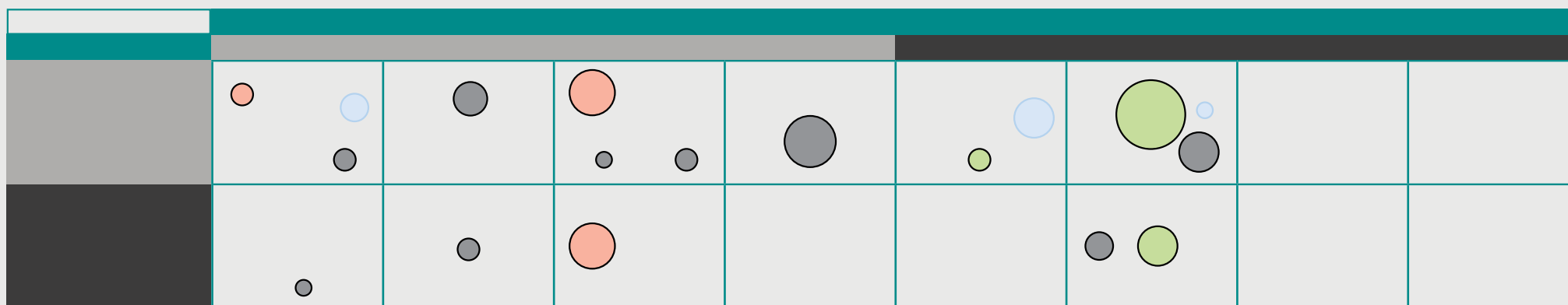


User guide

Evidence Gap Maps



This user guide describes how Evidence Gap Maps (EGMs) can support IDB employees in various phases of the operational and knowledge cycles, with illustrative use cases of scenarios in practice. An EGM is a thematic collection of evidence focused on a specific sector. It provides a structured overview of the available evidence on the effects and impact of different types of interventions, identifying areas where further research is needed.

In December 2024, the IDB and the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) signed a collaboration agreement. Besides Bank-wide knowledge transfer activities, this agreement included:

- The revision, improvement, and production of the EGM on policing interventions, in collaboration with the IDB's Citizen Security Division (CIS) and Knowledge & Learning Division (KLD); and
- Co-production of an EGM with the Transport Division (TSP) and KLD, together with the preparation of a methodological note that will establish a framework for the development of EGMs at the IDB.

These two EGMs are aligned with the relevant intervention categories highlighted in the Sector Framework Document for these areas. Additionally, the Transportation EGM is aligned with the existing Catalog of Results Indicators. This agreement was the starting point for an ongoing EGM agenda.



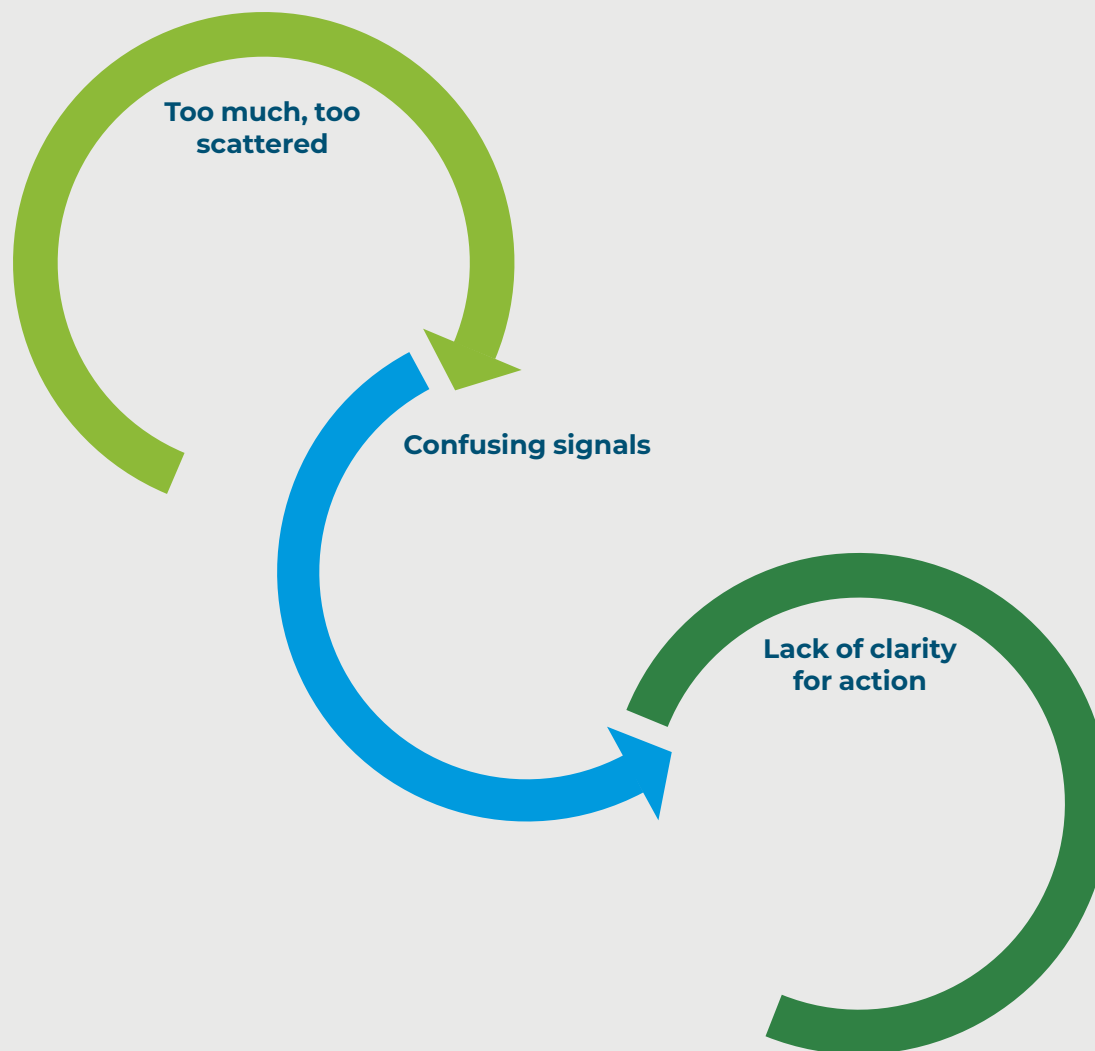
Introduction

The IDB Group's Institutional Strategy 2024–2030 positions knowledge at the core of its value proposition, emphasizing the need to strengthen the feedback loop between operations and knowledge as a key driver of development impact.

How does cutting-edge evidence on intervention effects strengthen the IDB Group's work?

- **Ensures effective and efficient use of public resources**
Grounding IDB Group programs in evidence maximizes their long-term success and allocates resources where they have the highest return.
- **Strengthens accountability and trust**
Reliable evidence demonstrates results to stakeholders and reinforces confidence in the effective use of public resources.
- **Informs policy dialogue and operational design**
Evidence may clarify what works (and what doesn't), enabling actionable, context-relevant recommendations and stronger project design.
- **Builds a culture of learning**
Evidence promotes knowledge-sharing and continuous improvement across the institution.
- **Maximizes development impact**
Proven approaches can be scaled up and ineffective approaches avoided, thereby increasing the value of the Bank's operations.

Figure 1: What problems does evidence mapping solve?



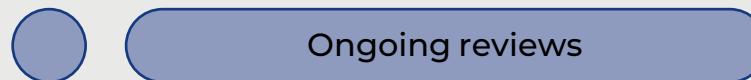
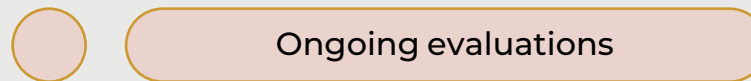
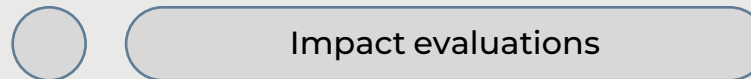
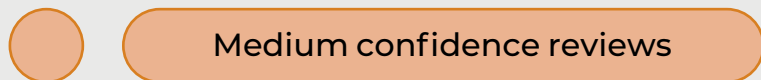
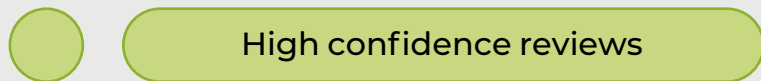
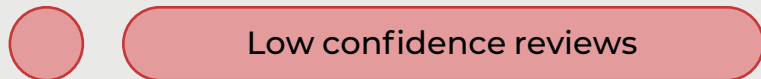
What is an EGM, and how do I use it?

What is an EGM?

An **EGM** is a thematic and structured collection of impact evaluations and systematic reviews that assess the effects of policies and programs in a particular sector. They are organized around a framework of **interventions** (the actions or programs implemented) and **outcomes** (the results observed). Each study is mapped in the cells that correspond to the intervention–outcome pairs it addresses, providing a visual overview of where evidence is clustered and where gaps remain.

EGMs enable policymakers and practitioners to explore

In the EGM below, gray bubbles represent impact evaluations, blue bubbles represent protocols or ongoing evaluations, while red, orange, and green bubbles represent systematic reviews and their associated confidence assessments. The size of each bubble indicates the number of studies.



What is an EGM, and how do I use it?

How to use an EGM?

EGMs are interactive tools that help you explore the evidence. You can filter studies, hide or group categories, and click on interventions or outcomes to read their definitions. Each bubble shows the number of studies—click to see the list, and then open individual study pages for more details. You can also share the map or use the chatbot to get quick text answers. Click each step below to find out how it works.

Building Stronger Transport Policy: An Evidence Gap Map

Published date: 01 October 2025 / Last modified date: 01 October 2025

Efficient and reliable transport systems are central to economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), transport and logistics performance remains below that of advanced economies, constraining access to services, social inclusion, competitiveness, and productivity (Córdova-Aríz, 2022).

This Evidence Gap Map (EGM) presents global effectiveness evidence on transportation interventions, including roads, regional transportation and logistics, urban mobility infrastructure, and laws, regulations, and policies governing public transit, mobility, traffic, and transportation. Financed and co-produced by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the EGM compiles, curates, and classifies studies that estimate causal effects, displaying where evidence is clustered and where gaps remain. It aims to help decision-makers identify the most promising approaches for improving transport systems, highlight priority areas for future research, and ultimately support evidence-informed policymaking, enhance the allocation of scarce resources, and contribute to safer, more inclusive, and more sustainable transport in LAC and beyond.

IDB project collaborators: Ulam Is. Restrepo, Leonal Borja, Agostina Calatayud, Vilejdy González, Miry King, Indira Porro, María Eugenia Rojas, Magdalena Rossetti, Santiago Sánchez, Gonzalo Sarmiento, Valentina Sequi, and Alejandro Taddia (listed in alphabetical order).
 Site project collaborators: María Daniela Anda, Diana Belén Córdova-Aríz, Mark Engelbert, Tomasz Kozłowski, and Shannon Shisler (listed in alphabetical order).

Note: This map covers studies published from 2005 up to the date of the search (April 2025). While the search and screening processes included studies on Chinese transportation interventions, their large number—mainly focused on high-speed rail—would have distorted the visualization of other intersections between intervention and outcome categories. For this reason, they are not displayed in the final map. The complete list of screened studies from China that meet all eligible criteria is available at [insert link].

How to use an EGM

CLICK ON a bubble to see details with links to studies. CLICK ON a link in the axes to see an explanation for Intervention / Outcome. UNSELECT side filter options to hide rows or columns. TOGGLE study categories on and off using the legend at the bottom of the chart. EXPORT the chart using menu button at the top right of the chart.

Online map citation:
 Acosta, C., Anda, M.D., Borja, L., Córdova-Aríz, D., Engelbert, M., Porro, I., Rossetti, M., & Shisler, S. (2025). Building Stronger Transport Policy: An Evidence Gap Map [Online map].
<https://development.evidence.iamaps.org/egm/transportation/evidence-gap-map>

Region: OR Country: OR Income Level: OR Study design: OR IDB study:

Year of Publication: OR Cost information: OR Journal Rank: OR Study type:

Filter condition (between filters):
 AND -

| Interventions | Outcomes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|--|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| | Access and use | | | Quality | | | Affordability | | Service management | | Socioeconomic results | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Public transit access and use | Private vehicle use | Rail services access and use | Other transport infrastructure access and use | Travel time, commuting and speed | Time used in other activities | Transport safety | Resilience and continuity | Transit affordability | Vehicle ownership costs | Government expenditure on transport | Operational efficiency | Operational environmental sustainability | Financial performance | Equity in public transport access and safety | Air pollution and greenhouse gases | Noise pollution | Land, housing, and rent prices and affordability | Goods and services prices and inflation | Health access and outcomes | Education access and outcomes | Access to other goods and services | Inequality and segregation | Crime and security | Employment access and outcomes | Household welfare and poverty | Economic activity | Trade and migration | Agricultural outcomes |
| Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Urban trains (subways, passenger trains, LRT, metro) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Cables | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Active mobility (pedestrian, bicycles, etc.) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Urban roads | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Low emission mobility: | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

● Low confidence reviews ● High confidence reviews ● Medium confidence reviews ● Impact evaluations ● Ongoing evaluations ● No records found





What is an EGM, and how do I use it?

What type of evidence is included in the EGMs?

The EGMs include causal evidence on intervention effects published since a predefined year. A causal evaluation is a study that uses an explicit identification strategy to estimate the impact of an intervention on outcomes, ensuring that observed effects can be attributed to the intervention rather than external factors.

This evidence is identified through a systematic search strategy that covers:

- Peer-reviewed publications;
- Gray literature (including working papers and unpublished studies available online in searchable formats); and
- Targeted organizational repositories and websites.

After identification, studies undergo rigorous screening to ensure that only eligible evidence is included (see Section V for a summary of steps to create an EGM).

Figure 3: Study designs included in an EGM





What is an EGM, and how do I use it?








Why should we map this evidence?

Mapping evidence helps to turn a vast and scattered body of research into a clear, structured overview that is directly useful for policy and operations.

Figure 4: Key questions and information to consider



How can EGMs support my work at IDB?

| Potential applications | Use Case | Operational teams | Knowledge teams and researchers | Country economists |
|---|--|-------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Inform programming cycle  | Quickly see which interventions have been evaluated and locate studies that can inform conversations with governments and other counterparts. | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Inform research agendas  | Identify key areas where evidence is limited or missing, and where resources could be strategically allocated for future research. | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Inform operational design  | Find impact evaluations and systematic reviews on similar interventions to draw on theories of change and available findings to strengthen project design. | ✓ | | |
| Identify relevant indicators to measure  | See which results and impact indicators others have used in similar projects' evaluations. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Identify relevant evaluation designs  | Learn which evaluation methods have been applied to similar interventions. | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Support policy dialogue  | Refer to mapped evidence to enrich conversations with government counterparts. | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Strengthen institutional documents  | Incorporate a structured overview of available evidence to inform strategic documents, such as thematic framework documents and country strategies. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |





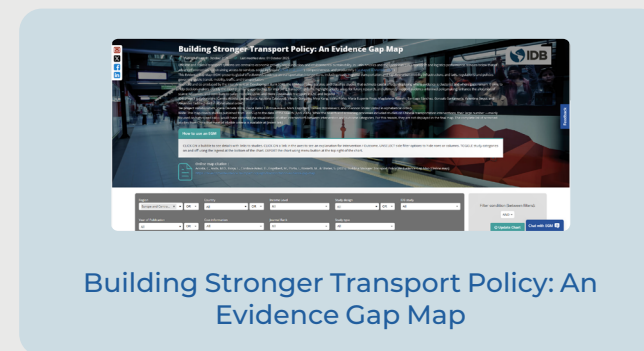
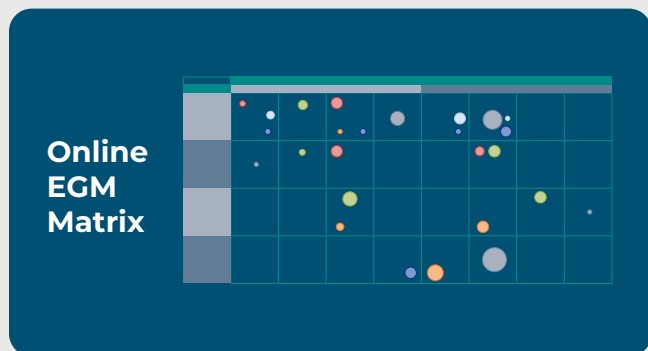
How can EGMs support my work at IDB?

How do EGMs complement other IDB resources?

By mapping the existing evidence and highlighting knowledge gaps, EGMs add value to other IDB resources such as the Knowledge Platform, Publications Catalog, Thematic Frameworks, and Country Strategies. They help ensure that these tools are grounded in rigorous evidence and aligned with operational priorities.



Exploring the EGMs



This user guide is part of the IDB's ongoing commitment to strengthening the use of evidence in decision-making. We will continue to produce new EGMs in priority sectors, expanding the collection of maps available to guide policies, programs, and research investments across the region.

Table 1: Links to relevant 3ie EGMs

| Name | No. of studies |
|--|----------------|
| Food Systems and Nutrition EGM | 3,217 |
| Climate Change and Biodiversity EGM | 1,605 |
| Promoting Sustainable Energy Development through Access, Renewables and Efficient Technologies EGM | 703 |
| Agriculture-Led Growth in Low and Middle-Income Countries EGM | 1,672 |
| Good Governance Through Government Effectiveness EGM | 504 |

Technical note: Evidence Gap Maps as a Tool for Evidence-Informed Decision-Making [Forthcoming at <https://publications.iadb.org/en>]

Demo on how to use the AI chatbot to explore this EGM



How to build an EGM?



How to build an EGM?

Before starting ...

Since EGMs require time and resources (just as any other knowledge product), it is essential to conduct an online review to check whether relevant EGMs already exist and could be adapted for the intended purpose.

Divisions should also reflect on whether the most suitable product is an EGM or another type of synthesis, such as a systematic review on a more specific topic. Unlike EGMs, which map where evidence exists, systematic reviews aim to answer questions on the effectiveness of specific interventions by synthesizing the results of identified studies.

How to start an EGM?

The IDB offers flexible options for divisions interested in developing an EGM, which are tailored to available resources, capacity, and strategic needs. Options include:



Sustainability and updates

EGMs are not self-updating products. To maintain their relevance, it is recommended that they be updated every three to five years, depending on the pace of new evidence emerging in the sector and the resources available for such updates.





About this guide

This Evidence Gap Map User Guide is available at <https://www.3ieimpact.org/research/leveraging-evidence-enhance-idbs-development-impact-lac> and through the IDB Publications Catalog at <https://publications.iadb.org/en>. The guide was authored by Camilo Acosta, Magdalena Rossetti, Indira Porto, María Daniela Anda, and Shannon Shisler. All content is the sole responsibility of the authors and does not represent the views of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), 3ie, their donors, or their respective boards. Any errors are the sole responsibility of the authors. 3ie is publishing this guide as received from the authors. It has been formatted in 3ie style, in line with IDB's guidelines. This guide was designed and produced by Akarsh Gupta and Mallika Rao. Comments or queries should be directed to the corresponding author, Camilo Acosta (camiloac@iadb.org).



The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is the leading source of development financing for Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 1959, it has been dedicated to improving lives across the region by providing financial and technical support to governments and partners. Together with IDB Invest and IDB Lab, the IDB Group promotes sustainable and inclusive growth by funding projects, generating cutting-edge research, and developing innovative solutions to address the region's most pressing challenges.

iadb.org/en

© Inter-American Development Bank. Licensed under CC BY 3.0 IGO (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/igo/>).

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IDB, its Board of Directors, or the countries they represent.



3ieimpact.org

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) develops evidence on how to effectively transform the lives of people living in low- and middle-income countries. Established in 2008, we offer comprehensive support and a range of approaches to achieve development goals by producing, synthesizing, and promoting the uptake of impact evaluation evidence. We work closely with governments, foundations, NGOs, development institutions, and research organizations to address their evidence and decision-making needs. With offices in Washington, D.C., New Delhi, and London, and a global network of leading researchers, we offer deep expertise across a broad portfolio of evaluation services.

October 2025

For more information on 3ie's evidence gap maps, contact info@3ieimpact.org or visit our [website](#).

