX 3

A Summary of Foreign and International EBP Organisations Examined Above

Country	Name	Type	Single or Multi-Sector	Funding (Amount & Source)	Size	Methods	Description	Evaluation & Audit	Independent?
Australia	The Productivity Commission	Government Body	Multi-Sector	- \$37,611,000 (AUS, 2012-2013) ¹ - Government departmental allocation	191 (2012-2013)	Multi-method	An independent government body tasked with providing research and counsel to the Australian government, helping it to make more informed decisions on a range of issues that include social policy.	Internal evaluations, and external evaluation of the PC's work as the Secretariat to the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision	Yes (see discussion above)
Belgium	Federal Planning Bureau (FPB)	Government Body	Multi-Sector	- €9,500,000 (Total 2012) - €8,600,000 of this from the federal government, and €900,000 from contracts with other Belgian public bodies and the European Commission.	87 total employees (2013), including 61 research staff	Primarily econometric modelling	The FPB is a government agency, which by law provides research "on economic, social and environmental policy issues," ranging from long and short-term economic forecasting to questions of social protection, poverty, and aging. Some of its work has a mandated and, therefore, direct impact on policy. ² All of its papers are published and made publically available in order to contribute to national debate.	No independent external evaluations of policy impact are available	
Belgium (Flanders)	Flemish Policy Research Centres (Steunpunten)	Government Bodies (or may be considered Public/Private partnerships)	Multi-Sector	- €9,200,000 (Total for all policy research centres "in the policy area of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI)". ³		Multi-Method	There are currently 21 different Policy Research Centres, each covering different sectors or themes, including: Education and School Careers, Work and Social Economy, Environment and Health, and Welfare, Public Health, and Family. Most of these Centres work in co-ordination with a major Flemish or Belgian University.	Evaluations at the end of the funding period.	
Germany	Bertelsmann Stiftung's 'Evidence-Based Policy Strategies' Project	Foundation	Multi-Sector	- €2,666,000 (2010, EBPS Project total expenditure) - foundation, primarily financed by its shares in Bertelsmann AG	12 dedicated staff	Multi-Method	The Bertelsmann Stiftung is a fully independent think/'do' tank and non-grantmaking foundation. Its EBPS project engages in comparative benchmarking projects at the national and international levels (such as the 'Benchmarking Germany' and 'Sustainable Governance Indicators' of the OECD countries).		Yes
	Advisory Council for Family Matters (Wissenschaftlicher Beirat für Familienfragen - WBF)	Government Body	Single Sector (Family Policy)	- Funding provided by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (the BMFSFJ)	13 council members (it can have up to 21)	Multi-Method	The independent advisory board to the German Government on issues related to family policy. The WBF provides advice to the German government, choosing its own topics of inquiry and undertaking them on a voluntary basis. The BMFSFJ may, however, request advice on specific issues, and ask to participate in the board's deliberations.		Yes

1. This represents the 2012-13 departmental appropriation for the PC. Total expenses are estimated at \$38,627,000 with a net resourcing of \$53,858,000 due to additional money from the prior year's appropriation. (see: <http://www.treasury.gov.au> for the 2012-13 Budget Statement for the PC from the Australian Treasury.)

2. See: <http://www.plan.be>

3. 'About Policy Research Centres'. Available at: <http://www2.vlaanderen.be/weten/steunpunten/en/about.htm>

Country	Name	Type	Single or Multi-Sector	Funding (Amount & Source)	Size	Methods	Description	Evaluation & Audit	Independent?
Germany	German Advisory Council on Global Change (<i>Wissenschaftliche Beirat der Bundesregierung Globale Umweltveränderungen - WBGU</i>)	Government Body	Single Sector (Environment)	- Funding provided by both the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).	Nine council members, plus ten staff members at its supporting Secretariat	Multi-method	The independent advisory board to the German Government on global warming and environmental issues. Its purpose is to provide scientific evidence-based advice for policy decisions made in Germany. The WBGU has a number of duties (from writing large biennial reports on major themes in climate change, complete with policy recommendations, to producing narrower policy papers in response to the specific requests by government).		Yes
	Leibniz Association	Hybrid/ Other	Multi-Sector	- €358.6 million (2011, across institutions) - Member institutes receive joint funding from their state and the federal government. Third party funding accounted for 24% of total funds in 2011.	17,259 (2011, across institutions)	Multi-method	The Leibniz Association is an umbrella organisation, with 86 member research institutions (such as RWI) covering a wide range of social and scientific issue areas.	The LA evaluates its members at least once every seven years for coherence, quality, and impact; after which it makes recommendations regarding the continuation of joint funding by the federal and state governments for the institution examined.	NA
	RWI Essen (<i>Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung</i>)	Research Institute/ Center	Single Sector (Economics)	- €10,088,000 in income for 2011 ⁴ - €6,628,000 of this came from federal and state government grants, the rest from other sources.	97 (2011)	Multi-method	RWI is focused on providing “scientific research and evidence-based policy advice” in numerous economic issue areas, including many associated with social policies such as labour, education, and health economics. ⁵ RWI has a ‘Special Research Topic’ area devoted to ‘Evidence-based Policy Advice.’ This advice is given both as the result of ‘self-initiated’ projects and those commissioned by the state of federal governments.	RWI is a member institution of the Leibniz Association, which evaluates it once every seven years.	Yes
	The German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin)	Research Institute/ Center	Single Sector (Economics)	- €20,000,000 (2011) - Approximately two-thirds of this came from federal and state (Berlin) government grants, the rest from other sources	180 current employees (100 of which are researchers)	Multi-method	DIW is a research institute covering nine major economic issue areas, such as ‘social affairs and health’ and ‘demography and households.’ In addition to its major research areas, it houses a number of databanks, including the ‘German Socio-Economic Panel Study.’	DIW is a member institution of the Leibniz Association, which evaluates it once every seven years.	Yes
	The Social Science Research Center Berlin (<i>Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung - WZB</i>)	Research Institute/ Center	Multi-Sector	- €17,957,000 (2011) - Primarily funded by state (Berlin) and federal government grants.	350 employees (including 160 researchers/ scholars)	Multi-method	The WZB conducts research across a range of issue areas (including education, social inequality, migration, and innovation, among others).	WZB is a member institution of the Leibniz Association, which evaluates it once every seven years.	Yes

4. It should be noted that the Institute had a net loss in 2011 of €484,000. (See: RWI Arbeitsbericht 2011, available at: www.rwi-essen.de/publikationen/arbeitsberichte/)

5. <http://www.rwi-essen.de/ueber-das-rwi/>

Country	Name	Type	Single or Multi-Sector	Funding (Amount & Source)	Size	Methods	Description	Evaluation & Audit	Independent?
Netherlands	CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis	Government Body (one of three Dutch government advisory institutes)	Multi-Sector	- €13,000,000 (Approximate Total Annual Budget) - 80% of this total is funded by the government (the Ministry of Economic Affairs) The remaining 20% from contracts with other Dutch government ministries or IGOs (including the EC, OECD, and IMF)	115 total full-time employees, including 80 research staff <i>(note: 2015 budget cuts will take these numbers down to 104 and 75 respectively).</i>	Multi-method (quantitative and qualitative), but primarily econometric modelling	The CPB is a unit of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, which provides not only the economic forecasting (used in the creation of the govt. budget), but also policy relevant research and analysis across a number of thematic areas. Staff are grouped into five sectors of focus: Public Finance, Macro-Economics, Labour & Education, Competition & Regulation, and Climate & Regional Economics. Each sector regularly meets and/or speaks with members of the appropriate ministries, keeping lines of communication open with relevant decision makers.	Mandatory (by government regulation) external evaluations are produced every five years (separately) on both 1) the scientific quality and 2) the policy relevance/impact of the CPB's research. Undertakes additional periodic self-evaluations.	The CPB sits within the govt. (Ministry of Economic Affairs), but retains full independence in terms of its content produced, methods used, and ability to publish and communicate its findings.
	Netherlands Court of Audit (Nederlands Algemene Rekenkamer)	Government Body (A High Council of State)	Multi-Sector	- €27,500,000	- 300		The Court of Audit is a 'High Council of State,' acting independent of government to audit its performance. Policy Issue areas are divided into eight broad thematic areas. Under the thematic umbrella of 'healthcare and welfare,' for example, the court of audit examines policy performance related to healthcare, youth, the aged, the disabled, and social services.		Yes
	PBL The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency	Government Body (A Dutch government advisory institute)	Multi-Sector (Environment & Spatial Planning)	- €33,825,000 (2012) - 80% of this total is funded by the government (the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment) - The remaining 20% from (national and international) external projects	Almost 238 full-time equivalents, 200 of which are permanent	Multi-method	The PBL is a government body tasked with conducting research and "strategic policy analysis in the fields of environment, nature and spatial planning." Staff analysts are divided into seven sectoral departments ranging from Sustainable Development to Nature and Rural Areas. ⁶	Mandatory (by government regulation) external evaluations will be produced every five years (separately) on both 1) the scientific quality and 2) the policy relevance/impact of the PBL's research. (The PBL was formed in 2008, so its first scientific evaluation was published in 2013, and a general evaluation is planned for 2014/15. Its first self-assessment was published in 2012.)	As per the other planbureaus, operational independence of findings and methods is retained, though it is part of government.
	SCP The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau)	Government Body (A Dutch government advisory institute)	Multi-Sector	- €4,620,000 (Fixed 2013 Budget) funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport. - In 2013 the estimated budget from external assignments is estimated to be €4,500,000.	100 employees (80 permanent, and 20 temporary, staff)	Multi-method	The SCP sits within the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport (VWS), and is responsible for providing social science research across a broad area of topics (ranging, for example, from health, youth, and the elderly to public opinion). The SCP's studies include evaluations of specific government policies.	Mandatory evaluations per the Planbureau 2012 regulations. The last external evaluations were conducted in 2008 (by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences), though the date of the next round of evaluations has not yet been announced.	As per the other planbureaus, operational independence of findings and methods is retained, though it is part of government.

6. <http://www.pbl.nl/en/aboutpbl/organisation>

Country	Name	Type	Single or Multi-Sector	Funding (Amount & Source)	Size	Methods	Description	Evaluation & Audit	Independent?
New Zealand	Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis Programme (BES)	Government Body	Single Sector (Education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - €603,000 NZD (annual funding from government) - This funding is then supplemented by pro bono work from outside partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two dedicated staff members (one Director and one assistant) 	Multi-Method	BES is an initiative of the New Zealand Ministry of Education. It is a lean organisation, run primarily as a web-based knowledge broker of successful education interventions whose audience is both educators and policymakers.	As of yet, no formal independent external evaluations on impact. However, questions on the BES initiative were included in the wider Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the New Zealand Curriculum Implementation. Critical friend reports have also been sought and utilised.	
USA	Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP)	Research Institute/Center	Multi-Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic funding comes from Washington State through the Evergreen State College's biennial budget allocation, and through ad hoc appropriation bills and authorising legislation. Additional funding for external projects can come from other sources, such as foundations. 	11 dedicated staff (plus a 16 person board of directors that includes state officials)	Multi-method, special focus on cost-benefit analysis ('WSIPP Model')	The WSIPP is a non-partisan research organisation formed to provide evidence for decision makers on public policy related issues. WSIPP projects and areas of inquiry are primarily directed by the Washington State Legislature, however the Institute may also take on additional projects with outside funding upon the approval of the Institute's Board.	The WSIPP cost-benefit model of evaluation used in its 'Return on Investment' reports has been externally evaluated by an 'independent panel of experts' for use by the Pew <i>Result's First Project</i> .	
	MDRC (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation)	Corporate Group	Multi-Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$85,982,863 (2011 total assets) - Over 32 million of this came from federal government contracts and grants, the remaining from other sources.⁷ 	Over 180 (including over 50 Senior Policy Experts)	Multi-method ⁸	MDRC is a non-profit and non-partisan organisation that evaluates policies across a range of social issues facing low-income groups in the US. Its topical areas are: K-12 Education, Higher Education, Families & Children, Workers & Communities, and Health & Barriers to Employment. It is both a "social research organisation" and "service provider." ⁹		Yes
	Mathmatica Policy Research	Corporate Group	Multi-Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding primarily from the public (state and local government departments and agencies) and private (universities, non-profits, foundations, etc.), sectors; domestic and international 	Over 800	Multi-method, with a focus on random assignment ¹⁰	Mathmatica is non-partisan, 100% employee owned research corporation that evaluates social policies (in the US and abroad) in order to provide an evidential basis for more effective policies. Mathmatica provides four main services: 'Program Evaluation & Policy Research,' 'Survey Design & Data Collection,' 'Research Assessment & Interpretation,' and 'Program Performance & Data Management.'		Yes

7. Other sources of revenue and support include government entities (state, local, foreign), corporations, foundations, and academic institutions.

8. MDRC's "projects are a mix of demonstrations (field tests of promising new program approaches) and evaluations of ongoing government and community initiatives." (http://www.mdrc.org/publications/mdrc_2011_audit_report.pdf)

9. For example, MDRC is overseeing New York's Adolescent Behavioral Learning Experience (ABLE) programme to lower recidivism rates among youth offenders in Riker's Island.

10. It should be noted that "Mathmatica conducted the first social policy experiment in the United States, the New Jersey Negative Income Tax Experiment, to test ways of encouraging low-income individuals to work." (http://www.mathmatica-mpr.com/About_US/).

Country	Name	Type	Single or Multi-Sector	Funding (Amount & Source)	Size	Methods	Description	Evaluation & Audit	Independent?
USA	Pew Center on the State's Results First Project	Foundation	Multi-Sector	- Funded by the Pew Charitable Trust in conjunction with the MacArthur Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.		Single-Method (WSIPP Model)	The RF project is run by the Pew Center on the States. It is working with 13 states seeking to adopt the WSIPP model in order to "assess the costs and benefits of policy options and use that data to make decisions based on results." ¹¹		Yes
	Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy	Network	Multi-Sector, focus on EBP advocacy	- Funded most by foundations, such as the MacArthur, the Edna McConnell Clark, the William T. Grant, and the William and Flora Hewlett foundations.	5 lead staff members, plus a 16 person advisory board	Single-Method (emphasis on RCTs)	The Coalition (like the Alliance for Useful Evidence in the UK) advocates the use of evidence in the decision making process to help government make more effective policy on the basis of 'what works.' It is a non-partisan, non-profit.	The Coalition has had their work externally evaluated twice; one independent review conducted in conjunction with a grant covering the years 2004-2009, and one evaluation conducted through interviews with policymakers in 2011.	Yes
	The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-Pal)	Network	Multi-Sector, focus on poverty alleviation across sectors	- J-Pal is endowed, though donors also contribute funding for projects, and affiliated professors raise funds to support their evaluation projects.	70 Affiliated Professors, approx. 200 full-time staff	Single-Method (Randomised Evaluations)	J-Pal is a global network of affiliated professors focused on addressing poverty by conducting randomised evaluations of policies across a range of sectors (from Education to Energy) to provide evidence that may help policymakers make more effective decisions. J-Pal has regional offices headquartered in universities in Africa, Europe, South Asia, and Latin America. The group's global headquarters are at MIT.		Yes
	The Office of Management & Budget (OMB)	Government Body	Multi-Sector	- \$92,863,000 (2011) - Federal Government	529 (2011)	NA	The OMB is a part of the Executive Office of the President, whose primary function is to prepare the annual federal budget, and oversee the management of the US Executive Branches and Agencies. In this capacity, the OMB is able to encourage government agencies and initiatives to adopt more rigorous evaluation tools, and use of evidence, in their policy choices.		No
	The US Government Accountability Office (GAO)	Government Body	Multi-Sector	- \$565,700,000 (2011)	3,134 (2011)	Multi-Method	The GAO is an independent, transparent, and non-partisan federal government agency tasked with ensuring federal funds are spent efficiently, effectively, and in accordance with ethical and legal obligations. Their reports cover a wide range of issues, and their work has a clear policy impact in the US.	GAO is evaluated every three years by an international peer review team that examines its "performance and financial audit practices." ¹² E.g. - the 2010 Evaluation (published in 2011), was conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of Norway.	Yes

11. http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS_Assets/2012/ResultsFirst_2012_factsheet.pdf12. For more information, see: <http://www.gao.gov/about/review.html>

Intergovernmental organisation	Name	Type	Single or Multi-Sector	Funding (Amount & Source)	Size	Methods	Description	Evaluation & Audit	Independent?
World Bank	Development Research Group (DECRG)	IGO Body	Multi-Sector	- \$21,034,000 (FY 2008) - Funding primarily from the banks internal funds.	Approx. 80 full-time research staff	Multi-method	The DECRG sits within the WB, conducting policy relevant research to impact development policy choices made within and outside the WB. There are eight separate sectoral programmes within the DECRG.	There was an external evaluation of the Bank's research activities from 1998–2005, conducted by an independent panel of experts. ¹³ Previous evaluations were undertaken in 1978 and 1983. ¹⁴	
OECD	Center for Education Research and Innovation	IGO Body	Single Sector (Education)	- €4,551,000 (2011)	11 staff	Multi-method	A subsidiary body of the OECD, which provides support for EBP by gathering and analysing data on formal and informal aspects of education, with the goal of contributing to innovative education policy advice.		
IMF	The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)	IGO Body	NA	- \$5,542,448 (2013, Approved Budget)	12 Permanent staff	Multi-method	The purpose of the IEO is to independently evaluate the 'activities and policies' of the International Monetary Fund, and thus promote a 'culture of learning.' ¹⁵	There was an external evaluation of the IEO and its work released in 2006, and another external evaluation is currently underway.	Yes

13. A copy of this evaluation, and further information on it, can be found at: <http://go.worldbank.org/45WXOK00Q1>.

14. See: <http://www.cfr.org/world-bank/evaluation-world-bank-research-1998-2005/p12470>.

15. For more information on the group's mission, see: <http://www.ieo-imf.org/ieo/pages/ieohome.aspx>.

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ENDNOTES

1. See Annex I for a short discussion of approaches to 'evidence.'
2. It has been noted that *"the striking change in government in the 20th century was the massive rise in the number of organisations seeking explicitly to advise or influence government in their actions,"* at the same time that *"with a few startling exceptions,... governments have (also) become increasingly receptive to certain types of evidence"* (Davies et al., 2000 p.1).
3. The supply of potential evidence is often diverse, widely dispersed, and not necessarily framed in a way that is useful to policymakers. When targeted, timely, and relevant evidence already exists, technical language and academic conventions may make it difficult for policymakers to follow, and too often the purveyors of evidence do not have the right access or platform to reach those making choices on the front line.
4. It can be argued that austerity measures might create added incentive for policymakers to base their decisions on evidence that could be considered to concurrently improve societal outcomes, while also reducing government waste and inefficiency. (See e.g. Kohli, J. 2012. For an interesting discussion of the different sides of this argument, see e.g. Nutley, S. 2010 and 2012).
5. In March 2013, the UK Government launched a What Works Network of six independent evidence centres that will provide decision makers with research on effective policy interventions across a broad range of policy issues. The What Works Network will include two pre-existing centres – the National Institute for Clinical and Health Excellence (NICE), and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) – and four new evidence centres in the areas of 'ageing better,' 'crime reduction,' 'early intervention,' and 'local economic growth' (HM Government 2013). The Government first announced its desire to create an evidence infrastructure in June 2012 (HM Government 2012).
6. It should be noted here that term social policy can have different meanings depending on the national context. In the UK, social policy is a *"discrete"* academic discipline with *"a distinct empirical focus – support for the well-being of citizens provided through social action"* (Alcock et al., 2012, p.5). It therefore covers a range of issues, such as education, poverty and development, social inclusion, health, and criminal justice. In the United States and elsewhere in Europe, many of these sectors might broadly fit under the heading of 'public policy,' but the latter term can also include policies like national security, which would clearly not fit under the UK understanding of social policy. This paper adopts the UK definition for the purposes of analysis.
7. The term 'evidence-based policy' (EBP) is used here to refer broadly to those policies in which the primary *"goal ... is to ensure that policymaking integrates the experience, expertise and judgment of decision makers with the best available external evidence from systematic research"* (Davies 2004: 5). Such an 'evidence-based' approach, however, may also be applied to professional 'practice', i.e. – the use of systematic research in the creation of guidelines for practitioners in fields such as medicine, criminal justice, and education (to name but a few). For this reason, the acronym 'EBP' is also used by some authors to refer to 'evidence-based practice,' and when referring to both evidence-based policy and practice some use the acronym 'EBPP' (see, e.g. – Davies et al., 2000, Nutley et al., 2010). As this brief is focused primarily on organisations that promote the use of evidence in the policymaking process, the acronym EBP will refer simply to evidence-based policy alone – and when evidence-based practice is brought into the discussion, it is noted separately for the sake of clarity. It should also be pointed out that here that definitions of these concepts can range from the broad one adopted above, to the extremely narrow, such as that which defines EBPP as *"a movement that promotes the systematic reviews of research studies aimed at assessing the effectiveness of health and social policy interventions and the translation of these into evidence-based intervention programmes, tools, and guidelines"* only (emphasis added, Nutley et al., 2010).
8. Please see endnote 5 above for details of the UK What Works Network.
9. In terms of case selection, out of the pool of nations with relative economic strength and strong academic, independent, and public research systems, this author has chosen – for the reasons of comparison and space – three Anglophone countries (with clear kinship to the UK) and three (at least partly) Germanic countries within Europe to investigate.
10. The Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Education (NKCE) was launched on 16 May 2013, and at the time of writing there was not yet enough information on this organisation for use as a case study. The NKCE will be an independent body (with its own advisory board) within the Research Council of Norway, and will be funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Education. Its Director will be Sølvi Lillejord, but it is as yet unknown how many will be employed in staff.
11. The SGI notes that *"their actual influence on policymaking is difficult to evaluate, but during the period under review (2008-2010), there were no examples of highly influential independent academic advisors"* (Rüb et al., 2011 p.42).
12. Translated from the German.
13. Unlike the Hartz reform evaluations (which *"affect every worker,"* and thus *"no comparison group exists"*), the Elterngeld evaluations were able to use a natural experiment methodology. See: Jacobi and Kluge (2007) p.46; and Kluge and Tamm (2012).
14. The report concludes that *"academic influence on government decision-making is relatively limited, although there have been some indications of greater receptiveness to 'evidence-based' policy formulation under the Labor government"* (McAllister et al., 2011). Furthermore, *"evaluations by academics, independent consultants and private 'think tanks' potentially offer a remedy, but their utilisation in Australia has been relatively limited"* (PC 2009 p.16).
15. ACER concluded that many stakeholders in the OID report would have preferred the report to focus on the indigenous community's 'strengths', whereas the government focus was on how to 'close gaps' between the indigenous community and the wider population (ACER 2012 p.5).
16. On the last point, the report finds that: *"evaluation skills are in short supply within governments for various reasons including inadequate resources and low status being afforded to evaluation functions. The limited use of high-quality evaluations in Australia has also constrained the emergence of a pool of experienced and non-aligned private sector analysts and institutions – such as the US's highly-regarded MDRC (until 2003, the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation) and Mathematica (PC 2010e). A preference by many agencies for in-house control of evaluations rather than drawing on independent external expertise has exacerbated these skill deficiencies in Australia."* (PC 2009, p.10).
17. It notably achieved the same overall score as Australia in the category of 'scholarly advice' in the 2011 SGI report (see: Kaiser et al., 2011, p.22).
18. BES can employ 4.4 in full-time equivalent staff at any one time, however budget constraints mean that this is not always possible, and the number of staff varies.
19. Alton-Lee comments that: *"The BES development approach is collaborative and iterative, inviting and depending on stakeholder engagement across policy, research, and practice to strengthen the usefulness of the work for its purpose. While the approach endeavors to embed 'use' in 'development', the programme has been funded only for development. Because of this, it takes a catalyst rather than a resourced role in brokering 'use'."* (Alton-Lee 2012, p.6).

20. David Gough (Professor of Evidence Informed Policy and Practice at the Institute of Education, University of London) hailed BES as one of the “most complex, most user driven” examples of an EPB organisation going (on par with the UK’s NICE), that is actually “concerned with making use of evidence” (Gough 2012). Paul Cobb (Professor of Mathematics Education, Vanderbilt University, Tennessee) has stated that: “put quite simply, the Iterative BES Programme is the most ambitious effort I have encountered that uses rigorous scientific evidence to guide the ongoing improvement of an education system at a national level” (Cobb in Anthony and Walshaw 2007, p.viii). And that one of BES’s most “notable characteristic(s) is a mature view of evidence and an emphasis on methodological and theoretical pluralism” (Cobb in Anthony and Walshaw 2007, p.viii). Dr Linda Kaser (Professor of Education at the University of Victoria, British Columbia) simply claims “the BES programme... is ‘the smartest intellectual property in the world’” (MOE 2008).
21. To provide additional evaluation, the BES Programme also participates in the Use of Online Research Project (UOR), run by the University of Ontario’s Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
22. For example, BES is used by the Centre for the Use of Research & Evidence in Education (CUREE) in the UK, and some of its reports are posted on the Unesco’s website as part of the International Bureau of Education’s Educational Best Practice Series. In the latter case, these reports are translated into multiple languages (one for example into Chinese, Estonian, Spanish, Portuguese, and German, in addition to the English and Maori versions) (see: IBE 2012).
23. Similarly, Professor Strathdee (Head of the School of Education Policy and Implementation at Victoria University) lauds the BES programme, but “it’s one thing to have that kind of evidence, and it’s another thing to try to embed that it in classrooms” because of lack of resourcing and infrastructure (Strathdee 2012; see also: OECD 2007, pp.71-79).
24. The work of the WSIPP is often cited in academic journals and policy briefs (see, e.g. Puttick ed. 2011; H. M. Government 2012).
25. Funding for the Institute comes from the state through the Evergreen State College budget, which also provides the Institute with administrative services (see: WSIPP 2012).
26. Specifically: “juvenile justice,” “adult criminal justice,” “child welfare,” “pre-K-12(th grade) education,” “children’s mental health,” “general prevention programs for children and adolescents,” “substance abuse,” “adult mental health,” “public health,” and “housing” (see: Lee et al. 2012).
27. MDRC (2012a) ‘About MDRC; Financial Profile,’ MDRC. Available at: http://www.mdrc.org/about_finance.htm
28. MDRC (2012b) ‘About MDRC; History,’ MDRC. Available at: <http://www.mdrc.org/about/about-mdrc-history>
29. http://www.mdrc.org/rsch_method.htm
30. For further information on the What Works Clearinghouse and similar projects in education from other sources (like the Best Evidence Encyclopedia), see: Costa 2012.
31. A recent OECD study has placed the number at ‘over 110 public research entities’ (OECD 2011, p.71-72).
32. It was originally called the Central Planning Bureau, and retains the well-known CPB acronym as a legacy despite the fact that it was ‘never’ actually ‘engaged in economic planning’ (CPB 2013a).
33. This conclusion comes not only from interviews with CPB staff members (CPB Staff Members 2013, pers. comms., 8, 12, 18 March) but more importantly from the independent external reviews of the CPB (CPB Review Committee 2003, 2010, 2013).
34. It should also be noted that these figures will decline to 104 and 75, respectively, in 2015 as a result of wider budget cuts to the Ministry of Economic Affairs (CPB Staff Member, Personal communication, March 2012; CPB 2013b).
35. Coen Teulings was appointed Director of the CPB in 2006 and will be officially stepping down 1 May 2013. His successor has not yet been named (see: Teulings 2012, p.3; CPB 2013c).
36. The CPB “is not allowed to compete with commercial” companies on the open market, however, for outside contracts. (CPB Staff Member, Personal communication, March 2012; CPB 2013a).
37. This is reported not only by members of the organisation itself, but was also found to be case in the internal and external evaluations of the CPB. (CPB Staff Members, Personal communications, March 2012; see also: CPB Review Committee 2010, p.3, 6; CPB 2009, p.18; CPB Review Committee 2003, p.7, 16; CPB 2003, p.9-11.)
38. See Article 3.1 of the 2012 ‘Notes on the Planbureaus’ (translation), which focuses on the importance of the Planbureaus scientific independence (Staatscourant 2012, pp.1-7).
39. When analysing the election platforms of coalition and opposition parties, for example, they want to “leave it to the voter to decide how to weight [the] implications’ of [the] trade-offs” they find. Moreover, “this rule of conduct implies that CPB has a greater freedom in putting forward arguments in the initial stage of the debate on a certain topic, when political parties have not yet taken a strong stance on the topic. [The] CPB times the publication of its research accordingly” (CPB 2009, p.18). CPB Director Teulings also pointed out that the CPB will “leave convincing voters to political parties,” and is “only [an] arbitrator on request,” which he notes can “actually” be “quite often” (Teulings 2012, p.4).
40. Interestingly, the review committee suggested it “compare itself to institutes that share the specific combination of being independent and formally being a part of the government,” specifically naming the Australian Productivity Commission as an example (CPB Review Committee 2010, p.3, 7).
41. See footnote 36 above.
42. CPB staff members are often in regular contact with members of the relevant Dutch ministry. One CPB staff indicated that they might make a relevant policy maker aware of their intended analysis at the very beginning, and/or again half-way through, a project in order to obtain feedback on its policy orientation and to learn of other decision makers whom they might wish to contact, but they aim to keep such contact in appropriate ‘balance’ in order to maintain the objectivity of their work. Another staff member pointed out, “the better and more frequent these contacts, and the higher the level of the people we speak with, the higher the chance of policy impact” (CPB Staff Members, Personal communications, March 2012).
43. As one CPB staff member highlighted, “the biggest challenge is to become a credible sparring partner at high levels. This takes many years to achieve. It requires various efforts: 1. building up and maintaining a network of people in policy, over many years (perhaps more than 10) 2. building up a reputation as an expert in a specific field (e.g. through academic achievements, or by writing influential policy reports)” (CPB Staff Member, Personal communication, March 2012).
44. Evaluators note that the “CPB places a high priority on objectivity, independence, and non-advocacy,” and that “this perspective permeates the entire CPB staff” (CPB Review Committee 2003, p.7).
45. These comments were taken from a series of phone and email interviews with high-level members of the CPB research and operations staff in March 2013.
46. In other words, the reviews of scientific quality were undertaken in 1997, 2003, and 2010, and reviews of policy orientation in 2007 and 2013.
47. The report’s title ‘Uit de lengte of uit de breedte.’ (literally ‘From the Length or From the Width.’) is a Dutch idiom that points to the difficulty of trying to do two things at the same time. Recommendations made regarding this trade-off boiled down to a requirement for a larger budget, or making choices about what work it undertakes in the future, and will be discussed by the Dutch Parliament in May (CPB Review Committee 2013, pp.1-22).
48. Fobe et al., point out that ‘this is not surprising in a consensus-based political system with neo-corporatist traits’ (2012, p.1-25).

49. The original Social Protection Committee was established in 2000 by the Council of the European Union (Decision 2000/436/EC). The existing Social Protection Committee was established on 4 October 2004 to replace the old one, and provided with a mandate *“take on additional tasks”* (Decision 2004/689/EC). For a detailed description of the ‘Open Method of Coordination’ in relation to social policy, see: EC 2013b.
50. The individual issue observatories were largely replaced by the Social Situation Observatory (SSO), which sought to act as a more streamlined and cost-effective repository of knowledge with a lower headcount. The EC determined that there was duplication of research, however, between the work of the SSO and the Directorate General for Research – and in 2013 the SSO will be renamed the Social Situation Monitor and be subsumed under the DG for Research.
51. For a full description of the measures taken to ensure the organisation’s independence, see: IEO 2012b.
52. These factors may be most successful in a national cultural context already inclined to be more receptive to, or with an extent level of ‘demand’ for, evidence. Though the impact of such broad societal ideational factors on EBP is difficult to prove, it has been argued *“there are three crucial enabling factors that underpin modern conceptions of evidence-based policy (EBP): high-quality information bases on relevant topic areas, cohorts of professionals with skills in data analysis and policy evaluation, and political incentives for utilising evidence-based analysis and advice in governmental decision-making processes”* (emphasis added, Head 2010, 14). An interesting topic for further research would be to examine how to such ‘political incentives’ are created and fostered – as it seems to have been by the OMB in the United States (see pp.11-12 above) – in order to create a greater ‘demand’ for evidence.
53. From anonymous interviews. See also, e.g. – the project descriptions of these indices, and the networks they use at: Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012a (for the SGI); or Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012b (for the TI).
54. Solesbury points out that *“not all this knowledge has equal validity”* (Solesbury 2001, p.8). Moreover, *“proponents of evidence-based policy and practice (EBPP) have paid particular attention to the need to improve the supply and use of robust, research-based evidence. However, as amply demonstrated in previous issues of Evidence & Policy, there are ongoing debates about the status and potential role of different types of evidence, how evidence is and should be used to inform policies and practices, and the ownership of both the evidence agenda and the evidence base”* (Nutley et al., 2010).
55. For an interesting discussion of this in the EPB world, see: Haskins and Baron 2011, p.26-28.
56. The Australian Productivity Commission has found that *“balanced ex ante analysis can help make the case for well-conceived reform and careful ex post evaluations of policies can help secure better government decisions and consolidate support for them within the community”* (PC 2009, p.2).

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