How can the use of ICTs in evaluation strengthen the evidence base for policymaking?
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Objectives

- Present lessons emerging from the ICT4Eval conference (June 2017) on cutting edge practices in using technology to make evaluation more effective and efficient

- Delve into implications for policy makers, evaluators and development practitioners in using emerging ICT tools.

ICT4Eval Conference 6-7 June 2017

Purpose:

- Discuss the latest innovative approaches to the use of ICTs in evaluation

- Showcase best practices from development organizations and the private sector across the world

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Three questions addressed

- Are ICTs increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of evaluations?
- How can ICT tools contribute to enhance evaluation rigor, now and in the future?
- How can innovative approaches to dissemination enhance learning and strengthen impact?
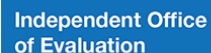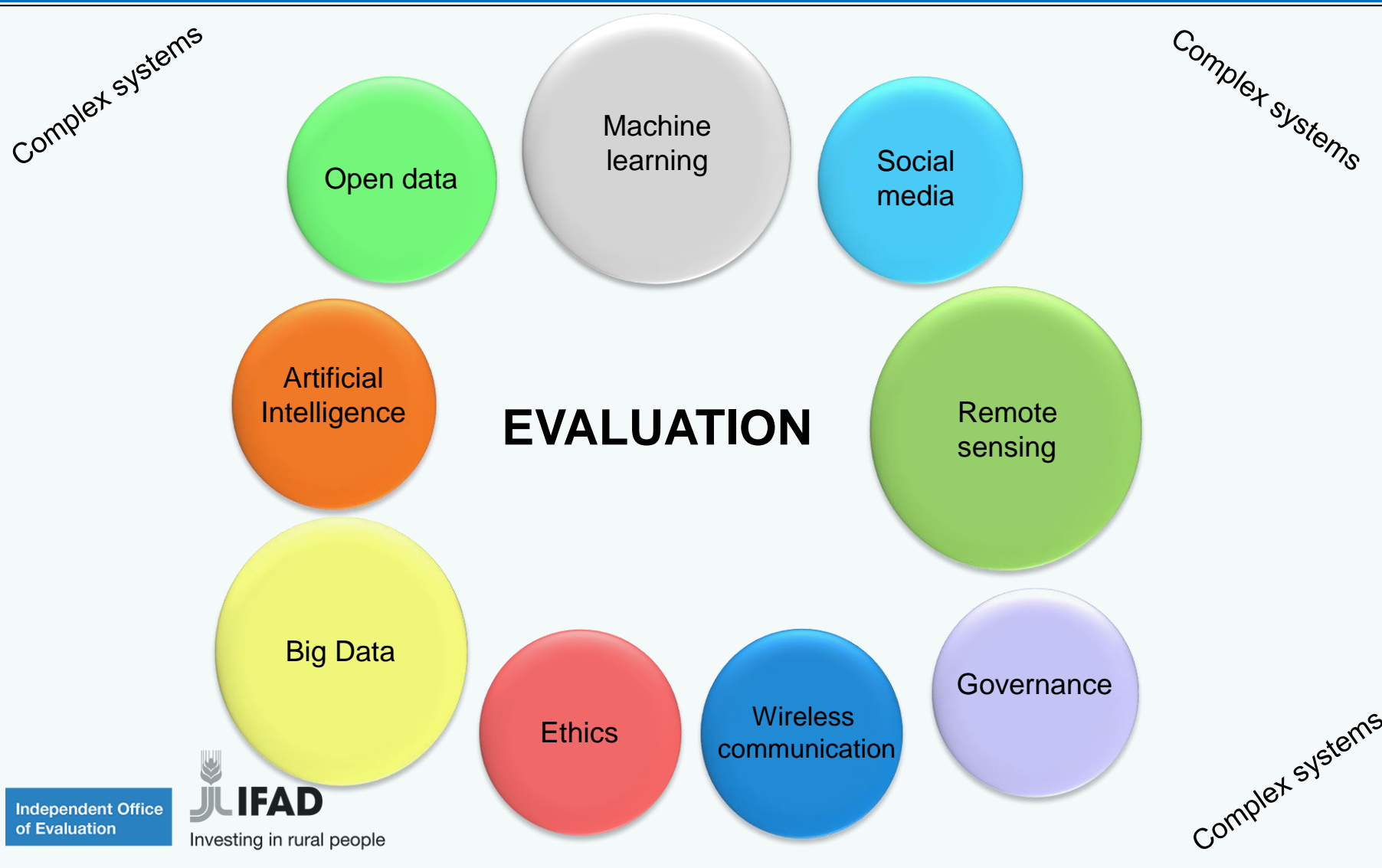
ICT4Eval Conference 6 – 7 June

200 participants, including UNEG, ECG, private sector, academic institutions, NGOs, think tanks and national-level counterparts
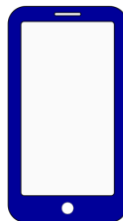
Themes addressed

Data Collection and Big Data

Remote sensing   Wireless   Mobile collection   Interviews   Geocoded photo
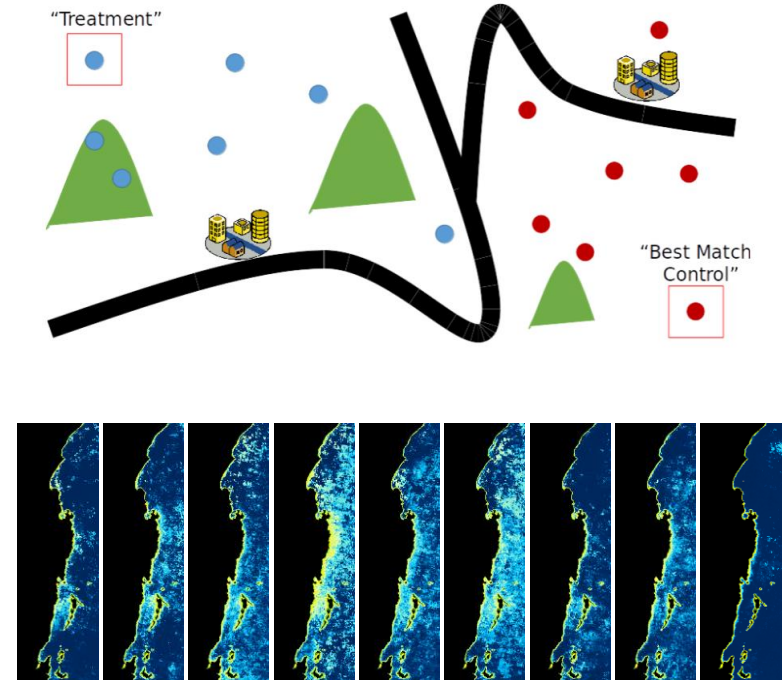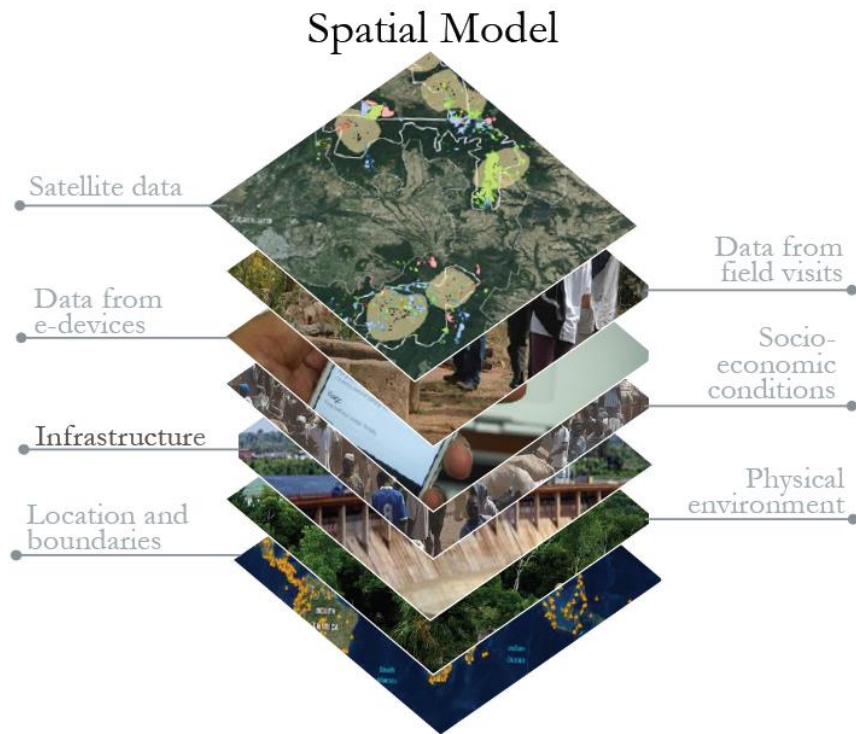
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- Access to real-time data
- Efficiency – shortening evaluation loops
- Increased reliability
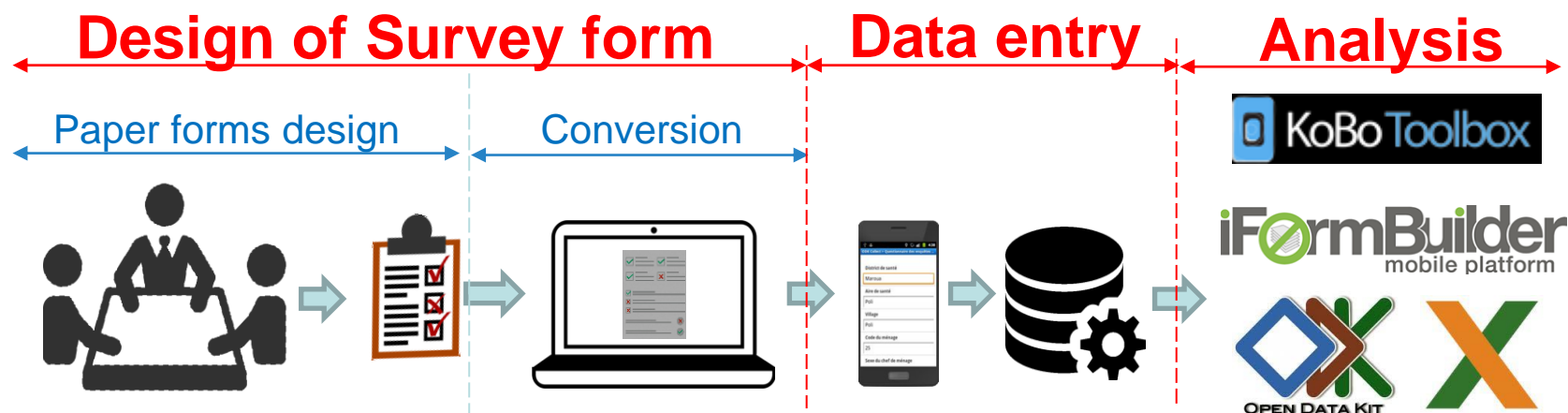- Access to larger data sets
- Lower costs

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- High initial cost and need for technical expertise creates unequal access
- More data does not equal better data

Example: Using Geospatial analysis for impact evaluations

Example: Mobile-based data collection tools for programme monitoring and evaluation

Data analysis

Artificial intelligence & machine learning

Increased processing power

Text/number/picture recognition

Data mining and systematic reviews

- Organizing and categorizing bigger data sets
- Automation of large scale data analysis and creation of predictive models
- Little financial investment once capacity has been developed

- Risk of linear thinking (Automatic cause → effect assumption)
- Risk of overlooking significant outliers
- In built biases can be enhanced

Example: Improving systematic reviews and evidence gap maps by text mining and machine learning

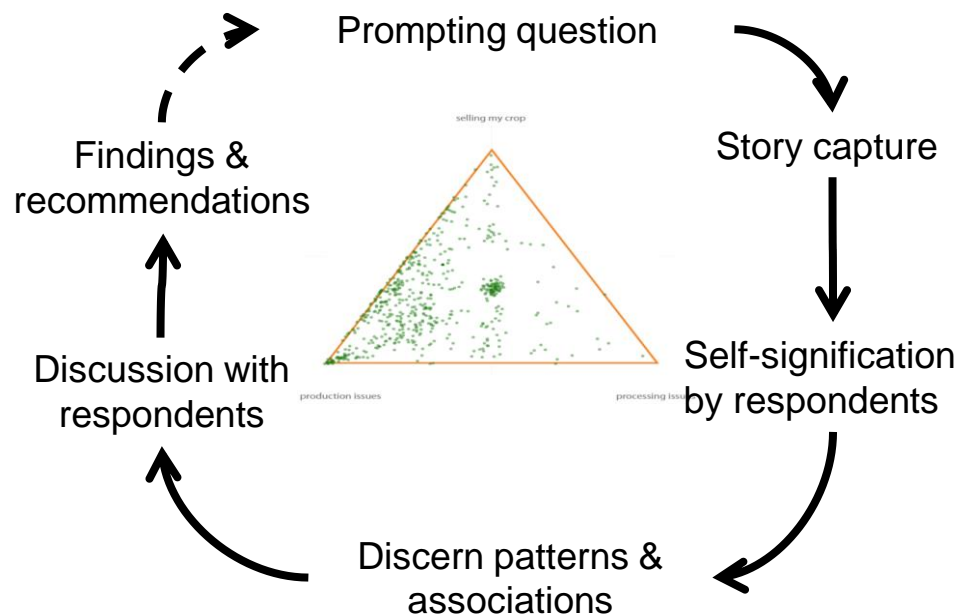Normally evidence and gap maps takes (1/-month) and systematic reviews 12-24 months + information.

Machine learning process:

- Researchers make first screening
- Machines suggest studies with high probability of inclusion
- Researchers make further screening
- Machines further refine the probabilities
- And so on..

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3ie International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

Example: Analysing stories of change - Engaging beneficiaries to make sense of data

People give sense to their experience and meaning to their choices

Reveals the reality as expressed and experienced by those involved

Prompting question

Story capture

Self-signification by respondents

Discern patterns & associations

Discussion with respondents

Findings & recommendations

Data dissemination & cross-cutting issues

Social media & outreach

Open Data
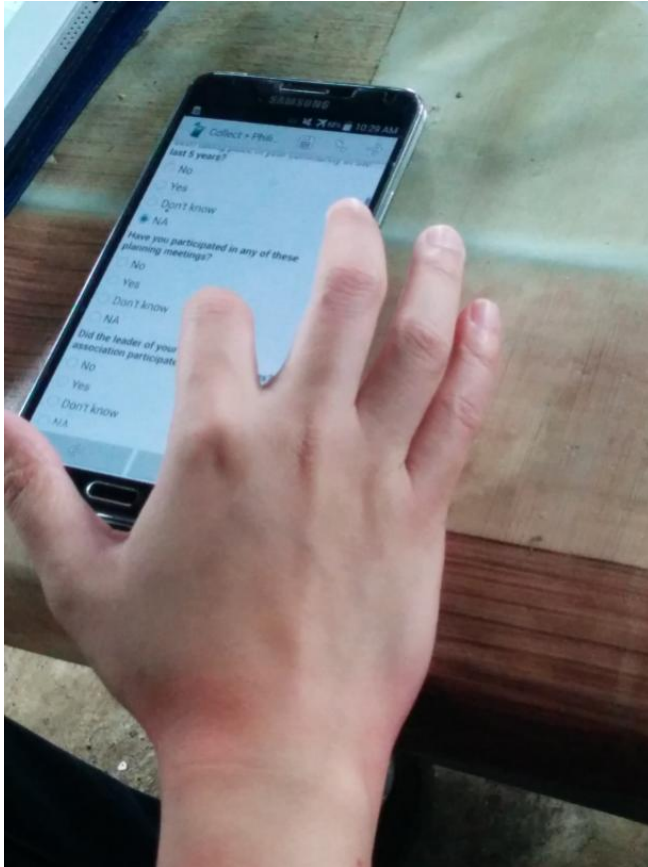

Knowledge sharing

Visualization

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- Engage with and disseminate results to beneficiaries
- Learning from and better collaboration with partners
- Can contribute to availability of data for informative decision-making

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- Risk of privacy intrusion
- Unequal access to information
- Potential biases can lead to manipulation or distortions of information to be communicated
- Unintended use of information

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Example: Enabling community participation and validation of digitally collected data through real-time feedback

Example: Open data and dissemination - Has the time come for common reporting standards on evaluations?

Lessons learnt and reflections for future

1. **ICTs hold scope for increased efficiencies. Field to policy maker loop shortened with 'real time' collection and analysis.**

2. **Increased rigor of analysis and more robust results for decision making using more diverse sources of data**

3. **Technology may help us listen and communicate better with target groups.**

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Lessons learnt (cont.)

4. **Technology not a panacea but means to an end; evaluations still need to be grounded in theory**

5. **'Behind every data point is a human story': evaluations need to remain human centric**

6. **Ethics and privacy important. ICTs must be used for inclusion**

7. **Shared capacities and mutual strengthening with governments, other dev. partners, academia & private sector**

Human Centered Design

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS