



# The necessary shifts in evaluation to inform climate action

Rethinking what works: Evaluation, systems change, and the environment and climate crisis

6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 Stefano D'Errico

iied - head of monitoring evaluation and learning

# The deafening silence: Evaluative evidence is missing in the Climate Debate

Members of the Bureau elected for the IPCC seventh assessment cycle have consistently expressed the desire for their assessments to generate findings that can inform practical action, and to engage practitioners more in IPCC activities.

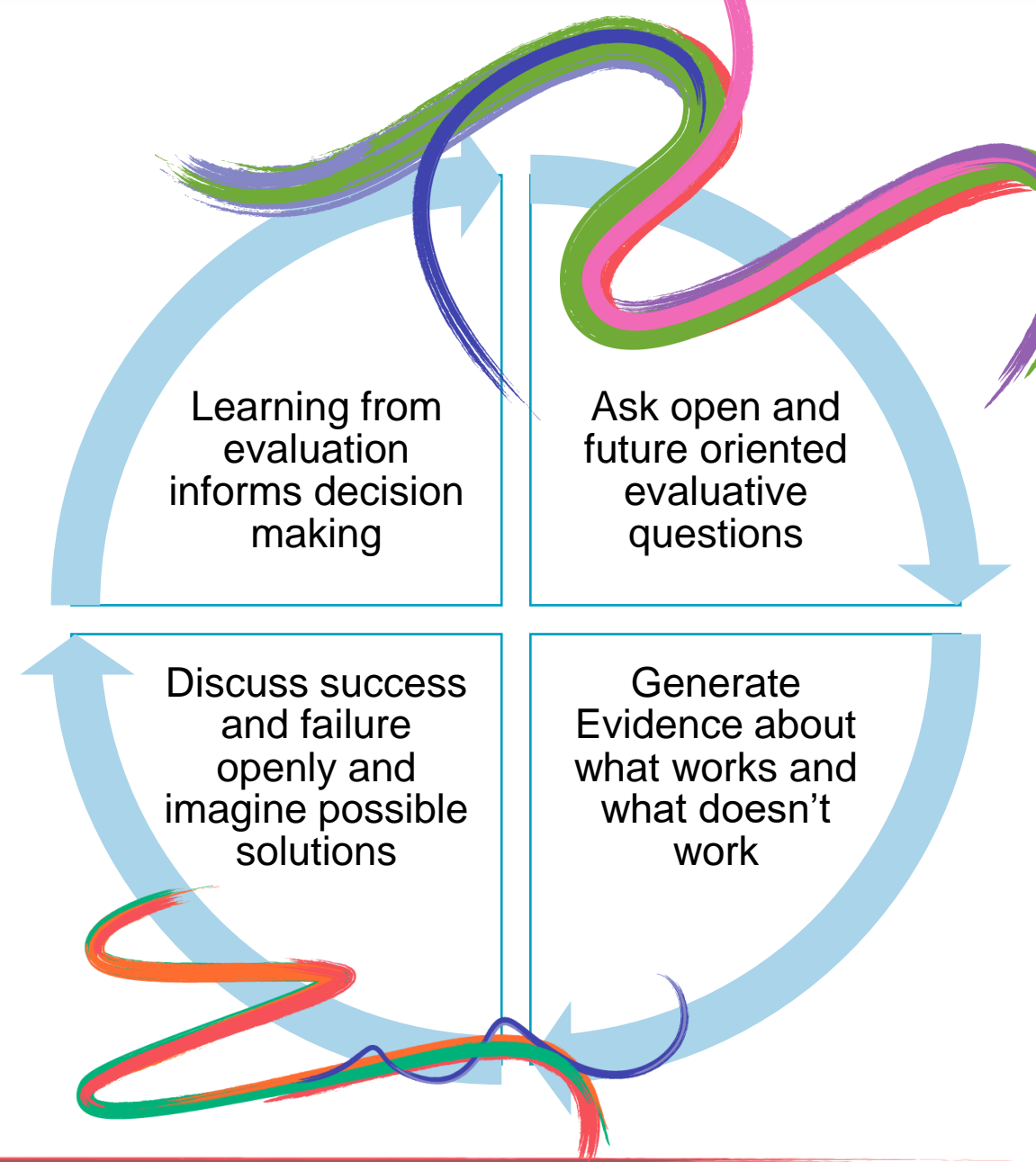


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and Extended Methods of Assessment in the AR7 (NEMA)

# Three shifts are needed

## Shift 1: From evaluation to evaluative thinking

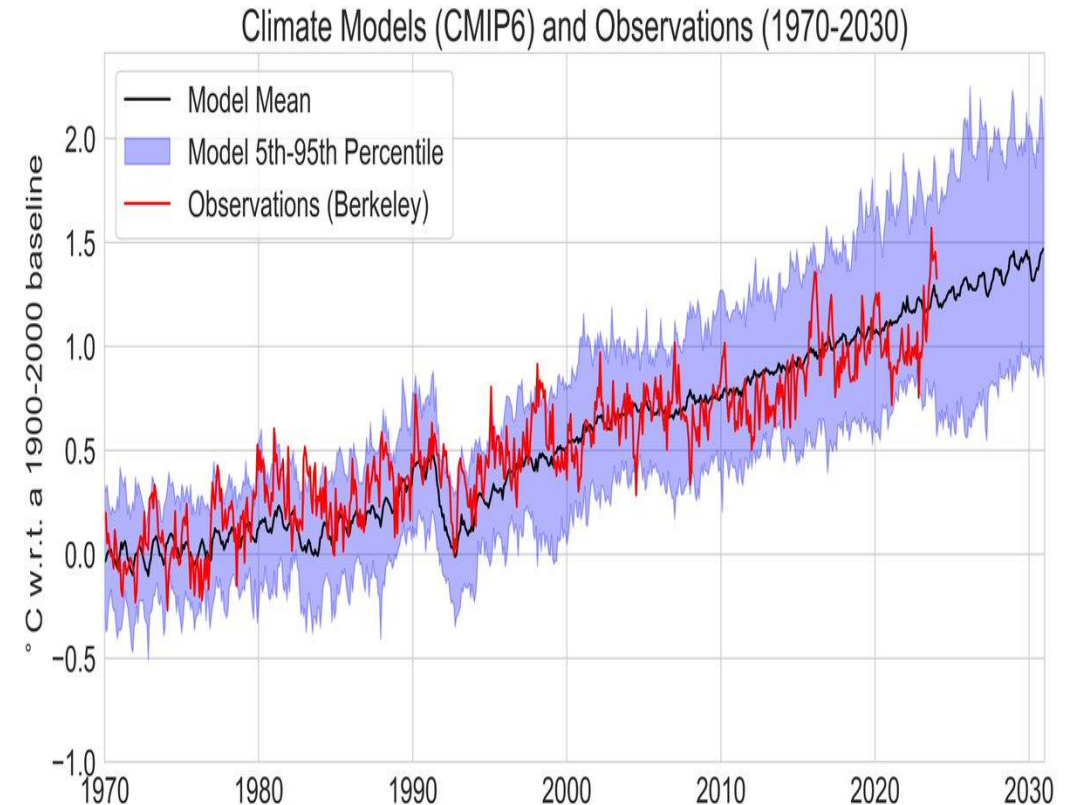
- **Rethinking evaluation questions:** Shift from asking “What difference have we made?” (biased) to “What is making a difference?” (objective).
- **From accountability to evaluative thinking:** Move beyond one-off evaluations towards continuous evaluative thinking in decision-making.
- **Evaluative thinking involves** reasoning, planning, and acting with self-awareness; examining biases, motivations, and learning from failures.
- **Key capacities for evaluative thinking:** Suspend judgment; Question assumptions; Explore multiple perspectives; Seek diverse solutions to problems.



# Three shifts are needed

## Shift 2. Moving from what works to what will work

- **Climate Science** uses multiple sources to predict and project climate uncertainty. It assesses effects on environmental, social, and economic systems.
- **Evaluations focus on the past.** Assess effects, contributions, and causality. Primarily retrospective rather than forward-looking.
- **Limited Attention to Sustainability:** Long-term sustainability is often overlooked. Impacts in a changing climate are not sufficiently examined.
- **The Need for Forward-Looking Evaluation:** Evaluations should consider evolving climate impacts. Greater integration of predictive methods is necessary.



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## Shift 3: From self-serving exercises to public good

- **The Limits of Traditional Evaluations:** Often self-serving, benefiting Boards and Management. At worst, mere tick-box exercises to justify or cut public spending.
- **The Need for Meaningful Evidence:** Evaluations should address global challenges, not just accountability. It should inform broader decision-making beyond internal needs.
- **Synthesising evaluation findings:** Greater cooperation needed to integrate and compare results across evaluations. Shared efforts can lead to more insightful, actionable findings.

We hired you,  
your job is to  
report what  
we say.



You did hire me,  
but as an evaluator  
that's not my job.



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# Moving from what works to what will work



Read *From what works to what will work* via the QR code or at [pubs.iied.org/21026iied](https://pubs.iied.org/21026iied)

