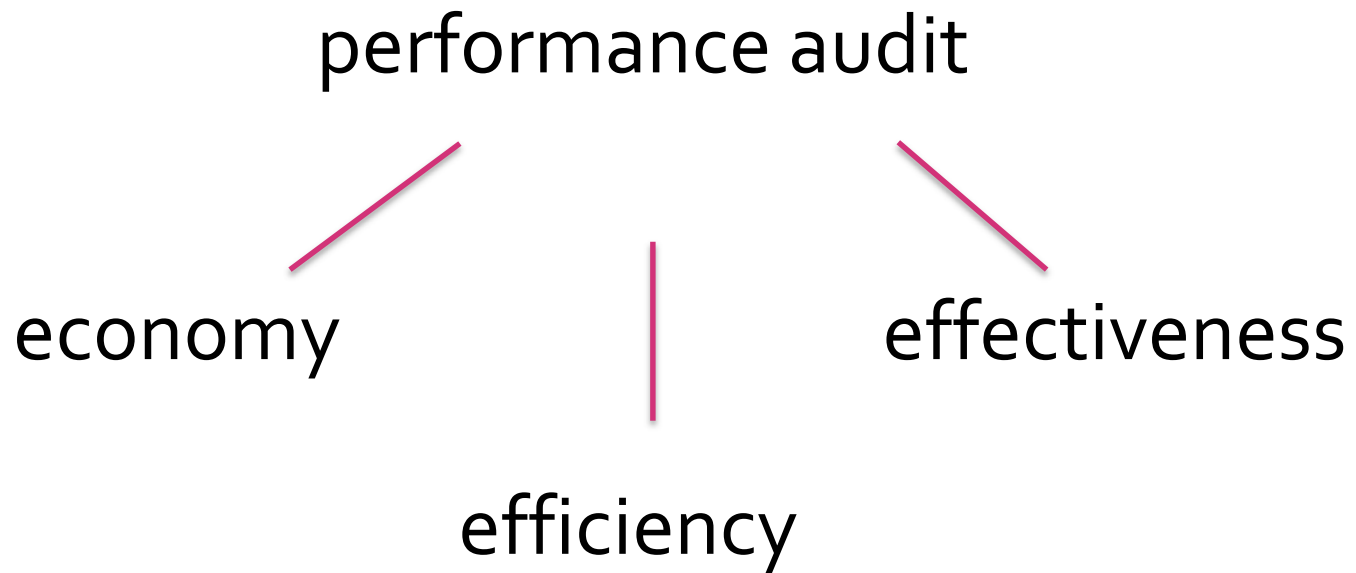


Evaluating government policy in absence of clearly defined goals: combining output indicators

Examples from the Belgian Court of Audit





performance audit

economy

efficiency

effectiveness

performance in
relation to
achievement of the
policy objectives,
operational goals and
other intended effects



Evaluating effectiveness of government policy

Ideally: what do we need?


- Policy objectives
- Operational goals
- Time frame
- Output indicators
- Targets
- ...
- All clearly defined



Evaluating effectiveness of government policy


What if they are not (clearly) defined?

- Not evaluate
- Use own definition/indicator/...
- Combine multiple “suboptimal” solutions



Combining output indicators: examples from the Belgian Court of Audit

1. Equal education opportunities in regular primary education
2. Governing bodies of school in primary and secondary education (ongoing audit)



Example 1: Audit *Equal education opportunities in regular primary education*

Equal education opportunities policy:

- Goal: provide “optimal learning and development opportunities for all students”
- Additional course hours and resources for disadvantaged students
- Student characteristics:
 - low-skilled mother
 - not speak Dutch at home
 - receive an education allowance



Evaluating policy: what can we evaluate?

- Broadly defined goal
- No indicators
- No targets
- No time frame

-> Effectiveness of the policy??



Combining indicators

- provide “optimal learning and development opportunities for all students”
- focus on students’ learning performance
- What data is available (no central exam)?



Combining available indicators

combination of 3 rough indicators:

- Has the student repeated school years during primary education?
- Does the student go on to the first year of A- or B-secondary education?
- Does the student attain A-attestation in 1A?



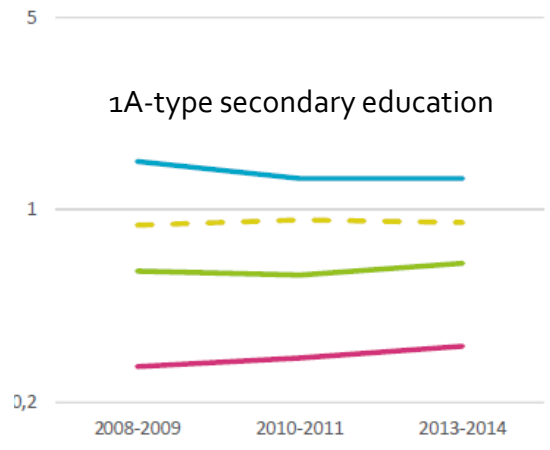
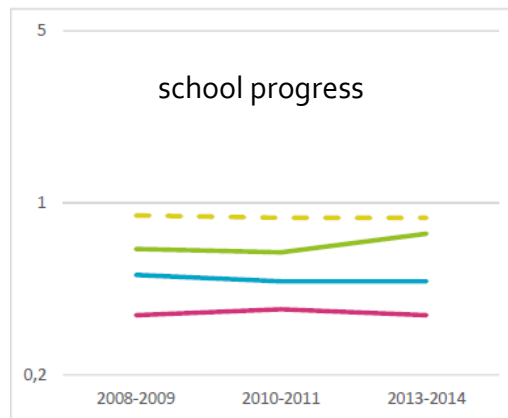
Combining indicators

- 1 indicator: specific disadvantages, flawed
- Combination:
 - Different indicators are differently flawed
 - Overall image

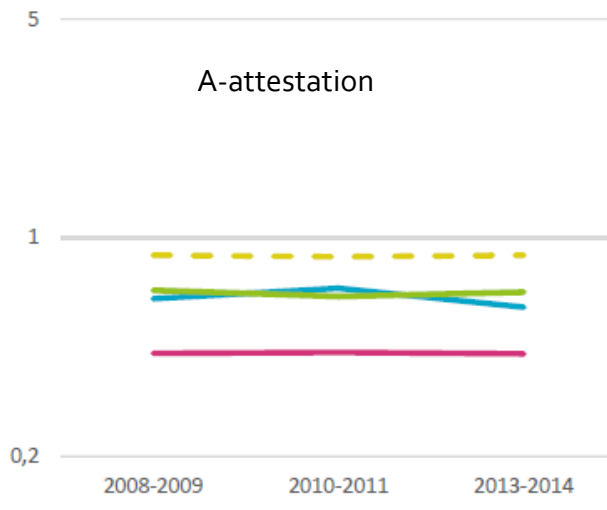
Combining indicators: overall image

Output criteria	Disadvantaged versus regular students		
	2008-2009	2010-2011	2013-2014
repeated school years	4,0937	4,1153	4,4137
1B	4,2323	3,9712	3,5392
No A-attestation	3,3202	3,3890	3,9362

Combining indicators: overall image




- low-skilled mother
- to not speak Dutch at home
- receive an education allowance
- % disadvantaged students in school



-> overall result pattern based on multiple suboptimal indicators used for evaluation

! Recognize flaws



Example 2: *Audit Governing bodies of school in primary and secondary education*

- Governing bodies of school:
 - Organising authority
 - Freedom of education
- Research question: is the policy of the governing bodies of school related to aspects of quality of education?



Evaluation indicator: aspects of “quality education”

What are aspects of quality of education?

Selecting criteria:

- Education quality decree
- School inspection decree
- Compliance education regulations (end terms)



Evaluation indicator: aspects of “quality education”

No clear definition or indicators

- Literature: mostly learning outcomes (but: no central exam)
- Broad perspective on “quality of education”
- Quantitative (data analysis)
- Combining different sources



Combining sources

What is available?

- Department for education
- School inspection

What can we obtain ourselves?

- Design of survey for school leaders

Policy domain	indicator	source
educational	Learning performance	Department for education
	Quality of courses	School inspection
	Use of follow-up system for students	Survey
personnel	Process indicator	Survey
	Absenteeism school leader & teachers	Department for education
	Proof of competence teachers	Department for education
	Personnel turnover	Department for education
quality	Proces indicator	Survey
Participation	Process indicator	Survey
External relations	List of indicators "Brede School"	Survey
Financial and material	Rating hygiene, habitability and safety of school property	School inspection
care	FTE assigned	Department for education
	Process indicator	Survey
	Well-being students	School inspection



Evaluation indicator: aspects of “quality education”

- Not one “perfect indicator” (even not for every policy domain)
 - Approximation of certain aspects
- > overall image/result pattern used for evaluation



Open questions

- Consequences for acceptance of the audit?
- Is it an auditor's task to collect/compose indicators or should the audit be limited to existing ones?
- Other ways to collect indicators?