

Investigate possible alternative explanations

All impact evaluations should include some attention to identifying and (if possible) ruling out alternative explanations for the [impacts](#) that have been observed.

Methods

- [Force field analysis](#)

A force field analysis is used to support the decision making process by providing a detailed overview of the variety of forces that may be acting on an organisational change issue.

- [General Elimination Methodology](#)

General Elimination Methodology has two stages:

- [Key informant](#)

Asking experts of programmes or in the community to predict what would have happened in the absence of the intervention.

- [Process tracing](#)

Process tracing is a case-based approach to causal inference which focuses on the use of clues within a case (causal-process observations, CPOs) to adjudicate between alternative possible explanations.

- [RAPID outcomes assessment](#)

RAPID outcome assessment (ROA) is a method to assess and map the contribution of a project's actions on a particular change in policy or the policy environment.

- [Ruling out technical explanations](#)

Ruling out technical explanations involves identifying and investigating possible ways that the results might reflect technical limitations rather than actual causal relationships.

- [Searching for disconfirming evidence/following up exceptions](#)

Treating data that doesn't fit the expected pattern not as outliers but as potential clues to other causal factors and then seeking to explain them.

- [Statistically controlling for extraneous variables](#)

Statistically controlling for extraneous variables is an option for removing the influence of a variable on the study of program results.

Approaches

- These approaches combine ruling out possible alternative explanations with options to [check the results support causal attribution](#).

- [Contribution analysis](#)

Contribution Analysis is an approach for assessing causal questions and inferring causality in real-life program evaluations.

- [Collaborative outcomes reporting](#)

Collaborative outcomes reporting (COR) is a participatory approach to impact evaluation based around a performance story that presents evidence of how a program has contributed to outcomes and impacts, that is then reviewed by both technical experts and

- [Multiple lines and levels of evidence](#)

Multiple Lines and Levels of Evidence (MLLE) reviews the evidence for a causal relationship between an intervention and observed impacts in terms of its strength, consistency, specificity, temporality, coherence with other accepted evidence, plausibility