

MESA

Diagnostic Tool for a Monitoring
and Evaluation Systems Analysis

4 – Monitoring and reporting systems

This section explores monitoring and reporting systems in detail, with an emphasis on output- and outcome-monitoring rather than activity monitoring. Looking at the reporting function is important to understand what happens with monitoring data, and the extent to which it is used for decision-making.

4.1 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at the national level

Why is this important?

This section explores monitoring and reporting systems at the national level. While this should explore formal systems, it should also look at informal systems (for example, how the ruling party is engaged), and distinguish systems in theory from what is happening in practice. In some cases, the regional dimension may be important, for example in small countries belonging to regional economic unions. Where this is the case, this could be included as part of a more in-depth enquiry.

Some examples

In **South Africa**, there are a number of monitoring systems. Line ministries have their own monitoring systems. In terms of central monitoring, each department has to produce a five-yearly strategic plan and an annual performance plan (APP). Reports on the APP are produced quarterly, and they are sent to the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME) and tabled at portfolio committees in parliament. The Auditor General also reviews the reports and comments on them. At the end of the year an annual report on the APP is produced. These reports are all for accountability purposes and are not learning focused.

In **Jamaica**, there are M&E technical groups within each ministry, responsible for gathering, validating, and reporting diverse information across the ministry, to incorporate it into their planning. Also, all ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) produce annual reports to document their performance. These are taken into account by the Ministry of Finance for its mid-term fiscal review on budgeting and planning.

In **Cabo Verde**, an M&E system platform is currently being implemented, supported by the World Bank and the UNDP, which will allow for a better follow-up of programs, projects, and sectoral units. The planned periodicity for feeding data is the product (monthly), program (semi-annual), and the plan (annual). It is expected that the new system will improve the bases that support the M&E process, with a better quality of information produced.

Useful sources

- 📄 M&E in South Africa⁴⁷
- 📄 Colombia's national M&E system (SINERGIA)⁴⁸
- 📄 Jamaican government M&E website⁴⁹

47 Sean Phillips et al. 2014. "A focus on M&E of results: an example from the Presidency, South Africa", *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 6, no. 4, (Dec 2014): 392–406. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2014.966453>

48 DNP (Department of National Planning). Synergia. Government of Colombia. Accessed February 16, 2022. <https://sinergia.dnp.gov.co/Paginas/Internas/Seguimiento/Que-es-seguimiento.aspx>

49 Office of the Cabinet, Government of Jamaica. Government Performance Management and Evaluation. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://cabinet.gov.jm/government-performance-and-monitoring/>

4.1 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at the national level

Suggested basic questions

- What are the main monitoring systems at the national level and who are the custodians of these?
- Is there monitoring and reporting of the national development plan, and other formalized plans?
- What monitoring and reporting systems are in place for outputs, for outcomes, and for budget/expenditure?
- What roles do line ministries play in monitoring?
- Are there incentives or sanctions in place to ensure that sectoral ministries and/or subnational governments adopt M&E practices in their daily work and report as required?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Are there other systems that are not called PM&E but that in fact are PM&E systems?
- How is information collected on expenditure/inputs/outputs/, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes and impacts?
- The evolution of these systems could be explored in more depth, as well as the implications for where they are headed.
- What mechanisms are there for government to share monitoring evidence and engage stakeholders (for example, CSOs) on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)?
- What are the main monitoring systems at the regional level and who are the custodians of these?

4.2 Systems for government monitoring and reporting in line ministries and at subnational levels

Why is this important?

This section explores monitoring and reporting of subnational levels, as well as deconcentrated levels of national government. This is particularly important in federal/semi-federal systems like India, Nigeria, and Mexico, where the states have their own governments and their own reporting systems. Within devolved units there are often lower levels of devolved local government.

Some examples

In Ghana, there are two main levels of government – national and district. There are also 10 regions with regional coordinating councils (RCCs) as the regional coordination structures. They are administrative levels of government and not governments in their own right. They provide guidance to districts in the development of their M&E plans and collate district data, which they pass on to the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and other stakeholders. They review and collate district annual performance reviews (APRs) to produce the regional APR and facilitate the evaluation of the district plans and make recommendations for a policy review. Decentralized sector departments have offices at the regional level, which provide guidance to decentralized departments at the district level, including on how to implement their sector M&E plans, collating district data. District assemblies are the local governments. Decentralized departments at the district level collect data on sector-specific indicators and report to the district planning coordination units (DPCUs) and heads of departments at the regional level. They also support the DPCUs in conducting evaluations and participatory M&E exercises.

Useful sources

- Twende Mbele Ghana scoping report⁵⁰

50 Twende Mbele. 2017. Report on a Scoping Visit to Ghana 13-15 June 2017. <https://twendembele.org/reports/scoping-visit-to-ghana-13-15-june-2017/>

4.2 Systems for government monitoring and reporting in line ministries and at subnational levels

Suggested basic questions

- › What are the main monitoring systems coordinated by line ministries?
- › What are the main monitoring systems at subnational levels and who are the custodians of these?
- › What monitoring and reporting systems are in place for outcomes and for outputs at these levels?
- › What lower-level monitoring and reporting do line ministries do?
- › How does this link with local government or state governments?

Possible more in-depth questions

- › Is there formalized monitoring and reporting of a subnational development plan and other plans? At state or other local government level?

4.3 Monitoring of government by parliament

Why is this important?

This section explores how the legislative arm carries out oversight of the executive. This may be through using the products of government's monitoring systems, but also their own tools to monitor government. For example, some parliaments have research departments, with library sections that sometimes generate evidence or collate existing evidence.

Some examples

Sri Lanka has a unicameral parliament. It has select committees, sectoral oversight committees, ministerial consultative committees, legislative standing committees, and committees for special purposes. The select committees are ad-hoc committees appointed from time to time as needed. The sectoral oversight committees do all or any of the following:

- review and study the application, administration, execution, and effectiveness of legislative projects and programs addressing subjects within its jurisdiction;
- review and study the organization and operation of departments and Institutions having responsibilities for the administration and execution of legislative projects and programs addressing subjects within its jurisdiction;
- engage in future research and forecasting on subjects within its jurisdiction.

The Secretary General and their staff function as secretary to all committees established by parliament. Staff with functions relevant to M&E include the library, with nine staff and a research unit with five staff. Most of what research staff provide is data relating to the operations of departments, which is made available to individual MPs or committees. They do not access evaluations. A proposal has been developed to bring an evaluation function into the research unit.

In **Uganda**, parliament has three units – an M&E unit, a research unit, and a budget office. The research unit has 36 staff, of whom 30 are allocated to committees. There are 16 sector committees and 14 select committees. The M&E unit handles the internal M&E of parliament. There is an M&E framework that is used to monitor parliament. There are not evaluators per se but the researchers are members of the evaluation association and the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS). They undertake the analysis of legislation and post-legislative scrutiny, and impact assessments related to bills. The team carries out data collection and analysis itself. It sometimes uses evaluations produced in government.

4.3 Monitoring of government by parliament

- Useful sources**
- 1 African Parliamentary Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE)⁵¹
 - 1 Book on African parliaments and evaluation⁵²
 - 1 Report on the use of evidence in African parliaments (VakaYiko, DFID)⁵³

- Suggested basic questions**
- How does parliament monitor government performance?
 - How is government monitoring information used in parliament?

- Possible more in-depth questions**
- How effective is this monitoring?
 - Do committees feel they can get an in-depth understanding of what the departments are doing and how effective it is?

4.4 Capacity in government to undertake monitoring and reporting

Why is this important?

This section explores the institutional and individual capacity for monitoring and reporting, and any capacity-development plans at different levels of government. At the institutional level, it is important to understand what capacity for monitoring there is, including numbers of staff, capability of staff, and what systems are in place to support monitoring. At the individual level it is important to understand what training people have had, and how familiar they are with monitoring approaches like RBM. An enriched module would involve getting more detailed information on individual capacity, possibly derived from a survey.

Some examples

The following extract from a past diagnostic illustrates a mix of strengths and weaknesses in a country:

M&E arrangements and practice at all levels – national, line ministry, provincial, and district – were found to be poor. Sector ministries, provinces, and districts did not have permanent M&E units and dedicated M&E staff, except for the central planning ministry, and a few sector ministries, such as health and education. The country-level M&E system was not providing stakeholders with adequate information for informing critical development processes, such as policy making, decision making, planning, budgeting, resource allocation, and advocacy. Capacities for M&E were acknowledged as lacking across the system. However, a structure responsible for coordinating M&E across government and automating data management and information flows was being set up. The government was making other positive changes, including the adoption of a national planning and budgeting policy five years prior to the diagnostic, and the development of a national performance framework, an M&E plan, an M&E management information system, and had recently adopted a national monitoring and evaluation policy. There was however no M&E capacity building program in place. Development partners were providing support that was considered key to the strengthening and institutionalization of M&E practice in the country.

In the case of **Mexico**, the Ministry of Finance, together with CONEVAL in Mexico, decided that all social programs should have a results framework (Matriz de Indicadores para Resultados) (MIR) and they should update it every year. As this was new for programs, a large training process started in 2007 and has continued every year since then. CONEVAL received assistance with this from Chile through the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES-ECLAC). The monitoring capacity increased dramatically in a few years. Today in Mexico, talking about MIRs in ministries and states is common.

51 African Development Bank. Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV). African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE). Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://idev.afdb.org/en/page/related-page/african-parliamentarians-network-development-evaluation-apnode>

52 Linda Kumalo et al., eds. 2021. African Parliaments Volume 1: Evidence Systems for Governance and Development. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media. DOI:10.52779/9781991201454

53 African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs. 2018. Evidence in African parliaments. <https://www.inasp.info/sites/default/files/2018-04/Evidenc%20i%20parliaments.pdf>

4.4 Capacity in government to undertake monitoring and reporting

- Useful sources**
- ① World Bank article on institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation systems for improvement⁵⁴
 - ① World Bank-sponsored note on devising an appropriate strategy for capacity building of a national monitoring and evaluation system, based on selected: African countries⁵⁵

- Suggested basic questions**
- Are there skilled personnel in government with the technical capacity for performance monitoring (for example, gathering, analyzing, and reporting on the performance of government policies and programs)?
 - What training have they had?
 - Overall, is there institutional capacity to undertake meaningful monitoring that feeds back into management? At what levels?
 - Is there a capacity-strengthening plan for monitoring skills in government (for example, training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance/support)?

- Possible more in-depth questions**
- A special MESA-related module, such as a survey, could collect more detailed information on individual capacity.

4.5 Role of civil society in the government monitoring system

Why is this important? It is important to understand any specific roles that CSOs play in government monitoring systems – for example, in community-based monitoring, or sitting on monitoring structures, such as district health committees. These can help to ensure the relevance of the information collected, and challenge government when systems are not working appropriately.

Some examples

In **South Africa**, the Framework for Strengthening Citizen-Government Partnerships for Monitoring Frontline Service Delivery, done through the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), was approved by the cabinet in August 2013 and a community-based monitoring system has been used to get citizen feedback on particular issues or in particular areas. There are some specialist think tanks, like the Health Systems Trust, which have played an important role in sectoral monitoring.

In **Ghana**, an NGO, CDD Ghana, was involved in undertaking knowledge-brokering, using government monitoring data at local government level, and drawing up a district league table, which showcased which district assemblies were performing well or poorly in a range of services. This case highlights the effects of strengthened evidence use in assessing sanitation performance at the local level: citizens putting pressure on district assemblies for improving performance in sanitation; more effective channels for citizen-level engagement with a source of pressure being created at district level; civil society using the evidence for their own project planning; and district assemblies being motivated to improve performance.

54 Keith Mackay. Institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation systems to improve public sector management (English). Evaluation Capacity Development Working Paper series, no. ECD 15 Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/715431468325271413/Institutionalization-of-monitoring-and-evaluation-systems-to-improve-public-sector-management>

55 Robert Lahey. 2015. Devising an Appropriate Strategy for Capacity Building of a National Monitoring and Evaluation System: Lessons from Selected African Countries. 2015. Note sponsored by the Poverty Global Practice of the World Bank Group. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22079/DevisingOanOapOedOAfricanOCountries.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

4.5 Role of civil society in the government monitoring system

- Useful sources**
- ❶ Citizen-based monitoring⁵⁶
 - ❷ Uganda Evaluation Association⁵⁷
 - ❸ Use of monitoring evidence in Ghana's district league table⁵⁸

Suggested basic questions Are there any specific roles that CSOs play in government monitoring systems – such as sitting on monitoring structures, or being involved in community-based monitoring?

Possible more in-depth questions What CSOs involved in social accountability and audit mechanisms exist to monitor government?

4.6 Systems/ incentives for acting on monitoring

Why is this important? Ultimately, the prevailing incentives and sanctions, whether formal or informal, tend to influence what actually happens in government. This can be in the form of rewards, such as recognition and promotion, or sanctions on the lack of follow-up or strong messaging from leaders about the importance of follow-up.

This section explores whether there is a system for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of monitoring evidence, such as performance dialogues on quarterly reports, or sections in performance agreements which explicitly refer to follow-up on problems identified). It also looks into whether the systems may provide negative incentives, with negative effects.

Some examples In **South Africa**, the quarterly reporting by government departments is followed up in some cases by performance dialogues. In these dialogues, the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME), the National Treasury, and the relevant departments come together to reflect on performance monitoring information, budget information, and evaluations, and how performance is going and what changes are needed. This provides incentives to follow up on the reports. Similarly, as these reports are tabled at parliamentary committees, they come under some scrutiny. This also sometimes results in parliamentary questions being asked.

Useful sources ❶ For more information on performance culture, read chapter 4 of the book *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice*.⁵⁹ The chapter covers evidence use by African governments, and explores M&E culture in Benin, Uganda, and South Africa.

Suggested basic questions Is there a system for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of monitoring evidence (such as rewards, sanctions, and messaging from leadership)?

Possible more in-depth questions Explore the above in more depth and how this relates to culture.

56 DPME (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation). Republic of South Africa. Citizen-based Monitoring. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/cbmSite/Pages/default.aspx>

57 Uganda Evaluation Association. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://ugandaevaluationassociation.org/web/ugandaevaluationassociation/default.aspx>

58 Ian Goldman et al. 2020. "Mere compliance or learning – M&E culture in the public service of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", in *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice*, eds. Ian Goldman and Mine Pabari, 54–74. Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003007043-4/mere-compliance-learning-culture-public-service-benin-uganda-south-africa-ian-goldman-wole-olaleye-stanley-sixolile-ntakumba-mokgoropo-makgaba-cara-waller?context=ubx&refId=c513054a-4cdb-420d-b196-8ed35908fa53>

59 Ibid.

4.7 Use of monitoring information by government

Why is this important?

This section explores whether and how monitoring information is used to inform management decision making and any lessons that may emerge.

Some examples

In the **Ghana** case outlined before, an NGO, CDD Ghana, was involved in undertaking knowledge brokering using government monitoring data at local government level and drawing up a district league table (DLT) which showcased which district assemblies were performing well or poorly in a range of services. The DLT has been successful in contributing to strengthening evidence use, particularly at the district level. The capacity strengthening of civil society groups, coupled with access to DLT data, strengthened the confidence and capabilities of citizens to engage in evidence-based advocacy. This created pressure points on government actors to improve service delivery, particularly at the subnational level.

The ranking of districts using the DLT has created a sense of competition among district officials. District assemblies that perform poorly on the DLT are flagged at the national level and peer pressure from other districts together with the evidence informed advocacy from civil society act as incentives to improve service delivery.

Useful sources

- ① District league table case: CLEAR-AA policy brief on evidence use for improving sanitation in Ghana⁶⁰

Suggested basic questions

- How does monitoring information within government inform decision making: planning, project or program management, budgeting, and performance reporting?
- What examples are there of the use of monitoring information in national plans, strategies, and government programs?
- How does the government usually respond to negative M&E findings/evidence?

Possible more in-depth questions

- What is the role of each department within the state in making these decisions based on M&E?

60 Dede Bedu-Addo and Mohammed Awal. 2020. All hands in the community bowl: Evidence use for improved sanitation in Ghana. CLEAR-AA Policy Brief. <https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/29177/Evidenc%20Us%20fo%20Improve%20Sanitatio%20i%20Uganda.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>

Annexes

4. Monitoring and reporting systems

This section explores monitoring and reporting systems in detail, with an emphasis on output- and outcome-monitoring rather than activity monitoring. Looking at the reporting function is important to understand what happens with monitoring data, and the extent to which it is used for decision-making.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
4.1 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at the national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the main monitoring systems at the national level and who are the custodians of these? › Is there monitoring and reporting of the national development plan, and other formalized plans? › What monitoring and reporting systems are in place for outputs, for outcomes, and for budget/expenditure? › What roles do line ministries play in monitoring? › Are there incentives or sanctions in place to ensure that sectoral ministries and/or subnational governments adopt M&E practices in their daily work and report as required? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there other systems that are not called PM&E but that in fact are PM&E systems? › How is information collected on expenditure/inputs/outputs/, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes and impacts? › The evolution of these systems could be explored in more depth, as well as the implications for where they are headed. › What mechanisms are there for government to share monitoring evidence and engage stakeholders (for example, CSOs) on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)? › What are the main monitoring systems at the regional level and who are the custodians of these?
4.2 Systems for government monitoring and reporting in line ministries and at subnational levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the main monitoring systems coordinated by line ministries? › What are the main monitoring systems at subnational levels and who are the custodians of these? › What monitoring and reporting systems are in place for outcomes and for outputs at these levels? › What lower-level monitoring and reporting do line ministries do? › How does this link with local government or state governments? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there formalized monitoring and reporting of a subnational development plan and other plans? At state or other local government level?
4.3 Monitoring of government by parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How does parliament monitor government performance? › How is government monitoring information used in parliament? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How effective is this monitoring? › Do committees feel they can get an in-depth understanding of what the departments are doing and how effective it is?

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
<p>4.4 Capacity in government to undertake monitoring and reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there skilled personnel in government with the technical capacity for performance monitoring (for example, gathering, analyzing, and reporting on the performance of government policies and programs)? › What training have they had? › Overall, is there institutional capacity to undertake meaningful monitoring that feeds back into management? At what levels? › Is there a capacity-strengthening plan for monitoring skills in government (for example, training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance/support)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A special MESA-related module, such as a survey, could collect more detailed information on individual capacity.
<p>4.5 Role of civil society in the government monitoring system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there any specific roles that CSOs play in government monitoring systems – such as sitting on monitoring structures, or being involved in community-based monitoring? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What CSOs involved in social accountability and audit mechanisms exist to monitor government?
<p>4.6 Systems/incentives for acting on monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there a system for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of monitoring evidence (such as rewards, sanctions, and messaging from leadership)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Explore the above in more depth and how this relates to culture.
<p>4.7 Use of monitoring information by government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How does monitoring information within government inform decision making: planning, project or program management, budgeting, and performance reporting? › What examples are there of the use of monitoring information in national plans, strategies, and government programs? › How does the government usually respond to negative M&E findings/evidence? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the role of each department within the state in making these decisions based on M&E?

