



## PPN WORKING PAPER

# COMPARATIVE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR COUNTER RADICALISATION (JUNE 2010)

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### 1 About the report

This report sets out an evaluation framework for counter-radicalisation, for use at local, regional and national levels, as well as comparatively between countries. In order to ensure the framework closely meets members' needs, a further period of refinement would be needed, but the report aims to be as concrete and practical as possible.

The report uses the definition of counter-radicalisation adopted by the United Nations Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that lead to Terrorism,<sup>1</sup> which distinguishes **counter-radicalisation** from **de-radicalisation**. It defines counter-radicalisation as “a package of social, political, legal, educational and economic programmes specifically designed to deter disaffected (and possible already radicalised) individuals from crossing the line and becoming terrorists” and de-radicalisation as “programmes that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of re-integrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence.” In other words, de-radicalisation is concerned with individuals identified as being radicalised, whereas counter-radicalisation works further upstream to prevent radicalisation by reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.

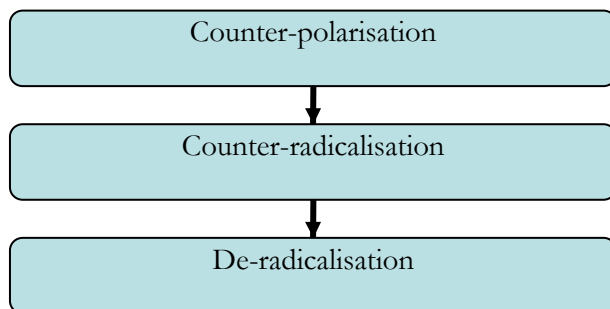
Closely linked are ‘**counter-polarisation**’ projects, aimed at reducing divisions between different groups within society. In many countries, counter-polarisation is an integral part of counter-radicalisation (whether or not the term itself is used), or is used interchangeably in policy language. This reflects dominant ideas about the causes of radicalisation.

Without wishing to suggest there is a ‘slippery slope’ from certain attitudes and behaviours towards the acceptance and use of violence (as the report will highlight, the “theory of change” for radicalisation is far from proven), it might be helpful to think of counter-polarisation, counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation on a ‘policy spectrum’, from broad, group-level ‘upstream’ activities, through more targeted group and individual interventions, through to highly targeted individual interventions at the other for

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<sup>1</sup> *First Report of the Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programmes*, United Nations, available from: <http://www.un.org/terrorism/pdfs/radicalization.pdf>

those whose behaviour and/or attitudes are considered ‘dangerous’, either to them personally or to society more generally. The spectrum is illustrated in the figure one, below. There are many areas of overlap between counter-polarisation and counter-radicalisation, and there are differing theories about when certain behaviours or attitudes become ‘dangerous’.



**Figure 1: Policy spectrum**

In designing an evaluation framework, it is essential to be clear about the objectives of policy – what does counter-radicalisation seek to achieve? How will we know when we have succeeded? What does success look like? There are competing theories about the causes of radicalisation, which produce different views about what the objectives of counter-radicalisation policy should be, which is amplified further at the European level. A review of PPN national approaches shows that there are many areas of agreement (which will be explored further in section two), but also points of underlying divergence:

- Which forms of extremism and radicalisation are in focus? Al-Qaeda-related and inspired, far right, far left, nationalist struggles, other?
- Is the approach to counter-radicalisation made through the prism of security, human rights, or social policy?
- How far upstream are interventions made – are they just focused on narrowly defined target groups and highly tailored activities, or do they seek to engage a wider audience and work through a broader range of tools?
- Are responses underpinned by presumptions about the instrumental role of ideas in influencing behaviour? And do they rest on the notion of a slippery slope where certain behaviours (e.g. anti-democratic) are considered to be a stepping stone towards radicalisation and the use of violence?
- What are considered to be the key causes/drivers of radicalisation: ideology, grievance, isolation/lack of integration, identity crises?

This report argues that it is possible to design a single evaluation framework for counter-radicalisation for PPN countries to use themselves and collaboratively; there is enough agreement to underpin a common framework, but each country will need to tailor it according to its overall approach and stated policy objectives. For example, those which think the ghettoisation of vulnerable communities is critical might prioritise segregation and integration indicators, whereas those which consider ideology as most important might focus on indicators linked to imam training, mosque reform and religious education. An evaluation framework that can be used across a number of countries will help to improve understanding of the kinds of strategic approaches that are most successful: such as, security or socially-led, broad or narrow, upstream or targeted, or those focusing on integration rather than ideology.

The report takes a pragmatic and bottom-up approach to the parameters of counter-radicalisation, taking its lead from what PPN countries are doing in practice rather than trying to fit them into an academic or theoretical framework. It therefore focuses on all forms of extremism, including Al-Qaeda related and

inspired, far-right and far-left; the full spectrum of projects and interventions, excluding de-radicalisation as defined above; and activities at all layers of government/governance, including local, regional and national. It focuses on activities that are domestically located, excluding counter-radicalisation efforts conducted by PPN member countries overseas, especially in relation to international development and foreign affairs. It is likely these could eventually be incorporated into this framework, but this requires more thought.

Section two outlines current counter-radicalisation practice and the different types of counter-radicalisation projects in place within PPN countries. Section three provides background on approaches to evaluation, presents principles for an evaluation framework for counter-radicalisation, and constructs a “theory of change” to form the basis of the framework. Section four presents an evaluation framework which consists of three elements: individual project monitoring, area-based impact evaluation, and thematic learning evaluation (structured around different *types* of interventions). Section five closes with conclusions and next steps for PPN members.

## 2 Counter-radicalisation in practice

There are many competing theories about radicalisation, but on the basis of limited empirical evidence, it is impossible to single out one root cause for radicalisation. As a report from the European Commission’s expert group on violent radicalisation commented, “The convergence of several possible contributing variables can usually be found at the origin of the radicalisation process.” They also found that there is no hierarchy of contributing factors, with the following present across cases and in varying combinations: excessive repression by state authorities; profound social changes; alienation or the sense of a personal identity crisis; perception of prevalent social injustice; lack of integration and the experiences or perception of discrimination.<sup>2</sup> This lack of hard evidence is important in relation to evaluation, as it means we cannot say for certain what causes or prevents radicalisation. The evaluation framework needs to be realistic about these limitations, and be focused as much on learning and ongoing programme improvement as straightforward measurement and impact assessment.

Given these limitations, this report takes its starting point for counter-radicalisation from the actual responses adopted by the PPN countries in terms of strategy, policies, programmes and projects. A review of these documents shows that PPN countries conceive of four overlapping factors in radicalisation (see list below and figure two), with each placing emphasis according to the dominant national theory of change that underpins their policy. Some countries have policies for all four, but this is not the case for all PPN countries:

- **Divisions:** lack of integration, ghettoisation, polarisation, internal community divides, identity crises;
- **Grievances:** under-employment, poor education, political / democratic disenfranchisement, discrimination;
- **Narratives:** faith, political movements, ideologies;
- **Means:** social / family / criminal networks, vulnerable/risky institutions and places, vulnerable individuals, charismatic individuals.

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<sup>2</sup> *Radicalisation Processes Leading to Acts of Terrorism: A concise report prepared for the European Commission’s expert group on violent radicalisation*, 15 May 2008

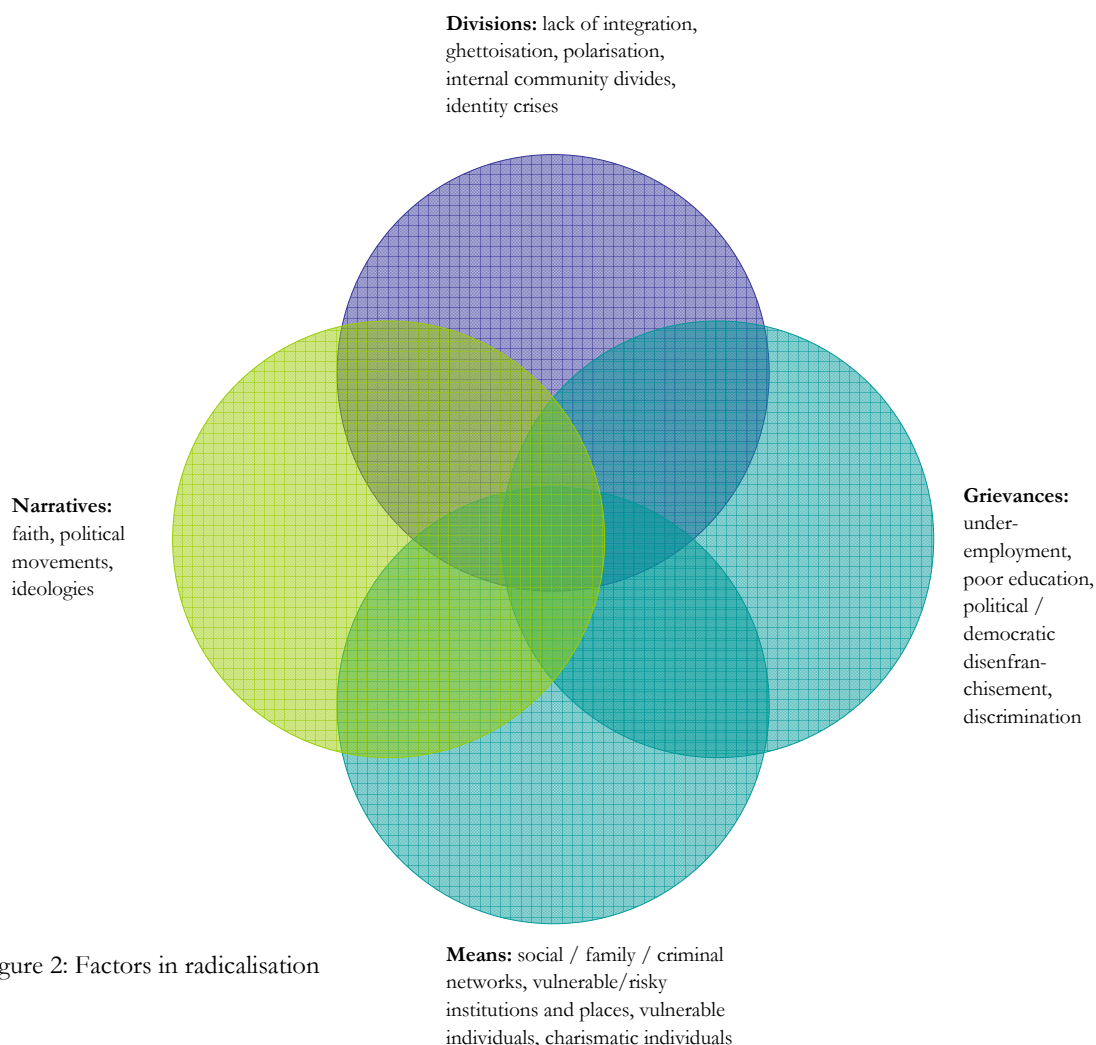


Figure 2: Factors in radicalisation

As a general rule, counter-polarisation projects are aimed at tackling ‘divisions’ and ‘grievances’, counter-radicalisation efforts are focused on ‘narratives’ and ‘means’, and there is an overlap of counter-radicalisation and ‘pursue’ type law enforcement in relation to ‘means’. The lines between these activities are often blurred. Table one, below, outlines the range of projects in PPN countries across the policy spectrum. Structured around the four factors outlined above, it also incorporates projects aimed at improving the ability and capacity of state agencies to respond, including knowledge, skills, training and awareness. It is intended to be indicative rather than fully comprehensive.

Factors in radicalisation	Purpose of intervention	Types of activities/projects
Divisions	Create a sense of belonging and shared identity	Citizenship teaching, inter-faith dialogue, cohesion activities, language tuition, anti-discrimination projects, myth busting

	Increase integration of vulnerable communities	Housing and integration policies, language tuition
	Reduce internal community divisions	Intergenerational projects, female empowerment, promoting leadership of young people
Grievances	Improve educational attainment	Targeted after-school clubs, mentoring and role models, language training
	Improve labour market outcomes	Leadership skills, mentoring and role models, professional networks, training and employment projects, apprenticeships, language tuition,
	Reduce experience of discrimination	Anti-discrimination work, myth-busting, inter-faith and inter-community activities, cohesion projects
	Increase political participation and sense of empowerment	Dialogue, discussion forums, democratic platforms, campaigns on voting, use of social media platforms
Narratives	Increase resilience of key institutions vulnerable to radicalisation	Imam training (faith, social, inter-generational), institutional capacity building, training on spotting vulnerable individuals, improving relations between institutions and police/social services/other local officials
	Reduce involvement in illegal political activity	Diversions activities for young people (sports, arts, politics, etc.), dialogue, discussion forums, democratic platforms
	Reduce attraction of extremist groups and their messages	Improving Islamic/political education, diversionary activities (sports, arts, politics, etc.)
Means	Reduced criminality within target group	Law enforcement, diversionary activities (sports, arts, politics, etc.), activities to improve educational attainment, mentoring and role models

	Increased support available for vulnerable individuals	Training for frontline workers, community mapping, information sharing protocols, capacity building for key institutions, prison imams, prison programmes
	Reduced attraction of extremist groups	Improving Islamic/political education, diversionary activities (sports, arts, politics, etc.)

**Table 1: Counter-radicalisation projects according to factors in radicalisation and purpose of intervention**

### 3 Constructing an evaluation framework for counter-radicalisation

There are three main schools of thought about what should determine the approach to evaluation: the purpose of evaluation; the characteristics of those being evaluated and relevant environmental factors (realist evaluation); and the nature of the problem to be solved.<sup>3</sup> There are two broad purposes for evaluation: control (controlling performance in terms of accountability) and learning (to create learning and thereby improve the programme in question). If evaluation is to be used for the purpose of control, it is essential that reliable methods for results measurement are available, and that those responsible for exerting control have insight into the people they are evaluating at the ‘production’ level. Neither is normally present in most areas of policy, but they are especially difficult to achieve in relation to complex challenges such as counter-radicalisation. Instead, given the theory of change for radicalisation is based on limited knowledge and evidence, it seems more sensible to base the evaluation framework on the principle of learning and continual project development, at least initially. The evaluation framework set out in this paper draws on ideas from all three schools of thoughts in order to establish key principles for evaluation (see table two below).

←	→	←
NATURE OF PROBLEM	PRINCIPLES OF EVALUATION	ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS
<p><b>COMPLICATED</b> (many different people and organisations involved in delivery)</p> <p>...So need to piece together information from different sources</p>	<p><b>MULTI-ACTOR APPROACH</b></p> <p><b>EVALUATE QUALITIES OF PROCESS AS WELL AS</b></p>	<p><b>STATE LEGITIMACY AND IMBALANCE OF POWER</b> (state-community imbalance of power, and questions about legitimacy of state intervention)</p> <p>...So heavy-handed approaches are counter-productive</p>

<sup>3</sup> Hanne Foss Hansen, ‘Choosing Evaluation Models: A discussion on evaluation design’ *Evaluation* 2005; 11; 447-462

	<b>OUTCOMES</b>	
<p><b>COMPLEX</b> (significant knowledge gaps about causes and effective responses)</p> <p>...So it is hard to find reliable data</p> <p>...So we don't know what works</p>	<p><b>FOCUS ON LEARNING RATHER THAN CONTROL</b></p> <p><b>BASED ON A THEORY OF CHANGE</b></p>	<p><b>CAPACITY-POOR COMMUNITIES</b> (lack of infrastructure and resources)</p> <p>...So can't expect communities to deliver evaluation without support</p>
<p><b>BLURRED</b> (multiple causes and dependencies of factors)</p> <p>...So we need to understand the context</p> <p>...So it's hard to attribute success</p>	<p><b>MONITOR RELATED INDICATORS</b></p> <p><b>COMPARATIVE AS WELL AS PROJECT/PROGRAMME BASED</b></p>	<p><b>POLITICALLY-CHARGED ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>...So there are competing views about the causes of the problem and what works</p> <p>...So there are sensitivities about use of data</p>
<p><b>LONG-TERM</b> (results take a long time to materialise)</p> <p>...So it takes a long time to see what has worked</p>	<p><b>STAGED APPROACH TO CAPTURE RESULTS IN SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM</b></p>	<p><b>ECONOMIC CRISIS</b> (increased pressure to show results)</p> <p>...So evaluation can't be avoided, no matter how difficult</p>

**Table 2: Principles of evaluation for counter-radicalisation**

The principles of evaluation above suggest a number of points about the way the evaluation is organised and conducted:

- Multi-actor approach: The evaluation needs to take account of the views of a range of actors associated with the delivery of the relevant intervention; it must also include the communities at whom the interventions are targeted
- Evaluate qualities of process as well as outcomes: Evaluation needs to monitor and evaluate *how* interventions are delivered as well as *what* they deliver

- Focus on learning rather than control: Evaluation needs to incentivise and reward honest critical self-assessment; it needs to be conducted via common shared frameworks to enable comparison between projects and places to speed up the learning process – learning economies of scale
- Based on a theory of change: Evaluation needs to be based on a theory of change (see below) which is revised on an ongoing basis as lessons are learned and more is understood about what works
- Monitor related indicators: Use broad as well as narrow indicators to provide common baseline that will not become redundant as the theory of change is amended over time
- Comparative as well as project/programme based: Evaluation needs to be conducted on a number of levels: project, programme, area, theme, etc.; a common framework is needed to enable cross referencing of results from different levels
- Staged approach to capture results in short, medium and long-term: a) Observe and learn, b) work out whether interventions are working, c) work out why interventions are working, d) work out whether they are the most effective and efficient ways of achieving the desired outcomes

The key tool for the evaluation framework is the ‘theory of change’ for radicalisation. This is based on what is known or assumed about the causes of the problem and maps long-term desired outcomes, interim outcomes, the activities needed to achieve them and resources required.<sup>4</sup> Because of the lack of empirical data, the theory of change is more speculative than it would be in many other areas of policy; it is too early to say with confidence what causes radicalisation, exactly how the different factors relate to one another, and what works in terms of prevention. Constructing a theory of change is made even more difficult at a pan-European level where each country has a slightly different approach, as discussed above. The theory of change for this evaluation model has therefore been kept purposefully broad to allow it to be used by all PPN countries, but it should be narrowed and refined when applied in each context. The theory of change is outlined in table three, below, but should be modified in consultation with PPN members to select the most important interim and long-term outcomes, choose the most appropriate indicators and measures, whether direct or proxy, and agree the desired degree of change. It will also be essential to establish a baseline measure for radicalisation – presumably based on area threat assessments conducted by the police or intelligence agencies, or the number of arrests/convictions – and baseline measures for each of the four factors: divisions, grievances, narratives, and means, in order to measure impact on vulnerability and resilience to radicalisation as proxy measures. These will provide a benchmark to measure progress over time.

It is also important to distinguish between the overall objectives of counter-radicalisation (to reduce the incidence of radicalisation, diminish the number of violent radicals, etc.) and the intended outcomes of counter-radicalisation projects which will be measured through evaluation. The latter are concerned with reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience to radicalisation and are based on a theory of what causes and prevents radicalisation, which is underpinned by a highly partial evidence base. Evaluations of individual projects can measure indicators related to vulnerability and resilience, but cannot on their own explain whether and how this impacts on an overall measure of radicalisation. This must be done in a cumulative and longitudinal way.

A health prevention analogy can illustrate this point. We know with a high degree of certainty that improved physical fitness reduces (but does not eradicate) the incidence of heart disease. An after-school sports club set up in a deprived neighbourhood with poor health outcomes, including heart disease, will

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<sup>4</sup> DTI *Evaluating the impact of England's Regional Development Agencies: Developing a methodology and evaluation framework*, DTI Occasional Paper No. 2, London: DTI, 2006

aim to improve health and contribute to the long-term reduction of heart disease among the local community. However, in an annual evaluation of its impact, it would not be possible to measure the extent to which the project had prevented heart disease among its participants because this effect would take many years to become evident, the fact that a single project evaluation would not be able to control for other variables, and because it would be impossible to prove that any impact had been produced by the club's activities rather than other interventions or local/personal factors. Instead, the evaluation would record the extent to which the club had reached its intended target audience, the extra amount of exercise they had done as a result, and this would provide a measure of the extent to which the club had contributed to a reduction in vulnerability factors for heart disease. To make the link between vulnerability/resilience and impact on overall policy objectives, individual project evaluations need to be combined with other forms of evaluation.

Table three, below, provides a suggested theory of change for radicalisation for use within the proposed evaluation framework which is outlined in section four. It breaks down each of the four factors – divisions, grievances, narratives and means – into a number of long-term outcomes. For each of these, suggested interim outcomes (service delivery goals) are provided, along with an illustration of the kinds of activities used to deliver them.

<b>Drivers</b>	<b>Long-term outcomes</b>	<b>Interim outcomes</b>	<b>Types of Activities</b>
Divisions	Sense of belonging to wider society felt within target group	Improved language skills Increased knowledge of rights and citizenship Improved happiness scores	Language tuition Citizenship classes, civic education Inter-cultural activities
	Physical integration into wider society of target group	Reduced segregation Reduced overcrowding Improved scores for bridging capital	Integration policies Housing policies Inter-cultural and cross-community projects
	Reduced community divisions within target group	Increased number and uptake of inter-generational activities Increased representation of women and young people in decision making forums Increased 'voice' for women and young people	Inter-generational activities and volunteering schemes Government funding to incentivise and support governance reforms for community organisations Skills and leadership programmes for women and young people Promoting role models for women and young people
Grievances	Improved labour market outcomes for target group	Increased support and training delivered to target group Improved performance in labour market	Apprenticeships and training programmes After-school study clubs

		Reduced levels of under-employment	Mentoring and professional networks
	Improved educational attainment within target group	Improved educational attainment at key stages Increased entrance to higher education	After-school study clubs Scholarships, mentoring and role models
	Reduced levels of discrimination towards target group	Improved tension monitoring results  Lower reported levels of discrimination (cases reported, cases prosecuted)	Inter-cultural, inter-faith and cross-community programmes  Myth-busting programmes, anti-discrimination programmes in schools
	Heightened political participation among target group	Increased voting levels within target group (where they qualify to vote)  Increased membership of political parties and NGOs  Improved understanding of government positions on key issues of relevance to them	Campaigns to increase voter turnout  Targeted campaigns by political parties and NGOs to reach out to target groups  Government public engagement campaigns, discussion forums, use of social media
Narratives	Increased community rejection of violence and violent ideologies within target group	Reduced reported support for key statements  Reduced use of key websites	Imam training, discussion forums  Support and promotion of alternative websites
	Increased institutional capacity to challenge extremism within target group	Increased training and information delivered to key organisations  Enhanced information sharing between institutions	Imam/leadership training, faith and political education for target group  Establishment of information sharing protocols, partnership

		Increased conduct of risk and threat assessments by key institutions	agreements/meetings Production of guidance on risk and threat assessment, production of frameworks, training for institutions
	Improved community political/religious understanding within target group	Increased capacity of target religious and political institutions  Increased delivery and uptake of public meetings for discussions	Capacity building projects, governance programmes, leadership training, awareness campaigns on radicalisation, partnership campaigns by police and local government  Discussions, debates, public forums
Means	Reduced criminality within target group	Reduced offending and reoffending rates within target group  Programmes delivered in prison  Support for prisoners on release	Diversions activities, after-school educational support, role models and mentoring, targeted programmes as necessary (e.g. drugs treatment)  Education, skills training, counselling programmes, religious/political education  Housing, work and social support packages, rehabilitation programmes
	Increased support available for vulnerable individuals within target	Referrals structure in place for vulnerable individuals  Increased knowledge and awareness of risk factors	Partnerships between key agencies  Training and awareness raising

	group	among frontline workers Improved mediation and conflict management skills among target group, professionals and key institutions	Training for frontline workers
	Reduced membership of identified groups (legal and illegal)	Increased availability and uptake of range of diversionary activities	Sports and arts activities and programmes

Table 3: Theory of change for radicalisation

#### 4 The proposed evaluation framework for counter-radicalisation

In constructing the evaluation framework, the first priority is to ensure it is underpinned by the principles outlined in the previous section. This will ensure that it is suitable for the problem and context; appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation; is a constructive part of the learning process to help improve understanding of what works; does not itself generate negative unintended consequences; and is a tool that can be used collaboratively and comparatively over time by PPN countries. These principles are: multi-actor approach; evaluate qualities of process as well as outcomes; focus on learning rather than control; based on a theory of change; monitor related indicators; comparative as well as project/programme based; and a staged approach.

The second priority is to ensure that the evaluation focuses on the right level of analysis, with a distinction between tactical monitoring and evaluation, and strategic impact assessment. As has been discussed, an evaluation of an *individual project* can only tell us the extent to which it has been successful in its own terms, linked to service delivery goals. In other words, it will show whether the project has – based on the theory of change – reduced vulnerability to radicalisation or increased resilience. For example, in evaluating an after-school madrassah project to improve understanding of Islam in order to equip young Muslims with the knowledge to challenge extremists, the evaluation can measure with a relative degree of certainty the impact on those taking part in the programme: the extent of their increased knowledge, the type of their new knowledge, how many took part, whether the target group was reached, shifts in acceptance/rejection of extremist messages amongst this group before and after the programme, and so forth. It can also assess the extent to which the project was well run, and conducted in line with current thinking about best practice. We can speculate as to whether the project has contributed to an overall reduction in radicalisation (whether these individuals – as a result of their involvement – are less likely to become radicalised, and whether any changes are attributable to this project or other factors), but until we have the longitudinal data available in other areas of policy, it will be impossible to say with any degree of certainty.

Making the leap between tactical level monitoring and evaluation and strategic level impact assessment is vital and is central to the aims of this project. We want to know what works in reducing radicalisation, why and how it works, and which interventions are most effective and efficient. Alongside tactical level project monitoring and evaluation, this framework incorporates two other kinds of evaluation – by area and by intervention type – with the aim of doing just that. The area-based studies look at a range of interventions within a finite area and can be pegged against area-specific baseline indicators for the target group, such as political participation, integration, belonging, tensions, educational attainment, labour market, crime and reoffending rates, and discrimination, as well as absolute measures of radicalisation derived from police and intelligence local threat assessments, or other measures. It will still be difficult to attribute impact to an individual intervention, but working within a finite area it is easier to control more of the variables. Also, by comparing places with similar profiles but different policy responses it is possible to contrast results and build understanding about which projects or types of interventions are most effective.

The third layer of evaluation ‘thematic learning evaluation’, assesses projects with shared objectives, such as all imam training programmes, discussion forums, integration programmes, training and apprenticeships, prison programmes, or mentoring projects. A detailed review is conducted of similar projects from different places in order to assess the relative impact of that kind of intervention over others, and to provide an insight

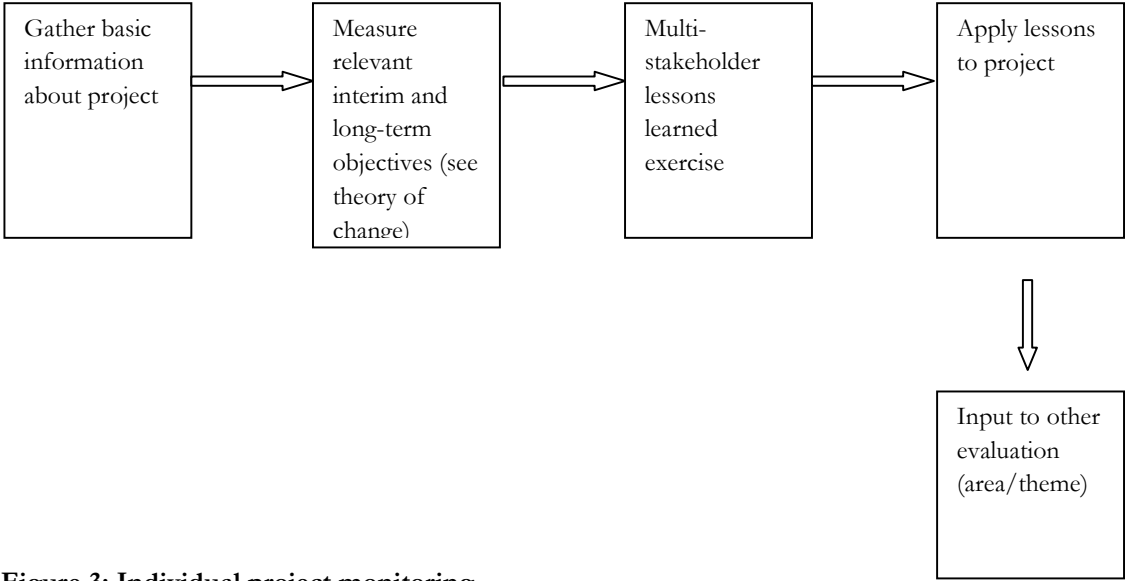
into the most efficient ways of delivery (best practice). This could also incorporate an element of geographical analysis, comparing similar projects in places with similar indicators in an attempt to understand the key externalities impacting on success or failure.

All three types of evaluation could be delivered within an individual country as a coordinated programme of evaluation of counter-radicalisation and counter-polarisation projects. At present, most evaluations are of individual projects or programmes, and there is rarely one person or department with an overview of them all which means opportunities for learning are minimised. Conducting individual project evaluations within a broader framework provides opportunities for detailed comparison between projects, with the option of controlling for certain factors. Two examples of this approach have been identified: the Danish government has commissioned a single external contractor to conduct a three year evaluation of projects within six areas of its action plan; and the UK Department for Communities and Local Government is conducting an overall evaluation of its local authority led programmes, plus a few other projects.

If PPN members were to adopt the same evaluation framework, this would also provide an opportunity to compare results across countries, thus speeding up the learning process even further. It would also provide an opportunity for high-level strategic assessment of which kinds of national approaches are the most successful in countering radicalisation and polarisation.

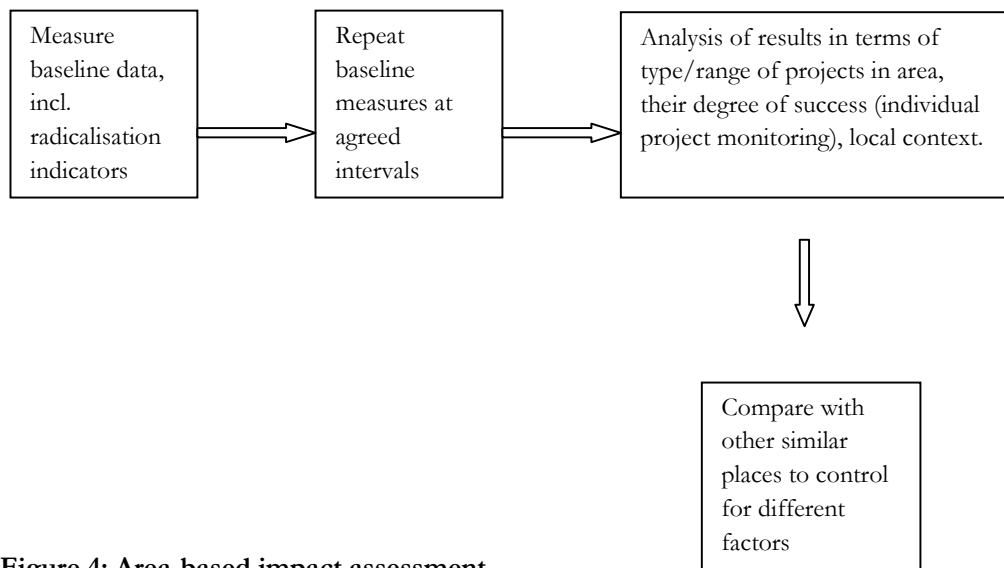
To summarise, the proposed framework contains three layers of evaluation:

**Individual project monitoring**, aimed at observing, learning and improving at the tactical level. Individual project evaluations can also be used as part of the area-based impact evaluations and thematic learning evaluations. It captures basic information about project management, seeks to learn lessons, applies these lessons to improve future practice, reinforces partnership by adopting a multi-stakeholder approach, thus also reinforcing local partnership arrangements. It measures the impact of the project in relation to its interim and long-term outcomes, related to vulnerability/resilience to radicalisation. It does not seek to draw broader conclusions about the impact of the project on levels of radicalisation as this is not possible at any degree of certainty at the individual project level. Given the constraints on resources, it will not be possible to evaluate all projects, so countries or local areas must decide which to prioritise, either in terms of absolute number of projects, projects over a certain size, or particular kinds of interventions.



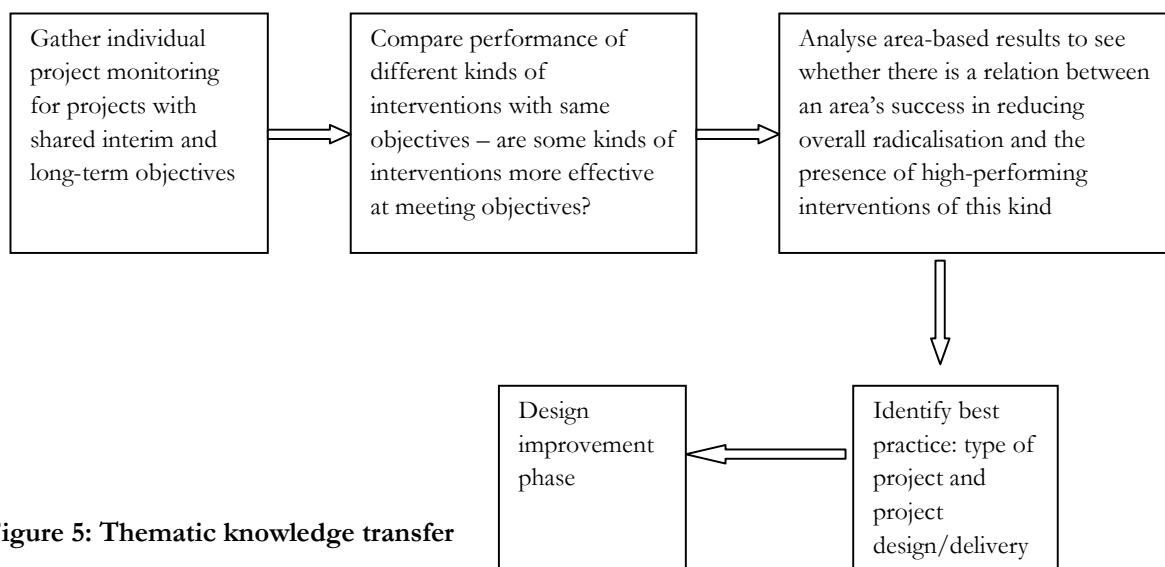
**Figure 3: Individual project monitoring**

**Area-based impact evaluation**, aimed at understanding whether interventions are effective, what types of interventions are most effective in certain settings, and controlling for area-based factors. This will draw together the results of individual project monitoring exercises within a particular area, produce an assessment of the spread of projects across the different categories of ‘drivers’, and then seek to assess the extent to which the area-based programme of interventions has impacted on long-term outcomes and overall policy objectives within that area. Working on a geographical basis, this can be done through analysing a set number of indicators that correspond to the ‘drivers’ in the theory of change, and an initial baseline measure would need to be taken against which progress would be charted. This might include voting levels, tension incidents, reported cases of discrimination, and so on, as well as more targeted measures, such as the number of arrests on extremism related charged, the number of individuals under police or intelligence surveillance, or longitudinal attitude surveys among the target group. Area-based impact evaluations could also be used comparatively between places, especially those with similar indicators, to begin to isolate the impact of particular types of interventions.



**Figure 4: Area-based impact assessment**

**Thematic knowledge transfer**, aimed at understanding which kinds of interventions and project designs are most effective at delivering a particular intended outcome, how they are best delivered (best practice), and also controlling for area-based factors. This kind of evaluation would help to fine tune particular kinds of interventions, and working comparatively between places (including cross-country) would increase the rate of knowledge transfer considerably. The evaluation would look at the extent to which individual projects had met their interim and long term outcomes, the extent to which the places where they had been delivered had met overall policy objectives to reduce radicalisation, and assess the extent to which this could be attributed to the presence/absence or nature of these kinds of interventions. Each evaluation would be followed by a period of design improvement to apply lessons learned and improve future practice.



**Figure 5: Thematic knowledge transfer**

## 5 Conclusions and next steps

The aim of this report was to find a way of measuring the impact of counter-radicalisation policy. While it is not possible to measure the impact of individual projects on overall policy goals (reduction in radicalisation), it is possible to measure their impact on vulnerability and resilience to radicalisation. By complementing this with two other forms of evaluation – within an area, and by intervention type – and running the overall evaluation exercise in a joined-up and cross referenced way, it would be possible to enhance understanding of what works, develop best practice, and deliver an absolute measure of impact on the level of radicalisation. Doing this across as well as within PPN countries would speed up the learning process further, and develop understanding of the relative effectiveness of different types of national approaches.

This three-pronged approach would require commitment and resource from PPN countries, but it would not necessarily require additional funding. With only a few exceptions, evaluation is currently done on a project-by-project basis; there are few attempts to compare evaluation results; and without a common framework it is impossible to draw wider conclusions to help refine the theory of change for radicalisation. In other words, evaluation currently tells us almost nothing about what works, so it is not surprising that reports sit on shelves, usually not even influencing refinement of the relevant project in focus. By pooling some or all of the resource allocated to evaluation, PPN members could get much better value for money from their evaluation, learn more about what works, establish best practice, and refine their understanding of the causes of radicalisation.

If there is broad agreement of the merit of a joined up approach, the next steps would be to:

- Refine the theory of change – do we have the right drivers? Are the interim/long-term outcomes appropriate? And have we captured all the relevant activities?
- Agree indicators for each of the interim and long-term outcomes, based on a realistic assessment of the availability of data within each PPN country, such that meaningful cross-country comparisons could be made;
- Agree baseline measures for each of the factors, based on a realistic assessment of the availability of data within each PPN country, such that meaningful cross-country comparisons could be made;
- Agree baseline measures for radicalisation, based on a realistic assessment of the availability of data within each PPN country, such that meaningful cross-country comparisons could be made, and taking into consideration potential sensitivities about information sharing;
- Refine the framework – are these the right lens through which to evaluate counter-radicalisation policy? Could others be added/substituted?