

# eVALUation Matters

A Quarterly Knowledge Publication on Development Evaluation

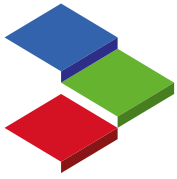


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*From knowledge to action...*  
*From action to impact*

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## eVALUation Matters

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***“If an M&E system is to be owned by a country, it needs to be linked to the country’s national development plan and integrated into the operations and culture of government institutions.”***

**Robert Lahey**

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## Editorial Calendar

### Q3 2018

AfDB 2018

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in Evaluation

Evaluation Matters is a quarterly magazine issued in both English and French, by IDEV, Independent Development Evaluation of the AfDB. We welcome topical articles from writers' original work and will be pleased to consider contributions for the themes in the above Editorial Calendar. See details at <http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/editorial-calendar-2018>



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## From the Evaluator General's Desk

► *Welcome to the second quarter edition of Evaluation Matters. Premised on the notion that the political economy of a country conditions the opportunities for evaluation to be used in policy processes, the Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) of the African Development Bank sought contributions on experiences in changing the narrative in the demand and supply dynamics of evaluation in Africa. Following the overwhelming response from contributors to our first quarter edition, this edition further treads the path of experiences, lessons and case studies in building supply and demand for evaluation.*

*To give a sense of the scope of the issue, in most developing countries, evaluators are limited to producing evaluation information, most of the time for a restricted number of people, that more than likely ends up on the shelf. The challenge to evaluators is to not only continue development on the supply side of evaluation, but also to increasingly focus on the demand side. So, how does one create the balance or achieve the equilibrium of the demand and supply of evaluation? Working on the supply side alone, hoping that demand will come after the evaluation, does not appear to be working. A focus on evaluation information requires informed, demanding stakeholders, and such stakeholders must receive relevant and timely evaluation information that could influence, inter-alia, policies and decisions.*

*Conversely, in the developed countries, where more examples are readily available, the success of evaluations may be largely attributed to the efforts made to simultaneously*

*promote the supply and demand for evaluation information, and to the resourcefulness and dedication of those involved. There is much to learn, adopt and adapt from some of these examples for African countries. Success will ultimately depend on the awareness, appreciation and common understanding by stakeholders of the importance and necessity for evaluation, and on the subsequent commitment of adequate financial and human resources to support a professional, dedicated and effective cadre of evaluators.*

*This edition of Evaluation Matters covers South-South Cooperation for peer learning and views on building the supply and demand for evaluation at country and institutional levels. By tapping into the vast amount of knowledge and experience available globally, IDEV has compiled a number of articles that explore stakeholder views, attitudes, experiences and expectations and assist in dissecting the evaluation demand and supply conundrum.*

*There is an African saying that goes “if you want to go fast, go alone; but if you want to go far, go together”. The African Development Bank, its development partners, and most importantly the African governments have a greater role to play in building the supply and demand for evaluation. More collaboration is needed for us to go further and make it sustainable.*

**Happy reading!**



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## About the Evaluator General

**Rakesh Nangia** is the Evaluator General for Independent Development Evaluation at the African Development Bank. Prior to joining the AfDB, he spent 25 years at the World Bank, where he held several positions including Director of Strategy and Operations for the Human Development Network and Acting Vice-President for the World Bank Institute. He attended the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi and Harvard University and holds degrees in business administration and engineering.

# Devising an Appropriate Strategy for Capacity Building of a National Monitoring and Evaluation System: Lessons from Selected African Countries

*National monitoring and evaluation systems (NMES) are crucial to countries' good functioning. The difficulty is for governments to believe in the utility of the NMES and understand its benefits to them. This is why it is important for countries to own these systems, integrating them into their national development plans and the operations of their respective governments. This article examines NMES in Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia, Mauritania, and Senegal in order to analyze the existing patterns within these countries and draw lessons from them to better inform future NMES capacity development. It finds that a strategy and action plan for NMES development is needed if improvements are to be made.*

Robert Lahey, Consultant, Canada

## Introduction

**I**N recent years, emphasis has been shifting to a new paradigm on national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity development—from a historical pattern of M&E being carried out primarily in the context of cooperation and development aid, to the concept of M&E capacity being centered around national ownership that is linked to a country's national vision, accountability, and good governance. The declaration of 2015 as the 'Year of Evaluation' and the advent of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016, have both reinforced movement in this direction, as well as raised expectations about the pace of M&E development at a country level. With a change in the frame of reference for national monitoring and evaluation system (NMES) development, the nature of a capacity-building strategy—including support that may be given by the international community to NMES development—also needs to be modified. NMES development, including M&E capacity gaps, needs to be considered in a broader context and built around more than simply traditional training initiatives. To work toward the goal of a sustainable, effective, national, and country-owned NMES, key foundation pieces such as infrastructure and supporting institutions need to be developed, along with training of country officials.

This article<sup>1</sup> examines NMES capacity building in the broader context of this new paradigm, examining the state of NMES development in five African countries—Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia, Mauritania, and Senegal—to explore and identify patterns and lessons that can inform future NMES capacity development in general.

## Background: A framework for developing an NMES<sup>2</sup>

If an M&E system is to be owned by a country, it needs to be linked to the country's national development plan and integrated into the operations and culture of government institutions. To be sustainable though, governments must believe in the utility of the NMES and understand its benefits to them. But, to do so, they must own the system. In other words, national ownership implies a particular cultural, social, and political context (Segone 2010). With good governance as a broad goal, and the driver behind developing an NMES, its development can be thought of as resting on two overarching influences: (i) the political will for change within a country and (ii) technical factors that will influence the pace of M&E infrastructure development. Upon these two foundation pieces sit four essential building blocks:

***"If an M&E system is to be owned by a country, it needs to be linked to the country's national development plan and integrated into the operations and culture of government institutions".***

- The vision of the leadership within the country;
- An enabling environment for an M&E system to develop and function;
- The capacity to supply and analyze M&E information—technical capacity to measure, evaluate and analyze performance and provide credible and timely information; and, ➤



- ■ The capacity within the system to demand and use M&E information—key users include government institutions, ministries, citizens, media, and other stakeholders.

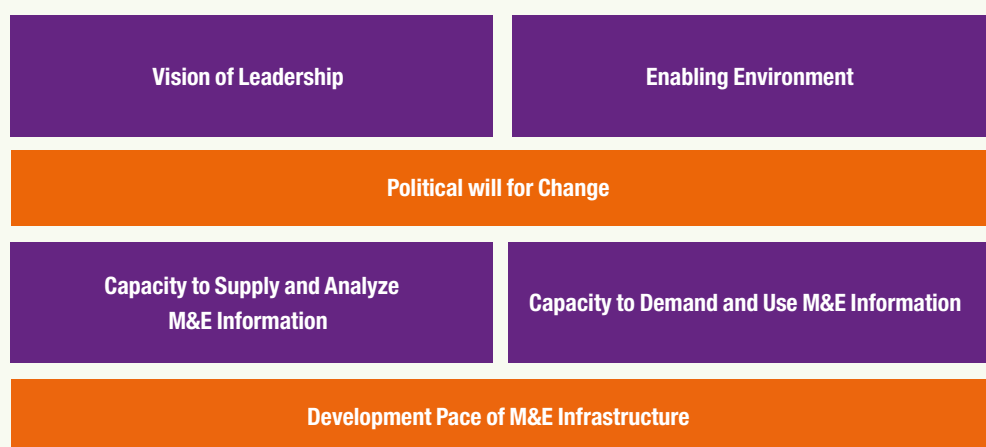
Political support is an essential driver to launch and fund the NMES exercise; lead needed change in organizational culture; provide NMES champion(s); ensure an enabling environment; deflect resistance to M&E and the changes it might imply; and help ensure long-term sustainability of the NMES. However, the successful development of an NMES takes more than political will. Even with a resource commitment to invest in M&E development, there may be technical hurdles that require a lengthy process to put in place and develop credible data systems. In addition, it takes time to train monitoring specialists and evaluators and educate managers throughout the system on how and where M&E information will be used. This is generally a lengthy and iterative process, as the experiences of most countries using M&E systems confirm, and one where allowance for continuous learning and improvement through oversight mechanisms is particularly beneficial to the improvement of the NMES.

Historically, efforts in many countries have been directed at improving the supply of M&E information, though most often in the context of individual projects or priority sectors such as health or education, but generally not in a comprehensive fashion inherent in an NMES. Further, the demand for or use of M&E information has often been linked primarily to funding or reporting requirements from donors or international agencies—for example, requirements of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) funding or Millennium Development Goal (MDG) progress reporting. In other words, M&E systems, where they have existed, have often been piecemeal and not necessarily aligned with the broader set of a country's national development goals. Additionally, the NMESs quite likely are missing many key institutional components and the infrastructure needed to make them both national in scope as well as sustainable.

While each country is unique and faces its own challenges in “growing” an NMES, implicit in the framework of Figure 1 are some important considerations for NMES development:

- A broad set of players needs to be involved in NMES development ►►

**Figure 1: Four Essential Building Blocks for an Effective NMES**



- for it to be both effective and sustainable.
- The goal is not simply to create an M&E capability, but to use performance/evaluative information to improve public sector management and governance. As such, a capability within government is being created to both generate (that is, supply) performance information as well as to use performance information in decision-making by government managers.
- The use of (or demand for) M&E information will function if there are effective incentives built into the system.
- Training and development is required for both technical analysts as well as nontechnical managers in government—these are the eventual users of the M&E information who will need to understand how and where M&E information can help them in the management of their programs and policies. Senior and political officials need sufficient M&E knowledge so that they grasp the importance of the NMES in achieving the high-order goals of accountability, results-based management (RBM), and sound governance for the country.

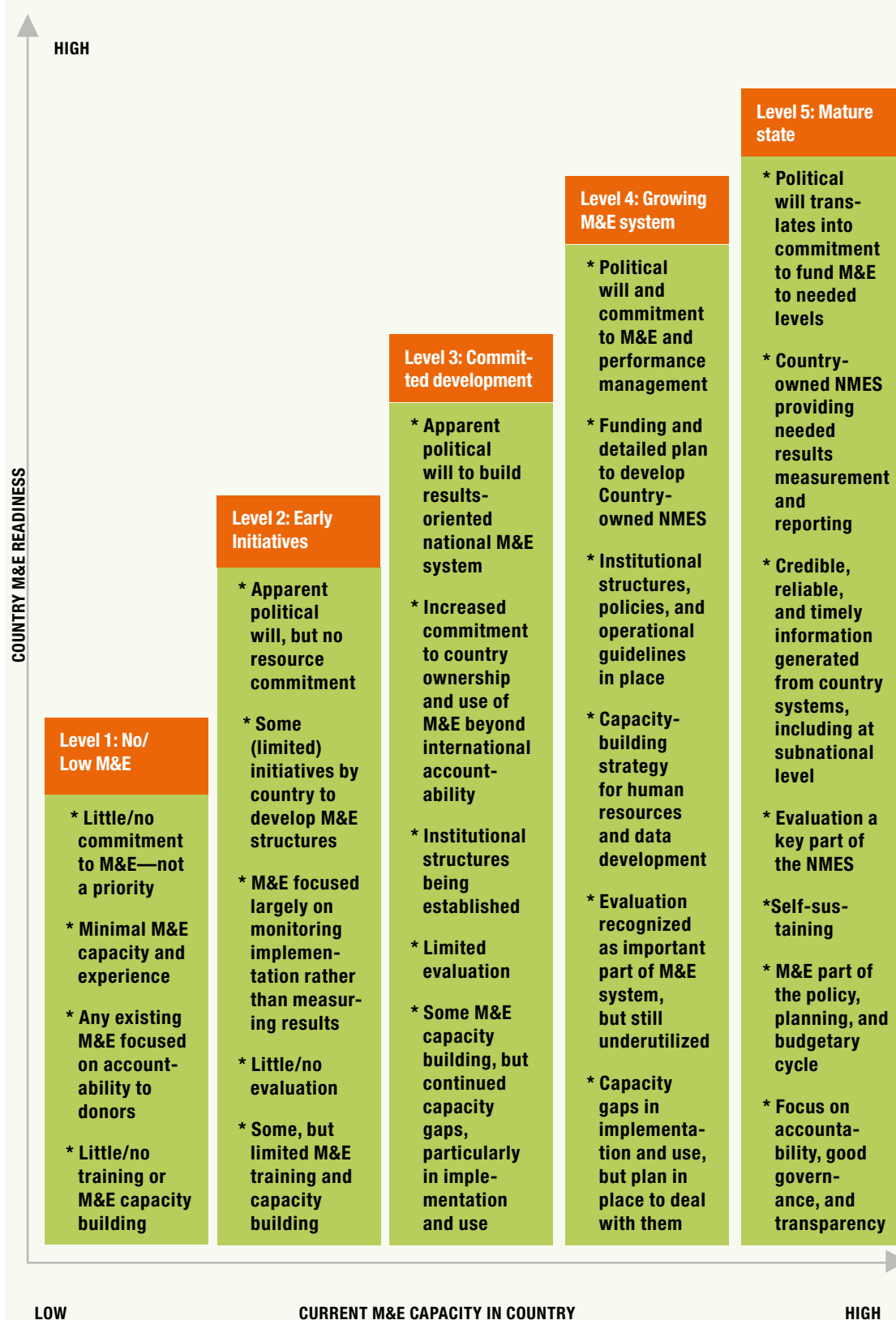
### The importance of understanding the current level of NMES development in a country

The four building blocks in Figure 1 represent the foundation of a country's NMES. Countries are at different stages/levels of development of what might be considered their national M&E system—everything from essentially no NMES to a point of having an effective and sustainable NMES (regardless of what it looks like), and everything in between.

International experience has shown that national M&E capacity development is an iterative process, generally developed

incrementally, sometimes in a piecemeal manner, and, not uncommonly, with false starts (Mackay 2007). For illustrative purposes, Figure 2 shows what might be considered a *continuum* in the development of the four building blocks that comprise a nationally-owned M&E system. In broad (and simplistic) terms, Figure 2 shows five levels of NMES development. In between the two end states—that is, level 1 with no or low M&E, and level 5 with a “mature state”—there could be even more than three levels or stages of NMES development. And, as noted above, movement along the continuum, from one level to another, is not necessarily linear. It is still useful though to adopt a framework to assess where a country might be situated in terms of its NMES development and, from the perspective of the international community, consider what this might imply in terms of developing or supporting an appropriate NMES capacity-building strategy and action plan.

While each country is unique in how far and how fast it may roll out their national M&E capability (and indeed, how that may be institutionalized), under the new paradigm, countries share the broad goal of developing an effective and sustainable NMES, centered around national ownership and M&E that is linked to the national vision of the country, accountability, and good governance. It is important, however, to recognize that a country with a weak basis for an NMES (as determined through an M&E Diagnostic) likely needs a capacity-building strategy somewhat different than a country with much stronger NMES capacity, that is, a country further along the continuum. The framework can help in devising a more comprehensive and country-specific strategy for NMES development than a generic strategy that focuses primarily on training country officials, in the absence of institutional changes and infrastructure development. ►►

**Figure 2: Key Stages and Drivers to Reach Mature NMES Status**

## ► NMES development in selected African countries

The framework of Figures 1 and 2 was applied to five African countries: Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia, Mauritania, and Senegal. Figure 3 shows where each country is situated on the NMES development continuum, based on an assessment of the development of each of the four NMES building blocks for each country. While the assignment of countries to a particular level is not an exact science, the relative placement of the five countries in relation to each other is likely close to an accurate depiction. A sixth African country, South Africa, is included in Figure 3 for comparative purposes. While South Africa was not a part of this analysis, there is considerable documented and public information about the state and development of South Africa's NMES from which to determine its relative placement along the continuum.

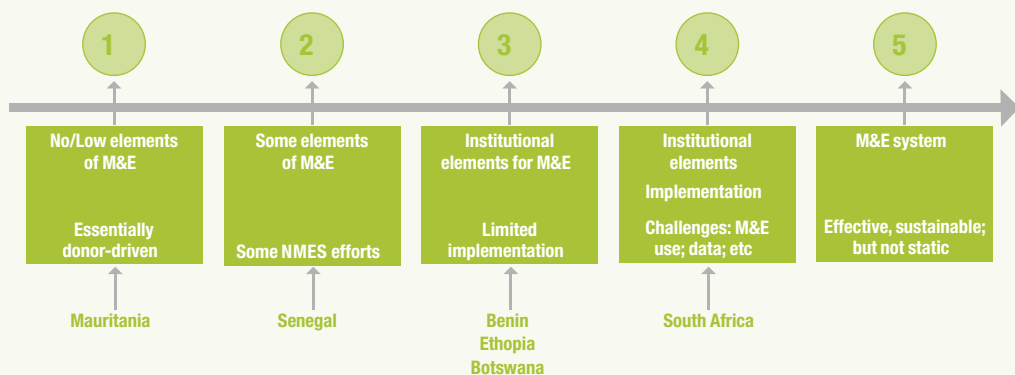
An assessment of M&E capacity and identification of capacity gaps was conducted for each country and examined specific factors aligned with each of the four NMES building blocks. CLEAR (2013) provides a detailed discussion of the assessment's findings for Benin, Mauritania, and Senegal.<sup>3</sup> In examining the NMES building blocks and sub-factors, a pattern of development emerges, both within individual countries and across countries.

It would seem apparent that NMES development must start with the vision of country leadership, which provides not

***"Institutionalizing M&E may indeed require some form of public sector reform, including national planning and budget decision making".***

only adequate space to allow development of the NMES, but also demonstrates commitment to fund and develop a national M&E system. With this commitment, and often with the support or encouragement of international development partners, the focus quickly turns to training country officials to build capacity to supply M&E information. However, the capacity-building process may slow down or take considerably longer than anticipated by senior officials, largely because of the need to clarify and establish institutional arrangements, roles, and responsibilities of the various actors within the system. Institutionalizing M&E may indeed require some form of public sector reform, including national planning and budget decision making. In all level 3 countries examined, establishing the appropriate institutional ►►

**Figure 3: Selected African Countries on the NMES Development Continuum**





► arrangements so that the generation of M&E information is a normal course of doing business, has proven to be a lengthy exercise—and one that likely does not get enough attention.

Another important area of NMES development that clearly gets too little attention is developing the capacity to use M&E information within the particular country. The experience of the five selected countries suggests that this may be due to several factors:

- Less attention is focused on information use, including how to build necessary incentives into the system to encourage/force use of M&E information in planning, management, and decision making in government.
- A vision for using M&E information is often narrow in scope and may derive largely from the historical need to satisfy accountability and reporting requirements of international agencies (for purposes of PRSP, MDG progress, and so forth); there is valuable use but insufficient to support the broad needs of good governance and RBM.
- In the five selected countries, there have been problems with the quality of information generated by the M&E systems. These problems derive in part from fundamental problems with data in general and the need for national data development plans.
- There may be potential roadblocks arising from historical perceptions of M&E in general, and evaluation in particular, as being a threatening control-type function that serves largely to criticize. In other words, officials are often not appreciating the knowledge-generating and learning aspects associated with evaluation as a tool of the NMES.

The other development aspect shown in Figure 1 relates to various institutional elements that help enable NMES success and sustainability in a country—such factors as the existence of a national statistics agency (NSA), a systematic planning function in government, oversight bodies such as parliament and a national audit office (NAO), and others. Their development may be on a separate track from NMES development, due to, for example, the various initiatives to develop and improve the NSA in each of the level 3 countries examined. But the NSA (and data) development needs to be linked to NMES development. It must quickly be emphasized though that they are not the same thing,<sup>4</sup> there is a correlation between the two. If a high priority is given to NMES development, priority also needs to be given to data development, along with associated statistical and analytical expertise. Similarly, the relationship between NMES development and other enablers needs to be recognized and fostered.

### M&E capacity gaps/challenges: countries at different levels of NMES development

In examining NMES development in the five selected countries, it should not be surprising that in level 1 and 2 countries there are fundamental needs and M&E challenges across *all four* building blocks. But what is perhaps surprising is that, even for countries well along the NMES continuum (countries at level 3 in this analysis), there are fundamental elements of the NMES development process that still represent challenges and capacity gaps. For the three level 3 performers in the sample though, the nature of the M&E issues and challenges are more subtle. In other words, it should not be assumed that some of the fundamental capacity building—for example, ►

► raising awareness and understanding of M&E among senior officials—is less important for these countries. Despite being at different levels of NMES development, there are still common M&E capacity challenges that each country in this sample faces. Where they likely differ is in the intensity of the challenge and appropriate intervention, given that, in some countries, there is a virtual absence or limited acceptance of M&E, while in other countries, M&E capacity development (in some form or other) has been ongoing for some period of time.

Listed below are key M&E issues/challenges observed to be common to all five countries examined:

- Awareness and understanding of M&E roles and uses
  - Need to raise awareness/understanding of the various roles and uses of an NMES to improve governance and management decision making,
  - Clarify what is meant by a national M&E system to increase understanding and buy-in at both the political and institutional level,
  - Weak culture and understanding of evaluation and its importance to an NMES.
- Institutional arrangements for M&E
  - Where M&E units exist, key capacity challenges also exist—such as inadequate resources and too few trained staff,
  - Lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities and limited harmonization/coordination of various M&E efforts,
  - Little/no institutionalization of evaluation—no systematic evaluation of government programs and policies.
- Human resource expertise
  - Too few officials trained in M&E, high turnover, and lack of evaluation expertise,
  - Little or no local training in M&E,
  - Too little practical M&E training and common understanding of M&E tools and methods.
- Data issues
  - Need to improve reliability, quality, completeness, and accessibility of data,
  - Too little sub-national data,
  - Sector data not always consistent with central data sources,
  - Too few data experts and analysts, often high turnover.
- Use of M&E within government
  - Potential for increasing the use of M&E in ministries and central government, but many challenges,
  - No evaluation of programs or policies and no link to policy/program development (exceptions may be internationally-funded projects).
- Performance measurement and reporting
  - Not enough/challenges in focusing on results (outputs and outcomes),
  - Common problems—no data to populate indicators, inappropriate indicators, poor quality data, too little analysis, timely release of reports.
- Functions/institutions that help enable NMES development
  - NSAs—challenges include not enough trained staff, data reliability, inadequate analysis, nor processing, ►►

- ▶ storing, accessing, and harmonization of data collection,
  - Planning functions—M&E not always well linked to or integrated into planning,
  - Oversight agencies (for example, the NAOs) key focus often on audit, control, and fight against corruption, which can negatively influence the perception of M&E and performance management,
  - Civil society organizations (CSOs)—not always clear who speaks for civil society or what influence they may have.

### Implications for devising an appropriate NMES capacity-building strategy

It should be noted that the set of common M&E issues identified above, and capacity gaps observed across the five selected countries cover all four NMES building blocks. Where they tend to differ from one country to another is in intensity level, and therefore the appropriate responses will differ by country. In general terms, observations from the five countries suggest that a distinction needs to be made between level 1, level 2 countries and level 3 countries. This is particularly important when examining appropriate strategies and potential initiatives to support NMES capacity building.

Potential initiatives to be built into a strategy to support NMES capacity building in countries at each of the three levels is discussed in more detail in Lahey (2015)<sup>5</sup>, examining initiatives under four broad categories, each with a variety of specific activities:

- training and human resource development;
- advising/facilitating the institutionalization of NMES;

- supporting evaluation capacity building; and
- supporting the development of key NMES enablers.

### Conclusion

Regardless of where a country may lie on the NMES continuum, it needs a strategy and action plan for NMES development if improvements are to be made—one that clearly articulates and assigns roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities along with milestones that establish expectations in terms of the pace and level of improvement. Monitoring its development and implementation in effect amounts to applying the concepts of M&E—both the learning and accountability aspects—to help grow and improve the NMES. Indeed, this is good practice at all levels of NMES development.

As an NMES matures, this level of oversight—addressing capacity gaps and identifying an appropriate strategy for building, enhancing, and modifying the NMES—implies being able to objectively assess the state, acceptance, and utilization of the current version of the NMES. This in itself could be threatening to officials aligned with NMES efforts. Nonetheless, without the knowledge of what is working and what is not (and why not), an appropriate capacity-building strategy will not be well informed nor address any issues critical to NMES effectiveness and sustainability.

Finally, it should be noted that these observations reinforce the importance of conducting an M&E Diagnostic as a prerequisite to determining an appropriate M&E capacity-building strategy. But even more, this note underscores the importance of addressing the fundamental issues of NMES development, even for countries that may appear to be further along the NMES continuum.

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## Endnotes

1. This article updates and draws on a longer paper that appeared in the 'Special Series on the Nuts & Bolts of M&E Systems', World Bank, Washington, DC: April 2015.
2. The NMES framework is further elaborated in Lahey (2013) and Lahey (2014).
3. Robert Lahey assisted the World Bank's CLEAR M&E Center serving Francophone Africa in Senegal in the study of Benin, Senegal and Mauritania, conducted over 2012–13 (CLEAR 2013). He led a formal M&E Readiness Assessment and NMES strategy development for Botswana's National Strategy Office and the World Bank in 2013-2014, with follow-up assessment of national M&E capacity as part of the 2016 evaluation of Botswana's Vision 2016. In 2014, Lahey led an M&E Diagnostic for Ethiopia's National Planning Commission and the African Development Bank.
4. While data serve as a critical element/input to enable an NMES, it needs to be emphasized that the NMES is not simply a mechanism to generate data. The NMES links information sets together and within a particular context to provide analysis, knowledge, and advice that facilitate critical thinking and evidence-based decision making.
5. See also CLEAR (2013) for a more complete discussion of potential initiatives to include in capacity-building strategies for countries at each of three levels.

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## Author's profile

**Robert Lahey** was the founding head of the Canada's Centre of Excellence for Evaluation, the Canadian government's evaluation policy center. He has headed evaluation units in several Canadian agencies. Since establishing his own consulting firm in 2004, he has advised many countries, international agencies and organizations around the world on building M&E capacity appropriate to their circumstances. He has written and presented extensively to the international M&E community on national monitoring and evaluation capacity building. Robert is a Fellow of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), a member of CES Credentialing Board, and has been recognized by the CES for his contribution to the theory and practice of evaluation in Canada.



# The Emergence of Government Evaluation Systems in Africa: The Case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa

*Evaluation is not widespread in Africa, particularly evaluations instigated by governments rather than donors. However, since 2007, an important policy experiment is emerging in South Africa, Benin and Uganda, which have all implemented national evaluation systems. These three countries, along with CLEAR Anglophone Africa and Independent Development Evaluation at the African Development Bank, are partners in a pioneering African partnership called Twende Mbele, funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Hewlett Foundation, aiming to jointly strengthen monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and work with other countries to develop M&E capacity and share experiences.*

**Ian Goldman, Twende Mbele**

**N**ational Evaluation Systems (NES) which encapsulate monitoring and evaluation have developed in advanced economies since the 1980s and are perceived as an important means of improving performance in the public sector. Since the 1990s NES have developed in Latin America and from 2007 in Africa (Benin), and Uganda and South Africa in 2011. Evaluation in particular has been seen as a route to strengthening effectiveness, efficiency and impact, as well as accountability of government policies and programmes

In 2011 an informal partnership and dialogue emerged as Benin, Uganda and South Africa realised they were on similar trajectories in developing an NES. Leveraging this informal partnership, the Department for International Development (DFID) agreed to support these countries through a peer learning programme, Twende Mbele, to promote the use of M&E as a tool for improving government performance and accountability in Africa.

Initial Twende Mbele partners were Benin, Uganda, South Africa, CLEAR AA and Independent Development Evaluation at the AfDB. This partnership started formally in January 2016 and involved collaboration, capacity development and sharing of experience with other African countries. In 2017 the Hewlett Foundation also started funding Twende Mbele. This article seeks to document the situation with M&E in these countries at an early stage of the

partnership, and the lessons emerging at this stage.

### **An emerging analytical framework**

Literature on NES remains predominantly authored by Western scholars, creating a challenge in finding useful frameworks within existing literature that speaks to emerging evaluation trends in an African context. One such framework by Holvoet and Renard (2007) however applies to a developing country context, where poverty-reduction efforts are the focus. This framework illustrates the key features of an effective NES and is centred on the dimensions of state construction as these systems in Africa tend to still be fairly nascent in their development. Figure 1 shows the adapted version used in this article.

The elements in Holvoet and Renard's framework are sixfold, with each having a distinct public sector rubric:

- The first element is *policy*, which suggests the presence of an evaluation *plan*, a clear differentiation between the roles of monitoring versus evaluation, a system that seeks to ensure *autonomy and impartiality* of the evaluators and one that puts *feedback* into use and into *planning and budgeting*.
- The second element is *methodology* which includes selection of ►

- *indicators*, how evaluations are *selected* and *priorities* established, whether there is some form of programme theory or *causal chain* in the programmes, and in the evaluations, which *methodologies* are used and how *data* are collected.

- The third element focuses on organization. Factors suggested include *coordination* of the system, the role of the *national statistical office*, *line ministries* and *decentralized levels of government* and how the system links with projects.

- Capacity makes up the fourth element, factors include *acknowledgement of the problem* and possession of a *capacity-building plan*.

- The fifth element, *participation of actors outside government*, is a key differentiator to other systems, this includes *Parliament*, *civil society* and *donors*. This is important for accountability and, where donors are important, integrating donors into the system.

- *Quality* makes up the last element, this factor the quality of the product and process and how the products and services feeds into *use* internally and externally.

### Emerging findings regarding national evaluation systems

The emerging findings on Benin, Uganda and South Africa show that all three countries have developed responses in most of the six elements of an NES. With regard to national evaluations, South Africa has undertaken a larger number of evaluations (56 as of December 2016–Uganda 23; Benin 15), reflecting the greater ability of the government to fund evaluations. Further, the scope of the evaluations differs - Benin's evaluations in particular are at the policy rather than the programme level, therefore covering a broader scope, but in less depth.

### Policy

All three countries have a national evaluation policy. In South Africa, this was ►►

**Figure 1: Six characteristics of an effective national evaluation system (Genesis 2016).**

|   |                                            |                            |                                |                           |                      |                                  |                 |
|---|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | POLICY                                     | The Evaluation Plan        | M VS. E                        | Autonomy and Impartiality | Feedback             | Alignment Planning and Budgeting |                 |
| 2 | METHODOLOGY                                | Selection of indicators    | Selection Criteria             | Priority Setting          | Causality Chain      | Methodologies Used               | Data Collection |
| 3 | ORGANIZATION                               | Coordination and Oversight | Statistical Office             | Line Ministries           | Decentralized Levels | Link with Projects               |                 |
| 4 | CAPACITY                                   | Problem Acknowledged       | Capacity Building Plan         |                           |                      |                                  |                 |
| 5 | PARTICIPATION OF ACTORS OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT | Parliament                 | Civil Society                  | Donors                    |                      |                                  |                 |
| 6 | QUALITY                                    | Effective use of M&E       | Internal Usage of M&E Findings |                           |                      |                                  |                 |

Source: Holvoet and Renard (2007).

► developed prior to developing the NES; in Benin and Uganda both countries were in the process of implementing a national system before ‘developing a policy’. All three developed an evaluation agenda or plan to prioritize evaluations for each year.

The evaluation system is differentiated from monitoring, and in all three cases mechanisms for promoting autonomy and impartiality have been developed, including the important role of the central unit in managing the interface between supply and demand from central policy units. All use independent service providers for reasons of independence. All countries have a system for dissemination, but this can be enhanced to widen knowledge of evaluation results. There is still a challenge to build the links between evaluation with planning and budgeting, although in 2016 the budget papers in South Africa included a section on the results of evaluations, an important move forward.

## Methodology

The methodology of the NES, that is, the main architecture for the system is summarised in Table 1. Selection in all cases is around government priorities. In some cases, this is a top-down decision (e.g. Benin, Uganda), whereas in South Africa there is a mix of bottom-up proposals from departments and strategic proposals from the DPME and National Treasury. In all three countries, most evaluations undertaken are process and implementation evaluations, which have a more rapid feedback into policy. In most cases, theories of change (ToC) and logframes are developed retrospectively against which the evaluation is conducted.

## Organization

All three Twende partner countries have centrally located units within the Presidency or Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). There are decentralized M&E units in departments ►

**Table 1: Comparing methodology elements across the three countries.**

| Components                                                         | Benin                                                                                      | Uganda                                                                                         | South Africa                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Clear selection criteria</b>                                    | Yes. In line with development priority. Bureau of Evaluation and National Evaluation Board | Criteria for selection of evaluations robust and executed by the Evaluation Sub-Committee      | Yes. Priorities set for evaluation plans at all levels                                                      |
| <b>Programmes/policies being evaluated have a programme theory</b> | They have a logframe. ToC not common. Retrospective development of theory of change        | Some logframes. Some newer programmes have ToC. In all cases, evaluation teams develop the ToC | Being introduced through the evaluation system. All evaluations now develop ToCs                            |
| <b>Type of evaluations</b>                                         | 14 implementation/ process evaluations, 1 impact                                           | Implementation, 4 process evaluations and 3 impact evaluations                                 | 45 implementations (process, some summative), 8 impact, 5 diagnostic, 1 economic (DPME 2017a)               |
| <b>Methodologies well identified and mutually integrated</b>       | Guideline developed in 2017                                                                | Evaluation methodology proposed by evaluation team and verified by the Sub-committee           | A series of guidelines elaborate the system. In general, a theory-based evaluation system is being promoted |

Source: Authors' compilation

► and agencies in South Africa and Benin, but these are emergent at ministry level in Uganda's case. Few of these departmental M&E Units have the capacity to support evaluations and ways are being sought to take forward evaluations where there is limited capacity (see Table 2).

In terms of coordination with donor M&E, donors are integrated with the system in Uganda, contributing to a basket of funding, and in Benin many evaluations are funded by donors. In South Africa, donors are rarer, and so not integral to the national M&E system.

### Capacity

Benin (BEPP, 2010) and Uganda have undertaken some skills assessment of their respective technical staffs, but not South Africa. South Africa has developed competences for evaluators and government staff who manage evaluations. One emerging way to address capacity challenges are peer learning forums

or communities of practice for sharing of the 'how to' and 'what works'. All three countries are currently engaged in a diagnostic of their supply and demand of evaluators through Twende Mbele.

Another capacity issue is that of policy-makers and their ability to use evaluation reports. As part of an advocacy campaign to promote use of M&E, South Africa has run a series of courses for top levels managers. In all cases, there could be greater formalization of the identification of capacity needs and this is planned in the Twende Mbele programme.

### Participation of actors outside the executive

There is a key role for the different players within the evaluation ecosystem, (e.g. universities who train evaluators and evaluation associations). For example, SAMEA and the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR) Anglophone Africa are participating in the Steering Committee for the ►

**Table 2: Organizational elements**

| Components                                                     | Benin                                                                                                 | Uganda                                                                                                           | South Africa                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Institutional structure for coordination and oversight</b>  | BEPPAG, Presidency. National Evaluation Board selects evaluations, and involves range of stakeholders | GEF in OPM National Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Working Group                                            | DPME 'owner' of system. Supported by Evaluation Technical Working Group involving national and provincial departments |
| <b>Evaluation and/or M&amp;E units in line ministries</b>      | All line ministries have own M&E system that links to Ministry of Planning                            | M&E Policy recommended creation of M&E units. OPM working with Ministry of Public Service to establish M&E units | All national and provincial departments have M&E units. Sector M&E units link vertically                              |
| <b>Evaluation and/or M&amp;E units at decentralized levels</b> | All line ministries have own M&E system that links to Ministry of Planning                            | M&E function is performed under planning units. Efforts underway to have specific evaluation staff               | All provinces have M&E units, but connection on M&E not systematic with national.                                     |
| <b>Methodologies well identified and mutually integrated</b>   | In the Ministry of Planning                                                                           | M&E Department relates with the donor economists group, and the Donor Partnership Forum                          | Donors do not play a big role and so focus is on the government                                                       |

Source: Data from Government partners

► evaluation of the NES in South Africa. In Benin, civil society is part of the National Evaluation Board (NEB).

In South Africa and Uganda, there is a systematic engagement with Parliament on the results of evaluations (see Table 3). This is starting in Benin. In Uganda and Benin, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are involved through committees in the selection and oversight of evaluations. Other key actors include universities who deliver some of the capacity development work and may also bid for undertaking evaluations.

### Quality and use

All three countries have a focus on ensuring the use of evaluations, sharing findings through workshops with stakeholders and senior management

and a formal process of submitting the recommendations to ministries – however, all countries are looking at how to strengthen this aspect.

In all three countries, the results of evaluations are presented to Cabinet, which gives weight to implementation. There is a formal follow-up process in Uganda and South Africa with some form of improvement plan generated after the evaluation to indicate how recommendations will be implemented. In South Africa, there can be a tension with these improvement plans being treated by departments as a compliance exercise. It is most important that departments want to do the evaluations, and so want to develop and implement improvement plans. Work is going on currently in all three countries to strengthen this aspect. ►

**Table 3: Comparing participation by stakeholders across the three countries.**

|                                      | Benin                                                                                                              | Uganda                                                                                                                                                                                                 | South Africa                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Role of Parliament in M&amp;E</b> | Now working to develop the collaboration                                                                           | Summary of evaluations presented to Parliamentary Committee on Budget (PACOB) and Committee on Presidential Affairs. Directorate also works closely with Parliament on APNODE                          | All evaluations sent to relevant committees. Chairs briefed on the role of evaluation. Study tours run with Appropriations Committee. Limited engagement with APNODE |
| <b>Role of civil society</b>         | CSOs represented in National Evaluation Board, which plays a role in all evaluations and dissemination of findings | CSOs engaged through National M&E Technical Working Group; Evaluation Sub-Committee and Uganda Evaluation Association which works closely with the Directorate on capacity-building and on evaluations | No systematic role for civil society -often on steering committees. Collaboration with SAMEA                                                                         |
| <b>Role of donors</b>                | Donors have funded all evaluations. Sometimes participate in validation process                                    | Donors funded most evaluations through GEF. Donors engaged through National M&E Technical Working Group; Evaluation Sub-Committee; National Partnership Forum; Local Development Partner Group         | Donors have funded parts of the system but do not participate.                                                                                                       |

**Source:** Data from government partners. African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE); CSO, Civil Society Organization; SA, South Africa



## ► The emerging lessons

As evaluation widens in Africa, including through the support of Twende Mbele, there are emerging lessons which can be harnessed in supporting this roll out.

A key feature of the three countries is that a central unit in the Presidency or OPM was given the mandate to *lead* the evaluation system and so has the authority to take the system forward. This ensures significant political will to make an evaluation system work. Even where there are a few staff in the central unit (Benin), there has been an ability to leverage resources to get evaluations happening and an NES in place.

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***"As evaluation widens in Africa, including through the support of Twende Mbele, there are emerging lessons which can be harnessed in supporting this roll out".***

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Initial lessons include the importance of a central unit to drive the evaluation system, developing a national evaluation policy, prioritizing evaluations through an evaluation agenda or plan, and taking evaluation to subnational levels. These lessons are being used to support other countries seeking to establish national evaluation systems, such as Ghana, Kenya and Niger.

Having the *policy* in advance (as South Africa did) does not seem necessary although there needs to be some definition of how the system will work, how it will provide for impartiality, etc. Other countries such as Niger, Kenya and Ghana have developed or are developing national evaluation policies and will add their

learning to the experiences of South Africa, Benin and Uganda in doing so.

Given limited resources and capacity, all three countries have started their respective NESs with priority national-level evaluations expressed in an evaluation plan or agenda using donor resources where needed but driving the agenda themselves. This is important if evaluation is to become part of countries' strategic agendas, not just imposed by donors.

Evaluation systems are extending beyond the national level; in South Africa to provincial level and Benin is keen to extend its evaluation system to municipal levels. South Africa now has some outstanding examples of provincial evaluation plans, with province alone having done 23 provincial evaluations. Progressively developing these systems is essential, while demonstrating what can be done and building interest in governments and with wider stakeholders.

In terms of *evaluation type*, sometimes there is an emphasis on impact evaluations (particularly through donor influence), however, in practice all countries are predominantly using implementation evaluations looking at what is working and why. These are less technically complex and can be done with local capacity, and quicker to undertake and feed back into policy or future programmes. Twende Mbele is also looking at sharing and adapting some rapid evaluation tools, that may be better suited to the policy implementation cycle.

In terms of *methodology*, theory-based evaluation is one way that evaluation can be undertaken even where there are data deficiencies, and thereby assisting where the underlying programme logic may well not have been well. The three countries are moving to using theory of change and logic models as a core element of the process. In this way, countries are adapting Western models of evaluation to local realities. ►►

► *Participation* of non-state actors differs. In South Africa, there has been more of a focus on the executive, rather than Parliament or non-state actors. In the other two countries, the role of NGOs and donors in promoting civil society has been stronger. In all cases, the main involvement of the private sector is as consultants undertaking commissioned evaluation, or in some cases being part of evaluation steering committees, for example, for evaluations of business incentives in South Africa. Twende Mbele is starting some research on where involvement of csos can strengthen national M&E systems which is likely to result in some pilots of specific interventions. This can be important in providing different viewpoints, enhancing accountability and keeping pressure on implementation of the recommendations of evaluations.

Benin, Uganda and South Africa are seeking to involve Parliament which will likely strengthen their use of M&E in their oversight roles. The African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE) has a potentially important role in stimulating the demand of African parliaments around the use of M&E, and Twende Mbele will also be funding training of Parliamentarians and the development of oversight tools.

The key challenges facing these three NESs are:

- A stronger focus on monitoring than on evaluation, and a lack of acceptance of and resistance to evaluation. Evaluation is often seen as an accountability tool rather than as a tool for learning.
- A funding challenge because evaluation is seen as secondary to programme implementation and monitoring.
- A lack of evaluator and government staff evaluation capacity.

- Ensuring that evaluations are followed-up and recommendations are implemented.

Constrained budgets are also a key challenge. Countries like Benin and Uganda, for example, show that when government budgets are very constrained, donor resources can be harnessed in ways where the agenda is set by government, even if the predominant funding for the evaluations themselves comes from donors. Uganda's use of a 'basket

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***"Initial lessons include the importance of a central unit to drive the evaluation system, developing a national evaluation policy, prioritizing evaluations through an evaluation agenda or plan, and taking evaluation to subnational levels".***

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of funding' from donors and government also means that there is not necessarily one donor having influence on one evaluation.

A big challenge faced by all countries is capacity – the capacity of evaluators in the country to conduct evaluations and the capacity in government to commission, undertake, manage and use evaluations. Until training in evaluation becomes more widespread, this will be a major constraint. This is a key role that CLEAR AA is playing in the region and a major area of intervention of Twende Mbele.

Another challenge is *follow-up*. The central agencies such as OPM in Uganda

play a big role in ensuring that evaluations are implemented successfully. However, responsibility shifts to the implementing departments during the implementation phase. All three countries are seeking some way to hold these departments to account for implementing the recommendations, but much work is still needed on how to ensure that the intrinsic motivation is in place to address the findings, that suitable mechanisms are in place to track implementation and to engage in conversations about how to ensure effective implementation. There is an important role for Parliaments and csos in holding departments to account for implementing these improvement plans.

## Conclusion

Since 2010, Benin, Uganda and South Africa have undertaken a significant effort to mainstream evaluations in the

work of government, in very differing political situations and with differing resource constraints.

These systems have to reflect local realities and challenges as mentioned above. There is considerable local innovation in how to establish these systems, and adaptive management as these systems develop – an example of ‘Made in Africa’ rather than mimicry of the West. In terms of use, there is evidence of a significant portion of evaluations having recommendations implemented and we are beginning to see examples of integration with the budget process. We see an emerging process of innovation and piloting, building capacity, and with an ongoing need for political will to ensure use of evaluation findings. The peer learning approach has already enhanced these systems, and the resources being made available through the Twende Mbele programme provide an opportunity to deepen this and to expand evaluation to other countries in Africa.

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## Author's profile

### Ian Goldman

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Ian has worked for 38 years on issues of rural development, decentralization, sustainable livelihoods approaches, community-driven development, and action learning, including a range of planning, evaluation and research work. He has worked in 18 countries in Africa, Europe and Latin America, and with national, provincial and local government, as well as in the NGO and SME sectors. He is an acting deputy director general in South Africa's Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), where he is leading South Africa's national evaluation system and DPME's involvement in research. Ian is also a Commissioner of the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) and founding Chair of the African M&E Partnership, Twende Mbele.

# South-South Cooperation to Evaluate Public Policies and Programs in Latin America

*These past years, a series of activities in results-based budgeting and evaluation in Latin America led to a collaboration between different Latin American institutions among which the Ministries of Planning of Uruguay, Colombia and Costa Rica and the Ministries of Finance of Peru and Paraguay. This collaboration is evaluation-oriented and aims at public policy improvement. This article provides an overview of the collaboration between these countries and looks at how it is linked to local evaluation supply and demand using the South-South cooperation model.*

**Miguel Angel Lombardo, PhD (Political Science - University Complutense, Madrid)**

### Different paths to the institutionalization of evaluation

**F**ROM 2014 to present, a series of activities in results-based budgeting and evaluation have been developed by Latin American Ministries of Finances and Planning involved in program budgeting. These have been under the umbrella of the regional program EUROSociAL, funded by the European Union and managed by an international consortium led by the Spanish agency, International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies – (FIIAPP). Although evaluation was part of the process to improve budgeting tools and the planning process, activities to enhance capacities in the evaluation systems did not arise at the first stage, but later. However, evaluation was essential to the planning process and therefore eventually contributed to the formation of a collaborative group between these institutions. Participating institutions came from different countries, with Uruguay, Colombia and Costa Rica by way of their Ministries of Planning, whereas in the case of Peru and Paraguay, via their Ministries of Finance. In some cases the mandate for evaluation came directly from the Presidency of the Republic, whereas in other cases it was guided by the internal budgeting control. However, the overall group vision is

anchored in public policy improvement and oriented to evaluation.

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***"After four years, evidence shows that the concept of institutionalization within the group can build a common ground and subsequent effectiveness in dealing with a wide variety of challenges".***

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A key aspect to understanding the collaboration between these countries is how support required from international cooperation is linked to local evaluation supply and demand; there was not a pre-conceptualized system of evaluation, or a model to be replicated, even though within the region there were clearly agencies in some countries which in theory could play a leading role. Each country has its own features, its strengths and challenges, and they are all in the process of developing their own systems of evaluation. Therefore, when coming to common assumptions about the theory of change in these systems, institutionalization was the only mechanism that could unite different approaches into a single purpose. In the context of different needs and stakeholders – from six countries ➡

- plus the facilitating agency - the targets needed to be comprehensive enough to integrate common strategies and results.

After four years, evidence shows that the concept of institutionalization within the group can build a common ground and subsequent effectiveness in dealing with a wide variety of challenges. For example, in Paraguay, institutionalization means developing drivers-of-change within the public system to initiate the evaluation process. As a result of this process of improving capacities and facilitating evaluations in many areas of the government, the Paraguayan Ministry of Finances was recently applauded by the Inter-America Development Bank (IADB) for leading result-based budgeting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of their public programs.

In Costa Rica, whose system of evaluation is attached to the Presidency through the Ministry of Planning (MIDEPLAN), institutionalization is more about improving capacities to develop a national evaluation agenda as endorsed by the public sector and society; it also means to develop technical competencies in the public sector with the support of national and international experts. In Uruguay, the path to institutionalization comes through a process of capacity building which is extended to all Ministries and public agencies; it also creates evaluation standards to develop criteria for a systematic public approach, and a national evaluations catalogue where every public institution can share studies developed by them. For Colombia, with a more extended practice of evaluation from academia to public and private sectors, institutionalization means the use of evaluation to effectively make improvements in policies and programs. Lastly, in Ecuador, it means developing capacities in central institutions such as the planning secretary, or SENPLADES, in charge of developing a national State reform agenda.

By putting institutionalization as the priority objective and strategy, the Project has enabled a common perspective and promoted debate within the group.

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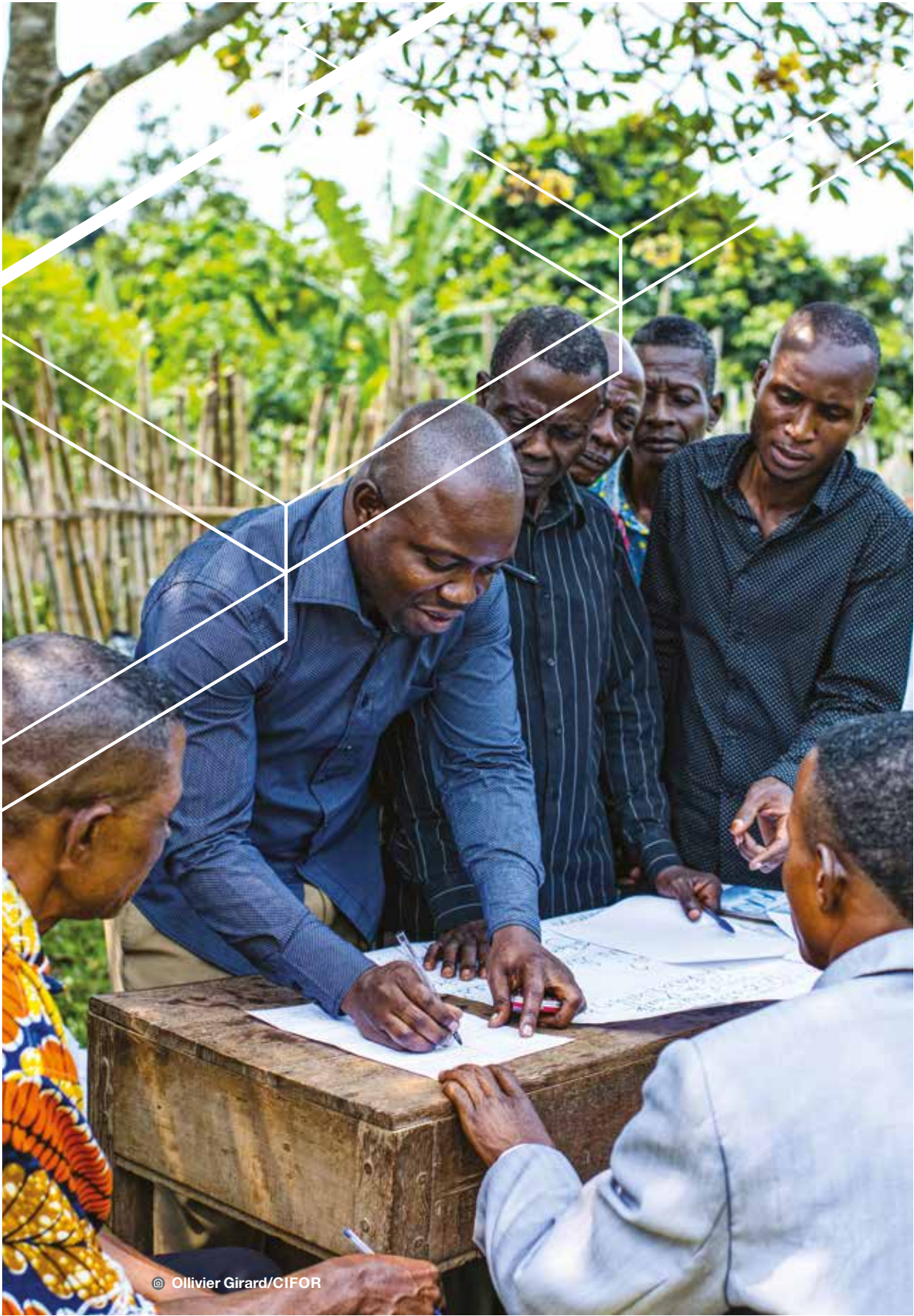
***"By putting institutionalization as the priority objective and strategy, the Project has enabled a common perspective and promoted debate within the group".***

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Frequent discussions allow each member to adapt timing/needs as needed with new ideas easily integrated, this is particularly helpful when addressing new administrations that often follow elections. Even if the political situation changes, which is natural in a multiyear context of cooperation, the technical staff related to evaluation, remains consistent, something not often assured in the public sector. Administrations can also benefit from this group in terms of empowerment, since it is important to be connected to an international and consolidated network of practitioners. However, this could be a challenge for other regions or countries where the stability of technical lines within the public sector are moderate or low.

### **Technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning and joint evaluations**

What started out as a process has now become a project, still supported by the European Union, but under the modality of the South-South Cooperation Project, with the FIAP as facilitator and the group of six countries making annual joint strategy decisions for planned and future activities. This prior relationship was essential, ►►



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► as helped to build trust among partners and consolidated a base for developing new activities in a more demanding framework. Since being formalized into a project, overall roles have not changed significantly, however group commitment has been strengthened with project developed management tools enriching the process, to include annual planning instruments, budgets, steering committee meetings, and others. Under the Project, three types of activities have been prioritized and initiated as of January 2017: technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning and joint evaluations.

Regarding technical assistance, each country can submit a list of demands to cover particular gaps in their systems or where international support can strengthen them. For instance, the Ministry of Planning in Uruguay has designed a plan to build national evaluation capacities in the public sector. With the support of the Project, it is expected that this plan will be reviewed and extended into additional phases to meet new demands. This experience would also be relevant to other countries where capacities are spread over different Ministries and agencies, and views and concepts on evaluation, even in the same system, could be different. It requires a harmonization of existent capacities, as well as the identification of strengths or weaknesses to be addressed.

Much work in the areas of peer-to-peer learning had already been developed within the group prior to the conceptualization of the Project. Most of these types of activities where in the form of workshops and study visits. For example, in July 2017, a workshop took place in Costa Rica to discuss and address the challenges around developing national evaluation agendas. This includes identifying the role of leaders in the definition of priorities, central and Ministry lines functions, and key stakeholder and society endorsements, such that study findings and

recommendations can be applied. For the South-South Cooperation Project, having a country specific national evaluation agenda becomes a key step to facilitate planning and coordination activities as well as a useful tool to identify issues which would be relevant for all participants.

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***"For the South-South Cooperation Project, having a country specific national evaluation agenda becomes a key step to facilitate planning and coordination activities as well as a useful tool to identify issues which would be relevant for all participants".***

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As a result of this, in 2017, gender equality was identified as a key area for support since it was a priority for many of the member's national agendas, to include policy evaluation, programs or projects. Another area of interest was climate change adaptation policies. This year, the group will begin the evaluation of risk prevention systems in Colombia and Ecuador, given the vulnerability of both countries to earthquakes, floods and other disasters. Similar problems and policies can also be found in other countries, with evaluation is being used to help develop approaches and indicators that can be used at the regional level.

In September of 2017, the Project initiated Costa Rica's Gender Policy Joint Evaluation, which has evolved in different phases since 2010. The evaluation is managed by FIIAPP and the six countries, and is being developed by the Latin America Faculty of Social Sciences – FLACSO, a regional academic institution selected through competitive bidding. The previous ►

► evaluation of the Colombian Gender Policy serves as a strong basis for the design of the Costa Rican policy, with lessons shared between the two countries and comparisons used to explain different hypothesis. This evaluation goes hand-in-hand with a peer-to-peer learning activity held in Colombia in January 2018, with the support of their National Planning Department, DNP - SINERGIA, where technicians and gender experts of three planning institutions in Ecuador, Costa Rica and Uruguay, will meet to discuss and follow up on the implementation of evaluation.

The group also met in November 2017 in Madrid to discuss new strategies and scenarios for the upcoming years and annual activity planning. This meeting was important for the prioritization of activities and to discuss the strategy to involve other stakeholders. Some of these issues are discussed in the following section.

### Connecting demand with supply: evaluation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

From the perspective of an international cooperation agency, the role of FIIAPP within the South-South Cooperation Project is to connect partner country demands with supply as found in international agendas and practices, syncing them to existing public expertise. In past international meetings on evaluation, particularly the National Evaluation Capacities (NEC) conference held by the UNDP in Istanbul in November 2017, and the Latin American Congress on Evaluation organized by RELAC and IDEAS and held in Guanajuato in December 2017, all participants and institutions highlighted the need to develop systems to monitor policies and programs in order to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. This new agenda carries specific challenges for

many Latin American countries as relates to evaluation in order to meet their international commitments. For some institutions, with consolidated systems of evaluation, monitoring and evaluating SDGs can represent an opportunity to review practices and rules that have already been implemented in their countries. For example, in the case of Mexico, who already hosts a multidimensional approach to poverty at the federal level, it includes a significant number of SDGs in their policies, programs and projects. However, for other countries, there is a challenge to establishing new M&E systems, developing baselines and indicators, and collecting data for each goal, as well as monitoring its relationships between goals. These imply the need to engage all Ministry lines and institutions in a coordinated effort to manage a holistic approach to the 2030 Agenda. In addition, meeting demands will require a set of activities ranging from technical assistance to peer-to-peer learning to either build or improve systems. This in itself creates great challenges as some of the capacities required for monitoring and evaluating SDGs are quite new.

SDG 1, for example, calls for the eradication of extreme poverty and halving poverty in all its forms. Some of the indicators can likely be captured through existent systems but others need to be developed, such as the eradication of social exclusion or material deprivation, most particularly as they must be disaggregated by age and/or sex, in order to capture how successful policies generate income as well as promote access to basic needs or, “leaving no one behind”. SDG 2 seeks to end hunger and malnutrition and ensure access to sufficient safe and nutritious food. This requires the promotion of sustainable production systems, ensuring the food market and access to market information. It requires therefore, an evaluation of adverse impacts on agricultural production and be able to capture indicators such as farmland bird populations, the ►►

► level of nitrates in groundwater, the use of fertilizers and other sources of ammonia emissions, or estimate the rate of soil erosion by water. All or some of this represents relatively new ground for evaluations and specialists in the arena, especially when promoting public policy expertise.

SDG 3, which targets ensuring good health and well-being, requires focus in areas such as health lifestyles, which includes objectives and subjective measurements of well-being, determinants to health, causes of death and access to health care. This will require innovative approaches ranging from traditional indicators such as life expectancy, or smoking prevalence, to new indicators such as self-perception of health, obesity rate and others which are not available in some countries. The same can be said for water, with quality and efficiency as new indicators that go beyond traditional forms of water measure, or employment that can include long unemployment rates. For the case of education or gender equality, relevant indicators on gender-based violence need to be developed, and gender gaps in employment, education and leadership positions should also be captured. In this vein, Ecuador will implement an evaluation on gender-based violence in 2018 with support of the Project. It is expected that the design of this evaluation will reflect on practices and dimensions developed by Colombia and Costa Rica in 2017 for the evaluation of similar gender policies.

In terms of reducing inequalities between and within countries, or on the subject of migrations and inclusion of new populations, there is wide room to develop new studies at the regional level in Latin America. Comparative perspectives on evaluation would be important to scaling up on conclusions as well as improving efficiency as, even though policies can be formally diverse, substantially there are many similarities. These include policies promoted through democratic institutions and adapted to

international standards, while respecting government's requirement to not abridge or limit citizen rights. Therefore, there is fertile ground for development in terms of joint evaluation around policies that promote institutional capacities and credibility, anti-corruption, justice and security. As example, in the fight against crime and the reduction of homicide rates, the Project is aware of the importance of reinforcing not only police, tribunal and court capacities, but also other institutions such as penitentiaries, so that they can improve and implement better rehabilitation programs for prisoners and effectively tackle the cycle of violence and recidivism.

The same can be said about sustainable transportation indicators such as public transport, Carbon-Dioxide emissions from new cars, and in the sub area of research and development on inner-city quality of life. These are all subjects where regional studies can be facilitated. Megalopolis such as Mexico (Federal District), or other cities in Brazil, Argentina or Colombia, would imply new challenges in terms of developing indicators for quality of life at the local level, sustainable transport and environmental impact. This will require insight and collaboration with local institutions for data access as to crime rates, population density rates, poor housing conditions, the number of habitant connected to wastewater treatment, the waste recycling and the concentration of particulate matter.

It is particularly relevant to mention in this article, what the Project envisages in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies from the perspective of evaluation. According to the Paris Agreement adopted in 2015, each country determines, plans and regularly reports its own contribution to mitigate global warming, and this implies a coordination of activities between different agencies and Ministries that range from greenhouse gas emissions to renewable energies or

energy dependence. In this regard, there is need to connect researchers from academia, business, and technology as relates to implementation, presenting an excellent opportunity for international cooperation. Such an approach not only fits with the agenda but reduces a reliance on Ministry lines who are engaged in developing sectorial plans for climate change (i.e. energy, environment, or infrastructures agencies). In this case, it will be necessary to introduce central agencies and Ministries for planning and finances, who are charged with developing an evaluation agenda. Once climate change is integrated into national evaluation agendas, it will be more impactful to grow capacity at all levels and make an effective use of these studies and recommendations.

Demands for climate change evaluation will require a group of multidisciplinary experts, and represents a new role of international cooperation agencies in order

to manage the complexity of projects and the interaction of practices, making experiences from other countries highly relevant. In Spain, a National Plan of Adaptation to Climate Change will be evaluated in the next two years, and a group of experts has already been put together to follow up on this evaluation plan. FIIAPP is part of this group and as a result, can integrate experiences from Latin America and other regions of the world, particularly in Africa. The South-South Cooperation Project is therefore a solid part of a global partnership for sustainable development. The Project highlights the how to do since the what to do is clearly adopted by member countries in their evaluation agendas in accordance to their international commitments. A coordinated effort in measuring SDGs in this group could also bring about a new practice in monitoring and evaluating the 2030 Agenda, as well as an opportunity to collaborate with other regions of the world.

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## Author's profile

**Miguel Angel Lombardo** holds a PhD in Political Science from the University Complutense of Madrid, and he is an expert in program and policies evaluation, with extensive experience working with public institutions and international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union and private foundations for cooperation with Latin America and Africa. He is the Administrator of the South-South Cooperation Project to promote the evaluation of Public Policies in Latin America, funded by the European Union and managed by the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP). Prior to this work, in 2008, he designed and coordinated the Spanish Strategy of International Cooperation for Democratic Governance. He has also been regional advisor for UNDP Africa in New York, and he has done consultancies for the evaluation of policies and programs for the public health system in Colombia, the penitentiary system of Paraguay, and public structures to fight crime in Guatemala.



## Impact Evaluation Demand For Regional Infrastructure Projects In West Africa<sup>1</sup> : Stages of a Maturing Process

*Building regional infrastructures is one of the pillars of regional integration in West Africa. To this effect, several projects and programmes are being initiated while others are currently being designed. However, only few evaluations of the impacts of such projects and programmes are made available, which leads to capitalization constraints. The first evaluation demands should come from regional/subregional economic communities (RECS) and regional/subregional development banks (RDBS). Shortage of evaluations is attributable not to negligence, but rather to the fact that the formulation of demands for complex evaluations is gradual. Regarding such demand, its maturing process under way includes (i) the kick-start of a better institutionalization of the evaluation function at the regional level, (ii) the regional design of a knowledge map in order to assess the most relevant evaluation issues, (iii) systematic development of five-year rolling impact evaluation plans to describe the potential demand for medium-term impact evaluations, and (iv) the implementation of regional mechanisms for sustainable financing of impact evaluations.*

*Damit Serge Didier Amany, West African Development Bank*

## Key Messages

1. Building regional infrastructures is one of the pillars of regional integration in West Africa, but paradoxically, only few evaluations of their impacts are available.
2. The first evaluation demands should come from the West African institutions in charge of regional integration such as regional /subregional economic communities RECs and regional/subregional development banks (RDBs).
3. Evaluation demand should be evidenced-based, and requires a maturation process that is as important as both the evaluation itself and the use of lessons from prior evaluations.
4. The process of maturing evaluation demand comprises (i) the kick-start of a better institutionalisation of the evaluation function at the regional level, (ii) the regional design of a knowledge map, (iii) systematic development of five-year impact evaluation plans, and (iv) the implementation of regional mechanisms for sustainable financing of impact evaluations.
5. There is room for optimism, as regional economic communities (RECs) and regional development banks RDBs in West Africa are taking measures to call for the evaluation of the impacts of regional infrastructure projects and programmes.

## Introduction

In West Africa, integration is supported by investments in regional infrastructures. This approach is being promoted since the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 and of the West African Development Bank in 1973. Yet, evaluations of the impacts of such infrastructures on national and regional economic performance, the population's well-being and business productivity are scarce. For the moment, this type of impact evaluation is slowly being called for by regional institutions financing development and economic integration, including those of West Africa. For instance, in the past five years, the Investment and Development Bank of the Economic Community of West African States and the Commission of West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)

are still to conduct evaluations of the impacts of regional infrastructures; but they have already launched brainstorming on the issue. While the BOAD has already assessed the impacts of seven national projects of irrigation schemes, it has not yet done the same regarding regional infrastructure programmes. So, there is almost no evaluation demand for regional infrastructure programmes and projects. Moreover, the prospects for capitalization require an assessment of the efficiency of regional infrastructures, for an improved implementation of integration policies.

One of the major concerns is to know why the current number of evaluation demands for regional infrastructure projects/programmes is close to zero, whereas the lessons thereof are likely to tremendously help speed up integration. Here, we highlight in particular ►

► some factors explaining the very low level of impact evaluation demands for regional infrastructure projects and programmes, and at the same time, we look optimistically at the actions under way that aim at reversing the trend in the years to come.

Our approach is structured around six (6) points, namely: (i) who has to initiate the formulation of demand? (ii) the formulation process of demand, (iii) the start of an improved institutionalization of the evaluation function, (iv) the establishment of a knowledge map to assess the most relevant evaluation issues, (v) the systematic design of five-year impact evaluation plans and of stakeholder engagement and evidence uptake plans, and (vi) the implementation of mechanisms for a sustainable funding of impact evaluations.

### **The core challenge of evaluating regional development infrastructure impacts: Who has to initiate the formulation of demand?**

The first evaluation demands should come from the West African institutions in charge of regional integration such as regional economic communities (RECs) and regional development banks<sup>2</sup> (RDBs). While these institutions are aware of such responsibility, for now they have not yet ordered the evaluation of impacts caused by the extant regional infrastructures through their projects and programmes. This lack of evaluation is not due to negligence, but rather because the demand for this type of evaluation, which is complex, is formulated gradually.

It should be noted that the demand for impact evaluation is not made *ex nihilo*, as it requires a maturing process that is

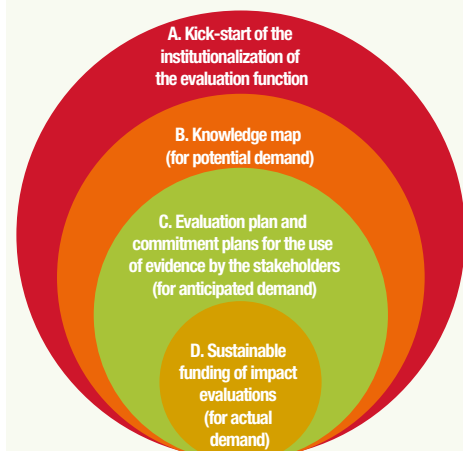
as important as both the evaluation itself and the use of lessons from prior evaluations. Much has been done to promote impact evaluation. Efforts include the organization, since 2003, of sensitization meetings and trainings within the WAEMU, with the support of the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) or the BOAD; the organization as of 2012 of other meetings by The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), with the support of the The World Bank and other development partners; and the Benin Open Days for Evaluation (JBE). These events were important to sensitize people and launch capacity building activities. That notwithstanding, the maturing process for regional infrastructure project/programme impact evaluation demand was not sufficiently emphasized on such occasions. Workshops, training sessions and platforms set to this effect are scarce, and each regional institution seeks ways and means of building its demand. Given the peculiarities of regional projects and programmes, it is necessary to formulate the demand for assessing their impacts as a joint action. Indeed, regional infrastructures are built as a result of multi-stakeholder partnerships—with a great deal of countries, donors and civil society organizations, *inter alia*—, and this makes it complex to attribute the results obtained to a single entity.<sup>3</sup> Formulating evaluation demand as a joint action is therefore a best-practice option, but it is actually challenging to coordinating multiple views on the acquisition of evaluation information. A solution may consist in implementing a structural approach for the formulation of impact evaluation demands, and in minimizing the use of results. Particular focus should be on the various steps in the process of building demand for the ►

- evaluation of regional infrastructure projects/programmes.

### Proposing a demand building approach for the evaluation of regional infrastructure projects/programmes

Evaluation demand originates from the evaluation issue. More specifically, the issues such as those of "causality" (Morra Imas and Rist 2009) induce the matter of impact evaluation. But before turning one or more issues into an actual impact evaluation demand, a process has to be deployed. While there is no unanimity about the steps of this process, some actions can be taken to help structure the impact evaluation. As a series of actions leading to evaluation demand, the process could make it easier to analyse the crash points that curb the emergence of a high impact evaluation demand.

**Figure 1: A few actions helping the structuring of impact evaluation demand**



Our approach is built around four points: (i) the kick-start of a better institutionalisation of the evaluation function at the

regional level, (ii) the design of a knowledge map in order to assess the most relevant evaluation issues, (iii) the systematic development of five-year rolling impact evaluation plans to describe the potential demand for medium-term impact evaluations, and (iv) the implementation of regional mechanisms to finance impact evaluations in a sustainable manner. Figure 1 shows the imbricated structured of such actions, which are better developed hereinafter.

### Kick-start of the institutionalization of the evaluation function

Though it is not a sufficient requirement, the kick-start of the institutionalization of the evaluation function is necessary as a pillar for the evaluation activities. This is why the RDBs and some RECs of West Africa have been working to build the capacities of their organizational evaluation units. Since 2012, the BOAD, the WAEMU Commission and its Investment and Development Bank have set or reinforced their evaluation functions and the dedicated structures. This comes in line with their willingness to structure and address evaluation issues. However, with regard to regional infrastructure projects, the structuring process of impact evaluation issues should not devolve upon a single institution. Here, a joint action is necessary, like for the design of regional infrastructure programmes. In this regard, it should be recalled that the development of WAEMU infrastructure programmes—including the Programme of Community Actions for Infrastructures and Road Transport (PACITR), the Regional Economic Programme (REP), and the Regional Initiative for Sustainable Power (IRED)—was jointly carried out by the Community's institutions, such as the BOAD, the WAEMU Commission, the ►►



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► Central Bank of West African States (CBWAS) and other external partners to the WAEMU. Equally, the ECOWAS Commission, the WAEMU Commission, the Investment and Development Bank, the BOAD and other external stakeholders to the Union were involved in the design of the ECOWAS Community Programme for Development. More efforts are needed to maintain this collaborative spirit in the design of impact evaluation demands. Measures are under way to give a regional perspective to the process of building impact evaluation demand, which will be guided by the RDBs and the RECs. In this light, it is expected that the institutionalization of the evaluation function will be reinforced and sustained at the regional level, through institutionalized evaluation coordination platforms.

### Design of a knowledge map to assess the most relevant issues

It is complex to identify and sequence impact evaluation issues, as several national and regional actors have to be considered while the knowledge to be developed, sustained or discarded has to be sorted. Therefore, it is not easy to find out a convergence of evaluation needs and to coordinate applicants' engagement. This is why it is important to build an approach to unveil the knowledge needed. In this regard, the knowledge map<sup>4</sup> may be useful, since it may help identify critical knowledge areas and sequence them according to their "criticality rate".<sup>5</sup>

A lack of impact evaluation knowledge map contributes to weakening the consistency and relevance of an impact evaluation demand, especially for regional infrastructure projects and programmes. Designing knowledge maps are likely to efficiently help not only to structure impact evaluation issues, depending on

the desired knowledge categories, but also to build a consensual evaluation plan.

The institutions in charge of regional integration could join their efforts to develop a knowledge map that can induce relevant exchanges and insights for useful impact evaluation assignments. With the implementation of the West Africa Capacity Building and Impact Evaluation programme (WACIE) in WAEMU Member States, and in partnership with 3ie, the BOAD and the WAEMU Commission, a knowledge map will hopefully be initiated in the coming years.

### Systematic development of five-year rolling impact evaluation plans to describe the potential demand for medium-term impact evaluations

The five-year rolling impact evaluation plans are used for planning the achievement of impact evaluations on a five-year period in order to systematically answer a set of questions that can enrich strategic and tactic knowledge. So far there is a scarcity of medium-term planning of impact evaluations for regional infrastructure projects and programmes in the WAEMU and the ECOWAS. The fact that impact evaluations are not considered when formulating regional infrastructure programmes may partially explain this situation. Until recently, impact evaluations were considered as a non compulsory appendix to the implementation of infrastructure projects and programmes. It was therefore planned and implemented only at the end of the programme and depending on the availability of resources or on the instructions of technical and financial experts working for regional stakeholders. It looked more like a need for accountability or



- for the publication of an article for academic purposes.

Implementing a sustainable evaluation plan and taking advantage of its planning role also enhances the formulation of the Stakeholder Engagement and Evidence Uptake Plan (SEEP<sup>6</sup>). The SEEP is an upstream process in relation to the formulation of evaluation issues, and it helps to integrate evidence from impact evaluations. The procedure for developing the SEEPs compels the various stakeholders in the evaluation process to guarantee the effective use of evidence from impact evaluations, for a better quality of future projects and programmes.

Insofar as this in-depth study targets the political and economic context where impact evaluations, risks and mitigation actions for the use of evidence take place, it contributes to highlighting the appetite for evaluation issues and to measuring the anticipated usefulness of impact evaluations. Thus, the evaluation plan and the SEEP help to unveil the preferences of the various stakeholders and to establish coherence between demand and usefulness.

So far a few regional infrastructure programme impact evaluations in West Africa have benefited from a Stakeholder Engagement and Evidence Uptake Plan. This is partially attributed to the fact that structured platforms integrating a SEEP and that are able to disclose the preferences of potential applicants for impact evaluations at the supranational level hardly exist. Nevertheless, these tools will hopefully be more and more used in the future, as the RECS and the RDBs of West Africa are reinforcing their collaboration.

## Implementation of mechanisms for sustainable financing of impact evaluations

To evaluate the impacts of regional infrastructure projects and programmes, an adequate budget is necessary. The lack of a stable mechanism to provide and allocate financial resources highly undermines evaluation demand. Important multilateral development institutions have solved this problem by putting in place automatic mechanisms in order to set a minimum budget for evaluations. Within the WAEMU and ECOWAS, the RECS and RDBs are still lacking automatic budget allocation mechanisms to finance impact evaluations. As a result, there is a reduced number of impact evaluation demands. Brainstorming is under way in the WAEMU to explore adapted solutions to the context of both the Member States and the community institutions.

Availability and stability of financial resources for evaluation plan implementation is a major challenge when it comes to increasing demand for impact evaluations for regional infrastructure projects and programmes. It is therefore important to solve this problem when designing such projects and programmes and to integrate specific budgets for impact evaluations in the financing plans. However, while the accounts of project/programme managers are being closed following implementation, the disbursement of funds for impact evaluation is not always achieved. Therefore, implementing mechanisms to remove such a stress becomes critical.

## Conclusion

Building regional infrastructures is one of the pillars of regional integration in West Africa. To this effect, several projects and programmes are being initiated while others are currently designed. Only a few impact evaluations for these actions are available. Yet, the prospects for capitalisation require an assessment of the efficiency of regional infrastructures, for an improved implementation of integration policies. The first evaluation demands should come from the West African institutions in charge of regional integration, namely the RECs and the RDBs. While these institutions are aware of such responsibility, they have not yet explicitly ordered the evaluation of impacts caused by the regional infrastructures through their projects and programmes.

This lack of evaluation is not due to negligence, but rather to the type of evaluation, which is complex and needs a gradually formulated demand. It should be noted that the demand for impact evaluation is not made *ex nihilo*, but it requires a maturing process that is as significant as both the evaluation itself and the use of lessons from prior evaluations. The maturing process under way includes (i) the kick-start of a better institutionalization of the evaluation function at the regional level, (ii) the regional design of a knowledge map in order to assess the most relevant evaluation issues, (iii) a systematic development of five-year rolling impact evaluation plans to describe the potential demand for medium-term impact evaluations, and (iv) the implementation of regional mechanisms for a sustainable financing of impact evaluations.

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## Endnotes

1 The focus is on supranational, regional and sub-regional communities.

2 This includes subregional development banks and sub regional economic communities.

3 Source Book for the Evaluation of Global and Regional Partnership Programs. Indicative Principles and Standards. Independent Evaluation Group, 2007.

4 The knowledge map is a knowledge management system that enables organizations to manage their knowledge assets so as to determine, following an in-depth analysis, the knowledge to

be developed, sustained or discarded. It is a decision-making tool (Aubertin et al., 2003).

5 "Knowledge criticality" refers to the level of risk taken by the organization when the knowledge concerned is not partially or totally mastered within the organization (Michèle ORBAN, 2013).

6 The SEEP is based on the approach by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).



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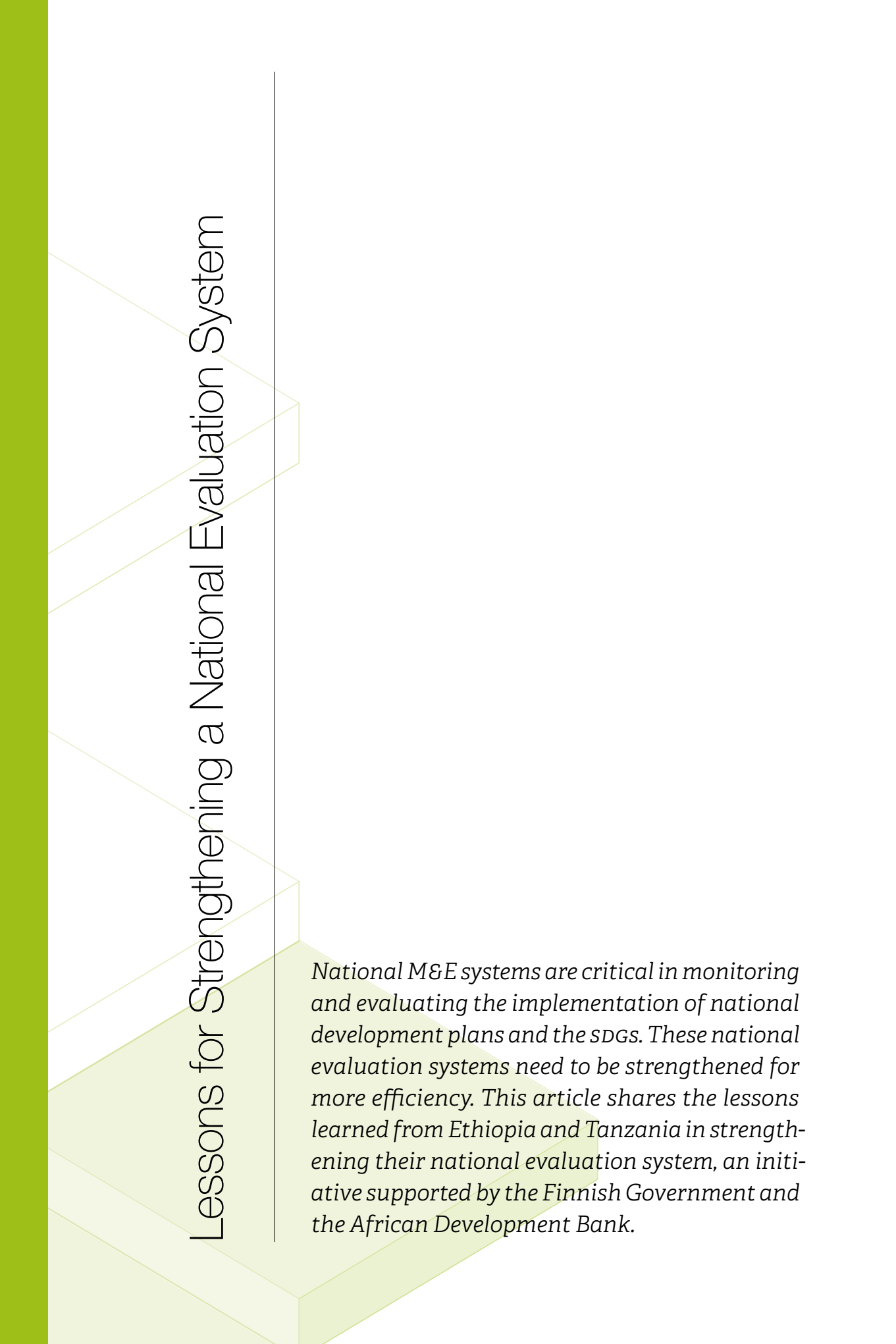
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## Author's profile

**Damit Serge Didier Amany** is an economist and statistical analyst working for the West African Development Bank (BOAD) since 2006. As the Deputy Director for Project Evaluation, his areas of interest are related to efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, the impacts of development actions, and the monitoring and evaluation of development results. He is involved in several think tanks on these topics both at the West African Economic and Monetary Union and internationally, including the Evaluation Platform for Regional African Development Institutions (EPRADI), the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), and the Working Group on the Harmonized Indicators for Private Sector Operations (HIPSO). He holds a Master's degree in economics and a postgraduate diploma in statistical analysis applied to development from the national advanced school of applied statistics and economics (ENSEA) of Abidjan. He also earned certificates in impact evaluation (Carleton University and The Asia Pacific Finance and Development Institute), in computed general equilibrium modelling (Purdue University), and in financial programming (International Monetary Fund). Before joining the BOAD, he was a Research Assistant at INSEA.





# Lessons for Strengthening a National Evaluation System

*National M&E systems are critical in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of national development plans and the SDGs. These national evaluation systems need to be strengthened for more efficiency. This article shares the lessons learned from Ethiopia and Tanzania in strengthening their national evaluation system, an initiative supported by the Finnish Government and the African Development Bank.*

Jayne Musumba, IDEV, African Development Bank

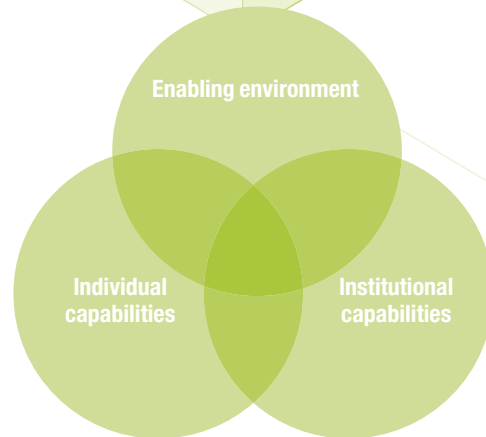
## Development effectiveness in Africa not only depends on the operations of development partners, but also on those of African governments.

**F**OR the past 5 years, the Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) of the African Development Bank (or, the Bank) has been actively engaged in developing the evaluation capacity of African governments, parliamentarians, and other regional institutions. One of IDEV's strategic objectives is to promote an evaluation culture in the Bank and Regional Member Countries (RMCs), and encourage a focus on development results, learning and continuous quality improvement. The Bank's evaluation capacity development (ECD) support to RMCs includes strengthening national evaluation systems, establishing regional networks and communities of practice, establishing evaluation platforms, and much more. These initiatives are in collaboration with other development partners.

Given this is the last year of implementing the project on Strengthening National Evaluation Systems (SNES) in Africa, I wanted to share some of the key lessons that we have learned.

The SNES initiative is a partnership between IDEV and the Finnish Government started in 2014 and providing ECD support to Ethiopia and Tanzania in strengthening their National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (NMES), which are crucial for accountability, drawing lessons, good governance and improving development outcomes of public investment programs. In several countries,

the development of a sound evaluation system has been the focal point of strengthening performance-based budgeting and evidence-based decision-making.



In concentrating on catalytic activities, the project supports four key areas: 1) formulation of a country owned National Evaluation Strategy; 2) development of a National Evaluation Policy and an institutional framework for evaluation; 3) strengthening skills for planning, managing and implementing complex evaluation projects; and 4) implementing an advocacy program to stimulate demand for high quality evaluations.

The overall IDEV approach to capacity development is holistic, incorporating individual, institutional and enabling environments. These catalytic activities are intended to move both countries towards having robust evaluation systems.

### The challenges

The scale of capacity development support needed on the continent to improve national evaluation systems is immense. The ➤



► challenges are formidable. Case studies conducted by CLEAR in 2012<sup>1</sup> highlight the various challenges - which cut across all African countries - in building national evaluation systems. The key hurdles include: a lack of national policy frameworks for monitoring and evaluation (M&E); a low level of M&E professionalization; inadequate professional capacity for M&E; underdeveloped Internet infrastructure; low quality of data; and uneven utilization of data. These challenges are still valid even in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where countries face four ongoing and interrelated challenges: developing an NEP; building enough individual evaluation capacity; ensuring institutions and processes are in place; and adequately engaging partners. These challenges are dynamic and affect both the supply of and demand for relevant and useful evidence that can inform national plans and policies ([IUED Briefing](#)).

### **The motivation**

National M&E systems are critical in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of national development plans and the SDGs. The drive for Ethiopia and Tanzania is no different. There are five key lessons that we have learned to date. They may seem obvious in implementing any capacity development initiative, but it is worth sharing the experience of Ethiopia and Tanzania in their respective context.

### **Political will and ownership**

From preliminary discussions with key stakeholders, the demand for evaluation is primarily coming from development partners whose program or project designs require an evaluation at the end of the program or project. But, this culture is slowly changing. ►

► In both countries, the political will is there, starting from the executive to the implementing ministries, agencies and officers. Since the inception of the project, both countries have undergone general elections, meaning changes of administration. In the case of Tanzania, it brought significant changes, in particular the loss of the original lead national implementing partner, the President's Delivery Bureau (PDB) - which has since been disbanded - and its replacement by the Planning Commission of Tanzania in the Ministry of Finance. However, this did not lead to the discontinuity of SNES project. Therefore, a key lesson learned is to ensure the right institution takes the lead.

Ownership starts with how demand for the project is identified. The country has to be ready to own the process. Both Ethiopia and Tanzania had evaluation experience to build-on which was critically important for their appreciation of an NMES. But although the implementation of a national development plan is a key motivation, ownership is also rooted in a country-owned NMES system that recognizes the importance of both the supply of and the demand for M&E information, as well as political factors and an enabling environment that will allow an NMES to grow within a country. Our experience to date shows a need to also strengthen ownership within the countries through continuous engagement with national partners, going beyond the central evaluation units to include other government ministries and agencies as well as other local players such as research and training institutions, civil society organizations, etc. They all have a stake at the improvement of the NMES.

## Where to Start – the diagnostics

The two countries took a different approach on how they wanted to start the implementation of the SNES initiative. In Ethiopia, we conducted two diagnostic assessments of the national M&E system at both the federal level

in 2014, and at the regional level in 2016. Both exercises provided a better understanding of the system in regard to its strengths, capacity gaps, challenges and opportunities for the national M&E system. In addition, both assessments provided inputs and recommendations for the development of their National Evaluation Policy approved by Council of Ministers in 2017. This is one of the greatest achievements of the project thus far. In Tanzania, they opted to build on the “Big Results Now”, or BRN, methodology, led by PDB. This is a methodology adopted from the Malaysia's Big Fast Results. Given the success of BRN's first year of implementation, the SNES project was to provide support in extending the new M&E methodology across the government beyond the six national key results areas (agriculture, education, energy, resource mobilization, transport and water), bringing Tanzania back on track in her ambition of making the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 a reality. In retrospect, a full diagnostic or needs assessment at the beginning would have been useful in learning more about the system. In reality, the much needed information about the national M&E system came much later in the scoping mission in 2017.

## The use of champions

Find your champions early. These are individuals and institutions who have a keen interest in improving the national evaluation system. The challenge to the lead institutions is to ensure they have the right instruments, processes and incentives in keeping the champions fully engaged. In addition, the lead institutions need to have clarity on how best to use their champions. In both countries, there were periods where it seemed nothing was happening, there was a risk to sustaining the interest and affiliation of the various stakeholders of the system. With hindsight, establishing a Community of Practice, connecting the various M&E professionals, agencies, etc. could have kept this interest and enthusiasm going. Indeed, there were some missed opportunities as this had not been done earlier. ►►



### ► Learning by doing

In addition to trainings, it is imperative to provide opportunities to “learn by doing” through fostering peer learning. This requires greater commitment from the respective individuals and institutions receiving the learning as well as the organization providing the experiences/learning. This must also be cognizant of the transient nature of civil servants, moving from one ministry or government agency to another, which remains a challenge.

I had the opportunity of participating in both the initial diagnostic assessment at the federal level in Ethiopia and primary discussions with the various stakeholders in the national M&E system in Tanzania. It was observed that some sector ministries had strong or weak M&E functions in both countries, which provided an opportunity for peer learning within the country and between the two countries. For example, M&E in Tanzania’s health sector was very strong and they had established creative

partnerships in data collection, analysis, and dissemination. To its side, M&E in the Ethiopian education sector was equally strong. Knowledge exchange exercises between these sectors in the two countries would have been helpful. But this learning did not stop only with the two countries, indeed both countries also expressed the desire of learning from other countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, etc., therefore, looking for experiences beyond the continent.

### Partnerships

Establish partnership very early in the process. To further support these two countries and additional ones from the continent, requires tremendous resources – financial, human and technical. To meet this need, we are reaching out to other development partners at national, regional and global levels. As a lesson, it is important to ensure that these systems are strengthened and sustainable, therefore partnerships with the following actors is ►

► critical: government, civil society, donors, research, academia, private sector, etc. Each has a contribution to make. For example, in skills development, support is needed in tailoring country training for evaluators and decision makers. With peer-to-peer mutual support, employing twinning and south-south cooperation arrangements is key. And with joint evaluations, providing hands-on experience, or learning by doing, is helpful.

Donor partners can also play a stronger role in building evaluation capacity in governments, in particular as donors undertake their program evaluations. In this process, donors could incorporate building evaluation capacity in the conducting of their evaluations.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the demand for similar evaluation capacity development support is real. One or two organizations cannot address this demand alone for the continent. It requires more commitment and resources to build national evaluation systems. What is important is to ensure that countries are in the driver's seat, owning and leading the process, knowing where to start (i.e. having a good understanding of a national evaluation system), identifying your champions, fostering learning, and building effective partnerships.

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## Endnotes

- 1 IDEV, African Development Bank (2013). Proposal for Partnerships and Financial Support for Strengthening National Evaluation Systems in Africa. Exploratory case studies by CLEAR done in Uganda, Benin, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Burundi and Cameroon in 2012- published September 2012.

## Author's profile

**Jayne Musumba** is a Principal Knowledge Management Officer with the Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) of the African Development Bank Group. Jayne leads the development and implementation of knowledge management activities at IDEV. She also manages the evaluation capacity development portfolio of IDEV, which includes the Strengthening National Evaluation Systems (SNES) in Africa project, African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE), and Evaluation Platform for Regional African Development Institutions (EPRADI). Prior to joining the AfDB, she had worked within the United Nations in various capacities mainly in the areas of sustainable development, knowledge management, change management, organizational development, capacity development, and innovation. She holds a Master's degree in Management from the New York University and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Hunter College, City University of New York. See Jayne's LinkedIn profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jaynemusumba/>.



**IDEV visits the Asian Development Bank to benchmark the AfDB's work in PPPs and compare its sanctions processes.**

IDEV is conducting an evaluation of the Bank's utilization of PPP mechanisms for the 2006-2016 period. The evaluation includes, as one of its main building blocks, a benchmarking exercise of the AfDB with selected Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) including the Asian Development Bank (AsDB). At the same time, IDEV is conducting a comparative review of sanctions practices across International Financial Institutions.

In this context, in March 2018, the department undertook a mission to the AsDB in the Philippines, as part of its work on these two evaluations.

In Manila, IDEV participated in several discussions with key staff at the AsDB dealing with PPP activities and sanctions practices. The mission was an opportunity to share lessons and knowledge, as well as identify good practices at the AsDB for future strategic and operational guidance at the AfDB.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/ongoing-evaluation-bank%E2%80%99s-utilization-public-private-partnership-mechanism-2006-2016>

**IDEV conducts 12 field visits across 5 countries to evaluate the Bank's quality assurance across the project cycle**

As part of an evaluation of the Bank's quality assurance across the project cycle, IDEV evaluators conducted country case study visits to Senegal, Morocco, Cameroon, Kenya and Zimbabwe, from March to May 2018. The evaluators reviewed 25 projects through interviews with key stakeholders at the Bank, government counterparts, executing agencies and development partners.

The mission included 12 field visits to active projects, such as a visit to a rural electrification project in Morocco, a rice project in Senegal, an outer ring road transportation project in Kenya, a water and



*The evaluators visited the province of ElJadida in Morocco where traditional djellaba tailors have abandoned manual work thanks to the arrival of electricity*

sanitation project in Cameroon, and an emergency power-infrastructure rehabilitation project in Zimbabwe.

The Evaluation of Quality Assurance across the Project Cycle covers around 300 Bank projects, looking at quality at entry as well as at supervision and exit. The objectives of the evaluation are:

- To explore and derive knowledge on known

challenges with respect to the quality of the Bank's portfolio;

- To address broader issues across the project cycle, including the contribution of the quality assurance chain to learning and development effectiveness; and
- To support the implementation of the DBDM and the High 5s, providing an independent view and bringing forward lessons.

The IDEV evaluation and the lessons learnt will support the Bank's ADF-14 commitments to improve the quality of project design, supervision and the performance of operations, as well as to ensure the Bank operates as a learning organization.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/page/ongoing-evaluations>

### IDEV visits Mauritius for the Bank's country strategy and programme over the period 2009–2018

As part of the on-going evaluation of the Bank's country strategy and program in Mauritius over the period 2009–2018, IDEV evaluators undertook a data collection mission to Mauritius from 16 to 27 April 2018. The objective of the mission was to collect qualitative and quantitative information to assess the development results of the Bank's intervention in Mauritius over the last decade, including projects, technical assistance, analytical works, policy dialogue, advisory services and donor coordination.

During the evaluation period, the Bank's total approvals amounted to UA 618 (USD 874) million. In line

with the High 5s, the Bank's portfolio in Mauritius includes the "Saint Louis Power Station redevelopment project" which is a high quality power station with a 160,000 - 200,000hr (around 25 years) expected life. The new power station aims to have positive environmental impact by reducing noise and air pollution (see picture below).

All the information and documents collected during the mission will feed into various component reports. The Team will prepare three sector reports that will feed into a technical report expected by end of June 2018.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/page/ongoing-evaluations>



St Louis Power Station.

### Powering Africa through Interconnection: Project cluster evaluation

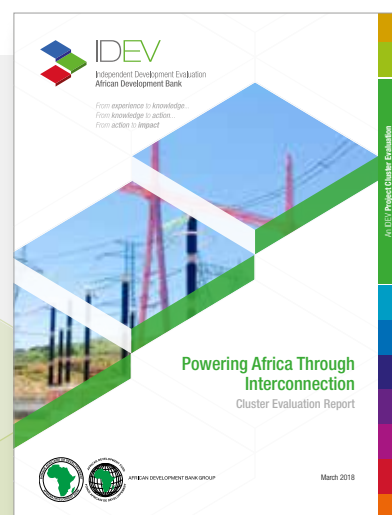
The evaluation of AfDB-funded power interconnection projects covers a cluster of energy sector operations approved by the Bank during the period 1999–2013. The selection of power interconnection was driven by the fact that it can significantly contribute to regional integration and help reduce the cost of electricity generation, thereby improving the overall energy supply in Africa. During the period under study, the Bank approved 48 projects related to power interconnection, amounting to UA 822 million. The cluster evaluation covers 6 of these (5 completed and 1 ongoing project), representing 25% of total energy operations approved by the Bank during the 1999–2013 period and a net amount of UA 196 million.

The cluster evaluation was intended to provide inputs to the independent evaluation of the Bank's assistance in the energy sector as well as the overall Comprehensive Evaluation of the Bank's Development Results (CEDR). In addition, the evaluation aimed to help Management in strengthening the implementation of the Bank's 2011 energy sector policy and the 2014 regional integration policy and

strategy, by providing insightful results (findings, lessons learnt and recommendations).

The evaluation examined the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, as well as the main project success or failure factors. It also contributed to the CEDR questions of whether the Bank has made a difference in Africa, whether it is maximizing its value as a development partner, and whether it is learning from what it is doing. Lastly, it evaluates a group of projects implemented in different contexts drawing on different sources of information (such as desk reviews, consultation with key stakeholders, and field visits), and using both qualitative and quantitative analytical methods.

<http://idevafdb.org/en/document/powering-africa-through-interconnection-cluster-evaluation-report>



## Spurring local socio-economic development through rural electrification: Project cluster evaluation

This cluster evaluation assesses the effectiveness of 6 out of the 18 rural electrification investment projects funded by the African Development Bank between 1999 and 2013, amounting to about USD 290 million. The projects cover five countries: Benin, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Mozambique and Tunisia. The selection of rural electrification as one of the evaluation themes is due to the fact that it has a pronounced impact on the majority of Africans living in rural and sub-urban areas.

The goal of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of completed rural electrification projects to draw key lessons from what worked, and what did not work. In addition to informing the design and implementation of future projects, this evaluation also adds to the ongoing independent evaluation of the Bank's assistance in the energy sector as well as the overall Comprehensive Evaluation of the Bank's Development Results completed in 2016. Additionally, it aims to help the implementation of the Bank's New deal on Energy for Africa by providing lessons learnt. Being intended as a learning

product, the report does not contain recommendations.

### Lessons learnt:

**Lesson #1:** Lack of critical risk analysis and adequate risk mitigation measures can contribute to substantial implementation delays and inefficiencies.

**Lesson #2:** Integration between rural electrification and other rural development projects (irrigation, agriculture, water supply, health, education, microcredit, etc.) is critical to better outcomes.

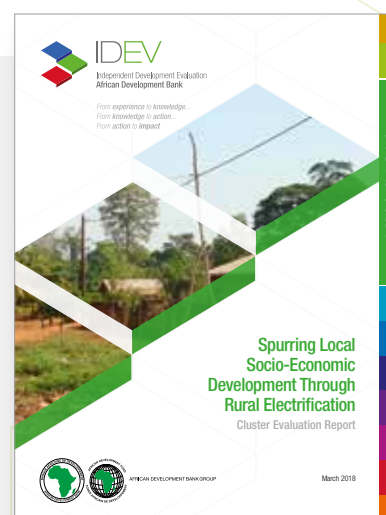
**Lesson #3:** Focusing rural electrification on geographical rather than household coverage can bring electricity closer to rural households but cannot ensure universal access unless issues of affordability to the rural poor are addressed.

**Lesson #4:** Appropriate tariffs and subsidies

are critical to the financial viability of electricity utilities and to sustaining rural electrification benefits.

**Lesson #5:** Strong political support, including an initial investment subsidy and adequate institutional framework, is necessary to sustain project results.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/spurring-local-socio-economic-development-through-rural-electrification-cluster-evaluation>



## The AfDB's support for agricultural value chains development: Lessons for the Feed Africa Strategy

In 2017, IDEV undertook an evaluation of the Bank's support for agricultural value chains development (AVCD), assessing the agricultural portfolio during the period 2005–2016, amounting to approximately UA 3.1 billion. The objectives of the evaluation were to: i) assess the relevance, inclusiveness, effectiveness, and sustainability of the Bank's support to value chains development; and ii) provide lessons and recommendations for the implementation and design of agricultural value chains interventions associated with the Feed Africa Strategy.

### Evaluation findings

- The evaluation found that agricultural value chains development has been a growing and evolving approach for the Bank, and is the cornerstone of the current Feed Africa Strategy. The evaluation also identified five fundamentals and five enablers for AVCD interventions.
- The five fundamentals include: (1) careful context-specific value chain analysis to ensure value-added along the Value Chain (vc); (2) inclusiveness for poor farmers, women, youth and other

vulnerable groups in both participation and benefits sharing; (3) flexibility and responsiveness to changing contexts and market needs; (4) focus primarily on profitability and efficiency of the value chain; and (5) apply strategies to ensure the sustainability of outcomes.

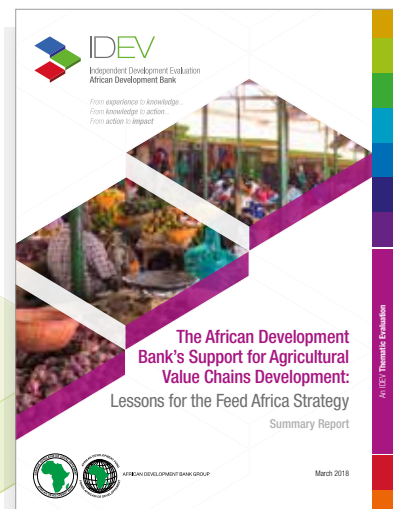
- The five enabling factors that are context-specific to ensure the success of AVCD include: (1) availability of appropriate infrastructure and technology; (2) conducive policy and regulatory environment pertaining to the targeted vc; (3) availability of appropriate business support services to strengthen the skills of vc actors; (4) access to finance for vc actors to make required investments to achieve increased profitability; and (5) private sector engagement and working relationships among vc actors. In addition, while the key enablers for AVCD are evident throughout the Bank's interventions, the evaluation indicates on opportunity to strengthening the vc fundamentals.

### Evaluation recommendations

The evaluation proposed the following six main recommendations to strengthen the Bank's approach to AVCD for the Feed Africa Strategy:

- #1 Build a coherent and consistent approach to AVCD across Bank operations
- #2 Build AVCD analytical and implementation capabilities.
- #3 Focus AVCD interventions on adding value and achieving sustainable impact.
- #4 Work with partners, especially the private sector, to strengthen strategic and operational approaches to AVCD.
- #5 Take affirmative actions to ensure inclusiveness.
- #6 Strengthen policy dialogue to enhance a conducive AVCD environment.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/african-development-bank%E2%80%99s-support-agricultural-value-chains-development-lessons-feed>



## Strengthening agricultural value chains to feed Africa: Project cluster evaluation

This report presents the key findings from the evaluation of a cluster of 9 agricultural value chain interventions by the African Development Bank over the period 2005–2016. The nine case studies were conducted as inputs to the formative evaluation titled “AfDB Support for Agricultural Value Chains Development: Lessons for the Feed Africa Strategy,”

### Lessons learnt

**Lesson #1:** Insufficient analysis in AVCD project designs constrains achievement of outcomes and impact, while comprehensive VC analysis guides implementation and responsiveness to changes in markets and contexts.

**Lesson #2:** AVCD interventions that focus heavily on increases in commodity production without sufficiently considering the efficiency of the production system and the value chain as a whole, will incur net financial and economic losses.

**Lesson #3:** Experience from the case studies shows that effective AVCD interventions require realistic planning that takes into account appropriateness of scope in terms of the time required for contributory activities to mature, the VC actors chosen for support, the scale of activities responsive to the market demand, and sequencing of activities.

**Lesson #4:** Deliberate, concerted and targeted efforts at all stages of AVCD design and implementation are essential to ensure inclusiveness. Processes that ensure participation, and mechanisms for equitable benefit sharing enable meaningful inclusiveness.

**Lesson #5:** Sustained benefit from AVCD interventions requires a comprehensive

package of support that ensures partnerships with the private sector, the government and other development actors.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/strengthening-agricultural-value-chains-feed-africa-cluster-evaluation-report>



## Comparative study of Board processes, procedures and practices

IDEV conducted a comparative study of Board processes, procedures, practices across International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and the extent to which they could contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Board of Directors in fulfilling its mandate. The primary objective was to draw lessons and good practices emerging from other IFIs for consideration by the AfDB's Board of Directors. The study covers corporate governance, accountability, Board operations, and support to the Board.

### Some of the findings include:

- The AfDB's Board of Directors is similar and in line with others in terms of the stated objectives of corporate governance, in the institutional and organizational structure, and in the language spelling out the general and specific roles and responsibilities of oversight.
- There were differences between Boards in the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of processes, procedures and practices and the day-to-day operation of organizational structures.
- All organizations' Boards and managements struggle to varying degrees with finding the appropriate balance between providing oversight over strategy, risk and results, and engaging in more executive, transactional activities and decisions.
- Well-functioning Board committees are important to the Bank. Committee work reduces the burden on the full Board, and allows it to focus on critical issues and provide oversight over strategy, risk and results. It is important to strengthen Committees to provide clear and timely inputs to full Board discussions.
- Greater delegation to Management requires the ability to track Management commitments and results.
- It is important to build morale and a shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges among Executive Directors as officers of the organization, who otherwise represent different shareholder interests.
- Building social capital, the basis for trust and confidence among Executive Directors, and between the Board and Management, is vital for effectiveness

and efficiency of corporate governance.

The study was well received by the AfDB Board of Directors, which, under the auspices of the Dean, is preparing an action plan as a follow-up.

● <http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/comparative-study-board-processes-procedures-and-practices-bppps>



## Addressing regional integration challenges in Central Africa

In March 2018, IDEV presented to the AfDB Board the findings of an independent evaluation of the regional integration strategy and operations of the AfDB, 2011-2016. The evaluation assessed: (a) the relevance and consistency of the Bank's strategy for fostering regional integration in Central Africa; and (b) the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the Bank's multinational operations (MOs) in that region. It discussed the key factors leading to MOs' low performance with respect to the performance of the Bank and that of countries and regional organizations.

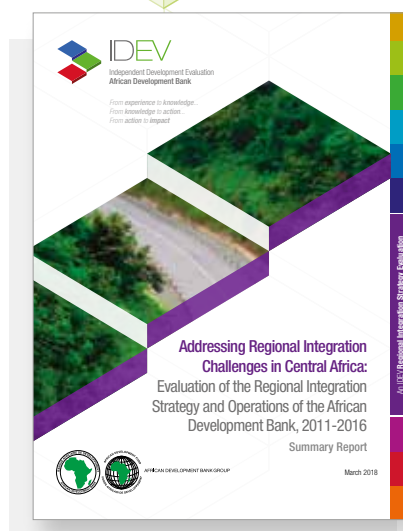
### Recommendations

From the main findings, IDEV made the following recommendations:

1. Address grand challenges of Central Africa with a commensurate tailored approach. The region has a multitude of development challenges that have to be met through a combination of efforts at the national and regional levels.
2. Move from a Regional Integration Strategy Paper (RISP) to an indicative operational program.
3. Undertake a more active dissemination of the Central Africa regional integration program.
4. Improve policy dialogue and leadership. It is essential to conduct policy dialogue at the highest level to increase the level of commitment and ownership by the policy and decision makers in countries and regions.

5. Consider more realistic business planning than is currently the case. All the RISPs had an extension of two years.
6. Continue supporting capacity building. The Bank should help clarify the division of labor between ECCAS and their specialized agencies.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/evaluation-afdb-regional-integration-strategy-and-operations-central-africa-2011-2016>



### IDEV participates in Evaluation Cooperation Group meeting

On 31 May and 1 June, IDEV participated in the twice-yearly meeting of the Evaluation Cooperation Group. Hosted and chaired by the Independent Evaluation Department of the Asian Development Bank, the meeting discussed topics including additionality, private sector evaluations, the ongoing review of the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, and external evaluation. During the thematic session on “Evaluation and Audit”, IDEV shared its recent experience of having been audited by the

AfDB’s internal audit department. The ECG meeting was preceded on 30 May by a joint meeting with the MDB working group on Managing for Development Results on “Improving Results Measurement and Management”. ECG members also participated in a panel discussion open to all AsDB staff and chaired by AsDB President Takehiko Nakao on “Assessing Performance – Boosting Results in MDBs”.

🌐 <https://www.adb.org/news/ifis-reaffirm-commitment-coordinate-results-management-and-independent-evaluation-better>



## Development Evaluation Week 2018: Strengthening Development Impact

The Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) of the African Development Bank (AfDB) will host its 2018 edition of Development Evaluation Week on 05-07 September 2018 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

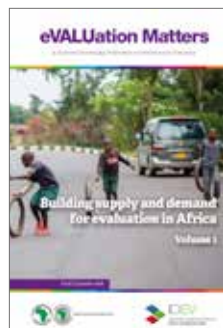
Under the theme "Strengthening Development Impact", this year's knowledge sharing forum will focus on the contribution evaluation can make to achieving greater development outcomes through learning from the past. The main objective is

to facilitate a reflection on the contribution of development evaluation to the implementation of the key priority areas under the African Union's Agenda 2063. The centrality of evaluation and learning from results (either positive or negative) will be interrogated from diverse perspectives around topics such as agricultural value chains, public-private partnerships for infrastructure development, and processes such as harvesting knowledge from evaluations, strengthening evaluation capacities, and establishing strategic partnerships to promote evaluation, among others.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/page/ongoing-evaluations>

Evaluation Week  
Semaine de l'évaluation  
2018

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire  
Strengthening development impact  
Renforcer l'impact du développement



## First Quarter 2018: *Building supply and demand for evaluation in Africa (Volume 1)*

Evaluation plays a critical role in the effective implementation of good governance structures in Africa, in promoting accountability, learning, development effectiveness, and sustained and rapid economic growth. Yet the supply of and demand for evaluation is still relatively low in most African countries. In this edition of Evaluation Matters, we look at the issues that need to be addressed in building the supply and demand of evaluation in the continent.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/building-supply-and-demand-evaluation-vol-1>

## Fourth Quarter 2017: *Evaluation as a driver of reform in IFIs*

What is the added value of independent evaluation focused not on projects and programs but on organizations themselves? Does it help organizations deliver more and better? Does evaluation evidence have any impact on the way development organizations are managing themselves? In this edition of Evaluation Matters, find the answers to all these questions and many more.



<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/evaluation-driver-reform-ifis>



## Third Quarter 2017: *Evaluation in the era of the SDGs*

This issue of Evaluation Matters is dedicated to evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It discusses the consequences of the paradigm shift from the MDGs to the SDGs and what the world of evaluation should do differently in this new era. Evaluation is acknowledged in Agenda 2030 as crucial to the follow-up and review processes for SDG progress, and evaluators can, and should, make a real difference to SDG achievements by helping point in the right direction for investment efforts.

<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/evaluation-era-sdgs>

## Second Quarter 2017: *The Comprehensive Evaluation of Development Results: Behind the Scenes*

This edition of eVALUation Matters focuses on the CEDR exercise – a consultative, iterative-process which prioritized the engagement and involvement of all key stakeholders throughout the exercise in order to mitigate the effects of the key challenges involved in such a complicated undertaking. The publication synthesizes viewpoints and reflections by drawing on the extant literature on complex evaluations, field challenges, and teamwork, while at the same time incorporating rich empirical material, anecdotal vignettes, and personal stories from the field, to highlight the CEDR experience in all its complexity and diversity. Each article provides a further snapshot of the dynamics of a complex evaluation.



<http://idev.afdb.org/en/document/comprehensive-evaluation-development-results-behind-scenes>





# IDEV

Independent Development Evaluation  
African Development Bank



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