4.3 Matching decision-related questions to forms of evidence

Having mapped forms of evidence to steps in a decision-making process in **section 4.2**, here we map each step in a decision-making process to forms of evidence, with examples.

Evidence syntheses can help answer almost all of these questions by summarizing what we know and don't know based on all of the studies that have addressed a similar question. Evidence syntheses are critically important for questions about benefits and harms, both for options and for implementation strategies. We elaborate in **section 4.4** on why evidence syntheses are the best place to start when answering many types of questions.

1 — Understanding a problem and its causes
2 — Selecting an option for addressing the problem
3 — Identifying implementation considerations
4 — Monitoring implementation and evaluating impacts

Steps	Related questions	Examples of helpful forms of evidence
1	Indicators – How big is the problem?	Data analytics
	Comparisons – Is the problem getting worse or is it bigger here than elsewhere?	Data analytics *(e.g., using administrative databases or community surveys)*
	Framing – How do different people describe or experience the problem and its causes?	Qualitative studies *(e.g., using interviews and focus groups)*
2	Benefits – What good might come of it?	Evaluations *(e.g., effectiveness studies like randomized-controlled trials)*
	Harms – What could go wrong?	Evaluations *(e.g., observational studies)*
	Cost-effectiveness – Does one option achieve more for the same investment?	Technology assessments / cost-effectiveness evaluations
	Adaptations – Can we adapt something that worked elsewhere while still getting the benefits?	Evaluations *(e.g., process evaluations that examine how and why an option worked)*
	Stakeholders' views and experiences – Which groups support which option?	Qualitative studies *(e.g., using interviews and focus groups to understand what is important to citizens)*
3	Barriers and facilitators – What (and who) will get in the way or help us in reaching and achieving desired impacts among the right people?	Qualitative studies *(e.g., using interviews and focus groups to understand barriers and facilitators)*
	Benefits, harms, cost-effectiveness, etc. of implementation strategies – What strategies should we use to reach and achieve desired impacts among the right people?	Behavioural / implementation research *See also 'selecting an option'*
4	Is the chosen option reaching those who can benefit from it?	Data analytics
	Is the chosen option achieving desired impacts at sufficient scale?	Evaluations