Executive summary for Workbooks

There is still much to be learned about the most effective, efficient and humane ways to help people with substance use disorders and to reduce associated harms to users themselves and to others. There are still many treatments that have not been rigorously evaluated and some treatments, found effective in some context or cultures have not also been tested I others. The emergence of new drug, new types of drug users and new patterns of use may also require the development of new treatments that need to be evaluated. Evaluation should therefore be a feature of treatment systems and treatment policy. Evaluation will help to

1. Identify treatment needs

2. Plan needs-based interventions

3. Show if these interventions are consistent with need and plans

4. Show if these interventions are effective and efficient.

The guidelines have not attempted to conceal the fact that some types of evaluation are quite complex and require special skills. This would be a disservice to the cause of evaluation and to the many people who have worked hard to develop the evaluation methodologies that are helping to improve treatment in some contexts. We have, however, also attempted to show that evaluation does not have to be daunting. All readers are strongly encouraged to consider supporting or undertaking basic evaluation even if more complex alternatives are not at present feasible. These efforts can later be extended as more skills are acquired and more resources become available.