Going farther, faster together:
Implementing the recommendations of
the Evidence Commission report

6 September 2023

John N. Lavis and Jeremy Grimshaw, Co-leads
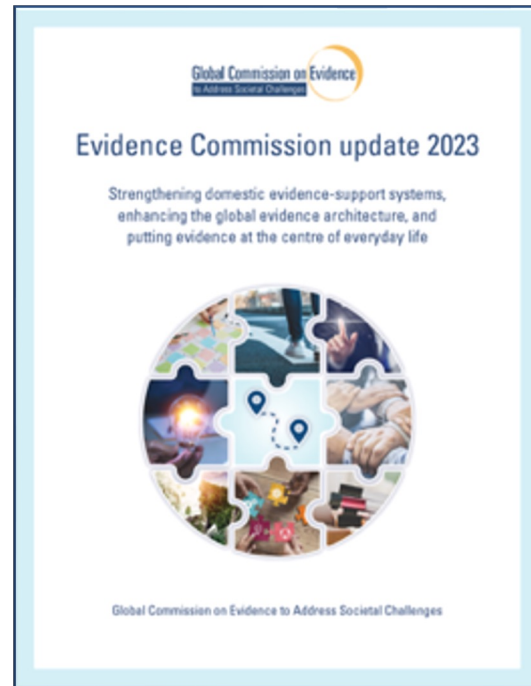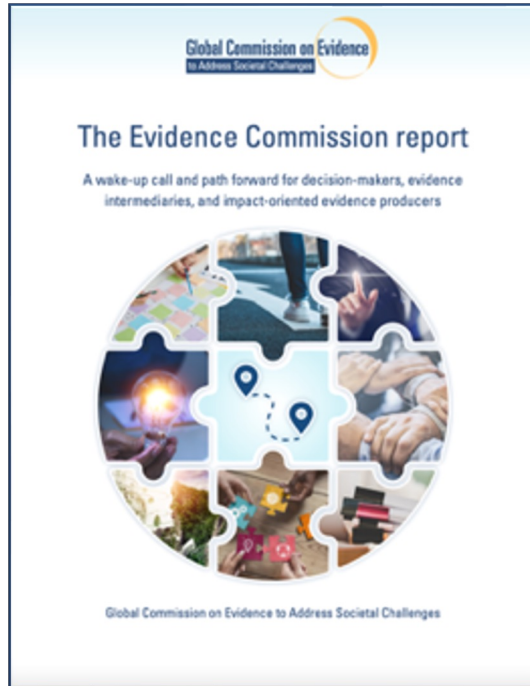Julian Elliott and Maureen Smith, Commissioners

Proposed agenda

- Welcome and introductions (5 min)

- Background on the Evidence Commission (5 min)

- Implementation priority 1: Enhancing and leveraging the global evidence architecture (20 min)
  - Summary of our thinking
  - Reactions? Collaboration opportunities?

- Implementation priority 2: Formalizing and strengthening domestic evidence-support systems (20 min)
  - Summary of our thinking
  - Reactions? Collaboration opportunities?

- Implementation priority 3: Putting evidence at the centre of everyday life (20 min)
  - Summary of our thinking
  - Reactions? Collaboration opportunities?

- Discussion about next steps (20 min)

Evidence Commission:
Why now? Who?

- Why now?
  - Origin in COVID-END and spurred by
    - Rapid learning from both successes and failures in the evidence response to COVID-19
    - Emergence of many innovations (e.g., ultra-rapid evidence support drawing on many forms of evidence and engaging citizens in the work, living evidence syntheses as global public goods, and AI as an enabler)
- Who?
  - Originally 25 commissioners from around the globe, all sectors, and all types of decision-makers
  - Now many groups working on the implementation priorities
    - Implementation Council
    - Rapid Evidence-Support System Assessment (RESSA) Country Leads Group
    - Global Evidence Producers Group
    - Citizen Leadership Group

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Evidence Commission:
1) Report 2022 & Update 2023 available in six languages (with Update 2024 in January)
2) Three implementation priorities shared with Cochrane Convenes & EVIPNet action plan

Enhance and leverage the global evidence architecture

Formalize and strengthen domestic evidence-support systems

Put evidence at the centre of everyday life

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Implementation priority 1:
We need to invest in an evolving suite of living evidence syntheses, a type of global public good (and the focus of a special session on Monday)

What are these 'game changers'?
- Regularly updated summaries of what we have learned from around the world, including how it varies by groups and contexts (with updates provided as context, issues and evidence evolve)
- Systematically and transparently identify, assess and synthesize the evidence addressing a specific question
- Can address any question and synthesize any type of evidence

Funders need to work together to ensure topic coverage, reduce duplication, and support quality and efficient resource use (e.g., living evidence synthesis about climate action), as well as to support the infrastructure that underpins them (e.g., protocol registration through PROSPERO; editorial support and capacity building through Campbell)

Domestic evidence-support systems can then contextualize the insights alongside the insights from many forms of domestic evidence in response to questions from decision-makers
(e.g., contextualized evidence product about climate-adaptation options for Canada prepared in 3 business days)

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Potential ways for 'deals' to come together

- National governments → Funding individually or through a pooled fund (as well as the domestic and LMIC pilots of 'general contractor' mechanisms that we'll turn to next)
- Funders → Transforming Evidence Funders Network including individual members, public research funding agencies, Bloomberg Philanthropies, WHO Foundation
- Global public good producers → alive, Campbell, CEE, Cochrane, SDG Synthesis Coalition
- Networks of domestic evidence producers in its many forms → Data analytics, evaluation, behavioural / implementation research, technology assessments, guidelines, etc.
- Hybrid global public good / domestic evidence-support initiatives (like EEF)
- UN system entities → UNDP, UNICEF, WHO

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Potential priority topics that could be among the suite of living evidence syntheses

- Climate action (e.g., carbon markets, climate adaptation, CO2 removal, and household behaviour change) → building from Campbell including Jan Minx & team, CEE, SDG Synthesis Coalition, etc.
- Education → building from EEF, Campbell, UNICEF, etc.
- Health (ranging from clinical management and public-health programs to health-system transformations, One Health priorities like AMR, and global and planetary health priorities) → building from alive, Cochrane, NICE, Wellcome, etc.
- Inclusive social development (ranging from early years and youth employment to crime & justice, disability and housing) → building from other What Works Centres, Campbell, Paul Ramsay Foundation, etc.
- Emergency preparedness (ranging from floods and wildfires prevention and management to pandemics)

Implementation priority 1:
We need to invest in an evolving suite of living evidence syntheses, a type of global public good

- Reactions?
- Collaboration opportunities?

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Implementation priority 2:
We need to expand skillsets to create general contractors, to formalize and strengthen domestic evidence-support mechanisms, and to build connections among them
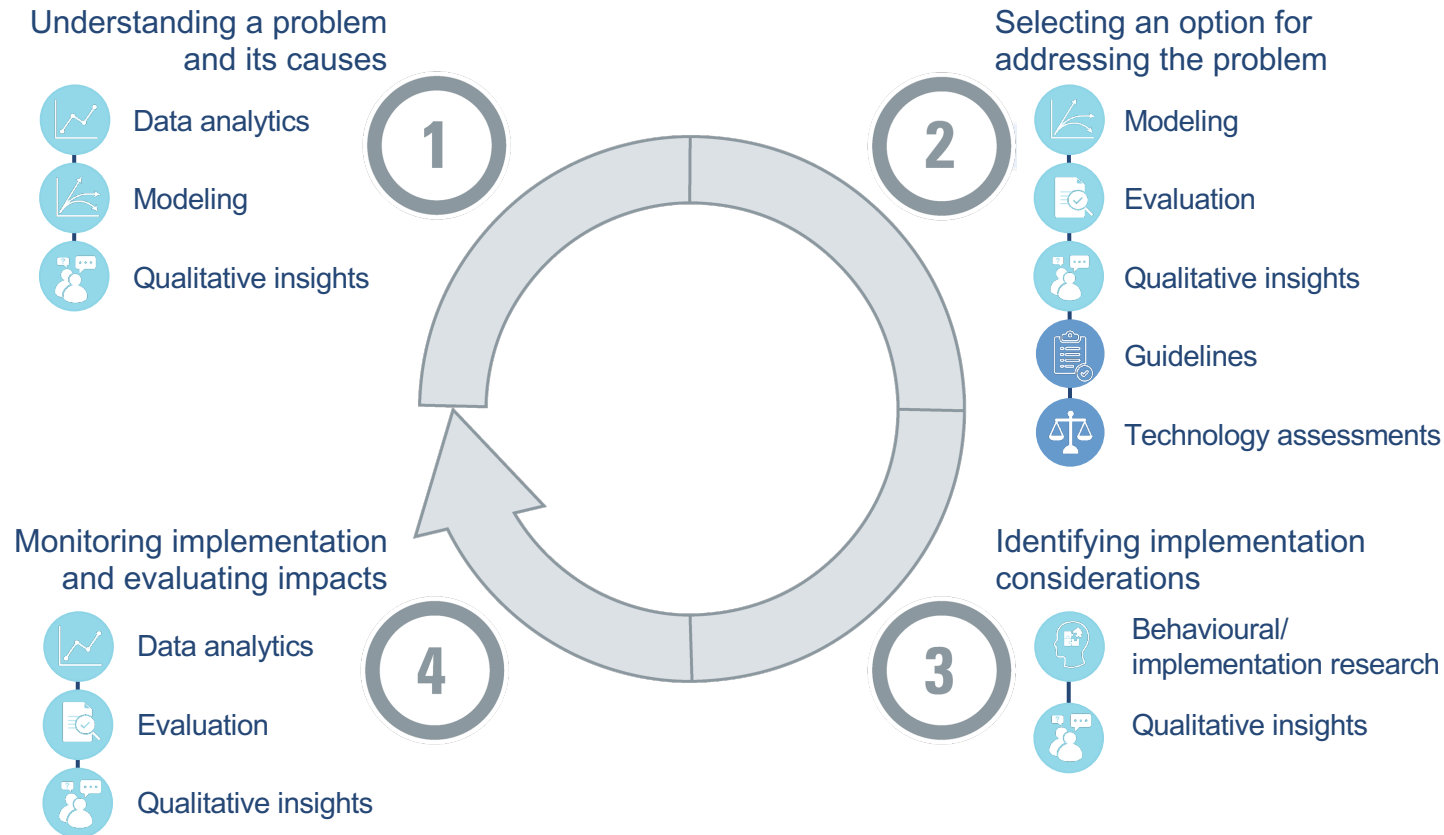
- We need general contractors* providing timely, demand-driven evidence responses to questions emerging from advisory and decision-making processes
  - o Making and delivering on credible commitments, often in timelines of hours and days
  - o Drawing together all of the relevant forms of domestic evidence (not just their own 'trade'), the global evidence (global public goods like living evidence syntheses), other types of information, and complementary inputs like lived experiences and Indigenous ways of knowing
  - o Placing the evidence in relevant policy, systems, equity or other frameworks

*or main or prime contractor, or project manager, or….

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Here's an example of possible ingredients in an evidence product that uses a policy analysis framework

Domestic evidence

(by step in the decision-making cycle)

Understanding a problem and its causes

1
- Data analytics
- Modeling
- Qualitative insights

Selecting an option for addressing the problem

2
- Modeling
- Evaluation
- Qualitative insights
- Guidelines
- Technology assessments

Monitoring implementation and evaluating impacts

4
- Data analytics
- Evaluation
- Qualitative insights

Identifying implementation considerations

3
- Behavioural/implementation research
- Qualitative insights

Global evidence

(each for one or more steps in the decision-making cycle)

Evidence synthesis
(what has been learned from around the world, including how it varies by groups and contexts)

Other types of information

Jurisdictional scan
(to learn from experiences – and ideally evaluations – in other provinces & countries)

Horizon scanning
(to leverage foresight work done nationally and globally)

Key-informant interviews
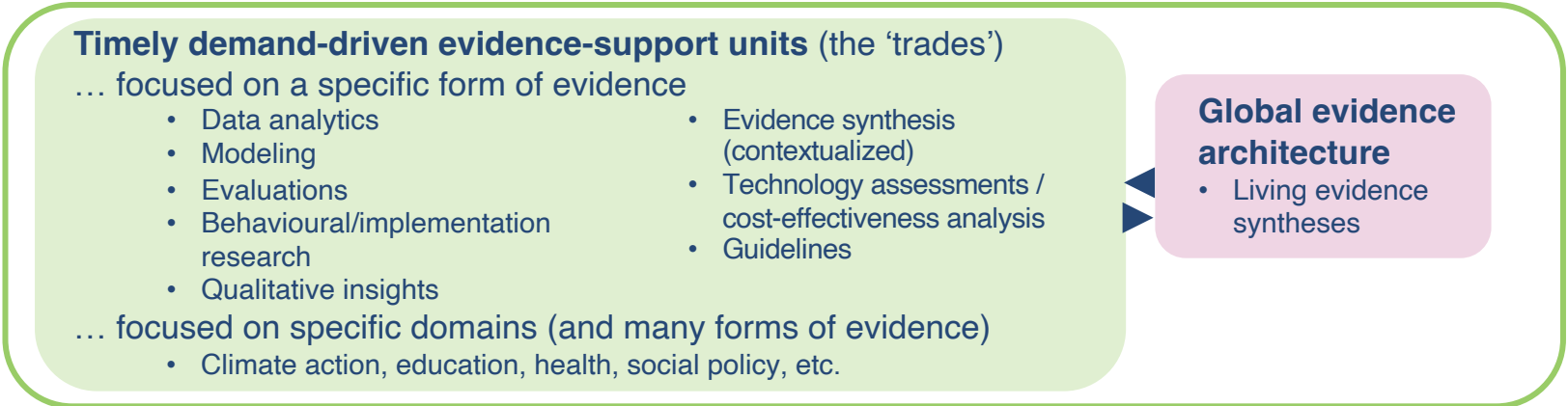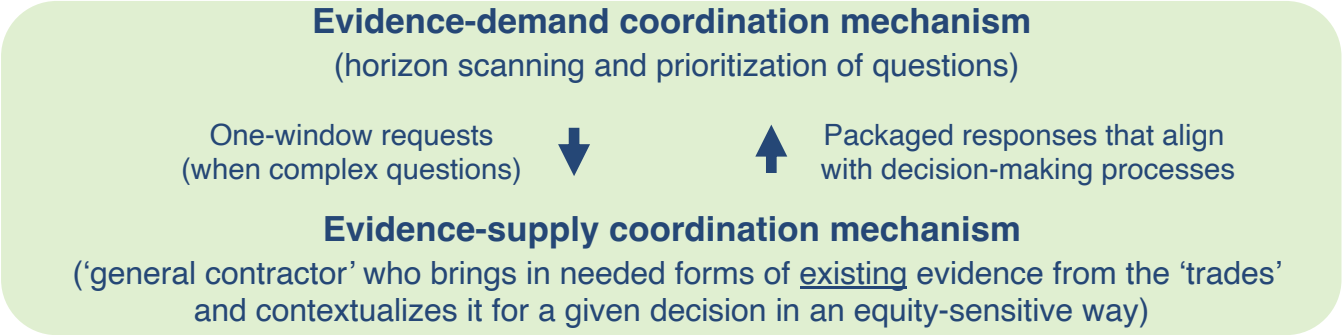(to leverage rich experiences)

Deliberative processes
(to engage citizens and stakeholders in collective problem solving)

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Cadres who are well positioned to become 'general contractors'

- Among those more on the evidence side
  - Evaluation teams and staff
  - Behavioural-science teams and staff
  - Evidence-synthesis teams and staff
  - Guidance panel secretariats
  - Science advisors
    - Who should be the conductor of an evidence-support system orchestra, not playing every instrument as a subject-matter expert
    - Who should be selected based on their 'general contractor experience,' not only research and innovation experience
- Among those who are more in intermediary and support roles
  - Strategic policy advisors
  - In-house performance auditors and program evaluators
  - Risk assessors
  - Subject-matter experts (e.g., medical advisors, social-policy advisors)
  - Those involved in supporting stakeholder and citizen engagement processes

Evidence Commission partners are conducting rapid assessments of the evidence-support systems in the central agencies, line departments, and parliaments of 12 countries (and noting connections to research and innovation systems)

Structures and processes on the evidence-demand side to:
1) incorporate evidence use into routine advisory and decision-making processes (**enablers**)
2) build and sustain an evidence **culture**; 3) strengthen **capacity** for evidence use

Evidence-demand coordination mechanism
(horizon scanning and prioritization of questions)

One-window requests
(when complex questions)

Packaged responses that align
with decision-making processes

Evidence-supply coordination mechanism
('general contractor' who brings in needed forms of <u>existing</u> evidence from the 'trades' and contextualizes it for a given decision in an equity-sensitive way)

Timely demand-driven evidence-support units (the 'trades')
… focused on a specific form of evidence
- Data analytics
- Modeling
- Evaluations
- Behavioural/implementation research
- Qualitative insights

- Evidence synthesis (contextualized)
- Technology assessments / cost-effectiveness analysis
- Guidelines

Global evidence architecture
- Living evidence syntheses

… focused on specific domains (and many forms of evidence)
- Climate action, education, health, social policy, etc.

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Sector-specific efforts to build connections among groups providing timely, demand-driven evidence responses to questions emerging from advisory and decision-making processes

- Wellbeing of military personnel, Veterans and their families
- Public health, including emergencies like pandemics, mpox and wildfires
- International development
- Social policy
- Medium-term policy work in cabinet offices

Potential activities for these sector-specific evidence-support networks

- Develop simple tools
  - Documentation of sector/system contexts and evidence assets
  - Inventory of key evidence sources, by form of evidence
  - Filters for key databases
  - Searchable database of domestic studies
- Align (where appropriate) standards for contextualized evidence products and processes
- Design and maintain an approach to sourcing evidence and experience from one another's contexts (e.g., responding to requests for documents and key-informant interviews)
- Share products that can be adapted by others
- Inform the starting, evolution and winding down of **living evidence syntheses** in areas of shared interest

Implementation priority 2:
We need to expand skillsets to create 'general contractors,' to formalize and strengthen domestic evidence-support mechanisms, and to build connections among them

- Reactions?
- Collaboration opportunities?

Implementation priority 3:
We need to put evidence at the centre of everyday life (alongside efforts to counter misinformation)

Help citizens judge what others are claiming or more generally find (and receive) reliable information on a topic

Make evidence available to citizens when they are making choices

Engage citizens in asking questions and answering them (with new research or with existing evidence)

Make evidence-based choices the default or easy option

Tools and training to develop critical-thinking skills (e.g., thatsaclaim.org), including in schools

Online sites like GiveWell for giving to the charities that make the most of every dollar they receive

Prioritization processes that engage citizens (e.g., James Lind Alliance)

Citizen engagement in evidence synthesis (e.g., COVID-END)

Using 'nudge' strategies to steer citizens towards evidence-based choices (e.g., automatic enrolments)

Current focus for this much more nascent work

- Identify promising practices and innovations, especially among
  - o Citizen-governed and citizen-serving NGOs
  - o Social movements, citizen coalitions and citizen partnerships seeking to drive change
  - o Local governments seeking to engage citizens and communities in local change initiatives
- Document the supporting evidence, exemplar initiatives, and opportunities for improvement
- Identify key implementation and scale-up considerations for promising practices and innovations
- Raise awareness about the practices/innovations and improvement, implementation and scale-up considerations

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Insights from Monday's workshop

- Many small-scale practices and innovations, often led by 'evidence people' and requiring citizens to know about and go to evidence sites
- Lots of 'noise' with the 'infodemic'
- Paralysis from the equity, diversity and inclusion challenges
- Rapidly growing 'competition' from generative AI

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Implementation priority 3:
We need to put evidence at the centre of everyday life

- Reactions?
- Collaboration opportunities?

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Discussion about next steps, including a potential three-year pilot

- An evolving suite of living evidence syntheses (LESs) (150 topics, with 100 active at any one time)
  - Capability spread globally among groups that bring: 1) methods and reliability strengths; and 2) connections to domestic evidence-support systems in their country or region
  - 'Power' – for priorities, standards, renewals, etc. – located with users
  - Includes support for infrastructure that underpins them (e.g., PROSPERO and Campbell)
- Domestic pilots of evidence-support mechanisms aligned to advisory and decision-making processes in national government (five pilots per country)
  - 'General contractor' function that puts many forms of domestic evidence alongside insights from LESs and from other types of information (jurisdictional scans, KI interviews, etc.)
- Domestic pilots of promising practices and innovations focused on putting evidence at the centre of everyday life (improvement, implementation and especially partnerships for scale-up)

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