

https://dspace.org/

Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in Five African Countries

Dr Ebenezer, Adaku; Dr Charles Teye, Amoatey; Mr Richard Kingsford, Otoo; Ms Linda, Khumalo; Mr Khotso, Tsotsotso ...

2019
CLEAR-AA
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/28232

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

Current status of the National Evaluation System in Zambia

Takunda Chirau, Laurie Less, Caitlin Blaser Mapitsa, Laila Smith and Masego Thabane

November 2018

Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA)

Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management

University of the Witwatersrand

clear Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results ANGLOPHONE AFRICA

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Sida SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Contents

Acronyms ii
1 Introduction 1
1.1 Background 1
1.2 Purpose 2
1.3 Approach 2
1.4 Defining concepts 2
1.4.1 Conceptual framework: 10 Functions of a National Evaluation System 3
2 Overview of M&E in Zambia 5
2.1 Institutional arrangements 5
2.2 Roles and responsibilities 6
2.3 Performance monitoring 7
3 Country evaluation system 8
3.1 Level of formalisation 8
3.2 Capacity of government to undertake evaluations 8
3.3 Approach to evaluations 10
3.4 Use of evaluations 10
4 Capacity-building for evaluations 11
4.1 Professionalisation of evaluation 11
4.2 Provision of training and other capacity-building initiatives 11
4.3 Evidence production and research 12
5 Conclusion 12
6 References 13
Appendix 1: Stakeholder map 15

Acronyms

ADC	Area Development Committee
AfRED	African Evaluation Database
APR	Annual Progress Report
CAG	Cluster Advisory Group
CLEAR-AA	Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
CU	Cavendish University
DDCC	District Development Coordinating Committee
ECD	Evaluation Capacity Development
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GWM&ES	Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System
HEI	Higher education institutions
IAPRI	Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute
INESOR	Institute of Economic and Social Research
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MIS	Management Information Systems
MNDP	Ministry of National Development Planning
MPSAs	Ministries, Provinces, and other Spending Agencies
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NDCC	National Development Coordinating Committee
NDP	National Development Plan
NEP	National Evaluation Policy
NES	National Evaluation System
NIPA	National Institute of Public Administration
PDCC	Provincial Development Coordinating Committee

PMRC	Policy Monitoring and Research Centre
RBM	Results-based management
SAG	Sector Advisory Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNILUS	University of Lusaka
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNZA	University of Zambia
VOPE	Volunteer organisation for professional evaluation
WDC	Ward Development Committee
ZaMEA	Zambian Monitoring and Evaluation Association
ZIPAR	Zambia Institute for Policy and Research

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

There is strong political will in Zambia to improve tangible results in terms of government performance and responsiveness to citizen's demands, in line with the country's Vision 2030, its long-term national policy which is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Vision 2030's main objective is to become a middle-income country by alleviating poverty and unemployment and growing its economy (Republic of Zambia, 2017), and there are various plans in place aimed at achieving this, such as the National Development Plan (NDP), Provincial Growth Development Plan, Provincial Development Plan, and Integrated District Plan/ District Development Plan.

However, policy analysis conducted by the Policy Monitoring and Research Centre (PMRC) of the 5th (2006-2010) and 6th (2011-2015) NDPs identified a number of implementation challenges in reaching this national objective of becoming a middle-income country, including inadequate financing, failure to fully implement the decentralisation policy, poor uptake of evaluation results, lack of a national programme/project appraisal system, and weak intersectoral coordination and programme linkages (Kaunda & Deka, 2018: 10).

Although the country's 7th NDP aims to address these challenges through various reforms, such as decentralisation on one hand and institutionalisation of results-based management (RBM) in all ministries, provinces and other spending agencies (MPSAs) on the other, this diagnostic study revealed that, as much as Zambia has made some progress towards developing its monitoring systems, much work remains to establish an evaluation system. This report is an effort to expand on the current nascent evaluation system in Zambia.

In 2015, the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) selected Zambia as one of its core countries in which to carry out its work towards building stronger evaluation systems. This was not only based on previous analysis of the supply of and demand for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the country, but also the significance of Zambia's capacity to do so. In the years that followed, CLEAR-AA identified appropriate partners to help address the growing demand for M&E in Zambia, as well as those that could help finance a medium-term intervention. Such an intervention could include building technical and M&E champions to help coordinate a greater alignment between the legislature's and executive's role in the use of M&E evidence for decision-making. Further steps towards realising this could involve getting several post-graduate degrees up and running in the country to cater for a growing cohort of local evaluators that provide high quality rigorous evaluations.

Given the growing demand for M&E services within government, CLEAR-AA was then invited to scope out higher education institutions (HEIs) in 2017 in order to determine how to programmatically address the supply side of Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) within the country. This was followed by delivery of training with key academic institutions and representatives from the Ministry of National Development Planning (MNDP) in February 2018, as well as further investigation into the kind of products and services that needed to be prioritised to strengthen capacity development within the HEIs. The training intervention was also complemented by a scoping visit to take forward the conceptual planning on the supply side, and ascertain the nature of demand within national

government to determine the feasibility of a subsequent multi-year ECD intervention. Central to this was assessing the funding possibilities from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a key development partner of the MNDP, to warrant CLEAR-AA's continued research and conceptual development of an ECD model for the country.

1.2 Purpose

Against this background, the diagnostic study sought to unpack the current status of a national evaluation system (NES) in Zambia, using CLEAR-AA's *10 Functions of a National Evaluation System* as a conceptual framework, in order to determine the most appropriate interventions for strengthening national evaluations in the country.

1.3 Approach

CLEAR-AA's first scoping visit, in May 2017, aimed to provide an overview of the supply side of M&E in Zambia in terms of appropriate universities or think tanks through which it could anchor a capacity-building curriculum, and included several engagements with government ministries and parliamentarians. In February 2018, a second scoping visit was carried out, during which meetings with a variety of key stakeholders took place, ranging from academics, think tanks and research organisations, to parliamentarians, development partners, central government agencies, and line ministries (see Appendix 1 for a comprehensive list). In addition to these meetings, the scoping included a desktop review and a combination of key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

1.4 Defining concepts

Monitoring and evaluation are concepts that seem inseparable; party because the use of M&E as a term has come to have its own meaning, but also because of the symbiotic relationship between the two. In this report, there are instances were monitoring and evaluation will appear as standalone and distinct activities, and others where the catch-all M&E term will be used. This is because while most countries talk of M&E, not evaluations, and have established M&E systems, CLEAR-AA aims to see more development institutions and governments undertake and use evaluations, and therefore indicators that specifically look at evaluation are required.

The UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) defines ***evaluation*** as an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, or institutional performance. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) adds that evaluation uses social research methods and practices to measure what changes the programme, projects, and policies have contributed to, and to obtain a mature understanding of how it happened. This is differentiated from ***monitoring***, which is routine collection of programme/project implementation and performance data, mostly to track progress. Monitoring data provides regular feedback to implementers, programme/project sponsors, and other relevant stakeholders, but does not always answer the questions why and how.

While the precise definition of an ***M&E system*** varies between different organisations and guidelines, in this report, an M&E system will be used to refer to indicators, tools, and processes used to measure if an intervention (programme/policy/project) has been implemented according to the plan (monitoring) and is having the desired result (evaluation). ***M&E*** itself will refer to processes and

systems generating programme/project performance information, and not systematic analysis/assessment of achievement of outcomes and impacts, which is what evaluations provide.

An ***evaluation system*** or ***NES*** will be used to refer to a system that exclusively defines the undertaking/commissioning and use of evaluations. This report uses a combination of the Furubo and Sandahl (2008) and Lazaro (2015) definitions of evaluation systems, which state that an evaluation system exists when "evaluation is a regular part of the life cycle of public policies and programmes, it is conducted in a methodologically rigorous and systematic manner in which its results are used by political decision-makers and managers, and those results are also made available to the public." Lazaro further points out that intertwined in such systems are values, practices, and institutions associated with a particular political and administrative system (Lazaro 2015:16). In other words, evaluation systems are not separate from the administrative systems that host them, whether in government, civil society organisations (CSOs), or international development agencies. This diagnostic study process therefore assessed not only the existence of technical components of a country's M&E system, but also the functioning of other public service management systems and evidence production and use by non-state actors, such as development partners and volunteer organisations for professional evaluation (VOPEs).

Although this report focuses on country level M&E and evaluation systems, it is important to note that these can also be sectoral, such as a Health M&E system, Education M&E system, etc. These different systems are also not necessarily mutually exclusive; different systems can co-exist within a country/organisation, for example, the sector or ministry system can be a subset of a national system that is coordinated at the centre of government but might have parts that are not reflected in the national system. In this report, in cases where a ministry is reported to have a robust or well established system, explicit mention is made of a sector evaluation or M&E system. However, the diagnostic process did not attempt to map all systems and sub-systems in Zambia, as the focus was on its NES.

1.4.1 Conceptual framework: 10 Functions of a National Evaluation System

In addition to defining what an evaluation system is, CLEAR-AA developed a framework that defines the functions of an evaluation system which illustrate why evaluation systems are so important for countries or sectors. The *10 Functions of a National Evaluation System* is a holistic framework which was used in the diagnostic process to assess and identify areas of strengths or readiness and entry points for a NES in Zambia. While it is significant for common understanding, consensus, coherence, and effective coordination of support and capacity development (Mapitsa 2018), it is important to note that the framework is not an ideal type, but rather a tool that can be used to better grasp the complexity of evaluation systems. Understanding the different functions within a NES, and how they relate to each other, is crucial for both defining a range of sub-systems and providing a more nuanced analysis of the capacity of an evaluation system and the ways different stakeholders interact within it. CLEAR-AA defines these functions as:

1. ***Defining results and planning:*** Defining results for a programme is one of the most critical functions of an evaluation system. This is reflected in recent changes in terminology in the M&E sector, through which M&E functions are now articulated as planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Evaluation systems, if empowered to play a role in governance, are

key to defining programmatic results, bringing evidence to planning processes, and setting programmatic direction.

2. ***Performance monitoring*****:** Evaluations do more than just monitor performance; in fact, in Africa in particular, evaluation systems are often explicitly designed to assess whether a programme has performed effectively or not, and why. Given the tremendous investment in political will, resourcing, and institutional strength, although focusing on assessing performance may constitute a disproportionate part of a NES and contribute relatively little in addition to monitoring systems, it does merit its own function.

3. ***Institutional arrangements:*** Taking a systems approach to a NES requires a focus on the linkages between the different components of the system, and while institutional arrangements may vary across evaluation systems, there is almost always a core custodian of these arrangements. This function requires dedicated attention and can include both normative and practiced roles of stakeholders, as well as policies, legislation, and standards.

4. ***Evidence production and research*****:** The process of undertaking an evaluation simultaneously uses and generates evidence; however, as with conducting research, evaluations face many boundaries, constraints, and contextual considerations. Nevertheless, evidence-production is a key function of a NES, and therefore these challenges require specific consideration. For the purposes of this diagnostic study, CLEAR-AA is particularly interested in the research and evidence-production associated with monitoring systems and evaluations and how these findings translate into decision-making.

5. ***Evaluation practice*****:** As an emergent profession with lively debate around the competencies necessary for evaluators, the systematisation of evaluation is essential for the evolution of evaluation practice, and a process of co-definition is currently underway among those institutionalising evaluation systems and those practicing evaluation in the region. This is evident in the emergence of collectively developed competency frameworks, quality assurance frameworks, and so forth.

6. ***Disseminating evaluation results*****:** Evaluation systems play an important role in disseminating evaluation results. The mechanisms and extent through which they do this varies, but dissemination, to users and a wide range of additional stakeholders, is one of the main factors that makes a NES effective.

7. ***Using evaluation findings*****:** A NES must not just disseminate evaluation results to be effective; it must also use these findings for, among others, planning systems and programme re-design, advocacy, accountability, and bolstering other evaluation functions.

8. ***Capacity-building*****:** Given both the variation in capacity around evaluation practice and the emergent systematisation of evaluation, capacity-building is an inherent component of evaluation systems. This includes building capacity for evaluation practice in general, as well as within each component of a NES to ensure it functions as a whole.

9. ***Shifting norms*:** Through the systematising of evaluations and the use of their results, evaluation systems can be a powerful tool for shifting norms and practices around the way decision-makers engage with evaluation processes.

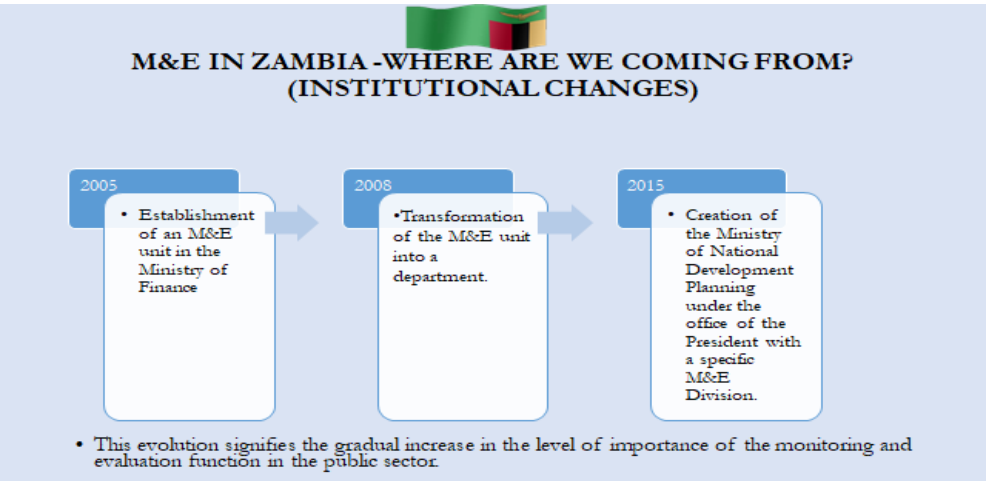
10. ***Shaping axiologies*:** Evaluation systems are designed around value systems in the way they define and measure results. Through a systemic practice of evaluation, particularly through the local ownership of evaluation systems in Africa, the process through which values are reinforced is changing.

2 Overview of M&E in Zambia

2.1 Institutional arrangements

The institutional arrangements for M&E from national to sub-national level are described in the M&E Framework section of Zambia's 7th NDP (2017-2021). The Framework is premised on the principles of RBM and sets out the roles and responsibilities of all actors in the practice of M&E activities to contribute to the measurement of the overall development progress in the country (Government of Zambia, 2017: 131). A detailed implementation plan is in place to strengthen M&E in ministries and at district levels, starting with where programmes are being implemented. The MNDP has produced evaluation guidelines to start institutionalising and providing structure to evaluation across all government ministries, and a legislative act for M&E is under discussion. According to the NDP, implementation of the M&E Framework involves, among other strategies:

- Institutionalising the National Performance Framework and the Sector Performance Framework;
- Establishing M&E management information systems (MIS);
- Strengthening the national statistical system;
- Establishing and operationalising national and sector evaluation frameworks;
- Developing structured and standardised tools and systems for M&E;
- Developing a communication and dissemination strategy for sharing M&E products; and
- Strengthening relevant institutions through capacity development.



Connected to the 7th NDP are the five-year Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs), which are related to strategic budgeting and public financial management, as well as the annual budgets and corresponding sector strategic plans developed by each line ministry in government.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

The structures that deal with national level monitoring are Parliament, the Office of the Director General, the Ministry of Finance, and the MNDP (the custodian of the institutional arrangements for M&E in Zambia), within which the M&E division manages the M&E and research function in government. The MNDP also has sole responsibility for planning, such as mid-term planning, aided by the Ministry of Finance, however, there is minimal/inadequate use of monitoring data in planning, which is further constrained by being paper-based. At operational level, human resources are limited, which presents a challenge across all governmental institutional arrangements that practice M&E.

Currently, coordinating, budgeting and monitoring of M&E activities are the responsibility of the Sector Advisory Groups (SAGs) and sector ministries at sector level, the Provincial Development Coordinating Committee (PDCC) and provincial administration at provincial level, and the District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC), district administration and Area Development Committees (ADCs) at district level. Ward Development Committees (WDCs) have also been introduced at local level. These three spheres of monitoring present progress at a sectoral level through the Sector Advisory Groups (SAGs).

The SAGs, together with the Ministry of Planning and the Central Statistics Office (CSO) are the central government agencies that drive the establishment of national M&E tools and systems, while the MNDP's M&E division provides support to MPSAs to develop mechanisms and systems for monitoring implementation progress on interventions for improving development results and meeting medium- and long-term development objectives. The division also tracks delivery of public services and assesses the impact and appropriateness of policies, programmes and projects. Sector level monitoring is also filtered through Cluster Advisory Groups (CAGs), which are an assembly of sectors sharing common overall objectives.

Some line ministries have their own standalone M&E units, for example the Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture and Home Affairs, but in others, these functions are located in M&E positions within other departments or planning and budget units that sit within these ministries. However, despite having M&E units in a selected number of ministries, the general sentiment is that their primary responsibility is related to monitoring, and very little attention is paid to evaluation.

Various CSOs, such as the PMRC, Zambia Institute for Policy and Research (ZIPAR), Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), and Zambian Monitoring and Evaluation Association (ZaMEA), play a key role in government monitoring systems as well. The CSPR, for example, mainly conducts budget tracking, whereas ZaMEA is collaborating with the Ministries of Gender and Water and Sanitation to monitor their financial programmes.

Ironically, the role of development partners has contributed to the current coordination challenges in Zambia's programme performance monitoring. The sharing of information across development

partners, let alone with government, is weak, despite the joint-monitoring frameworks clause as espoused in the Paris Declaration. Although an aid policy was developed, it focused on coordination mechanisms but failed to stipulate what role government should play to ensure it gets the right information. Furthermore, despite the European Union (EU) spearheading the establishment of a MIS, perceived by many donors as the foundation for a government-wide monitoring and evaluation system (GWM&ES) to draw from, the challenges in putting the MIS in place have themselves led to delays in moving the institutionalisation of M&E forward. As such, donor engagement around evidence emerging from various donor-funded programmes has excluded the state and is an area that needs to be addressed.

2.3 Performance monitoring

While there is a growing culture for monitoring performance with demand for regular updates on line ministry results requested by the President, the function of monitoring at all levels of government remains weak and unaccounted for by M&E officials at most sectoral levels. The Planning and Budgeting Act regulates performance monitoring, but there are currently no guidelines in place for performance monitoring, and there is insufficient institutional support or technical capacity to implement performance monitoring well. Where there are quite robust systems in place at the line ministry level, such as in Health or Education, the capacity to implement these systems beyond these core ministries is limited. There is likewise limited capacity across government, and within the national statistical office in particular, to collect and monitor government programme performance in a way that is effective and appropriate. For example, there is insufficient capacity and inappropriate or lacking MIS to generate the necessary data to complete Annual Progress Reports (APRs). Even though the APRs use information from sectoral annual progress reports from MPSAs using agreed upon set guidelines and a standardised template for data collection to ensure completeness and consistency in reporting, late submission of some sector and provincial chapters, non-submission of some key sector reports despite repeated reminders, and failure to follow the agreed set of guidelines when reporting, which makes it difficult to track progress, all impede completion of the report.

The MNDP is in the process of establishing performance monitoring guidelines and there are performance contracts in place for all Permanent Secretaries in order to track whether key organisational objectives are being met at optimal levels, but other challenges that affect performance monitoring remain, such as the lack of capacity to interpret and engage with data, and the fact that the system is paper-based, which makes collation and analysis difficult. Additionally, it means that performance monitoring is not necessarily timely enough to allow for effective planning. Furthermore, despite the establishment of the GWM&ES in 2007, which articulated the structures, tools, strategies, and indicators significant for effective M&E, the bulk of government's focus has been on MIS, largely due to the strong partnership with donors active in the M&E space to coordinate the building blocks of a MIS. Some CSOs, departments, and other role players (such as the University of Zambia) do have capacity for monitoring performance, but are often under-resourced and balance multiple priorities. This gap needs to be bridged by way of harmonising decentralised institutional arrangements with key policy priorities (Government of the Republic of Zambia 2008).

3 Country evaluation system

3.1 Level of formalisation

As with the GWM&ES, the 6th NDP outlines the structures for monitoring, but not evaluation, from national to sub-national level, thus showing some decentralisation of monitoring in Zambia. However, there are no formal guiding policy on evaluations or evaluation standards, although a draft national M&E policy has been produced for tabling at Cabinet.

The legislation currently provides a limited entry point for ECD activities and, although evaluations are in line with the Planning, Budgeting and Statistical Bill, only a draft National Evaluation Policy (NEP) exists. Drafted in September 2017, it has yet to be adopted by the Zambian Cabinet for implementation, and this delay has had a negative effect on building a culture of evaluation and providing structure for the NES. Furthermore, the lack of a policy impacts on standardisation and institutionalisation of evaluations across the public sector. Currently, evaluations are not well coordinated, and there is no system that informs what evaluations should be undertaken, by who, and at what stage. In addition, while the draft NEP provides the Ministry of Finance with a mandate to support the creation of functional M&E departments/units in all MPSAs, there are concerns that the ministry will shift towards monitoring, given its auditing function.

Despite not having a formally adopted NEP or M&E policy, the 7th NDP underscores the importance of evaluation. It states: “Given the emphasis on results-based management, the culture of evaluating sector programmes and policies will be entrenched. Through continued collaboration with the sectors, emphasis will be placed on the need for periodically evaluating programmes in order to appraise strategies, document key lessons, and take corrective measures where necessary.” It also sets guidelines on when and how evaluations should be done: “As part of the programme for entrenching a culture of managing for results, sectors will be required to undertake and/or sustain the implementation of evaluations and policy studies that will inform planning and budgeting processes. In this regard, clusters will identify programmes to be evaluated.”

ZaMEA, in collaboration with key universities and think tanks such as the Centre of Excellence at the University of Zambia (UNZA), Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), University of Lusaka, National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), and Cavendish University, is also considering establishing national standards (CLEAR-AA Prime 2017). This is, however, expected to take some time and will require successful coordination to build an appropriate M&E curriculum. ZaMEA, together with the support of the MNDP and other stakeholders, developed a National Evaluation Advocacy Strategy in 2018. The purpose of the strategy is to advocate for the increased use of evaluation evidence by decision-makers and to create a stronger enabling environment for evaluation in Zambia.

3.2 Capacity of government to undertake evaluations

The capacity of the Public Investment Planning Department in the Ministry of National Planning is being built to conduct project appraisals before government approves any project, and this is being linked to the M&E department so that the relevant monitoring information and evaluation evidence can inform project investment planning. This is likely to be the starting point from where an evaluation system is built in terms of planning evaluations as part of the design of each of these projects.

However, although, the 7th NDP has incorporated and addressed the 5th and 6th NDP shortcomings, there are ongoing coordination, planning, budgeting, and monitoring challenges which affect evaluation practice in the country, particularly the public sector. Government fiscal constraints have resulted in limited resources for monitoring, let alone evaluations, and financing of M&E is generally a secondary consideration to ensuring there are resources for the delivery of programmes. Furthermore, evaluations are not commonly considered when results are defined and translated into programme plans. In addition, the structures of government within Zambia are highly centralised, with data collection at the local and district level fed straight to the national sphere of a line ministry, thus not only compromising capacity development in M&E at provincial and district levels, but also limiting their ability to draw on this information for monitoring purposes.

Some ministries have made inroads in establishing systems for data collection at the district level, however, as with line ministries' efforts to collect monitoring information and feed this into their own planning, this is limited by two main obstacles. The first is lack of coordination among donor-driven data collection systems. The parallel data collection structures created through the significant interventions by donors together with the limited coordination among donors poses a challenge to building institutions that support robust planning (de Waal et al. 2014). Given the degree of donor involvement in programme implementation, the importance of this should not be discounted. The second is an absence of data collection systems or analysis of data collected through national surveys or the census below the district level. Strengthening district capacity for collecting information and analysing it is central to addressing this problem. In view of this, the MNDP is in the process of establishing performance planning guidelines.

Another significant impediment to the monitoring capabilities of national government is that, while the government has established M&E units within departments and line ministries, many are either inadequately staffed or staffed with officials who have limited knowledge and technical skills to carry out evaluations. Moreover, there are no standalone evaluation units in the ministries. As a result of this lack of internal evaluation experts, external evaluation consultants are then engaged to conduct evaluations. While this does ensure greater transparency and impartiality, it also means that internal M&E experts do not get the opportunity to develop their capacity.

Despite these shortcomings, government has been conducting evaluations since 2005. For example, the Ministry of Finance commissioned an evaluation on the impact of tax incentives in 2012 and an evaluation of the 5th NDP (2006-2010) in 2013/14. In 2016, the Cabinet Office commissioned an evaluation of the Private Sector Reform Programme Phase II (2009-2014) and the MNDP commissioned an evaluation on the evaluation capacities in government and among service providers, and in 2017, the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development, Ministry of National Development Planning, and ZIPAR commissioned an evaluation on the Youth Development Fund. In fact, analysis of the African Evaluation Database (AfRED) database on evaluations carried out across 12 countries from 2005 to 2015 revealed that the government of Zambia commissioned 130 evaluations during this period.

It is important to note, however, that while the government is clearly committed to evaluations, the bulk of evaluations are co-commissioned and managed by donors, such as UNICEF and the Deutsche

Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It is therefore imperative that steps are taken to build internal systems so that the findings from these donor-funded evaluations can inform government decision-making as it relates to their related programmes.

3.3 Approach to evaluations

The results of this diagnostic study highlight that the way in which evaluations are conducted in the public sector is fragmented, and the dissemination of evaluation results is neither systematised nor widely distributed. This is largely because evaluations are mostly conducted by external evaluators. Where dissemination of results is part of complying with donor requirements, ministries and departments tend to do better in this regard. For example, in 2015 the Ministry of Health, Education and Agriculture published a report with key findings and recommendations from the Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance) Full Country Evaluations for the period 2013-2016, with the aim of examining and quantifying the challenges and drivers of immunisation programme improvement in Bangladesh, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zambia. The report was made available to all key stakeholders, including government, donors, and the public.

Discussions with stakeholders as part of the diagnostic study revealed that another barrier to dissemination is that there is currently no repository accessible to the public. Ministries, departments and sectors disseminate their evaluation findings in 'silos' and there are limited communication strategies used to expand the reach of evaluation findings. For instance, even where there are staff with a communications role, often they do not have a directive around disseminating evaluation findings. Nonetheless, the MNDP does disseminate some of their evaluation findings through workshops and websites and many stakeholders were optimistic about the potential to bring media into evaluation dissemination, although these relationships have not been built as yet.

3.4 Use of evaluations

The government of Zambia clearly values the role of evaluations in informing budgets, planning, and decision-making, as seen in the 7th NDP, which builds strongly on lessons from the evaluation of previous NDPs, and there are many examples of evaluation evidence being used. However, generally, the use of evaluations in the public sector is limited. This is largely due to a lack of sound methodology, inherently leading to limited credibility of these evaluations' findings. Nevertheless, a culture of evaluative thinking and evaluation practice is beginning to emerge.

Another constraint to effective use of evaluation results by government is the lack of a central repository for evaluations. Anecdotal reports cited cases where evaluation results were controversial and therefore withheld, or where organisations were concerned that results had to be presented in a 'sensitive' manner for fear of negative results for future funding or relationships. There may also be political limitations to the use of evaluation results; these don't seem to be driven by systemic cultural issues, but rather a lack of information about the purpose of evaluations, with many seeing this as an audit function or fearing consequences of 'negative' evaluation findings.

4 Capacity-building for evaluations

4.1 Professionalisation of evaluation

ZaMEA, which has over 350 paid memberships and 15 institutional memberships, is currently advocating for and spearheading the process of the professionalisation of M&E in collaboration with government (MNDP). This includes advocating for a public sector curriculisation. However, the professionalisation of evaluation faces a number of challenges, including the lack of clarity on demand and career pathing, which is hindering the growth of evaluation practice. In addition, the heavy use of external evaluation consultants not only means, as mentioned, that local evaluators do not get the opportunity to develop their capacity, but also that the sector does not attract young evaluators as they do not see how they can build a career as an evaluator.

4.2 Provision of training and other capacity-building initiatives

The NDP stipulates that government will continue to strengthen the capacity of M&E officers in MPSAs by providing relevant skills and expertise to effectively monitor and evaluate development programmes, such as through working with academia to build capacity for M&E practitioners from MPSAs on a sustainable basis. At the moment, however, most capacity-building is focused on monitoring and reporting. Evaluation is often neglected, and in cases where evaluation topics are presented, they are usually pitched at an abstract/conceptual rather than practical level, without contextualising the Zambian situation. This gap in evaluation-focused skills development opportunities is compounded by the limited willingness/ability to pay for evaluation capacity development/training, even where there is a strong culture of skills development, and the lack of a standardised competency framework. This is further hampered by limited or inadequate technical expertise in some institutions providing ECD training.

On the other hand, there are several institutions that offer effective training, such as the INESOR course on RBM, which covers a wide range of topics and is accredited by UNZA as a certificate of attendance. NIPA also offers a RBM and basic M&E training accredited at certificate and diploma levels. UNZA itself offers a postgraduate diploma on M&E, as well as short courses in development studies that have a monitoring focus. An undergraduate degree on M&E as well as peer-reviewed elective modules is under development. At the University of Lusaka (UNILUS), evaluation is not offered as a standalone programme, but rather included in major courses of project management and performance management.

No institution offers an evaluation credit-bearing course at present, but it has been suggested that ZaMEA work in partnership with the public sector to deliver training, particularly for the Ministries of Education, Defence, and Health. Furthermore, ZAMEA has been coordinating with key Zambian universities in working towards the establishment of national norms and standards for evaluation competencies required to be an evaluator in Zambia. This will form the basis for curriculum development and degree formation in selected universities interested in specializing in M&E offerings. ZaMEA currently hosts M&E conferences for various sectors, including CSOs and the public sector, and liaises with the PMRC to pull this information together. The MNDP and MPSA also have a role to play in supporting evaluation capacity-building across government.

CLEAR-AA has developed an evaluation curriculum proposal, as requested and being considered by UNICEF and the MNDP. The curriculum will incorporate a train-the-trainer component, and it is intended that ZaMEA, MNDP and UNICEF will choose one or more "anchor HEIs" to offer the evaluation curriculum. Although the initial proposal is for the development of a six-month certificate course, UNICEF and the MNDP are keen to explore the development of a standardised, high-quality post-graduate diploma in M&E, as well as a shorter 10-day course for executives.

4.3 Evidence production and research

There is capacity to generate useful evidence outside of government, such as through universities or think tanks, but these are not necessarily recognised or used to a large extent, and there are varying levels of confidence on the validity of the evidence they produce. However, some local research and evaluation organisations are increasingly providing support to government in its planning around evidence and are also being more regularly commissioned to carry out research relating to specific government programmes. For example, ZIPAR, which recently, in collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development, conducted an evaluation on the Youth Development Fund in order to better assess the performance of the initiative. ZIPAR carries out regular research related to government programmes and plays a useful convening role in driving discussion and debate on these research findings. PMRC also generates useful evidence for government, such as policy analysis and policy briefs, and the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI), a not-for-profit organisation, works collaboratively with public and private stakeholders and publishes technical, policy, and working papers as well.

5 Conclusion

As the demand for improved public sector management in Zambia grows, and monitoring practice gains momentum, the need for a functioning monitoring system becomes more pressing, as does the strengthening of evaluation systems. It is clear that government recognises evaluation as a vital management tool able to influence informed decisions and policy-making, and is trying to build the capacity of ministries at individual and institutional level to ensure a shift towards a culture of evaluations. Evaluation guidelines are already in place, efforts to standardise these in law are underway, and the NEP has gone to cabinet for approval. Once approved, it is anticipated that the policy will form the basis for a NES that can encourage a culture of learning by institutionalising evaluation practice across government.

The culture of defining results and planning may still be in its infancy, but it has been given prominence within the last four years. A key challenge in terms of shifting norms and shaping axiologies, however, is that not all ministries speak about results. Nevertheless, there is political will to improve results in Zambia with growing pressure on planning to draw on the relevant evidence to achieve this. For example, the current president's demand for demonstrating results has required all permanent secretaries to brief him on a quarterly basis as to what and where the bottlenecks are and how they are being addressed. In addition, it is key that the constraints encountered in Zambia's institutional arrangements are addressed, such as by providing adequate resources to support planning and programmatic outputs, giving staff detailed orientation on M&E processes and recommendations to strengthen human resources.

Importantly, a culture of evidence use and organisational learning from M&E evidence needs to be embedded in a manner that creates an enabling environment to champion M&E. Given the innate trade-off of primary data collection, further research is needed to fill the cultural gap in defining results and planning (Government of the Republic of Zambia 2008).

6 References

de Waal, A. A., Goedegebuure, R., Mulimbika, T. (2014). *Creating high performance governmental organisations in Zambia*. African Journal of Business & Economic Research, 9, 2357-2386.

CIVICUS & ZCSD (n.d). *The status of Civil Society in Zambia: Challenges and Future Prospects*.

CLEAR-AA (2017). *Progress Index for Monitoring and Evaluation*. University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. Seventh National Development Plan (2017-2021).

Government of the Republic of Zambia. Sixth National Development Plan (2011-2015).

Government of the Republic of Zambia. Fifth National Development Plan (2006-2010).

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2005). Public service management component final report. Lusaka.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2006). Vision 2030: A prosperous middle-income nation by 2030. Lusaka.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2008). Annual report of the public service management component. Lusaka, Zambia: Public Service Management Secretariat, Cabinet Office.

Kaunda, S. & Deka, B (2018). *Towards successful implementation of the seventh National Development Plan: The importance of mind-set shift in the implementation of the 7th NDP.* PMRC analysis.

Kaunda, S (n.d). *The National Planning and Budgeting Policy: Fundamental to Government's ability to deliver on Zambia's Development Agenda*. PMRC policy analysis. Available on: https://pmrczambia.com.

Lazaro, B. (2015). Comparative Study on the Institutionalisation of Evaluation in Europe and Latin America. Programme for Social Cohesion in Latin America.

Leeuw, F. & Furubo, J., 2008. Evaluation Systems: What are they and why Study them?. Evaluation, 14(2), pp. 157-169. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389007087537

Moodley, J. Govender, M & Mulenga, O (2016). Government Sector Evaluation Needs Assessment: Diagnostic Report. DNA Economics; UNICEF.

Ramasobana, M (2016). Zambia Country Profile.

Republic of Zambia. (2005). Public service management component final report. Lusaka.

Republic of Zambia (2006). A prosperous vision of Middle Income Nation by 2030; Vision 2030.

Republic of Zambia (2014). National Planning and Budgeting Policy. Ministry of Finance; Lusaka

Republic of Zambia (2017). *Zambia: Policy Decisions relating to Green Growth and Poverty*. Waves 2nd NCA Policy Forum. The Hague, Netherlands.

UNEG. 2012. National Evaluation Capacity Development: Practical tips on how to strengthen National Evaluation Systems. http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1205

Appendix 1: Stakeholder map

	Anchor stakeholder	Core stakeholder	Stakeholder	Stakeholder	Additional stakeholders
1. Defining results and planning	MNDP	Line departments	(CSOs) like (PMRC) (ZIPAR)	ZaMEA	
2. Performance monitoring	MNDP	MPSA	CSOs (PMRC, ZIPAR)	VOPES (ZaMEA)	Local government Departments
3. Institutional arrangements	MNDP Office of the President	Parliament	GIZ and UNICEF	ZaMEA	CSOs, cooperating partners, etc.
4. Evidence production and research	National Statistical Office	Universities	INESOR, ZIPAR	ZAMEA	Think tanks/ Consultancies
5. Evaluation practice	MNDP	ZaMEA	Universities	Consultancies /CSOs	Donors (GIZ, UNICEF)
6. Disseminating evaluation results	MNDP	Line ministries	Media	Universities	ZaMEA
7. Using evaluation findings	Cabinet (Parliament)	MNDP	Civil society	Donors	Local government
8. Capacity-building	National Institute of Public Administration	UNICEF	UNZA, UNLIUS	ZaMEA	CLEAR-AA
9. Shifting norms	MNDP	Multilaterals	Donors	Civil society	
10. Shaping axiologies	Political parties	Civil society, religious groups	Thought/ cultural leaders	Traditional leaders	Media