

REGIONAL CENTERS FOR LEARNING ON EVALUATION RESULTS (CLEAR)

CLEAR is a global initiative aimed at strengthening developing countries' capacities in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and performance management (PM) to support a focus on results and evidence-based decision-making.

The initiative is being supported by the African Development Bank, the Australian Agency for International Development, the Asian Development Bank, the Belgian Development Cooperation, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Swedish International Development Agency, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, the UK Department for International Development, and the World Bank Group. The secretariat is housed in the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank Group.

CLEAR responds to increasing government and civil society demands for practical and applied M&E and PM capacity-building and to the current limited availability of relevant services in many developing countries in several regions. Countries often depend on western international institutions for the supply of these services, which tends to be expensive and not necessarily customized to their specific needs.

The CLEAR initiative responds to this situation with two key components: (1) support to regional centers to develop and provide high-quality applied in-region training, technical assistance, and evaluation and advisory services; and (2) global learning to produce innovative materials and enable practical knowledge-sharing on M&E and PM across regions.

Regional Centers

CLEAR supports competitively selected regional institutions to host the centers. The selection is based on transparent criteria and an open competitive process.

CLEAR competitively selected the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa to host the center for Anglophone Africa, the Centre Africain d'Etudes Supérieures en Gestion (CESAG) in Senegal to host the center for Francophone Africa, the Jameel Poverty Action Lab at the Institute for Financial Management and Research in India to host the center for South Asia, and the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) in Mexico to host the center for Spanish-speaking Latin America. The Asia Pacific Finance and Development Center (AFDC) in Shanghai, China, is also part of the CLEAR program.

CLEAR will support the institutions for five years to help them achieve recognition as regional "go to" centers for gaining technical and institutional knowledge of M&E. The centers will provide demand-driven and cost-effective services specific to each region. Government agencies, civil society organizations, development institutions and donors, among other clients, will be able to access regionally based high-quality knowledge and expertise through several inter-related services

- *Training.* The centers develop technical content and resources and deliver core CLEAR courses (see under Global Learning). Courses are customized to meet the knowledge and skills needs of practitioners (e.g., government officials, decision makers, and civil society organizations) and experts (e.g., evaluators, technicians, specialists). The centers also provide courses and workshops to meet unfulfilled needs for practical "how-to" knowledge on other related topics.
- *Advisory services.* The centers will also offer technical advice and assistance on the most innovative and relevant M&E and PM tools, methods, and approaches. Services include on-demand support and on-the-job guidance regarding the design and implementation of M&E and performance budgeting systems, the application and use of different types of evaluations, and the formulation and implementation of government reforms to strengthen a focus on results.
- *Evaluation and innovation.* A key aim is to help strengthen the quality of evaluations, usefulness of evaluations, and the availability of qualified evaluators in each region. A key piece of the



centers work is on developing their capacities (technical and practical) to conduct evaluations, using varied and appropriate methodologies. Teaming up with other organizations and professionals to conduct evaluations also serves to expand the pool of professional evaluators in the region. In addition, the centers work closely with clients to carry out innovative analytical work, which in turn helps to increase the knowledge base of region-specific practical research for policy and program decisions.

Global Learning

Countries face similar challenges regarding their M&E systems and evidence-based decision making. They increasingly seek knowledge and experience on how to solve common M&E design, implementation, and institutionalization problems, as well as good practice standards from more experienced peers and neighbors.

CLEAR's global approach aims to help the centers and their clients acquire global technical and institutional knowledge and share and compare the effectiveness of specific M&E tools, interventions, and approaches in different settings (e.g., countries, regions, sectors). The initiative tackles these objectives by supporting two sets of activities.

- Building centers' technical and institutional capacities to enable them to become successful capacity development and knowledge organizations through:
 - Providing centers with ongoing expert assistance for developing technical know-how on key topics in monitoring, evaluation, and results-based management
 - Developing innovative courses, training materials, and other knowledge resources in topics such as performance-based budgeting, impact evaluation, qualitative methods, rapid assessments, and evaluation systems. These courses and materials have a strong focus on actual experience, drawing on cases and good practices in the region. These technical topics are developed with global experts who assist the centers in strengthening their capacity to deliver the courses and provide services in those areas
 - Facilitating a network of shared learning among the centers to focus on a range of technical and institutional topics, including assessment of M&E demand, development of approaches to capacity building, and identification of frontier issues in evaluation
 - Assisting centers engage with their stakeholders on key M&E issues, such as conducting institutional assessment of M&E systems
- Strengthening regional communities of practice to facilitate informal exchanges of technical and practical knowledge among peers and to help build a culture of results. At the community of practice meetings, CLEAR also organizes technical training sessions on evaluation methods and other evidence-focused knowledge-exchange sessions on the use of M&E for decision-making and program implementation.

Governance

CLEAR's governance structure includes a Board, comprising representatives from the donor organizations supporting the program, and a Secretariat housed at IEG. The Board will be expanded to include senior representatives from governments, academic institutions in the regions in which the centers are based. The centers will also establish Regional Advisory Councils to provide guidance and support. Council members will be representatives from evaluation associations, civil society organizations, government, and academia. This governance structure ensures participant diversity, country input, and stakeholder support.