



Australian Government

Australian Taxation Office

Weaving evaluation into a large government agency

Sharing the ATO Evaluation Hub's favoured tools and activities to facilitate learning by current and emerging evaluators

aes22 International Evaluation Conference

31 August 2022 | Adelaide

SEC=[Official – External]

The ATO acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands upon which we live and work, and we pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise the unique relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to Country, culture and community, and the important role this plays in us all walking together as Australians.



About us



Megan Lugg
Director



Abhi Easwaran



Robert Grimshaw



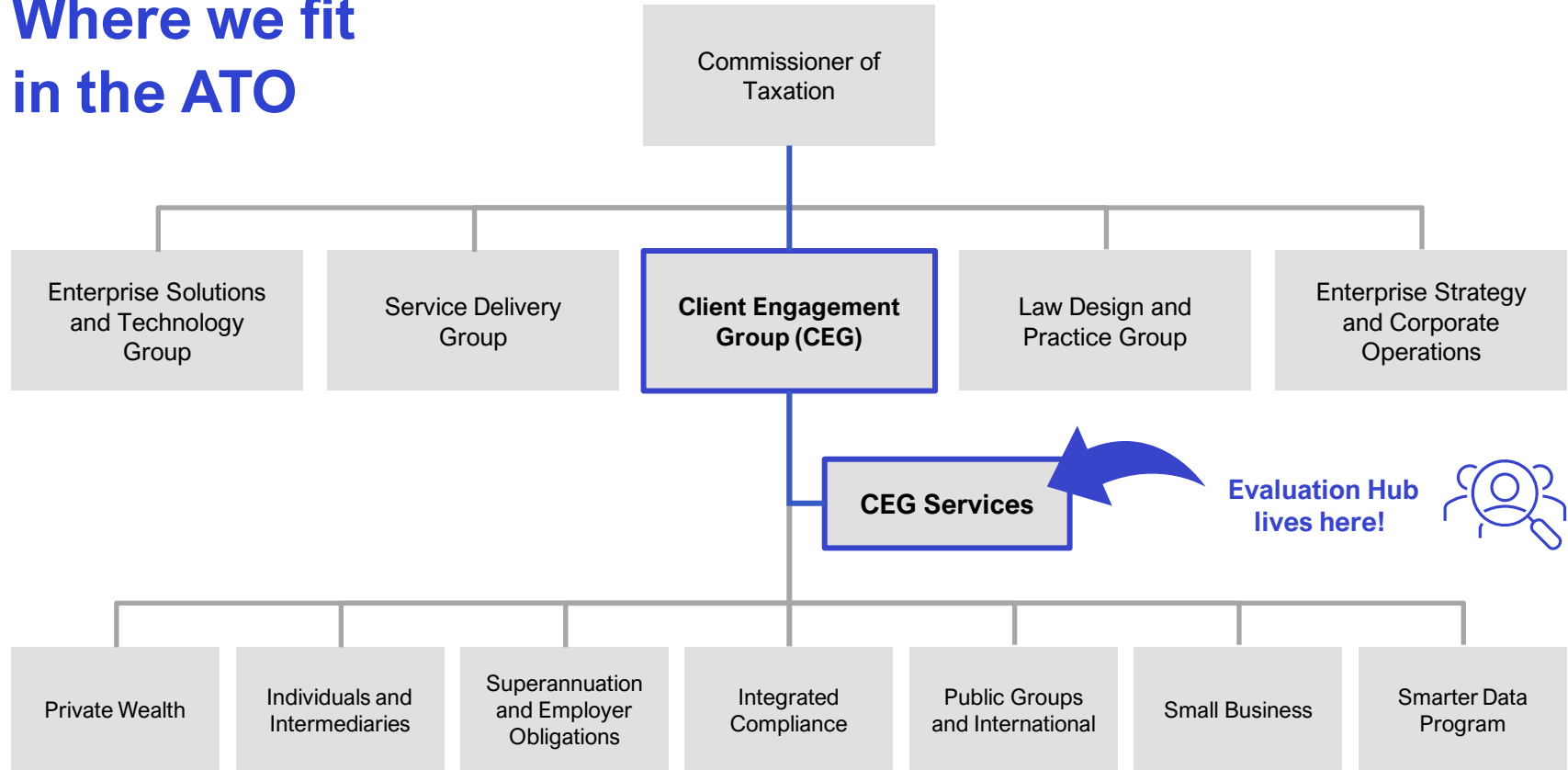
Liesl Harrold

Context

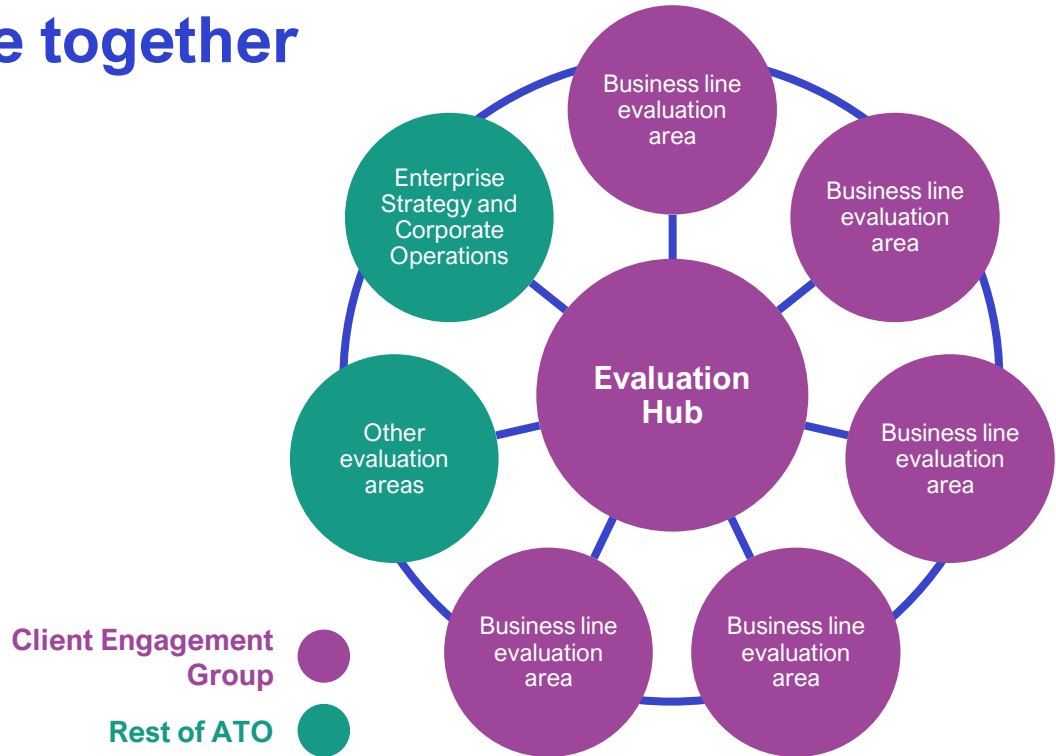
- **ATO is Australian Government's principal revenue collection agency**
 - Administering legislation governing tax, superannuation and business registry systems and supporting delivery of government benefits to the community
 - 20,000+ staff across 24 sites
 - High profile policy-driven programs, like the [Tax Avoidance Taskforce](#) program suite
- **ANZSOG review of the current state of evaluation in the APS¹**
 - Evaluations not adding value due to narrow focus, not asking the right questions, and bias towards showing program success
- **A deliberate investment in building evaluation culture and capacity**
 - Targeted recruitment with focus on building capability within
 - Experience and expertise to support business-connected evaluation teams

1. Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), *Evaluation in the Australian Public Service: current state of play, some issues and future directions*, March 2019

Where we fit in the ATO



We're building evaluation culture, capacity, and practice together



We provide a range of services



Guidance and support for planning and carrying out fit-for-purpose evaluations that produce actionable insights



Help with defining program purpose, outcomes and program logic



Opportunities and resources to build evaluation capability and capacity



Leadership of the ATO Evaluation Community of Practice

Service principles – and how we put them into practice

Our service principles



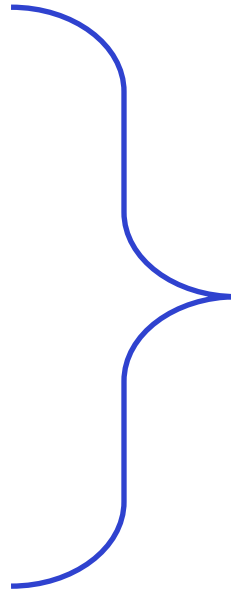
Collaboration

Utilisation

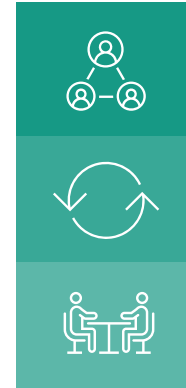
Fitness for purpose

Learning

Evaluative thinking



Our service delivery strategies



Modelling and coaching

Two-way learning

Client-led evaluation

The background of the slide is a solid dark blue. In the top right corner, there are several overlapping diagonal stripes in lighter shades of blue and cyan, creating a modern, geometric design.

**Our favoured
tools and activities**

Our SharePoint

Evaluation Hub
About us
Evaluation resources
ATO Evaluation Community of Practice
Client Engagement Group

Welcome to the Evaluation Hub

The Evaluation Hub provides expert evaluation advice to all Client Engagement Group business lines, with a focus on building evaluation culture, capacity and practice. Our SharePoint site is a collaborative space where people work together to bring evaluation to life across the Client Engagement Group and the ATO.

Who we are

What we provide

- Expert guidance and support for planning fit-for-purpose evaluations that produce actionable insights.
- Help to define your program purpose, outcomes and program logic.
- Opportunities and resources to build your evaluation capability and capacity.
- Leadership of the ATO Evaluation Community of Practice.

How we add value

We help your business area to use evaluation for learning and for making informed decisions, and help to ensure that your programs achieve their intended outcomes.

Our hub and spoke model

We work collaboratively with evaluation teams across CEG and the ATO:

- Superannuation and Employer Obligations
- Small Business and GST
- Individuals
- Bespoke Markets (Public Groups and International, Private Wealth and Integrated Compliance)
- Behavioural Insights


Meet the team

You can learn more about the CEG Evaluation Hub and meet the team [here](#).


We are part of the CEG Services | Planning, Reporting and Evaluation branch.

Contact us at CEG Evaluation

**Connect to the
ATO Evaluation Community of Practice**

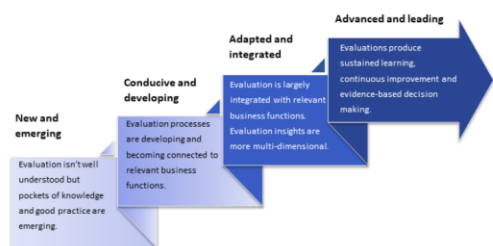

[Join the Yammer group](#)

The evaluation life cycle




Important resources


Evaluation Maturity Model




ATO developed resources



Planning an evaluation



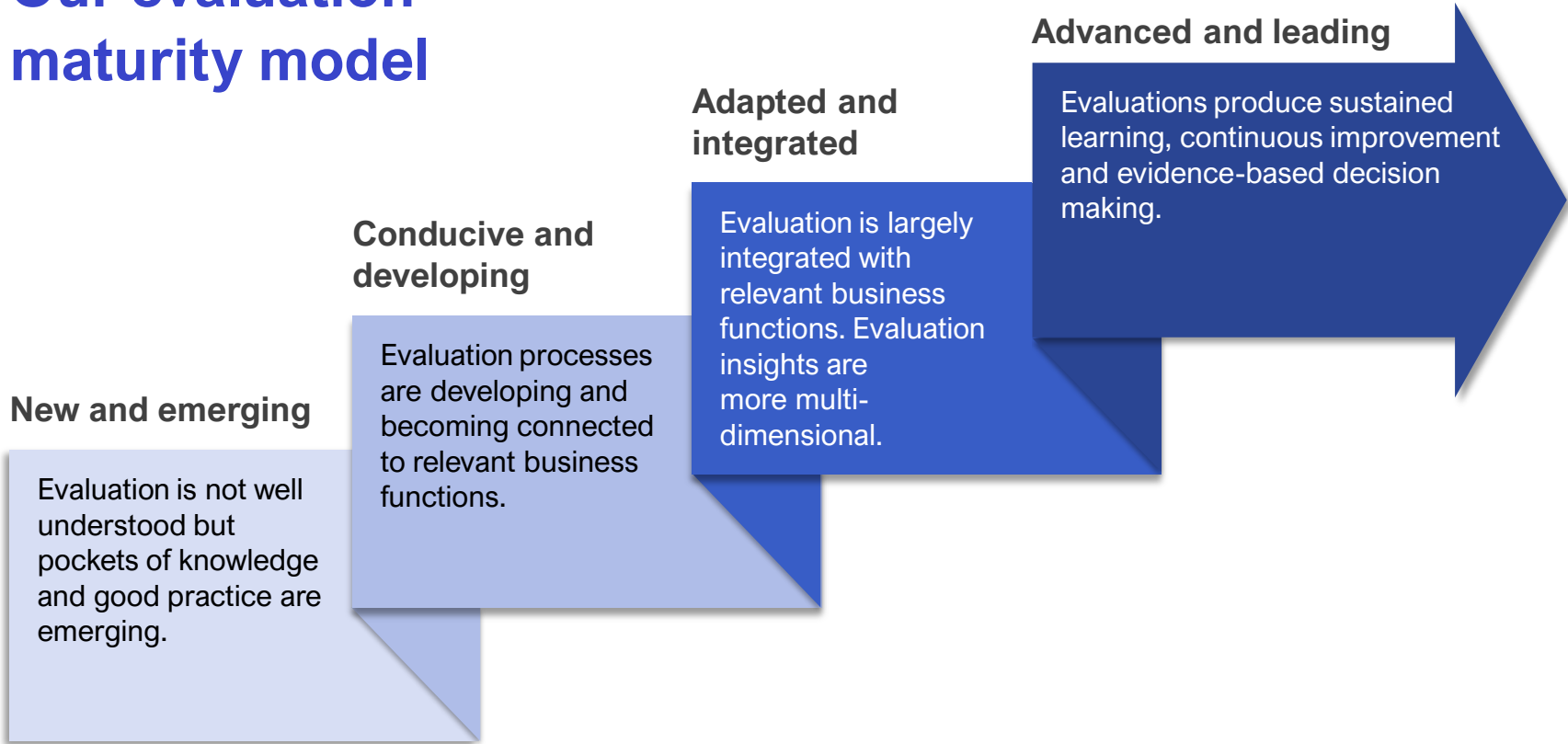
Evaluation glossary



Evaluation criteria





**Explore more resources aligned to
the evaluation life cycle**

Our evaluation maturity model




Our evaluation maturity model

An evaluation maturity model: culture

New and emerging 	Conducive and developing 	Adapted and integrated 	Advanced and leading 
Investment decisions often involve adjusting previous strategy in light of experience	Decision makers start to seek evaluation evidence but generally cannot find it	Decision makers seek and can find relevant evaluation evidence and insights	Investment and strategy decisions are routinely informed by meaningful and timely evaluation evidence and insights.

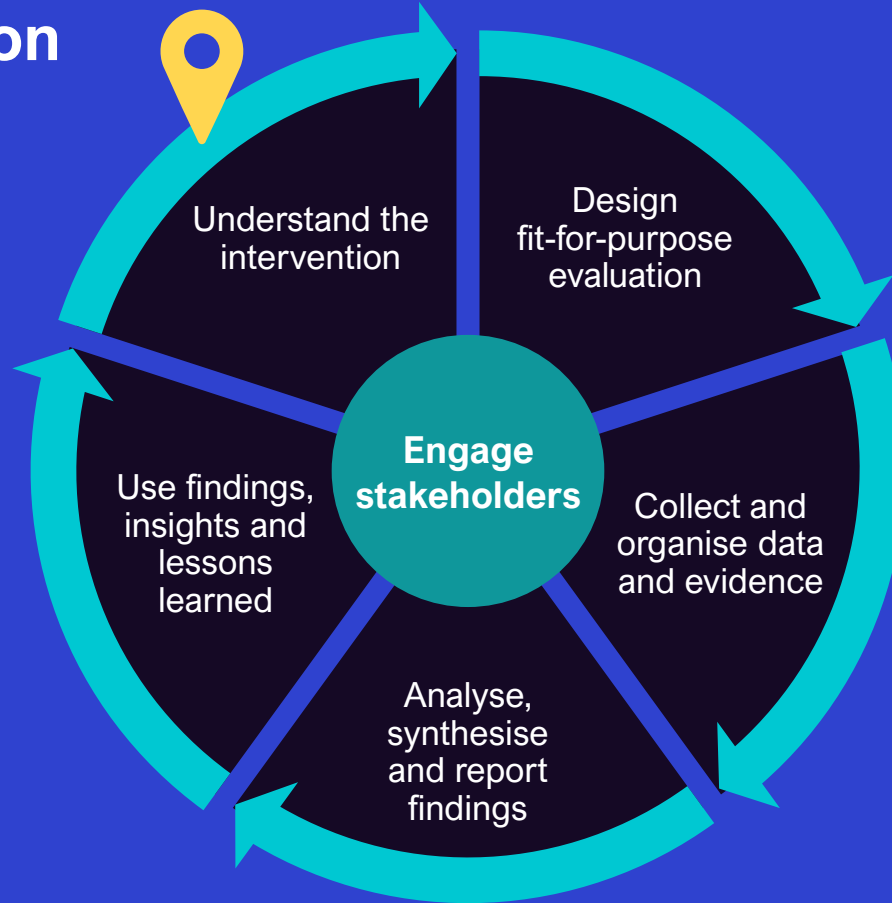
An evaluation maturity model: capacity

New and emerging 	Conducive and developing 	Adapted and integrated 	Advanced and leading 
Evaluation is not well understood, although pockets of	A defined evaluation capability is becoming visible within the	Evaluation capabilities are established across the	Evaluation capabilities are established, embedded and maintained at all levels of the organisation.

An evaluation maturity model: practice

New and emerging 	Conducive and developing 	Adapted and integrated 	Advanced and leading 
<p>There are few defined processes, principles and guidelines for evaluation.</p> <p>Where they happen, evaluations are generally straightforward and single method.</p> <p>Some good practices exist for experimental or quasi-experimental research methods</p>	<p>Defined processes, principles and guidelines for evaluation are being developed and connected to related functions (such as risk management, project and program management).</p> <p>Evaluation is mentioned in program governance frameworks.</p>	<p>Defined processes, principles and guidelines for evaluation are established and integrated with related functions.</p> <p>The requirement for evaluation is explicit within program governance frameworks and conformance is monitored.</p> <p>Mixed method and multifaceted</p>	<p>The organisation has established (or adopted) quality evaluation guidelines and policy which are cited regularly across the organisation at all levels.</p> <p>Conformance with evaluation guidelines and policy is obvious.</p> <p>Fit-for-purpose evaluations produce timely, meaningful and credible findings and insights.</p>

The evaluation life cycle



Planning an evaluation

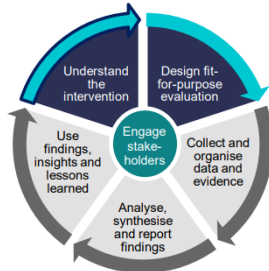


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Planning an evaluation

This resource discusses concepts and questions relating to the initial phases of the evaluation life cycle: *understanding the intervention being evaluated* and *designing fit-for-purpose evaluation*. It is useful for anyone commissioning or planning an evaluation or others involved in their planning.

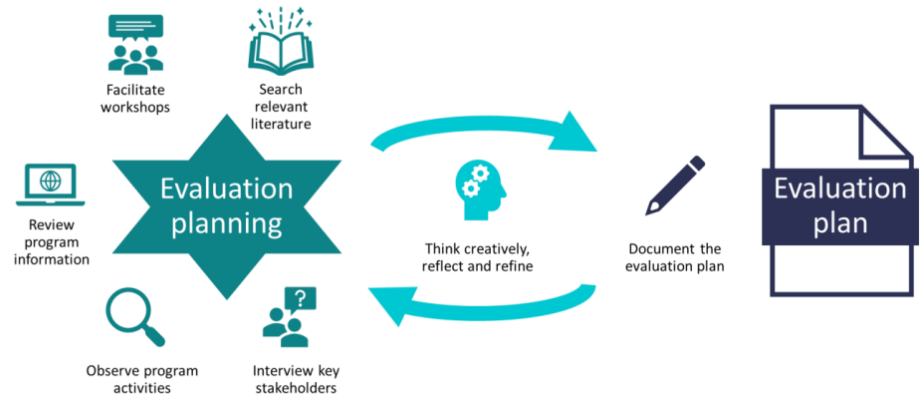
Figure 1: Evaluation life cycle



You can find more guides and resources to support each stage of the life cycle on the [Evaluation Hub](#). All resources align with the [Commonwealth Evaluation Policy](#) and are regularly updated.

- ❖ The term **intervention** is used above to mean the subject of evaluation. In the ATO context this is usually a program, project or risk treatment, but could also be a system or process.
- ❖ The substitute term **program** is used in the rest of the document to help with readability.

Figure 2: What evaluation planning looks like



The ATO Evaluation Community of Practice

- Open to any ATO people with a role or interest in evaluation
- For sharing information and experiences and learning from each other
- Building a supportive, cohesive evaluation community
- Supported by multiple communication channels (meetings, email, SharePoint site, Yammer group)
 - plus some events for focused capability building
- Led by the Evaluation Hub providing strategic direction and day-to-day management

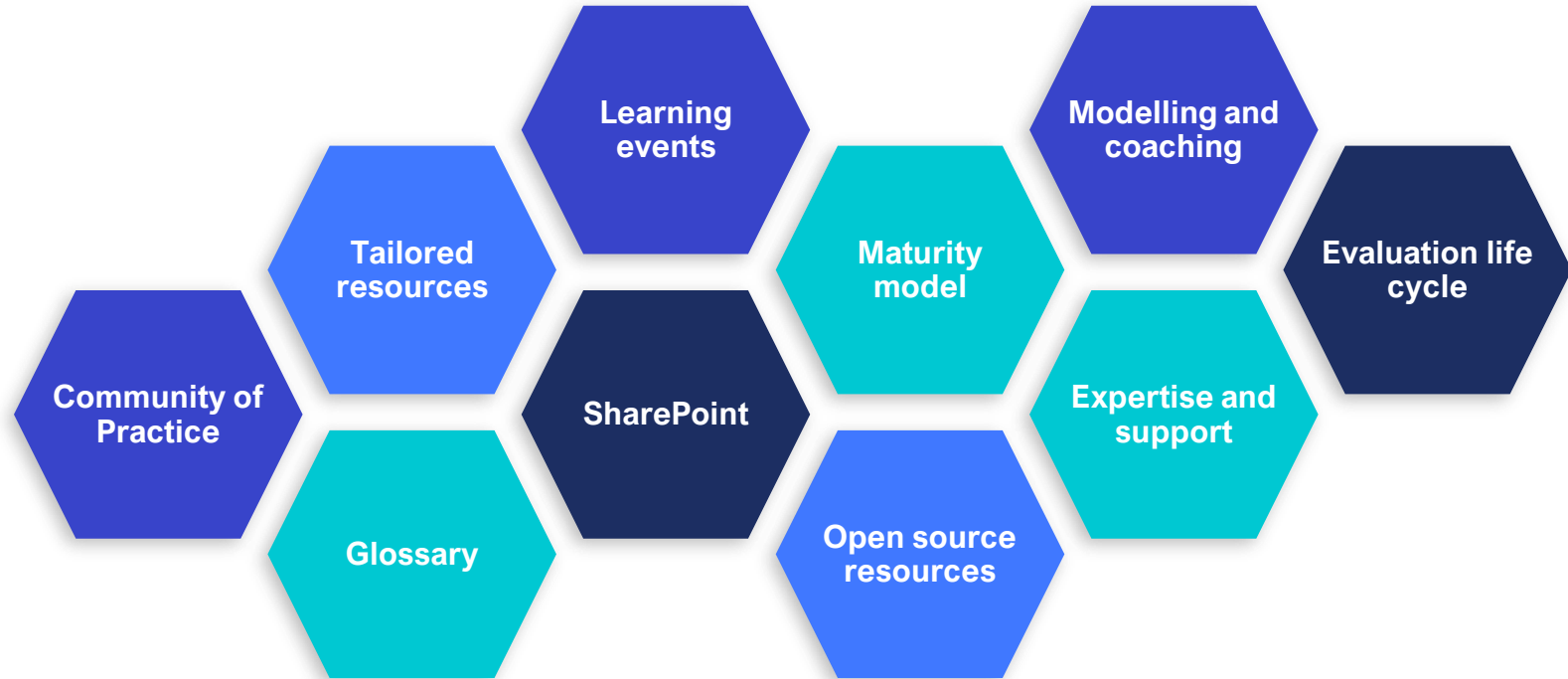




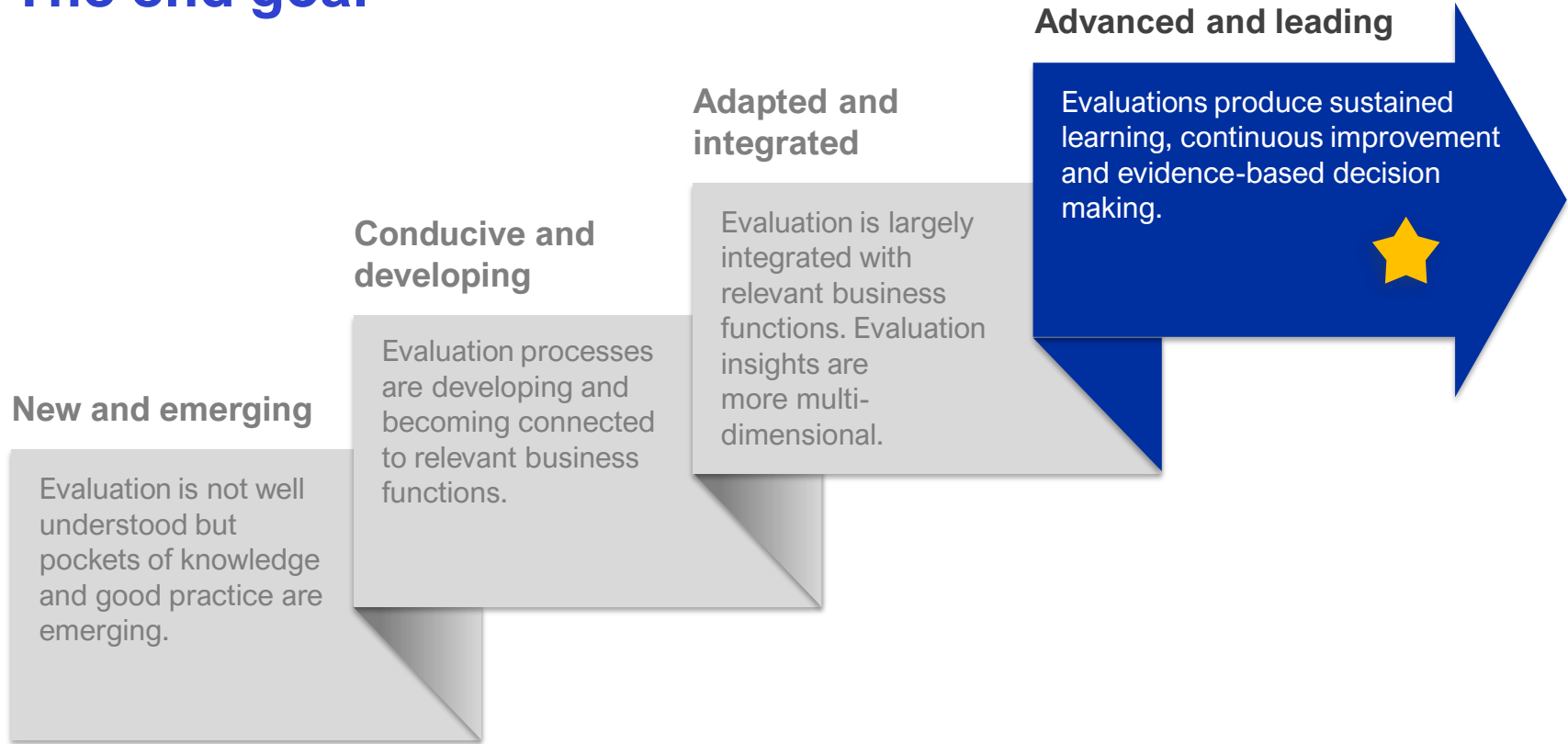
Harnessing external learning events

- We assess relevant external evaluation courses and coordinate targeted participation
- Around 50 people have attended external courses since the Evaluation Hub was set up in July 2021 (mostly AES workshops)
- We scaffold participants' learning through follow-up workshops to reflect on key concepts and support them in applying their learning
- This approach brings together external evaluation expertise and support for applying learning in context

We weave these tools and activities together to build evaluation capacity



The end goal



Thanks for listening...

Contact cegevaluation@ato.gov.au for any queries