

# MESA

Diagnostic Tool for a Monitoring  
and Evaluation Systems Analysis

## 5 – Evaluation systems

This section goes into the country's evaluation systems in detail. Here, the MESA focuses not only on the production and use of single evaluations, but on the status of the evaluation system as a whole.

### 5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level

#### Why is this important?

Mirroring section 4.1 on monitoring, this section explores evaluation systems and practices at the national level. Building on the overview in section 3, this is one of the most important parts of the MESA, as it explores the center of the evaluation system and its main components. It will be important to look into both formal and informal systems, as well as distinguish systems in theory from what is happening in practice. This section focuses on the identification of the main stakeholders of the evaluation system within government, their roles and how they interact with each other. In some cases, where there are strong regional links, it may be important to highlight practices at the regional level, such as CARICOM in the Caribbean.

#### Some examples

Most of the literature and many evaluation diagnostics provide information on this (CLEAR LAC and Deval INCE for Latin America, for example). They identify how governments have built evaluation systems. There is a range of useful examples:

**Chile** originally developed its evaluation system around the Department of the Budget, within the Ministry of Finance. For many years this was the only evaluation unit in the country. However, in 2011, the Ministry of Social Planning (later the Ministry of Social Development and now the Ministry of Social Development and Family) also started evaluation for the social sector. Doing a MESA for Chile today involves assessing the evaluation processes in both ministries and their strategies for coordinating with each other.

In **South Africa**, the driving agency in government is the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME), housed in the Presidency. A national evaluation policy was adopted by the cabinet in 2011 (and revised in 2019). This promotes a utilization-focused approach, with evaluations conducted at national, provincial, and ministry/department levels. Since 2012, a national evaluation plan has been produced annually, with evaluations conducted as a partnership between the DPME and the respective sector department. DPME part-funds the evaluations, and the reports go to the cabinet along with a management response and an improvement plan. These are large evaluations, a mix of diagnostic, implementation, and impact evaluations. Seventy-three evaluations have begun, covering projects and programs to the value of around US\$10 billion of government expenditure. By 2021, 50 evaluations had been completed and closed<sup>61</sup>. Twenty-seven guidelines/templates have been produced, which are available publicly, along with a repository of evaluations, standards, and required competencies.

This section can also identify changes in evaluation tools and the reasons for those changes.

In the **USA**, during the G. W. Bush administration, a useful evaluation tool called the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) assessed public programs based on direct answers covering the life cycle of programs. This tool was terminated during the Obama administration. Exploring the reasons for this change could shed light on the M&E systems, goals, and challenges.

In **Mexico**, the M&E guidelines launched by CONEVAL and the Ministry of Finance in 2007 have been shaping the M&E system ever since. These guidelines specify the way several elements should be addressed: the annual evaluation plan, types of evaluations, the need to make all evaluations public, programs' log frameworks, the periodicity to assess results indicators, and the mechanism to follow up on evaluations' recommendations.

## 5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level

In **Uganda**, the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (NIMES, 2006) has been managed through sector working groups: the National Monitoring and Oversight (NM&O) Working Group and the Evaluation Sub-Committee (ESC). It is through the NIMES and the sector working groups that Uganda established its national evaluation system.

In Uganda, in its work on developing evaluation agendas, the Office of the Prime Minister partnered with Twende Mbele<sup>62</sup> in 2020 and 2021, working through CLEAR-AA, and collaborated with health-sector CSOs to develop the Health Sector Evaluation Agenda, which is aligned to the National Development Plan III (2021/21–2024/25).

### Useful sources

- ❶ CLEAR LAC and Deval's INCE are important readings to show assessment of different evaluation systems in Latin America.<sup>63</sup> This guidance suggests using questions from the Deval/WFP INCE to assess section 5 of THE MESA.
- ❷ Progress in the South African system<sup>64</sup>
- ❸ The DPME website<sup>65</sup>
- ❹ The M&E Guidelines for Mexico, issued in 2007<sup>66</sup>

### Suggested basic questions

- Who are the custodians of the evaluation system at regional/national level?
- What is the extent of the coverage of the evaluation custodian or evaluation unit across government?
- Is evaluation of the national development plan, ministries' plans and other plans formalized/institutionalized?
- How are line ministries involved in evaluation?
- What roles do they play regarding evaluation?
- How effective are public entities in managing evaluations?
- Is there a demand from line ministries for external evaluations?
- Which type of interventions/programs/sectors are evaluated by the system?
- How are evaluations funded?
- What type of evaluations are typically conducted (for example, design, implementation, outcome, and impact)?
- How are the credibility, independence, and impartiality of evaluations fostered??
- Are there mechanisms in place to ensure quality?
- What is the quality and technical rigor of the evaluations performed?
- Do countries have methodologies/guidance to define recommendations?
- What mechanisms are there for government to share evaluation evidence and engage stakeholders on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)?

62 Twende Mbele. A knowledge sharing platform to improve M&E in Africa. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://twendembele.org>

63 Gabriela Perez-Yarahuan and Claudia Maldonado, eds. National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems. Experiences from Latin America. CLEAR-LAC, 2020. <https://clear-lac.org/3d-flip-book/national-monitoring-and-evaluation-systems/>

64 Ian Goldman et al., "The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", *African Evaluation Journal*, 6 no. 1, (March 2018): 253. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v6i1.253>

65 DPME (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation), Republic of South Africa. Evaluations. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Pages/default.aspx>

66 CONEVAL. Evaluación De La Política Social. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.coneval.org.mx/Evaluacion/NME/Paginas/LineamientosGenerales.aspx>

## 5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level

### Possible more in-depth questions

- › Is there a willingness to overcome current negative perceptions about evaluation in the public and nongovernmental sectors?
- › Does a classification of program performance exist?
- › What is the quality of the ToR for conducting evaluations?
- › What is the degree of impartiality in evaluation processes?
- › If so desired, the systems at regional level (for example, CARICOM) can be explored. The questions for the national level can be used here.
- › How many country-led evaluations commissioned or implemented by government started in the past two to three years?

## 5.2 Evaluation systems at line ministry and subnational levels

### Why is this important?

In this section, it is important to assess the main elements of evaluation systems in states, municipalities, and the subnational level, if they exist. To learn fully about the evaluation system in a country, it is important to understand the existence and status of the evaluation systems at the levels of line ministries and subnational levels, which could include subnational governments. This is crucial if countries have a federal system. Ideally, similar questions to those asked at the national level should be asked. An additional element is to assess the level of coordination around evaluation between the central and local levels.

### Some examples

It is not possible to understand the evaluation system in India or in Mexico without learning what type of evaluation systems have been set up at the state level.

In **India**, Karnataka and Odisha are two states with well-established evaluation systems.

In **Mexico**, Mexico City, the State of Mexico, and Oaxaca have well-structured evaluation systems, while the systems in other states are not yet as well developed.

In **South Africa**, eight of the nine provinces have had provincial evaluation plans and have implemented some evaluations. Limpopo and Western Cape are examples of provinces that have taken evaluation seriously. Western Cape has implemented a very structured process and conducted over 50 provincial evaluations. These evaluations are outsourced and conducted by consultants or universities. Both Limpopo and Western Cape have tested models of rapid evaluations, conducted by government staff, as mechanisms to reduce both the costs and time involved in completing evaluations.

In **Brazil**, state governments rely on public research institutes that conduct evaluations and which are staffed by civil servants, such as the João Pinheiro Foundation in Minas Gerais. These institutes establish relationships with local universities to support the development of evaluations.

### Useful sources

- ① The State Evaluation Assessment undertaken by CONEVAL in Mexico assesses evaluation practices and norms at the state level<sup>67</sup>
- ① This article reviews the provincial evaluation system in the Western Cape, South Africa<sup>68</sup>

67 CONEVAL. Diagnóstico Del Avance En Monitoreo Y Evaluación De Las Entidades Federativas. Accessed February 14, 2022. [https://www.coneval.org.mx/coordinacion/entidades/Paginas/Indice\\_diagnosticos\\_temp.aspx](https://www.coneval.org.mx/coordinacion/entidades/Paginas/Indice_diagnosticos_temp.aspx)

68 Zeenat Ishmail and Victoria L. Tully, "An overview of the provincial evaluation system of the Western Cape Government of South Africa as a response to the evaluation of the National Evaluation System", *African Evaluation Journal* 8, no. 1, (April 2020): 425. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v8i1.425>

## 5.2 Evaluation systems at line ministry and subnational levels

### Suggested basic questions

- › In this section, it will be important to include similar questions as the ones asked for the national level, including additional questions about the coordination between the central government and local government:
- › Who are the custodians of the evaluation system within line ministries?
- › Who are the custodians of the evaluation system at the state/district/municipality level?
- › What is the extent of the coverage of the subnational evaluation custodian or evaluation unit in the state/local government?
- › Are the evaluation of the state/district/municipality development plans, or of ministry/sectoral plans, and/or other plans formalized or institutionalized?
- › How are subnational line ministries involved in evaluation?
- › How effective are subnational entities in managing evaluations?
- › What type of interventions/programs/sectors are evaluated at subnational level?
- › How are evaluations funded?
- › What type of evaluations are mainly conducted at the subnational level?
- › How are credibility, independence, and impartiality encouraged in conducting evaluations?
- › What is the quality and technical rigor of the evaluations performed?
- › Are there mechanisms to ensure quality?
- › Does the subnational level have methodologies/guidance to define recommendations?
- › What mechanisms are there for the subnational government to share evaluation evidence and engage stakeholders on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)?
- › Are there formal and informal mechanisms for coordinating the subnational evaluation system with the central government system?
- › Does subnational government produce evaluations together with the central government?

### Possible more in-depth questions

- › Does a classification of program performance exist?
- › What is the quality of the ToR for conducting evaluations?
- › What is the degree of impartiality in evaluation processes?

## 5.3 Government capacity to manage, commission, and undertake evaluations

### Why is this important?

This section focuses on the government's capacity to directly manage evaluations, commission them, and potentially also conduct evaluations using internal staff. (Section 5.4 looks at the capacity to manage a running evaluation system.) It is very important to determine if the government is an efficient enabler of evaluations in the country at the technical level, and to identify its main partners. The capacities can be both institutional and individual. Often a limitation is the lack of technical skills in government to both produce and manage evaluations. Developing capacity around these elements will be an important part of a capacity development plan for the evaluation system as a whole.

## 5.3 Government capacity to manage, commission, and undertake evaluations

**Some examples** When **Costa Rica** started to implement its evaluation system in a significant way, it started with only 15 evaluations, in the period 2015–18. Its current plan is to conduct 60 evaluations. Some of these evaluations are to be undertaken externally, particularly in 2020-21, with government budgets under strain due to the COVID pandemic.

In **Mexico**, at the subnational level, when the state government of Oaxaca started to demonstrate interest in evaluation, CONEVAL's assessment was that evaluation skills were relatively weak. Through capacity-building strategies, where both the Ministry of Finance and CONEVAL partnered with the state, it was able to improve its evaluation capacities within five years. The same happened with the State of Yucatán.

### Useful sources

- ❶ Mexico states' M&E Index, CONEVAL<sup>69</sup>
- ❷ For evaluation capacity and systems in Benin, Uganda, and South Africa<sup>70</sup>

### Suggested basic questions

- Are there skilled personnel<sup>71</sup> in government with the technical capacity for undertaking or managing evaluations?
- What is government's capacity to commission evaluations (for example, managing and sponsoring one or more evaluations)?
- What is government's capacity to conduct evaluations itself, either centrally or in ministries?
- Is there a capacity strengthening plan for evaluation skills in government (for example, training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance/support)?

## 5.4 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system

### Why is this important?

It is possible that governments are able to produce single evaluations. However, being able to coordinate an entire evaluation system requires not only technical abilities but institutional and political abilities and systems too. Because running an evaluation system involves systems and not just individual evaluations, learning about this is crucial for each country, whether at the national or subnational level. This section is linked to sections 3.1–3.4 for monitoring, where regulations and formal institutional arrangements are explored. In this section, the focus is on the realities of the institutional settings for running an NES in greater depth.

### Some examples

**South Africa** has developed significant capacity in the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME) to oversee the evaluation system. This has enabled many elements of the evaluation system to be developed: around eight significant national evaluations conducted per year, and the development of capacity across the whole of government. These evaluations were co-funded by DPME and the relevant sector department.

National departments have M&E units, and in some cases, these have significant evaluation capacity, while in some departments there are no people with evaluation expertise. Central offices in each province also have some capacity, with some having dedicated evaluation capacity, such as Western Cape, with four staff members. The tightening of the fiscal situation since the mid-2010s and especially the prevailing context of COVID-19, have put considerable strain on evaluation budgets, which has actually stimulated an interest in the use of rapid evaluations that are conducted internally.

69 CONEVAL. Publicaciones Sobre La Colaboración Con Entidades Federativas. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.coneval.org.mx/InformesPublicaciones/InformesPublicaciones/Paginas/Colaboracion-con-Entidades-Federativas.aspx>

70 Ian Goldman et al., "The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", *African Evaluation Journal*, 6 no. 1, (March 2018): 253. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v6i1.253>

71 Define "skilled" before asking, for example, post-graduate qualification in M&E, experience of undertaking evaluations, and so on.

## 5.4 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system

**Useful sources** ⓘ For capacity and systems in Benin, Uganda, and South Africa<sup>72</sup>

### Suggested basic questions

- How able is government to manage and run an evaluation system (in relation to knowledge, skills, human and financial resources)?
- How many evaluations have been conducted and with what coverage?
- What capacity is invested in the entity running evaluations and in developing the systems, such as plans, frameworks, standards and training?
- How effective is coordination among stakeholders in building an ecosystem across government, including with nongovernmental stakeholders?
- Is government able to plan and implement a national evaluation agenda/plan?
- What is the involvement of a range of government institutions and non-governmental stakeholders to agree on and monitor the evaluation agenda?
- What is the involvement of a range of government institutions and non-governmental stakeholders in dialogue around the system?

## 5.5 Capacity to undertake evaluations in civil society/academia/ the private sector

### Why is this important?

In most cases, government does not undertake evaluations itself – it commissions third parties. To do this there needs to be sufficiently capacity in civil society, academia, and the private sector to undertake high-quality evaluations. These skills could have been built because these organizations are undertaking evaluations for development partners, for CSOs, or from experience in undertaking evaluations for government. In addition, the country is better off in terms of M&E if civil society produces evaluations even if the evaluations are not commissioned by government. It is important to understand the capacity that exists, so that if evaluation systems scale up there is the capacity to undertake the expansion in demand.

### Some examples

The Twende Mbele Project<sup>73</sup> has funded studies to look at the supply of evaluators and demand for evaluations in Benin, South Africa, and Uganda.

In **South Africa**, many professional service providers do not employ permanent evaluation staff – rather, they form evaluation-specific associations with individuals with the required qualifications, expertise, and experience. There is therefore a pool of people, some evaluation specialists and some sector specialists, that can be drawn on by evaluation consultancies. Many of them work for a range of different evaluation consultancies. Their interest in carrying out evaluations often depends on factors such as who the client is, the track record of the client in terms of the way in which it manages evaluations, the quality of the ToR, and whether the budget is realistic. Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude that to date, supply has generally been adequate to meet demand, apart for some exceptions for highly specialized evaluations. A lag and increase in demand and in supply should be expected, due to the time required for capacity building.

A study on impact evaluation skills in **Sub-Saharan Africa** found that some countries (notably South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda) have a strong supply of impact evaluation specialists, although this is concentrated in a few sectors, mostly health.

72 Ian Goldman et al., "The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", *African Evaluation Journal*, 6 no. 1, (March 2018): 253. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v6i1.253>

73 Twende Mbele. A catalyst for Knowledge Sharing. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://twendembele.org>

## 5.5 Capacity to undertake evaluations in civil society/academia/ the private sector

(cont.)

In **Mexico**, various CSOs have started doing evaluations themselves. This contributes to intensifying accountability and pressure on government to perform. Furthermore, there have been seminars and workshops where evaluations commissioned by CONEVAL coincide with evaluations done by CSOs.

In the north-east region of **Brazil**, there are several universities that have been conducting evaluations of public policies: Federal Universities of Ceará (UFC), Bahia (UFBA), Pernambuco (UFPE) and Paraíba (UFPB). Within these academic institutions, research centers and labs have also been created to conduct evaluations:

- M&E Study Lab (LEMA), at UFPB
- Public and Economic Policy Evaluation Group (GAPPE), at UFPE
- Results-based Management Center (CGPR), at UFC

In addition, UFC has recently created and is offering the Professional Master's Program in Public Policy Evaluation (MAPP).

### Useful sources

- ① CLEAR-AA study on the state of monitoring and evaluation in Anglophone Africa<sup>74</sup>
- ① Comparative study on the institutionalization of evaluation in Europe and Latin America<sup>75</sup>
- ① Scoping the impact evaluation capacity in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>76</sup>
- ① Examples of CSOs in Mexico doing evaluations<sup>77</sup>

### Suggested basic questions

- › Who are the local providers of evaluation services (for example, consulting firms, auditors, independent consultants, academia)?
- › To what extent are evaluations commissioned by government, donors, and CSOs conducted by local evaluators?
- › Is there a sufficient supply of quality local evaluators?
- › Are the country's universities producing evaluations on a systematic basis?

### Possible more in-depth questions

- › How many evaluations have been produced by non-governmental institutions every year?
- › What types of evaluations are done by non-governmental institutions?

## 5.6 Systems/ incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon

### Why is this important?

The prevailing incentives (explicit or tacit) are key elements of the country's evaluation system. It is important to understand how evaluation findings are used, and whether this is systematic. This will guide some of these elements needed in follow-up work to strengthen the system. Even where evaluations are completed, there may be a limited capacity to make use of the findings of the evaluation. According to Goldman and Pabari (2020), the use of evidence is particularly encouraged when policy makers have the motivation, capability, and the opportunity to use it. Evidence use may be encouraged by the existence of specific internal systems, for example, improvement plans, which require government to plan for improvements as a result of the evaluation. The improvement plan is an example of providing opportunities to use the evidence, and possibly motivation, if there are consequences for not following up. It is also possible that the system is not mature enough to overcome negative incentives arising from the challenges found during the evaluation process.

74 Dugan I. Fraser and Candice Morkel. 2020. "State of monitoring and evaluation in Anglophone Africa: Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results in Anglophone Africa's reflections", *African Evaluation Journal* 8, no. 1, (Nov 2020): 505. <https://aejonline.org/index.php/aej/article/view/505/936>

75 Blanca Lázaro. 2015. "Comparative study on the institutionalisation of evaluation in Europe and Latin America", Study n. 15 Series: State of the Art Area: Public Finance, EUROsocial Programme (July 2015). [http://sia.eurosocial-ii.eu/files/docs/1456851768-E\\_15\\_ENfin.pdf](http://sia.eurosocial-ii.eu/files/docs/1456851768-E_15_ENfin.pdf)

76 Ibid.

77 Mexico Evalua. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.mexicoevalua.org/>

Animal Politico. Accessed February 14, 2022, <https://www.animalpolitico.com/>

Mexicanos Contra la Corrupcion y la Impunidad. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://contralacorruptcion.mx/>



## 5.6 Systems/ incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon

### Some examples

Both in **South Africa** and in **Mexico**, there are annual evaluation awards, where the central evaluation units hold a public event to award government officials in various M&E categories. One is about the proper use of evaluation findings. In this way, the M&E systems seek to include positive incentives to use the evaluation findings, trying to offset the potential negative ones. Similarly, countries have systems of improvement plans to institutionalize the application of the findings.

In **Brazil**, the newly launched Evidence-based Policy-making Award (Prêmio Evidência) is a joint initiative between FGV EESP CLEAR LAB, the National School of Public Administration, and the Institute of Social Mobility. The award generates significant visibility of public policies that showcase the use of evidence at different stages of implementation.

The award will feature municipal-, state-, and national-level public programs that have demonstrated, through the use of evidence, the promotion of social mobility and the reduction of inequality in Brazil. This initiative intends to recognize and showcase public policies that make use of evidence in its multiple stages, as well as to foster collaboration between scientific research and public policy management.

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### Useful sources

📄 The impact of impact evaluation<sup>78</sup>

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### Suggested basic questions

- Are there mechanisms for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of evaluation evidence (for example, evaluation steering committees to institutionalize ownership of evaluations, or improvement plans or management responses following evaluation)?
- Is there a management response/improvement plan-type process to respond to evaluation findings and recommendations?
- How is the implementation of such an improvement plan monitored?
- Describe how the government usually responds to negative M&E findings/evidence?
- When there is poor performance in an area or in a program/policy, what is the process to ensure adjustments and improvements happen?
- What is the link between evaluation results and program/policy budget allocations?

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### Possible more in-depth questions

- What is the greatest fear that program managers have around the implementation challenges arising from evaluations?
- Do program managers participate in the generation of recommendations as part of the evaluation process?

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<sup>78</sup> Richard Manning, Ian Goldman, and Gonzalo Hernández Licona, "The impact of impact evaluation: Are impact evaluation and impact evaluation synthesis contributing to evidence generation and use in low- and middle- income countries?", WIDER Working Paper 2020/20, (March 2020). <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/Publications/Working-paper/PDF/wp2020-20.pdf>

## 5.7 Use of evaluations by government

### Why is this important?

In this section, the MESA should find concrete examples of how evaluation findings have been used in public policy by government. Together with section 5.6, this is one of the most important sections of the MESA. If the information coming from the evaluation systems is used by government to learn about how to improve public policy, then the evaluation system makes sense. This important phase of the evaluation cycle has never been easy. While section 5.6 shows the potential problems, this section aims to find concrete examples of the use of evaluations by government. Sometimes the government uses the findings of one evaluation, and sometimes there are systems that make stakeholders use the evaluation findings every year. Finding positive examples is important in building the case for an evaluation system, and the cost benefits of the system. In many countries, the use of evaluation evidence requires the changes to be embedded not just in changes of policies but in the standard operating procedures of programs and services.

### Some examples

Fortunately, there are many examples of evaluations being used by governments in different countries.

The **Philippine** government was able to use the findings of at least three impact evaluations: the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Conditional Cash transfer, the Kalahi-CIDSS<sup>79</sup>, and the Special Program for the Employment of Students. The government was able to make changes in the three programs due to the evaluation findings.

In **Benin**, the evaluation of agricultural policy in 2010 contributed to significant changes in agricultural policy, including to the significant expansion of cotton production in the country.<sup>80</sup>

In **Mexico**, part of the evaluation process is a mechanism for tracking evaluation findings (Mecanismo de seguimiento de aspectos susceptibles de mejora). After the evaluation is finished, the program/ministry agrees to address certain findings and they write down their commitment in an Improvement plan, which is made public. CONEVAL tracks these improvements. In this way, it is possible to measure improvements made in public policy based on the evaluation findings.

### Useful sources

- ❶ Book on using evidence in policy and practice, with lessons from Africa.<sup>81</sup> This includes a series of case studies of using evaluation evidence, including the Benin example above.
- ❷ The impact of impact evaluation<sup>82</sup>
- ❸ Mexico's mechanism for tracking evaluation findings<sup>83</sup>

### Suggested basic questions

- What examples are there of evidence from government evaluations informing government decision making: planning (including of national development plan), policies, project or program management, budgeting and performance reporting?
- Does government draw on M&E evidence from stakeholders (for example, NGOs, think tanks, development partners) to inform government planning, policy, and decision making, and if so, how?

79 Known as the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services.

80 Bonaventure Kouakanou et al., "The potential and the challenges of evaluations to positively influence reforms: Working with producers in the Benin agricultural sector", *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice*, eds. Ian Goldman, Mine Pabari (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2020), 152–168. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003007043-9/potential-challenges-evaluations-positively-influence-reforms-bonaventure-kouakanou-dossa-aguemon-marius-aina-abdoulaye-gounou-emmanuel-david-gnahoui?context=ubx&refId=da33ea01-bb97-4414-90a7-d399b6d3e23a>

81 *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice*, eds. Ian Goldman and Mine Pabari (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2020). <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003007043/using-evidence-policy-practice-ian-goldman-mine-pabari>

82 Richard Manning, Ian Goldman, and Gonzalo Hernández Licona, "The impact of impact evaluation: Are impact evaluation and impact evaluation synthesis contributing to evidence generation and use in low- and middle- income countries?", *WIDER Working Paper 2020/20*, (March 2020). <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/Publications/Working-paper/PDF/wp2020-20.pdf>

83 CONEVAL. Informe De Seguimiento A Los Aspectos Susceptibles De Mejora De Los Programas Y Acciones Federales De Desarrollo Social 2020-2021. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.coneval.org.mx/Evaluacion/CMPE/Paginas/Informe-de-seguimiento-asm-2020-2021.aspx>

## 5.7 Use of evaluations by government

### Possible more in-depth questions

- What lessons are there from why evaluation evidence was used in these cases?
- Does the use of evaluation findings change according to the government cycle?
- Is there any evidence of evaluation findings being used in voluntary national reviews and in the follow-up to the national SDG agenda?

## 5.8 Use of evaluations by parliament

### Why is this important?

Ideally, evaluation findings should be used by many stakeholders. An important potential user is parliament. Parliaments are part of the center of government, making important decisions, such as on issues like the budget and legislation. If the M&E system works properly, parliaments should use evaluations produced by governments. At the same time, parliamentary research staff can produce their own evaluative studies, or draw from performance audits. In a number of countries, evaluation findings are sent to the legislative arm of government, such as parliament or the congress. It is not clear, however, that these findings are actually used by them for key decisions. In this section, the MESA should find concrete examples of how the evaluation findings have been used by parliament, and how parliamentary committees could use evaluative evidence.

### Some examples

In **South Africa**, government evaluations are tabled in parliament once they have been to cabinet. In one case, parliament specifically requested an evaluation to be undertaken, which was done. Thus, evaluations are considered, although it is not clear to what extent they influence decision-making.

In **several countries**, parliaments are very interested in accessing evaluations and so are tabling bills to apply the evaluation system in legislation. These include Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Benin.

### Useful sources?

- ❶ Book on African parliaments and evaluations, first volume<sup>84</sup>  
(Forthcoming, second volume on institutions and practice)

### Suggested basic questions

- Do parliamentary portfolio committees consider government or non-governmental evaluations in their oversight and legislative work?
- Do parliamentary portfolio committees commission evaluative studies from their parliamentary researchers?
- Does parliament draw on evidence from non-governmental stakeholders (for example, NGOs, think tanks, development partners) to inform their work?
- What are the key challenges affecting the use of evaluative evidence in parliament?

### Possible more in-depth questions

- Are there sufficient capacities within parliament (for example, parliament M&E/research units and portfolio committees) to draw on and utilize M&E evidence?
- Are there sufficient capacities within parliament (for example, parliament M&E/research units) to undertake evaluative studies, including synthesizing from existing evaluations?

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

## 5.9 Use of evaluations by civil society and the media

### Why is this important?

If evaluations are part of the democratic process of countries, then the role of civil society is important – not only to use the evaluations produced by government, but also to promote, commission, and produce evaluations. Civil society and the media are important stakeholders for demanding the production and use of evaluations for public policy and accountability purposes. An active civil society is part of the enabling environment that promotes and demands the production and use of evaluations.

In this section, the MESA should determine the extent to which civil society (such as CSOs, schools and universities) and the media access and use the evaluations produced by various stakeholders, especially the government. They may also use their own evaluations for advocacy with government, and thus exert significant influence on the government.

### Some examples

When evaluations can be accessed in public repositories or on websites they can be used by the wider public as part of their advocacy work.

In **Bangladesh**, a large nutrition program was being planned with World Bank support, based on an apparently successful program which had resulted in greatly lowered levels of malnutrition. However, this being attributed to the World Bank-funded program was challenged by an evaluation conducted by Oxfam. Instead, it was found that the lowered malnutrition levels were common to areas outside the program, and in fact the main factor was the drop in the price of rice.<sup>85</sup>

In **Mexico**, the media have been an important part of the enabling environment for the M&E system, especially since 2000. Evaluation findings are clearly of potential interest to the media. In an open democracy (the case in Mexico since 1997) the media use evaluations to show potential challenges in the government's public policy. A recognition of the importance of the media by high-ranked officials has contributed to shaping the Mexican M&E system. For example, before evaluations are launched, CONEVAL runs workshops with the media, explaining the contents of the evaluations. The media have also helped to highlight challenges in programs and thus have helped to improve them on some occasions. Using the power of the media to enhance the M&E system is always important in democratic countries.

### Suggested basic questions

- Is there evidence from civil society demanding evaluations of government programs (pressuring government to do evaluations, or to be able to access evaluations)?
- Are there examples of NGOs using government evaluations to put pressure on government about results ex post and about policy choices ex ante?
- How often does the media show information coming from the evaluation system?
- Are results of government evaluations commonly used in public discourse and in the media?

### Possible more in-depth questions

- Is there evidence of CSOs sharing with government evidence from their evaluations of programs, and advocating for changes/scale-ups?

85 Howard White and Edoardo Masset. "Assessing interventions to improve child nutrition: a theory-based impact evaluation of the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project," *Journal of International Development*, 19, no. 5, (2007): 627–652, DOI:10.1002/jid.1344

## 5.10 Role of civil society in government evaluation systems

### Why is this important?

Government can be very inward looking, sometimes suspicious of civil society and seeing it as potentially undermining the state. Civil society has the potential to represent beneficiaries of government policies and programs, as implementors of some services. It also includes advocacy organizations that work on human rights and the environment, for example, often representing disadvantaged groups and communities. These organizations can thus present important perspectives on whether programs and policies are working or not. They can also present important perspectives if they participate in aspects of the evaluation system. It is important to understand whether and how civil society participates in the evaluation system and has the potential to influence it, including government and parliament. This role may in fact help to strengthen the sustainability and impact of the system.

### Some examples

In **Costa Rica**, civil society is one of the stakeholders represented in the national evaluation platform, which has around 30 participants per meeting and includes representatives from the legislative assembly, the auditor general, and civil society.

Similarly, in **Uganda**, to ensure wider participation, an evaluation subcommittee was established with the mandate to provide management and oversight support in the implementation of the evaluation system. The committee includes a range of key state actors, non-state actors from academia, civil society development partners and government-financed research institutions. This collaboration was shown to have contributed to the effectiveness of the system.

In **South Africa**, the VOPE plays an active role. Civil society often participates in evaluation steering committees, where it frequently make significant contributions.

### Useful sources

① Use of evidence in a complex social program: Case of an evaluation of the state's response to violence against women and children in South Africa<sup>86</sup>

### Suggested basic questions

- Do civil society organizations or representatives play specific roles in structures and systems related to government evaluations (for example, steering committees, a national evaluation council)?
- What is the role of VOPEs in the national and subnational M&E systems?
- How involved are citizens, civil society organizations, or other actors in specific government evaluations?

### Possible more in-depth questions

- What is the degree of maturity of VOPEs?
- See also questions on VOPEs in section 3.

86 Amisi Matodzi, Thabani Buthelezi, and Siza Magangoe, "Use of evidence in a complex social programme: Case of an evaluation of the state's response to violence against women and children in South Africa", *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice*, eds. Ian Goldman, Mine Pabari (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2020), 92–114. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003007043-6/use-evidence-complex-social-programme-matodzi-amisi-thabani-buthelezi-siza-agangoe?context=ubx&refId=967c993d-21eb-4bed-8514-9963534bc702Ann>

# Annexes

## 5. Evaluation systems

This section goes into the country's evaluation systems in detail. Here, the MESA focuses not only on the production and use of single evaluations, but on the status of the evaluation system as a whole.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
<p>5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Who are the custodians of the evaluation system at regional/national level?</li> <li>› What is the extent of the coverage of the evaluation custodian or evaluation unit across government?</li> <li>› Is evaluation of the national development plan, ministries' plans and other plans formalized/institutionalized?</li> <li>› How are line ministries involved in evaluation?</li> <li>› What roles do they play regarding evaluation?</li> <li>› How effective are public entities in managing evaluations?</li> <li>› Is there a demand from line ministries for external evaluations?</li> <li>› Which type of interventions/programs/sectors are evaluated by the system?</li> <li>› How are evaluations funded?</li> <li>› What type of evaluations are typically conducted (for example, design, implementation, outcome, and impact)?</li> <li>› How are the credibility, independence, and impartiality of evaluations fostered??</li> <li>› Are there mechanisms in place to ensure quality?</li> <li>› What is the quality and technical rigor of the evaluations performed?</li> <li>› Do countries have methodologies/guidance to define recommendations?</li> <li>› What mechanisms are there for government to share evaluation evidence and engage stakeholders on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Is there a willingness to overcome current negative perceptions about evaluation in the public and nongovernmental sectors?</li> <li>› Does a classification of program performance exist?</li> <li>› What is the quality of the ToR for conducting evaluations?</li> <li>› What is the degree of impartiality in evaluation processes?</li> <li>› If so desired, the systems at regional level (for example, CARICOM) can be explored. The questions for the national level can be used here.</li> <li>› How many country-led evaluations commissioned or implemented by government started in the past two to three years?</li> </ul>

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
<p>5.2 Evaluation systems at line ministry and subnational levels</p>	<p>In this section, it will be important to include similar questions as the ones asked for the national level, including additional questions about the coordination between the central government and local government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Who are the custodians of the evaluation system within line ministries?</li> <li>› Who are the custodians of the evaluation system at the state/district/municipality level?</li> <li>› What is the extent of the coverage of the subnational evaluation custodian or evaluation unit in the state/local government?</li> <li>› Are the evaluation of the state/district/municipality development plans, or of ministry/sectoral plans, and/or other plans formalized or institutionalized?</li> <li>› How are subnational line ministries involved in evaluation?</li> <li>› How effective are subnational entities in managing evaluations?</li> <li>› What type of interventions/programs/sectors are evaluated at subnational level?</li> <li>› How are evaluations funded?</li> <li>› What type of evaluations are mainly conducted at the subnational level?</li> <li>› How are credibility, independence, and impartiality encouraged in conducting evaluations?</li> <li>› What is the quality and technical rigor of the evaluations performed?</li> <li>› Are there mechanisms to ensure quality?</li> <li>› Does the subnational level have methodologies/guidance to define recommendations?</li> <li>› What mechanisms are there for the subnational government to share evaluation evidence and engage stakeholders on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)?</li> <li>› Are there formal and informal mechanisms for coordinating the subnational evaluation system with the central government system?</li> <li>› Does subnational government produce evaluations together with the central government?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Does a classification of program performance exist?</li> <li>› What is the quality of the ToR for conducting evaluations?</li> <li>› What is the degree of impartiality in evaluation processes?</li> </ul>



Subsection	Suggested basic questions
5.3 Government capacity to manage, commission, and undertake evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Are there skilled personnel<sup>1</sup> in government with the technical capacity for undertaking or managing evaluations?</li> <li>› What is government's capacity to commission evaluations (for example, managing and sponsoring one or more evaluations)?</li> <li>› What is government's capacity to conduct evaluations itself, either centrally or in ministries?</li> <li>› Is there a capacity strengthening plan for evaluation skills in government (for example, training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance/support)?</li> </ul>
5.4 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› How able is government to manage and run an evaluation system (in relation to knowledge, skills, human and financial resources)?</li> <li>› How many evaluations have been conducted and with what coverage?</li> <li>› What capacity is invested in the entity running evaluations and in developing the systems, such as plans, frameworks, standards and training?</li> <li>› How effective is coordination among stakeholders in building an ecosystem across government, including with nongovernmental stakeholders?</li> <li>› Is government able to plan and implement a national evaluation agenda/plan?</li> <li>› What is the involvement of a range of government institutions and non governmental stakeholders to agree on and monitor the evaluation agenda?</li> <li>› What is the involvement of a range of government institutions and non governmental stakeholders in dialogue around the system?</li> </ul>

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
5.5 Capacity to undertake evaluations in civil society/ academia/the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Who are the local providers of evaluation services (for example, consulting firms, auditors, independent consultants, academia)?</li> <li>› To what extent are evaluations commissioned by government, donors, and CSOs conducted by local evaluators?</li> <li>› Is there a sufficient supply of quality local evaluators?</li> <li>› Are the country's universities producing evaluations on a systematic basis?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› How many evaluations have been produced by non governmental institutions every year?</li> <li>› What types of evaluations are done by non governmental institutions?</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Define "skilled" before asking, for example, post-graduate qualification in M&E, experience of undertaking evaluations, and so on.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
<p>5.6 Systems/incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Are there mechanisms for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of evaluation evidence (for example, evaluation steering committees to institutionalize ownership of evaluations, or improvement plans or management responses following evaluation)?</li> <li>› Is there a management response/improvement plan-type process to respond to evaluation findings and recommendations?</li> <li>› How is the implementation of such an improvement plan monitored?</li> <li>› Describe how the government usually responds to negative M&amp;E findings/evidence?</li> <li>› When there is poor performance in an area or in a program/policy, what is the process to ensure adjustments and improvements happen?</li> <li>› What is the link between evaluation results and program/policy budget allocations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› What is the greatest fear that program managers have around the implementation challenges arising from evaluations?</li> <li>› Do program managers participate in the generation of recommendations as part of the evaluation process?</li> </ul>
<p>5.7 Use of evaluations by government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› What examples are there of evidence from government evaluations informing government decision making: planning (including of national development plan), policies, project or program management, budgeting and performance reporting?</li> <li>› Does government draw on M&amp;E evidence from stakeholders (for example, NGOs, think tanks, development partners) to inform government planning, policy, and decision making, and if so, how?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› What lessons are there from why evaluation evidence was used in these cases?</li> <li>› Does the use of evaluation findings change according to the government cycle?</li> <li>› Is there any evidence of evaluation findings being used in voluntary national reviews and in the follow-up to the national SDG agenda?</li> </ul>

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
<p><b>5.8 Use of evaluations by parliament</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Do parliamentary portfolio committees consider government or non governmental evaluations in their oversight and legislative work?</li> <li>› Do parliamentary portfolio committees commission evaluative studies from their parliamentary researchers?</li> <li>› Does parliament draw on evidence from non governmental stakeholders (for example, NGOs, think tanks, development partners) to inform their work?</li> <li>› What are the key challenges affecting the use of evaluative evidence in parliament?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Are there sufficient capacities within parliament (for example, parliament M&amp;E/research units and portfolio committees) to draw on and utilize M&amp;E evidence?</li> <li>› Are there sufficient capacities within parliament (for example, parliament M&amp;E/research units) to undertake evaluative studies, including synthesizing from existing evaluations?</li> </ul>
<p><b>5.9 Use of evaluations by civil society and the media</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Is there evidence from civil society demanding evaluations of government programs (pressuring government to do evaluations, or to be able to access evaluations)?</li> <li>› Are there examples of NGOs using government evaluations to put pressure on government about results ex post and about policy choices ex ante?</li> <li>› How often does the media shows information coming from the evaluation system?</li> <li>› Are results of government evaluations commonly used in public discourse and in the media?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Is there evidence of CSOs sharing with government evidence from their evaluations of programs, and advocating for changes/ scale-ups?</li> </ul>
<p><b>5.10 Role of civil society in government evaluation systems</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Do civil society organizations or representatives play specific roles in structures and systems related to government evaluations (for example, steering committees, a national evaluation council)?</li> <li>› What is the role of VOPEs in the national and subnational M&amp;E systems?</li> <li>› How involved are citizens, civil society organizations, or other actors in specific government evaluations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› What is the degree of maturity of VOPEs?</li> <li>› See also questions on VOPEs in section 3.</li> </ul>

