



## APPENDIX 7: CASE STUDY ON THE AWARENESS MECHANISM

### Title of the case study:

Evidence for Democracy: raising awareness of the need for evidence-based decision-making in government

### What mechanism is the case about?

*Mechanism: Building awareness for, and positive attitudes towards, evidence-based policy-making.* This mechanism emphasises the importance of policy-makers' valuing the concept of evidence-based policy-making.

### What happened (description of the background to the case and its key features)?

Evidence for Democracy (E4D) is a fact-driven, non-partisan, not-for-profit organisation promoting the transparent use of evidence in government decision-making in Canada. Through research, education and issue campaigns, the organisation engages and empowers the science community while cultivating public and political demand for evidence-based policy-making (EBPM). The organisation's vision is to contribute to strong public policies, built on the best available evidence, for the health and prosperity of all Canadians.

E4D was funded in the aftermath of the 2012 'Death of Evidence' rallies. In July of that year, thousands of Canadians concerned about the diminishing role of evidence in government decision-making organised to march in nation-wide rallies. These rallies built such a momentum for EBPM in the country that a number of co-organisers of these marches decided to continue this advocacy work under a newly formed organisation: E4D.

E4D focusses on three areas of activities to enhance awareness of EBPM. First, issue-based campaigns to tackle emerging issues affecting science and evidence-based public policy in Canada. This includes collaboration with national and local partners to organise events, raise awareness, and engage the public directly with policy-makers. Second, education programmes to put knowledge and skills into the hands of Canada's scientific community and the wider public. This includes the facilitation of expert panels, lectures, and documentary screenings to educate Canadians on issues concerning evidence-based decision-making. It also entails hands-on workshops providing training for communication and action to support science in Canada. Third, E4D also maintains an original research programme addressing knowledge gaps at the interface of policy and evidence. This research focuses on what works for evidence use, what hasn't, and what opportunities exist for improvement. This research provides critical analyses intended for use by government, industry, NGOs and the public to strengthen the inclusion of evidence-based decision-making in policy.

### What impact did the case have? / What is the importance of the case to EBPM?



E4D works in a number of areas to support EBPM in Canada. Based on the success of the 'Death of Evidence' rallies, the organisation is based on an active grassroots community of EBPM advocates. Through this grassroots network, it supports a variety of initiatives including:

- Based on its advocacy campaign on the Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics Act, E4D testified on the need for open science to standing committee overseeing this act.
- E4D contributed to 2 federal consultations on proposed policies such as the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.
- E4D organised 8 Canadian satellite events as part of the US March for Science.
- E4D organised over 2,600 Canadians and 250 prominent international climate scientists to advocate for increased funding for climate science in the country.
- E4D advocated for the reinstating of the Chief Science Advisory post in government and for an overall increase in the science budget. Both outcomes were achieved.

### What is the relevance of the case for South Africa?

The role of civil society and advocacy groups in EBPM is not yet well explored in South Africa. This is despite the country's long-history of active citizenry and grassroots movements. If EBPM is to contribute to the achievement of the NDP, citizen and civil society voices need to be included in the EBPM movement. E4D provides many valuable lessons on how to mobilise civil society to rally for the use of evidence in government decision-making. South Africa has a range of existing mechanisms that could benefit from exploring synergies with E4D advocacy work. These refer to DPME's citizen-based monitoring and frontline service delivery programmes.

### Conclusion: why does this case illustrate the power of the mechanism in supporting the use of evidence?

E4D is an excellent case study illustrating the intersection between advocacy, civil society activism, and EBPM. Too often, EBPM is seen as a technocratic exercise left to the realm of researchers and policy-makers. E4D shows that this is not the case. Unless there is broad societal agreement on the value of using evidence to inform policies, and civil society feels strongly enough to engage in activism to uphold this value, EBPM will remain a technical process. Systemic support for EBPM rests on broad societal agreement for its benefits to social development and needs to be nurtured explicitly through advocacy and awareness campaigns.

### References

- Evidence for Democracy: <https://evidencefordemocracy.ca/en/research>
- E4D 2017-2018 Impact report: [https://evidencefordemocracy.ca/sites/default/files/impact\\_report\\_fy17-18\\_reduced.pdf](https://evidencefordemocracy.ca/sites/default/files/impact_report_fy17-18_reduced.pdf)