

Ensuring use and sharing lessons learned

Definition	Ensuring that a) stakeholders are aware of the evaluation procedures and findings; b) the findings are considered in decisions or actions that affect the program (i.e., findings use); and c) those who participated in the evaluation process have had a beneficial experience (i.e., process use).
Role	Ensures that evaluation achieves its primary purpose — being useful; however, several factors might influence the degree of use, including evaluator credibility, report clarity, report timeliness and dissemination, disclosure of findings, impartial reporting, and changes in the program or organizational context.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designing the evaluation to achieve intended use by intended users;• Preparing stakeholders for eventual use by rehearsing throughout the project how different kinds of conclusions would affect program operations;• Providing continuous feedback to stakeholders regarding interim findings, provisional interpretations, and decisions to be made that might affect likelihood of use;• Scheduling follow-up meetings with intended users to facilitate the transfer of evaluation conclusions into appropriate actions or decisions; and• Disseminating both the procedures used and the lessons learned from the evaluation to stakeholders, using tailored communications strategies that meet their particular needs.

Adapted from a) Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. Program evaluation standards: how to assess evaluations of educational programs. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994; and b) Patton MQ. Utilization-focused evaluation. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.