



HM Treasury

# Office for Value for Money: evaluation plan

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## Introduction

This plan sets out a proportionate, light-touch process, impact and value for money (VfM) evaluation of the Office for Value for Money (OVfM). It will demonstrate whether the OVfM has delivered its intended outputs and identify lessons learned that could be applied to other similar interventions. The plan has been reviewed by the Evaluation Task Force and the Evaluation and Trial Advice Panel.

## Evaluation aims

The evaluation will include:

1. Process: what can be learned from how the OVfM was designed, set up and delivered?
2. Impact: what difference will the OVfM make? Has it delivered its intended outputs, and what outcomes are expected?
3. VfM: was the OVfM a good use of resources?

## Evaluation methods

### Document review

The OVfM documentation to be assessed will include:

- OVfM's advice to ministers, including:
  - regular updates to the Chancellor and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury
  - submissions on system reform recommendations
  - submissions on OVfM interventions through the Spending Review
- documents published as part of the Spending Review, including:
  - outputs from the VfM studies
  - efficiency plans and targets
- information published on gov.uk, including:
  - terms of reference for the OVfM's Chair
  - correspondence with select committees

### Stakeholder survey

Online surveys will seek stakeholders' views on lessons learned from the OVfM, what impact they think the OVfM has had (compared to what would have happened in the absence of the OVfM), and whether they believe the OVfM has been good VfM.

The survey will not seek to be statistically representative but will target those the OVfM have worked most closely with to ensure respondents can provide an informed view. Surveys will be targeted to ensure a good response rate is achieved. Responses will be anonymous.

Surveys will be sent to the following stakeholders:

- HM Treasury:
  - The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and special advisers
  - HM Treasury Public Spending Group and Spending Teams
  - National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA)
- Cabinet Office:
  - Evaluation Task Force
  - Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office
  - Director General, Public Sector Reform and Efficiency
  - Heads of Government Commercial and Finance Functions
- Government departments:
  - Heads of Department
  - Finance Directors
  - Chief Operating Officers (COOs)
  - Government Chief Digital Officer
  - VfM study working groups and senior stakeholder groups
- External:
  - The Institute for Government
  - Reform Think Tank
  - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
  - National Audit Office

## In-depth interviews

A small number of in-depth interviews will be conducted with a selection of stakeholders to represent each of the above groups to provide a richer source of data on how well the OVfM has delivered against its objectives. These will include:

- Conrad Smewing, Director General for Public Spending, HM Treasury
- Catherine Little, Permanent Secretary of the Cabinet Office and Chief Operating Officer of the Civil Service
- Jane Cunliffe, Head of the Chief Operating Officer Network and COO, DfE
- Hannah White, Director, Institute for Government

## Analyses of OVfM resources, finances, and outputs

OVfM resources, budget and outturn will be assessed against the outputs the OVfM achieves over its lifetime, and the potential outcomes that will most likely result.

## Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework below illustrates how each of the evaluation aims will be achieved by mapping these onto success measures and the methods or evidence sources that will be used.

<b>Evaluation aim 1: Process:</b> what can be learned from how the OVfM was designed, set up and delivered?	
<b>Evaluation success measures</b>	<b>Evaluation method/evidence source</b>
1. Stakeholders believe the OVfM resources (c.15 FTE) and set-up (multidisciplinary team in HM Treasury with an independent Chair) were right for the task	OVfM survey of stakeholders  In-depth interviews
2. Stakeholders believe joint working with the OVfM (on VfM studies, efficiencies and investment appraisals) resulted in greater emphasis on VfM through the Spending Review	OVfM survey of stakeholders  In-depth interviews
3. Stakeholders believe that OVfM work is complementary to, rather than duplicative of, other work being undertaken within government	OVfM survey of stakeholders  In-depth interviews



<b>Evaluation aim 2: Impact:</b> what difference will the OVfM make? Has it delivered its intended outputs, and what outcomes are expected?	
<b>Evaluation success measures</b>	<b>Evaluation method/evidence source</b>
4. Technical efficiency plans and targets of at least 1% p.a. are agreed with all government departments ahead of the conclusion of Phase 2 of the Spending Review	Spending Review publications  OVfM advice to ministers
5. VfM studies are completed in a small number of specific high-risk areas of cross-departmental spending and inform decisions in Phase 2 of the Spending Review	Spending Review publications  OVfM advice to ministers
6. OVfM provides additional scrutiny of investment proposals, focused on where it is most likely to inform decision-making	OVfM advice to ministers
7. OVfM announces at least three system reforms to the VfM framework for public spending that have clear, actionable plans for implementation, including who will be responsible for delivery	Spending Review publications  OVfM advice to ministers  OVfM report
8. Stakeholders believe the announced system reforms will help improve VfM in the long term, by tackling the root causes of VfM issues	OVfM survey of stakeholders  In depth interviews

<b>Evaluation aim 3: Value for Money:</b> was the OVfM a good use of resources?	
<b>Evaluation success measures</b>	<b>Evaluation method/evidence source</b>
9. OVfM resources are used efficiently to deliver outputs, with minimal wasted spending or time, compared to other teams	Analyses of OVfM resources, finances, and comparison with other teams
10. Potential outcomes from OVfM's workplan (in particular from efficiencies and VfM studies) outweigh the costs of the OVfM in the most realistic scenario.	Spending Review publications  OVfM advice to ministers
11. Stakeholders believe the OVfM has delivered good value for money – that the team has made the best use of its resources to deliver intended outputs	OVfM survey of stakeholders  In depth interviews

## Delivery plan

The evaluation will be delivered by a member of HM Treasury staff with input, peer review and quality assurance from the Government, Economic, Social Research Profession in the Treasury, the Evaluation Task Force, and the Evaluation and Trial Advice Panel.

Most of the data required will already be available and will not need to be collected. Views of stakeholders will be captured via a survey and interviews, carried out in the summer, in time to report by October 2025.

The final report of findings will be published at the end of the OVfM's term and added to the Evaluation Registry.

## Use of findings

The evaluation findings will inform the set-up of any similar bodies or VfM exercises in the future and will contribute to the evidence base for future policy making. They will also support efforts to communicate the work of the OVfM and its lessons learned to emphasise VfM in future decision making.

## Limitations

This evaluation plan is proportionate; the OVfM is a relatively small team, with clear outputs to deliver over its lifetime. The evaluation only assesses short term outputs and potential outcomes. Monitoring of outcomes as part of HMT's and departments' ongoing responsibilities

will help to iteratively adjust the interventions over time and inform similar interventions in the future.

Conducting the evaluation in HM Treasury means there is a risk that the evaluation produces, or might be perceived to produce, a biased account. To help mitigate against this we will ensure the individual carrying out the evaluation is not from the OVfM, and the draft evaluation report is reviewed by members of the Evaluation and Trial Advice Panel.

The evaluation plan envisages surveying only a small number of stakeholders and it will not seek to be statistically representative. It is necessary to focus on those stakeholders with most knowledge of the OVfM's work, and this will be proportionate to the small team.

### **HM Treasury contacts**

This document can be downloaded from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

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