

Measuring impact



All air quality monitoring activities should be undertaken with the intention to create impact.

Understanding impact and evaluation

The OPENAIR Impact Planning Cycle* differentiates between **outcomes** (the direct result of project activities) and **impacts** (the wider implications of outcomes). Impacts emerge from project outcomes, and are the justification for acting in the first place.

Evaluation is a process for measuring and critically assessing impact. It can be conducted at the end of a project for reporting purposes, can help to inform future projects, and contribute to broader knowledge and understanding.

However, evaluation is not something that only occurs at the end of a project. Evaluation is an iterative process that can occur throughout a project delivery period.

Before you begin

- 1 Identify your capacity to complete evaluation
- 2 Plan to evaluate as you go
- 3 Consider evaluation stakeholders
- 4 Establish evaluation roles and responsibilities

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO MEASURE IMPACT?

Impact is defined as the goal of a project. It is the ultimate result of activities, and the justification for acting in the first place. Impact is distinct from project outcomes, which are the more immediate and measurable results of project activities. It is important to measure impact because:

- It supports reporting on the **success of a project**, which can be critical for the acquittal of funding, and for securing future funding.
- It supports **critical evaluation** of project design and strategy.

* Refer to the OPENAIR Best Practice Guide chapter The Impact Planning Cycle overview.

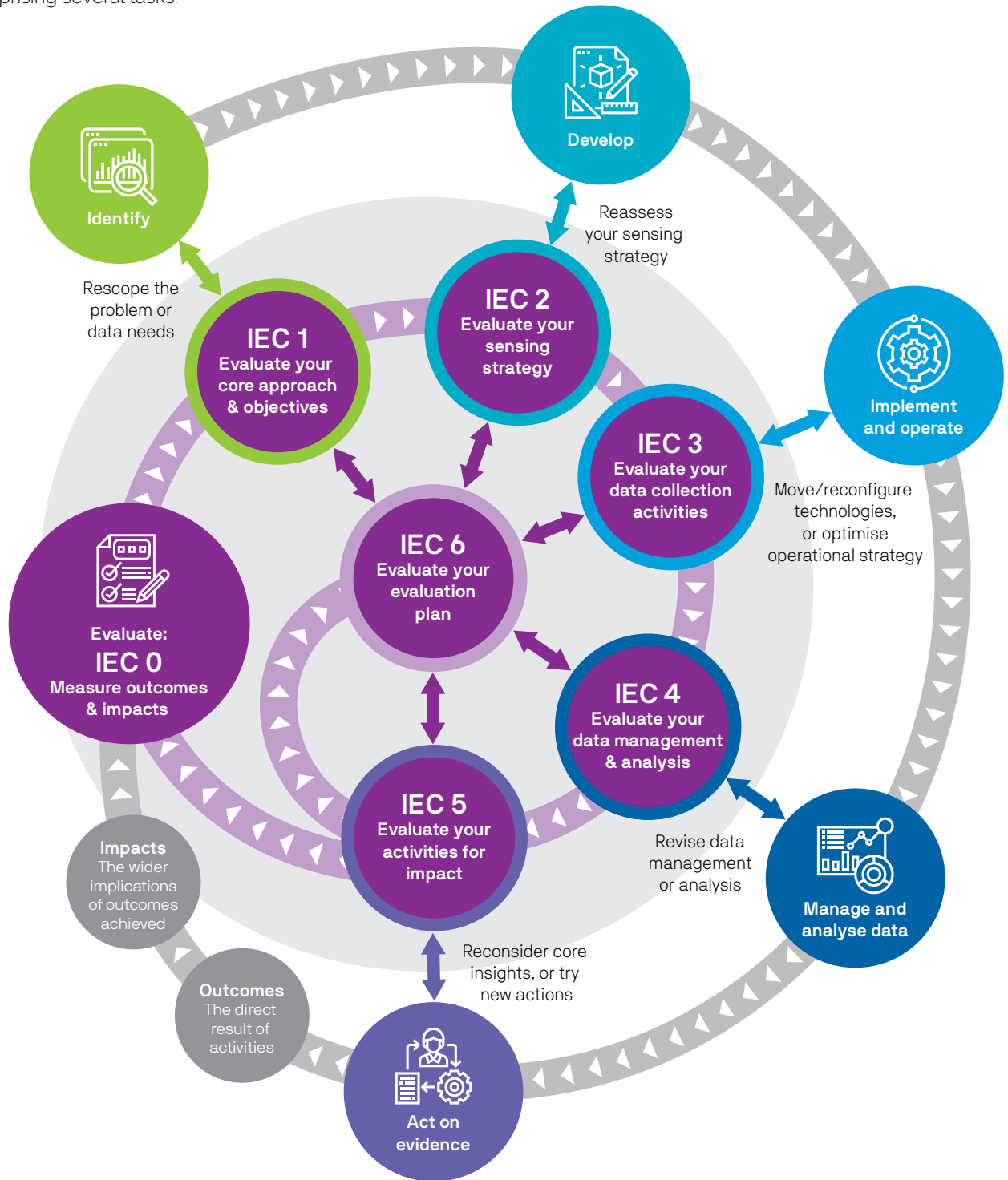
The Impact Evaluation Cycle as a project tool

The OPENAIR **Impact Planning Cycle** is a tool that can help local governments to maximise the impact of a smart air quality monitoring project. It features six stages (*Identify, Develop, Implement and operate, Manage and analyse data, Act on evidence, and Evaluate*), each comprising several tasks.

The **Impact Evaluation Cycle (IEC)** defines an iterative evaluation process that sits within the Impact Planning Cycle, and supports evaluation of all six project stages shown below.

A Project Evaluation Plan is an actionable document.

It should be developed for your specific project by applying the evaluation methodology at each stage of the Impact Evaluation Cycle.





Associated OPENAIR resources

See the OPENAIR Best Practice Guide chapter *Measuring impact* for a detailed overview of the Impact Evaluation Cycle, guidance on how to develop a Project Evaluation Plan, and how to apply the OPENAIR evaluation methodology.

The OPENAIR Best Practice Guide chapter *The Impact Planning Cycle overview* provides detailed guidance on the Impact Planning Cycle as a tool that can help local governments to maximise the impact of a smart air quality monitoring project. *The Impact Planning Cycle at a glance* factsheet is a high-level summary of the corresponding Best Practice Guide chapter.

FIND OUT MORE AND ACCESS OPENAIR RESOURCES

This factsheet is part of a suite of resources designed to support local government action on air quality through the use of smart low-cost sensing technologies. It is the first Australian project of its kind. Check the project website for resources and updates on post project collaborations: www.openair.org.au



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