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Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in Five African Countries

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CLEAR-AA
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Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results
ANGLOPHONE AFRICA

MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS IN FIVE AFRICAN COUNTRIES

AUGUST 2019



GHANA
KENYA
RWANDA
UGANDA
ZAMBIA

CONTENTS

Foreword	iii
Introduction	1
The Big Picture	1
Ghana	2
Kenya	5
Rwanda	7
Uganda	9
Zambia	11
Conclusion	12

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FOREWORD FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CLEAR-AA

African governments are increasingly creating Monitoring and Evaluation Systems to measure their performance, generate evidence on what is working and what is not. This is an important development. Unlike donor-driven M&E systems that have previously dominated the continent, these country-led systems increase government ownership of monitoring and evaluation generated evidence. They offer better opportunities for governments to identify areas where policies and programmes are having effect and where they are not, and therefore learn from implementation. Country led systems also make sure that monitoring and evaluation evidence generated answer pertinent questions faced by governments instead of merely fulfilling donor requirements. This is why the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) takes a keen interest in country-led M&E systems. Over the years the Centre has worked with governments in different African countries to strengthen M&E systems. We aim to contribute to knowledge generation of the nature, form, and function of these emerging systems on an ongoing basis.

From February 2018, CLEAR-AA conducted situation analyses to understand the development and functioning of M&E systems in five Anglophone African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia. Our systemic approach guided our explorations of the different areas that make up a functional M&E system. The situation analyses are intended as important contributions to the existing knowledge base about M&E systems in Africa. The analyses complement the work the done by Twende Mbele and others.

The findings presented in this document show how systems for M&E in countries of focus are slowly growing. These M&E systems differ significantly in maturity, capacity, and effectiveness. Governments are increasingly taking M&E seriously, they are investing in establishing M&E units, departments, ministries and developing M&E policies to guide the practice. M&E is slowly being institutionalised and systematised. However, M&E systems remain constrained by inadequate financial and human resource allocation. Much work is still needed to adapt methods and approaches for Monitoring and Evaluation to the context of most governments in the continent to meet increasing demands from the government and its people.

In our work, we have found that in all countries there are many organisations with a keen interest in strengthening national M&E capacity these include international development partners, UN agencies, International M&E capacity building institutions, and local universities providing training, Voluntary Organisation for Professional Evaluation amongst others. Growing national M&E capacity in countries would allow partners to maximise the impact of their work and bring about better development outcomes. We hope that findings presented here and in other reports mapping M&E systems in Africa help different stakeholders target their interventions and that this contributes to systematic and coordinated efforts to strengthen M&E capacity.

We wish to thank the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency for the financial support that made the work possible. To our country partners who gave their time to respond to questions, attended validation workshops and stakeholders mapping exercises, we hope the work will be of use in-country to guide advocacy work around M&E and local interventions to strengthen M&E capacity. Lastly, CLEAR-AA staff who carried out situation analyses work in different countries, wrote the respective country reports and contributed to compiling this report. Their work is greatly appreciated.

Prof. Dugan Fraser

CLEAR-AA Director

INTRODUCTION

Growth of M&E systems in African governments is a noteworthy development. It signals maturity in administration, interest in results and perhaps response to growing demand for accountability from civil society. Functional M&E systems embedded in public service management processes can enable governments to make policy and management decisions informed by evidence of what work and does not in their context. It helps government better target scarce resources towards interventions that are likely to have benefits for society.

To ensure that our capacity development and systems strengthening work is nuanced, rigorous and uniform, we have identified the 10 functions of a national evaluation system and developed a holistic framework for analysing monitoring and evaluation capacity in any Anglophone African country. The framework guides CLEAR-AA and its development partners to bring a more sophisticated understanding to M&E systems and to planning capacity development and system strengthening interventions.

The framework elements we use in this report are:

- national context
- government approach to monitoring and evaluation
- monitoring and evaluation situation in legislatures
- monitoring and evaluation situation among non-state stakeholders.

The situation analyses were carried out through document reviews, including of policies and national development plans. Qualitative data was collected through indepth, face-to-face interviews with key government and non-state informants. Although primary data collection was relatively limited, the findings from the document review show a degree of consistency that gives us confidence in the validity of the findings and analyses.

"CLEAR-AA believes that a strong grounding in the local context and a learning-through-practice approach will drive indigenisation and innovation in the M&E field."

THE BIG PICTURE

Our findings indicate that:

- Governments in the countries we reviewed prioritised the development of monitoring and evaluation systems based on the principles of results-based management.
- Monitoring systems are more advanced than evaluation because legislation requires ministries, departments and agencies to periodically report on performance.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems are not distinct from the political and administrative systems in which they exist, and their development is largely influenced by state architecture, political and ideological priorities, and financial and human capacities.
- There is a wide array of needs across the countries, and hence there is no formula for capacity-building and system(s) strengthening. M&E systems are influenced by national context, values, culture, financial and human resources and socio-political dynamics.
- Collaboration on evaluations and research between government, civil society organisations and academia is limited, hence various stakeholders work in silos.
- Governance mechanisms for data processes are inadequate and cannot support M&E efforts, compromising the uptake of results.
- Monitoring and evaluation courses are offered by higher education institutions, private consultancies and Voluntary Organisations for Professional Evaluation. The courses are pitched at different levels: certificate, diploma, Master's and Doctor of Philosophy. Generally, courses are biased towards monitoring, hence there are insufficient evaluators in the public sector.

GHANA



QUICK LOOK: M&E in GHANA

What makes Ghana stand out?

- Ghana's open-door policy for engaging with non-state actors brings diversity and skills to public sector M&E.
- Strong Voluntary Organisation for Professional Evaluation – the Ghana Monitoring and Evaluation Forum with legitimacy to convene and lead M&E discussions and developments.

Strengths

- The implementation of priority programmes is directly overseen by the Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Many diverse academic programmes are sprouting in the M&E space.

Challenges

- The lack of an approved national M&E policy inhibits structuring and institutionalising of M&E.
- Evaluations are donor-driven so there is little room for the indigenisation of M&E practice.
- Evaluation findings are only used in a limited way for evidence-informed decision-making, partly because in government there is inadequate capacity within to drive M&E agenda, the generation of evaluation evidence and its use.

What is Ghana like, economically and socially, in 2019?

Ghana has had 30 years of consistent economic growth, driven by successful poverty reduction programmes and economic reforms. The standard of living and public health and education have improved remarkably over this period.

Ghana's president has demonstrated high levels of commitment to evidence-informed decision-making. How else is public sector M&E being promoted and strengthened in Ghana?

Advocacy for M&E is driven mainly by Ghana's Voluntary Organisation for Professional Evaluation –the Ghana Monitoring and Evaluation Forum. But more recently, the Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation is also promoting M&E. Public sector M&E practice has been strengthened over the years by training and technical backstopping. Many donors require progress reports and evaluations from the government sectors they support, which also strengthens M&E capacity. Recently, Ghana passed the Right to Information Act (2019), which is also expected to deepen the demand for evidence-informed decisions.

How is the appetite for M&E being bedded down institutionally?

Monitoring is well institutionalised in Ghana's public sector, with various structures, systems and processes to support it. But evaluation is proving more difficult to institutionalise, given the varying levels of technical capacity and the complexities of generating evaluation evidence in Ghana's emerging M&E space. A National Evaluation Policy, drafted in 2018, is set to be approved by Cabinet by the end of 2019. Such a policy will further institutionalise M&E by government.

Between 2003 and 2016, the management of Ghana's M&E framework was within the mandate of the National Development Planning Commission. How has that changed?

The National Development Planning Commission has the constitutional mandate to monitor, evaluate and coordinate all development programmes in Ghana. This mandate came into force in 1992. A formal M&E framework began with the implementation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2003.

In 2017, the Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation was established specifically to track the presidential priorities outlined in the new governing party's 2016 manifesto. The National Development Planning Commission still monitors, evaluates and coordinates national development programmes of all kinds, while the ministry oversees only flagship government programmes and projects, using real-time monitoring and rapid evaluations.

How is M&E managed at the lower levels of government?

Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Divisions are responsible for ministerial, departmental and agency M&E activities,

as well as sectoral M&E. M&E activities in metros, municipalities and districts are the responsibility of District Planning and Coordinating Units.

What is the relationship between strategic planning and reporting in Ghana?

Districts and sectors develop Medium-Term Development Plans, with guidelines issued by the National Development Planning Commission including alignment with the National Decentralisation Policy Framework. The district and sector plans are aggregated to produce the national Medium-Term Development Plan. Districts and sectors also submit quarterly implementation reports, which the National Development Planning Commission collates into Annual Progress Reports. The Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation submits quarterly reports to Cabinet.

Evidence from evaluations and the Annual Progress Reports is expected to feed into the planning cycle. Often this does not happen, largely due to late submission of Annual Progress Reports. Another limitation in the planning cycle is that there are few mechanisms for citizens' inputs into development plans other than occasional ad hoc representations.

Apart from data in the Annual Progress Reports, what other data is available to the National Development Planning Commission?

The National Development Planning Commission collaborates with the Ghana Statistical Service and gets data directly from field visits and surveys. Further, the Constitution of Ghana provides for the permanent representation of the Ghana Statistical Service on the Commission. The Commission often makes specific requests for data from the service, which is drawn from specific projects such as Ghana Living Standard Surveys and the Housing and Population census.

Currently, the Commission manages its database manually. It requests information on policies, programmes and projects from ministries, departments and agencies through its project register instrument. The manual system is unable to deliver data for decision-making timeously, and the Commission is working on acquiring a Management Information System. The Management Information System will be hosted by the Commission but managed in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and the Ghana Statistical Service. The Management Information System will allow all ministries, departments and agencies to supply real-time data or information for planning and decision-making.

Ghana's Parliament has evolved substantially since independence, and the development of a multiparty democracy has brought changes in Parliament's culture and organisational structure. How do these changes advance a culture of evidence-informed decision-making?

Parliament's capacity for evidence-informed decision-making is developing, but systems and procedures need to be strengthened. A clear strategic institutional direction is lacking, which compromises a concerted strengthening effort.

Ongoing tension between formal M&E procedures and the political interests that influence MPs is ongoing, even though MPs are required to use evidence in Parliamentary inquiries, budget hearings and debate and fact-finding missions, among others.

M&E capacity within Parliament is another challenge. Parliament's research unit lacks the capacity to broker the use evaluation findings for decision-making by MPs, and Parliaments poverty alleviation subcommittee, which scrutinises M&E findings lacks technical M&E capacity to carry out its mandate. Nevertheless, there are indications that there is appetite to use evidence in Ghana parliament. Recently, Parliament set the the premium for the National Health Insurance based on evidence from an evaluation.

What is Ghana doing to build professional M&E practitioners and build M&E capacity in the public sector?

A number of academic institutions are providing academic M&E programmes in Ghana. The University of Ghana's School of Public Health, for example, has a Master's degree in Public Health with an M&E option, and its Business School awaits accreditation to launch a Master's programme in M&E. This is a good indication of intended professionalisation of the M&E sector.

In 2017, CLEAR-AA and the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration began the Development Evaluation Training Programme in Africa (Harmattan School) for executives and M&E practitioners in the public sector. In February 2018, CLEAR-AA and the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration started running a Postgraduate Diploma Programme in Monitoring and Evaluation. Significant M&E skills and capacity are already in evidence among public sector staff.

The Ghana Monitoring and Evaluation Forum supports the provision of M&E training, both formally and informally.

How does Ghana encourage organised civil society's participation in policymaking?

Ghana has long been well known for its vibrant Civil Society Organisation sector. Government has made attempts to draw Civil Society Organisations participation in public policy processes. Since 2005, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning has introduced an open-door policy to encourage Civil Society Organisations to make inputs into the preparation of the national budget. The ministry uses advertisements to invite civil society actors to submit memoranda on issues that could inform Ghana's resource allocation priorities. The National Development Planning Commission invites Civil Society Organisations to national planning and policymaking meetings. At the commission, Civil Society Organisations are grouped into sectors for discussions and subsequent inputs into decision-making and policymaking. At the regional and district levels, Civil Society Organisations are co-opted into planning and decision-making meetings and forums.

Civil Society Organisations are needed in policymaking in Ghana, mainly because government institutions have not been able to meet civil society's demands for sustainable and inclusive development.

KENYA



QUICK LOOK: M&E in KENYA

What makes Kenya stand out?

- Integrated M&E systems at the national and county levels are well institutionalised.
- Existing culture of monitoring and evaluation with more than 10 years experience in implementing National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System.

Strengths

- The national and county stakeholder forums are likely to ensure that key evaluation reports get validated and disseminated.
- There is an increasing demand for Big Four Agenda results, with increasing requests to the Monitoring and Evaluation Department for M&E support.

Challenges

- The delays in approving the M&E policy mean that M&E practice is likely to remain unsystematised.
- There are not enough human and financial resources in the public sector for doing M&E.

What are the main development challenges and priorities in Kenya right now?

The Kenyan economy has grown, but Kenyan society remains unequal by income, by gender, and by geographical location. Kenya's development priorities under the Presidency's Big Four Agenda, launched in December 2017, are manufacturing, universal healthcare, affordable housing, and food security. The agenda is largely informed by Kenya's longer-term development blueprint, Vision 2030.

How successful have been efforts to institutionalise M&E in the public service sector?

In 2000, the IMF/World Bank Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper precipitated Kenya's early attempts at a Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System. Before that, M&E was ad hoc and uncoordinated, with no system. M&E is valued in the public sector insofar as it is linked to the imperative to measure progress on national priority plans.

Current M&E infrastructure includes: a draft M&E policy; the Monitoring and Evaluation Department in National Treasury and Planning; the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System; and the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System. Further, a minimum of 1% of the development budget is allocated to evaluations.

Any specific blockages?

The development national and county M&E systems has increased government's demand for M&E. But inadequate capacity to supply monitoring data and evaluation studies, on the demand side to commission and manage evaluations. Financial resources for M&E are also lacking. The consequences of such challenges are that government does fewer evaluations, and that both government and civil society organisations rely on international experts to do evaluations.

How is M&E presently managed and coordinated?

The Monitoring and Evaluation Department coordinates all government's M&E activities, primarily through the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System. The department also provides technical support to public sector institutions to build technical capacity and inculcate M&E practice. Ministerial M&E Committees in each line ministry coordinate ministerial M&E activities, collect information and prepare reports.

Under the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System, County Monitoring and Evaluation Committees are the key policy advisory bodies. They validate and approve county M&E documents, including plans, progress reports, indicator handbooks, and standards and guidelines.

What is the relationship between Planning and M&E?

Decentralised planning presents challenges for coordinating and harmonising plans and reports between the different levels of government. Reports from directorates, departments, semi-autonomous government agencies and non-state

actors within a sub-sector feed into quarterly and annual M&E reports prepared by ministerial committees collaborating with Central Project Planning and Monitoring Units.

How are official statistics managed?

The Statistics Act (2006) specifically mandates the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics as the principal government agency for collecting, analysing and disseminating statistical data, and as the custodian of official statistics.

How is M&E being integrated into Parliamentary processes?

Members of Parliament are driven to use evidence by the oversight of the parliamentary assembly. Further, the African Parliamentary Network on Development Evaluation has been instrumental in shaping evidence use in Kenya by providing platforms for peer learning and sharing.

In 2010, Kenya's new Constitution opened the way for CSOs to collaborate with government on policy direction. How is this playing out in the M&E space?

Civil Society Organisations are recognised through the Public Benefit Organisations Act (2013), which provides a platform for CSOs to strengthen government accountability. But there is a culture of mistrust and suspicion among Civil Society Organisations and other non-state actors in public development programmes. The consequences are that organisations tend not to share their institutional M&E reports optimally, including with government.

What is the status of capacity-building and professional training in M&E in Kenya?

Several Kenyan institutions provide capacity-building in M&E. The Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training and the African Institute for Development Policy are significant institutions, and parliamentarians at national and county level benefit from their M&E offerings. The Monitoring and Evaluation Department also provides training, including guidelines for setting up M&E systems and support to counties to develop their own M&E policies.

Seven higher education institutions provide formal M&E qualifications. In the main, M&E courses are offered as part of other professional qualifications. Some institutions offer M&E certificates and diplomas. The Evaluation Society of Kenya, the country's Voluntary Organisation for Professional Evaluation, is spearheading the professionalisation of M&E, in collaboration with the Monitoring and Evaluation Department and universities.



RWANDA

QUICK LOOK: M&E in RWANDA

What makes Rwanda stand out?

- The Results-Based Management policy has been in place since August 2015.
- Rwanda is driven by the need to achieve results.

Strengths

- The executive and administration will to achieve results is a powerful incentive for M&E practice.

Challenges

- There are not enough public sector M&E experts.
- The demand for M&E exceeds the supply.
- There is not enough funding for M&E services.

Rwanda has been politically stable since the 1994 genocide. What are the country's key post-1994 development achievements?

Key national achievements over the last 25 years include: rapid economic growth and reduced poverty; low government debt; a market-friendly policy environment; zero tolerance for corruption; a comprehensive programme of investment in energy, agriculture, ICT and tourism; and a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. Rwanda aspires to be a middle-income country by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050.

What guides Rwanda on the path to achieve these broad goals?

A series of seven-year National Strategies for Transformation informs Rwanda's broad goals. Achieving Rwanda's sectoral strategies is closely intertwined with the Sustainable Development Goals.

How is M&E positioned in Rwanda's development approach?

M&E in Rwanda began with a process for macroeconomic monitoring in 2003, supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. M&E practice has grown over the last 16 years and is fast becoming a government-led system integrated with planning. The first attempt at consolidating M&E at a national level was brought about by legislative processes for decentralisation, aimed at setting out M&E requirements at the local level. Today, the Rwandan government strongly supports the use of monitoring and evaluation evidence in planning, policy and decision making.

How does government coordinate M&E?

Unlike other countries where planning, monitoring, and evaluation are located in a standalone ministry, in Rwanda these functions are coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, guided by the 2015 Results-Based Management policy, which provides indepth descriptions of monitoring, evaluation and planning processes and the roles of all stakeholders. The Ministry plays a critical role in ensuring that the Results-Based Management policy with all its prescripts is applied across government. Each ministry and district prepares a quarterly progress report and submits it to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The ministry assesses the reports and submits a consolidated report to the Office of the Prime Minister.

How is data collected for M&E?

The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda supports sectors or institutions in defining the metadata of agreed indicators, the frequency of data collection, and data quality assurance, among others.

What is the relationship between Planning and M&E?

The Government Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System informs the national planning process. The system provides evidence on the implementation of the national planning framework and informs decisions for adjustments to national, sectoral and institutional planning. Each of the medium-term and annual planning documents includes a results framework for M&E purposes.

The Parliament of Rwanda has its own M&E system, built into its institutional structure. How does this system work?

Both houses, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, have dedicated M&E Officers. M&E Officers work with Planning Officers to monitor progress on planned activities. They present findings to the Clerk, as the permanent secretary of Parliament, who then engages with the portfolio committees, which in turn engage with ministries or departments. Every year, Parliament can ask ministries to submit their year plans. And during the course of the year, ministries present their plans and progress to parliamentary committees, including budget committees.

The Senate is guided by a five-year strategic plan that is informed by an evaluation of the previous five-year plan. The plan outlines an M&E framework that includes: regular, ongoing monitoring; an annual assessment of the plan; an independent mid-term evaluation aimed at improving strategies where there are challenges; and a final evaluation that will inform the next five-year plan.

Further, Parliament has its own researchers. They analyse secondary data – departmental reports, research reports – but also do field visits to cross-check this information. Findings are then presented to MPs for oversight through committee structures.

What about civil society?

Government has put in systems to regulate, support and create an enabling environment for CSOs in Rwanda. The Rwanda Governance Board is the custodian of all CSOs. Planning at all levels in central and local government follows a participatory process, bringing on board civil society at all levels so that priorities relevant to all stakeholders are taken into account.

CSOs collaborate with the Rwandan government to implement programmes, but they tend to do M&E independent of the government M&E system. However, an independent, leading research institution – the Institute for Policy Analysis and Research – does do the evaluations of national performance contracts for government.

What role does Rwanda's Voluntary Organisation for Professional Evaluation play in supporting M&E?

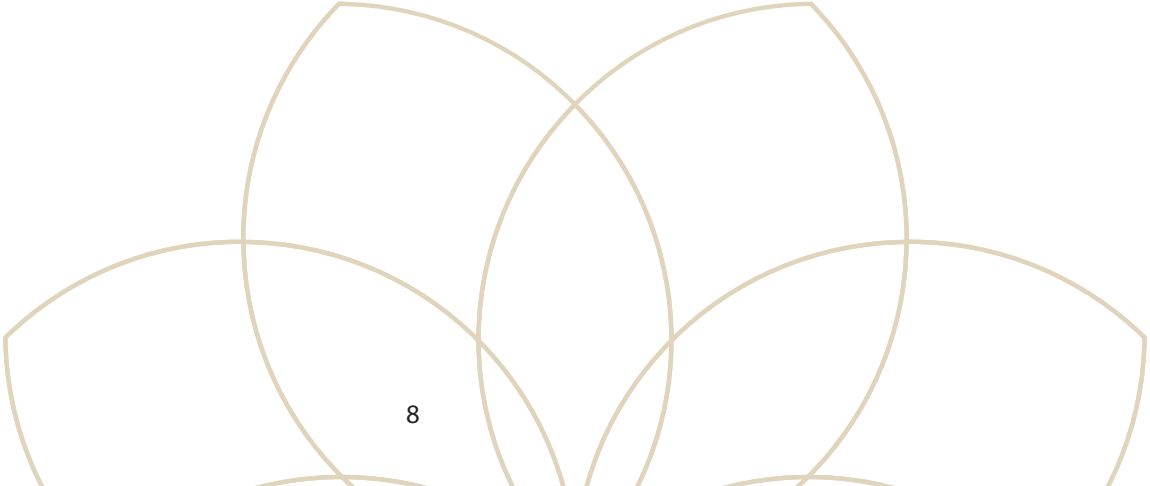
The Rwandan M&E Society was launched in November 2016 and is fully registered with the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA), and has limited membership, despite the fact that it boasts a selection of very influential founding members with good contacts within the various ministries in their individual capacity.

What level of M&E capacity does Rwanda have?

In some government institutions, M&E services are reportedly provided by consulting companies, including building data systems and training in M&E fundamentals by Pricewaterhouse Coopers.

How is Rwanda addressing its lack of M&E capacity?

Rwanda has a capacity development agency, tasked with capacitating the entire government, including in M&E. The Capacity Development and Employment Board, a state-funded agency responsible for government wide capacity development carries out training through the Rwandan Management Institute for the public service. The agency offers limited and somewhat theoretical M&E programmes. The African Institute for Mathematical Sciences has displayed the ability to train in data science and data systems, however, such training is not tailored for government officials. The University of Rwanda offers no specialised M&E programme, though there are some M&E modules in its professional degree programmes in health and business administration.



UGANDA



QUICK LOOK: M&E in UGANDA

What makes Uganda stand out?

- The National Evaluation System has been formalised since 2011.
- The National Evaluation System and the National Evaluation Policy are well institutionalised among centre of government institutions.

Strengths

- The National Evaluation Policy provides a framework for M&E.
- New good practices are emerging as a result of the institutionalised National Evaluation System.
- Government has established its own evaluation facility, and actively seeks partnerships to strengthen M&E capacity.

Challenges

- The National Evaluation System is difficult to coordinate because of financial and technical constraints. Parallel systems in different spheres of government have emerged as a result.
- Many sectors do not have sector strategy plans with results frameworks aligned with the National Development Plan.
- Evaluations are not used to their full because of a lack of awareness of the available M&E infrastructure.

What are the country's main development challenges?

Over 2015/16-2019/20, the government of Uganda is pursuing its National Development Plan II, whose key development priorities are agriculture, tourism, minerals, oil and gas, infrastructure, and human capital development, in line with Uganda Vision 2040. Uganda faces numerous challenges: core projects are slow to be implemented; planning and budgeting are not aligned; the results framework of the National Development Plan II is inadequate; the public sector has inadequate management; and non-state actors are involved in only a limited way.

What are the indications that M&E for public decision-making is valued in Uganda?

In 2011, Uganda established the National Evaluation System. The National Evaluation System institutionalised evaluation across government defining what is meant by evaluation, how they are carried out and roles and responsibilities. Monitoring and Evaluation in Uganda is directly linked to government's need to measure progress on its various development plans.

Who are the key government institutions coordinating M&E?

The Office of the Prime Minister is the custodian of the National Evaluation System and is responsible for coordinating evaluations across government. The Office produced the National M&E Policy and Evaluation Guidelines to structure and institutionalise the evaluation function across ministries, departments and agencies. The National Planning Authority leads M&E on medium-term and long-term national development goals and plans. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development plays a role in mobilising and releasing funds for M&E across government.

What is the relationship between planning and monitoring?

Performance monitoring reports are produced and disseminated at various levels. A national development report is produced annually by the National Planning Agency and submitted to Parliament. The Office of the Prime Minister produces Annual Performance Reports annually and semi-annually to facilitate Cabinet's review of government performance.

Sector Annual Performance Reports provide a key performance review of the previous year's Budget Framework Papers and budget appropriation by Parliament. But aligning sector plans to the national plan is a challenge: only 8 of the 18 sectors have sector strategy plans with fairly well-developed results frameworks aligned to the National Development Plan.

At the local government level, reports are produced by districts and submitted to the Ministry of Local Government for sharing at the Joint Annual Review of Decentralisation.

What is the Ugandan government's capacity to demand and supply M&E?

The establishment of the National Evaluation System in 2011 has seen a reasonable supply of and demand for M&E across government. National planning departments is using evidence from health, education and agriculture evaluations for planning, policymaking, and programming.

What kind of data is being generated for M&E and planning?

The Ugandan Bureau of Statistics generates evidence on a large scale through surveys and censuses, useful for national planning and programming. Data is also generated from the monitoring function through regular reporting to leadership by ministries and the Office of the Prime Minister. But the quality of the data from ministries, departments and agencies is a huge challenge for the country.

How established is M&E in Uganda's Parliament?

In 2014, Members of Parliament signed the Yaoundé Declaration of African Parliamentarians on Evaluation, signaling MPs' support for evaluations and evaluation evidence in national decision-making. The establishment of a Parliamentary M&E Unit is further evidence of the perceived value of M&E for oversight. Parliament uses its portfolio committee reports to hold the executive to account and other oversight functions

How have CSOs interacted with the government M&E system?

Civil society organisations contribute significantly to social and economic development in Uganda, playing a complementary role in achieving government's sub-sector goals. They supplement government service delivery efforts and hold government accountable, for example on the national budget planning.

Well-funded civil society organisations have robust M&E systems and skilled M&E personnel. Most CSOs do their own evaluations. For impact evaluations, independent evaluators are contracted, given the required transparency and impartiality. CSOs allocate budgets for their evaluations. In contrast, government's evaluation budget is not always available. However, the relationship between CSOs and government is characteristically mistrustful and suspicious. CSOs face a major hurdle in not having legitimacy as being properly representative of citizens' diverse interests.

How has the local Voluntary Organisation for Professional Evaluation supported M&E in Uganda?

The Uganda Monitoring and Evaluation Association has been critical to efforts of building M&E capacity in the country. The Association has also worked with the Office of the Prime Minister to develop the country's evaluation standards and guidelines.

What is being done to build national M&E capacity?

Several institutions offer M&E training at the postgraduate level. The courses tend to focus mainly on monitoring while evaluations are narrowly covered. Makerere University's School of Public Health is primarily involved in building the capacity of evaluation practitioners in the health sector, and the Faculty of Agriculture at Uganda Martyrs' University offers a Master's programme in M&E. The Uganda Technology and Management University is working on a postgraduate M&E curriculum with Saarland University in Germany in an effort to standardise content in M&E courses.



ZAMBIA

QUICK LOOK: M&E in Zambia

What makes Zambia stand out?

- Zambia has a formalised M&E policy, and evaluation guidelines are widely used.
- Zambia has willing partners to fund Evaluation Capacity Development services for the public sector.

Strengths

- There is a strong political and administrative will to improve results.
- Line ministries have standalone M&E units.
- The 2019 M&E policy will strengthen capacity-building, budgeting and the use of evaluations.

Challenges

- Monitoring data is used in the most limited way in planning, further constrained because monitoring is paper-based.
- At the operational level, human resources are limited.
- Austerity measures will compromise M&E services, nascent as they are.

How has two decades of steady economic growth translated into benefits for Zambia's population?

Zambia began embracing multiparty democracy and a liberalised economy since the early 1990s. But steady economic growth has had little effect on citizens' welfare, and a large proportion of the population lives in poverty.

What are the development challenges Zambia faces?

Inadequate financing, a failure to fully implement the country's decentralisation policy, the poor uptake of evaluation results, the lack of a national programme/project appraisal system, and weak intersectoral coordination and programme linkages are some of the challenges. But the political will to achieve results is strong.

How is the Zambian government approaching these challenges?

Until 2017, government's planning strategy was sector based. The 2017-2020 multi-sectoral Seventh National Development Plan departs from this strategy. Guided by Vision 2030, the plan's key development priorities are: job creation and economic diversity; poverty and vulnerability reduction; reduced developmental inequalities; enhanced human development; and a conducive governance environment for a diversified and inclusive economy.

Is M&E seen to be a valuable practice for development?

A culture of evaluative thinking and practice is emerging in Zambia. There is recognition of the value of M&E by the Zambian government. Cabinet adopted an M&E policy in 2019, which will require ministries, departments and agencies to budget, manage, commission and use evaluation findings; the evaluation of the Sixth National Development Plan to inform the direction of the Seventh National Development Plan. The country also has a National Performance Framework, which articulates results to be achieved towards realising Vision 2030. The framework drives a results orientation within government. Government also established the M&E Department in the Ministry of National Development Planning to oversee public sector M&E. Lastly, the Seventh National Development Plan provides a robust M&E system and makes clear calls for evaluations to be integrated with planning and budgeting.

How is M&E coordinated nationally?

The custodian of public sector M&E is the M&E Department in the Ministry of National Development Planning, under the Office of the President. The department has produced evaluation guidelines and an M&E policy to structure and institutionalise the evaluation function across government. The department provides support to ministries, provinces and government spending agencies to monitor the progress of interventions.

And at other levels of government?

Cluster Advisory Groups, comprised of sectors with common objectives, coordinate sectoral M&E activities, including

budgeting and monitoring, with sector ministries. These groups, together with the Ministry of National Development Planning and the Central Statistical Office are the central government agencies that drive the establishment of national M&E tools and systems.

The provincial administration links the national and district levels, providing feedback on the planning, financing, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects. The provinces have oversight of the implementation of district plans to ensure that districts are working towards meeting NDP targets. The provinces also act as implementing agencies for district programmes and projects, in accordance with the Constitution and the Decentralisation Policy. Municipal and district councils determine the implementation of programmes and projects. Districts design their own plans and M&E systems.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of Zambia's reporting system?

The Annual Progress Reports use set guidelines and a standardised template for data collection to ensure completeness and consistency, but they rely on information from sectoral reports and from ministries, provinces, and government spending agencies. There is not enough capacity to generate the necessary data to complete Annual Progress Reports, and some sectors and provinces submit late reports.

Apart from reports, how else is data generated?

The Central Statistical Office and other research bodies generate evidence from surveys and censuses for both direct and indirect evaluation of the National Development Plan's impact on the economy and population.

Does Parliament use M&E?

In 2019, an M&E unit was established in Parliament, signalling recognition of the value M&E for Parliament's oversight function.

How might Zambia's strong M&E culture be strengthened?

Evaluations are not always budgeted for in government and are undertaken on ad hoc basis. Where budget is available, it is solicited from UN agencies or other partners. Government needs to start allocating budget from Voted funds to support evaluations.

What is the relationship between government and organised civil society in Zambia?

The government of Zambia acknowledges that equitable development requires the joint commitment of all stakeholders, including CSOs. But in reality, as is common, government and CSOs tend to be mutually suspicious and mistrustful.

Who are the main M&E practitioners in Zambia?

CSOs that are well-supported by international donors, specifically in the education and health sectors, have skilled and knowledgeable M&E personnel because of their robust M&E systems. They do their own evaluations, except impact evaluations, which require external evaluators. Government relies heavily on external evaluation consultants. This means that local evaluators do not get the opportunity to develop their evaluation skills and knowledge, and the civil service cannot attract young evaluators because they cannot see how they might build their careers.

How is M&E being strengthened?

Several Zambian institutions offer effective M&E training.

The Results-Based Management course at the Institute of Economic and Social Research is accredited by the University of Zambia with a certificate of attendance. The National Institute of Public Administration also offers a Results-Based Management course, as well as and basic M&E training, accredited at certificate and diploma levels.

The University of Zambia itself offers a postgraduate diploma in M&E, as well as short courses with a monitoring focus in development studies. An undergraduate degree in M&E, as well as peer-reviewed elective modules, are in development.

At the University of Lusaka, M&E is not offered as a standalone programme but included in courses in project management and performance management.

The Zambia Monitoring and Evaluation Association is spearheading the professionalisation of M&E in Zambia in collaboration with the Ministry of National Development Planning, including advocating for a public sector curriculum. The growth of evaluation practice is hindered by a lack of clarity on the demand for M&E and on career pathing, among other challenges.

CONCLUSION

This report offers a snapshot of five countries' M&E systems, culture, and practices. It shows how efforts to institutionalise evaluations to support countries' development objectives influence the wider M&E ecosystem. Countries are taking different paths to institutionalise evaluation, with some commonalities. One commonality is that all five countries have gone for government policy and not legislative instrument to embed evaluations in government architecture. The benefits or challenges of this approach remains to be seen as these systems advance. Another observed commonality, except for Rwanda, is the establishment of standalone M&E departments/ministries. The implication is that M&E is not always integrated with other public service management systems such as strategic planning, budgeting, and auditing. Whether this approach works to encourage learning and not a compliance-based approach to evaluation remains to be established.

Another important observation from the five countries is the growing interest in professionalization of M&E. All the countries analysed have an M&E association or VOPE. The VOPEs are at different levels of functionality and maturity, where they are well established like in Ghana, Zambia, and Uganda we see them playing an important role in the wider M&E ecosystem. They shape M&E discussions in the country, hence can be important partners in efforts to strengthen capacity for M&E and give M&E practitioners an identity. The last important observation is the role of parliament in the wider M&E ecosystem. Parliaments are both users and producers of M&E evidence. There is interest by parliaments to produce evidence, particularly from M&E/Research units. The signing of Yaoundé declaration by parliaments is an important foundation to build on.

In all five countries, there are multiple entry points to strengthening M&E capacity. This could be through government institutions, particularly where there are standalone ministries/department with custodial responsibility to systematise and institutionalise evaluation in government. These ministries/departments often need the capacity to carry out the massive task to get evaluation adopted as a management function and evaluation generated evidence used in other government systems. Another entry point is through VOPEs. Where the VOPE is functional, has the capacity and legitimacy, it can be an important partner in the development of M&E capacity. They can represent M&E practitioners from different sectors, and ensure equitable access to opportunities. The last entry point that emerges from the situational analyses is parliament. Parliaments can serve to strengthen their own ability to carry out evaluations and use evaluation generated evidence in oversight. Organisations can work with parliament to raise awareness on the importance of programmes/interventions evaluated and use parliament to demand the executive to evaluate their programmes. This makes parliaments incredibly important in efforts to strengthen national M&E capacity.

It is important to note that the report offers a snapshot. The systems reported in this report are not static, they evolve constantly. They respond and adapt to changes in the political system and leadership, budgetary changes, administrative leadership changes, amongst other things. Therefore, research on M&E systems must be updated regularly to generate knowledge about made in Africa approaches to institutionalise M&E and inform strategies of organisations to support evaluation capacity strengthening.

FIND OUT MORE

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