

# Facilitators and barriers to the use of economic evaluations in nutrition and public health

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**Background:** Interventions targeting dietary factors have the potential to reduce a consistent fraction of the chronic disease burden. Economic evaluations of such interventions can be an important tool in guiding public health practitioners and decision makers at various levels; yet, few economic evaluations in this area have been performed. This qualitative study explored facilitators and barriers in conducting and using economic analysis to inform decision makers, in the field of public health nutrition.

**Methods:** Data were collected through written open-ended questionnaires administered to twenty-three participants (13 from academia and 10 from government) using purposive sampling and analysed through a conventional content analysis.

**Results:** The analysis revealed two broad categories of barriers to perform and use economic evaluations in public health nutrition decision making, including: 1) “Methodological challenges”, and 2) “Barriers related to the use of economic evaluations”. Two broad categories of facilitators were also identified: 1) “Facilitators to improve the methodology of economic evaluations”, with subcategories further detailing frameworks and methods to be applied, and 2): “Facilitators to widen the use of economic evaluations”, with most subcategories addressing science-into-policy transitions.

**Conclusion:** Public health nutrition policies are seldom based on economic evaluations. It seems that it is partly due to the absence of methodologies that are relevant and readily applicable to nutrition and public health aspects of economic evaluations. However, there are a series of facilitators with the potential to address both these aspects. These barriers and facilitators are perceived somehow differently by researchers and policymakers.

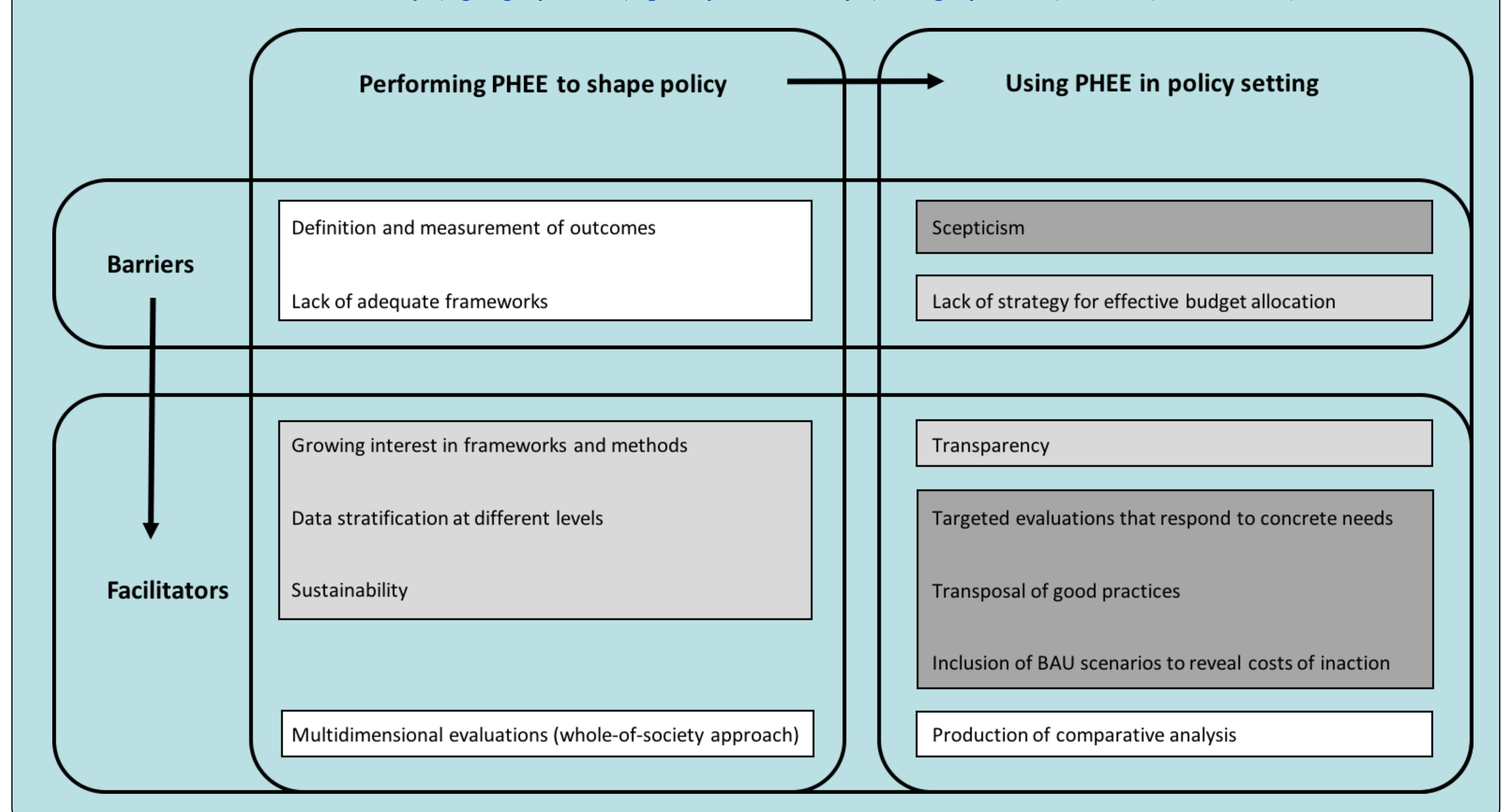
Participants characterisation (first block: policymakers; second block: researchers)

Gender		Expertise		Area of action		Area	
M	7	Public health	4	EU	4	EU	9
F	3	Economics	4	National / sub-national	6	Non-EU	1
		Nutrition	2				
M	6	Public health	3	Non applicable		EU	8
F	7	Economics	7			Non-EU	5
		Nutrition	3				

## Main references

Lafranconi A, Wollast J, Caldeira S. Public health and nutrition economics: the numbers behind prevention. DOI: 10.2760/311218; 2017 (in press).  
Cobiac LJ, Veerman L, Vos T. The role of cost-effectiveness analysis in developing nutrition policy. *Annu Rev Nutr* 2013;33:373-393.  
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Main categories and subcategories of facilitators and barriers to PHEE identified by: researchers only (light grey boxes), policymakers only (dark grey boxes), both (white boxes).



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