

Evaluation and Monitoring



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Why are evaluation and monitoring important?

Monitoring involves the regular collection of specified data which tracks changes in behaviour, traffic and system performance.

Evaluation is defined as work carried out after implementation to find out what the actual impacts and effectiveness of the policy have been. Evaluation studies add to the body of literature available to improve our ability to predict and appraise future schemes.

Evaluation is thus the process of assessing, using data from the monitoring process after a policy such as road user charging has been implemented, whether it was successful in meeting the objectives set for it. It is common for this step in the policy cycle to be overlooked. Politicians may understandably take the view that, once a scheme has been introduced and broadly accepted, it is better to move on to the next policy challenge than to spend time and resources checking in detail how well it worked.

Evaluation can be used to answer the following questions:

- Did the scheme work effectively in meeting our objectives?

- Are there aspects of the scheme which merit improvement?
- Were the predictions accurate, or are improvements needed in the prediction process?
- Is this scheme (in another city) something which I should be considering for my city?

What information is provided by the evaluation and monitoring process to support implementation and decision making?

Monitoring and evaluation should ideally cover performance against all of the objectives. In the short term, the monitoring and evaluation process will indicate whether the scheme is meeting its objectives, and whether adjustments are needed.

The data collected through monitoring programmes for future road user charging schemes will provide the basis for further research into many areas where the available body of evidence is still weak. Thus evaluation in one city will help other cities to design more effective schemes.



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What further research is needed?

Clearer guidance is needed on the coverage of an evaluation, and the values to be used in that evaluation. Specific areas in which greater clarity is needed are the treatment of unreliability and overcrowding, the inclusion of complementary instruments and the treatment of the wider range of effects of those instruments.

Comparison of evaluation and appraisal in one city will help to improve our ability to predict performance, while comparison of evaluations in different cities will help understand the transferability of successful schemes.

What can we conclude at present?

The following DOs and DON'Ts should help to increase the likelihood of a successful road user charging implementation:

DOs

Develop a monitoring programme that

- defines where and when the data are to be collected
- determines the spatial coverage based on the design of the scheme and its anticipated impacts

Identify indicators for each policy objective

Implement a plan for data collection and surveys

Use the results to understand the impacts of the scheme and the need for any remedial measures

Disseminate the results to other cities

DON'Ts

Do not conduct surveys at different times of the year as this might introduce extraneous effects and confuse the picture

Do not hide the weights used in the consideration of trade offs between objectives in the evaluation process

