



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

NAO REPORT ON EVALUATION IN
GOVERNMENT

BIS Response

DECEMBER 2013

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NAO report on Evaluation in Government: BIS response

Background

The NAO report, Evaluation in Government, reviews cost effectiveness evaluations in Government. It is an important reminder of evaluation as a tool to ensure accountability and learning in all areas of our work. It is based on a selection of evaluations across government and aims to be illustrative rather than representative.

<http://www.nao.org.uk/report/evaluation-government/>

The NAO reviewed evaluation reports that had been completed and published so only covers policies or initiatives that were in place in the last decade; its conclusions are not a reflection of the evaluations that are currently underway in BIS.

Within BIS there has been a systematic drive in the past two years to ensure new evaluations use robust methodologies to show progress and, wherever possible, are able to show impact. The recent interim evaluation of the Enterprise Finance Guarantee and the randomised control trial on Growth Vouchers are good examples.

Recommendations in the report

BIS accepts the NAO's assessment of the challenges and opportunities to strengthen and enhance evaluation, and endorses most of the recommendations. BIS has developed and started implementing an Evaluation Plan to address these NAO recommendations and achieve a step change in the quality of BIS' evaluations.

This has a number of elements. In particular we have appointed an external peer review panel of independent experts on evaluation. They will provide an independent check at key stages of evaluation projects, and will peer review all BIS's outcome evaluations before publication.

We have started a rolling series of reviews of the evaluations in each BIS area of work, and provide an update on evaluation performance across BIS for all Directors every six months. These help Directors and the Chief Analyst ensure that the evaluations they are responsible for are well designed and delivered.

We have developed a comprehensive programme of training and advice for analysts based on a skills audit, and are establishing a network of internal experts on advanced evaluation methodologies.

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