



Report

BUILDING CAPACITY TO USE RESEARCH EVIDENCE (BCURE) REALIST EVALUATION: STAGE 2 SYNTHESIS REPORT

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Results in development

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Report

BCURE evaluation: Stage 2 synthesis report

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ACD	African Cabinet Decision-Making Programme
ACGN	Africa Cabinet Government Network
AEN	Africa Evidence Network
AFIDEP	African Institute for Development Policy
ASI	Adam Smith International
BCURE	Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence
BPS	Business Process Services
CMO	Context–Mechanism–Outcome
CIMO	Context–Intervention–Mechanism—Outcome
CIMSU	Cabinet Implementation Monitoring and Strategy Unit
CPRU	Cabinet Policy Review Unit
(C)ToC	(Common) Theory of Change
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DFID	Department for International Development
DPME	Department for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EIPM	Evidence-Informed Policy Making
EQ	Evaluation Question
CIMO	Context–Intervention–Mechanism—Outcome
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
MoH	Ministry of Health
NES	National Evaluation System
SECURE	Strengthening Capacity to Use Research Evidence
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UK	United Kingdom

Executive summary

This report synthesises the Stage 2 results of a realist evaluation of the Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) programme. The evaluation aims to capture lessons on how and why capacity building for evidence-informed policy making (EIPM) in the global South works, for whom, to what extent, in what respects and in what circumstances.

BCURE aims to improve the use of evidence in decision making in low- and middle-income countries. BCURE is a £13 million programme, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). It is made up of six linked capacity development projects, which use different combinations of activities to support policy makers, government officials and parliamentarians to develop skills, knowledge and systems in order to improve the use of evidence in decision making. BCURE is implemented in 12 countries in Africa and Asia, and runs from 2013 to 2017.

The evaluation runs in parallel with the programme. It has two aims:

- To strengthen the global evidence base on the effectiveness of capacity building approaches to support EIPM.
- To evaluate the effectiveness and value for money of the six BCURE programmes.

Stage 2 of the evaluation was conducted from March to September 2016. The Stage 2 report presents interim evidence of emerging outcomes from BCURE, and further develops the Stage 1 theories about how and why programmes are contributing to change. At Stage 3, a full summative evaluation will provide definitive conclusions about the extent of change as a result of the BCURE programme, and will present a final tested set of theories about how and why capacity building contributes (and fails to contribute) to evidence-informed policy making, for different groups and in different circumstances.

The synthesis report is structured as follows. Section 1 provides a brief introduction to BCURE and the aim and scope of the evaluation. Section 2 summarises the BCURE interventions and their operating environments. Section 3 outlines the methodology for the BCURE evaluation. Section 4 presents findings from the realist analysis on how, why, in what circumstances and for whom the BCURE interventions lead to change. Section 5

discusses the overall conclusions and recommendations for the BCURE programmes.

Evaluation design and methodology

A realist approach was selected for the evaluation because DFID was interested in understanding not just *whether* BCURE worked but also *how and why* capacity building can contribute to increased use of evidence in policy making in the very different contexts in which the programme is operating. The evaluation was designed around an overarching Common Theory of Change (CToC), which describes four domains of capacity change: individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional. In brief, the theory states that BCURE will lead to change as follows:

Developing the capacity of decision makers to use research evidence (by building knowledge, skills, commitment, relationships and systems at four levels: individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional) will allow them to access, appraise and apply good-quality evidence more effectively when forming policy. This will improve the quality of policies, ultimately benefiting more poor people.

In Stage 2 the CToC was developed into a detailed realist programme theory. This is underpinned by a series of more granular theories about how BCURE might lead to change in different contexts, known as ‘context–intervention–mechanism–outcome’ configurations (CIMOs). Section 3.2 describes the approach to developing and refining theory.

The CToC was used to define the evaluation questions, outlined in Section 3.3. It also shaped the design of the main evaluation components, which include (among others):

1. Six programme evaluations of BCURE-funded projects, incorporating primary data collection within one country (the ‘country case study’), and analysis of monitoring and implementation documents from across the projects (see Section 3.4).
2. A synthesis of findings from across the programme, investigating how and why capacity building for evidence use works or does not work in different contexts (Section 3.7).

Data collection and synthesis is repeated each year for three years to enable the evaluation to track programme results over time, and iteratively test and refine our theories about how and why

particular outcomes have occurred in different contexts.

The findings in this report are based largely on insights from qualitative interviews with BCURE programme staff, programme participants, high-level government stakeholders and civil society stakeholders conducted as part of the programme evaluations.

- **Outcome** data derived from interviews is triangulated where possible with monitoring data collected by the programmes. However, many of the outcomes (particularly at interpersonal, organisational and institutional level, where outcomes are more intangible and emergent) have not been systematically monitored by the programmes, therefore we have necessarily relied more strongly on interviews. Evidence for an outcome is deemed stronger if it is triangulated across a larger number of sources and interview respondents.
- Evidence for our CIMO theories about the **mechanisms** that contribute to outcomes in specific **contexts** is derived largely from interview data. The evidence behind particular CIMOs is deemed stronger when more respondents in more contexts provided insights in support of the theory. Section 3.3 discusses the methodology further, with full details provided in a Supplementary Annex.

BCURE interventions and operating environments

Evaluation country case studies were conducted in Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The six case study countries present a range of challenges to evidence use in policy making.

Apart from South Africa, all the countries score fairly low on the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators dimensions of governance (World Bank, 2015). Fragile political contexts in Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe present challenges for the use of evidence in policy development. Kenya and Bangladesh present mixed challenges for EIPM: more established systems co-exist with political instability and low levels of government effectiveness. In contrast, South Africa has relatively well-established decision making systems and processes, but strong ideological voices on all sides of the political spectrum limit the extent to which evidence is considered.

At Stage 2, the BCURE programmes were approaching the final six months of implementation, and they have met the majority of their output milestones. Most will complete their programmes by late 2016 or early 2017. Progress has been made broadly according to agreed plans, with no reductions in scope. There have been some delays and some adaptations, given the challenges in countries.

All the programmes face challenges inherent to working in government settings in the global South. These include challenges relating to Ebola in Sierra Leone. More routine difficulties arise from regular changes in government personnel that require the rebuilding of relationships, as well as changes in political priorities that can block or accelerate demand for the programme activities. Responding to challenges has required a flexible approach and the investment of significant staff resources.

Key outcomes observed at Stage 2

Overall, the evaluation has found evidence that BCURE activities are enhancing the use of evidence in the programme countries. However, there are some weaknesses, and also questions about how sustainable the positive results are.

The strongest evidence at Stage 2 relates to **individual-level** changes in officials' technical skills and use of evidence in their work, with evidence of behaviour change among government officials in Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zimbabwe. However, there is more limited evidence from Pakistan of new knowledge being put into use, and some evidence that a minority of respondents across four countries have not been able to put new learning into practice or have faced major difficulties in doing so.

In relation to **interpersonal change**, there is clear evidence from Zimbabwe of new and improved relationships being developed through formal networking events, but limited evidence of this from other programmes that have used this type of intervention. However, primary evaluation data suggests that many other types of BCURE activities have enabled relationships to be built between participants, and there is some evidence from several contexts that these new networks are being used to share information or advice, or to spark new organisational collaborations.

There are also signs that BCURE activities are contributing to **organisational change** in targeted government organisations. Primary evidence from Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and South Africa shows how tools or systems to strengthen or operationalise EIPM have been co-developed through BCURE interventions. In some countries, standardised EIPM procedures have been officially adopted and rolled out. In Zimbabwe, there is evidence of buy-in from senior management for the programme to help facilitate organisational reforms. However, organisational change in all countries is generally at an earlier stage than individual change outcomes, and the evidence on these outcomes is more tentative.

In relation to **institutional change**, there is clear evidence that national institutional actors promoting EIPM have been established or strengthened, particularly in Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe. These organisations have the potential to continue supporting EIPM once BCURE has ended. However, as yet there is limited evidence that BCURE is influencing wider shifts in the institutional environment, such as in terms of public awareness of EIPM.

There is limited evidence at Stage 2 of changes in **policy development processes** as a result of BCURE activities. However, the data suggests that support to specific processes may be leading to short-term improvements in the consideration of evidence, and that standardised procedures may be enabling better-informed debate about policy and the evidence to support it.

The changes observed at Stage 2 represent important foundations for promoting evidence use in decision making, but are nevertheless short-term changes. The BCURE programmes are nearing their completion, and there are questions as to how sustainable change will be when BCURE is no longer there to animate and catalyse government partners. As the novelty of evidence use declines and it is incorporated into normal business, with political priorities reasserting themselves, momentum in the BCURE countries may well stall. Summative conclusions about the real extent of change and its sustainability will not be clear until Stage 3 in 2017. Section 4 discusses the findings in detail.

Insights into how and why outcomes are emerging as a result of BCURE activities

Stage 2 findings provide important insights into how capacity strengthening for EIPM works to support systemic change. The BCURE programmes started through interventions at different entry points. Some began with training courses aiming to influence individuals' behaviour (SECURE, Harvard, VakaYiko), while ACD started with top-down organisational reform. The evidence at Stage 2 suggests that changes in one domain (e.g. individual) have influenced outcomes in other domains (e.g. organisational) in many of the programmes. At Stage 2, there is emerging evidence of organisational change, well beyond the individual change seen at Stage 1. This supports our finding that, over time, changes have combined and reinforced each other at a broader systemic level.

These findings imply that capacity development for EIPM needs to go beyond building technical skills at an individual level. Capacity strengthening needs to be considered systemically, providing support at different levels. Individual-level changes are unlikely on their own to 'filter up' to create organisational change. Top-down reforms may create improved systems for planning and policy making, but may not necessarily support people to use evidence in ways that are genuinely useful to their work and the work of government. So capacity support should ideally encompass a range of interventions, from developing skills, values and norms to promote EIPM at an individual level, to supporting the adoption of organisational procedures, incentives and resources – financial and human – to enhance use of evidence.

At Stage 2, the evidence from the six case study countries suggests capacity support for EIPM is most effective if three overarching contextual factors are in place, or can be created. First, there has to be high-level interest in improving the effectiveness of government through better use of evidence, which creates receptiveness for capacity building activities, incentivises individuals to apply new learning in their work and allows organisational systems and processes to take root. Second, it appears to help when EIPM is aligned to an improvement and professionalisation agenda, avoiding political connotations. Finally, the practical value of evidence to improve government effectiveness has to be demonstrated – such as through the quality of individuals' work improving

or through new products or processes that showcase the value of evidence – which help build senior buy-in for EIPM and create a positive context for change to be formalised within organisations.

The evidence highlights several entry points for EIPM capacity strengthening (discussed in more detail in Section 4). When the entry point is support to *individual change*, then there is good evidence that:

- When training provides information and opportunities to practise skills, this generates self-efficacy and leads to behaviour change if training is directly relevant to people's roles, there is management support and training comes at the 'right time' for the organisation. Where BCURE training has not succeeded in changing behaviour, there is some evidence that this owed to a lack of opportunity to apply learning, insufficient time (linking into insufficient organisational support) and hierarchical civil service cultures that constrained participants from applying their learning.
- BCURE coaching (e.g. mentoring or follow-up support after training) provides encouragement, which generates or embeds a feeling of self-efficacy and builds confidence. This leads to improved ways of working when participants have either personal motivation or organisational incentives to change. Success depends on coaching being driven by clear objectives based on participants' needs, and the coach having the right interpersonal and professional qualities.
- BCURE-facilitated spaces for dialogue and collaboration enable sharing of evidence from different perspectives, which generates knowledge and influences attitudes about EIPM. This is made possible where interventions bring together diverse groups of people with relevant interests and provide space to share challenges in a context of a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM. However, in most cases there was no evidence that dialogue had promoted self-efficacy that resulted in behaviour change – the theory is that spaces for dialogue potentially create a conducive context for other interventions to stimulate behaviour change at a later stage, although there is limited evidence on this at Stage 2.

There is more tentative evidence that changes at individual level can then link to organisational change. Where it has taken place, it has been through a number of mechanisms:

- A cohort of trained individuals who are applying new EIPM practices, which can 'filter up' to influence senior stakeholders, such as in Kenya and Zimbabwe (although this is not enough to create widespread change by itself).
- EIPM enthusiasts and leaders at different levels, who can cascade skills and new ways of working to others inside or beyond their organisations, as has happened in four countries.
- An entry point to enable BCURE partners to work with organisations in order to facilitate organisational reforms, especially where government settings are hard to access, as has occurred in South Africa and Zimbabwe, where training has provided a 'foot in the door' for a programme to initiate organisational reforms, by establishing the credibility of the partner.

When the project entry point is support to interpersonal change then more limited data suggests that:

- Facilitated spaces for dialogue about EIPM (e.g. between policy makers, researchers, civil society and citizens) create and strengthen connections or generate a sense of closeness and trust, resulting in new and improved relationships. This is more likely in a context where open, informal dialogue is enabled and where the 'right' composition of people are in the room, in a broader context where existing networks are weak but there is a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM.
- Interpersonal or network change can be viewed as a *stepping stone* towards EIPM. There is some evidence to suggest that events that bring people together and create spaces for dialogue have multiple, interlinked, outcomes – including raising individual awareness, catalysing policy processes that utilise evidence and strengthening the position and networks of BCURE partners to enable them to promote EIPM more widely.

When the project entry point is support to organisational change, then emerging evidence suggests that:

- BCURE support to co-produce new tools or systems that promote EIPM can lead to

positive examples or ‘showcases’ that demonstrate the value of EIPM when the support is collaborative, links EIPM to improving performance and helps establish relationships with internal sponsors or champions.

- Capacity building activities, when delivered through responsive and collaborative partnerships, can lead to high-level stakeholders giving BCURE partners the permission to provide ongoing, tailored support to ‘accompany’ a process of reform and help them embed EIPM. Although still tentative, this theory was recognised by stakeholders in all BCURE contexts. Permission to accompany appears to be driven by pressure to improve performance from senior levels, and is enabled when the BCURE partner has established trust through previous activities. This can lead to uptake of recommendations from processes facilitated by BCURE, adoption of procedures and possibly the emergence of an internal unit to ‘own’ and ‘champion’ EIPM.
- Where government partners have officially adopted BCURE-supported standard procedures, limited evidence suggests that adoption is more likely to happen where existing approaches to evidence use are *ad hoc*, or where there is an absence of standardised procedures, in a setting where there is existing top-down demand for evidence use. EIPM systems need to be designed in a way that allows them to be standardised and linked to other procedures, in order to be officially adopted.

There is limited evidence on how organisational-level change can filter down to influence individual behaviour, but tentative theories are emerging. Insights from the BCURE literature review suggested tools or systems to promote EIPM might provide practical assistance, which *facilitates* people to do their jobs better or more easily. This results in the EIPM system or tool being used, and (potentially) increasing the value of evidence through demonstrating the benefits it can bring. Tools and systems can also create positive or negative incentives, which *reinforce* EIPM behaviours, leading to individuals deciding to change the way they access, appraise or apply evidence in decision making. However, in all the settings it was too early to see individual-level outcomes from the use of tools and procedures to

make it possible to test whether they were facilitating or reinforcing changes in individual practice.

If the project entry point is support to *institutional change*, then there is some evidence to suggest that:

- Supporting local organisations to deliver EIPM capacity building activities can strengthen their capabilities through ‘learning by doing’. This can result in the establishment or strengthening of national institutional actors that can act as a ‘hub’ for EIPM, are capable of running successful programmes to promote it and are potentially able to continue supporting it once the programme has ended.
- Where local organisations successfully deliver programme activities and/or explicitly aim to build relationships with government departments and other EIPM actors, this enables partners to ‘relate and attract’ – providing exposure to new collaborators and leading to increased demand for partners to provide capacity building support for EIPM to new actors not originally targeted by the programme.

There is limited evidence at Stage 2 about how BCURE programmes support improvements in the quality of policy development processes. However, there are some early insights into how BCURE capacity building is starting to contribute to better-quality policy processes. First, there are some examples of capacity building improving *evidence products* (i.e. how evidence is prioritised, analysed, visualised and presented in briefing notes, policy papers and evaluations), and therefore feeding more or better quality evidence into policy processes. Second, capacity building is creating or improving *processes and incentives* (e.g. cabinet memos, improvement plans and consultation channels) for decision makers to consider a wider range of evidence more thoroughly within policy processes.

Overall, the evaluation findings add interesting nuances about politics and power to the basic BCURE assumption that capacity development is the entry point to enhanced EIPM and improved quality of policy processes. The Stage 2 findings highlight the need to work politically, build trust and relationships and support the development of governmental institutions, if EIPM is to be embedded. The original programme models were

based to varying extents on 'rational', technical understandings of EIPM – for example focusing on building the technical capacity of individuals to access, use and appraise evidence with the assumption that this would filter up to affect the use of evidence in policy decision making. Over time, many of the programmes have increasingly recognised the need to build trust and ownership within government departments to support changes in decision making processes.

Stage 2 findings therefore offer a tentative insight into how a technical approach might be combined with working politically to enhance decision making processes, although the evidence is still limited at this stage. Where BCURE programmes have combined technical skills development with approaches to build trust and relationships, this appears to facilitate the embedding of EIPM in government institutions. Approaching EIPM as a technical process seems to create opportunities, even in authoritarian political systems, for the consideration of evidence that represents a broader range of perspectives on an issue, broadening consultation with stakeholders outside of government and enhancing the scrutiny and transparency of decisions to balance purely

ideological decision making. Because EIPM can help promote broader consultation and scrutiny, in the democratic BCURE countries some respondents see EIPM as ultimately strengthening the accountability of governments for service delivery. In this way, if combined with a focus on building relationships and trust, capacity building for EIPM could well offer an entry point to improving the quality of policy and decision making processes, and, through this, support broader governance reforms. The final section of the report offers some tentative guidance about how technical and institution-building approaches might be combined.

Finally, experience in many countries suggests that there will always be political limits to the extent evidence is used in policy making. However, the BCURE programmes have generated important insights into how evidence use can be strengthened in order to move away from purely political or ideological decision making. We discuss the main insights and the emerging practical implications for BCURE and future EIPM programmes in the final section of this report.

1. Introduction

This report synthesises the Stage 2 results of a realist evaluation of DFID's Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) programme. It explores how and why capacity building for evidence-informed policy (EIPM) works and does not work, for whom, to what extent, in what respects and in what circumstances.

The report is structured as follows: Section 1 provides a brief introduction to BCURE and the aim and scope of the evaluation; Section 2 summarises the BCURE interventions and their operating environments; Section 3 outlines the methodology for the BCURE evaluation; Section 4 presents findings from the realist analysis on how, why, in what circumstances and for whom the BCURE interventions contribute (or do not) to change; and Section 5 discusses the overall conclusions and recommendations for the BCURE programmes.

1.1. What is BCURE?

BCURE is a £13 million programme, funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). BCURE aims to improve the use of evidence in decision making in low- and middle-income countries. It supports policy makers, government officials and parliamentarians to develop skills, knowledge and systems to support the use of evidence. Made up of six linked capacity development programmes, BCURE is implemented in 12 countries in Africa and Asia, and operates from 2013 to 2017. Section 2 provides more detail on the programmes.

DFID views BCURE as a pioneering programme, and so is investing in explicitly capturing lessons on how to promote EIPM in developing countries through capacity building. The two main channels for capturing learning are a three-year evaluation that accompanies the programmes through their implementation, and cross-programme BCURE learning and communications activities (described in Annex 2).

1.2. Aim and scope of the evaluation

The BCURE evaluation is funded by DFID, conducted by an independent evaluation team from Itad, and runs from 2014 to 2017, in parallel with the programme. It has two aims:

- To strengthen the global evidence base on the effectiveness of capacity building approaches to support evidence-informed policy.
- To evaluate the effectiveness and value for money of the six BCURE programmes. The evaluation, therefore, has both a learning focus and an accountability focus. The full Terms of Reference are contained in Annex 1.

The evaluation encompasses annual programme evaluations of the six BCURE programmes (incorporating country case studies of six of the 12 BCURE focus countries), a literature review, an impact case study of a non-BCURE capacity building initiative and annual synthesis reports on how and why capacity building for evidence use works or not in different contexts.

Stage 2 of the evaluation was conducted from March to September 2016. Stage 1 was conducted in March to September 2015,¹ and Stage 3 will be conducted over the same period in 2017. At Stage 2 (2016), most of the programmes were nearing their completion, with the exception of ECORYS (Bangladesh), which started at the end of 2015.

Stage 2 findings are presented in this report as between mid-point and end-point, with a forward look to sustainability. The report does **not** present summative findings or definitive conclusions about BCURE impact. Rather, it presents interim evidence of emerging outcomes, and further develops the Stage 1 theories about how and why programmes are contributing to change. At Stage 3, a full summative evaluation will provide

¹ The Stage 1 synthesis report is available here <http://itad.com/reports/building-capacity-use-research-evidence-bcure-evaluation-stage-1-synthesis-report/>

conclusions about the extent of change as a result of the BCURE programme, and present a revised set of tested theories about how and why capacity building contributes (and fails to contribute) to evidence-informed policy making, for different groups and in different circumstances. This has been agreed with the BCURE evaluation Steering Committee in the revision process for the Stage 2 synthesis report, and implications agreed for the Stage 3 evaluation design. These are summarised in Section 5.5.

Key audiences for the evaluation

The evidence base on capacity development for EIPM is small, largely derived from the health field, and weighted towards studies examining the impact of training on individual capacity. There are significant evidence gaps around the role of interpersonal and organisational interventions in promoting change, and regarding the influence of EIPM capacity development on policy change and improved quality of policy development processes. There is a particular lack of evidence on capacity development for EIPM in developing countries. Operational insights into how to design and implement this type of intervention in developing country contexts are also lacking.

To strengthen this evidence base, the BCURE evaluation provides robust evidence on how and why different approaches to capacity building for EIPM work, for whom and in which contexts, in developing countries. These lessons are intended to be directly applicable to the commissioning, design, implementation and adaptation of EIPM capacity building programmes in developing countries to improve results.

Therefore, the intended users of the synthesis report are, in the first instance, BCURE's managing team at DFID's Research and Evidence Division and the BCURE partners responsible for delivering BCURE programmes, to inform improvements within the current portfolio of programmes.

The findings are also intended to be of use to a wider audience of donors, funders, commissioners and implementers who are considering future EIPM capacity development programmes. These evaluation users may be in numerous fields, such as governance, public management and administration, and research and evidence utilisation. For these audiences, the evaluation findings provide evidence on:

- How and why different interventions lead to change, and contextual factors that affect outcomes.
- How interventions can be combined in multi-level capacity development strategies.
- How and why capacity development interventions can contribute to organisational and institutional shifts to embed EIPM behaviours and systems, ultimately enhancing policy development processes.

An evaluation communications strategy was developed to facilitate the contribution of the evaluation to the wider evidence base on EIPM, and a range of communication activities are underway. These include disseminating final reports and tailored blogs and briefing papers through a range of relevant channels, and sharing learning through events including the BCURE Annual Learning event and a variety of national and international conferences.

2. BCURE interventions and their operating environments

BCURE targets perceived weaknesses in skills, practices and systems that inhibit EIPM among government institutions in the global South. It does this through a range of interventions, designed and combined in different ways by different partners. The aspiration underpinning BCURE is that more routine use of evidence in policy making will contribute to improved policies, which, in turn, will deliver positive outcomes for poverty reduction. Each of the six programmes works directly with cabinet staff, ministerial staff and civil servants in governments, as well as parliamentarians and non-government actors. They all focus on building up skills, networks and organisational systems for EIPM, through a range of interventions designed and combined in different ways by different partners. These include training on how to access, appraise and use evidence in policy making (online and face-to-face, in-workplace and residential and shorter and longer in duration); practical workshops; mentoring; facilitating online and face-to-face networks; developing tools, systems and manuals to embed evidence use at an organisational level; and working with 'evidence champions' in

government organisations. Programmes range in scope and scale, from working in single ministries to working across whole government systems or international networks. Table 1 provides further detail on each programme.

The programmes are implemented in countries with low or mixed use of evidence in government decision-making. The BCURE programmes have identified a range of blockages to EIPM in the 12 BCURE targeted countries. This report focusses predominantly on the six countries examined through the programme evaluations: South Africa, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Bangladesh. Apart from South Africa, all of these countries score fairly low on the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators² (WGI) dimensions of governance (voice and accountability; political stability; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; control of corruption) (World Bank, 2015).

The six countries examined through the evaluation country case studies present a range of blockages to evidence-use in policy making. The political contexts in Sierra Leone, Pakistan and Zimbabwe present contrasting challenges for the use of evidence in policy development, including still-evolving systems for planning, policy development and implementation; centralised, authoritarian control; and political instability. Kenya and Bangladesh present mixed conditions for EIPM, with some issues around political stability but generally more established systems for planning, policy development and implementation, and research systems, although both score fairly low on government effectiveness in the WGI. In contrast, South Africa has reasonably effective government agencies, and well-established systems and processes for planning, policy and implementation, in contrast to some of the other case study countries. However, as a relatively young constitutional democracy, strong ideological voices on all sides of the political spectrum are considered to exert a strong influence on decision making and setting of political priorities, which affects the extent to which evidence is considered. Table 1 presents a summary of national-level enablers and barriers to EIPM within the six evaluation case study countries.

At Stage 2, the BCURE programmes were approaching the final six months of implementation, and have met the majority of their output milestones. Most will complete their programmes by late 2016 or early 2017. Progress has been made broadly according to agreed plans, with no reductions in scope. There have been some delays and some adaptations, most notably in the ACD programme due to continued challenges relating to Ebola in Sierra Leone, while in South Sudan, activities remained extremely constrained in 2016 due to continued conflict, economic crisis and major infrastructure problems, as well as delays in the formation of the transitional government. Table 1 summarises each programme's progress against milestones in 2016.

All the programmes have faced challenges inherent to working in government settings, highlighting the need for a flexible approach. There have been some issues with the contracting model, which some partners consider inflexible. Challenges include regular changes in government personnel that require the rebuilding of relationships, as well as changes in political priorities that can block or accelerate demand for the programme activities. All the programmes have had to invest significant staff resources in maintaining relationships with partners in government, especially with senior stakeholders, and managing expectations among programme participants. For example, some key steps in the ACD Sierra Leone project have not progressed because of delays on the government side, notably the establishment of standing committees that would discuss policies in draft stage and that require authorisation by the president. In Kenya, SECURE has faced delays with the national Research for Health agenda because of difficulties in reaching consensus on research priorities between national and county-level administrations. This experience highlights the risks to programmes working closely with government partners to introduce reform, and the need for a flexible approach to adapt to government timelines.

The underlying challenge relates to a wider tension between milestone-based contracting and the need for governance programmes to be flexible and adaptive. Where ownership by government partners is key, timelines can be unpredictable and lengthy, while opportunities for influence may open and close rapidly,

² <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>

requiring the ability to swiftly react. A flexible and responsive programme model is required that minimises costly contract revisions, which can often create a disincentive for programmes to adapt their plans to changing contexts. The optimal model for commissioning flexible, adaptive programmes that can effectively accompany government partners through reform processes is not yet fully clear.

A value for money assessment has been made at the programme level. Annex 9 discusses this in detail.

Table 1: Overview of BCURE programmes in 2016 and implementation contexts

Lead partner and project name	Focus countries	Programme evaluation case study country, and key features of the national EIPM context <i>Source: Stage 1 and Stage 2 programme evaluation reports</i>	Main activities	Targeted stakeholders	Progress against milestones in 2016
<p>African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)</p> <p><i>Strengthening Capacity to Use Research Evidence in Health Policy (SECURE Health)</i></p>	Kenya and Malawi	<p>Kenya: Presidential representative democratic republic. New Kenyan constitution in 2010 created a devolved system of government with two tiers: national and county-level administrations, with a separation of powers between the three arms of government – executive, legislature and judiciary – and introduced an upper house. Policy making happens at national framework level, with resources for implementation managed at the country level. Parliament oversees budget allocations for counties. County governance and implementation capacities are still being built. Multi-party system but tribal allegiances tend to shape voting and agenda setting, while political party agendas are expected to be followed by assembly members, politicians in leadership roles in government and county governors. In 2016, performance contracting and monitoring are perceived to be pushing forward a fledgling culture of results and evidence, and gradually enhancing efficiency in service delivery, although the general election in 2017 may affect emerging EIPM reforms.</p>	Working with ‘evidence champions’; convening high-level policy maker fora; training workshops for policy makers; internships; policy cafés for policy makers and researchers; producing guidelines for EIPM; establishing links between policy makers and researchers, including through a national health research priorities policy and framework.	High-level policy makers (e.g. cabinet secretaries, heads of departments); mid-level policy makers (technical staff in MoH departments, research staff, clerks, county health officers).	The programme met or exceeded the majority of milestones in both Malawi and Kenya, with some key exceptions – in particular around the development of the Kenya Research for Health Policy Framework and follow-up training and mentoring.
<p>Adam Smith International (ASI)</p> <p><i>African Cabinet Decision-Making Programme (ACD)</i></p>	Sierra Leone, Liberia and South Sudan (primary focus countries) plus 8–10 other African countries to disseminate results and facilitate learning	<p>Sierra Leone: Presidential representative democratic republic. The president exercises executive power and parliament legislative power. Multi-party system. Challenged by weak government capacity and lack of trust in government institutions. The cabinet system is functioning but there is limited development of the system as a legitimate mechanism for balancing competition for resources and coordinating across ministries. There is an acknowledged need for greater use of evidence to support implementation of decisions. In 2016, the state of emergency declared during the Ebola crisis remains in place, even though the region has been declared provisionally Ebola-free. A major post-Ebola recovery programme was launched in 2015 involving more than six key ministries of government. One impact of Ebola is the reprioritisation of the government of Sierra Leone’s development plan – the Agenda for Prosperity – towards health, education, water, energy, agriculture, social protection, private sector development and governance.</p>	Working with individual cabinet secretariats to review and revise cabinet procedures and practices to facilitate utilisation of research; setting up support networks across ministries; supporting the establishment/upgrade of standing committees; building up analytic capacity in cabinet secretariats; running training workshops for line ministry personnel; running policy development workshops for ministers. Also running high-level international workshops and producing case studies, training materials and an evidence-based policy toolkit.	Cabinet ministers (‘end users’ of policy research) and cabinet secretariats and senior officials in line ministries (‘intermediaries’ involved in submitting policy proposals).	The programme partially met its output milestones, with progress most pronounced in Sierra Leone. However, a number of key outputs have not yet been achieved.

Lead partner and project name	Focus countries	Programme evaluation case study country, and key features of the national EIPM context <i>Source: Stage 1 and Stage 2 programme evaluation reports</i>	Main activities	Targeted stakeholders	Progress against milestones in 2016
Harvard University <i>Towards a Culture of Evidence: Building Capacity for Evidence-Based Policy</i>	India (recently ended), Pakistan and Nepal	Pakistan: Federal parliamentary republic, with constitutional democratic elections. Executive and legislative power is shared between the executive, parliament and judiciary. The president is head of state and a popularly elected prime minister heads the government. Federal government is constitutionally intended to share sovereignty with provincial governments, but power is effectively centralised at the federal level. Pakistan has a history of alternating periods of electoral democracy and authoritarian military government, often with turbulent transitions between administrations. Voting is polarised between two political ‘clans’ that reflect ethnic, regional and religious lines. The country faces major challenges in terms of security and law enforcement, economic reform and infrastructure development. Pakistan has a large civil service, and there are national data systems and research; however, evidence use is limited in government.	Conducting a policy mapping process and assessment to develop diagnostics for identifying barriers to evidence use; implementing pilot projects that build partners’ technical capacity and demonstrate how evidence can be used to support policy decisions (these will involve competitive submissions); establishing a training platform for policy makers using online tools (6–8 modules planned); facilitating policy dialogues across policy networks; empowering ‘champions for evidence’.	Primarily policy decision makers (politicians, senior government officials, civil servants, military officers). Also targeting broader policy actors (practitioners and leaders from civil society, non-governmental organisations, the media, the private sector).	The majority of milestones have been met. In Pakistan, five pilot projects have been delivered, exceeding the milestones. Some delays may require a no-cost extension to be negotiated with DFID, in order to deliver activities by the end of 2016. As part of the UK government’s refocus of its relationship with India, the BCURE project in India came to an end. A sustainability plan for India was developed to reflect on short- to long-term programming implications.
INASP <i>VakaYiko Consortium</i>	Ghana, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Uganda	Zimbabwe: Presidential republic, executive and legislative power is centralised and exercised by government and assembly. The policy system is authoritarian and top-down. Any policy change is dependent on strong and legitimate political and other leaders and champions. Zimbabwean society is strongly polarised in favour either of the ruling party or of the political opposition. This polarisation also has a regional and ethnic foundation. However, a strongly centralised system means new priorities can be rapidly institutionalised on the basis of presidential-level decisions, for example the recent adoption of EIPM as a government-wide priority.	Tailored EIPM training courses for civil servants; strengthening organisational processes for EIPM, e.g. through mentoring; supporting a Research, Development and Evidence Framework in South Africa; strengthening local partners’ capacity to enable them to continue to support EIPM beyond the lifespan of BCURE (ZeipNET in Zimbabwe and GINKS in Ghana); testing and documenting approaches to building EIPM capacity through a global small grants programme.	Ghana: Civil Service Training Centre, Parliament. Zimbabwe: Civil servants in Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment and Parliament. South Africa: Department for Environmental Affairs.	The vast majority of milestones have been achieved, and the programme has implemented some additional activities over and above its milestones. The programme has also been extended into Uganda following an extension from DFID.

Lead partner and project name	Focus countries	Programme evaluation case study country, and key features of the national EIPM context <i>Source: Stage 1 and Stage 2 programme evaluation reports</i>	Main activities	Targeted stakeholders	Progress against milestones in 2016
ECORYS <i>BCURE Bangladesh</i>	Bangladesh	Bangladesh: Parliamentary representative democratic republic, executive power exercised by government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. Although it has a multi-party system, Bangladesh still suffers from confrontational, partisan politics, with each election's new parliament commonly overturning or curbing legislation passed by its predecessor. Patron–client relationships prevail in all tiers of government, although recent local elections suggest a shift towards trust and accountability as determinants for voting preference. Public sector reforms have resulted in ministries and government offices introducing, for example, Citizens' Charters, standard operating procedures and performance agreements, enhancing the potential for greater transparency, accountability and reliance on EIPM. Reliance on evidence in decision making in Bangladesh has increased in recent years, with a formal openness to listening to different views and presentation of evidence, and consultations on various policies. Draft policies are also put on ministry websites and comments are solicited. However, EIPM practices vary and the approaches are not always systematic.	Establishing an improved institutional framework in support of evidence-informed policy making in government; strengthening capacity for EIPM in Cabinet Division, pilot line ministries and other coordinating institutions for the effective use of EIPM; raising awareness of the benefits of EIPM across government.	Cabinet Division, with additional activities in six pilot line ministries: Phase 1, Commerce, Environment and Forests; Phase 2, Health and Family Welfare.	At this early stage, the programme is substantially on track against planned activities as per the workplans. Over the next year, the EIPM training course will be delivered to Cabinet Division staff, and the draft EIPM Guidelines updated based on pilot results at end of Year 1, to be signed off by Cabinet Division.
University of Johannesburg <i>UJ-BCURE</i>	South Africa and Malawi	South Africa: Relatively young constitutional democracy, with a three-tier system of government and an independent judiciary. Parliament has oversight over the executive; national, provincial and local levels of government all have legislative and executive authority in their own spheres. Policy making happens in different types of department: 'centre of government' departments develop policies to be implemented by other agencies; service delivery departments both develop policies and implement them. Strong ideological voices on all sides of the political spectrum mean political priorities exert a strong influence on decision making.	Establishing an Africa Evidence Network (AEN); delivering workshops on EIPM to senior decision makers and technical government staff; mentoring programme; secondments.	Civil servants: technical and decision making staff.	The programme is on track against the milestones.

3. Evaluation design and methodology

The evaluation design and methodology is summarised below. Further details are provided in Annex 3, which also includes the evaluation approach to ethics and assessing value for money, and information about intended users.

3.1. Introduction

A realist approach was selected for the three-year BCURE impact evaluation because DFID was interested in understanding not just *whether* BCURE worked but also *how and why* capacity building can contribute to increased use of evidence in policy making in the very different contexts in which the programme is operating. Realist evaluation works through opening up the ‘black box’ between interventions and outcomes, through developing and testing *programme theory* (an explanation of how, why and in what contexts interventions lead to particular outcomes). Programme theory consists of linked sets of hypotheses about the *mechanisms* that cause an intervention to work or not work in particular *contexts*, to lead to specific *outcomes*. These hypotheses are known as ‘context–mechanism–outcome’ or CMO configurations (see Box 1) – the core analytical units of realist evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Wong et al., 2013).

At Stage 1, we decided to incorporate *features of the intervention* as an additional element to our CMO configurations, in order to separate out features that are inherent in or under the control of the programme (such as training design or length) from contextual factors that are not (such as professional incentives to participate in training) when considering what might ‘spark’ a particular mechanism. This gives us the formulation C+I+M=O (CIMOs), used throughout this report.³

Box 1: Context, mechanism and outcome

Mechanisms are the causal forces, powers, processes or interactions that generate change within an intervention – including the choices, reasoning and decisions people make as a result of the resources the programme provides. An intervention such as a training course is not a mechanism. The mechanism is the ‘thing’ that explains *why* training changes behaviour (or does not) in a particular setting.

Mechanisms are triggered only in certain **contexts**. Contextual factors may include *individual* characteristics that affect how people respond to opportunities (e.g. gender, ethnicity, education); *interpersonal* factors that affect trust and buy-in (relationships between stakeholders and programme implementers); *institutional* factors (the rules, norms and culture of the organisation in which the intervention is implemented); and *infrastructural* factors – the wider social, economic, political and cultural setting of the programme (Pawson & Tilley, 2004).

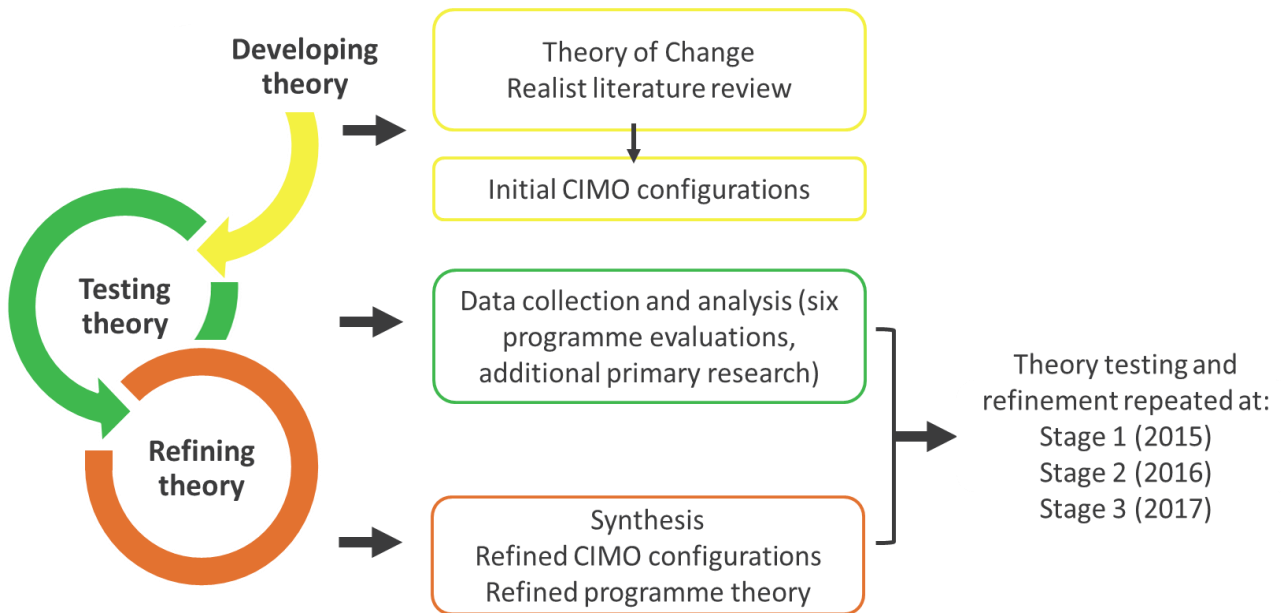
Outcomes refer to intended and unintended short-, medium- and long-term changes resulting from an intervention.

A **CMO configuration** is a theory or hypothesis about how a particular mechanism works in a specific context to lead to an outcome. They can usually be read as sentences – for example, ‘Where training content is directly relevant to a person’s day job (C), providing information about how evidence can improve policy making can spark an “eye-opener” in which trainees recognise how evidence can add value (M), leading to increased use of evidence in their day-to-day work (O)’.

(Source: Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Westhorp, 2014; Punton et al., 2016)

Realist evaluation encompasses three broad stages: developing theory, testing theory and refining theory. These are iterative rather than linear; theory is developed, tested, refined and tested again as knowledge accumulates. Figure 1 provides an overview of the evaluation design.

³ At Stage 1 and during Stage 2 data collection, we phrased these components in a slightly different order: I+C+M+O. We have amended this for conceptual reasons: without the right contextual factors, the intervention will not spark the mechanism (even if ‘well designed’), so we decided to put context first.

Figure 1. BCURE evaluation design

The evaluation began by designing a Common Theory of Change (CToC). This was later developed into a realist programme theory, and used to develop initial CIMO configurations to test during data collection. Section 3.2 discusses the CToC, programme theory and CIMOs.

The CToC was used to define the evaluation questions, outlined in Section 3.3. It also shaped the design of the main evaluation components:⁴

1. Six programme evaluations of BCURE-funded projects, incorporating primary data collection within one country (the 'country case study'), and analysis of monitoring and implementation documents from all country contexts (see Section 3.4).
2. A realist literature review, synthesising published papers and grey literature related to capacity building for EIPM (Section 3.5).
3. An impact case study, consisting of additional primary research on a similar intervention to BCURE that had been running for a longer period and therefore closer to seeing 'impact', in order to provide evidence on how capacity building for EIPM contributes to improvements in policy quality (the ultimate goal of the BCURE programme) (Section 3.6).
4. A synthesis of findings from the above components, investigating how and why capacity building for evidence use works or does not work in different contexts (Section 3.7).

Data collection and synthesis is repeated each year for three years to enable the evaluation to track programme results over time, and iteratively test and refine our theories about how and why particular outcomes have occurred in different contexts.

⁴ During the initial stages of the evaluation an additional component was proposed: a series of 'non-BCURE case studies', examining other interventions that were either comparable with or complementary to the BCURE projects, in order to help strengthen the evidence base around how different capacity building interventions affect different people in different settings. However, there were a number of challenges in identifying and conducting meaningful non-BCURE case studies. Interventions selected as case study subjects needed to have relatively similar aims and approaches to BCURE in order to help test our theory, and the BCURE team also required sufficient access to stakeholders and to outcome data in order to draw meaningful conclusions about what happened and why. A pilot case study was conducted in 2015, and it was decided that the value added was insufficient to justify further investment in additional cases. In 2016, the evaluation steering committee agreed that in Stage 2 the resources would be reallocated to the impact case study.

3.2. Developing and refining theory

The BCURE evaluation began by articulating an overarching CToC for the programme.⁵ The first iteration of the CToC drew on the evaluation team's existing knowledge – and professional hunches – about the nature of capacity building, and how capacity building can contribute to evidence use in policy making. The CToC followed a logic model approach that helped bring the BCURE programmes into a single framework. It describes a set of propositions about building capacity for EIPM that sketch out the short- to long-term process of change that the BCURE programmes are seeking to influence. Annex 5 presents the full Stage 1 CToC and diagram. In summary our Stage 1 CToC was as follows:

Box 2: BCURE Common Theory of Change

Developing the capacity of decision makers to use research evidence (by building knowledge, skills, commitment, relationships and systems at four levels: individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional) will allow them to access, appraise and apply good-quality evidence more effectively when forming policy. This will improve the quality of policies, ultimately benefiting more poor people.

The four levels of capacity change outlined in Box 2 provide a central framework for the evaluation. They convey the concept of capacity development as multidimensional, and capacity as a function of different factors and processes working together and reinforcing each other at:⁶

1. *Individual level:* individual behaviour (decisions and actions) in relation to EIPM, and the skills, knowledge, motivation, attitudes, commitment, values and personal incentives that affect this.
2. *Interpersonal/network level:* the relationships between individuals and groups that affect evidence interpretation and use, including formal and informal communities (or networks) of individuals or organisations.
3. *Organisational/government level:* the systems, policies and procedures, practices, culture or norms within a governmental organisation that exist above the level of individual actors, and which incentivise, support (or inhibit) evidence access, appraisal and application in decision making. This includes 'system-level' factors within government that affect EIPM, such as national or sub-national laws, policies, regulations, governance systems and 'institutional rules of the game'. Our definition of 'government' includes government administration and parliamentary scrutiny functions (including elected opposition politicians).
4. *Institutional level:* the broader enabling environment for evidence use *outside* of government, including the role of external actors such as international donors, civil society and the media, and the influence of external factors such as crises, global events and socioeconomic change, as well as broader societal factors that influence EIPM, such as culture, norms, collective beliefs, attitudes and values. This includes the institutional role of the BCURE partners themselves within their national contexts.

Our CToC states that multidimensional change across these four domains will contribute to change in the quality of policy development processes. The BCURE literature review highlights an inherent tension between approaching EIPM as a complex system that is infused with power and politics (which is difficult to reconcile with 'rational' concepts such as 'policy quality'), and the basic premise of the BCURE programme that better and more routine use of evidence leads to better quality policy development. This suggested the value of adopting an iterative approach to the measurement of 'policy quality' and engaging critically with this concept

⁵ The recent RAMESES II reporting standards for realist evaluations (Wong et al., 2016) require a description of the programme theory and its revisions. This is discussed in this section, while Annex 10 summarises the realist reporting standards.

⁶ There are many definitions used in the literature to describe levels of capacity change. We have adapted DFID's definitions from the 2010 'How to Note on Capacity Building in Research' (DFID, 2010). This document uses 'institutional' to denote 'changes in the rules of the game'. Other readers may interpret 'institutional' to mean 'systemic' or 'environmental' change. We have opted to consider the government system as falling within a broadly conceived 'organisational change' category because organisations within the government system are bound by common, cross-cutting rules, incentives and procedures. This means that 'institutional' change then encompasses all non-governmental influences within the wider environment. However, we recognise that the boundaries between the levels of change are fuzzy and dynamic, and we consider the implications of these dynamics in our analysis.

over the course of the evaluation. We have drawn on Newman et al.'s (2012) definition of policy quality, along with insights from the theoretical literature on EIPM discussed in the literature review (e.g. Nutley et al., 2002; Sutcliffe & Court, 2005; Jones, 2009; Broadbent, 2012; du Toit, 2012) to develop the working definition in Box 3. We reflect in the conclusions on how the Stage 2 findings affect the basic premise of BCURE.

Box 3: Working definition of 'policy quality'

A policy development process can be considered to be 'good quality' in relation to its use of evidence if:

1. Multiple types of evidence were considered in the process – including but not limited to research evidence (e.g. also including public opinion, process and practice knowledge, critical and reflective knowledge).
2. The quality of evidence was seriously considered (in a way that took into account standards of evidence, while also accepting the limitations of evidence hierarchies).
3. The process of decision making involved engagement with evidence (accessing it, appraising it, discussing it)...
 - ... at multiple points...
 - ... with multiple stakeholders with different viewpoints and perspectives...
 - ... in a way that enabled real debate and discussion on the issues raised by evidence...
 - ... and where evidence had a demonstrable influence on the decisions made (thinking beyond 'instrumental' influence to also consider less direct pathways of influence, for example on how people conceptualise issues).

The CToC was used to shape the research questions for the BCURE literature review, from which initial CIMO configurations were developed. The literature review (discussed in Section 3.5) identified theories in the wider literature about how capacity building can contribute to EIPM. These were used to develop our first iteration of CIMO configurations – hypotheses about how and why BCURE interventions might lead to different outcomes in the CToC, and how these outcomes might link to, catalyse and reinforce one another. Stage 1 of the evaluation began to test and refine these CIMOs (presented in Annex 4). The refined theories were then tested and further refined during Stage 2, and are presented in Section 4.

At Stage 2, we have developed our CToC into an explicitly realist programme theory. A realist programme theory explains '(some of) how and why, in the 'real world', a programme 'works', for whom, to what extent and in which contexts' (Wong et al., 2016). A realist programme theory is a variation on a ToC that explicitly spells out the causal links between outcomes as CIMO configurations. The 'assumptions' that feature in a ToC are embedded as *theories to be tested* in the CIMOs as contextual factors and/or conditions necessary for mechanisms to fire. Some ToC approaches also include 'risks to assumptions' – that is, factors that will prevent the assumptions from holding true. Again, realist programme theory integrates this into the CIMO testing, by explaining what might have gone wrong if outcomes have not happened or have been negative. At this revision point we also introduced the realist concept of 'resources' that interventions bring to the context. Different actors respond to the resources, opportunities and constraints provided by the programme in different ways, giving rise to the 'mechanisms' in realist evaluation (Westhorp, 2014). Adding 'resources' further unpacks the causal explanation hypothesised by the CIMOs, allowing them to be tested with greater precision and focus.

Thinking about resources helps bring greater precision to the testing of CIMOs by unpacking generic terms such as 'training' and 'mentoring', which mask very different approaches. Through seemingly different interventions, all the BCURE programmes provide seven main types of 'resources'. Box 4 provides an overview of the main resources provided by BCURE.

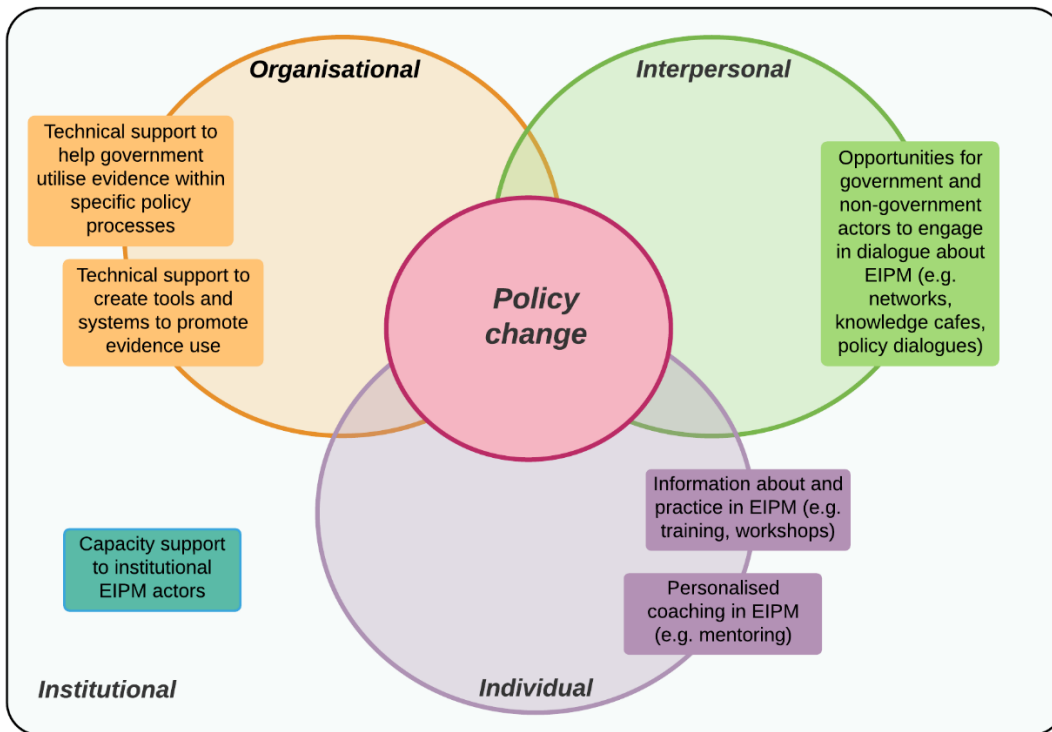
Box 4: Resources provided by BCURE

1. **Information:** this includes both technical information about how to access, appraise and apply evidence, and normative information about the role evidence should play in policy making. Information is often provided within training courses, alongside ...
2. **Opportunities to practise skills** – in particular technical skills through practical exercises within training courses. In some cases, interventions provide opportunities for participants to ‘learn by doing’ by applying evidence appraisal or policy development skills within specific policy making processes.
3. **Coaching:** personalised, tailored, ongoing and hands-on support to an individual or a group from either an individual ‘mentor’ or an organisation, in order to help build technical EIPM skills, soft skills that help mentees use evidence more effectively in their work, or skills to make decisions using evidence within ‘good practice’ policy making processes.
4. **Technical support:** provision of advice, consultancy, expertise or an ‘extra pair of hands’ to help produce a specific evidence-informed process or product, or to help design/facilitate tools or systems to promote EIPM. There is a somewhat blurry line between coaching and technical support, but one defining feature of coaching is its interpersonal element: it involves a personal relationship between the coach and the recipient or ‘mentee’.
5. **Spaces for dialogue and collaboration:** either formal or informal ‘spaces’ (in the form of events, courses, online platforms etc.) that bring different actors together to discuss and debate issues relating to EIPM. This can lead to further resources being provided as a result of collaborations developing out of these interactions, such as access to good-quality evidence, and further information provision and/or technical support from fellow participants.
6. **Access both to evidence and to people who can support EIPM.** This resource is usually embedded in activities that provide resources 1-6. For example technical support and spaces for dialogue often provide access to experts or researchers who can help provide relevant evidence to inform policy decisions, and training courses that primarily provide information and opportunities to practice skills may also signpost trainees towards where to find good quality evidence as well as providing access to experts in the form of speakers or facilitators.
7. Some BCURE partners also provide **support to national partners** (e.g. as part of the implementing consortium) to build their organisational capacity to deliver resources 1–6.

The BCURE interventions introduce resources through different ‘entry points’ at different levels. They may initially target *individuals* with information and opportunities to practise skills, provide spaces for dialogue between different *groups* of stakeholders, deliver technical support to *organisational* systems and processes and/or develop the capacity of *institutional* actors to promote EIPM (summarised in Figure 2).

Interventions at one level begin to influence outcomes in other domains of change, which then start to combine and reinforce each other.⁷ The visual representation of the programme theory was revised to depict the four domains of change as intersecting. The Stage 2 programme theory (Section 6) demonstrates our emerging theories about how these domains interact, and how outcomes at one level can contribute to outcomes at other levels.

⁷ For example, VakaYiko began work in Zimbabwe by developing and delivering an EIPM training course to selected ministries and parliament (individual level), alongside various networking events that brought together government stakeholders with external actors (interpersonal level). This led to the development of a mentoring scheme, which involves technical support to tools and systems within the targeted organisations to promote evidence use, by working with selected mentees who attended the EIPM training (organisational level). Conversely, the ACD programme in Sierra Leone began at organisational level, by developing tools and systems to promote better policy making with evidence use at its heart. As this process developed, training and networking activities were designed to support individuals to use the new tools effectively. Section 4 discusses the consequences of different entry points further.

Figure 2. Different entry points of the BCURE interventions

Based on evidence from Stage 1 data collection, the refined Stage 1 programme theory brought together thinking about resources, entry points and how outcomes combine to lead to capacity change at the four levels. The refined Stage 1 programme theory informed the Stage 2 evaluation questions and CIMOs. These were further tested and refined at Stage 2, as detailed in Sections 4 and 5. Section 6 presents the revised Stage 2 programme theory. Annex 4 provides specific details about how the Stage 1 CIMOs were refined at Stage 2.

Stage 1 programme theory (tested at Stage 2)

When the programme 'entry point' is interventions at individual level...

- Providing civil servants and senior government decision makers with information about the importance of evidence in decision making, alongside information about, and/or opportunities to practise accessing, appraising and applying, evidence in policy making processes, can *crystallise* existing knowledge or awareness of the concept of EIPM, leading to increased enthusiasm for it. When participants see that new knowledge and skills are immediately applicable to their work, these resources can spark *eye openers*, leading to behaviour change in the way they use evidence in their day-to-day work. When participants are actively involved in a policy process, these resources can spark *game changers*, in which behaviour change influences the way evidence is used within these policy processes. Following up training interventions with coaching can help embed new skills and enable knowledge to translate into behaviour change.
- Providing coaching in the form of one-to-one mentoring can lead to *peer learning* as mentors and mentees learn together through applying different skills, technical knowledge and experience 'on the job' – resulting in mentees using evidence more or more effectively in their work.

When individuals begin using evidence more in their day-to-day work, this can catalyse organisational change through...

- Enabling people who lack overt decision making power but who have opportunities to model EIPM behaviours in their job (when they are committed to or passionate about EIPM and have good interpersonal skills) to act as *junior champions*, demonstrating the value that EIPM can bring to build organisational buy-in 'from below.'

- Developing a *'critical mass'* of people whose behaviour change can diffuse throughout the organisation (when a sufficient number have been reached, at different levels of seniority), increasing organisational commitment and buy-in to the concept of EIPM.

When the 'entry point' is interpersonal level...

- Providing networking opportunities for government and non-government actors (researchers, civil society, the media, the general public) to engage in dialogue about issues relating to EIPM promotes awareness of the importance of using evidence to inform decisions, and enables participants to *learn from each other* about different policy issues, in an evidence-informed way. Bringing people together also provides participants with access to researchers, experts and government actors, enabling *new relationships* to develop, potentially translating into new collaborations that facilitate EIPM and/or provide civil servants with better access to good-quality evidence.

When the 'entry point' is organisational level...

- Providing technical support to assist government ministries, parliaments and cabinets to use evidence within specific policy processes builds organisational capacity to use evidence through *'learning by doing'*, resulting in new co-produced policy products or processes that are informed by evidence. Supporting senior stakeholders to promote EIPM within their organisations (who have seniority, commitment to the issue and good interpersonal skills) also enables them to act as *transformational leaders*, who can push change 'from above' to support EIPM and initiate reforms, resulting in high-level buy-in for EIPM and potentially new organisational tools and systems to promote it.
- Where there are structural capacity gaps, providing technical support to help establish structures for policy making with evidence use at their heart can create a *focal point* for EIPM. New tools and systems to promote evidence use can also *facilitate* staff members to use evidence within their jobs better or more easily, and/or provide positive or negative incentives to individuals, which *reinforce* the use of evidence within policy processes.
- New evidence-informed policies and products, and success stories of evidence use having 'good results', can have a *demonstration effect* – showcasing the positive results evidence can bring to policy processes. This can lead to increased organisational commitment and buy-in to (and potentially increased organisational kudos and resources for tools or systems that promote) EIPM.

Capacity changes at all levels (individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional) then create the conditions for better and more routine use of evidence, which positively influences the quality of policy development processes.

3.3. Evaluation questions

The BCURE evaluation addresses two overarching evaluation questions (EQs). These are based on the questions posed in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1), revised in the inception phase following discussions with DFID.

1. How effective are the BCURE projects in achieving their stated outcome of increasing the use of evidence in public sector decision making, and influencing longer-term changes in policy quality?
2. How and why does capacity building for evidence use work and not work, for whom, to what extent, in what respects and in what circumstances?

The Stage 1 evaluation framework identified 10 evaluation questions underlying the two overarching EQs, which were designed to test different parts of the CToC. This proved to be unwieldy, and the framework was streamlined for Stage 2. It was decided to focus on five questions, built around the four domains of capacity change (individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional) within our programme theory, with a fifth question relating to policy quality. Our Stage 1 CIMOs were then aligned with the EQs, based on which domain of capacity they helped explain.

- EQ 1. How and why did BCURE contribute to individual-level change?

- EQ 2. How and why did BCURE contribute to interpersonal-level change?
- EQ 3. How and why did BCURE contribute to organisational-level change?
- EQ 4. How and why did BCURE contribute to institutional/system-level change?
- EQ 5. How and why did BCURE (and similar EIPM capacity building interventions) contribute to changes in policy quality?

Annex 3 presents the full evaluation framework for Stage 2.

3.4. Programme evaluations

The Stage 2 programme evaluations performed two functions:

- Informing internal management reports for each project, which verified outcomes identified by the BCURE programme monitoring data (and identified additional outcomes), captured key lessons and recommendations including around sustainability and generated an assessment on programme effectiveness and contribution to inform decision making.
- Collecting data on how and why different BCURE activities have contributed to different patterns of outcomes. Outcomes include changes in individuals' awareness of skills and knowledge about EIPM; behaviour changes in the use of evidence; changes in relationships to promote EIPM; and changes in senior-level buy-in and organisational systems to support EIPM. This data was fed into the synthesis, in order to identify, test and refine theories about how and why BCURE interventions lead to, or do not lead to, change.

Each programme evaluation consists of an independent review of secondary monitoring data and implementation/strategy documents produced by the project team; and a country case study, involving primary data collection by the evaluation team within one of the countries targeted by the project.

Country case studies: The country case studies were selected using case replication logic (Yin, 2003), based on a high-level mapping of the conduciveness of national environments for EIPM. The selected country case studies represent a range of contexts for EIPM, detailed in Section 2 above (with the full case selection process explained in Annex 3). Pragmatic considerations of security and access also informed the final selection. At Stage 2, the country case study in India was replaced with Pakistan because the BCURE project in India came to an end as a result of the UK government's refocus of its relationship with India.

Selection of respondents: In a realist evaluation, decisions about sampling are driven by a consideration of who the researchers need to talk to in order to test their theory. Our Stage 2 sampling approach was therefore built around the programme theory and the CIMOs generated at Stage 2. Respondents were identified purposively according to their relationship to the BCURE programmes, their role in the government system, their ability to comment on our Stage 1 CIMOs and their relationships to each other (i.e. where possible samples included trainees and their line managers or colleagues, or mentees and their mentors, in order to triangulate insights). Each country case study consulted 25–30 stakeholders, including BCURE programme staff and implementing partners, participants in BCURE interventions, high-level stakeholders with an insight into how the government system operates and stakeholders from civil society and other external vantage points. In total, 220 respondents were consulted for the Stage 2 evaluation across the six programmes.

Data collection sources and methods: The programme evaluations drew on exploratory workshops with BCURE implementing partner staff, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and programme monitoring data and implementation documents produced by the BCURE partners. It was hoped the evaluation would also have access to relevant government documentation, such as policy documents, but for confidentiality reasons these were not possible to access.

Data analysis methods: Primary data from workshops and interviews was written up using a template structured according to the EQs. The programme evaluation leads then extracted evidence into a Microsoft Excel CIMO analysis spreadsheet. Secondary documents were reviewed and summary notes compiled in

Word, with evidence relating to *outcomes generated by the programme* extracted into a second Microsoft Excel document review spreadsheet. In both spreadsheets, all data was coded according to which EQ the data related to. This provided a systematic record of outcome evidence from across all available sources.

The programme evaluation lead then synthesised data from primary and secondary sources to draw conclusions on:

- Any evolution in the contextual challenges facing the programme in the case study country context.
- Progress against programme milestones since 2015, including any adaptations to plans.
- Summary of evidence on the outcomes achieved against each of the EQs.
- Insights into BCURE's contribution to the outcomes, including preliminary analysis on how and why the outcomes were achieved. However, a full realist analysis was not conducted at programme level; instead, the data was fed into the overall synthesis.

To aid the analysis and to ensure consistency in judgements across the programme evaluations, the programme evaluation leads applied rubrics to assess the extent of change, the strength of evidence underpinning the assessment of change and a qualitative judgement on the programme's contribution to change in relation to each EQ. Annex 3 details these rubrics.

3.5. Literature review

A realist literature review (Punton et al., 2016) was conducted during the early stages of the evaluation, in 2014–2015.⁸ The findings informed the CToC and the development of the first iteration of CIMOs tested in Stage 1. Insights from the literature review are drawn out in Section 4. However, the literature proved less useful at Stage 2 than at Stage 1, because our theories have evolved beyond the boundaries of the evidence considered during the early stages of the evaluation. The literature review will be updated in 2017, prior to the Stage 3 evaluations, in order to make it possible to further test and refine the programme theory and incorporate evidence missed or not yet available in 2015.

3.6. Impact case study

The impact case study aims to generate evidence on how capacity building for EIPM can lead to improvements in the quality of policy processes, the hoped-for ultimate impact of the BCURE programmes. It was recognised that it may be difficult to demonstrate change in policy quality as a result of specific BCURE projects, within the three-year life of the project and within the resources available for the evaluation. The impact case was therefore designed to complement the BCURE programme evaluations through examining a non-BCURE capacity building intervention that had been operating for a longer period of time and that offered the potential to investigate how capacity building had contributed to changes in policy quality.

An evaluability assessment during the inception phase selected South Africa as the case study country, and identified the National Evaluation System (NES) as a suitable subject. The NES was established in 2011 and is managed by the Department for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). Tracking specific evaluation processes over time allows us to investigate how DPME's capacity support is promoting change in the longer term, and how the NES is contributing to the quality of policy processes through supporting better-quality evaluation.

The data collection and analysis methods were the same as those used for the programme evaluations. Relevant documentation was reviewed and semi-structured interviews were conducted with DPME staff members, intervention participants, high-level stakeholders, civil society or other external stakeholders and service providers. In total 39 interviews were conducted in Stage 1 and 2, involving 32 unique interviewees.⁹

⁸ Available from <http://www.itad.com/knowledge-products/bcure-literature-review/>

⁹ Data was collected at Stage 1 but there was insufficient evidence to write up a case study until Stage 2.

3.7. Synthesis approach

The synthesis brings together the findings from the programme evaluations, literature review and impact case study in order to draw generalisable conclusions about how and why different BCURE interventions have contributed to different patterns of outcomes in different contexts. The purpose of the synthesis at Stage 2 is to produce an evidence-based set of refined CIMOs and a refined programme theory. The synthesis does not focus on *performance judgements* of the individual BCURE programmes; these are contained within the BCURE programme evaluations and are confidential between DFID and the programme implementation teams.

A CIMO database was developed to combine the coded CIMO data from the 220 semi-structured interviews conducted for the programme evaluations and the impact case.¹⁰ This data was cleaned, and then a series of systematic analytical steps was followed to identify patterns in the data, and use these to test and refine our Stage 1 CIMOs. This process began in an initial evaluation team synthesis workshop in which initial patterns were identified and discussed, which was followed by the comprehensive analysis of the dataset by two core team members. We drew on elements of meta-ethnography to help provide a transparent structure for this process.¹¹ The full synthesis method can be found in Annex 3.

At the end of the synthesis process, we had a revised set of CIMO configurations representing our informed theories at the end of Stage 2 about how BCURE interventions are contributing to change. These provided new insights into how elements of our programme theory lead to and reinforce other elements, and were used to refine our programme theory by nuancing expected outcomes and adjusting the anticipated links between them. The CIMOs and programme theory will be revisited, tested and refined for a final time at Stage 3 of the evaluation.

Strength of evidence behind CIMOs: The evidence in this report derives largely from the qualitative interviews conducted as part of the programme evaluations.

- **Outcome** data derived from interviews is triangulated where possible with monitoring data collected by the programmes. However, the programmes in many cases not systematically monitored the outcomes (particularly at interpersonal, organisational and institutional level, where outcomes are more intangible and emergent), therefore we have necessarily relied more strongly on interviews. Findings from interviews have been triangulated *within* interviews, by asking for examples and further detail from the respondent, and *between* different interview respondents (different categories of respondent, different individuals within the same department, trainees and their line managers). Evidence for an outcome is deemed stronger if it is triangulated across a larger number of sources and interview respondents
- Information on **contexts** and **mechanisms** is derived largely from interview data, given the nature of this type of information and the absence of evidence on these factors in monitoring and other documentary evidence.

Throughout the synthesis narrative, we discuss the prevalence of perspectives underpinning the CIMOs. ‘Prevalence’ refers to the number of interviews in which respondents expressed a particular theory (or part of a theory) about how and why change happened or is expected to happen, which was developed at synthesis stage into a coherent CIMO.

This approach does not provide an exact ‘count’ of the number of times particular CIMOs ‘happened’. Our programme theory is broad, and it was not possible to explore all elements of it with all interviewees – discussed in Section 3.8 below. Even if a particular element of the theory was discussed with a respondent, they may have observed something (an outcome, mechanism, feature of context, etc.) but did not mention it for any number of reasons – for example they did not think of it, did not understand the question, thought something else was more interesting or did not feel comfortable discussing it. The prevalence data therefore simply reports how often outcome x was mentioned in the same interview as context, intervention factor or

¹⁰ Note that not all interviews were included in the CIMO database, as some did not provide insights into how and why outcomes came about (or failed to).

¹¹ Meta-ethnography is an interpretive synthesis method, involving the transfer and translation of ideas, concepts and meanings across different sources (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

mechanism y , which is a broad indicator of the frequency of co-occurrence and provides a way of being systematic about the patterns in the data.

The process of developing CIMOs is a creative and interpretative one. In some cases, the analysis suggested certain factors might be important to enable particular mechanisms even though respondents did not explicitly correlate them with particular outcomes – for example certain features of the national context. These have been flagged in the text and in our revised CIMO configurations as areas where there is limited evidence to date but that it may be important to explore at Stage 3.

3.8. Limitations to the synthesis

There are some key challenges and limitations to the synthesis, in terms of timing, the dataset and methodological challenges.

- **Partial dataset:** primary data comes only from the selected case study countries, not from all programme sites. It is, therefore, limited in what it can say about how the BCURE programmes work in all their settings.
- **Ensuring consistency of data collection and analysis across a diverse team:** six different programme evaluation leads collected data, with the support of six national consultants. In addition, several new team members joined at Stage 2. There was limited time and budget to train the team comprehensively on the principles of conducting realist interviews, or on coding CIMO data. We attempted to mitigate this through a two-day team workshop prior to data collection, involving a full introduction to the programme theory and basic training on realist interviewing and analysis. Programme leads then provided training in-country to national evaluators prior to data collection. In addition, the CIMO dataset was cleaned at synthesis stage, and additional data incorporated that may have been missed during the initial coding process. Further training will be provided at Stage 3 to continue building the capacity of the team.
- **Granularity of data:** it has been challenging to reach an appropriate level of abstraction when analysing CIMO data. It is easy to over-partition these configurations down to very micro sets of factors. During the analysis we have attempted to reach a useful level of generalisability in the data analysis that can facilitate the application of the findings in planning and implementation.
- **Time demand for synthesis:** a key challenge arises from the time and resource investment required for achieving a good-quality qualitative synthesis of the enablers/barriers and CIMO data. This affects all stages, from requiring more time for interviews and data processing as well as reporting. We have mitigated this by undertaking as rigorous a process as resources allow for Stage 2 and being pragmatic.

As well as the general limitations above, the Stage 2 evaluation process had some specific data limitations which have influenced what has been possible in the synthesis.

- **Limited access to monitoring and other documentary sources in order to triangulate interview data:** many of the outcomes relating to changes in behaviour, relationships and organisational norms are intangible and emergent, and the BCURE programmes have not systematically monitored them. Therefore, we have necessarily relied more strongly on interviews (see earlier point relating to strength of evidence). With regard to changes in policy decisions, it has proved difficult to obtain documentary evidence from government partners, for reasons related to confidentiality and access limitations. In addition, in most cases BCURE is not aiming to influence specific policies and so it is not possible to know in advance which documents might be useful to support claims made in interviews about organisational or policy change. We have mitigated this through the triangulation approaches described above and in Annex 3.4.
- **Prioritising outcomes and theories to assess within the limited time available for interviews:** the evaluation examined a wide range of outcomes at individual, interpersonal, organisational, institutional and policy level; and a wide range of theories about how and why BCURE was thought to contribute to these outcomes. It was necessary to prioritise which outcomes and elements of the programme theory to test with different stakeholders. This was not always easy, particularly when respondents were

involved in a range of different interventions, theorised to work in different ways. We attempted to mitigate this limitation by designing unique interview guides for each respondent that aimed to test the most relevant theories for each respondent, and using later interviews to plug gaps in earlier ones. However, it proved difficult to ensure such a wide range of theories were systematically examined and insights fully triangulated. We plan to conduct a prioritisation exercise with DFID in advance of Stage 3 to select the most important CIMOs, in order to address this limitation.

- **Positive (confirmation) bias of respondents:** there is a very real possibility of confirmation bias in the primary data arising from the power dynamics of interviewing in developing country government settings. Evaluators can be seen as representing the international funder, and positive messages about programme outcomes may be given in an attempt to continue funding for the programme. We have mitigated this in three ways: in the interview process, by approaching the same topic from different angles with various interviewees and by asking for concrete examples to corroborate any claims of change; in the sample, by interviewing a range of participants including stakeholders external to the project, and cross-checking claims of change made by civil servants with their managers and peers; and in the analysis, by triangulating between data sources (i.e. different interview respondents, and where possible, secondary data) within the same case. However, the challenge of accessing documentary sources of evidence, and the challenge of investigating a wide range of theories and outcomes across a relatively small number of interviews, have both limited how far it has been possible to mitigate this limitation.

The data limitations described above have affected what was possible in the Stage 2 synthesis. Primarily, while the Stage 2 analysis has built on Stage 1 to *identify and further develop* a wide range of theories about how BCURE appears to be contributing to change at different levels, it has been unable to confidently *verify* these theories and conclude that change happened in the ways theorised rather than in some other way. The Stage 3 evaluation process will be designed to robustly test a narrower range of outcomes, and enable theories to be systematically tested against alternative explanations of change. This is discussed in Section 5.5.

4. What is the evidence on how, why, in what circumstances, and for whom the BCURE interventions lead to change?

4.1. Introduction

This section discusses the evidence from Stage 2 on how, why, in what circumstances and for whom the BCURE interventions lead to change. The evidence is structured in line with the ‘levels of change’ in our programme theory and EQs: individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional.

Each sub-section begins with an explanation of the ‘outcome patterns’ observed within the BCURE programmes, and the features of the macro context within BCURE implementation countries that affects these outcomes. The outcome patterns convey the extent to which BCURE has achieved particular outcomes so far, and progress towards more substantial outcomes anticipated in Stage 3.

We then examine the evidence on how and why these patterns might exist, by articulating *theories* that help explain how different types of BCURE activities have contributed to the outcome patterns. These theories are expressed in the form of context–intervention–mechanism–outcome configurations (CIMOs), as described in Section 3.2. The evidence is then discussed for each CIMO, in relation to:

- What the interventions looked like (which contributed to particular patterns of outcomes).
- What the main outcome patterns were (as identified through the programme evaluations and impact case).
- What mechanisms contributed to these outcome patterns.
- The circumstances (context and intervention factors) that enabled the mechanisms to operate (or stopped them operating).

The CIMOs represent the next generation of our theory. Annex 4 provides a detailed description of how each Stage 1 CIMO was refined, nuanced or abandoned at Stage 2.

CIMO configurations are presented in tables at the top of each section. Each factor is accompanied by a number in square brackets, which indicates the number of interview respondents who associated this issue with the outcome. Red text indicates a contextual factor that emerged as important from the broader analysis of national case study contexts, but that respondents did not directly associate with the outcome.

Findings are reported with clear references to the data sources. In order to be clear about the source of the data behind findings, numbers in brackets in the text indicate the source interview, coded by country case study, as follows: Harvard (Pakistan): 1; VakaYiko (Zimbabwe): 2; UJ-BCURE (South Africa): 3; SECURE (Kenya): 4; ASI (Sierra Leone): 5; ECORYS (Bangladesh): 6; Impact Case (South Africa): 7. Where there are two or more source interviews to support a point, these are footnoted.

The Stage 2 analysis has built on Stage 1 to identify and further develop a wide range of theories about how BCURE appears to be contributing to change at different levels, but it does not verify these theories. The explanations of change discussed below are those espoused by a range of stakeholders, with insights triangulated across sources and countries. However, the Stage 2 evaluation is formative rather than summative, aiming to identify what the main emerging outcomes of BCURE are, and develop more detailed hypotheses about how these are unfolding. The data limitations discussed in Section 3.8 have affected how far it has been possible to systematically test the CIMOs, to assess whether change actually happened in the ways hypothesised rather than in some other way. The Stage 3 evaluation process will be designed to robustly verify a narrower range of outcomes, and enable priority CIMOs to be systematically tested against alternative explanations of change. This is discussed in Section 5.5.

4.2. Individual change

Overview

Individual-level capacity change includes individuals' development and application of skills and knowledge relating to EIPM, as well as improvements in motivation, attitudes, commitment, values and personal incentives that affect individual behaviour. Skills for EIPM, as understood in the BCURE programmes, include the ability to search for and appraise evidence, as well as the ability to weigh evidence with other factors and use it to inform decision making.

At Stage 2, there is evidence of moderate to established change at individual level across five of the six BCURE programmes.¹² Participants and senior managers reported that trainees, mentees and workshop participants had improved their skills in accessing, appraising and applying evidence in policy processes. Interview data from Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Sierra Leone suggests individuals have changed their ways of working after attending training, and in some cases this has filtered up into perceived improvements in evidence products, and adaptation of tools to train others. Annex 7 contains detailed assessments of each programme's contribution to individual-level change.

The Stage 2 evidence supports three main theories (CIMOs) about how and why BCURE contributes to individual-level change:

- Providing information and opportunities to practise skills through training generates self-efficacy and lead to behaviour change when training is directly relevant, there is management support and training comes at the 'right time' for the organisation (CIMO 1).
- Coaching (e.g. mentoring or follow-up support after training) provides *encouragement*, which generates or embeds a feeling of self-efficacy ('now I know how'); *contacts and sponsorship* that give access to useful networks; and/or *advice and a guiding hand* that promotes understanding and builds confidence. This leads to changed ways of working where participants have either personal motivation or organisational incentives to do so. Success depends on coaching being driven by clear objectives based on participants' needs, and the coach having the right interpersonal and professional qualities (CIMO 2).
- Facilitated spaces for dialogue and collaboration enable sharing of advice and perspectives, which generates knowledge and influences attitudes about EIPM – including through learning about what others have done when facing similar challenges. This is made possible where interventions bring together diverse groups of people with relevant interests, and provide space to share challenges, in a context of a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM. However, this learning can be put into use only if there are existing direct opportunities to do so, although spaces for dialogue potentially create a conducive context for other interventions to stimulate behaviour change at a later stage (CIMO 3)

Changes at individual level contribute to organisational change by creating:

- A cohort of trained individuals who are applying new EIPM practices (although this is not enough to create widespread change by itself).
- EIPM enthusiasts and leaders at different levels, for example, senior managers who see the value of evidence use and mid-level officials who can cascade new ways of working.
- An entry point to facilitate BCURE partners to work with organisations in order to facilitate organisational reforms, in a context where government settings are hard to access.

CIMOs 1–3 are discussed separately in three sub-sections. First, each sub-section begins with a summary of the theory (CIMO) and the evidence underpinning it. Second, it describes the relevant interventions and resources provided by BCURE. Third, it details the main outcome patterns. Fourth, it discusses the mechanisms that contributed to these outcome patterns. Finally, it analyses the circumstances (context and intervention factors) that enabled or prevented the mechanisms from operating.

¹² There is evidence of early change in Bangladesh – unsurprisingly given the early stage of the ECORYS programme.

4.2.1 Information and opportunities to practise skills through training

CIMO 1: Providing information and opportunities to practise skills through training generates self-efficacy and leads to behaviour change when training is directly relevant, there is management support and training comes at the ‘right time’ for the organisation.

CIMO 1 unpacked:

Resource provided by BCURE	Context	Intervention factors	Mechanism	Outcome
Providing information about and practice in accessing, appraising and applying evidence...	<p>... in a context where training is directly relevant to participants’ day jobs [35]...</p> <p>... and where participants have the explicit support of direct supervisors/ flexibility to self-direct their work/change their practices [15]...</p> <p>... and/or where training comes along at the ‘right time’ to address specific needs or work of the organisation [10]...</p> <p>... and where there is a positive discourse around EIPM within the government system, as well as leaders promoting it...</p>	... where training follows the principles of adult learning, in particular being practical [13] and participatory [11]...	<p>... this generates self-efficacy, or a feeling of ‘now I know how’ among participants, who now have the knowledge and skills they need to do their day to day work [35]...</p> <p>... in many cases alongside other aspects of learning [17]: ‘now I understand why’ evidence is important [12], ‘now I’m confident’ to do my work and try new things [6]...</p>	... resulting in participants changing their behaviour and putting new knowledge and skills into practice in their work [37].

What resources did the interventions provide?

VakaYiko, SECURE, Harvard and ECORYS provide EIPM training courses, which aim to build skills through different delivery approaches. These courses provide information about the value of evidence in policy making, alongside technical information about how to access, appraise and apply evidence – with opportunities to practise these skills through practical exercises. VakaYiko and SECURE also teach soft skills such as communication and negotiation to help trainees influence the use of evidence in policy making.

UJ-BCURE workshops in South Africa take a different approach, not designed as ‘training’ but aiming to build awareness. These workshops are shorter in duration and aim to provide an introduction to EIPM to participants who might become mentees, and to provide spaces for dialogue (discussed in Section 4.3.1). The workshops still provide information about applying evidence, and about the value of evidence in policy making, but are less focused on providing opportunities to practise EIPM skills.

ACD training for cabinet focal persons in Sierra Leone provides information about and practice in applying the procedures established in the new cabinet manual, developed as part of the BCURE programme. Programme staff see the training as more about ‘filling gaps’ to help roll out organisational reforms, rather than as a standalone intervention (5-3).

What were the outcome patterns?

There is reliable evidence from Kenya and Zimbabwe that trainees have put new knowledge and skills learnt through training courses into practice in their day-to-day work. The majority of trainees, facilitators and high-level stakeholders interviewed in these countries gave examples of behaviour change linked to training.¹³ These interviews are triangulated with programme monitoring data that shows widespread self-reported application of learning. However, only VakaYiko and SECURE used monitoring tools to examine knowledge and skills *application*.¹⁴ A smaller number of interviewees in South Africa and Sierra Leone gave examples of workshops or training leading to changes in practice, but these are not triangulated with monitoring data.¹⁵

Several respondents across four countries suggested some trainees were not able to put new learning into practice or faced major difficulties in doing so.¹⁶ Also, in Kenya, interviews and monitoring data shows many trainees did not complete policy briefs as planned when back at work.¹⁷

Annex 8 provides a full breakdown of the evidence underpinning these outcome patterns from the programme evaluations.

What mechanisms contributed to these outcome patterns?

The Kirkpatrick model provides a framework to conceptualise the mechanisms behind these outcome patterns. Level 2 of the widely used Kirkpatrick model for training evaluation (Kirkpatrick Partners, n.d.) relates to *learning*: changes in participants' knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and commitment as a result of participation in training. Level 3 relates to *behaviour*: participants' application of the training when back on the job. The BCURE country case studies provided several insights into how different elements of learning correspond to different 'reasoning' within the minds of targeted individuals, leading to a decision to change behaviour – summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Mechanisms of individual change mapped against the Kirkpatrick training evaluation model

Element of 'learning' (Level 2 of the Kirkpatrick Framework)	Mechanisms at work within BCURE
Increase in knowledge	'Now I know what'... EIPM is; systematic reviews are
Increase in knowledge and skills	'Now I know how'... to do my job better, more easily; to find information or evidence from different places; to engage with senior policy makers effectively; to approach a problem I've been grappling with. This corresponds to the concept of 'self-efficacy'
Change in attitude	'Now I understand'... why evidence is important; how I can contribute to good policy making through making use of evidence
Increase in confidence	'Now I am confident'... to perform particular tasks that are part of my job; to try new things in relation to evidence use
Increase in commitment	'Now I am (more) committed to'... using evidence in my work; applying pressure to others around evidence use

For almost all of the respondents who had personally changed their behaviour or had seen others do so as a result of training, BCURE had led to change through generating a feeling of 'now I know how'.¹⁸ This

¹³ 2-12, 2-5, 2-6, 2-7, 2-8, 2-10, 2-12, 2-13, 2-15, 2-17, 2-18, 2-24, 2-29, 2-30, 2-32, 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-9, 4-11, 4-12, 4-14, 4-17, 4-20, 4-21, 4-23, 4-25, 4-30, 4-36, 4-38, 4-39, 4-41, 4-42, 4-45

¹⁴ Harvard completed outcome diaries that provide some anecdotal examples of individual learning being applied, but this does not constitute systematic monitoring of behaviour change. UJ-BCURE monitored self-reported knowledge and skills increases. ACD did not conduct independent assessment of cabinet focal persons' skills in use of evidence before or after the training.

¹⁵ 3-15, 3-16, 5-4, 5-16, 5-17

¹⁶ 2-17, 2-20, 3-6, 3-12, 3-13, 3-14, 4-14, 4-38, 4-40, 1-10, 1-15, 1-18

¹⁷ 4-40, 4-21, 4-25, 4-38, 4-45. Monitoring data shows 14 of 40 trainees had completed or were near completion of the policy brief by May 2016.

¹⁸ 2-5, 2-6, 2-7, 2-8, 2-W2, 2-10, 2-12, 2-13, 2-15, 2-17, 2-18, 2-24, 2-29, 2-30, 2-32, 3-15, 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-11, 4-12, 4-14, 4-17, 4-20, 4-21, 4-23, 4-25, 4-30, 4-36, 4-38, 4-39, 4-41, 4-42, 4-45

corresponds to the concept of ‘self-efficacy’ discussed in the literature review – relating to people’s beliefs about their capability to perform a particular task or handle a particular situation (Bandura, 1977). Quite simply, trainees now had the knowledge and skills they needed to do their jobs.

They didn’t know how to come up with research papers [before]... Those economists are now applying those tools that they were taught in this training – Zimbabwe supervisor (2-10)

For 17 of these respondents, this feeling of ‘now I know how’ was accompanied by other Kirkpatrick elements of learning – strengthened attitudes, confidence and commitment to try using evidence in their work or to demand evidence from others.¹⁹

The ‘now I know how’ mechanism was less evident in the UJ-BCURE programme. Rather, for four participants, the workshops sparked a sense of ‘now I understand’ (why evidence is important)²⁰ and/or ‘now I know what’ (EIPM is, systematic reviews are)²¹ – introducing participants to terminology or new approaches and reinforcing their basic understanding of the importance of evidence to improve the quality of work. This generally resulted in new awareness or understanding, but not behaviour change.

In what circumstances could the mechanisms operate?

The ‘now I know how’ mechanism was enabled when trainees were *already doing work* that was directly relevant to the content of the training. All 35 respondents who said they had changed their ways of working as a result of training stated this. In Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, relevance and applicability of training was enhanced by targeting policy analysts and research officers, who were required to search, access and appraise evidence as part of their roles:

This [training] is related to your job. So you have no way of putting aside what you’ve learned. You have to use it to do your job – Sierra Leone trainee (5-4).

Training in all the BCURE settings was based on clear needs assessments and piloting to ensure appropriate tailoring of the content (BCURE programme evaluation reports, 2016). However, several trainees who had not put their learning into practice said they had not had the opportunity to do so within their current role.²² This included three trainees in Pakistan – where the training course is undertaken by all civil servants participating in mid-career and senior management training, rather than being targeted to specific cohorts and tailored to the type of work they do. In Kenya, one of the key differences between trainees who had completed policy briefs after the course and those who had not was how relevant the policy brief was to trainees’ work.²³

These findings suggest the importance of ensuring training follows the principles of adult learning if it is to catalyse behaviour change. Adult learning theories emphasise that training needs to be relevant and participants need to be able to see how to apply their skills back in the workplace (Knowles et al., 2005). Many trainees also emphasised the importance of training being practical²⁴ and participatory²⁵ – two further elements of adult learning theory. These findings suggest that, to enhance practical application, interventions that seek to influence behaviour change need to include sufficient time for skills practice. This may explain why UJ-BCURE workshops less frequently sparked a feeling of ‘now I know how’ to result in behaviour change (although they did contribute to other useful outcomes discussed elsewhere in this report).

Many respondents felt it was essential for trainees to have the support of supervisors who understood what the training was about and gave the time and permission to change ways of working.²⁶ Permission from managers influences whether trainees can put skills into practice:

¹⁹ 2-6, 2-7, 2-12, 2-13, 2-18, 2-30, 3-15, 4-2, 4-9, 4-11, 4-14, 4-20, 4-23, 4-36, 4-38, 4-41, 4-42

²⁰ 3-12, 3-11, 3-13

²¹ 3-12, 3-11, 3-21

²² 3-6, 3-13, 3-14, 1-10, 1-15, 1-18. It should be noted that, owing to difficulties in locating trainees from Pakistan, it was possible to interview only three trainees at Stage 2.

²³ 4-11, 4-21, 4-2, 4-3, 4-9

²⁴ 2-6, 2-7, 2-8, 2-18, 2-24, 3-15, 4-3, 4-9, 4-11, 4-23, 4-30, 4-41, 4-42

²⁵ 2-5, 2-6, 2-7, 2-8, 2-12, 2-15, 2-24, 2-W2, 3-15, 4-3, 4-39

²⁶ 2-5, 2-6, 2-10, 2-15, 2-18, 2-24, 2-29, 2-30, 2-32, 2-W2, 3-6, 4-11, 4-20, 4-25, 4-30, 4-45

Sometimes when... the bosses are not aware that our minds have been opened in a new way, it is very different to implement some of the things. Because they will not know how important it is to adopt the new skills that we have had from the training – Zimbabwe trainee (junior staff member) (2-6).

Where activities were less successful in promoting behaviour change, lack of time was often mentioned,²⁷ along with understaffing and competing priorities in the workplace (one of the factors often cited in Kenya for participants not completing policy briefs).²⁸ The literature review suggested lack of time linked to organisational values and norms around evidence use – for example whether individuals are given the permission and space in their working days to spend time accessing and appraising evidence (Orton et al., 2011; Armstrong et al., 2013).

This suggests the importance of targeting both junior and senior government staff, but potentially with different types of support. In recognition of the importance of securing the support of trainees' supervisors, VakaYiko has increasingly tried to include senior staff in its training courses. However, one trainer felt it was not straightforward to ensure 'non-tokenistic' participation of managers (2-20), and respondents in Kenya also pointed out that senior managers might be too busy to fully participate.²⁹ If training is tailored specifically to the roles of more junior staff (who conduct research and analysis), the technical content will be less relevant to senior stakeholders who do not perform these tasks (which may make it less likely they will put skills into practice, as discussed above). This implies a need to provide different kinds of support to different levels of the bureaucracy. For example, the shorter awareness raising workshops UJ-BCURE provides may be more appropriate for senior staff.

The programme reports suggested hierarchical civil service cultures in case study countries constrained the space for participants to apply their learning. Several trainees stressed they were not able to directly influence policy decision making at their level, given the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of policy making.³⁰ However, several other respondents stated that the training came along at the 'right time' for their organisations, associating this with high-level support needed to facilitate behaviour change.³¹ Contextual analyses carried out as part of the programme evaluations found that, in all case study countries, there seemed to be a 'positive discourse' around EIPM (BCURE programme evaluation reports, 2016). Most settings featured proactive individuals providing leadership around improving government effectiveness through the use of evidence, at both senior and junior levels. This, to varying degrees, appears to counteract the negative effects of hierarchies and creates a receptive context for putting new technical skills into use – although there is limited evidence to directly link this to the outcome of behaviour change. For example, in Zimbabwe one government trainee said the research department within her ministry was new and trying to prove itself (2-10), whereas in Kenya the SECURE training targeted officers who were transitioning to policy making roles from service delivery roles and so needed to build skills (4-21). In Sierra Leone, training was introduced by a high level champion who stressed the importance of evidence and trainees' roles in promoting good quality policy making (5-3).

Other intervention factors facilitated or discouraged engagement in training and workshops. Some stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring training facilitators were knowledgeable about the issue at hand, patient and confident.³² Others stressed the need to hold training in venues where participants were not going to be interrupted or called back to their desks.³³ The decision to pay per diems may affect participation in some contexts – VakaYiko in Zimbabwe and UJ-BCURE in Malawi both faced issues with participation as a result of not paying per diems in contexts where these are expected.³⁴

²⁷ 2-17, 3-12, 3-6, 4-38, 4-40

²⁸ 2-17, 4-17, 4-25, 4-45, 4-40, 4-45

²⁹ 4-45, 4-46

³⁰ 2-7, 2-18, 2-10, 4-14, 4-38, 1-10

³¹ 2-5, 2-10, 2-13, 2-15, 2-30, 4-1, 4-3, 4-9, 4-21, 4-30

³² 2-82-12, 2-13, 2-17, 2-30, 2-32, 2-W2, 3-12, 3-14, 3-W, 4-11, 4-12, 4-21, 4-42, 6-1, 6-7

³³ 2-7, 2-10, 2-18, 4-2, 4-42

³⁴ 3-W2, 2-W2, 2-12

4.2.2 Coaching through one-to-one or group mentoring

CIMO 2: Coaching provides *encouragement*, which generates or embeds a feeling of self-efficacy (‘now I know how’); *contacts and sponsorship* that give access to useful networks; and *advice and a guiding hand* that promote understanding and builds confidence. This results in participants changing their behaviour in relation to EIPM where they have either personal motivation or organisational incentives to do so. Success depends on coaching being driven by clear objectives based on participants’ needs, and the coach having the right interpersonal and professional qualities to provide for these needs.

CIMO 2 unpacked:

Resource provided by BCURE	Context	Intervention factors	Mechanism	Outcome
Providing coaching in accessing, appraising and applying evidence... <i>In the form of encouragement or coaxing (aptitudinal resources); contacts and sponsorship (positional resources) advice and a guiding hand (cognitive resources); and /or encouragement and a hand of friendship (affective resources)</i>	... where participants have personal motivation and/or organisational support and incentives to participate and to apply their learning [14]...	... and where relationships have clear objectives driven by the needs of the participants, combined with flexibility to adapt [9]... ... and where the coach has ‘the right’ interpersonal and professional qualities depending on the resources required by the participant [13]...	... encouragement or coaxing generate a feeling of self-efficacy (‘now I know how’), or further embed this from previous training courses [17]... ... often alongside contacts and sponsorship providing access to useful networks; advice and a guiding hand promoting understanding, and/or encouragement and a hand of friendship-building confidence [16]...	... resulting in individual-level behaviour change – participants putting learning into practice and/or taking on new opportunities to use evidence or promote EIPM in the workplace [21].

What resources did the interventions provide?

UJ-BCURE’s one-to-one mentorship scheme in South Africa is the main example of coaching within the BCURE programme. This consists of matching a volunteer mentee to a mentor, based on the mentee’s learning objectives. The relationship is initially six weeks long, although many mentees extend this. The support is conducted through a combination of face-to-face meetings, Skype calls and emails. Some VakaYiko mentees in Zimbabwe have also received informal and ad hoc coaching from ZeipNET following the training, to assist them with specific evidence access or appraisal tasks – but this is a relatively minor part of the programme. In Kenya, SECURE has also provided coaching in the form of group mentoring to trainees, to help them finish a policy brief started during the training course.

What were the outcome patterns?

In South Africa, primary evaluation data provided many examples of mentees changing their behaviour as a result of the one-to-one UJ-BCURE coaching. Six of the 13 mentees involved in the one-to-one mentorship programme were interviewed, along with their mentors. They all gave examples of the mentoring influencing mentees’ day-to-day practices – for example through seeking out and taking on new opportunities to use evidence or promote EIPM in their workplaces, and directly applying skills learnt through the mentoring relationships.³⁵ In most cases, mentors, line managers or programme staff corroborated the examples

³⁵ 3-2, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 3-7, 3-9, 3-16, 3-18, 3-20, 3-21, 3-22, 3-W, 3-W2

mentees mentioned, although at Stage 2 it was not possible to triangulate interviews with programme monitoring data.³⁶ Two mentees from Zimbabwe also felt their work had benefited from ad hoc coaching from the ZeipNET team.³⁷

The evidence on follow-up coaching from Kenya is more mixed. Eight stakeholders from Kenya said that it had helped trainees put new skills into practice in their day-to-day work,³⁸ whereas five others felt coaching had not been successful in encouraging participants to complete policy briefs.³⁹ There is no monitoring data relating specifically to the group mentoring intervention in Kenya.

Annex 8 provides a full breakdown of the evidence underpinning these outcome patterns from the programme evaluations.

What mechanisms resulted in these outcome patterns?

Mechanisms underlying coaching can be understood in terms of the resources that mentees take from one-to-one or group support. A realist review of mentoring interventions discussed in the BCURE literature review (Pawson, 2004) suggests four types of resources are offered within mentoring programmes: positional, aptitudinal, cognitive and affective. The BCURE country case studies provided insights into how these resources lead to different ‘reasoning’ within the minds of targeted individuals, leading to a decision to change behaviour – summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Resources and responses as a result of coaching

Resource offered	Mechanisms at work within BCURE
Positional resources (contacts, sponsorship, access)	‘Now I have access to’ (the people or networks I need to take my work forward; the ear of important people who can open doors for me; the information I was looking for)
Aptitudinal resources (encouragement and coaxing into practical gains, skills and qualifications)	‘Now I know how’ (to access, appraise or apply evidence more effectively). This corresponds to the concept of ‘self-efficacy’, which in some cases is further embedded from previous training courses
Cognitive resources (advice, a guiding hand through difficult choices, space to think and consider issues)	‘Now I understand’ (what the best options for me are; how to move forward with this issue)
Affective resources (encouragement and a ‘hand of friendship’ to help mentees feel differently about themselves)	‘Now I am confident to’ (take new chances; put myself out there in the workplace)

(Source: Adapted from Pawson, 2004)

All the resources were evident in UJ-BCURE mentorships, with many coaching relationships providing several resources in combination. In South Africa, several respondents mentioned aptitudinal resources, whereby mentoring encouraged mentees into practical skills acquisition, in many cases helping embed previous learning through training courses.⁴⁰ This seemed to happen through ‘learning by doing’ – embedding practical skills through support to mentees on-the-job.⁴¹ Others felt mentoring provided cognitive resources, in the form of advice or space to think through issues and make choices.⁴² Five gave examples of mentoring delivering positional resources, in the form of new contacts, or access to people or research required by the

³⁶ At the time of the Stage 2 data collection, the programme was compiling a mentoring report, but monitoring data on application of learning following mentoring relationships was not yet available. However, programme documents confirmed that most mentoring relationships were renewed after the six-week initial period, triangulating mentees’ reports that the relationships were seen as useful.

³⁷ 2-8, 2-15

³⁸ 4-11, 4-17, 4-20, 4-21, 4-23, 4-25, 4-30, 4-41

³⁹ 4-12, 4-36, 4-39, 4-25, 4-45

⁴⁰ 3-2, 3-6, 3-9, 3-18, 3-20, 3-21, 3-22, 3-W, 3-W2

⁴¹ 3-21, 3-18, 3-20, 3-22

⁴² 3-4, 3-5, 3-7, 3-16, 3-18, 3-20, 3-22, 3-W2

mentee:⁴³ *'It broadened my network'* (3-4). For a few respondents, affective resources were important – mentoring providing encouragement that helped improve confidence.⁴⁴

In Kenya, follow-up support and mentoring were more narrowly focused on providing 'aptitudinal' resources, helping embed the sense of 'now I know how' among trainees through providing practical, on-the-job support to the process of developing a policy brief.⁴⁵

In what circumstances could the mechanisms operate?

UJ-BCURE mentorships have been most successful when they have clear objectives driven by the needs of the mentee, combined with flexibility to adapt to mentees' changing needs. Several South African respondents felt UJ-BCURE mentoring had been successful in delivering aptitudinal and other resources as a result of the nature of the coaching relationship.⁴⁶ Particular emphasis was given to the relationship being flexible and based on clear objectives and needs directed by the mentee. The UJ mentoring relationships are initially six weeks in length, but some of the most successful relationships have been extended many times (3-W2). The need for flexibility and for mentoring to be self-directed creates some tension between successful mentoring and remaining true to EIPM programme aims. In some cases, UJ-BCURE mentoring support has been focused on broad personal development goals of the mentee that relate only loosely to EIPM skills – this may lead to capacity improvements that do not necessarily contribute to EIPM.⁴⁷

Personal motivation and/or organisational support and incentives were critical to both UJ-BCURE's one-to-one mentoring in South Africa and SECURE's follow-up support in Kenya.⁴⁸ Behaviour change was more likely when the goals of the mentoring were linked to mentees' performance objectives or personal development plans, or when mentees were already motivated and had a desire to make the relationship succeed.⁴⁹ It was also more likely when supervisors were supportive and gave the mentee enough time to engage, or where mentees had sufficient authority within their work environment to carve out time themselves.⁵⁰

Evidence from South Africa and Kenya suggests the mentor needs to have a range of interpersonal and professional qualities, depending on the resources the mentee requires. Several UJ-BCURE respondents discussed the importance of various qualities of the mentor,⁵¹ including knowledge on the subject area, responsiveness, proactiveness and empathy. There is some suggestion that seniority may be more important when the main resources required from mentors are aptitudinal – for example Kenyan trainees who had received follow-up support emphasised this: *'They [mentors] were more senior, they're very experienced. They should have more experience than you'* (4-23). In South Africa, where mentoring provided a range of different types of resources, the seniority of the mentor did not always seem to be important (3-W). Five respondents suggested a 'good match' between mentors and mentees might be more important⁵² – someone able to work within the mentee's environment, who understands the mentee's context and who is able to provide the types of resources the mentee needs. One unsuccessful UJ-BCURE mentoring experience was attributed to a 'mismatch of skills' between the mentee and the mentor (3-W2).

All of these factors mean one-to-one mentorships can be resource-intensive to manage successfully. UJ-BCURE's experience was that early mentorships were 'fizzling out', and more time was needed to keep track of relationships and coordinate the mentorship programme. This means that, within the UJ-BCURE model, only a relatively small number of mentees can be managed; this raised concerns among some respondents on the relatively limited reach of the programme and its potential sustainability.⁵³ However, as many of the mentees are quite senior in their organisations, with the potential to act as champions for EIPM within their

⁴³ 3-4, 3-5, 3-7, 3-20, 3-W2

⁴⁴ 3-7, 3-18, 3-20

⁴⁵ 4-11, 4-17, 4-20, 4-21, 4-23, 4-25, 4-30, 4-41

⁴⁶ 3-2, 3-4, 3-7, 3-18, 3-20, 3-21, 3-22, 3-W, 3-W2

⁴⁷ 3-20, 3-W2

⁴⁸ 3-2, 3-4, 3-6, 3-16, 3-20, 3-21, 3-22, 3-W, 3-W, 4-11, 4-17, 4-20, 4-23, 4-25

⁴⁹ 3-4, 3-20, 3-22, 4-25

⁵⁰ 3-2, 3-21, 3-W2, 4-35

⁵¹ 3-2, 3-4, 3-6, 3-7, 3-18, 3-21, 3-22, 3-W

⁵² 3-2, 3-7, 3-21, 3-22, 3-W

⁵³ 3-7, 3-18, 3-26

organisation, it is possible that they can provide a ‘foot in the door’ for UJ-BCURE to influence broader organisational processes for EIPM, beyond individual change. Section 4.4.1 discusses this further.

4.2.3 Facilitated spaces for dialogue and collaboration through policy dialogues, knowledge cafés, workshops, training, secondments, mentoring and new organisational processes

CIMO 3: Facilitated spaces for dialogue and collaboration enable advice and sharing of perspectives to generate knowledge and influence attitudes about EIPM, including learning about what others have done when facing similar challenges. This is made possible where interventions bring together diverse groups of people with relevant interests, and provide space to share challenges, in a context of a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM. However, this learning can be put into use only if there are existing direct opportunities to do so, although spaces for dialogue potentially create a conducive context for other interventions to stimulate behaviour change at a later stage.

CIMO 3 unpacked:

Resource provided by BCURE	Context	Intervention factors	Mechanism	Outcome
<p>Providing facilitated space for dialogue and collaboration between policy makers, researchers, academia, civil society, citizens, etc.</p> <p><i>... which provide cognitive resources in the form of advice, a guiding hand or space to consider issues, alongside information sharing about EIPM and why evidence is important</i></p>	<p>... where there is a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM...</p>	<p>... and where interventions bring together diverse groups of people with relevant interests and expertise [6] and provide a space for sharing of challenges and solutions [6]...</p>	<p>... advice or sharing of perspectives generates knowledge (a feeling of ‘now I know what others have done when they faced similar challenges, and the solutions they have come up with’) [10]...</p> <p>... and/or information generates knowledge (a feeling of ‘now I know what EIPM is; or what this particular policy issue involves’) [11], and/or influences attitudes (‘now I understand why EIPM is important’) [6] ...</p>	<p>... resulting in new knowledge and awareness about the importance of EIPM, what EIPM is and how to conceptualise it within a particular national context, and how others have used evidence or dealt with challenges in different contexts [21]</p> <p>This can result in immediate behaviour change (putting knowledge into use) only if there are opportunities to directly practice or apply learning [4].</p> <p>However, it may create a conducive context for behaviour change later through other interventions, by stimulating initial awareness or motivation.</p>

What resources did the interventions provide?

VakaYiko, Harvard and SECURE have all facilitated ‘knowledge cafés’ or ‘policy dialogues’ to bring together participants from different sectors. In addition, UJ-BCURE is supporting the international AEN, and training and secondments offered by VakaYiko and SECURE have brought together colleagues and counterparts from different countries or ministries. ACD has facilitated international annual meetings of cabinet secretaries across the region, as well as international training for policy analysts. Section 4.3.1 provides a more detailed description of spaces for dialogue.

What were the outcome patterns?

Primary evaluation data found that **21 respondents (mainly from Zimbabwe and South Africa) felt they had gained new knowledge or awareness of issues relating to EIPM as a result of participating in group conversations and dialogue through BCURE activities.** In particular, they said participants had learned about the importance of EIPM, what EIPM was and how to conceptualise it within a particular national context.⁵⁴ This evidence is not triangulated with monitoring data – largely because programmes did not specifically monitor increases in participant knowledge and awareness as a result of taking part in facilitated spaces for dialogue.⁵⁵

Only four respondents gave examples of putting this learning directly into use.⁵⁶ This suggests that, while spaces for dialogue increase knowledge and awareness, this is unlikely to be enough on its own to lead to instrumental behaviour change.

Annex 8 provides a full breakdown of the evidence underpinning these outcome patterns from the programme evaluations.

What mechanisms resulted in these outcome patterns?

Spaces for dialogue and collaboration provide opportunities to share perspectives and advice, generating knowledge of what others have done when they faced similar challenges. These spaces also increase knowledge about what EIPM is, and influence attitudes about why EIPM is important. This combines insights from the Kirkpatrick framework (Table 2) and from Pawson’s typology of mentoring interventions (Table 3) discussed above. For example, several stakeholders suggested opportunities for discussion and dialogue had provided cognitive recourses in the form of advice, sharing of perspectives or space to consider issues⁵⁷ (or were expected to in future⁵⁸), which gives rise to practical knowledge about how to tackle problems: *‘Our problems are not so different from other cabinets. There are gains from talk with counterparts. I tell them what we are doing here and they take notes and they go and replicate’* (5-10). For other respondents, opportunities for dialogue had influenced attitudes towards EIPM⁵⁹ or given rise to more general knowledge or awareness – a sense of ‘now I know what EIPM is; or what this particular policy issue involves’.⁶⁰ *‘When you hear three or four people talking about something you didn’t actually consider in the first place, you are eye-opened so to speak’* (2-5).

In most cases, there was no evidence that dialogue had promoted self-efficacy that resulted in behaviour change – the theory is that this comes later, although there is limited evidence on this at Stage 2. UJ-BCURE staff felt that generating knowledge and awareness (in the absence of skills development or opportunities to practise) was a first step towards behaviour change. Participants may change how they think about EIPM or speak about concepts, but further work is required to change or deepen practice (3-W). This idea is also implicit within VakaYiko knowledge cafés, which are about raising conceptual awareness and ‘demystifying’ the concept of EIPM to help participants make sense of it within the Zimbabwean context (2-W1).

In what circumstances could the mechanisms operate?

Cognitive and affective resources (provided through networking events) have generated knowledge and influenced attitudes when events have allowed for the sharing of challenges and solutions between counterparts doing similar work and given participants the chance to shape the agenda. Two respondents in Sierra Leone praised international training events for their experiential aspects – providing participants with the space to openly discuss issues.⁶¹ Some South Africa workshop participants, who liked that workshops

⁵⁴ 2-5, 2-11, 2-14, 2-19, 2-22, 2-24, 2-27, 2-28, 2-W1, 3-9, 3-16, 3-18, 3-20, 3-26, 3-W, 4-25, 4-36, 5-10, 5-13, 5-16

⁵⁵ VakaYiko uses an observational rubric to measure ‘interaction, facilitation, power dynamics and the use of research evidence’ at its knowledge café and policy dialogue events but this does not monitor changes in knowledge and awareness.

⁵⁶ 3-15, 4-36, 5-10, 5-16

⁵⁷ 3-11, 3-15, 3-16, 3-18, 3-20, 3-W, 4-36, 5-10, 5-13, 5-16

⁵⁸ 2-10, 2-13, 2-32, 3-11

⁵⁹ 2-19, 2-22, 2-28, 2-W1, 3-26, 4-25

⁶⁰ 2-5, 2-11, 2-14, 2-19, 2-22, 2-23, 2-24, 2-27, 2-28, 2-W1, 4-25

⁶¹ 5-10, 5-16

allowed the sharing of challenges and the application of EIPM concepts to their own contexts, echoed this idea.⁶² In Zimbabwe, respondents emphasised the importance of informal events with breaks to enable conversation; others felt it was useful to hold events externally rather than within a government ministry, to create a conducive atmosphere for sharing and to avoid civil servants controlling the agenda.⁶³

Knowledge and awareness is raised through bringing together diverse groups of people with relevant interests and expertise in a facilitated process. Several stakeholders from Zimbabwe felt the composition of participants at knowledge cafés or policy dialogues was important – ensuring experts are in the room to enable participants to ask questions and clarify issues and key players from different sectors are included.⁶⁴ Others mentioned the importance of considering power dynamics: *‘If you had the minister there it would be a problem, everyone would be intimidated and won’t express their views’* (2-5). Some felt it was important to ensure participants had relevant interests and expertise so conversations could be focused on promoting learning.⁶⁵ If participation is tokenistic and participants lack relevant interests and expertise, it is unlikely the mechanisms will operate – for example some youth participants at a policy dialogue in Zimbabwe said they had attended mainly to *‘add to the numbers’* and so had not benefited in any way from attending (2-9).

4.2.4 How does change in individual-level capacity link to interpersonal, organisational and institutional change?

Outcomes at individual level ripple out to contribute to change at other levels, especially at the organisational level. These are discussed further in Sections 4.3–4.6. In some cases, behaviour change is ‘filtering up’, with better-quality work leading to higher-level recognition of the value of an evidence-informed approach (CIMO 6). In other cases, learning is being formally cascaded through the development of new ways of working at an organisational level (CIMO 7). There is also evidence that providing individual-level support such as training or coaching has provided an ‘entry point’ for some BCURE partners, generating permission and buy-in for them to begin implementing organisational reforms (CIMO 5).

There is some suggestion (although little firm evidence as yet) that information provision, coaching and spaces for dialogue generate motivation or enthusiasm for EIPM, which can create a conducive context for participants to initiate new collaborations that further EIPM (CIMO 4) or to request additional capacity support from BCURE partners (CIMO 14).

However, in all country case studies apart from that in South Africa, the programme evaluation contextual analyses found governments had little or no financial resources to dedicate to strengthening their own capacities. There is a reliance on donor funding to provide this type of support, which raises the question of the longer-term sustainability of the BCURE individual change outcomes. This is discussed further under EQ 3.

Lessons from the evidence on how and why BCURE promotes individual-level change

In order to change individuals’ behaviour, activities that provide information about EIPM should be tailored to meet the specific needs of trainees within the workplace, and be accompanied by opportunities to practise skills. The evidence suggests that training sparks self-efficacy and leads to behaviour change when it is tailored in such a way as to be directly relevant to participants’ day jobs – that is, participants will be able to immediately apply their learning when they are back at their desks. This implies the need for targeting specific roles where there is scope to introduce new ways of working, as well as delivering practical and participatory pedagogical approaches, following the principles of adult learning theory. There is some evidence that follow-up support helps trainees put skills into practice but it appears to work only when trainees have intrinsic motivation to complete their projects (linked to how relevant projects are to their work) and/or there is organisational support (manifested in trainees being able to set aside enough time to produce a final policy brief).

⁶² 3-15, 3-16, 3-20

⁶³ 2-5, 2-28, 2-W2

⁶⁴ 2-14, 2-22, 2-23

⁶⁵ 2-5, 2-11, 2-19

As a standalone intervention, short workshops that do not provide space for practising skills are unlikely to result in widespread application of new learning, although they may raise awareness of EIPM concepts. There is some suggestion that this might be a ‘first step’ towards behaviour change that can be furthered through other interventions – for example, in South Africa, UJ-BCURE workshops helped introduce mentees to the programme and provided them with an initial level of awareness that the mentorship could build on.

Training programmes are more likely to result in behaviour change if organisational support and incentives exist, and where trainees’ supervisors are engaged. There is some suggestion that, where there is a recognised need within the organisation or a broadly positive discourse around EIPM at a national level, training and coaching that provides relevant skills that meet a performance need, when combined with activities that engage managers and that also build in spaces for dialogue, might together overcome the constraints of hierarchical cultures.

There is some evidence that training, mentoring, workshops and spaces for dialogue have provided an ‘entry point’ for more sustained relationships and engagement with government stakeholders. Although there is little evidence that short workshops or other spaces for dialogue promote behaviour change on their own, there is some (as yet limited) evidence that they may provide an entry point for further interventions. Similarly, there is little evidence that spaces for dialogue and collaboration lead to immediate behaviour change, unless participants have specific opportunities to directly apply their learning. However, an emerging theory is that these interventions may create a conducive context for behaviour change later through other activities, by stimulating initial awareness or motivation. By helping create and maintain the space for trainees to apply EIPM skills, training and coaching may start to shift the discourse around EIPM towards actual behaviour change and observable benefits of working in an evidence-informed way, which in turn create the conditions for change to occur at other levels. This will be investigated further at Stage 3.

4.3. Interpersonal and network change

Overview

Interpersonal and network capacity change refers to change in relationships or networks, including within formal and informal communities and between institutions, in relation to evidence interpretation and use. This includes one-to-one relationships or informal networks that involve sharing or discussing evidence, formal online or professional communities that give access to or interpret evidence or groups within an organisation united by particular knowledge interests or personal relationships.

At Stage 2, there is reliable evidence of moderate change at interpersonal or network level across most of the BCURE programmes. Participants in all case study countries reported that facilitated spaces for dialogue and collaboration (such as policy dialogues, knowledge cafés and workshops) had brought people together across sectoral divides, promoted networks, linkages and relationships and in some cases resulted in new collaborations. Annex 7 contains the programme evaluation assessments of each programme’s contribution to interpersonal-level change.

The country case studies suggest one main theory (CIMO) about how facilitated spaces for dialogue lead to interpersonal or network change. This is that spaces for dialogue create and strengthen connections or generate a sense of closeness and trust, resulting in new and improved relationships – when they enable open, informal dialogue and ensure the ‘right’ composition of people, and in contexts where existing networks are weak or dysfunctional but there is a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM. Where participants have motivation or opportunities to use new connections, this can also lead to individual or organisational collaborations (CIMO 4).

Certain elements of this theory are still tentative, and evidence from Zimbabwe is disproportionately represented as a result of a greater focus in the VakaYiko case study on networking events (as a number were conducted this year).

Interpersonal or network change should be viewed as a *stepping stone* towards EIPM. Relationships are not an end in themselves; it is what people do with these relationships (to catalyse change at individual, organisational or institutional level) that matters. This builds on the findings from Stage 1, which tentatively

suggested interventions providing spaces for dialogue could sow the seeds for future embedding of EIPM practices.

CIMO 4 is unpacked as follows. First, the sub-section summarises the overall theory (CIMO). Second, it describes the relevant interventions and resources BCURE provides. Third, it details the main outcome patterns. Fourth, it discusses the mechanisms that contributed to these outcome patterns. Finally, it analyses the circumstances (context and intervention factors) that enabled or prevented the mechanisms from operating.

4.3.1 Facilitated spaces for dialogues and collaboration to build relationships

CIMO 4: Facilitated spaces for dialogue (e.g. between policy makers, researchers, civil society and citizens) create and strengthen connections or generate a sense of closeness and trust, resulting in new and improved relationships. This is more likely in a context where open, informal dialogue is enabled, where the ‘right’ composition of people are in the room and where existing networks are weak or dysfunctional but there is a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM. When participants have the motivation or opportunity to utilise new relationships, they are used to share information or advice or lead to new organisational collaborations.

CIMO 4 unpacked:

BCURE intervention	Context	Intervention factors	Mechanism	Outcome
Facilitated spaces for dialogue and collaboration with others (policy makers, researchers, academia, civil society, citizens, etc.) on EIPM issues... <i>... which provide positional resources (contacts, access), and affective resources (encouragement, a hand of friendship)...</i>	... where there is a recognised research-policy gap or decision making silos, or where existing networks are dysfunctional [8]... <i>... and where there is a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM...</i>	... and where interventions provide sufficient space for participants from different sectors or ministries to engage in open dialogue about EIPM in an informal setting [7], and ensure the ‘right’ composition of people (including those not usually reached by similar fora [3] and relevant ‘key players’ [3])...	... contacts with and access to new people create or strengthen relationships between stakeholders [32], and/or encouragement or a ‘hand of friendship’ generates a sense of closeness, trust or community [6]	... resulting in connections with stakeholders who can enable respondents to do more than they would be able to on their own [34]. Where participants already have the motivation or opportunity to utilise new connections (or were given this through BCURE activities) [10], this leads to sharing knowledge that benefits individuals’ work, or new organisational collaborations [16].

What resources did the interventions provide?

Most of the programmes include events designed to promote dialogue and collaboration. VakaYiko, Harvard and SECURE have all held ‘knowledge cafés’ or ‘policy dialogues’ to bring together participants from different sectors, such as government officials and external stakeholders (e.g. researchers, experts from industry, civil society, the media and the general public). These have generally been ‘one-off’ events, each involving different participants and with different topics and aims. UJ-BCURE is supporting the international AEN, and ACD convenes the Africa Cabinet Government Network.

At Stage 2, VakaYiko has made the most significant investment into these events: three knowledge cafés and four policy dialogues had been held by the time of the Stage 2 fieldwork. The VakaYiko knowledge cafés are informal events, open to the general public, and focus on raising awareness about and demand for EIPM,

facilitating collaboration and creating relationships. Policy dialogues are formal meetings with the aim of building the evidence on a particular policy issue, in order to lead to tangible policy outcomes.⁶⁶

SECURE's science policy cafés were designed to focus on a specific policy problem and to use evidence in a facilitated debate to identify solutions and concrete actions. However, there is limited evidence from SECURE at Stage 2, as SECURE's cafés in Kenya had become progressively less successful and the team decided to reorient its strategy to follow up on and provide support to the implementation of actions from its successful cafés in the previous year.

A broad range of interventions have brought about new connections and collaborations for respondents – not just formal networking events. Respondents highlighted new connections that had developed as a function of new organisational processes,⁶⁷ such as technical support to the development of EIPM procedures in Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, within mentoring relationships that span different organisations⁶⁸ and that exist on the fringes of formal training courses.⁶⁹ The development of networks as part of training is a key emphasis of the VakaYiko course, which brings together colleagues and counterparts from different ministries. ECORYS is also attempting to promote collaboration through joint training sessions across ministries and divisions.

What were the outcome patterns?

There is clear evidence from Zimbabwe of new and improved relationships developing through formal networking events, but limited evidence of this from other contexts. However, primary evaluation data suggests many other types of BCURE activities have enabled relationship building between participants. In Zimbabwe, several interview respondents said they had made new connections or gained better awareness of networks through knowledge cafes.⁷⁰ This is supported to some extent by observational monitoring data collected by the programme at these events, reporting a diversity of participants, broadly positive interactions, balanced discussion between different group, and active engagement from the general public and female participants. There is more limited evidence from other settings on the outcomes of networking events. Two stakeholders in Pakistan felt policy dialogues helped bridge gaps between members of the civil service, academia, think tanks and research institutions, creating a platform from which relationships could be forged.⁷¹ In Kenya, the evaluation found little evidence that the science policy cafés and research-policy events had improved relationships between policy makers and researchers. There is also limited evidence as yet from South Africa that the AEN is facilitating network building.

However, the interview data suggests building relationships and networks has happened through a variety of other interventions. In Sierra Leone, positive relationships were developed between the Cabinet Policy Review Unit (CPRU) and line ministries, which were required to work together to complete the policy template.⁷² In Kenya and Zimbabwe, the EIPM training brought together individuals from different units who did not normally come into contact but who appreciated the cross-function connections.⁷³ In South Africa, several programme participants reported that they had made new connections as a result of BCURE workshops⁷⁴ and mentoring.⁷⁵

Thirteen interview respondents, particularly in Zimbabwe, gave examples of new networks created through BCURE or DPME activities being used in some way. In most cases networks were used to share information or access advice in order to benefit an *individual's* work, but in some cases they led to *organisational*

⁶⁶ 2-W1, 2-W2

⁶⁷ 5-4, 5-24

⁶⁸ 3-W2, 3-7

⁶⁹ 2-7, 2-8, 2-10, 2-15

⁷⁰ 2-10, 2-11, 2-28, 2-32, 2-23, 2-25

⁷¹ 1-6, 1-7

⁷² 5-13, 5-32, 5-31

⁷³ 2-7, 2-10, 4-1, 4-9, 4-12, 4-14, 4-39

⁷⁴ 3-16, 3-4, 3-W

⁷⁵ 3-W2, 3-W, 3-7

collaborations.⁷⁶ Annex 8 provides a full breakdown of the evidence underpinning these outcome patterns from the programme evaluations.

What mechanisms resulted in these outcome patterns?

Spaces for dialogue and collaboration appear to provide a combination of positional and affective resources that influence knowledge and attitudes around EIPM. Thirty-two respondents reported new relationships being forged with potential collaborators within and outside government. These contacts enable respondents to do more than they would be able to on their own, for example through exchange of information or active collaboration.⁷⁷ Participants learned who else was working in a similar policy area to them or who might have knowledge or expertise relevant to their work, got to know them and got hold of their contact details. This relates to the *positional* resources in Pawson's (2004) typology of mentorship relationships discussed in Section 4.2.2 (contacts, sponsorship and access): *'You'll establish new contacts [at workshops] who will assist you in your work going forward'* (3-16).

Some respondents also reported a sense of closeness, trust, community or family being generated between participants at events.⁷⁸ This relates to the affective resources in Pawson's typology – new contacts offering a 'hand of friendship' to potentially build confidence or ownership in the concept of EIPM, or begin developing a 'community of practice' around an issue (3-W). For example, in Zimbabwe, training that brought together staff members from two different ministries – situated in the same building but with infrequent interactions – had helped create a sense of closeness and 'family' between these participants.

In some cases, positional and affective resources seem to catalyse further dialogue, learning and collaborations in future – leading to change at individual, organisational and/or institutional level.⁷⁹

You get networking with various individuals... and that, I think, becomes an important stepping stone... Because you can have social networks where you then discuss these issues socially... you get to create the networks that are necessary in order for you to then achieve your own objectives as an organisation –
Zimbabwe trainee and knowledge café participant (2-5)

In what circumstances could the mechanisms operate?

Where new connections had led to new collaborations, participants generally seemed to have (or were given through BCURE activities) the motivation and opportunity to catalyse the leap. There is limited evidence on the conditions necessary to help new connections translate into active collaborations. However, in 10 cases where stakeholders spoke about new collaborations taking place, these appeared to respond to a specific opportunity – either an opportunity that already existed, given what participants were working on, or one created by BCURE.⁸⁰ In Pakistan, the Harvard project deliberately used policy dialogues to bring together academics, policy makers and researchers to kick-start collaborations for the policy pilots (1-7). In Sierra Leone, the new policy template made it necessary for people to work together across silos in order to prepare documents using the new template (5-24). Two further collaborations in Zimbabwe happened because BCURE spaces for dialogue provided other civil society organisations with exposure to policy makers relevant to their work, which had resulted in follow-up meetings and conversations.⁸¹

There are some insights from Zimbabwe on the features of event design that help create a conducive environment for new connections to be forged. Several stakeholders emphasised the importance of an informal atmosphere with sufficient opportunities for informal interaction.⁸² Some respondents also mentioned the importance of having the 'right' composition of people at events, in order to allow new relationships to develop but also potentially to act as a draw to encourage people to attend. This ranged from

⁷⁷ 1-7, 1-16, 2-5, 2-8, 2-11, 2-15, 2-19, 2-23, 2-25, 2-28, 2-32, 2-W1, 2-W2, 3-4, 3-7, 3-16, 3-25, 3-W, 3-W2, 4-1, 4-9, 4-12, 4-14, 4-39, 4-36, 4-W, 5-4, 5-24, 7-1, 7-8, 7-9, 7-12

⁷⁸ 2-7, 2-8, 2-10, 2-14, 3-6, 3-W

⁷⁹ 1-6, 1-7, 2-5, 2-11, 2-15, 2-28, 2-32, 3-7, 3-16, 3-W2, 4-W, 5-24, 7-1, 7-9, 7-12

⁸⁰ 1-7, 2-8, 2-11, 2-15, 2-28, 2-32, 3-7, 3-W2, 4-W, 5-24

⁸¹ 2-11, 2-28

⁸² 2-W2, 2-7, 2-8, 2-10, 2-15, 2-22, 2-28

directly targeting individuals from diverse sectors or regions who are currently operating in silos or are usually not reached by similar fora, to ensuring the ‘key players’ are invited (especially in the case of events that aim to influence specific policy processes) and inviting well-known stakeholders to facilitate or participate.⁸³

Spaces for dialogue lead to new connections in contexts where there is a recognised research–policy gap, where decision making is happening in silos or where existing networks are dysfunctional. Stakeholders in Zimbabwe mentioned the value of events bringing together policy makers and researchers, in a context where there is *‘a huge disconnect between research institutions and policy makers’*.⁸⁴ In Pakistan, policy dialogues are seen to be bridging important gaps between members of the civil service, academia, think tanks and research institutions.⁸⁵ In South Africa, the AEN was considered one of the few functional EIPM networks, in a context where there was growing interest in the issue (3-26).

However, there is some suggestion that spaces for dialogue make little difference when barriers to collaboration are deeply structural. For example, in Kenya, institutional connections and priorities between the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Kenyan research institutes are considered persistently misaligned (SECURE report, 2016). In this context, two respondents felt structural interventions were needed rather than networking activities to help bridge these gaps.⁸⁶ Similarly, the South Africa impact case found that inter-governmental coordination on ECD remains a challenge despite the opportunities for interaction provided through the DPME-facilitated evaluation process, given the historical tendency of actors to operate in silos.⁸⁷

4.3.2 How does change at interpersonal level link to individual, organisational and institutional change?

Events that bring people together and create spaces for dialogue have multiple, interlinked outcomes at different levels. Relationships are not an end in themselves when it comes to promoting EIPM – it is what happens as a result of these relationships that matters. This is well recognised by BCURE practitioners: none of the BCURE interventions aims solely to promote new connections. Instead, activities such as workshops, networks, knowledge cafés and policy dialogues often have a range of expected outcomes at different levels: in particular individual awareness raising and knowledge sharing (CIMO 3), catalysing policy processes at an organisational level that utilise evidence (CIMO 10) and developing the institutional reputation and credibility of the BCURE implementing partners, in order to generate new demand for capacity building support and new opportunities for networking and collaboration (CIMO 14).

It seems likely these processes do not happen in isolation but rather reinforce and build on each other. There is little clear evidence at Stage 2 on the inter-linkages between processes. However, our tentative theory is that an event that catalyses new connections may lead to future organisational collaborations and/or new individual learning when participants draw on each other’s expertise. Or an event may make a participant enthusiastic about the potential that systematic reviews or policy briefs can offer their work, at the same time as putting them in touch with people who can help translate this enthusiasm into a change in practice (including potentially BCURE itself – resulting in requests for future capacity support).

Effective spaces for dialogue and collaboration may also diffuse a positive EIPM discourse and build up the valuing of evidence use, creating a receptive context for organisational change. However, there is limited empirical evidence to support this hypothesis at this stage, and this Stage 3 should investigate further.

Lessons from the evidence on how and why BCURE contributes to interpersonal or network change

Facilitated spaces for dialogue create or strengthen relationships with people who can help participants do more than they would be able to on their own. Evidence from Zimbabwe suggests it helps when interventions use an informal approach, invite key individuals from communities that are currently not well connected or

⁸³ 2-19, 2-22, 2-23, 2-32, 2-5, 2-22

⁸⁴ 2-25, 2-W1, 2-28

⁸⁵ 1-7, 1-14, 1-16

⁸⁶ 4-8, 4-26

⁸⁷ Boule et al. describe the siloed nature of relationships in government as one of the factors contributing to shortcomings in ECD policy and plan implementation.

that work in silos and include senior and well-known people to attract others to attend. Spaces for dialogue appear to add value where there is a recognised research–policy gap or decision making is happening in policy silos, or where existing networks are dysfunctional. However, there is some suggestion that they make little difference when barriers to collaboration are deeply structural.

New connections appear to lead to new collaborations in a context where participants have (or are given through BCURE activities) the motivation and opportunity to catalyse this leap. However, it is not clear whether any specific intervention features help facilitate new connections to spark collaborations – Stage 3 will explore this further.

Interpersonal or network change should be viewed as a *stepping stone towards* EIPM, rather than a separate domain of change. Building on the findings from Stage 1, Stage 2 data suggests relationships are not an end in themselves; it is what people do with these relationships (to catalyse change at individual, organisational or institutional level) that matters.

Building spaces for dialogue into interventions provides opportunities for people involved to make connections with others, potentially catalysing further individual, organisational or institutional change. Many new relationships discussed in the Stage 2 case studies were developed through training or technical support activities, rather than through specific networking interventions. This suggests the value of practitioners explicitly thinking about how their activities might be designed to spark new connections – for example through bringing together stakeholders from different organisations where interaction is not currently happening but could feasibly be useful; carefully considering group dynamics and promoting group support mechanisms; having an eye on future collaboration potential when setting up mentoring relationships; or building in ample time for training groups to set the agenda and share challenges and lessons in a collaborative way.

4.4. Organisational and governmental change

Overview

Organisational change refers to an organisation’s systems, policies and procedures, practices, culture or norms, which incentivise or inhibit evidence access, appraisal and application in decision making. This includes ‘system-level’ factors within government that affect EIPM, such as national or subnational laws, policies, regulations and governance systems. Tools include checklists, guidance notes, assessment criteria and templates, designed at an organisational level to help individuals search for, assess and interpret evidence. Systems are broader, including processes, procedures and events at an organisational level that incentivise and promote access, appraisal and use of evidence.

At Stage 2, the evidence suggests that most BCURE programmes have contributed to moderate or established organisational change in their target countries. In Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Kenya, tools or systems to strengthen or operationalise EIPM have been developed and in some cases formally adopted and rolled out. In Zimbabwe, there is evidence of buy-in from senior management for the programme to help facilitate organisational reforms. Annex 7 contains the evaluation assessments of each programme’s contribution to organisational-level change.

The country case studies suggest six main theories about how support to individuals or organisations can contribute to organisational change:

- Interventions targeting individuals (e.g. training) help partners build credibility, trust and relationships that create the buy-in and permission for partners to help support organisational reform (CIMO 5). When individuals (reached through interventions such as training) begin using evidence more or more effectively, these practices also filter up (CIMO 6) or cascade out (CIMO 7) to lead to organisational change.
- Technical support to co-produce new tools or systems to promote EIPM leads to positive examples or ‘showcases’ that make the case for the value of EIPM (through linking EIPM to improving performance and helping establish relationships with internal sponsors or champions) (CIMO 8).

The above processes appear to happen in parallel and reinforce each other, ultimately leading to:

- High-level stakeholders giving BCURE the permission to provide ongoing, tailored support to ‘accompany’ a process of reform and helping them embed EIPM (where there is pressure to improve performance from senior levels and where the BCURE partner has established trust through previous activities). This leads to uptake of recommendations from processes facilitated by BCURE, adoption of procedures and possibly the emergence of an internal unit to ‘own’ and ‘champion’ EIPM (CIMO 9).
- High-level stakeholders deciding to formally adopt official standards or procedures for EIPM – either on a small scale (e.g. templates) or on a large scale (e.g. a comprehensive system to promote and monitor evidence use throughout the policy cycle) (CIMO 10).

These latter two theories are less well supported by the evidence but will be further tested at Stage 3. There is also limited evidence at Stage 2 on how organisational tools and systems influence *individual* behaviour. However, two tentative theories describe how evidence-based tools and standard procedures may *facilitate* individuals to use evidence more effectively in some cases (CIMO 11), and *reinforce* positive behaviours in others (CIMO 12).

CIMOs 5–12 are discussed in four sub-sections. First, each sub-section begins with a summary of the theories (CIMOs) and the evidence underpinning them. Second, it describes the relevant interventions and resources BCURE provides. Third, it details the main outcome patterns. Fourth, it discusses the mechanisms that contributed to these outcome patterns. Finally, it analyses the circumstances (context and intervention factors) that enabled or prevented the mechanisms from operating.

4.4.1 Interventions that promote individual change catalysing change at an organisational level

CIMO 5: Providing individual-level support (such as training or coaching) in a sensitive, collaborative way provides a ‘foot in the door’ for BCURE partners, generating permission and buy-in for them to begin implementing organisational reforms (e.g. technical support for EIPM tools and systems). This could be a particularly important entry point in contexts where it is not possible to start working directly at organisational level, for example where access to government is difficult to secure.

CIMO 6: When a sufficient number of individuals (including some with leadership roles) begin accessing, appraising and applying evidence more in their work, this ‘filters up’ and leads to higher-level recognition of the value of an evidence-informed approach – through senior staff seeing and being impressed by good-quality evidence products and through these products feeding into senior decision making processes and improving them (which can go on to spark CIMO 8).

CIMO 7: When individual support influences the behaviour of individuals in mid-level roles, who are committed and passionate and who have supportive senior management, they can formally cascade their learning through introducing new ways or working and new structures and processes within their organisations.

CIMO 5, 6 and 7 unpacked:

Resource provided	Context	Intervention factors	Mechanism	Outcome
Support (such as information or coaching) to junior staff members, who play a technical role in relation to evidence access and appraisal...	... in a context where it is not possible to start directly working at organisational level (e.g. where access to government is difficult to secure) [4]	... when provided in a sensitive, collaborative way by the local partner... [4]	... allows individual-level support to provide a foot in the door – generating access to an organisation...	... resulting in the permission and buy-in for the supporting partner to begin implementing organisational-level reforms, e.g. through technical support to tools and systems [17].

	<p>... which results in individuals beginning to access, appraise and apply evidence more in their work (e.g. through CIMO 1)...</p>	<p>... where a sufficient number of people are trained within a setting/team [11] and where some of the individuals have leadership roles [3]...</p>	<p>... individual-level behaviour change filters up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through senior staff seeing and being impressed by good-quality evidence products (policy briefs, concept notes, etc.)... <i>and/or</i>... - through improving senior decision making processes, by feeding (better-quality) evidence into those processes... 	<p>... resulting in senior staff recognising the value of an evidence informed approach [55] ... and through evidence products feeding into senior decision making processes and hence improving the quality of those processes, resulting in <i>showcases</i> for EIPM [CIMO 8].</p>
	<p>... which influence the behaviour of individuals in mid-level leadership roles [7], who are committed and passionate [3] and who have supportive senior management who permit reform [2]...</p>		<p>... these individuals formally cascade learning...</p>	<p>... resulting in new ways of working and new structures/processes being introduced (e.g. training products being adapted – training of trainers effect) [18].</p>

What resources did the interventions provide, and what were the outcome patterns?

Primary evaluation data, particularly from Pakistan, Zimbabwe and Kenya, suggests that interventions that promote individual-level change (e.g. through training, mentoring and spaces for dialogue and collaboration) also contribute to change at organisational level. Fifty-nine respondents⁸⁸ in five countries reported organisational outcomes arising from individual-level interventions. These include partners gaining buy-in and permission to move their support into the organisation; senior staff seeing the value of an evidence-informed approach; and trainees formally cascading what they have learnt about EIPM to colleagues and other teams through onward training, ‘training of trainers’ or introducing new ways of working. There is no relevant monitoring data in relation to this outcome; the evidence in this section is derived solely from primary interviews with BCURE stakeholders.

What mechanisms contributed to these outcome patterns?

In Zimbabwe and South Africa, training and workshops provided a ‘foot in the door’ for a programme to initiate organisational reforms, by establishing the credibility of the partner. Fourteen respondents⁸⁹ reported that training and workshop activities had helped BCURE gain permission and/or buy-in to begin implementing organisational-level reforms. The data suggests that, in a context where it is not possible to start directly working at organisational level (e.g. where access to government is difficult to secure), a sensitive, collaborative approach by the local partner can create trust and access, which enables the local partner to begin working at organisational level.⁹⁰ In the Zimbabwean context, it was particularly important that the collaboration was seen as ‘apolitical’, as any signs of interference or links to a regime change agenda would have blocked access.⁹¹ It also seemed to help that the local partners were known to some extent and had some previous experience of government (2-24).

⁸⁸ 1-3, 1-7, 1-14, 1-15, 1-16, 1-17, 2-5, 2-6, 2-7, 2-10, 2-13, 2-15, 2-18, 2-17, 2-27, 2-29, 3-23, 2-30, 2-W2, 3-15, 4-3, 4-6, 4-9, 4-1, 4-11, 4-12, 4-20, 4-21, 4-25, 4-26, 4-39, 4-20, 4-21, 4-23, 4-27, 4-30, 5-3, 5-11, 5-16, 6-16, 6-2, 6-7, 7-64, 5-11, 5-16, 6-16, 6-2, 6-7, 7-6

⁸⁹ 2-13, 2-15, 2-20, 2-24, 2-25, 2-28, 2-29, 2-32, 2-W1, 2-W2, 3-27, 3 W2, 6-1, 6-12

⁹⁰ 2-W2, 2-24, 2-25, 2-28

⁹¹ 2-20, 2-25, 2-28, 2-29

The ‘foot in the door’ mechanism also operated in other BCURE programmes, where initial workshops or needs assessments established relationships that created opportunities for technical support. For UJ-BCURE, workshops offered a ‘foot in the door’ to one-to-one mentorships, while these mentorships in turn appeared to open the door for ‘team mentorships’ – organisational-level technical support and coaching to support a specific EIPM-related process (3-W2). In Bangladesh, two respondents reported a similar effect relating to the training needs assessment, where the process had created awareness of needs around use of research and evidence among groups at different levels and started to stimulate receptiveness to further work at an organisational level.⁹²

In Zimbabwe and Kenya, good-quality work and improved EIPM practices among individual trainees have ‘filtered up’ to influence senior stakeholders. Eighteen respondents reported that senior management, colleagues and counterparts were becoming interested in EIPM as a result of seeing good-quality work.⁹³ In Kenya, improvement in the quality of parliamentary research analysts’ work seems to have impressed MPs, who reported feeling better informed.⁹⁴ In Zimbabwe, there is some evidence that junior staff are directly influencing their superiors, convincing them of the importance of EIPM.⁹⁵ These results may imply the value of including soft skills such as influencing and communication in EIPM training courses – a factor that Stage 3 will explore further.

Several respondents talked about the idea of ‘critical mass’, as part of the ‘filtering-up’ mechanism – the theory that training a sufficiently large cohort could be enough to shift organisational norms and cultures around evidence use. However, this effect was not actually observed. Twenty-three respondents⁹⁶ talked about the ‘critical mass’ effect in Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zimbabwe. However, the data on this is mostly negative. Respondents felt that not enough time had elapsed in their settings, the training interventions had not reached sufficient numbers or it was not sufficiently long-lasting:

In the training we have this broad brush approach. I would not say that the training is vigorous enough to induce a change at the civil service... It needs to be a continuous process. Not a piecemeal process and you need to start from the beginning – Pakistan respondent (1-15)

Formal cascading of skills, training and new ways of working also helps catalyse organisational change. Eighteen respondents in Kenya, Pakistan, South Africa and Zimbabwe reported outcomes relating to the ‘cascading’ effect.⁹⁷ In Pakistan, a number of EIPM trainees have been formally trained as trainers (through a ‘training of trainers’ approach) and have started to deliver courses – it is anticipated that this will help cascade EIPM across a wider cohort.⁹⁸ In Kenya, a key group of mid-level officials from MoH who had received EIPM training spontaneously adopted the SECURE curriculum to deliver training to the county health administrations. The first pilots in four counties have already trained 66 people, more than in the original BCURE training. The EIPM curriculum is now part of the formal offer from the national level to support county health teams, and the team are seeking funding from donors to scale this out.⁹⁹ In other examples of formal cascading of EIPM skills in Kenya, SECURE trainees have been asked to form a quality assurance group in the parliamentary research department and another official has adopted EIPM principles and training into guidance on quality and standards for county health administrations.¹⁰⁰

In what circumstances could the mechanisms operate?

Slow-to-change civil service cultures will impede the filtering-up mechanism, if they prevent individuals from putting skills into practice and diffusing new approaches. BCURE programme reports refer to various features of organisational culture within civil services that impede change – in Sierra Leone one respondent

⁹² 6-1, 6-12

⁹³ 2-5, 2-6, 2-7, 2-10, 2-13, 2-15, 2-18, 2-27, 2-30, 2-W2, 4-3, 4-6, 4-9, 4-20, 4-21, 4-23, 4-26, 4-30

⁹⁴ 4-21, 4-23, 4-6, 4-9, 4-26, 4-30

⁹⁵ 2-6, 2-10, 2-13, 2-15, 2-18

⁹⁶ 2-17, 2-27, 2-24, 2-29, 3-23, 4-1, 4-11, 4-12, 4-20, 4-21, 4-25, 4-26, 4-3, 4-39, 5-11, 5-16, 6-16, 1-3, 1-15, 1-17, 6-2, 6-7, 7-6

⁹⁷ 1-1, 1-7, 1-12, 1-14, 2-5, 2-7, 2-15, 2-28, 2-29, 3-22, 4-3, 4-9, 4-11, 4-12, 4-17, 4-20, 4-36, 4-39

⁹⁸ 1-1, 1-3, 1-7, 1-12, 1-14

⁹⁹ 4-1, 4-2, 4-9, 4-39

¹⁰⁰ 4-20, 4-12

talked about a *'rush to wait'* culture (Stage 2 programme reports, 2016). However, where there are transitions in mandate, this may create opportunities to change ways of working – such as the transition of MoH in Kenya from service delivery to policy making, and the strengthened scrutiny role for parliament. A top-down pressure for performance improvement seems to also create momentum for change (see Section 4.4.2).

Targeting specific roles and in sufficient numbers was considered important for creating a 'critical mass' that enables learning to 'filter up' and influence organisational change, but movements of staff may dilute this.¹⁰¹

Some respondents felt targeting specific roles was an important aspect of achieving a critical mass of staff whose behaviour could shift organisational culture around evidence use, such as in the DPME training that has explicitly targeted specific roles in the top three management layers.¹⁰² In Kenya, high-level respondents were sceptical of being able to create critical mass to support a culture change, stating that close to 40% of national-level health policy making officials would need to be trained.¹⁰³ Seven stakeholders in four countries mentioned the risk associated with trainees moving jobs, either to other departments or out of government altogether – which was felt to reduce the potential to reach a critical mass.¹⁰⁴

However, barriers in the political context can block the 'filtering-up' mechanism. If junior trainees must wait until they are promoted to a position where they can influence organisational processes, knowledge and skills are likely to dissipate. Bureaucratic and hierarchical organisational structures (discussed in Section 4.2.1) appear likely to act as powerful blockages to the filtering-up mechanism, preventing individuals from influencing attitudes or decisions further up the chain. Project staff and facilitators from VakaYiko and UJ-BCURE suggested that training junior individuals may contribute to organisational change in the longer term through 'playing the long game' – building skills and awareness about EIPM among people who will eventually be promoted into a position of more power, or who are able to apply their learning when contextual blockages eventually shift.¹⁰⁵ However, the evidence discussed in Section 4.2.1 suggests the importance of trainees having the opportunity to apply their skills immediately in order for new knowledge to lead to behaviour change. The principles of adult learning theory suggest it may be unlikely that new skills will remain latent for long periods, ready to be applied when the opportunity arises.

Personalised mentoring and secondments have created EIPM leaders or 'champions', some of whom have gone on to introduce changes in ways of working and/or formally cascade training and mentoring approaches. The trainees, mentees and seconded individuals who had been able to cascade new ways of working with evidence were highly motivated, committed and enthusiastic individuals. They were in leadership roles (at mid or senior level), with scope to introduce new approaches, and with support from senior management to do so.¹⁰⁶ In South Africa, a mentored individual in a senior role was able to champion evidence through the development of cross-government strategies (3-22). In Kenya, individuals seconded to UK POST had introduced new ways of working in their departments within four months of their return, to help colleagues use evidence more routinely. These included standard templates for policy briefings, daily clinics for peer support and quality assurance processes; they also worked on developing a wider training programme based on the SECURE curriculum. There are also plans to develop an IT system to support the research department.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ 2-17, 2-27, 4-25, 5-16, 6-2, 6-7, 7-6, 2-29, 3-23, 4-30, 4-1, 4-39

¹⁰² 3-23, 4-30, 4-1, 4-39

¹⁰³ 4-1, 4-2, 4-9, 4-39

¹⁰⁴ 2-17, 2-27, 4-25, 5-16, 6-2, 6-7, 7-6

¹⁰⁵ 1-15, 2-20, 2-25, 3-W

¹⁰⁶ 2-29, 3-22, 4-11, 4-17, 4-36

¹⁰⁷ 4-11, 4-17, 4-36

4.4.2 Technical support to co-produce EIPM tools or systems creating ‘showcases’

CIMO 8: Providing technical support to co-produce tools or systems that facilitate staff to use evidence more effectively, where this is done in a collaborative and innovative way, generates good examples that ‘showcase’ the value of evidence for quality, performance and delivery. These ‘showcases’ provide user-friendly decision support tools that help individuals use evidence (CIMOs 11 and 12) but also build understanding and buy-in among senior staff about the value of evidence for decision making, resulting in examples ‘diffusing’ out to inspire new reforms elsewhere.

CIMO 8 unpacked:

Resource provided by BCURE	Context	Intervention factors	Mechanism	Outcome
Technical support to co-produce tools, together with information about the importance of EIPM, access to good evidence sources and the opportunity to practise applying evidence to a live policy process....	... where there is organisational recognition of the need to strengthen evidence use to improve performance as current evidence use is <i>ad hoc</i> [11]... ... and/or where some data sources exist but data systems are not optimal [5]...	... collaborative support that combines government officials and technical specialists in an interdisciplinary team [14], builds networks [4], is innovative [4] and makes the EIPM value case [3]...	... sparks a ‘showcase effect’: good examples of tools or systems showcase or demonstrate the value of evidence for quality, performance and delivery [22]...	... resulting in owned user-friendly decision support tools that utilise evidence (leading to individual change through CIMO 11 or 12) [8], generate understanding of the value of evidence for decision making [12] and lead to positive responses by other government stakeholders, inspiring reports, seminars, workshops and potentially further reforms [6].

What resources did the interventions provide?

In Pakistan and South Africa, BCURE has provided technical support to collaboratively produce tools and systems that promote better use of evidence in decision making. In South Africa, UJ-BCURE has helped facilitate the production of an ‘evidence map’ in collaboration with DPME. This aims to inform the positioning of a new Human Settlement White Paper, but also to demonstrate the value of presenting and packaging research evidence in a way that is useful for policy decision making.¹⁰⁸ Harvard is developing ‘pilot projects’ in Pakistan – demonstrations of practical systems and tools aimed to facilitate EIPM, particularly through creating innovative means for policy makers to engage and interact with data through visualisation and geospatial mapping. The impact case also describes DPME support to the NES. DPME has developed a structured evaluation process and is helping facilitate government departments to implement it.

In all three cases, technical support was provided alongside information about the importance of using evidence in decision making, access to good-quality evidence and practice in applying evidence within a live policy process.

What were the outcome patterns?

Primary evaluation data found that respondents reported improved understanding about the value of evidence as a result of BCURE and DPME activities, and that senior managers and colleagues had been inspired by the tools or systems produced. Several BCURE participants, particularly from South Africa, felt they had gained understanding about the value of evidence for decision making through participating in these processes,¹⁰⁹ and that they now had ownership of user-friendly decision support tools that enabled them to use evidence more effectively.¹¹⁰ Respondents in Bangladesh anticipate having this type of tool if the

¹⁰⁸ 3-7, 3-9, 3-10, 3-19

¹⁰⁹ 3-10, 3-15, 3-19, 3-7, 3-9, 4-3, 7-4, 7-4, 7-8

¹¹⁰ 3-10, 3-15, 3-19, 3-7, 3-9, 3-W, 3-6, 3-19, 1-4, 1-7

programme advances as planned.¹¹¹ A number of respondents from various contexts provided examples of positive responses from other stakeholders in the government system to the tools and processes developed through BCURE or DPME support, and ideas diffusing to other spaces through reports, seminars and workshops.¹¹² There is no relevant monitoring data in relation to this outcome; the evidence is derived solely from primary interviews.

‘Valuing of evidence’ appears essential to create the conditions for wider organisational change. Twenty respondents¹¹³ in six countries highlighted that, after participating in an EIPM intervention, they now understood the value of EIPM for enhancing quality, performance and delivery. The data suggests the value of EIPM has to be demonstrated in organisational interventions to establish a foundation for change, so our analysis treats it as both an outcome and a critical mechanism.

What mechanisms resulted in the outcome patterns?

For 23 respondents, technical support to co-produce tools or systems seemed to spark a *showcase effect* – the resulting product demonstrates in a practical and tangible way the positive results evidence can bring to policy and decision making processes.¹¹⁴ Organisational tools and systems help stimulate awareness of the importance of evidence, because they demonstrate how it can be operationalised to help tackle real policy or decision making challenges. Showcase examples make it feel worthwhile and feasible to change practices and processes.

Participants in both Pakistan and South Africa noted the importance of *visually* presenting a body of evidence and data on challenges and potential solutions.¹¹⁵ This stimulated new perspectives on a policy issue:

The visual presentation assisted managers’ understanding of the data, and influenced their thinking. Since managers can ‘see’ the outcome, it has led to reflective thinking. It resulted in an attitude change towards evidence from senior managers. Visualisation provided a wake-up call – demonstrating effect – South Africa respondent (3-15)

Some respondents suggested that positive and successful examples of evidence use inspire others to try similar approaches.¹¹⁶ Showcase examples also seem to kick-start diffusion of EIPM as a norm through the organisation, if peers report on and share them to show what is possible to achieve, how to do it practically and the value evidence can bring to a policy process.¹¹⁷ By creating these receptive conditions, a showcase effect can potentially spark the formalising and/or rolling-out of EIPM reforms – for example by influencing the decision to formally adopt EIPM tools (CIMO 10).

In what circumstances could the mechanism operate?

A high-level push to improve government effectiveness seems to create a receptive context for technical support interventions that aim to strengthen use of evidence. Government effectiveness is rated low in the World Governance Indicators for the all the case study countries bar South Africa, suggesting that politically driven decision making is not supporting effective delivery or implementation of policies and services (World Bank, 2015). However, the country case studies found that positive discourse about EIPM was present in most case study settings, linking evidence use to performance improvement (Stage 2 programme reports, 2016). In more democratic countries, such as Kenya and South Africa, performance improvement is linked ultimately to accountability to the public for government results. This is in contrast to authoritarian Zimbabwe, where accountability can be interpreted as punitive towards the ruling party (Vaka Yiko programme report, 2016). However, in Kenya, Zimbabwe and, to a degree, Pakistan, the BCURE programme reports suggest EIPM is seen

¹¹¹ 6-12, 6-13, 6-21, 6-3

¹¹² 3-15, 4-3, 4-39, 7-4, 7-9, 1-4 1-7, 2-15, 3-15, 3-19

¹¹³ 2-15, 2-W1, 3-10, 3-15, 3-16, 3-19, 3-7, 3-9, 3-W, 3-W, 4-26, 4-3, 4-3, 4-39, 4-39, 4-39, 7-3-8.6, 7-4, 9.6, 7-4-9.6, 7-4, 7-4, 7-8, 7-9, 3-6, 3-19, 1-4, 1-7, 3-26

¹¹⁴ 2-15, 3-10, 3-15, 3-19, 3-7, 3-9, 3-W, 4-14, 4-3, 4-39, 4-40, 6-12, 6-13, 6-21, 6-3, 7-4-9.6, 7-4-9.6, 7-4-9.7, 7-8-13.6, 7-9-13.6, 3-6, 3-19, 1-4, 1-4, 1-7, 1-14, 1-14, 1-14

¹¹⁵ 1-4, 1-7, 1-14, 3-10, 3-15, 3-19, 3-17, 3-9, 3-W

¹¹⁶ 1-7, 7-4, 7-8

¹¹⁷ 3-15, 3-19, 4-3, 4-14, 4-40, 7-4

as ‘apolitical’, rather than challenging government. It is seen as a way of enhancing the ‘professionalism’ of government officials. Being seen as having an apolitical agenda enables the BCURE EIPM support to create momentum for organisational reform.

Several respondents felt an organisational demand for better evidence use (in order to improve performance) was an essential condition for the showcase mechanism.¹¹⁸ Pressure to improve performance came from both senior and mid level. Respondents described a situation where senior managers were demanding evidence but evidence use was *ad hoc* and mid-level officials were unclear how to make it more systematic. In Bangladesh and South Africa, there was a suggestion that pressure to improve performance through evidence use was linked to the need for accountability to the public for government results.¹¹⁹ In Pakistan, where the government has emphasised the use of technology to update systems, respondents suggested that general familiarity with technology and the existence of data sources were important additional circumstances that enabled a data tool to act as a showcase and catalyse further change.¹²⁰

A collaborative approach, through a government and technical interdisciplinary team, seems to be critical for a showcase effect to happen. In a context where there is a need to improve performance through evidence use, respondents in Kenya, Pakistan and South Africa suggested tools and systems needed to be developed through a collaborative intervention for it to lead to change through a showcase effect.¹²¹ These respondents described how tools were developed through a co-production approach that brought together government officials with technical specialists into a genuine team, not as an outsourced process. Knowledge of the government decision making environment was combined with technical knowledge of evidence methods and quality. In Kenya, Pakistan and South Africa, the technical specialists came from an external partner. Six respondents emphasised that the co-creation activity was innovative and exciting, and created new networks.¹²² The collaborative approach meant the tools created were highly tailored to the needs of intended users and so government partners felt sufficient ownership to continue to use and adapt them.

Positive collaborative experiences seem to create the conditions for partners to move into ‘trusted partner’ status. This seems to give partners permission to move fully into the government space in order to provide flexible, embedded technical support to accompany EIPM organisational reforms, discussed further below.

4.4.3 Technical support ‘accompanying’ organisational reform to policy development processes and EIPM tools or systems

CIMO 9: Where there is pressure to improve performance from senior levels and where the BCURE partner has established trust through previous activities, this leads to high-level stakeholders giving BCURE the *permission to accompany* an organisation through a change process, providing ongoing, tailored support to help them embed EIPM. This leads to uptake of recommendations from processes facilitated by BCURE, adoption of tools or systems (which can lead to CIMO 8, 11 and 12) and possibly the emergence of an internal unit to ‘own’ and ‘champion’ EIPM (CIMO 10).

¹¹⁸ 1-4, 1-14, 3-9, 3-15, 3-19,, 3-W, 6-3, 6-13, 6-21, 7-4, 7-9

¹¹⁹ 3-9, 6-3, 6-12

¹²⁰ 1-4, 1-7, 1-14

¹²¹ 1-14, 3-10, 3-7, 3-9,3-15, 3-19, 3-W, 4-3, 6-12, 6-3, 7-4, 7-8

¹²² 3-10, 3-9, 3-19, 3-7, 1-4, 1-14

CIMO 9 unpacked:

Resource provided by BCURE	Context	Intervention factors	Mechanism	Outcome
A range of resources provided through responsive and collaborative partnerships (e.g. information, coaching, technical support)...	... where resources are perceived to offer value to organisational performance and there is pressure to improve performance through evidence use from senior levels [5], and the partner has established trust among senior stakeholders [3]...	... if approaches are collaborative and responsive [7], build trust [5] and provide on-going support to develop professional skills in EIPM and processes [5]...	... this sparks an overarching ‘accompaniment’ mechanism [11] – high-level stakeholders give BCURE the <i>permission</i> and access to provide ongoing, tailored, organisational-level support to help embed EIPM (e.g. technical support, spaces for dialogue, coaching, information provision)...	... leading to uptake of recommendations from processes (co)facilitated by BCURE [4], and adoption of tools or systems [4] – which can lead to CIMO 8, 11 and 12. This might also lead to the emergence of catalysed internal ‘owner(s)’ or ‘champions’ of EIPM processes [3] (CIMO 10).

What resources did the interventions provide?

A range of resources were provided through responsive and collaborative partnerships between BCURE partners and government organisations. Earlier-stage interventions in some cases included workshops, training or support to specific evidence products (e.g. Kenya and Zimbabwe). Having established a trusted partnership, interventions ranged from providing technical support to live policy development processes, convening groups and co-producing tools as needed, such as in Kenya and South Africa.¹²³ In Kenya, SECURE convened a study to investigate the dynamics of health policy development processes. The findings provided some challenging insights into internal decision making at MoH, but the recommendations were nevertheless accepted, thanks to the trust that had been established through the partnership.¹²⁴

What were the outcome patterns?

Eleven interview respondents reported that responsive and collaborative support provided by BCURE had contributed to organisational change, ranging from uptake of recommendations from processes co-facilitated by BCURE partners, to the emergence of a stronger government team to take ownership of EIPM and champion it.¹²⁵ In Kenya and South Africa, some respondents suggested that the capacities of internal government teams to take ownership of EIPM were being catalysed through collaboration with a trusted external partner.¹²⁶ The emerging governmental ‘owners’ of EIPM may take the form of a distinct unit with an explicit mandate to support systems (such as the DPME in South Africa), or it may be role shared between two or more functions (policy on the one hand, research on the other, as in the Kenyan MoH). In Sierra Leone, the ‘owner’ was a senior leader and EIPM champion, backed by presidential support. In Kenya, through collaboration and partnership with SECURE, the Ministry of Health’s research and development team is now in a much stronger position to facilitate the ministry’s participation in the new World Health Organization Data Initiative for health in East Africa. This will invest considerable resources in the development of large-scale data systems to enhance health policy making and health service delivery, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SECURE programme report, 2016).

Catalysing internal owners for EIPM is an important outcome for organisational change in support of BCURE’s overall aims. Internal ‘owners’ play a key role in continuing to champion and advocate for EIPM,

¹²³ 3-27, 4-1, 4-44, 4W

¹²⁴ 4-1, 4-W

¹²⁵ 2-24, 2-29, 2-W2, 3-27, 3-10, 4-1, 4-44, 4-W, 5-23, 5-3, 6-18

¹²⁶ 3-10, 4-1, 4-W

building the systems, standards and monitoring, and support for staff, to ensure evidence use continues into the future. This outcome forms a key context for CIMO 10, discussed in the next section.

There is no relevant monitoring data in relation to this outcome; the evidence in this section is derived solely from primary interviews with BCURE stakeholders.

What mechanisms resulted in the outcome patterns?

These outcomes appeared to arise through a process of *'accompaniment'*, whereby government stakeholders gave permission to a trusted partner to accompany them in a flexible and responsive way through the process of designing and introducing reforms to support EIPM, helping facilitate learning, adaptation and self-organisation. The accompaniment mechanism overlaps and occurs in parallel with the other organisational-level mechanisms. The difference is that this CIMO relates to the *permission to accompany* that government stakeholders bestow on a trusted partner and the close-up, flexible support that this enables. For example, some BCURE partners started by delivering discrete, distinct capacity building interventions (i.e. training), which allowed them to build up the trust that led to them being permitted to move into a more accompanying role. In other CIMOs at organisational level, the mechanism is about government stakeholders *adopting* various products from other processes. A number of respondents across all the case study countries recognised the *'accompaniment'* role BCURE partners were playing.¹²⁷

This has been support as you work, this is a very different design, it is supportive... it is embedded and that is a big difference, it is on-going support – Kenya respondent (4-3)

There is an emerging literature on the *'accompaniment'* mechanism, from both the health policy and governance fields. *Accompaniment* echoes, for example, the 'Development Entrepreneur' approach developed by The Asia Foundation (Faustino & Booth, 2014), and the capacity strengthening to health systems in Nigeria developed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) (IDRC, 2014). A study on technical assistance by Land (2007) also explores this mechanism. The evaluation will explore this literature further in the Stage 3 refresh of the literature review in 2017 (see Annex 3.5).

In what circumstances did the mechanisms operate?

High-level government pressure to improve performance through evidence use seems to be a necessary context to spark the mechanism.¹²⁸ Positioning EIPM reforms as enhancing performance and professionalism in government seems to be an important aspect of this type of support. In Zimbabwe especially, the partner needs to be seen as apolitical and supporting government performance in order to maintain trust and permission, as discussed in Section 4.4.2.

The evidence suggests the *accompaniment* mechanism requires flexible and collaborative partnership, geared towards addressing the performance need for EIPM. Respondents from Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zimbabwe suggested the partnership needs to be collaborative and responsive,¹²⁹ to build trust¹³⁰ and to focus on supporting EIPM expertise through learning-by-doing to meet the performance need.¹³¹ A key feature of support is its flexibility – for example changing pace and introducing different initiatives as required, depending on the opportunities that arise within the government setting. If the *accompaniment* mechanism operates successfully, it seems to create favourable conditions for government organisations to formally adopt the tools and procedures co-created with partners, discussed in the next section.

¹²⁷ 2-24, 2-29, 2-W2, 3-27, 3-10, 4-1, 4-44, 4-W, 5-23, 5-3, 6-18

¹²⁸ 2-9, 3-10, 4-W, 5-3, 5-23

¹²⁹ 2-29, 2W2, 3-10, 3-27, 4-1, 4W, 5-3

¹³⁰ 3-10, 4-1, 4W, 5-23, 6-12, 2-14, 2-29, 2-W2

¹³¹ 3-27, 4-44, 5-23

4.4.4 Technical support leading to formal adoption of new tools and systems, and/or comprehensive systems for EIPM and planning

CIMO 10: Providing technical support to co-produce tools or systems that facilitate staff to use evidence more effectively sparks a high-level decision to formally adopt the tools or systems, when tools link to other government procedures and are backed by sufficient authority. Adoption can be on a small scale (e.g. adopting templates) but, in a context where there are high-level government ‘owners’ of EIPM, adoption can also be large scale (e.g. adopting a comprehensive policy and planning system to promote, embed and monitor the quality of evidence use throughout the policy cycle and into the future).

CIMO 10 unpacked:

Resource provided by BCURE	Context	Intervention factors	Mechanism	Outcome
Technical support to co-produce standardised procedures, together with information about good practice EIPM process and about the importance of EIPM...	... where standardised procedures for evidence use do not exist, or procedures are <i>ad hoc</i> [5] but where there is a top-down demand for evidence [7]...	... where the intervention creates standardised procedures that link to other government procedures [11]; that are authoritative [5], developed through a collaborative process [4], tailored to the setting and user-friendly [4]...	... this sparks a high-level decision to officially adopt EIPM procedures and tools in order to standardise EIPM...	... leading to small-scale government adoption of standardised and systematic EIPM procedures [19], which improve decision-making processes [7], and promote diffusion of EIPM through official procedures [4-anticipated].
Technical support and coaching from a specific government EIPM ‘owner’; and collaboration with others (inside and outside government); and the opportunity to practise a systematic approach to EIPM...	... where there is pressure from senior levels to improve government performance, as well as a strategy to deliver improvement [6]... ... and the EIPM ‘owner(s)’ have a mandate to promote EIPM systems, has high-level political support, and the political environment is conducive to systems and process change... [7]	... where the intervention is collaborative, builds trust and a sense of ownership with government stakeholders [5], aims to help build an EIPM standardised system with quality standards, procedures and monitoring [5] and provides access to technical specialists and sources of useful evidence [5]...		... leading to large-scale government adoption of standardised and systematic EIPM procedures, which improve organisational use, monitoring and quality of EIPM processes [11]; improvements in cross-government coordination [2].

What resources did the interventions provide?

In Kenya and Bangladesh, BCURE partners have provided technical support to co-create specific EIPM guidelines. In Kenya, these guidelines are intended to support officials in MoH and parliament to use evidence in a standardised way through the policy development process. SECURE’s support targeted a single ministry and a single department within parliament. In Bangladesh, the proposed EIPM guidelines are intended to apply across three pilot ministries, and so many of the insights gained through experience in Kenya, Sierra Leone and South Africa will be relevant as the programme moves forward.

In Sierra Leone, ACD has provided a broader range of technical support, information and coaching to help cabinet and line ministries adopt comprehensive systems to embed evidence use. This has involved introducing a comprehensive manual of cabinet procedures, including memo templates for ministries to make submissions to cabinet, structured cabinet meeting protocols and guidelines. The ACD programme also established new and revised structures in the cabinet secretariat, including a Cabinet Policy Review Unit (CPRU), a Cabinet Implementation Monitoring and Strategy Unit (CIMSU) and cabinet focal persons in the line ministries, to help reinforce the use of new procedures. Training and coaching support is also provided to help officials use the new systems.

In South Africa, the impact case found that DPME support to the NES encompassed technical support and coaching to help ministries implement evaluations. This is more than support to stand-alone evaluation reports, but rather involves support within a full ‘lifetime’ cycle of policies and programmes – through planning, cabinet and ministerial approval, implementation, evaluation and re-planning. Senior ministerial stakeholders are actively involved in steering committees to oversee the evaluation process through to the development of implementation plans in response to evaluation findings. DPME support also includes evaluation standards and competencies for government, as well as coaching and training to contribute to their partners’ capacities to use systems (Impact case study report, 2016).

What were the outcome patterns?

Primary evaluation data suggests BCURE activities are leading to ‘small-scale’ formal adoption of new tools or systems. Eighteen interview respondents in Bangladesh, Kenya and Sierra Leone reported that government organisations had or were planning to officially adopt the standardised EIPM procedures co-created through BCURE interventions.¹³² In Kenya, MoH has adopted the EIPM guidelines, and these will become part of its standardised procedures for ISO quality certification and appear on its public portal as official guidance (4-6). The adoption of EIPM guidelines also served to stimulate the production of a broader set of guidelines to standardise policy development processes for use at national and county levels of government in the health sector.¹³³ However, insufficient time has elapsed to observe how widely-used the procedures have been in Kenya.¹³⁴

In Sierra Leone and the South Africa impact case, BCURE and DPME activities led to ‘larger-scale’ improvements in organisational and cross-ministerial monitoring and quality of EIPM decisions and processes, creating comprehensive systems and incentives to sustain the use of evidence.¹³⁵ In Sierra Leone, six respondents reported improved processes as a result of using the new manual of comprehensive cabinet procedures and support from the quality assurance units.¹³⁶ Respondents said the new manual had led to more streamlined submissions featuring better use of information, and had supported better debates in cabinet meetings:

Yes, now the discussion is in line with the memo. The presentation is in line with the memo. There is also time for pre-cabinet briefing especially when there are issues of more technical nature to give insight to ministers of the substance. – Sierra Leone respondent (5-11)

In the South Africa impact case, respondents gave examples of evaluation evidence being used to improve programmes and policies, because the value of EIPM for performance improvement had become evident.¹³⁷ Two respondents gave examples of standardised EIPM systems and processes being adopted into ministerial

¹³² 4-1, 4-14, 4-2, 4-25, 4-26, 4-3, 4-36, 4-39, 4-6, 4-W, 5-10, 5-11, 5-19, 5-27, 5-29, 5-32, 5-5, 6-12

¹³³ 4-1, 4-14, 4-25, 4-26, 4-39

¹³⁴ There was no data from Pakistan relating to this, as the Harvard programme did not have an intervention to develop official procedures in that country.

¹³⁵ 5-11, 5-13, 6-10, 7-4, 7-10, 7-11, 7-12

¹³⁶ 5-10, 5-11, 5-19, 5-27, 5-29, 5-32

¹³⁷ 7-4, 7-5, 7-7, 7-12

systems,¹³⁸ and two further stakeholders suggested the process had contributed to improvements in cross-government coordination on cross-cutting mandates.¹³⁹

There is no relevant monitoring data in relation to this outcome; the evidence in this section is derived solely from primary interviews with BCURE stakeholders.

What mechanisms resulted in the outcome patterns?

The mechanism that was sparked was the decision to officially adopt or formalise EIPM procedures. This is a key mechanism, as it gives a signal that the government is prepared to invest time and resource in prioritising EIPM. For 19 respondents,¹⁴⁰ this mechanism established standard, formal EIPM practices. In Kenya, five respondents felt official adoption, even on a small scale, had given EIPM procedures authority, and would promote diffusion of EIPM norms across national and county governments, as well as parliament.¹⁴¹ However, it is not yet clear if the EIPM guidelines will be used; Stage 3 of the evaluation in 2017 will explore this further.

Many respondents, in four case study countries, also talked about ‘large-scale’ adoption – a decision to formally adopt more comprehensive systems and incentives for evidence use.¹⁴² However, more time is required to observe what has unfolded as a result of this mechanism in Sierra Leone and South Africa. In Stage 3, we will seek to explore in more depth whether all aspects of the mechanism need to operate to generate the desired results.

In what circumstances could the mechanisms operate?

Small-scale adoption seems to happen where existing approaches to evidence use are *ad hoc*, or where there is an absence of standardised procedures, in a setting where there is existing top-down demand for evidence use.¹⁴³ In these cases, respondents suggested new EIPM systems or tools developed through BCURE technical support helped bring structure and consistency to make policy making more efficient.¹⁴⁴ For example, in Kenya, MoH’s mandate changed in 2010 from service delivery to policy making, but its internal procedures have not kept pace, so staff have had no guidance on how to develop policies.¹⁴⁵ In Bangladesh, one respondent suggested the government had many procedures that shape decision making, but the core ‘Rules of Business’ do not include using evidence (6-12). In Sierra Leone, respondents suggested governmental institutions were still evolving, and so standard procedures are missing.¹⁴⁶

In Kenya, adoption happened because EIPM systems were developed through a collaborative process, involving key government stakeholders and tailoring procedures to user needs.¹⁴⁷ Stakeholders from both policy and research departments in the ministry were involved in steering the development of the tools, in collaboration with the external BCURE partner. Respondents were satisfied that the process had consulted widely, respected internal mandates in the ministry and responded to needs across functions. Other respondents were positive about the stepwise approach that made the EIPM guidelines user-friendly, which they felt boded well for wider use.¹⁴⁸

EIPM systems need to be designed in a way that allows them to be standardised and linked to other procedures, if they are to be officially adopted.¹⁴⁹ This means products need to be sufficiently generic to provide a structured process for different sectors and functions. Respondents highlighted that new guidance

¹³⁸ 7-8, 7-9

¹³⁹ 7-11, 7-12

¹⁴⁰ 4-1, 4-14, 4-2, 4-25, 4-26, 4-3, 4-36, 4-39, 4-6, 4-W, 5-10, 5-11, 5-19, 5-27, 5-29, 5-32, 5-5, 6-12

¹⁴¹ 4-1, 4-14, 4-25, 4-26, 4-39

¹⁴² 4-8, 4-14, 4-26, 5-11, 5-13, 6-10, 7-4, 7-5, 7-7, 7-8, 7-9, 7-10, 7-11, 7-12

¹⁴³ 4-1, 4-15, 4-3, 5-5, 6-12

¹⁴⁴ 5-5, 4-1

¹⁴⁵ 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-6

¹⁴⁶ 5-10, 5-32

¹⁴⁷ 4-1, 4-2, 4-25, 4-3

¹⁴⁸ 4-14, 4-25, 4-36, 4-39

¹⁴⁹ 4-14, 4-25, 4-36, 4-39, 5-10, 5-11, 5-19, 5-27, 5-29, 5-32, 5-5

should not contradict other government procedures and compliance responsibilities, something that will be important to consider in Bangladesh. At the same time, new procedures must be authoritative and credible if they are to provide a structure for good practice.¹⁵⁰

Large-scale adoption seems to require the presence of EIPM owners, with a top-level mandate to promote EIPM systems that go beyond piecemeal reforms. The adoption of large-scale comprehensive systems to promote and incentivise EIPM was associated with pressure from senior levels to improve government performance, as well as the presence of an explicit strategy to deliver improvement.¹⁵¹ Respondents suggested the drive for performance improvement spurred demand for evidence, creating the momentum to invest in new systems.¹⁵² For example, in Sierra Leone there were no effective planning procedures for cabinet, leading to low implementation of policies. This provided the entry point for ACD to help accompany (CIMO 9) reform, leading to large-scale adoption of comprehensive cabinet procedures (5-10). In South Africa, the DPME unit itself was set up by the President's Office as part of a broad strategy to strengthen government performance (Impact case study report, 2016).

Many respondents emphasised that EIPM 'owner(s)' were needed to provide a top-down push for adoption – their absence prevents EIPM systems from being embedded.¹⁵³ In Kenya, three high-level respondents felt this authoritative function was a missing piece in the programme.¹⁵⁴ As a result, they felt EIPM would not be given the necessary high-level advocacy, quality assurance and monitoring to really shift systems and practice. However, this formalising function may yet develop in the coming months (SECURE Health programme report 2016). The evaluation will explore this development further in Stage 3 in 2017.

For large-scale adoption, EIPM owners need to be supported by political will, and the political environment needs to be conducive to change, although entry points may differ in different settings. For example, in Sierra Leone the governmental culture is hierarchical and there is a perceived need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of decision making. In this context, implementing a procedure from the top down, with strong endorsement by the president, and enforcement by senior leaders, has obliged ministries to adopt new cabinet procedures (sparking large-scale adoption). If ministry staff wish their submissions to be considered, then the template has to be used, and a desire to impress the top leaders also adds weight.¹⁵⁵

In contrast, in South Africa, with established systems and role players, introducing large-scale systems requires building collaborative relationships and navigating governmental dynamics. South Africa is a complex government environment, with overlapping remits and inter-agency competition. Respondents emphasised the importance of there being a clear political-administrative mandate for an EIPM unit to approach a line ministry to collaborate on systems development, especially if it could affect ministerial legal responsibilities to deliver for citizens.¹⁵⁶ In this setting, interview data suggests that a top-down political-administrative mandate provides only an entry point. The *technical competence* of the EIPM unit and the team's ability to *convene stakeholders*, *promote trust*, *generate collaboration* and *co-production* and demonstrate the *value of evidence* for improving performance all need to be rapidly deployed to spark large-scale adoption in this context.¹⁵⁷

There are some early indications that organisational change for evidence use may ultimately catalyse self-organisation to promote EIPM, whereby ministries may invest in strengthening their own systems and structures for EIPM. In the South African DPME case study, this included one ministry investing in implementing more rigorous processes around evidence and evaluation, using the systems co-developed with DPME; strengthening the monitoring and evaluation unit to collect data more rigorously; and engaging senior

¹⁵⁰ 4-14, 4-25, 4-39, 5-11, 5-32

¹⁵¹ 5-13, 7-4, 7-5, 7-11, 7-12

¹⁵² 5-13, 7-4, 7-5, 7-7, 7-7, 7-11

¹⁵³ 4-8, 4-14, 4-26, 5-11, 5-13, 6-10, 7-4, 7-5, 7-7, 7-8, 7-9, 7-10, 7-11, 7-12

¹⁵⁴ 4-8, 4-14, 4-16

¹⁵⁵ 5-5, 5-10, 5-11, 5-19, 5-27, 5-29, 5-32

¹⁵⁶ 5-13, 7-4, 7-5, 7-7, 7-11, 7-12

¹⁵⁷ 7-8, 7-9, 7-10, 7-11, 7-12

executives in evaluation so that monitoring and evaluation data is considered in management decision making, improvement measures and forward planning, alongside political considerations.¹⁵⁸

Catalysing self-organisation seems to be an appropriate aim for EIPM capacity strengthening, as it leads to self-directed implementation of systems that promote and continue to improve the use of good-quality evidence in decision making. Some of the BCURE programmes show hints of results that point to this ultimate outcome. Given the approaching end of the programmes in 2017, the extent to which governments decide to self-finance (or find new resources to support) structures and systems to operationalise EIPM will be a key question for sustainability, to be explored at Stage 3. However, given the difficult financial situation that many BCURE countries face, self-financing may pose a potential systemic constraint to effective policy implementation and the challenge of using evidence effectively in policy, planning and implementation.

4.4.5 How does change in organisational-level capacity link to interpersonal, organisational and institutional change?

CIMO 11: Tools or systems to promote EIPM spark a facilitation mechanism – they provide practical assistance that enables people to do their jobs better or more easily. This results in the EIPM system or tool being used, (potentially) increasing the value of evidence through demonstrating the benefits it can bring.

CIMO 12: Tools or systems that involve positive or negative incentives to adopt EIPM behaviours spark a reinforcement mechanism, in which positive incentives or risk of negative consequences influence behaviour and lead to individuals deciding to change the way they access, appraise or apply evidence in decision making.

There is still limited evidence on how organisational level tools and systems influence individual behaviour. However, there is some suggestion that evidence-based tools and standard procedures can feed back down to facilitate changed practices in some cases, and reinforce them in others. Tools and systems for EIPM (e.g. EIPM guidelines) are often intended to help individuals do their work better. This maps to the *facilitation* mechanism identified in the literature review and the Stage 1 evaluation – whereby individuals choose to adopt a tool because it helps them, rather than because it is enforced. In other cases, tools and systems aim to *reinforce* behaviour change through providing incentives to individuals to change their practice (e.g. linking use of evidence in decision making to performance reviews, or the likelihood of getting policies approved).

However, in all the settings it was too early to see individual-level outcomes from the use of tools and procedures, in order to test whether they are facilitating or reinforcing changes in individual practice. Early signs were good – for example, in South Africa, the evidence maps were greeted with enthusiasm as genuinely useful tools that would make a difference to people’s work.¹⁵⁹ DPME appears to have combined facilitation and reinforcement in different types of support to ministerial systems to enhance the use of evaluation evidence.

At Stage 3, we will explore whether and how these mechanisms help explain change within the different BCURE programmes.

Providing accompaniment and responsive support to a government partner can result in a strengthened national institutional actor who can continue to build awareness, momentum and demand around EIPM in the wider context. The evidence from Kenya and Zimbabwe suggests the experience of accompanying EIPM organisation change within government is enabling national BCURE partners to enhance their own capacities and relationships and raise their profiles as national ‘institutional players’. This profile can help national partners attract future funding and continue to convene processes to build awareness and demand for EIPM in the national setting. The next section explores this in more detail.

¹⁵⁸ 7-4, 7-8, 7-9

¹⁵⁹ 3-10, 3-15, 3-7, 3-9

Lessons from the evidence on how and why BCURE contributes to organisational change

The opportunity to provide support to organisational change seems to emerge when there is a high-level drive to improve government effectiveness, coupled with a positive discourse around EIPM as a means to improve performance but a lack of clarity in terms of how to develop systems, tools and skills. This is a critical contextual factor, necessary to create the momentum to shift civil service cultures that might be slow to change and establish a receptive initial context for introducing EIPM support at an organisational level. If these conditions are not present, EIPM seems unlikely to gain a foothold, and implementers may be better off considering starting an initial dialogue about the practical value of evidence among government stakeholders.

Organisational change is dynamic, and seems to emerge through four main processes that mutually reinforce and build on each other:

- Numerous individuals applying EIPM skills, improving their work and cascading EIPM learning can allow change to filter from the bottom up. This seems to depend on reaching certain roles and motivated individuals who can change ways of working, as well as changing the behaviour of a large number of officials.
- Co-production and technical support create ‘showcases’ that make the case for the value of EIPM, linking EIPM to improving performance and helping establish relationships with internal sponsors/champions.
- Trusted technical partners can provide responsive support to policy development processes and systems, whereby the external partner works alongside government stakeholders to ‘accompany’ policy or systems development process with specialist support.
- Providing technical support for official procedures, and/or comprehensive systems for EIPM and planning, can stimulate government partners’ decision to adopt official standard procedures for EIPM – either on a small scale (e.g. templates) or on a large scale as a comprehensive system to promote and monitor evidence use throughout the policy cycle, representing the willingness of government to prioritise and invest in EIPM.

Valuing of evidence and trust in a technical partner seem to be key conditions for enabling organisational change. Effective accompaniment seems to successfully align EIPM reforms towards government partners’ aims of enhancing performance and professionalism, and seeks to catalyse existing capacities. It seems important for the partner to be seen as ‘apolitical’ and not associated with any particular policy agendas. Accompanying government partners through processes of reform may also help establish supporting organisations as credible national institutional actors that can continue to build awareness, momentum and demand around EIPM in the wider context.

4.5. Institutional change

Overview

Institutional capacity change refers to change in the broader enabling environment for evidence use outside of government. This includes the role of external actors such as international donors, civil society and the media, and the influence of external factors such as crises, global events and socioeconomic change, as well as broader societal shifts in culture, norms, collective beliefs, attitudes and values. This also includes the institutional role of the BCURE partners themselves within the environments they are operating in.

There is evidence of institutional change in Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe in relation to the role BCURE partners are playing to promote EIPM within their operating environments. VakaYiko has succeeded in increasing the capacity of its national partners to act as EIPM players, with the potential for them to continue to support national EIPM initiatives after the end of the BCURE programme. Similarly, UJ-BCURE has managed to build a network around its programme and has become well integrated with key role players in the evidence landscape – including through its support to the AEN. In the SECURE programme, AFIDEP has become established as an EIPM actor in the East African health sector. However, there is limited evidence of change from the other BCURE programmes, and no evidence at this stage that BCURE is influencing wider institutional

shifts, for example among civil society and the media. Annex 7 contains the evaluation assessments of each programme's contribution to institutional-level change.

The country case studies suggest two main theories (CIMOs) about how BCURE interventions are leading to institutional change.

- Supporting local organisations to deliver EIPM capacity building activities strengthens capabilities through 'learning by doing'. This results in the establishment or strengthening of national institutional actors that can act as a 'hub' for EIPM, are capable of running successful programmes to promote it and are potentially able to continue supporting it once the programme has ended (CIMO 13).
- Where local organisations successfully deliver programme activities and/or explicitly aim to build relationships with government departments and other EIPM actors, this enables partners to 'relate and attract' – providing exposure to new collaborators and leading to increased demand for partners to provide capacity building support for EIPM to new actors not originally targeted by the programme (CIMO 14).

Three further tentative theories have limited data behind them at this stage, but may prove more significant at Stage 3:

- Providing technical support to systems and tools at institutional level may help build linkages between policy, research and other actors in ways that help promote EIPM.
- BCURE programmes may generate a 'showcase effect', in which positive examples of success influence other institutional actors to seek to promote EIPM (or do so in more effective or innovative ways).
- Spaces for dialogue that include the media and the general public may generate external demand for EIPM, putting pressure on government to make more evidence-informed decisions.

CIMOs 13 and 14 are unpacked as follows. First, the sub-section summarises the overall theories (CIMOs) and describes the evidence underpinning them. Second, it describes the relevant interventions and resources BCURE provides. Third, it details the main outcome patterns. Fourth, it discusses the mechanisms that contributed to these outcome patterns. Finally, it analyses the circumstances (context and intervention factors) that enabled or prevented the mechanisms from operating.

4.5.1 Establishing or strengthening a national 'institutional player' to build awareness, momentum and demand around EIPM

CIMO 13: Supporting local organisations to deliver EIPM capacity building activities (directly through organisational capacity support and/or indirectly through providing opportunities for national partners to 'learn on the job') strengthens organisational capabilities through 'learning by doing.' This results in the establishment or strengthening of national institutional actors that can act as a 'hub' for EIPM, are capable of running successful programmes to promote it and are potentially able to continue supporting it once the programme has ended.

CIMO 14: Where local organisations successfully deliver programme activities and/or explicitly aim to build relationships with government departments and other EIPM actors, this enables partners to 'relate and attract' – providing exposure to new collaborators. This leads to increased demand for partners to provide capacity building support for EIPM from new actors not originally targeted by the programme – which can provide a crucial entry point where there are sensitivities around influencing government decisions, and hence where it is difficult for 'outsiders' to gain entry to government organisations.

CIMO 13 and 14 unpacked:

BCURE intervention	Context	Intervention	Mechanism	Outcome
Supporting local organisations to become ‘institutional actors’ for EIPM and build relationships with government and non-government actors		... where local partners have pre-existing capacity for and interest in EIPM [6]...	... this strengthens organisational capabilities through ‘learning by doing’ – including the capabilities to carry out technical tasks, to relate and attract and to commit, engage, adapt and self renew [11]	... resulting in the establishment or strengthening of national institutional actors to promote EIPM [16], which act as a ‘hub’ for EIPM, are capable of running successful EIPM programmes, and can continue supporting EIPM
Successful delivery of programme activities by local partners, and/or activities that explicitly aim to build relationships between partners and government departments/other EIPM actors...	... where there are sensitivities around external agencies influencing government decisions, and/or where building relationships is crucial to gaining entry to government systems... [5]		... enables partners to relate and attract: - Demonstrating their acceptability and credibility as a partner; - Building trust; - Generating a ‘snowball effect’ – providing exposure to new collaborators that generates invitations to other events where further exposure happens... [8]	... resulting in increased interest in and demand for partners to provide capacity building support for EIPM, including from actors not originally targeted by the programme [12].

What resources did the interventions provide?

The BCURE projects are viewed to different degrees as ‘institutional actors’ for EIPM within the different national contexts in which they are working – that is, as institutions with a name or reputation for promoting EIPM. In Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa, the BCURE projects are implemented by a local organisation with a full-time presence on the ground (AFIDEP, ZeipNET and UJ-BCURE). VakaYiko provides support to build the capacity of local partners in Zimbabwe (ZeipNET) and Ghana (GINKS), in order to enable them to continue to support EIPM beyond the lifespan of the BCURE programme. In Bangladesh, Sierra Leone and Pakistan, the projects are implemented largely through local experts contracted in to deliver project activities, and there is less of a clear institutional association with the BCURE activities. In South Africa and beyond, the AEN is becoming an increasingly important institutional actor for EIPM, supported by UJ-BCURE in the hope that it will develop into a sustainable network uniting stakeholders across Africa.

Resources provided by BCURE partners – including information, coaching, spaces for dialogue and technical support – appear important in developing BCURE partners’ reputation and credibility as institutional actors. ZeipNET, UJ-BCURE and AFIDEP have invested time and resources into building relationships between their organisation and government departments as well as other non-governmental players in the EIPM space, in part through using their other interventions to strengthen links with representatives from government and other organisations, and also through having a presence at external, non-BCURE events.

What were the outcome patterns?

Primary evaluation data from Zimbabwe, South Africa and Kenya suggests that national institutional actors promoting EIPM have been established or strengthened, with the potential to continue supporting EIPM

once BCURE has ended.¹⁶⁰ Stakeholders suggested that partners in these countries have increased their capacity to run successful programmes to promote EIPM. For example, they have increased ability to facilitate well-designed training courses and events, conduct monitoring and evaluation and manage communications activities. The evidence of this is strongest in Zimbabwe, where building organisational capacity was a core aim of the VakaYiko programme, and where interview testimony is triangulated with organisational capacity assessments demonstrating improvements in national partner capacity.¹⁶¹

Several stakeholders in these countries observed new or stronger relationships between BCURE partners and governmental or other institutional EIPM actors (e.g. other civil society organisations working on promoting evidence use in policy making).¹⁶² For example, there is stronger collaboration between AFIDEP in Kenya and government and research partners, including collaboration on a concept note for rolling out EIPM training to the whole country.¹⁶³

Finally, there are some signs that BCURE national partners are beginning to act as a ‘hub’ for EIPM. Six stakeholders observed this in South Africa and Zimbabwe – suggesting that national partners (and the AEN in the case of South Africa) are starting to act as an institutional ‘hub’ or ‘centre’ around which conversation, momentum and interest around EIPM can catalyse.¹⁶⁴ For example in South Africa, one stakeholder felt that *‘where an organisation is actually punting [EIPM] it acts as a stimulant’* (3-25); another felt that UJ-BCURE offered a potential location for a dedicated centre for research synthesis (3-26).

There is clear evidence, particularly in South Africa and Zimbabwe, of increased interest in and demand for BCURE partner activities. Several stakeholders from these countries reported this outcome.¹⁶⁵ This includes interest from government and non-government actors within BCURE country contexts who were *not originally targeted* by the programme. In some cases, these actors had specifically requested capacity building on EIPM¹⁶⁶ – for example ZeipNET and UJ-BCURE have received several requests from new organisations for them to run training courses or provide mentoring support. In Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe, BCURE partner staff are also being invited to participate in and present at external events.¹⁶⁷ This interview testimony is supported by programme reporting, which documents the additional requests for capacity support.

Annex 8 provides a full breakdown of the evidence underpinning these outcome patterns from the programme evaluations.

What mechanisms resulted in these outcome patterns?

Baser and Morgan’s five ‘core capabilities’ provides a useful framework to conceptualise the mechanisms that have helped lead these outcomes. The literature review discusses a paper by Baser and Morgan (2008), who articulate five ‘core capabilities’ which they argue ‘can be found in all organisations or systems’ (see Box 5). Four elements of this framework proved useful to help explain how BCURE was contributing to the outcomes above: the capability to carry out technical and logistical tasks, to relate and attract, to commit and engage, and to adapt and self-renew.

¹⁶⁰ 2-1, 2-2, 2-20, 2-33, 2-W1, 2-W2, 3-1, 3-18, 3-20, 3-21, 3-24, 3-25, 3-W, 4-1, 4-26

¹⁶¹ 2-W1, 2-W2, 2-1, 2-2

¹⁶² 2-20, 2-W1, 2-W2, 3-1, 3-18, 3-20, 3-21, 3-25, 3-W, 4-1, 4-26

¹⁶³ 4-1, 4-29

¹⁶⁴ 2-22, 2-33, 2-W1, 2-W2, 3-25, 3-26

¹⁶⁵ 2-11, 2-21, 2-24, 2-27, 2-31, 2-W2, 3-7, 3-20, 3-24, 3-W, 4-29, 4-37

¹⁶⁶ 2-11, 2-21, 2-27, 2-31, 2-W2, 3-W

¹⁶⁷ 2-W2, 3-7, 4-37

Box 5: Core organisational capabilities

Organisations must have the capability to...

- **Commit and engage:** ‘Organisations must be able to have volition, to choose, to empower and to create space for themselves’
- **Carry out technical or logistical tasks** such as project and financial management, programme analysis, communications etc.
- **Relate and attract:** ‘being able to craft, manage and sustain key relationships needed for the organisation to survive’
- **Adapt and self-renew:** the ability to reposition and reconfigure the organisation, incorporate new ideas and map out a growth path
- **Balance diversity and coherence:** the ability to balance a diversity of capabilities, interests, identities and perspectives, with ways to rein in fragmentation in order to retain stability.

(Source: Baser & Morgan, 2008)

National partner capabilities have been built through ‘learning by doing’. There is explicit evidence on this only from Zimbabwe, where ‘learning by doing’ has been a core element of the BCURE approach. However, it seems likely that this mechanism may also be at work in other programmes that involve national partners operating through international consortia, such as AFIDEP (SECURE Health) in Kenya – this will be investigated further at Stage 3. In Zimbabwe, the VakaYiko project has provided ZeipNET with some formal training alongside *ad hoc* technical support with particular activities, to enable ZeipNET staff to try out new things and develop new technical and logistical skills ‘on the job’ (2-W1). VakaYiko’s ‘learning by doing’ approach has also supported ZeipNET and GINKS to relate and attract, including through providing access to INASP’s networks across the continent (2-W1). Finally, the programme is attempting to build ZeipNET’s capacity to adapt and self-renew, through purposefully reducing the frequency and intensity of support provided to national partners over time, in order to hand over progressively more responsibility (2-3). In addition, partners have been supported to develop sustainability plans, in order to help plan for the future once BCURE funding has ended.

Increasing demand for BCURE partner support appears to link closely to partners’ capabilities to relate and attract. In South Africa, UJ-BCURE has prioritised active relationship building with government and external partners, making a deliberate decision to use the full inception phase for this purpose as it formed the ‘bedrock’ for their programme.¹⁶⁸ The programme has worked to establish partnerships in a number of ways, including conducting a stakeholder mapping exercise that drew on various stakeholder perspectives, co-presenting workshops and conference papers and identifying opportunities work with other EIPM actors such as DPME and the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development. All of these activities aimed to demonstrate to government that BCURE had something valuable to offer, creating an entry point to deliver capacity building through partnership.¹⁶⁹

In Zimbabwe, ZeipNET has developed the capability to relate and attract through working effectively with initial partners and being associated with an international consortium with a good reputation. This has strengthened its credibility as a potential partner, resulting in demand from new organisations for capacity support.¹⁷⁰ In both South Africa and Zimbabwe, there also appears to be a ‘snowball effect’ resulting from BCURE partners facilitating or participating in events that provide exposure to new potential partners and collaborators, and which go on to generate invitations to other events where further exposure happens.

In what circumstances could the mechanisms operate?

In Zimbabwe, ‘learning by doing’ was enabled through combining formal and informal support in a collaborative project design. VakaYiko has provided capacity support to ZeipNET through a variety of formal

¹⁶⁸ 3-W, 3-1

¹⁶⁹ 3-1, 3-18, 3-20, 3-23, 3-24 3-25

¹⁷⁰ 2-31, 2-W1, 2-W2

and informal activities – including visits, templates and regular calls with staff from INASP. Staff attributed success to the collaborative design of the project, and the gradual handover of responsibilities.¹⁷¹

The capacity ‘starting point’ of local partners appears important to facilitate ‘learning by doing’ and to catalyse increased demand for support. VakaYiko appears to have been successful in building ZeipNET’s capabilities (particularly to relate and attract) in part because its two main staff members were already working in the field of EIPM, were passionate about the goal of improving evidence use in policy making and already had knowledge and contacts from previous roles (in government and research) to draw on.¹⁷² The programme capitalised on the existing interest and experience of these individuals, giving them the opportunity to work on promoting EIPM within the BCURE programme. Similarly, UJ-BCURE and AFIDEP staff members brought their relationships and expertise from previous roles, which seems to have helped both programmes build good relationships with government stakeholders.¹⁷³ Where these features are lacking, there is some suggestion that it may be difficult for a programme to help establish a credible national EIPM actor. For example, ASI found it difficult to find an appropriate national training institution because there was insufficient capacity in existing organisations (5-3).

In Zimbabwe, there are sensitivities around external agencies influencing government decisions, and in South Africa building relationships is crucial to entry. In these contexts, it was important to have a credible local partner delivering activities. ZeipNET needed to build trust and credibility, and allow informal relationships to take root, in order to gain access to government spaces in Zimbabwe (2-20). In South Africa, the BCURE programme is only one of many actors working to promote EIPM. Where the EIPM space is ‘crowded’, relationship building may be more essential to gain appropriate entry points. UJ-BCURE staff felt that having a team in country was essential to build the relationships necessary for their programme to gain entry to the system – meaning they could be more responsive and attend events and be viewed as ‘part of things’ within South Africa.¹⁷⁴

There is some suggestion that successful relationship building may link to an ability to present EIPM as a ‘neutral’ concept. For ZeipNET and to a lesser extent UJ-BCURE it was viewed as important that the organisations were politically ‘neutral’ – promoting EIPM as an issue of professionalisation or technical skills, rather than from the perspective of holding the government to account.¹⁷⁵ This is particularly important in Zimbabwe, where organisations thought to be associated with a regime change agenda may be side-lined (2-W1).

4.5.2 Influencing wider shifts in the institutional environment

As yet, there is limited evidence that BCURE is influencing wider shifts in the institutional environment, beyond the establishment of national institutional actors for EIPM. However, three further tentative theories are emerging at institutional level. As yet, these theories have limited evidence behind them, but they may prove more significant at Stage 3.

Emerging institutional-level theories

- Providing technical support to systems and tools at institutional level may help build linkages between policy, research and other actors in ways that help promote EIPM.
- BCURE programmes may generate a ‘showcase effect’, in which positive examples of success influence other institutional actors to seek to promote EIPM (or do so in more effective or innovative ways).
- Spaces for dialogue that include the media and the general public may generate external demand for EIPM, putting pressure on government to make more evidence-informed decisions.

¹⁷¹ 2-W1, 2-W2

¹⁷² 2-33, 2-W1

¹⁷³ 3-7, 3-25, 4-1, 4-26, 4-39

¹⁷⁴ 3-1, 3-10, 3-25

¹⁷⁵ 3-W, 3-20, 2-20, 2-W1

Providing technical support to systems and tools at institutional level may help build linkages between policy, research and other actors that in turn help promote EIPM. There are some signs that this may be starting to happen in Kenya and South Africa. SECURE is supporting the national Research 4 Health Policy Framework in Kenya, which (if implemented) may result in changes in relationships and investments between government, research agencies and development partners.¹⁷⁶ UJ-BCURE has provided support to an ‘evidence map’ process, which has served to bring together researchers and government stakeholders within the human settlements sector and created the opportunity to align the priorities of both.¹⁷⁷ The South Africa impact case found DPME had supported an ECD Community of Practice through its facilitation of the ECD evaluation, which encouraged engagement between government and civil society.¹⁷⁸

In two and a half years to have seen the sector shift from one which was very competitive among civil society, with government pretty much disengaged from civil society and saying we’re not prepared to engage with such a diverse and fragmented civil society, to now having, within two years, this community of practice – civil society informant, South Africa impact case (7-11)

BCURE programmes may generate a ‘showcase effect’, influencing how other civil society or research actors seek to promote EIPM. The VakaYiko small grants programme aimed to fund and pilot innovative new approaches to supporting EIPM in order to learn lessons about what types of approaches worked, and document them through case studies. The programme has also produced an EIPM toolkit, with the hope that it will be picked up by non-governmental organisations and other actors and adapted for use in their sectors (2-3). There are also some signs that SECURE in Kenya and ZeipNET in Zimbabwe may have provided other research organisations with ideas about how to promote EIPM, which the latter have adopted into programming.¹⁷⁹ These examples seem to point to an institutional-level ‘showcase effect’, similar to CIMO 11 – in which positive examples of success in building capacity for EIPM influence other institutional actors, encouraging them to promote EIPM themselves (or to do so in more effective or innovative ways).

Spaces for dialogue that include the media and the general public may generate external demand for EIPM, putting pressure on government to make more evidence-informed decisions. VakaYiko’s knowledge cafés are underpinned by the idea that raising awareness among the media and the general public around the importance of EIPM will lead to journalists deciding to publish more stories holding government to account for evidence use in decision making, and the general public putting pressure on political figures about EIPM (in a context where demand and capacity for EIPM is also being built through other means, e.g. through training and mentoring) (2-W2). However, the VakaYiko programme evaluation found very little evidence to help test this theory, and raised some doubt on whether it is a realistic aim – given the small number of knowledge cafés (three conducted to date) and the fact that participant lists suggest relatively few members of the public attend.

4.5.3 How does change at institutional level link to individual, interpersonal and organisational change?

Sustainable national EIPM actors continue to provide the resources that spark change at other levels, and act as a ‘hub’ for actors to come together and collaborate to promote EIPM. If a sustainable national actor is established, they can continue providing the various forms of resources described throughout Section 4 in order to catalyse change at individual, interpersonal and organisational levels. For example, in Zimbabwe, the hope is that ZeipNET will become the ‘go to providers’ for EIPM training courses (2-3). An established institutional partner may also go on to accompany government partners to implement organisational reforms (CIMO 9). The evidence at Stage 2 suggests some BCURE actors are beginning to be viewed as an institutional ‘hub’ or ‘centre’ around which national conversation, momentum and interest around EIPM can catalyse. This may bring people together and encourage conversation about EIPM, leading to new relationships and collaborations (CIMO 4), as well as building interest and demand for capacity support (CIMO 14), as long as

¹⁷⁶ 4-1, 4-5, 4-26, 4-37

¹⁷⁷ 3-7, 3-10, 3-19

¹⁷⁸ 7-11, 7-12

¹⁷⁹ 2-11, 4-37, 4-W

financing can be mobilised. At this stage, there is relatively little evidence on what makes such a ‘hub’ coalesce, attract funding and succeed – this is something to explore further at Stage 3.

Lessons from the evidence on how and why BCURE contributes to institutional change

Some BCURE partners are beginning to evolve into ‘national institutional actors’ for EIPM, which may have the potential to continue supporting EIPM once BCURE has ended, and which are attracting demand for additional support from new institutional players. The capacity of national partners (to carry out technical tasks, to relate and attract and to commit, engage, adapt and self-renew) have been built through ‘learning by doing’, enabled through combining formal and informal support in a collaborative project design. In some cases partners are starting to act as a ‘hub’ for EIPM, around which national conversation, momentum and interest around EIPM can catalyse. The capacity ‘starting point’ of local partners appears important – both to facilitate ‘learning by doing’ and to catalyse increased demand.

Where there are sensitivities around external agencies influencing government decisions, or where building relationships is crucial to entry, it may be important to have a credible local partner delivering activities. Successful relationship building may also be enabled when the national partner has the ability to present EIPM as a ‘neutral’ concept, and can mobilise resources to support collaborations.

As yet, there is limited evidence that BCURE is influencing wider shifts in the institutional environment, beyond the establishment of national institutional actors for EIPM. However, three further tentative theories are emerging at institutional level, which have limited evidence behind them but which may prove more significant at Stage 3. Providing technical support to systems and tools at institutional level may help build linkages between policy, research and other actors in ways that help promote EIPM; BCURE programmes may generate a ‘showcase effect’, in which positive examples of success influence other institutional actors to seek to promote EIPM (or do so in more effective or innovative ways); and spaces for dialogue that include the media and the general public may generate external demand for EIPM, putting pressure on government to make more evidence-informed decisions.

4.6. Change in the quality of policy processes

The overall objective of BCURE is to improve the quality of policy processes through increased use of evidence. Our theory is that *changes in the quality of policy development processes* emerge from multidimensional capacity change across individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional domains, which supports better and more routine use of evidence. In summary, a policy process can be considered ‘good quality’ in relation to its use of evidence if: multiple types of evidence were considered in the process, the quality of evidence was seriously considered, and the process of decision making involved engagement with evidence (accessing it, appraising it, discussing it) at multiple points, with multiple stakeholders, in a way that enabled real debate and discussion on the issues raised by evidence, and where evidence had a demonstrable influence on the way issues were conceptualised and decisions made.

In this section we describe the emerging policy-level outcomes observed at Stage 2, and explain how BCURE capacity building appears to be contributing to better quality policy processes.

4.6.1 Summary of policy-level outcomes per programme at Stage 2

There is limited evidence at Stage 2 of changes in the quality of policy development processes as a result of BCURE interventions. However, there are some examples of BCURE support leading to short-term improvements in the way that evidence was considered, and standardised procedures enabling better-informed debate about policy and the evidence to support it.

The BCURE programme evaluation reports highlighted the following outcomes at policy level (Annex 7 contains full assessments of each programme’s contribution to policy-level change)

- Harvard’s support to pilot projects seems to be spurring short-term uses of evidence – for example one pilot involved developing a system to geo-spatially map crime clusters, which enabled data to be more

easily visualised and used for decision making. There is little evidence as yet that the pilot projects are contributing to systematic change in how evidence is used in policy processes. However, there is some evidence of government departments taking an interest, and considering integrating the systems and tools developed through the pilots into organisational structures that could lead to more systematic change.

- SECURE has provided ‘accompaniment’ to high-profile policies, such as health financing and free maternal health services, bringing in evidence and convening technical working groups. The team has also supported concrete follow-up actions from policy cafés. The supported policies are considered to have been ‘enriched’ through SECURE’s involvement and have created ‘showcase’ examples, but the recommended investment needed from MoH to improve policy development processes has yet to emerge.
- In Zimbabwe, VakaYiko contributed to the decision to establish the Research and Policy Unit in the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenisation and Empowerment, and ZeipNET is providing valuable ongoing support to the functioning of this unit. Policy dialogues and (to a lesser extent) knowledge cafés have resulted in some concrete follow-up actions, and there are examples of trainees influencing policy processes through applying the skills learned in training. Secondary evidence suggests that VakaYiko’s work in supporting a research framework within the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in South Africa is contributing to improved processes for evidence prioritising within the department.
- There is early evidence that UJ-BCURE mentoring support which focuses on specific policy processes may be leading to increased and better consideration of evidence within these processes.
- ACD has contributed to positive changes in how policy is made in Sierra Leone, through its support to new structures and processes that enable more proposal scrutiny, interaction between ministries, more cabinet discussion and better-structured presentation of policy. These changes are all enabling more debate about policy and the evidence to support it. However, the changes are largely around the summarising and more streamlined *presentation* of evidence, rather than representing a significant change in the *quality or use* of evidence.

Insights from the impact case study in South Africa suggest how support to EIPM systems and capacities can influence the quality of policy development processes. The case study highlighted the following outcomes, as a result of DPME support to the ECD and Business Process Services (BPS) evaluations:

- Enhanced reliance on evidence from multiple sources and greater clarity on what an ‘evidence approach’ demands of individuals, departments and government systems.
- Increased use of improvement plans, and regular reporting on them; increased accountability arising from enhanced use of evidence.
- The majority of (evidence-informed) recommendations from the BPS evaluation were approved and implemented by the department, and the evaluation was taken to parliament as a ‘success story’ (7-15) *‘Eighty percent of the recommendations were adopted and have already been implemented, including increasing the length of the incentive (three to five years)’* (7-9).
- While evidence was used before DPME provided support for the BPS evaluation, the exercise was seen as helping the department become more systematic in its approach to EIPM.

While the Stage 2 evidence suggests some interesting early results at the policy level, there are important limitations and questions about sustainability. Many of the policy-level outcomes discussed above are short term or still emerging, and relate to changes that are still being closely supported by BCURE as external partner. While the Stage 2 evidence suggests good momentum for change has been built in the case study countries, summative conclusions about the extent of policy-level change and its sustainability will not be clear until Stage 3.

4.6.2 How and why does capacity building influence the quality of policy processes?

The evidence on how and why capacity building influences the quality of policy processes is limited at Stage 2. However, there are some examples of capacity building firstly improving *evidence products* and therefore feeding more or better quality evidence into informing policy processes, and secondly improving *processes and incentives* which facilitate decision makers to consider evidence in new or better ways when developing policy.

Box 5 summarises our working definition of ‘policy quality,’ as described in Section 3.2.

Box 5: Working definition of ‘policy quality’

A policy development process can be considered to be ‘good quality’ in relation to its use of evidence if:

1. Multiple types of evidence were considered in the process – including but not limited to research evidence (e.g. also including public opinion, process and practice knowledge, critical and reflective knowledge).
2. The quality of evidence was seriously considered (in a way that took into account standards of evidence, while also accepting the limitations of evidence hierarchies).
3. The process of decision making involved engagement with evidence (accessing it, appraising it, discussing it)...
 - a. ... at multiple points...
 - b. ... with multiple stakeholders with different viewpoints and perspectives...
 - c. ... in a way that enabled real debate and discussion on the issues raised by evidence...
 - d. ... and where evidence had a demonstrable influence on the decisions made (thinking beyond ‘instrumental’ influence to also consider less direct pathways of influence, for example on how people conceptualise issues).

As discussed above, there is limited evidence at Stage 2 of changes in policy development processes as a result of BCURE programmes. However, the emerging changes discussed above came about through two main change pathways, which cast some early light on our working definition of policy quality outlined in Box 5.

1. **Capacity building leading to improvements in *evidence products* (i.e. how evidence is prioritised, analysed, visualised and presented in briefing notes, evaluations etc).** Improvements in evidence products mean new *types* of evidence are fed into a policy process (dimension 1 in Box 5) and/or better *quality* evidence (dimension 2). For example, some trainees in Kenya and Zimbabwe have used their new skills to develop briefing notes that have been discussed in committees to formulate policy, strengthen scrutiny or conduct better-quality bill analysis within parliamentary committees, meaning fewer amendments are required when the bill comes to the floor (outcomes arising from CIMO 1). This is also a key pillar of DPME’s support to the South Africa NES: good-quality evaluations, which consider evidence from multiple sources and make a judgement on the quality of evidence, providing a key resource to inform decision making (an outcome arising from CIMO 10).
2. **Capacity building leading to improved *processes and incentives* to consider evidence within policy processes.** This relates to dimension 3 of our working definition of policy quality – processes that facilitate and incentivise decision makers to explicitly consider evidence (at multiple points, with multiple stakeholders, in a way that enables debate and discussion, and where evidence has a demonstrable impact on decisions made). In South Africa, DPME has created incentives for ministries to engage with evidence through ‘improvement plans’ that aim to ensure evidence has a demonstrable influence on decisions, in the form of actions being taken on the evidence-informed recommendations produced by the NES evaluations. Improvement plans must be submitted alongside the evaluations and regularly reported on (outcomes linked to CIMO 10 – large-scale adoption). Similarly, the cabinet memo template introduced in Sierra Leone provides both a process to engage with evidence when developing policy, and an incentive though insisting on consultation with other ministries before submission. However, as discussed above, it is not clear how far the process is affecting the *quality* of evidence considered (dimension 2 in Box 5), or the ultimate *use* of evidence (dimension 3d).

Other examples relate specifically to dimensions 3b and 3c of our definition – BCURE partners actively creating opportunities for multiple stakeholders to feed evidence into a policy process. For example,

VakaYiko facilitated policy dialogues in Zimbabwe that included consultation with external groups and influenced thinking around specific policies (arising from CIMO 4). The ACTS programme (supported through VakaYiko's small grants) influenced the Kenya Climate Change Bill through bringing together key stakeholders at roundtables, to inform the process through research-based dialogue (VakaYiko case study), while SECURE's support to the health financing policy also convened technical dialogues to ensure evidence was considered (arising from CIMO 9).

At Stage 3, these insights will be integrated into more detailed theories about how and why capacity change at individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional level contributes to change in the quality of policy processes. Policy-level outcomes will also be explicitly assessed against the dimensions of policy quality in Box 5, both to assess how far BCURE capacity building has contributed to improvements in policy processes, and to enable critical reflection on and development of what 'policy quality' means in the context of evidence use.

5. Conclusions and implications

This report has explored how and why capacity building for EIPM works and does not work, for whom and in what circumstances. There are important insights into how and why the support provided by BCURE partners has catalysed capacities. Interventions at different levels influence outcomes in multiple domains, which then start to combine and reinforce each other. At Stage 2 of the evaluation, there is a good spread of evidence of positive change in many of the case study countries, although this is more tentative at the organisational levels, as it is drawn mainly from primary evaluation data. The BCURE programmes each started through different entry points, but findings suggest changes at different levels need to be catalysed in order to significantly influence the way evidence is used in policy processes. Individual-level changes are unlikely to ‘filter up’ to influence organisational change without high-level support that helps facilitate this, and top-down reforms may create improved systems for policy making but may not necessarily support people to use evidence in ways that are genuinely useful to their work.

How sustainable these changes will prove is not yet clear, as summative judgements cannot be made until Stage 3. The changes observed at Stage 2 represent important foundations for promoting evidence use in decision making. However, the BCURE programmes are nearing their completion, and there are questions as to how sustainable change will be when BCURE is no longer there to animate and catalyse government partners. Where there are examples of improved evidence use in policy making, this is generally at an early stage and still actively supported by BCURE partners. As the novelty of evidence use declines and it is incorporated into normal business, momentum may well stall, and the picture at Stage 3 may show compromises in the extent and sustainability of the results.

The Stage 2 analysis has built on Stage 1 to identify and further develop a wide range of theories about how BCURE appears to be contributing to change at different levels, but it does not verify these theories. The explanations of change discussed in this report are those espoused by a range of stakeholders, with insights triangulated across sources and countries. However, the Stage 2 evaluation is formative rather than summative, aiming to identify what the main emerging outcomes of BCURE are, and develop more detailed hypotheses about how these are unfolding. The data limitations discussed in Section 3.8 have limited how far it has been possible to systematically *test* the CIMOs, to assess whether change actually happened in the ways hypothesised rather than in some other way. The Stage 3 evaluation process will be designed to robustly verify a narrower range of outcomes, and enable CIMOs to be systematically tested against alternative explanations of change. This is discussed below.

At Stage 2, the emerging evidence from the six case study countries suggests capacity support for EIPM is most effective if three overarching contextual factors are in place, or are created. First, there has to be a high-level interest in improving the effectiveness of government through better use of evidence, which creates receptiveness for capacity building activities, incentivises individuals to apply new learning in their work and allows organisational systems and processes to take root. This interest may exist within a specific organisation (e.g. where senior stakeholders anticipate benefits from promoting EIPM), and/or across government as part of a broad positive discourse around EIPM. Second, it appears to help when EIPM is aligned to an improvement and professionalisation agenda, avoiding political connotations. Finally, the practical value of evidence to improve government performance and effectiveness has to be demonstrated – for example through the quality of individuals’ work improving, or through new products or processes that showcase the value of evidence – which help build senior buy-in for EIPM and create a positive context for change to be formalised within organisations.

The Stage 2 evidence provides early insights into how BCURE capacity building is starting to contribute to better-quality policy processes. First, there are some examples of capacity building improving *evidence products* (i.e. how evidence is prioritised, analysed, visualised and presented in briefing notes, evaluations etc), and therefore feeding more or better quality evidence into policy processes. Second, capacity building is creating or improving *processes and incentives* (e.g. cabinet memos, improvement plans and consultation channels) for decision makers to consider a wider range of evidence more thoroughly within policy processes. These insights will be explored in more detail at Stage 3.

Although only emerging at Stage 2, the evaluation findings add interesting nuances about politics and power to the core BCURE assumption that capacity development is the entry point to enhance EIPM and the quality of policy processes. The Stage 2 findings highlight the need to work politically, build trust and relationships and support the development of governmental institutions, if EIPM is to be embedded. These findings offer a broader view of capacity development for EIPM, moving beyond the original focus in BCURE on technical skills and systems, for example, towards understanding and using systematic reviews. The original programme models drew to varying extents on ‘rational’, technical approaches to EIPM (discussed in the BCURE literature review). Over time, many of the programmes have increasingly focused on building trust and relationships within government departments to support changes in decision making processes. This approach chimes with the view built into the evaluation from the start, highlighted by the literature review, of the inherent tension between approaching EIPM as a purely technical issue and the realities of developing country governments as complex systems infused with power and politics.

Stage 2 findings suggest that, if capacity building for EIPM combines building of technical skills and systems with approaches to build trust and relationships, these could together support improved processes and performance in government institutions. In this way, capacity building for EIPM could well offer an entry point to improving the quality of policy and decision making processes, and, through this, support broader governance reforms. The final section of the report offers some tentative guidance on how technical and institution building approaches might be combined.

Finally, taking a more political lens to understand capacity development for EIPM underlines that, ultimately, political factors will inevitably affect the extent to which evidence is considered in policy making. The experience of DPME in South Africa, as well as that of other governments, suggests that, even after the large-scale adoption of policy, planning and decision making processes that encourage better use of evidence, many potential blockages may prevent this from leading to ‘better-quality policy processes’. Nevertheless, the BCURE programmes are generating important insights into how evidence use can be strengthened and promoted in order to move away from purely political or ideological decision making.

The emerging programme theory at Stage 2 maps the different entry points and outcomes. It illustrates how changes at different levels combine through a range of CIMOs to create momentum for change at all levels. Figure 3 presents our revised Stage 2 programme theory, and depicts how the CIMOs discussed throughout Section 4 interlink to catalyse outcomes at different levels.

The findings at Stage 2 represent an incomplete picture, with one more year of data to be collected to provide firm summative conclusions. Therefore it is not yet possible to offer fully supported recommendations for future programmes. However, there are important insights for BCURE programme teams and the wider EIPM community, so we present the implications below for those considering similar interventions, with the caveat that these should be treated as tentative at this stage.

5.1. Implications for programmes working at individual level

In order to change individuals’ behaviour, activities that provide information about EIPM should be tailored to meet the specific needs of trainees within the workplace, and be accompanied by opportunities to practise skills. The evidence suggests training sparks self-efficacy and leads to behaviour change when it is tailored in such a way as to be directly relevant to participants’ day jobs – that is, participants will be able to immediately apply their learning when they are back at their desks. The evidence supports the view that participants in specific roles should be targeted – that is, roles where individuals are working on policy and decision making processes that would benefit from evidence use, and where individuals have scope to put their skills into practice and introduce new ways of working. Training interventions support behaviour change when they deliver practical content geared to the day-to-day work that individuals are engaged in – for example using ‘live’ examples – and apply participatory pedagogical approaches, following the principles of adult learning theory. There is some evidence that follow-up support can help trainees put skills into practice, but this appears to work only when trainees have intrinsic motivation to complete their projects (linked to how relevant projects are to their work) and/or there is organisational support (manifested in trainees being able to set aside enough time to produce a final policy brief).

As a standalone intervention, short workshops that do not provide space for practising skills are unlikely to result in widespread application of new learning, although they may raise awareness of EIPM concepts. There is some suggestion that this might be a ‘first step’ towards behaviour change that can be furthered through other interventions – for example, in South Africa, UJ-BCURE workshops helped introduce mentees to the programme and provided them with an initial level of awareness that the mentorship could build on.

Training programmes are more likely to result in behaviour change if organisational support and incentives exist, and where trainees’ supervisors are engaged. The evidence suggests that, where there is recognised need within the organisation or a broadly positive discourse around EIPM at a national level, training and coaching that provide relevant skills that meet a performance need, when combined with activities that engage managers and that also build in spaces for dialogue, may overcome the constraints of hierarchical cultures and lead to individuals changing behaviours and practices.

Numerous individuals applying EIPM skills, improving their work and cascading EIPM learning can cause individual change to catalyse organisational change from the ‘bottom up’. This seems to depend on reaching certain roles and motivated individuals who can change ways of working, as well as changing the behaviour of a large number of officials. When interventions are targeting junior-level staff, the anticipated pathway to organisational and policy change should be considered, and steps should be taken to mitigate potential barriers and blockages, for example by engaging supervisors and senior managers appropriately.

Where it is not possible to start implementing organisational reforms immediately, activities such as training and mentoring can generate the buy-in for programmes to begin providing technical support for organisational reform. This could be a particularly important ‘way in’ in contexts where it is not possible to start working directly at organisational level, such as where access to government is difficult to secure.

5.2. Implications for programmes working at interpersonal or network level

Spaces for dialogue can create and strengthen connections or generate a sense of closeness and trust, resulting in new and improved relationships. This seems more likely to happen when these spaces enable open, informal dialogue and ensure the ‘right’ composition of people (e.g. inviting key individuals from communities that are currently not well connected or that work in silos, and including senior and well-known people to attract others to attend) and in contexts where existing networks are weak or dysfunctional but where there is a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM.

Changes in relationships are a *stepping stone towards* EIPM, rather than an end in themselves. New relationships alone will not result in changes to the way evidence is used in policy making; it is what people do with these relationships that matters. Where participants have motivation or opportunities to utilise new contacts (including opportunities created by a programme), this can catalyse change at other levels. For example, individuals may share information or advice and through this improve how evidence is utilised within a particular policy process; new contacts may lead to new organisational collaborations. It is not clear whether any specific intervention features help new contacts leap into new collaborations – Stage 3 will explore this further.

Spaces for dialogue can be built into other interventions, to provide opportunities for the people targeted through training or technical support to make connections with others. It may be valuable for practitioners to explicitly think about how their activities might be designed to help spark new connections and collaborations – for example through training courses bringing together stakeholders from different organisations where interaction is not currently happening but could feasibly be useful, carefully considering group dynamics, promoting group support mechanisms, having an eye on future collaboration potential when setting up mentoring relationships or building in ample time for training groups to set the agenda and share challenges and lessons in a collaborative way.

5.3. Implications for programmes working at organisational level

The opportunity to provide support to organisational change seems to emerge when there is a high-level drive to improve government effectiveness, coupled with a positive discourse around EIPM as a means to improve performance, but a lack of clarity in terms of how to develop systems, tools and skills. This is a

critical contextual factor, necessary to create the momentum to shift civil service cultures that might be slow to change, and establish a receptive initial context for introducing EIPM support at an organisational level. If these conditions are not present, EIPM seems unlikely to gain a foothold, and it may be better to start by stimulating an initial dialogue about the practical value of evidence among government stakeholders.

If there is a positive discourse about EIPM, technical support to co-produce new tools or systems to promote EIPM can showcase the practical value of evidence for planning and policy making. This requires a collaborative approach, involving government and technical specialists in a genuinely interdisciplinary team, in order to create an evidence tool or an evidence-informed process that is highly tailored to needs, and owned by government partners. This can create an inspiring example that shows how evidence use can be adopted into practice and generates a stronger valuing of evidence among government partners, which is essential to create the conditions for wider organisational change.

Valuing of evidence and trust in a technical partner is a key condition for operating the *accompaniment* mechanism, where a trusted partner is given permission and access to provide responsive support to government departments. Trust and credibility can be built through a number of ‘entry point’ interventions, including training, but depend on the partner maintaining a collaborative and responsive approach that focuses on enhancing stakeholders’ EIPM expertise through learning by doing in their day-to-day work. Effective accompaniment seems to successfully align EIPM reforms towards government partners’ aims of enhancing performance and professionalism, and seeks to catalyse existing capacities. It seems important for the partner to be seen as ‘apolitical’ and not associated with any particular policy agendas. Accompanying government partners through processes of reform may also help establish supporting organisations as credible national institutional actors, which can continue to build awareness, momentum and demand around EIPM in the wider context.

The decision to adopt official EIPM procedures or systems is a key mechanism for organisational change, as it represents the willingness of government to prioritise and invest in EIPM. Our analysis found that, if government ‘owners’ or sponsors of EIPM exist, or have been catalysed through accompaniment, this enables the adoption of EIPM procedures or systems. If there is an EIPM owner with a high-level mandate to develop systems from the top down, adoption can be large scale, involving investment in comprehensive systems for planning and policy making that allow space for, encourage and incentivise the use of evidence in ways that support improved decision making processes. If an EIPM ‘owner’ or configuration of government ‘owners’ for EIPM do not already exist, it may be useful for interventions to consider how this function could be developed or catalysed, in order to support a move towards large-scale adoption of EIPM in planning and policy making systems.

Organisational-level change can then filter down to influence individual behaviour through tools and systems that spark facilitation or reinforcement mechanisms. There is relatively limited evidence on these mechanisms as yet, but tools or systems to promote EIPM may provide practical assistance that *facilitates* people to do their jobs better or more easily. This results in the EIPM system or tool being used, and (potentially) increasing the value of evidence through demonstrating the benefits it can bring. Tools and systems can also create positive or negative incentives that *reinforce* EIPM behaviours, leading to individuals deciding to change the way they access, appraise or apply evidence in decision making.

5.4. Implications for programmes working at institutional level

Some BCURE partners may be evolving into ‘national institutional actors’ for EIPM, attracting demand for additional support from new partners. Building the capabilities of national partners can allow them to continue to promote EIPM beyond the lifespan of the programme. Where there are sensitivities around external agencies influencing government decisions, or where building relationships is crucial to entry, it may be important to have a credible local partner delivering capacity building activities. Support to national organisations should ensure a focus on building their capability to relate and attract, as well as developing technical and practical skills, to enable them to engage other actors and stimulate demand for further capacity support in future.

As yet, there is limited evidence that BCURE is influencing wider shifts in the institutional environment, beyond the establishment of national institutional actors for EIPM. However, three further tentative theories are emerging at institutional level, which have limited evidence behind them but which may prove more significant at Stage 3. Providing technical support to systems and tools at institutional level may help build linkages between policy, research and other actors in ways that help promote EIPM; BCURE programmes may generate a ‘showcase effect’, in which positive examples of success influence other institutional actors to seek to promote EIPM (or do so in more effective or innovative ways); and spaces for dialogue that include the media and the general public may generate external demand for EIPM, putting pressure on government to make more evidence-informed decisions.

5.5. Implications for the evaluation

The Stage 2 synthesis process has given rise to lessons and implications for the Stage 3 evaluation. These have been discussed and agreed with the BCURE evaluation Steering Committee as part of the review and revisions of this report.

The Stage 3 evaluation design should investigate a smaller number of outcomes and CIMOs in more depth, rather than attempt to cover the full breadth of outcomes at individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional levels. ‘Breadth vs depth’ has been a major challenge for the evaluation, as reflected in Section 3.8. It proved difficult to ensure that the full range of outcomes and theories across various levels of change were systematically examined and insights fully triangulated, within the time available for each of the six country case studies. For similar reasons, it has been a challenge at Stage 2 to systematically integrate features of the macro-political context into our emerging theories. The data limitations discussed in Section 3.8 also affected how far it has been possible to systematically *test* the CIMOs, to assess whether change actually happened in the ways hypothesised rather than in some other way. A major learning point for others conducting realist evaluations is the need to prioritise elements of the programme theory to investigate, as attempting to robustly test theory across the full range of programme outcomes may not be feasible. A prioritisation exercise will be conducted with DFID during the Stage 3 design phase, to select priority CIMOs to investigate. The evaluation team will then develop indicators for the main outcomes we have observed to date, and design an approach to test evidence against these indicators based on available data sources within each country.

At Stage 3, the evaluation team should integrate a more explicit investigation of political economy issues into the evaluation design, in order to systematically investigate how features of the macro political context give rise to or inhibit mechanisms of change. The ‘breadth vs depth’ challenge also placed limitations at Stage 2 on how far it was possible to systematically investigate macro-contextual features of case study contexts (e.g. political, socio-economic and cultural factors), and their influence on the outcomes anticipated by BCURE. This will be addressed at Stage 3 through incorporating a more explicit assessment of political economy issues into the evaluation design.

The Stage 3 design should attempt to further mitigate risks of confirmation bias through increasing the number and range of stakeholders consulted, and revisiting the possibility of accessing secondary documentation. As discussed in Section 3.8, confirmation bias is a very real possibility in interviews with BCURE stakeholders. The evaluation team identified this as a risk in the Stage 1 and 2 design of the BCURE evaluation, a concern that was reiterated by the evaluation Steering Committee as part of the review process for this report. For Stage 3, the evaluation team will revisit the purposive sampling approach and the allocation of resources for case studies, to enable a wider range of stakeholders to be consulted in order to provide more in-depth triangulation of findings. The evaluation team will also revisit the possibility of accessing secondary documents (e.g. policy documentation) to verify the presence or absence of (particularly organisational level) outcomes.

6. Revised programme theory at the end of Stage 2

The refined CIMOs at Stage 2, discussed throughout Section 4, were used to revise the overall programme theory. The revised programme theory narrative and summary diagram are key outputs of Stage 2 and will be used as to frame the forthcoming Stage 3 evaluation. The narrative and diagram are presented below.

When the programme ‘entry point’ is through interventions at individual level...

- Providing information about EIPM (its importance, and how to access, appraise and apply evidence in decision making), alongside opportunities to practise skills, generate self-efficacy (a feeling of ‘now I know how’) and lead to behaviour change when training is directly relevant, there is management support and training comes at the ‘right time’ for the organisation (CIMO 1).
- Coaching provides *encouragement*, which generates or embeds a feeling of self-efficacy (‘now I know how’); *contacts and sponsorship* that give access to useful networks; and *advice and a guiding hand* that promote understanding and builds confidence. This can result in participants changing their behaviour in relation to EIPM where they have either personal motivation or organisational incentives to do so. Success depends on coaching being driven by clear objectives based on participants’ needs, and the coach having the right interpersonal and professional qualities to provide for these needs (CIMO 2).
- Facilitated spaces for dialogue and collaboration can enable advice and sharing of perspectives to generate knowledge and influence attitudes about EIPM, including learning about what others have done when facing similar challenges. This is made possible where interventions bring together diverse groups of people with relevant interests, and provide space to share challenges, in a context of a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM. However, this learning may be put into only use if there are existing direct opportunities to do so, although spaces for dialogue potentially create a conducive context for other interventions to stimulate behaviour change at a later stage (CIMO 3).
- Providing individual-level support (such as training or coaching) in a sensitive, collaborative way can provide a ‘foot in the door’ for BCURE partners, generating permission and buy in for them to begin implementing organisational reforms – this could be a particularly important ‘way in’ in contexts where it is not possible to start working directly at organisational level, for example where access to government is difficult to secure (CIMO 5).

When individuals began using evidence more in their day-to-day work, this can catalyse organisational change as follows:

- When a sufficient number of individuals (including some with leadership roles) begin accessing, appraising and applying evidence more in their work, this can ‘filter up’ and lead to higher-level recognition of the value of an evidence-informed approach – through senior staff seeing and being impressed by good-quality evidence products and through these products feeding into senior decision making processes and improving them (CIMO 6).
- When individual support influences individuals in mid-level roles, who are committed and passionate and who have supportive senior management, they can formally cascade their learning through introducing new ways of working and new structures and processes within their organisations (CIMO 7).

When the ‘entry point’ is through interventions at interpersonal level...

- Facilitated spaces for dialogue (e.g. between policy makers, researchers, civil society and citizens) can create and strengthen connections or generate a sense of closeness and trust, resulting in new and improved relationships. This is more likely where open, informal dialogue is enabled, where the ‘right’ composition of people are in the room, and in contexts where existing networks are weak or dysfunctional but there is a positive wider discourse in support of EIPM. Where participants have the motivation or opportunity to utilise new relationships, they can be used to share information or advice, or can lead to new organisational collaborations (CIMO 4).

When the 'entry point' is through interventions at organisational level...

- Providing technical support to co-produce tools or systems that facilitate staff to use evidence more effectively, where this is done in a collaborative and innovative way, can generate good examples that 'showcase' the value of evidence for quality, performance and delivery. These 'showcases' provide user-friendly decision support tools that help individuals use evidence, but also build understanding and buy-in among senior staff about the value of evidence for decision making, resulting in examples 'diffusing' out to inspire new reforms elsewhere (CIMO 8).
- Where there is pressure to improve performance from senior levels and where an external partner has established trust through previous activities, this can enable an 'accompaniment' mechanism: high-level stakeholders give partners the permission to provide ongoing, tailored support to help them embed EIPM. This can lead to uptake of recommendations from processes facilitated by the partner, adoption of tools or systems, and possibly the emergence of an internal unit to 'own' and 'champion' EIPM (CIMO 9).
- Providing technical support to co-produce tools or systems that facilitate staff to use evidence more effectively can spark a high-level decision to formally adopt the tools or systems to help standardise EIPM within the organisation. This is more likely when they link to other government procedures and are backed by sufficient authority. Adoption can be on a small scale (e.g. adopting templates), but, in a context where there are high-level government 'owners' of EIPM, adoption can also be large scale (e.g. adopting a comprehensive policy and planning system to promote, embed and monitor the quality of evidence use throughout the policy cycle and into the future) (CIMO 10).

Organisational level change can then filter down to influence individual behaviour through:

- Tools or systems to promote EIPM sparking a *facilitation* mechanism – providing practical assistance enabling people to do their jobs better / more easily. This results in the system or tool being used, and (potentially) increasing the value of evidence through demonstrating the benefits it can bring (CIMO 11).
- Tools or systems that involve positive or negative incentives to adopt EIPM behaviours sparking a *reinforcement* mechanism, in which positive incentives or risk of negative consequences influence behaviour, and lead to individuals deciding to change the way they access, appraise or apply evidence in decision making (CIMO 12).

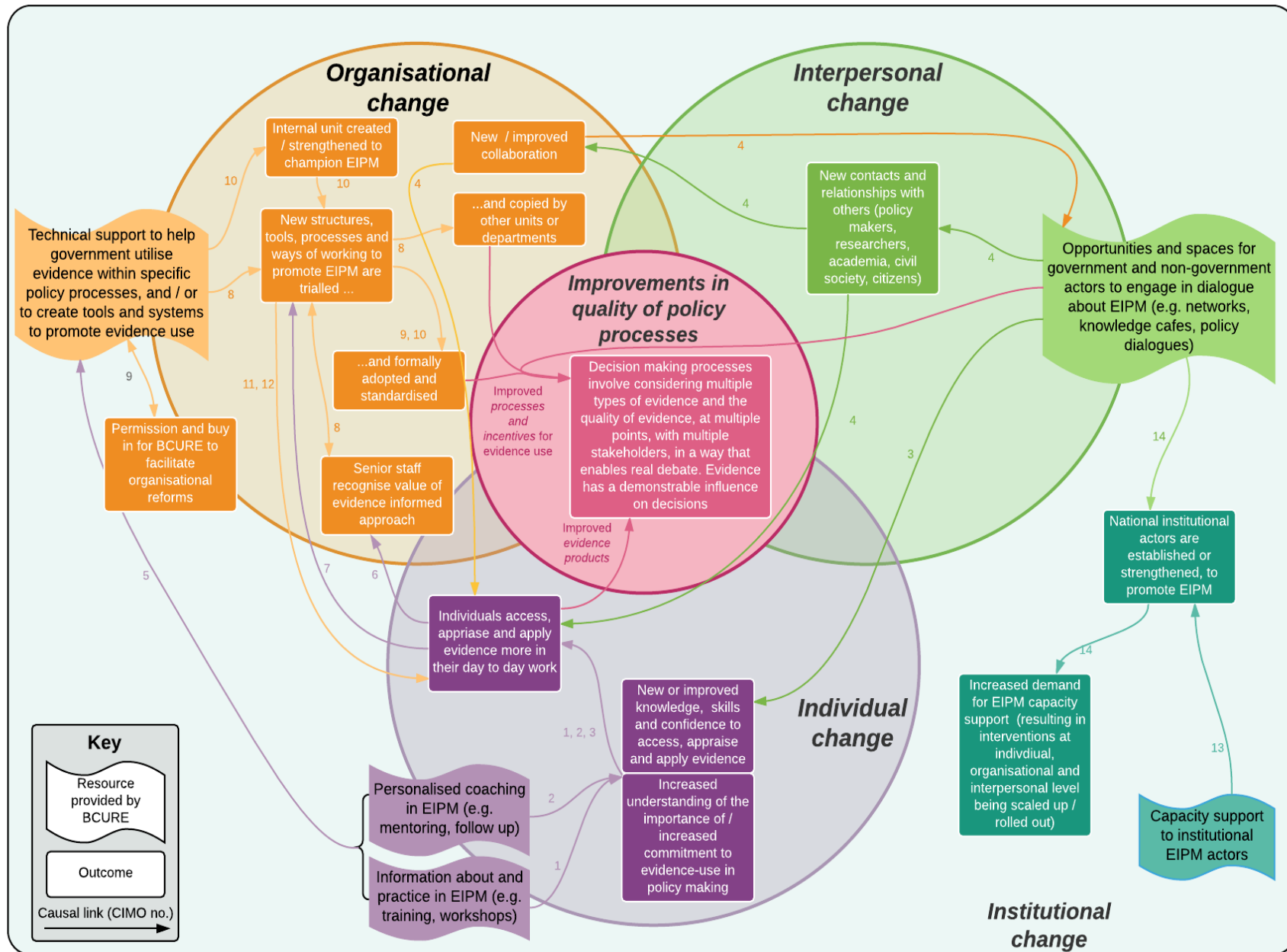
When the 'entry point' is through interventions at institutional level...

- Supporting local organisations to deliver EIPM capacity building activities (directly through organisational capacity support, and/or indirectly through providing opportunities for national partners to 'learn on the job'), can strengthen organisational capabilities through 'learning by doing.' This can result in the establishment or strengthening of national institutional actors, which can act as a 'hub' for EIPM, are capable of running successful programmes to promote it and are potentially able to continue supporting it once the programme has ended (CIMO 13).
- Where local organisations successfully deliver programme activities and/or explicitly aim to build relationships with government departments and other EIPM actors, this enables partners to 'relate and attract' – providing exposure to new collaborators. This can lead to increased demand for partners to provide capacity building support for EIPM from new actors not originally targeted by the programme – which can provide a crucial entry point where there are sensitivities around influencing government decisions, and hence where it is difficult for 'outsiders' to gain entry to government organisations (CIMO 14).

Capacity change at individual, interpersonal, organisational and institutional level combines to contribute to improvements in quality of policy processes through:

- Improving *evidence products* (i.e. how evidence is prioritised, analysed, visualised and presented in briefing notes, evaluations etc), which feed better quality or additional types of evidence into decision making processes.
- Improving *processes and incentives* for evidence use – facilitating and incentivising decision makers to participate in policy development processes that involve explicit consideration of evidence.

Figure 3. Programme theory at the end of Stage 2



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