

# Tools to assist in evaluation of municipal public health and wellbeing plans

## Module 3 of 7: Achieving a culture of evaluation





## Tools to assist in evaluation of municipal public health and wellbeing plans

---

Module 3 of 7: Achieving a culture of evaluation

This resource is available electronically on the internet at:  
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/eastern/initiatives.htm>

For further information regarding this resource contact:  
Brian McDowell  
Manager Public Health  
Eastern Metropolitan Region  
Department of Health  
Phone: 03 9843 1709

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format please phone 03 9843 1709 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email <[Brian.McDowell@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:Brian.McDowell@health.vic.gov.au)>.

© Copyright, State of Victoria, Department of Health, 2013.  
This publication is copyright, no part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Authorised and published by Victorian Government, 820  
Whitehorse Road Box Hill, Victoria  
September 2013

**Disclaimer:**

*This work has been compiled from a variety of sources including material generally available on the public record, reputable specialist sources and original material. Care has been taken wherever possible to verify accuracy and reliability. However, the material does not provide professional advice. No warranty is provided nor, to the extent lawful, liability accepted for loss resulting from reliance on the contents of this resource or from its use, by the authors, or the Department of Health. Readers should apply their own skill and judgment when using the information contained herein.*

# Contents

	<b>Acknowledgements</b>	
	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART 1</b>	<b>The essentials of achieving a culture of evaluation</b>	<b>2</b>
	1.1 Learning organisations	2
	1.2 Leadership	2
	1.3 Innovation and change	3
	1.4 Taking charge of the future	3
<b>PART 2</b>	<b>Evaluation culture in practice</b>	<b>4</b>
	2.1 Strategy, Culture, Performance	4
	2.2 Lead with strategy	5
	2.3 Align your people	6
	2.4 Deliver results	6
<b>PART 3</b>	<b>Further resources</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>Achieving a culture of evaluation tool</b>	<b>8</b>

## Acknowledgments

This toolkit was developed and written by Ged Dibley and Fae Robinson of PDF Management Services Pty Ltd, in conjunction with the Department of Health, Public and Population Health Unit, Eastern Metropolitan Region and the network of Eastern Metropolitan Region local government health planners.

The toolkit is a product of the *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Planning Review and Evaluation Support Project: Phase 2*. This regional initiative funded by Department of Health, was designed to support the evaluation of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans (MPHWPs) as set out in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The work commenced with Phase 1 in 2011 involving an assessment of the barriers and enablers to MPHWP evaluation experienced by the region's councils. Phase 2 built on this work to produce the toolkit and deliver professional development opportunities for the network and individual councils.

Development of the toolkit involved a collaborative design process, induction workshops, trialling of toolkit modules and comprehensive feedback from councils and the department.

The authors would like to acknowledge the many organisations and individuals who contributed to the development of the toolkit. Thanks to:

- the staff of the Department of Health, Public and Population Health Unit, Eastern Metropolitan Region who provided direction and support for the project: Christine Farnan, Brian McDowell and previously Raymond Burnett
- the other delegates to the Steering Committee who provided valuable guidance and input into content and design:
  - Helen Molnar and Wendy Smith, Boroondara City Council
  - Sharon Barker, Knox City Council
  - Jan Loughman, Manningham City Council
  - Grant Meyer, Noelene Greene and Diana Bell, Maroondah City Council
  - Isha Scott, Shire of Yarra Ranges
  - Annette Rudd, Health Promotion Manager, Knox Community Health Service and (in her absence) Maggie Palmer, Health Promotion Manager, Eastern Access Community Health
- the many council personnel and partners who participated in workshops, reviewed and tested the toolkit and who provided valuable feedback
- the staff of Department of Health, Health and Wellbeing Strategy Team who provided insights into the toolkit's alignment with other MPHWP resources.

# Introduction

The purpose of this module is to assist in promoting an organisational culture that supports MPHWP evaluation as a key contributor to learning, innovation and change.

The module is one of a suite of seven resources entitled **Tools to assist in the evaluation of MPHWP**s designed to provide evaluation support and guidance to practitioners involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of MPHWP as required under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. See **Module 1: MPHWP evaluation at a glance** for more information.

The following table describes each module and its use against MPHWP evaluation actions<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 1: Alignment of Tools to assist in evaluation of MPHWP**s modules with evaluation actions

MPHWP evaluation action	Tools to assist in evaluation of MPHWPs modules
<p><b>Understanding MPHWP evaluation</b></p>	<p>Use <b>Module 1; MPHWP evaluation at a glance</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the legislative requirements for MPHWP evaluation under the <i>Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i>.</li> <li>• understand the multilayered approach applied to MPHWP evaluation applied in this resource.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop an MPHWP evaluation strategy</b></p>	<p>Use <b>Module 2; Building an MPHWP evaluation strategy</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish the governance mechanisms for MPHWP evaluation</li> <li>• clarify how each evaluation question will be approached and what will be evaluated</li> <li>• establish systems to coordinate evaluation elements</li> <li>• design summary MPHWP evaluation reporting</li> </ul>
<p><b>Determine role of internal partners, external partners and the community</b></p>	<p>Use <b>Module 3: Achieving a culture of evaluation</b> to develop internal relationships that promote MPHWP evaluation across council</p> <p>Use <b>Module 4: Evaluating with partners</b> to work with external partners to include assisting in the design and conduct of MPHWP evaluation in their MPHWP roles</p> <p>Use <b>Module 5: Engaging the community in evaluation</b> to engage the community more effectively in the design and conduct of MPHWP evaluation</p>
<p><b>Design systems to support the evaluation strategy</b></p>	<p>Use <b>Module 6: Making evaluation sustainable</b> to develop approaches to the design and conduct of MPHWP evaluation that are sustainable</p>
<p><b>Conduct MPHWP evaluation</b></p>	<p>Use <b>Module 1</b> to guide how answers to evaluation questions will be brought together, analysed and reported</p> <p>Use <b>Modules 3, 4, 5</b> to guide the way in which internal partners, external partners and the community are engaged in the conduct of evaluation</p> <p>Use <b>Module 7: Designing and conducting an evaluation</b> to design and conduct an evaluation of selected MPHWP topics or to support someone else to do so</p>

You are here

<sup>1</sup> Victorian Department of Health, 2013, *Guide to municipal public health planning*, DH, Melbourne.

# PART 1: The essentials of achieving a culture of evaluation

Evaluation opens up opportunities not only to assess the effects of your MPHWP, but also to search for better ways of doing things. It can achieve clarity and understanding about where you are now, create opportunities for new thinking and empower better decision-making. Evaluation creates the space for innovation and supports adaptation to an ever-changing context.

When the evidence and insight gained from evaluation inspires dialogue, discussion, debate and new decisions in an organisation it can be regarded as having achieved an evaluation culture.

Leaders in such an organisation value and encourage evaluation practice, while staff participate in a learning environment that is open-minded, committed to finding out what works and what doesn't and appreciative of the differing perspectives of stakeholders and the community.

## 1.1 Learning organisations

Organisations that have developed an evaluation culture don't see evaluation as a chore, or something that's managed in order to meet reporting obligations. When an organisation's evaluation story moves from 'must do it' because of external requirements, to 'really want to do it' so that the process of inquiry, the production of credible information and the application of useful knowledge have a real bearing on organisational success, it is using evaluation as a learning organisation.

As a learning organisation, evaluation is part of 'the way we do things around here' and filters through the organisation as an agreed way of operating. Results of evaluation are actively shared, reflected upon, and used as the basis for new action. This collective frame of mind applies evaluation as part of the wider performance management framework to make more informed decisions and develop more effective plans, policies, programs, projects and initiatives.

When councils view evaluation as a valuable and anticipated source of evidence-based learning that encourages experimentation and change, it is laying the foundations for an evaluation culture. Evaluation is valued as an effective risk-management tool, helping the organisation and individuals to learn from mistakes and supporting a dynamic test-and-learn approach in a feedback loop that constantly guides decision-making.

## 1.2 Leadership

Leaders have a pervasive influence on an organisation – their values and behaviours permeate the organisation and influence what is regarded as important. In this way, leaders activate a corporate ethos that focuses the priorities, thinking and actions of the people in the organisation.

In an evaluation culture, sound leadership ensures evaluation is everyone's business. Senior managers act as champions, embedding formal and informal evaluation processes, building capacity and capability, providing resources and ensuring results are used in strategic



decision-making. Their values, behaviours and commitment of resources model evaluation as 'the way we do things around here'.

Organisations with leadership focused primarily on external reporting will only scratch the surface of the value evaluation can provide to their organisation, its stakeholders and community. In these cases, the opportunity to use evaluation results to reflect upon and learn from experience is often lost. A leadership focused on a broader concept of accountability uses evaluation to assess and share the results of policies, programs, projects or initiatives.

In a culture built on an ethos of open-mindedness, a willingness to learn and a focus on the future, evaluation thrives. Open dialogue and collaborative decision-making bridge the technical knowledge gained through the evaluative process into practical, mutually agreed new actions. In this culture, planners can create new knowledge which is shared with others both inside, and outside the organisation.

### **1.3 Innovation and change**

Evaluation is a powerful contributor to innovation and adaptation in a changing environment and supports council's capacity to produce the results it truly wants to produce. Built into the fabric of the organisation, evaluation reduces the complexity of change through a structured process of inquiry, production of credible information and application of useful knowledge.

Great evaluation can challenge the conventional wisdom, test new ideas and provide insights into what might be possible. Using evaluation as a learning, innovation and change management system can also challenge the limitations of, and reliance on, quantitative data. In behavioural change projects, which are most often the focus of health and wellbeing policies, programs, projects and initiatives, numbers may not adequately indicate success or otherwise. Learning from experience can add credible knowledge for decision-making and provide different perspectives on the same reality, strengthening the results.

### **1.4 Taking charge of the future**

When evaluation focuses on improving the MPHWP on behalf of your community, and accountability is invested in learning, innovation and change, councils can actively use it to help take charge of their futures. This evaluation ethos begins the search for more effective approaches, making it possible to replicate the things that work and address those that don't. It is based on understanding not only on *what* has been achieved, but also *why*.

Evaluation that takes charge of the future also appreciates the organisational context, potential implications of disturbing the *status quo*, and relationships with funders, stakeholders and the community. Acceptance of evaluation as a vehicle for learning, innovation and change will depend on councils' underlying motivations for embarking on evaluation (reporting, accountability or learning, innovation and change), the robustness of its relationships, and degree of adaptability and flexibility in responding to new learning.

# PART 2: Evaluation culture in practice

Councils, like organisations everywhere, are operating in an environment of constant and accelerating change. This brings with it uncertainty and complexity. Given the right organisational environment, evaluation can be a driver of change that helps you to navigate the complexity and add more certainty to decision-making. It has the power to help define the future of your MPHWP, and your organisation.

## 2.1 Strategy, Culture, Performance

Sometimes the task of evaluation can appear daunting and overwhelming. The MPHWP Evaluation Strategy developed using **Module 2: Building an MPHWP evaluation strategy**, attempts to overcome this by unpacking MPHWP evaluation into distinct levels. This and other Modules break evaluation tasks into manageable steps using with templates and tools.

The success of your MPHWP Evaluation Strategy will depend not just on the simple use of these concepts and tools but on the organisational context in which they are applied. Whether it's for reporting, accountability, learning or a combination, the achievement of your MPHWP Evaluation Strategy is inextricably linked to what the people in your organisation believe and value about evaluation.

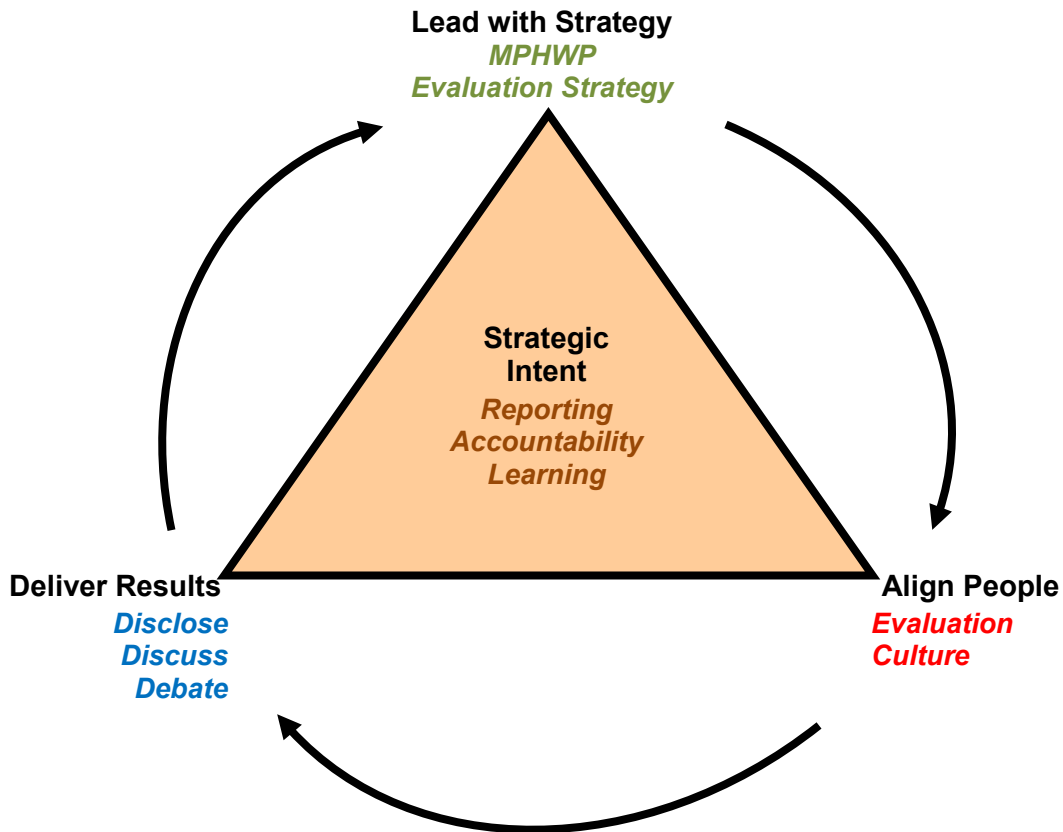
This cultural aspect of successful evaluation is often overlooked. It is essential that your evaluation culture aligns with the intent of your MPHWP Evaluation Strategy, for example:

- A strategy intended primarily to meet reporting and legislative requirements will rely heavily on quantitative measurement and reporting systems that meet pre-determined timelines.
- A strategy that intends greater accountability to your organisation and to stakeholders will operate most effectively in a culture of transparency and shared communication of results.
- An evaluation strategy that intends to make the world a better place to live in will value dialogue, learning, tolerance of mistakes, innovation and change.

In these ways, the evaluation culture will also drive the results you deliver. Investment in skills and systems that go beyond mechanical quantitative reporting will provide a rich evaluative environment for the delivery of 'results as learning'. Viewed from this perspective, evaluation can be regarded as an investment in your organisation's future.

Figure 1 illustrates how strategy, people and results come together as a framework for change – involving an iterative process that views evaluation as serving people.

Figure 1: Lead Align Deliver – A Framework for Change



## 2.2 Lead with strategy

As a health planner, you will have a principal role in developing the MPHWP Evaluation Strategy. The key aim of this strategy is to drive your council's approach to MPHWP evaluation. The MPHWP Evaluation Strategy is more likely to achieve this if it appeals to senior management and aligns with existing processes and systems that support council-wide planning and reporting.

Use the **Achieving a culture of evaluation tool** to consider some practical ways in which you can address these factors and contribute to building an evaluation culture in your organisation- see **page 8**.

### 2.3 Align your people

Your culture is the powerhouse for your MPHWP Evaluation Strategy. It expresses what people actually see as the priorities, guides where they put energy and effort and what actions they take. While the MPHWP Evaluation Strategy sets the direction, the culture drives its success. This is because your culture is made up of the collective values, beliefs and codes of practice that characterise your organisation.

Leaders have an enormous influence on the culture of an organisation. Their values, beliefs and behaviours are generally modelled throughout the organisation and become 'the way we do things around here'. They are the key to unlocking an evaluation culture and aligning the people in your organisation to the evaluation strategy.

To make your MPHWP Evaluation Strategy as successful as possible, as health planner it will be important to understand the culture within which it operates and to take a lead role in harnessing and broadening it to support evaluation. Aligning the people in your organisation to the evaluation strategy can contribute to building an evaluation culture in your organisation.

Use the **Achieving a culture of evaluation tool** to consider some practical ways in which you can address these factors and contribute to building an evaluation culture in your organisation- see **page 10**.

### 2.4 Deliver results

Delivering results is what it's all about. Determining your MPHWP Evaluation Strategy and aligning people to support it will build greater understanding of the performance of your MPHWP. Delivering that understanding and actively using it to manage change takes evaluation beyond an administrative reporting chore to an information system that informs decisions about the future health and wellbeing of your community.

An evaluation culture learns from past experience, makes different decisions based on the evidence and applies new thinking to build a better future. This culture can be achieved if you:

Use the **Achieving a culture of evaluation tool** to consider some practical ways in which you can address these factors and contribute to building an evaluation culture in your organisation- see **page 11**.

## PART 3: Further resources

The following is a list of useful organisational culture resources in addition to those cited in the body of the module. All web based material was last accessed 20 September 2013.

Hanwright J & Makinson S 2008, *Promoting evaluation culture*, Evaluation Journal of Australasia, Vol. 8, No.1, 2008, pp 20-25

Hyman V 2007, *Create a culture of evaluation*, Fieldstone Alliance, available at [http://www.fieldstonealliance.org/client/tools\\_you\\_can\\_use/06-20-07\\_evaluation\\_culture.cfm](http://www.fieldstonealliance.org/client/tools_you_can_use/06-20-07_evaluation_culture.cfm)

Mayne J 2008, *Building an Evaluative Culture for Effective Evaluation and Results Management*, ILAC Brief No. 20: The Institutional Learning and Change Initiative, available at <http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/content/ilac-briefs>

Murphy DF undated, *Developing a culture of evaluation*, TESOL-France, available at <http://www.tesol-france.org/articles/murphy.pdf>

National Centre for Sustainability & Swinburne University of Technology 2011, *A Short Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation*, available at <http://www.evaluationtoolbox.net.au/>

Owen JM 2003, *Evaluation culture: a definition and analysis of its development within organisations*, Evaluation Journal of Australasia, Vol. 3, NO. 1, August 2003, pp43-47

Public Management Service 1998, *Best Practice Guidelines for Evaluation*, PUMA Policy Brief No. 5, OECD, available at <http://www.oecd.org/governance/budgetingandpublicexpenditures/1902965.pdf>

Trochim WMK 1992, *Developing an Evaluation Culture for International Agricultural Research*, Cornell Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development, Ithaca, New York, available at <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/research/RD/Evaluation%20Culture.pdf>

## Achieving a culture of evaluation tool

This tool can be used to clarify the action you can take to achieve an evaluation culture. It has three sections reflecting each facet of Lead Align Deliver –Framework for change (see **page 5**).

Consider how each Action Area might apply to your circumstances and then select tasks that are most likely to promote a culture that actively embraces and supports evaluation. Where possible integrate actions into your MPHWP Evaluation Strategy.

### LEAD WITH STRATEGY

ACTION AREA	TASKS	POSSIBLE AT YOUR COUNCIL?
<p><b>Engage Council Leadership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Explain the role of evaluation in briefings about your new MPHWP to councillors and/or senior management</li> <li>❖ Use officers of the Department of Health as speakers to reinforce statutory obligations and effective planning practice</li> <li>❖ Explain the role of evaluation in briefings about your new plan</li> <li>❖ Demonstrate how you've applied previous evaluation findings to your planning decisions</li> <li>❖ Demonstrate how you are going to use evaluation to be accountable and build new evidence</li> <li>❖ Be enthusiastic around managers – seek formal and informal opportunities to discuss evaluation</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Involve others in the development of the MPHWP strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Assemble an evaluation team that garners commitment to MPHWP evaluation across council and that demonstrates engagement with partners and in the wider community</li> <li>❖ Use good governance to manage the process</li> <li>❖ Build commitment and enthusiasm</li> <li>❖ Organise a forum to spread the word or share results</li> </ul>	

**LEAD WITH STRATEGY** continued

<p><b>Make your evaluation strategy simple, low cost, efficient and practical</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Build evaluation into the front end of your planning processes</li> <li>❖ Be strategic about what you decide to do</li> <li>❖ Piggy-back on others doing evaluation to share resources and strengthen evaluation capacity around a shared issue</li> <li>❖ Apply previous findings transparently to the new planning process</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Check what's most important to council and align priorities where possible</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Clarify how MPHWP planning can contribute to council's overall planning priorities</li> <li>❖ Find out specifically what others might be most interested in seeing evaluated</li> <li>❖ Get wide agreement on the MPHWP evaluation strategy</li> <li>❖ Find out where health and wellbeing indicators fit with whole of council performance measures and align</li> <li>❖ Engage with others on the value of evaluating initiatives with them</li> <li>❖ Use evaluation to mitigate risk</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Time your request for evaluation resources with the budget cycle</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Use the budget process to bid for evaluation resources</li> <li>❖ Bundle evaluation into bids for projects or initiatives</li> </ul>	

### Achieving a culture of evaluation tool

#### ALIGN YOUR PEOPLE

ACTION AREA	TASKS	POSSIBLE AT YOUR COUNCIL?
<b>Live evaluation values</b>	Act with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Honesty</li> <li>❖ Truth-seeking</li> <li>❖ Accountability</li> <li>❖ Forward looking</li> <li>❖ Open-minded</li> <li>❖ Evidence</li> </ul>	
<b>Promote evidence-based learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Tell stories</li> <li>❖ Share experiences</li> <li>❖ Present data</li> <li>❖ Hold forums</li> <li>❖ Use intranet/newsletter opportunities</li> <li>❖ Demonstrate success and discuss failures</li> </ul>	
<b>Collaborate on evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Seek out and engage others who understand evaluation and know its importance</li> <li>❖ Identify peer champions</li> <li>❖ Upskill your manager and the corporate planner</li> <li>❖ Engage the risk management team</li> <li>❖ Use your organisational language –for example, 'results', 'performance', 'understanding'</li> <li>❖ Influence, influence, influence</li> </ul>	
<b>Advocate for evaluation to be a core competency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Engage organisational development colleagues</li> <li>❖ Support development of training</li> <li>❖ Develop an evaluation policy</li> <li>❖ Engage experts to educate about evaluation</li> </ul>	
<b>Make evaluation part of everyday life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Incorporate evaluation in aspects of managing your MPHWP</li> </ul>	



Achieving a culture of evaluation tool

DELIVER RESULTS

ACTION AREAS	TASKS	POSSIBLE AT YOUR COUNCIL?
<b>Use performance reporting systems to deliver evaluation results</b>	❖ Integrate evaluation reporting with other performance reporting	
<b>Share the results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Make results easy to understand and accessible</li> <li>❖ Use intranet, newsletters, team meetings and other means</li> <li>❖ Hold a learning event, especially one that reflects a critical issues for the organisation or the community</li> </ul>	
<b>Celebrate success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Hold an event to share the findings</li> <li>❖ Celebrate!</li> </ul>	
<b>Test the tolerance for, and learning from, mistakes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Use your evaluation results as opportunities for learning</li> <li>❖ Consider questions within the context of your municipality or organisation</li> <li>❖ Problem solve, create and innovate</li> </ul>	
<b>Demonstrate evaluation as a change process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Engage in conversations about what evaluation has revealed and the need for change</li> <li>❖ Foster new thinking and new approaches based on what you have learned</li> </ul>	

