

Examining Knowledge Management Practices of Monitoring and Evaluation Professionals in the Public Sector

Research Report

MM in Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation

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Abstract

The intersection of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Knowledge Management (KM) has garnered significant attention in recent years, yet the nuanced understanding of how KM complements M&E, particularly within the public sector, remains limited. The study aims to investigate how public sector M&E professionals understand and employ KM practices, identifies challenges and benefits associated with KM in M&E, and assess the implementation of M&E policies and legislation, particularly concerning KM integration. Utilising a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews with M&E professionals complemented by documentary analysis of relevant literature and policies were conducted. Thematic analysis was applied to analyse the data. Findings revealed there is some level of awareness and implementation of KM practices but a need for further development and integration of KM into M&E practices is needed. Overcoming organisational barriers and promoting a collaborative culture are essential for effective KM integration in M&E within the public sector, for improving decision-making and performance. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between KM and M&E in the public sector context revealing the need for targeted interventions and policy reforms to enhance KM integration and utilisation in M&E practices for improved use.

Declaration

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Monitoring and Evaluation) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Limpho Christinah Moleleki

.....February 2024

Dedication

Thank you God without your strength I wouldn't have made it. I lost focus along the way but you kept me at times I felt like I didn't have what it takes. To my son Omphile Katlego Molefe, I love you and thank you for your support and understanding. To my mother Blandinah Moleleki for believing I had what it takes even though I was going through the most difficult time of my life. To my siblings Thabo, Maseabata, Tsebo Moleleki and Mathabo Thobejane for encouraging me when I was about to give up. To my friends and colleagues, thank you. Vee, thank you so much. Thank you to the DMV for providing the bursary to further my studies.

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List of abbreviations

AGSA	Auditor General of South Africa
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DPSA	Department of Public Administration
ICT	Information and communications technology
IIED	International Institute of Environment & Development)
IFAC	International Federation of Accountants
KM	Knowledge Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SAMEA	South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association
SCOPA	Standing Committee on Public Accounts
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Trust Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to understand the extent to which public sector monitoring and evaluation (M&E) professionals employ knowledge Management (KM) in acquiring, storing, disseminating and using M&E knowledge products. The impetus for this study stemmed from an observation by the researcher that the relationship between monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management could still be in its infancy in the South African public sector. Visser et al. (2014) suggest that KM can improve M&E utility and contribute to improved actions and behaviour. In order to conduct M&E transparently and ethically, and to facilitate learning, governments need to manage knowledge of both M&E processes and evidence (Twende Mbele, 2022). Despite this, performance reports of public sector organisations have noted that there is inefficient use of KM (Siami-Namini, 2018). On the contrary the M&E and KM relationship is not new to non-profit organisations and the private sector as they have been recruiting professionals with responsibilities for both KM and M&E. M&E is often linked with KM in both organisational structure and content, especially at the United Nations (Thorpe, 2013). This is because of the realisation that KM and M&E facilitate collaborative learning and require intentional collaboration to succeed (The TOPS Program, 2017). The full cycle of learning is ensured through integrated monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge management systems, which generate and share knowledge for ongoing improvements (United Nations Trust Fund for Women, 2008).

Although KM & M&E seem similar, they have distinct differences, so linking them can have both advantages and disadvantages. It is argued that KM and M&E lack proper connections, which creates pervasive errors in the management of information and a slow learning process that impedes organisational performance (Suntaxi, 2013). In general, KM and M&E planning are usually not done in tandem (The TOPS Program, 2017). A major challenge is the focus on accountability in M&E compared to KM, which concentrates more on learning and reflection and how lessons can be shared in other programmes, policies, and projects (Thorpe, 2013). At end of the day, information

must be delivered properly to the appropriate users promptly to facilitate better management of resources by an organization or government (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

As will be shown in the report, there have been attempts by the public sector to make KM an integral part of M&E as seen in the 2007 Policy Framework for Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System. The Policy Framework for Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System has a brief section which recommends that M&E products should be oriented towards meeting strategic needs and knowledge requirements (The Presidency 2007; p13). The extent to which public sector M&E professionals have applied KM in line with the Policy Framework for Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System is arguably insignificant. Based on the 2018/19 Assessment Report on KM in the Public Service, the findings regarding M&E were not so positive. M&E had the lowest score out of the seven measured dimensions, with an average of 23% (7/30) for national departments and 27% for DPME (DPME, 2020).

In order to address the informal way in which KM was being implemented in the public sector, DPSA developed a National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework which was approved in 2019. The framework proposes that the manager responsible for KM be based in the Strategy and M&E units within Corporate Services Branches of national departments to ensure KM is part of the strategic function (DPSA, 2019). Since approval of the Framework in 2019, less is known about the extent to which it is being applied by departments— something which sparked an interest of this research.

1.1 Problem statement

This research emanates from observations by the researcher that the value of KM in enhancing M&E is relatively understudied in the South African public sector. One concurs with Visser et al. (2014, p.27) who asserts that “M&E knowledge and experience is a knowledge source that is underutilised for improved individual and organisational performance.” The M&E literature frequently discusses the utilisation of evidence but pays less attention to the management of M&E knowledge throughout the whole program lifecycle to guarantee the utilisation of evidence. Another observation is that the National Evaluation Policy Framework, together with the Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans developed by DPME in 2019 refer to evidence use in the lifecycle of a policy or programme. Nowhere

do these frameworks mention how knowledge will be managed. In addition, there is no standardised M&E framework guidelines, so each department has developed its own framework according to how relevant M&E professionals understand the legislative frameworks on M&E. There are, however, standardised guidelines for Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans, Evaluation Guidelines, Annual and Quarterly Reports. As a consequence, M&E activities often lack recognition or application in intervention programmes (The TOPS Program, 2017). The researcher is not downplaying the fact that data management is included in the performance information handbook. Data management merely looks at how data is collected, stored, and accessed, KM goes a step further by leveraging on the raw data to produce usable knowledge (INTRAC, 2019). Blair (2002) argues that KM is mostly concerned with managing and supporting expertise, rather than managing data and information repositories.

Another point to highlight is that although national departments accept the need to manage knowledge, they are still in the initial phase of beginning to recognise the need to manage knowledge, while some are in a reactionary phase where KM initiatives are ad hoc (DPSA, 2020). Despite the South African government's enthusiasm for KM, the absence of necessary implementation skills among public officials, combined with challenges like limited resources and resistance to change, particularly in adopting new technologies or learning methods, may impede the successful adoption of KM practices in government departments (Barbier & Tengeh, 2022). Without a well-defined framework with clearly outlined guidelines, successful implementation of KM cannot occur (Barbier & Tengeh, 2023).

Twelve years after the Policy Framework for Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System was developed, the DPSA developed a National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework with the goal of standardising KM in the public sector. At the time there was no KM Framework in the public sector to enhance M&E strategies as required by the Policy Framework for Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation. This observation is unsurprising, given that KM activities are compartmentalised, rarely planned for, and inadequately funded, in contrast to M&E activities that are meticulously integrated into all programmes or policies (The TOPS Program, 2017).

The ineffective use of KM can have costly results, which can impact the key principle of making decisions based on evidence (Odiwuor, 2015). A report by the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) (2020) revealed that the public sector systems were unable to apply KM tools to ensure the proper delivery of initiatives during the Covid-19 pandemic. Public sector agencies could not respond to changes in information technology, processes and controls resulting in non-implementation of some of the interventions (AGSA, 2020). This resulted in fraud and corruption of public funds and the M&E systems could not respond to these shocks. As data validation and integration were lacking across public platforms, resulting in ineffective sharing of information (AGSA, 2020). Public sector organisations like the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Revenue Service have access to individuals' data, but they do not effectively integrate and utilise this information through KM.

Besides the pandemic, AGSA's opinion on the Audit of Pre-determined Objectives in the public sector shows poor results due to poor documentary evidence to support the reported achievements (AGSA, 2021). The processes of collecting performance information relies heavily on manual processes and is prone to human error that is not detected and corrected in time (AGSA, 2021). This challenge was also noted by Ngoepe (2014) who stated that "the problem of poor documentary evidence in public administration features prominently in reports generated by oversight mechanisms such as AGSA, the South African Human Rights Commission, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and to some extent, the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa". As a result of this incorrect or non-availability of supporting evidence, validation of performance against the reported information becomes a challenge which leads to non-accountability of public funds by those who have been entrusted with that responsibility.

The researcher has also observed that there is considerable scholarly work on monitoring and evaluation of knowledge management and also research on the linkages between M&E and KM systems (Chen et al., 2019; Hearn et al., 2011; Leborgne et al., 2011; Suntaxi, 2013; Talisayon, 2009a). There is however, limited literature on the role that KM processes play in creating and stimulating the use of M&E knowledge products. As argued by (Visser et al., 2014, p. 27) "a key factor to use is the institutionalisation of M&E knowledge management in the organisation's structure and culture". M&E knowledge products are being created but less is known

about the tacit, explicit, and implicit approaches that M&E professionals utilise in developing, storing, sharing and applying them, especially in the current situation where there is no guidelines on the implementation of KM in M&E. This is the gap this research sought to bridge.

This study provides deeper insights into the link between M&E and KM in the public sector context. It also sheds light on how legal frameworks governing KM and M&E in the public sector can influence the role of KM processes in enhancing M&E Knowledge Management. Monitoring and Evaluation experts in the public sector can utilise the research findings, suggestions, and outcomes to gain an increased understanding of the elements that influence the significance and effectiveness of Knowledge Management in their field. This will initiate a discussion between KM and M&E experts on possible targeted interventions and policy reforms to enhance KM integration and utilisation in M&E practices, ultimately improving decision-making and organisational performance. This is because the benefits of KM will not accrue to an organisation that uses them without knowledge and awareness (Cong & Pandya, 2003).

1.2 Research question

This study sought to answer the following research question:

In what ways do public sector monitoring and evaluation professionals understand and employ knowledge management practices to generate, store, share, and use knowledge products?

The sub-research questions are:

- i. What is the understanding of M&E professionals of the role that KM plays in producing, storing, disseminating and using M&E knowledge?
- ii. What are the experiences of M&E professionals in the use of KM in their work?
- iii. How do they collaborate with other professionals in their departments to create and disseminate knowledge products?
- iv. What challenges do they face in implementing explicit KM processes and systems?

1.3 Research purpose

The purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which public sector monitoring and evaluation professionals employ knowledge management practices in acquiring, producing, storing, disseminating and using M&E knowledge products.

1.4 Key concepts

The key concepts of the study were within the Knowledge Management (KM) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) fields of study. It should be noted that there are several scholarly contests on how these concepts should be defined.

Knowledge management is “the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge” (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). It is an organised system and a process of managing the explicit and tacit knowledge of individuals in an organisation to the maximum, for improved organisational performance.

Monitoring refers to a “the collection, analysing, and reporting of data on inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts as well as external factors, in a way that supports effective management” (Presidency, 2007, p. 1)

Evaluation is defined as “Evaluation is a time-bound and periodic exercise that seeks to provide credible and useful information to answer specific questions to guide decision making by staff, managers and policy makers” (Presidency, 2007, p. 2)

A **knowledge product** is an “output of a process, team or organization in the form of a document that enables effective action” (Talisayon, 2012, p. 2).

Public sector refers to the “portion of the economy composed of all levels of government (national, provincial and local) and government controlled enterprises”(National School of Government, 2022, p. 18).

Elaborate definitions and context will be provided in chapter 2.

1.5 Outline of the Study

Chapter 1: This section introduces the study and provides some background information. The problem statement, research questions, research purpose, and key concepts.

Chapter 2: This section provides a review of key themes found in KM and M&E literature as it pertains to the role of KM in M&E. In order to gain insight into the thesis question, popular M&E and KM journals and articles, books, and websites were reviewed.

Chapter 3: This section outlines the research methodology. A review of the methodology used in this study, the sample, the sample size, as well as the tools used to collect data is included in this chapter.

Chapter 4: This section provides the presentation of the findings. The data collected during study is analysed and the results are presented in this section.

Chapter 5: This section discusses the findings of the study. The information presented in the preceding chapter is analysed, comparisons are drawn, and conclusions are derived by referencing relevant literature and theoretical frameworks

Chapter 6: This section provides the conclusion for the study. It summarizes the key findings, discusses their implications, and suggests avenues for future research.

1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Detailed background and introduction to the study are presented in this chapter. The research problem and question was articulated, demonstrating the gap in knowledge that the thesis aims to address. The purpose, key concepts and the outline of the study were provided. The researcher also emphasized the significance of the research, highlighting potential contributions to the field within a wider academic and practical context.

CHAPTER TWO

2 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

This section provides a review of key themes found in literature on the topic of the study. The review considers scholarly debates from the KM and M&E fields and identifies key themes. It also explains the gap which this study aims to address in the literature. Before delving into the review, it is critical to first understand how knowledge is defined and understood by various scholars.

2.1 Definition of knowledge

Although the preceding section has provided a definition of KM, it should be acknowledged that there is currently no agreed definition of knowledge amongst scholars. Since classical Greek times, philosophers have grappled with defining knowledge and engaged in numerous epistemological debates (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Anand & Singh (2011) states that the phrase which defines knowledge as “justified true belief” was used by Socrates, in Plato's Theaetetus (369 BC). The debate was furthered in an article by (Gettier, 1963) titled, “Is justified true belief knowledge?” Since the publication of that article in the 60s, the debate continues (Dawson, 1981; de Grefte, 2021; Dutant, 2015; Leeser, 1996; Olen, 1976; Turri, 2010). Authors such as Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995); Alavi & Leidner, 2001 and Goldman (1991) (as cited in Anand & Singh, 2011) have also applied this definition. The word belief is “an individual's or group's idea about what is ‘truth’ (Galliers & Newell, 2003, p. 7) and it is seen as problematic because knowledge and truth are always contestable since truth is socially constructed. Hence the on-going debate.

There are other definitions of knowledge as they relate to KM. In Anand & Singh (2011, p. 928), they provide twelve definitions with the common theme being that knowledge: “exist in heads of individuals; is information in context; is know how; is capacity to take action; and codified, captured and accumulated facts”. Knowledge is the state of consciousness about ideas, facts, techniques and being able to take action about the accumulated insights whether in recorded form or through interaction with others.

The literature review shows how complex the definition of knowledge is and how it can be defined from different forms and perspectives. The adopted definition of knowledge

is by Alavi & Leidner (2001) where knowledge is a process concerned with the flow of knowledge production, sharing, and dissemination of knowledge.

2.2 Forms of knowledge: Tacit, implicit and explicit

There are also different forms of knowledge. Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) makes a distinction between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. The difference between explicit (documentable) and tacit (impossible to formally document) knowledge. A formal, systematic, and shareable form of knowledge is explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge resides in the minds of individuals and unless shared with others, this knowledge remains private (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Experts are presumed to have tacit knowledge, which they use to perform their work (Blair, 2002). In order to acquire powerful knowledge in an organisation, there has to be an interaction of tacit and explicit knowledge. Liebowitz & Beckman (1998 as cited in Anand & Singh, 2011) extended these two categories to three by adding implicit knowledge which is observable or performance-based knowledge.

If KM was to be defined according to these forms it would be a “systematic and organized approach of organizations to manipulate and take advantage of both explicit and tacit knowledge, which in turn leads to the creation of new knowledge” (Serban & Luan, 2002, pp. 9 & 10).

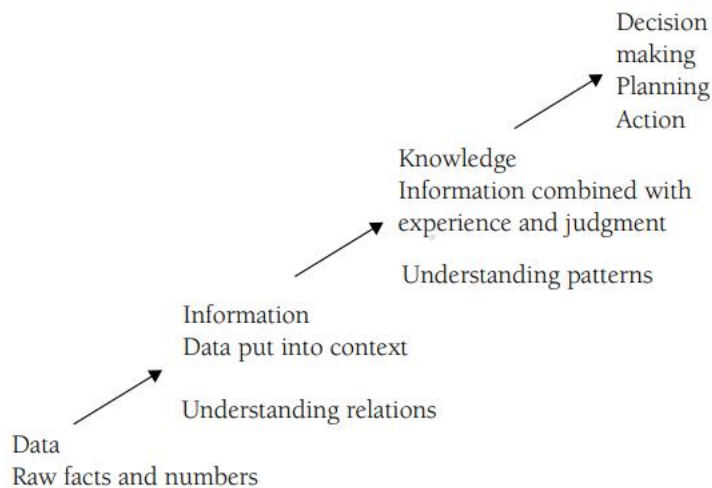
2.3 Data, Information and Knowledge

Another debate about knowledge is its distinction between data and information. It is argued that there is a hierarchical transition from data to information, and from information to knowledge and from knowledge to wisdom (Chen, 2018; Anand & Singh, 2011; Serban & Luan, 2002; Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Figure 1 shows this hierarchical transition is called the DIKW chain model which represents the relationship between Data, Information, Knowledge, and Wisdom. Figure 1 shows the DIKM chain model.

The first step in this transition is from data which can be viewed as raw facts and numbers, which, while informative, do not necessarily serve as the basis for judgments, plans, or other actions (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Serban & Luan, 2002). In the view of Hearn et al., (2011, p. 8). They point out that knowledge is constructed

from the subjective and the objective approaches, by individuals and societies, and by facts as well as values.

Figure 1: From Data, information, Knowledge to Wisdom (DIKW)



Source: Serban & Luan, 2002, fig. From Data to Knowledge

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The second step in this transition is from data to Information which is viewed as data that has been analysed to reveal useful and relevant perspectives (Serban & Luan, 2002). Information is about the sender and receiver of a message which influences the recipient's judgements and behaviour and, in so doing, effects change (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). For this message to be sent data has to be organised for purpose.

The third step is from information to knowledge which involves information combined with experience and judgment from individuals, groups, and organizations and understanding patterns that inform action (Serban & Luan, 2002; Talisayon, 2009a). It is an intuitive sense that gives knowledge its breadth, depth, and richness (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Consequently, this means no knowledge can be derived from information if it cannot be applied. In order for information to become applied

knowledge, it should be disseminated and made available to potential users (UNDP, 2002). “Information is codified and abstracted data, while construction of knowledge underpins the dynamic process to turn data into meaningful information and to go beyond what is given” (Hearn et al., 2011).

In contrast to the other three categories, wisdom is the last one in the hierarchy, it allows people to devise the future rather than just grasp the present and past, but it is difficult to acquire wisdom because people must move through the other three categories sequentially (McFadden et al., 1999, as cited by Chen, 2018). Wisdom is knowledge which has been shaped and processed (Anand & Singh, 2011). The DIKW models is not without weaknesses so there has been a move to define the terms in their right (Hearn et al., 2011). According to Faucher (2008, as cited in Anand & Singh, 2011) this traditional hierarchy can be extended to enlightenment which is the highest form of understanding to complete the knowledge hierarchy perspective.

Alavi and Leidner (2001) argue that, contrary to popular belief, the belief that data lead to information, leading to knowledge, with each depending on contextual factors, utility, and interpretability, rarely survives careful scrutiny. Knowledge is information that is possessed in a person’s brain (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Jones & Leonard, 2009) it is an opinion based on facts, ideas, concepts, interpretations, observations, and conclusions, regardless of whether they are new, useful, original, or accurate.

Alavi and Leidner (2001) provide different perspective of viewing knowledge and its implication for KM: knowledge as an object, is centred on knowing how to build and manage knowledge stocks as the ultimate goal of KM. Similarly with knowledge as information access, knowledge as a process is concerned with the flow of knowledge and the production, sharing, and dissemination of knowledge as the ultimate goal of KM. Knowledge as a capability suggests that the ultimate goal of KM focuses on the creation of intellectual capital as well as developing core competencies and knowledge as a state of mind is centred on KM that focuses on improving the individual learning and understanding by means of information provision.

On the other hand, it is only as soon as information is articulated and presented that it becomes knowledge (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). They conclude that Knowledge is “the result of cognitive processing triggered by the inflow of new stimuli” (Alavi & Leidner, 2001, p. 109). According to UNDP (2002, p. 77) “knowledge is content- and context-

specific information capable of bringing change or more effective actions at a wider level that can contribute to new learning and knowledge”.

Based on these definitions we can also define a knowledge product. A knowledge product is an “output of a process, team or organization in the form of a document that enables effective action” (Talisayon, 2012, p. 2). In other words, a brochure, leaflet, news article or anything alike can convey only information, not knowledge, and therefore cannot be called a knowledge product (Talisayon, 2012). According to the African Development Bank (n.d, as cited in Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), 2015, p. 5) knowledge products are “tangible outputs (e.g., publications and other products) and activities/services (e.g., policy advice) of development, sharing, or application of information and knowledge contents”. Common to both definitions is that knowledge products are viewed as publications whether written or recorded with a highly knowledge-based content.

2.4 Unpacking knowledge management

Today's knowledge-driven global economy places a great deal of emphasis on KM as a way to ensure and maintain competitive advantage (Santoro et al., 2018). Now that knowledge is regarded as a strategic resource that is essential for organizations' performance, it has taken on a dimension of its own (Urpia et al., 2020). Organisations are applying KM whether they are conscious of it or not (Cong & Pandya, 2013). The definition of KM will vary according to different perspectives depending on how scholars understand the meaning of knowledge. It is therefore important to understand what is meant by KM. A review of the literature and the analysis of existing definitions shows that KM can be classified as follows: the holistic nature of KM; the need for KM; KM and intellectual capital; what KM demands; KM practices; KM processes; KM and IT; objectives of KM and strategy; and what KM can do (Anand & Singh, 2011; Kavalić et al., 2021). Although researchers and practitioners disagree with defined terms, and hold multiple perspectives regarding KM, there is a common theme amongst them. That is, KM is about “managing knowledge and encouraging people to share knowledge to create value-adding products and services” (Anand & Singh, 2011, p. 932).

As discussed above, for the purpose of this study KM is a process “the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge” (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). It is an organised system and a process of managing the explicit and tacit knowledge of individuals in an organisation to the maximum, for improved organisational performance. This is because the researcher concurs with (Firestone, 2008, p. 8) who states that “KM doesn't directly manage, create or integrate most knowledge outcomes in organizations, but only impacts knowledge processes performed by operational process agents, which, in turn, impact knowledge outcomes”. This is because, as Blair (2002) explains, the practitioners themselves become the “repositories” of knowledge since the knowledge that is being managed is hard to separate from them.

2.4.1 KM Processes

KM processes mean a wide-range of activities involved in knowledge acquisition, creation, refinement, storage, transfer, sharing, and utilization. There are various components or enablers such as human resource practices, technology, culture, and organisational structure which are impacted by these KM processes, so organisational performance is affected as well (Abubakar et al., 2019; Kavalić et al., 2021). While individuals can certainly personally engage in each of the KM processes, KM is primarily an organisational activity. They are centred on what managers can do to facilitate the achievement of KM goals, motivate individuals to actively participate, and create social processes that contribute to the success of KM initiatives (King, 2009). Thus, KM processes rely heavily on people and are less dependent on technology than commonly perceived. This is not to say investing in information technology is not imperative, it is in fact very imperative in enhancing the success of KM projects and applications. Technology can enhance people's access to information and connect them with one another (Cong & Pandya, 2003), but it is not the ultimate answer.

2.4.1.1 Knowledge acquisition

In knowledge acquisition, one seeks, recognises, and assimilates potentially valuable information outside of an organization (Huber, 1991, as cited in King, 2009). In line with that, knowledge acquisition can be defined as the process of learning through hands-

on experiences and experiments (Kaba & Ramaiah, 2020). It is the process of acquiring new knowledge and recognizing and acknowledging existing knowledge (Huber, 1991). The body of literature on knowledge acquisition is extensive and multifaceted. In this context, the construct of knowledge acquisition is divided into five subcomponents or sub-processes: 1. Utilizing existing knowledge within the organization from its inception; 2. Learning from hands-on experiences; 3. Observing and learning from other organizations; 4. Incorporating components with the necessary knowledge that the organization lacks and 5. Actively seeking and recognizing information related to the organization's environment and performance (Huber, 1991). One can look for this knowledge inside the organization or from sources outside of it. Internal knowledge acquisition entails gathering knowledge from personal networks, employee expertise, organisational routines, and best practices, as well as leveraging organisational members' intellectual capital and requiring employee expertise to identify and apply relevant knowledge (Paliszkiewicz et al., 2017). Furthermore, external knowledge can be collected by engaging with policymakers, suppliers, clients, recruiting external experts, benchmarking, and collaborating through business alliances (Paliszkiewicz et al., 2017).

2.4.1.2 Knowledge creation

It becomes evident that the initial step of acquiring knowledge is indispensable before embarking on the journey of knowledge creation. This assertion underscores the difficulty, if not outright impossibility, of generating novel insights without a profound understanding of the problem's inherent nature and characteristics, as argued by (Kaba & Ramaiah, 2020). Knowledge is a process by which individual knowledge is amplified by the organization and incorporated into the organization's knowledge network (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). In the realm of knowledge creation, the process entails the generation of new insights or the substitution of existing knowledge with fresh content. To this effect Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) developed the SECI model (Socialization, Externalization, Combination, Internalization) which explains how knowledge is created and transferred. Socialization has to do with how tacit knowledge is shared through direct interaction and shared experiences among individuals. Externalization deals with how tacit knowledge is converted into explicit knowledge through articulation, often facilitated by metaphors, analogies, and models.

Combination is when different explicit knowledge elements are combined to create new knowledge. Internalization is the process where individuals internalize explicit knowledge to make it tacit and integrate it into their personal experiences.

2.4.1.3 Knowledge capture and storage

Knowledge capture and storage are crucial components of KM, focusing on collecting, organizing, and preserving information within an organization. Alavi & Leidner (2001) emphasized that the creation of new knowledge is insufficient, underscoring the importance of mechanisms to store acquired knowledge and facilitate retrieval, acknowledging the propensity for people to forget over time. Knowledge capture is the process where an organisation's knowledge is captured either explicitly or tacitly, depending on whether it is that knowledge located within people, artefacts, or organisations (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015). The process of capturing the knowledge or experience held in an individual's mind into explicit representation, whether in print, electronic, or multimedia format (Janus, 2016).

On the other hand, storing knowledge plays a crucial role in safeguarding organizations against the adverse effects of duplication, repetitive actions, and in addressing both current and future challenges, as asserted by Stein (1995, as cited in Namdarian et al., 2020). The optimal method for storing knowledge is through the establishment of an organisational memory. Organisational memory encompasses knowledge stored in diverse forms, including written documents, electronic databases, codified knowledge within expert systems, documented organisational procedures and processes, as well as tacit knowledge embedded in individuals and networks of individuals, as outlined by (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Instruments for storing knowledge include knowledge maps, databases, wikis, guidelines, and proceedings (Fisher, 2021).

2.4.1.4 Knowledge transfer and sharing

The study acknowledges debates surrounding the terms "knowledge transfer" and "knowledge sharing," as highlighted by Edwards (2017), yet it opts not to delve into those specific debates. As a result knowledge transfer takes place when a person communicates their knowledge to a known recipient in an organised, focused manner.

It is a deliberate process of converting one's work experiences into knowledge that is shared and made common among a group or within an organization Chen (2018). Gupta and Govindarajan (2000, as cited in Paliszkievicz et al., 2017) outlined five key elements constituting the transfer of knowledge in their article: 1. the perception of the value of the source knowledge; 2. the source's willingness to share the knowledge; 3. the presence of effective information channels; 4. the recipient's willingness to acquire the knowledge; and 5. the absorptive capacity of the recipient. The formal methods of transferring knowledge include training, mentoring, coaching, workshops, and seminars, whereas informal methods involve day-to-day interactions, discussions, and shared experiences.

Transferring knowledge can be challenging, primarily contingent on the willingness of the knower to share, given that knowledge resides within their mind. Davenport and Prusak (1998, p. 88) offer a compelling solution to the effective transfer of knowledge within organizations, "The short answer, and the best one, is: hire smart people and let them talk to one another. Unfortunately, the second part of this advice is more difficult to put into practice." In contrast, knowledge sharing involves dissemination through repositories to people the contributor is often unfamiliar with (King, 2009). "Technologies facilitating exchange include groupware and other team-collaboration mechanisms; Web-based access to data and databases; and repositories of information, including best practice databases, lessons learned systems, and expertise locator systems" (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015, p.66).

2.4.1.5 Knowledge use

Knowledge use is at the top of these KM processes which is a process of applying knowledge to add value to an organization (Anand & Singh, 2011). The essential requirement is that the knowledge is employed in a manner that guides decisions and actions (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015). This involves the application of existing knowledge to inform decision-making, enhance organisational performance, and attain organisational objectives, thereby extending its utilization to the services, processes, and products of the organization (Namdarian et al., 2020). As a result of knowledge use, knowledge can be applied into action through problem-solving, and the creation of new knowledge (Abubakar et al., 2019). It takes knowledge to create knowledge, which must be captured, shared and applied; thus, a cycle is created.

2.4.2 Implications of Knowledge Management Processes

KM processes play a vital role in enhancing organizational performance, particularly in environments where decision-making, problem-solving, and resource optimization are critical. In the context of public sector organizations, the adoption and implementation of KM practices have profound implications that directly influence the efficiency and effectiveness of departments responsible M&E, as well as broader organizational outcomes.

Enhanced Decision-Making: KM processes contribute to better decision-making by ensuring that accurate, up-to-date, and relevant knowledge is readily accessible across different levels of management (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). The availability of collective knowledge aids middle and senior managers in making well-informed decisions, which can improve strategic planning and execution. As evidenced in public sector organizations, access to comprehensive knowledge repositories enables decision-makers to align their actions with policy mandates and operational requirements, thus enhancing the quality of decisions made at both the departmental and organizational levels (Chen, 2018).

Increased Efficiency and Productivity: One of the key benefits of KM processes is the reduction in time and resources needed to solve recurring problems. By capturing and sharing best practices, organizations avoid duplicating efforts, leading to improved productivity and operational efficiency (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). This is particularly relevant for M&E professionals, who rely on knowledge-sharing platforms to access historical data, reports, and case studies that streamline their evaluation processes. The ability to reuse knowledge ensures that teams can focus on higher-order tasks, such as generating insights from evaluations rather than collecting information from scratch.

Improved Innovation and Learning: KM processes foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation by promoting the exchange of ideas and experiences among employees. Organizations with effective KM systems are better positioned to innovate, as they can draw upon collective wisdom to generate new ideas and solutions (Fisher, 2021). This is particularly important in the public sector, where adaptive learning from previous policy implementations can lead to more effective strategies for addressing

emerging challenges. In M&E, for instance, the sharing of lessons learned across departments enhances the overall quality of evaluations and promotes the development of more robust methodologies.

Better Knowledge Retention: Organizations face the constant risk of losing critical knowledge when employees leave. KM processes mitigate this risk by documenting institutional knowledge, ensuring that important insights, strategies, and operational details remain accessible (Wiig, 1997). For public sector organizations, where turnover can be high, KM ensures continuity in operations and minimizes the impact of employee departures on institutional memory. In M&E, the retention of knowledge through KM processes helps professionals maintain a continuous improvement cycle, using past evaluations as references for future work.

Stronger Collaboration and Teamwork: KM systems create opportunities for enhanced collaboration by breaking down silos between departments and facilitating cross-functional teamwork (Nonaka & Konno, 1998). In public sector organizations, this is particularly relevant as different departments often need to collaborate on complex, multi-dimensional projects. KM enables M&E teams to collaborate more effectively with other units, such as strategic planning or policy divisions, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness and utility of evaluation findings.

Enhanced Organizational Performance: KM processes align knowledge development with the strategic objectives of the organization, directly contributing to enhanced performance outcomes (Chen, 2018). In the public sector, where performance is often measured through service delivery and resource optimization, KM plays a crucial role in ensuring that departments have access to the right knowledge to meet their objectives. By improving the flow of information, KM strengthens the ability of senior managers to implement government policies effectively, while middle managers can ensure compliance through efficient operational practices.

Support for M&E: KM strengthens M&E functions by enhancing the quality of knowledge products such as reports, databases, and studies (Fisher, 2021). The use of KM processes in M&E facilitates better data collection, analysis, and dissemination, ensuring that the evaluation process is more comprehensive and insightful. By integrating KM into M&E processes, organizations can leverage existing knowledge to

improve the design of evaluations, increase the accuracy of findings, and inform decision-making with evidence-based recommendations.

Risk Management and Knowledge Gaps: KM processes also have implications for risk management, particularly in identifying and closing knowledge gaps within organizations (Wiig, 1997). By systematically collecting and analyzing knowledge, organizations can identify areas where information is incomplete or outdated, reducing the risk of making decisions based on flawed or insufficient data. This is particularly relevant in the public sector, where decision-making often has far-reaching consequences, and KM provides a mechanism for mitigating risks associated with knowledge loss.

Increased Employee Satisfaction and Engagement: KM processes can enhance employee satisfaction by creating opportunities for learning and collaboration. Employees who are empowered to contribute to and benefit from a knowledge-sharing culture are more likely to feel engaged and valued (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). In public sector organizations, this is particularly important, as motivated employees are more likely to contribute to the success of M&E initiatives and overall organizational performance.

Overall the implications of KM processes are far-reaching and multifaceted, touching on key aspects of organizational performance, innovation, decision-making, and risk management. By fostering collaboration, enhancing knowledge retention, and supporting M&E functions, KM processes can significantly improve the operational effectiveness of public sector organizations. The alignment of KM with strategic goals ensures that organizations remain adaptive, resilient, and capable of delivering on their policy mandates.

2.5 KM in the Public Sector

Before moving on with this section's discussion it is important to understand what is meant by the term "Public sector". The term public sector refers to "the portion of the economy composed of all levels of government and government controlled enterprises"(National School of Government, 2022, p. 18). The Asian Productivity Organization (2013, p. 3) defines public sector as "the functioning agencies and units at all federal, state, country, municipal, and local levels of government". The sector

encompasses all agencies, government corporations, the military, and departments that provide various forms of public service (Asian Productivity Organization, 2013).

Public sector organisations are increasingly recognising KM tools as strategic assets. In a recent study, it was shown that KM practices facilitate greater efficiency and productivity in the public sector (Barros et al., 2020). In addition to enhancing government competence and service quality, KM can also promote a healthy development of e-government (Asian Productivity Organization, 2013). According to Mbhalati (2014), e-government can be pursued more cost-effectively if it is part of a KM strategy. The reason is that KM is not just about managing information systems, which calls for not just automation of processes, but also changes in organisational culture (Asian Productivity Organization, 2013; Mbhalati, 2014).

Implementing KM is not without benefits. In Anand & Singh (2011) they conducted a literature survey on the benefits of KM and the results show 28 benefits as identified by 28 authors. Some benefits KM in relation to the public sector teams, employees and organisations include: better decision making and problem solving, builds a sense of community, up to date on procedures and technology, reduces duplication of efforts by saving money, time, and resources (Barbier & Tengeh, 2023). Additionally KM improves organisational performance through increased efficiency, productivity, quality of tasks or services, and innovation, higher data integrity, increase the financial value of the organisation by treating people's knowledge as an asset (Asian Productivity Organization, 2013; Cong & Pandya, 2003).

Although this importance is recognised, KM research is mostly discussed from the perspective of the private sector, whereas very few studies have addressed public sector issues, challenges, and opportunities (Siami-Namini, 2018). It may be argued, however, that there has been a recent increase in literature on KM in the public sector, which was noted in the literature reviews conducted by (Lambe, 2011; Massaro et al., 2015). As Massaro et al. (2015) found in their literature review, "KM literature in the public sector is fragmented, dominated by unrelated research mainly in the education and research sectors, supported by ostensive research techniques". Massaro et al. (2015) further states that, public sector KM is perceived as having low impact outcomes and as 'uninteresting' at best if the top KM journals continue to publish research with this focus.

Several cultural and technological barriers prevent KM from being widely adopted by the public sector (Barros et al., 2020). In the public sector, there are many problems associated with the bureaucracy and organisational culture: lack of customer focus, inefficiency, comfort generated by stability and lack of investment in training of servers, among others (Barros et al., 2020).

Although literature of KM in the public sector has increased in recent years, research on KM in African organisations has received very little attention (Mbhalati, 2014). It would seem that the majority of developed countries have kept up with KM developments, as well as a few developing countries, such as the Republic of Korea, China, Malaysia and India. Corruption and maladministration have been challenging KM efforts in Africa, resulting in a lack of an appropriate strategy and inadequate capacity (EDOUN, 2016).

2.5.1 KM in South Africa

Over 15 years ago, the South African government adopted KM due to its widespread use and significant benefits noted in the private sector, particularly among consultants (Barbier & Tengeh, 2022; DPSA, 2019). In South Africa the DPSA is responsible for public management frameworks, performance management, and knowledge management, as well as improving service delivery (The Presidency, 2007). The DPSA is mandated to establish norms and standards for information management and e-Government in the public service amongst other responsibilities (Government Communications, 2021).

In order to address the informal way in which KM was implemented in the public sector, DPSA developed a National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework which was approved in 2019. A major objective of the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework is to create a consistent approach for storing, sharing, and using information within the public service using ICT (DPSA, 2019). In addition the framework seeks to place KM at the centre of Government agenda as it relates to performance planning and National Development Plan 2030. A KM approach provides the following benefits (DPSA, 2019): a reduction in effort; an avoidance of repeated errors/bad practices; an improvement in the process and working methods; and decreased reliance on consultants.

According to DPSA (2019) the coordination and facilitation role is recommended to the Strategy and M&E Units within Corporate Services Branches of national departments. Leadership should be provided by the Chief Knowledge Officer who is the relevant manager for Strategic Management DPSA (2019). The strategy recommends that the coordination and facilitation responsibility of KM be within Strategy and M&E Units within Corporate Services Branches in national departments. Furthermore, leadership for KM should be provided by the Chief Knowledge Officer who is the relevant manager for Strategic Management DPSA (2019). A collaborative effort between M&E and KM can be extremely effective for getting a better understanding of organisational knowledge and how to leverage it. However, this only works if KM people are permitted to function like KM people, and their different roles and skill sets are respected rather than being viewed as part of an overall monitoring and accountability system (Thorpe, 2013).

Since post-apartheid, DPSA has largely focused on transforming the public service with special attention on human resource management (Cloete, 2005). This is because of the inherited fragmented public service of the apartheid era, whose effects are still felt 29 years later after democracy. A vigorous process of transformation has been taking place since 1994, including the drafting of a new constitution, reforming the state apparatus, and changing almost every policy to move away from apartheid and create a democracy based on nonracist and non-sexist (The Presidency, 2003). In the process of this transformation, there was loss of experience and institutional memory, especially with regard to civil servants recruited after 1994 which resulted in poor performance (The Presidency, 2003). Even with this realisation little attention was placed on KM in the public sector. The National School of Government does not have courses on KM, because there are other competing priorities in public service such as dealing with corruption, professionalising the public service, ethics and etc. South Africa is one of the developing countries that faces several challenges in implementing KM (Barbier & Tenengeh, 2022). "These challenges include a lack of necessary skills, limited resources, cultural barriers to the adoption of KM practices (such as reluctance to share knowledge or hierarchical organisational structures that discourage collaboration), a lack of awareness and understanding of KM, as well as resistance to change (such as reluctance to adopt new technologies or methods of learning that hinders the adoption of KM practices)" (Barbier & Tenengeh, 2023, p. 187).

An important aspect of KM is retaining retirees' knowledge. The most effective strategy would be for retirees to be kept involved, by participating in Communities of Practice meetings, and making sure they get to know current issues and are able to use expertise locator systems (Koenig, 2018). The real value may not be found directly in the info left behind by retirees, but in the new knowledge that is generated through current employees interacting with them (Koenig, 2018).

Recently the public sector in an effort to reduce the wage bill, introduced early retirement and whether efforts were put in place to capture, store, share and use the tacit knowledge of those who had the wealth of knowledge in the public sector before letting them go is worth exploring. An important aspect of KM is retaining retirees' knowledge.

2.6 Review of M&E

The Monitoring and Evaluation relationship is one joined together by harmony, although the two are distinctive in their own right. M&E systems are increasingly popular as a means to demonstrate accountability by evaluating results and drawing lessons from them (Suntaxi, 2013). During M&E processes, data is collected to provide information about plans, budgets, staffing levels, and resources, all of which are crucial for decision-making. In the context of M&E systems, accountability, learning, and sustainability are central to ensuring organizations remain answerable to their stakeholders (Odiwuor, 2015).

For M&E to be truly effective, a system-based approach must be employed. M&E is most valuable when integrated into policy-making, planning, learning, and adaptive systems, allowing collected data to be synthesized, analyzed, reported, and used (Fraser & Morkel, 2020). However, M&E-generated data, although used by stakeholders for various purposes, remains difficult to consistently incorporate into actionable knowledge (Simister, 2017a). This gap highlights the challenge of turning M&E data into knowledge that can inform everyday decisions and organizational learning.

Russ-Eft & Preskill (2009) emphasize that the integration of evaluation into organizational practices is critical for ongoing learning and improvement. They view evaluation as a systematic process that generates knowledge, which, when used

effectively, enhances organizational performance and drives change. This aligns with the purpose of M&E, which aims not only to collect data but also to foster continuous learning and improvement through knowledge use.

Building an M&E system gives decision-makers a management tool that provides performance feedback, serving as a foundation for future improvements (Görgens & Kusek, 2009, p. 2). The primary aim of an M&E system is to use findings to improve performance. As Kusek and Rist (2004) note, “The main point of the M&E system is not simply to generate continuous results-based information, but to get that information to the appropriate users in a timely fashion so that the performance feedback can be used to better manage organizations and governments” (p. 138).

This concept is supported by Preskill and Boyle (2008), who describe evaluation as a learning process that generates valuable knowledge for decision-making. They emphasize that evaluation should not be seen as an isolated activity but as an integral part of organizational learning systems. Evaluation findings contribute to a continuous feedback loop, providing organizations with insights that can guide future strategies and actions.

According to Görgens & Kusek (2009, p. 417), “information is used when decision makers and stakeholders explicitly consider information provided to them in policymaking, programme planning and management, or service provision. The final decision or actions may not be based on that information alone, but its use is a part of the process of decision-making.” In this context, Russ-Eft & Preskill (2009) argue that the systematic use of evaluation findings leads to enhanced organizational learning, which is essential for long-term sustainability and change.

While there is no universally accepted definition of M&E, the OECD (2009) provides widely recognized definitions. Monitoring is a “continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds” (OECD, 2009, p. 1). Evaluation, on the other hand, is the “systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results with the aim of determining its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability in meeting objectives” (OECD, 2009, p. 1).

Evaluation is not a one-time event but involves continuous evaluative learning and knowledge gathering throughout the life cycle of a program.

Preskill & Boyle (2008) emphasize that evaluation is a crucial tool for building knowledge within organizations. Their model of Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) underscores the importance of creating organizational structures that support ongoing learning, reflection, and use of evaluation findings. Similarly, Rossi et al. (2019) state that evaluations serve multiple purposes, including program improvement, ensuring accountability, and generating knowledge. In particular, some evaluations are conducted to document the impacts of an intervention, contributing to organizational knowledge that can inform future strategies and improvements.

Chen et al. (2018) further extend this perspective by emphasizing that knowledge does not come solely from evaluation; monitoring also provides lessons specific to particular outcomes, programs, or projects. Evaluation, however, offers more generalizable lessons, helping to identify broader trends and alternatives to both specific and generic issues (UNDP, 2002). Visser et al. (2014) contend that the importance of monitoring is often underrated compared to evaluation, though both processes generate valuable knowledge that should be utilized.

In this study, the knowledge produced through monitoring is considered as important as that generated through evaluation, as both complement each other in contributing to a broader understanding of organizational performance and improvement. By assessing what works, what does not work, and why, M&E systems contribute to organizational and global knowledge. This knowledge, in turn, is shared widely through M&E groups and communities of practice (UNDP, 2002), ensuring that lessons learned are disseminated and applied to improve future decision-making.

Figure 1 below shows the purpose of M&E for organizational employees. As a result of using past data as a basis for future decision-making, stakeholders are held more accountable, and ultimately, performance improves (UNDP, 2002). By fostering organizational learning, M&E systems contribute not only to performance improvement but also to the development of a knowledge base that supports organizational sustainability and adaptation over time.

Figure 2: Objectives of M&E



Source: Adapted from UNDP, 2002

2.6.1 M&E system in the South African public sector

In the South African context, there is a recognition for the need to accelerate the demand for M&E knowledge for use in policy decision-making. The New Public Management movement has shaped results-based and evidence-based approaches to public management, emphasizing the importance of monitoring and evaluating policies to assess their appropriateness and effectiveness, thereby elevating M&E to a higher-order management function (Abrahams, 2015). The appetite for M&E started with the approval of the development of a Policy Framework Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System by cabinet in 2005. The development process was initially managed by “an inter-departmental task team in the Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA) and later by the Policy Coordination and Advisory Service Unit located within the Presidency”(Abrahams, 2015, p. 3). In 2007, the Presidency issued a policy framework defining a Government-Wide Monitoring & Evaluation system, linking official statistics, evaluations, and coordination among various government actors to champion M&E (Goldman et al., 2015). In addition, the Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information together with the handbook were developed in 2007 by National Treasury.

Following the elections in 2009 the incoming administration was faced with challenges such as high poverty and inequality, as well as widespread protests at the municipal level (Goldman et al., 2012; Phillips et al., 2014). In order to address those challenges the Presidency created the Ministry for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, and in 2010 the Department for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) was

established. The increased exposure to international experiences, both technocrats and political leadership placed a stronger emphasis on M&E since 2009 (Goldman et al., 2012). At the time of DPME's establishment, the M&E system in government was predominately compliance-based, especially in terms of accountability to the National Treasury and the Auditor General South Africa (Goldman et al., 2015). After its establishment in 2010 the DPME initially concentrated on planning and monitoring the 12 priority outcomes, introducing a management performance assessment system, and monitoring the delivery of front-line services (Phillips et al., 2014). In 2010, the government approved the outcomes-approach as a means to reiterate its commitment to shifting its high-level management focus from inputs such as budgets, personnel, and equipment, to managing for outcomes (Treasury, 2011).

The National Evaluation policy framework was approved by the cabinet in November 2011, supporting the government's commitment to increase the use of evaluations (IIED, 2019). The purpose of the National Evaluation Policy was to improve policy or programme performance; to improve accountability; to improve decision-making; and to generate knowledge for learning (Abrahams, 2015). It was decided in 2014 to rename the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation as the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in order to emphasize the importance of effective government planning (DPME, 2019b). DPME is also responsible for producing the Medium Term Strategic Framework. It is evident that the public sector has made major investment in M&E since the 2000s even going as far as linking M&E with planning.

On the 25 May 2019 the 6th administration of the democratic South Africa took office which some reviews in the legislative frameworks in the planning and M&E space. During 2019 Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans which was built on the foundation of the 2010 national Treasury Framework for Strategic and Annual Plans was approved. In the revised framework, improved use of evidence and results from M&E are among the key objectives to streamline the planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes and to increase learning and innovation (DPME, 2019b). Monitoring is said to be about “the collection, analysing, and reporting of data on inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts as well as external factors, in a way that supports effective management” (Presidency, 2007, p. 1). Usually, it provides information about actual performance against plan.

In addition a review of the successes and challenges of the 2011 National Evaluation Policy Framework was used to produce the revised National Evaluation Policy Framework for 2019-2024. The purpose of the revised policy framework “promote quality evaluations, which can be used for learning to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and impact of government interventions” (DPME, 2019, p. 11). The definition of the evaluation term is still, “the systematic collection and objective analysis of evidence on public policies, programmes, projects, functions and organizations to assess issues such as relevance, performance (effectiveness and efficiency), value for money, impact and sustainability, and recommend ways forward”(DPME, 2019a, p. 17).

Since the adoption of evaluations in country, DPME employs an evaluation communication strategy, disseminating results through media channels, its electronic newsletter, presentations at conferences and forums, submissions to parliamentary portfolio committees, and maintaining a publicly accessible national evaluation repository on its website (Goldman et al., 2019). The case study conducted by the International Institute of Environment & Development (IIED) (2019) also noted the strides that the DPME has made in enhancing capacity building by offering comprehensive support through standards, guidelines, and training, all conveniently accessible on the DPME website. Additionally the creation of data forums by DPME serves as real-time interactive spaces among key stakeholders, aiming to enhance comprehension of required datasets from various departments, promote information sharing, and provide technical support (IIED, 2019).

Literature shows that implementing the Policy Framework Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System is not without challenges even with the complementing frameworks as noted in recent studies by (Eresia-Eke & Boadu, 2019; Fraser & Morkel, 2020; Goldman et al., 2015, 2019; Phillips et al., 2014; Sebola, 2021). The challenges in implanting M&E system are not unique to South Africa but other African countries that have the adopted the M&E systems also have challenges (Fraser & Morkel, 2020; Goldman et al., 2019). As complex as these systems are, they are further bedevilled by political and ideological cycles created by the necessary democratic processes through elections every five to seven years, depending on the country and or levels of government (Abrahams, 2015).

The linkage between M&E and KM as it relates to how KM complements M&E is still at its infancy in the public sector, especially in South Africa. This partnership is not new in other organisations where, M&E is often linked with KM in both organisational structure and content, especially at the United Nations (Thorpe, 2013). Whether or not the KM and M&E relationship is a match made in heaven remains to be discovered in the public sector.

2.6.2 M&E professional

This section looks at who is an M&E professional since they constitute the unit of analysis in the study. This is an important aspect of the study as the study is about assessing the KM practices of individual M&E professionals in the public service as subjects of the study. This section is in no way addressing the issue about the M&E as a profession. This is because despite the extensive writings by numerous researchers on the topic of professionalization, a unanimous agreement on the issue has yet to be reached, and it continues to be a subject of ongoing debate (Smith & Morkel, 2018). The conferences, the establishment of professional organizations, the accumulation of knowledge, organisational connections, the supportive policy environment, and collaborative solutions are all indicative of the ongoing efforts towards the 'professionalization' of M&E in South Africa, as noted by Abrahams (2015).

According to the National School of Government (2020, p. 51) the word professional “means to work and project oneself in a way that demonstrates superior levels of acquired knowledge, skills and competence as well as exemplary conduct, commitment to the profession and its associated code of ethics and service to the community”. Its foundation is based on a significant wealth of knowledge and a mutual comprehension of the responsibilities of those involved, enabling their active participation in their respective professional domain (Abrahams, 2015).

M&E professionals are knowledge workers. A knowledge workers is an “individual whose work focuses on finding, synthesizing, communicating, sharing, applying and packaging knowledge” (DPSA, 2019, p. 5). In this study the M&E professional is defined as a knowledge worker who provides services and develops, and shares M&E knowledge products for continuous improvements and innovation in

programmes/projects/policies. M&E Professionals stems from different fields of study as M&E is a multi-dimensional field. In a nutshell M&E is a management tool and as such it can be applied to any sector with some specialisation.

M&E professional within government should be able to apply an evidence-based approach to gather and analyse data on the government activities. An M&E user should be able to assess information collected through the M&E process, and use this information as a tool for taking managerial action and to improve future interventions through the planning process (Presidency, 2007).

2.7 Assessing the link between KM and M&E

According to a USAID, “good knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation systems are more of an art than a science” (United Nations Development Group, 2011). It is believed that there is a complementary relationship between KM and M&E. Organisational learning and decision-making can be enhanced by using M&E and KM together (Elhussien, 2023). In the full cycle of learning, integrated M&E, and KM systems ensure that knowledge is generated, shared, and improved continuously (United Nations Trust Fund for Women, 2008). Both KM and M&E are concerned with producing knowledge that can be used to inform decision that will ultimately lead to improved organisational performance. KM and M&E will enhance performance at all organisational levels by ensuring better results and improved internal processes (Odiwuor, 2015).

Several studies by Suntaxi, 2013, Chen et al., 2019, Chen, 2018 and Odiwuor, 2015 explore the relationship between KM and M&E and how they work together. Suntaxi (2013) states that M&E systems are not considered as a potential tool to transform institutions into learning organisations and as such there are limited academic frameworks that bridge M&E and KM. Suntaxi (2013) proposes a framework to address this gap by illustrating how M&E systems can be used to strengthen the institutional arrangements to (re)create and maintain KM practices.

A study by (Odiwuor, 2015) which examines the influence of KM on monitoring and evaluation in health NGOs in Kenya, found that Kenya’s health NGOs are highly regarded for their KM practices, although few of them have effective systems for fostering the adoption of these practices. In the study, organisational factors such as

organisational culture, employee participation in decision-making, management support, and employee motivation are found to influence M&E in health NGOs (Odiwuor, 2015). With KM, M&E, organizations are able to improve their capacity for improving overall organisational effectiveness and adapt quickly to changes that were not anticipated (Odiwuor, 2015).

A study conducted by Chen et al. (2019) examined the need for M&E systems and KM systems in sport management partnership. The focus was to explore the benefits of KM and M&E approaches in G2G partnerships and how these can be applied practically (Chen et al., 2019). Based on the study findings, joint reporting and monitoring systems were seen beneficial to both the government of Western Cape and the People's Republic of China by establishing KM and M&E systems, so that joint analyses and publications of results may be possible (Chen et al., 2019). While the study participants agreed that KM and M&E were important, they lacked an understanding of what KM is actually all about (Chen, 2018). As a consequence, the author recommends that the full value-chain of KM and M&E systems need to be explored as more streamlined and integrated approaches are necessary. According to the author, KM and M&E are highly significant and vastly undervalued in the public sector, and therefore, increasing awareness of their importance and scope is recommended.

Much of the academic literature on the relationship between KM and M&E has been focused on the monitoring and evaluation of KM strategies with emphasis on the role of M&E in KM. Studies such as those by Firestone, 2000; Hulsebosch et al., 2009; Kim, 2006; Liebowitz & Wright, 1999; Straus et al., 2010; Talisayon, 2009, proposed frameworks on how organisations can go about measuring KM. This is because a growing number of organisations have invested in KM initiatives, which has increasingly prompted practitioners to measure the organisational benefits of KM initiatives (Kim, 2006). The KM practitioners need to demonstrate to the decision-makers that KM initiatives have improved the performance of the organisation. In order to build meaningful evaluation frameworks, academics and practitioners need to continue to work to develop a standard evaluation framework for KM performance across a variety of organisational contexts (Kim, 2006).

While there are authors who are for monitoring and evaluation of KM, there are others such as (Davenport & Prusak, 1998) who argue that knowledge cannot be measured by itself, but can be measured by the actions and outcomes resulting from its application. Wallman and Gold et al., 2001 (as cited in Loermans & Fink, 2005) are of the view that it is difficult to measure intangibles and its measurement is subjective in nature. Although M&E is vital to decision-making, it fails to tap into the full potential of human capacity regularly and is seldom able to address questions about knowledge and the role of knowledge in development (Hearn et al., 2011).

The importance of M&E to KM has been identified in literature but there is limited empirical literature on the role of KM in M&E that address the issues of how M&E knowledge can be managed in organisations to inform improvements.

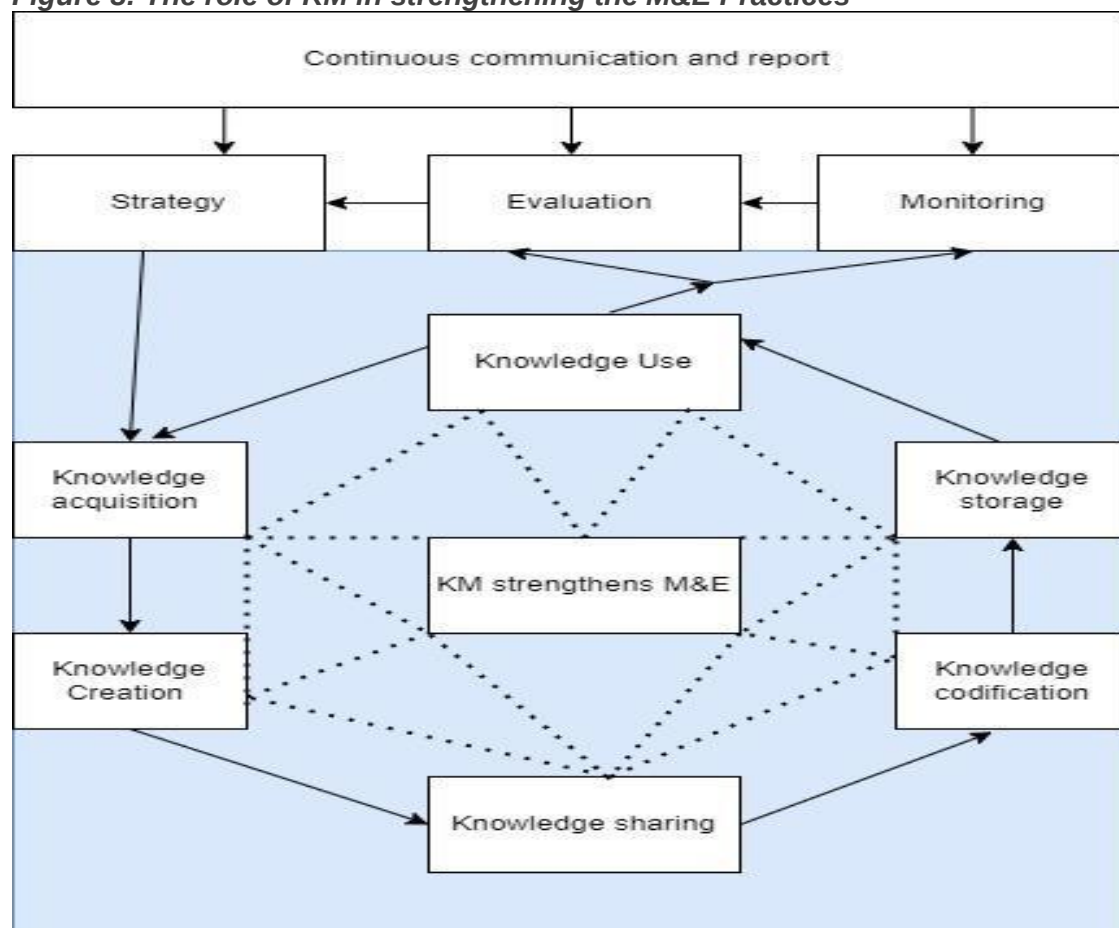
Even though there is limited literature on the role of KM in M&E, organisations such as The TOPS Program, 2017; UNDP, 2002; United Nations Trust Fund for Women, 2008, have identified the role of KM in the M&E and how this knowledge should be shared. The use of KM can improve the effectiveness of M&E, and it can correspond to better actions or behaviour on the part of employees (Visser et al., 2014). Monitoring and Evaluation provide information and facts that, when accepted and internalized, become knowledge that promotes learning (UNDP, 2002). Monitoring and Evaluation can be improved by using tools and techniques for KM (Thorpe, 2013).

In South Africa, knowledge is another point of emphasis in the Policy Framework for Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System which prescribes that M&E products should be oriented towards meeting strategic needs and knowledge requirements (The Presidency, 2007). The framework further states that M&E is most effective when it provides information rather than raw data, and when it facilitates the development of knowledge (The Presidency, 2007). Furthermore the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System, states that M&E strategy/framework should explicitly articulate its alignment with institutional Knowledge Management or Learning Strategies, emphasizing the integration and synergy between these frameworks (The Presidency, 2007). This the main area the study sought to examine.

After analysing the available literature on this subject, the researcher realised that a considerable amount of research had been conducted at the organisational level, with comparatively less emphasis on the individual level, which was the gap this study

sought to address. This study focused on individual M&E professionals, ensuring that their views and opinions were expressed in the subject matter. This emphasis was particularly important because, from the researcher's observations, the value of KM in enhancing M&E was relatively understudied in the South African public sector, despite recent efforts to implement KM frameworks.

The conceptual framework which underpins the study is briefly described in this section. This conceptual framework was developed from the M&E and KM fields of study based on the literature above.



The figure 3 shows the role of KM in strengthening M&E. Both monitoring and evaluation processes are involved in the development of knowledge. According to Chen's (2018) "Combined KM and M&E Systems Model," Chen's (2018) "Combined

KM and M&E Systems Model" suggests that KM is connected to reporting and should contribute to monitoring processes, not just be limited to evaluation. Likewise, M&E is important to organizational strategy. By systematically collecting and analyzing data on performance, M&E helps organizations assess whether they are meeting strategic objectives, identify areas for improvement, and adjust their approaches accordingly. M&E provides evidence-based information that feeds directly into the development and implementation of strategy, making strategic decisions aligned with the organization's evolving needs.

KM strengthens M&E in several key ways as noted by The TOPS Program (2017). First, it facilitates real-time decision-making systems, allowing M&E to benefit from continuous feedback without waiting for final evaluation reports. This streamlining of data collection and analysis ensures that processes are faster, more efficient, and user-friendly, reducing the burden on M&E teams while enhancing the relevance of insights.

Second, KM systems enable faster and easier access to critical information such as indicators, tools, and plans, saving time and improving the efficiency of M&E operations. By leveraging past programming experiences, KM provides a foundation for creating innovative approaches, ensuring that M&E avoids redundancy and builds upon prior lessons learned. Additionally, KM enhances information use by promoting the replication of quality results through designed processes and tools. This ensures that the knowledge generated is not only stored but also actively used to improve implementation and decision-making throughout the organization.

M&E requires continuous communication in order to inform stakeholders and the public about progress and developments (Twende Mbele, 2022). A great deal of effort needs to be invested in communicating results to effectively use M&E as a change agent. Reason being, in most cases, regardless of how rigorous the M&E is and how accessible the results are, insights and lessons learned are hidden in reports that few practitioners have the time to read and assess (United Nations Trust Fund for Women, 2008). KM plays a critical role in disseminating knowledge products such as reports and assessments to ensure that insights are effectively communicated across departments and stakeholders. These efforts are essential to maximizing the impact of M&E, as they ensure that the knowledge produced is action-focused and contributes

to ongoing learning and performance improvement within the organization (Fraser & Morkel, 2020; Kusek & Rist, 2004; Odiwuor, 2015).

The starting point before writing or producing M&E knowledge products is to verify the demand for the knowledge product. In the M&E context, supply refers to those who produce evidence, whilst demand refers to those who use M&E products or services (Fraser & Morkel, 2020). After the organisation has decided on the type of knowledge, it must acquire, create, store, share and finally it must decide on how knowledge will be used (KM processes). Ultimately, KM processes support key organizational processes like innovation, learning, and decision-making (King, 2009), with the goal of using the knowledge generated by M&E to drive organizational performance improvements.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the literature from both the M&E and KM fields. The areas such as the definition of knowledge, Forms of knowledge, Data, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom were provided. Following those sections was a brief section that unpacked KM, KM Processes and KM in the public sector including a section on KM in South Africa. A Review of M&E, especially M&E system in the South Africa public sector was looked at. Since the study is about individual as a subject of study a brief look at who is an M&E professional was also provided. Assessing the link between KM and M&E which is at the core of the study was presented together with the Conceptual framework that guides the study.

CHAPTER 3

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology that was employed for the study. Researchers describe the process they used for solving research problems and answering research questions in this section. A research methodology is a way to solve a research problem in a scientific way (Kothari, 2013)). The main purpose is therefore to provide a detailed discussion of the research approach, design, method, sampling, data analysis process, including limitations, reliability, validity, and ethical consideration that were followed during the study giving an account of why the researcher chose those methods or procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.1 Research Approach

The research strategy is a roadmap that reflects how the researcher intended to conduct the study in a manner that ensures that the research questions are answered, objectives are met, the hypothesis is tested or propositions are proved (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is largely dependent on the discipline, intention and audience of the research (Bairagi & Munot, 2019). A research approach is also known as a research strategy or a research paradigm. The main types of research approaches are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed.

For the purposes of this study, a qualitative research approach was utilised. A qualitative researcher is interested in how social behaviour is constructed, perceived, and interpreted using specific methods and tools (Patton, 2015). It is a form of social science research that investigates the ways in which human behaviour is motivated by using explanatory techniques like interviews, surveys, contextual analyses, case studies, and other techniques (Van Zyl, 2014). A qualitative research inquiry essentially unpacks 'unknown' deeper meanings of social issues and explains what informs these issues.

In their study to examine the need for M&E systems and KM systems partnership between Shandong (PRC) and the Western Cape Government (RSA) (Chen et al., 2019) adopted a qualitative research approach. In using this approach, the advantage was that it provided government institutions with a better appreciation of the nature

and need for support for KM and M&E in public sector organizations, an area often overlooked and neglected within the sphere of social development.

Unlike the language of mathematics (quantitative research), which is considered by some experts to be more accurate and powerful at representing results than words, it cannot substitute for the language of words (qualitative research) in expressing the complexity, richness, and ambiguity of human life and society (Shkedi, 2019). In qualitative research, things are usually studied in their natural setting, and the participant's voice is often used to explain phenomena (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). There is no attempt to manipulate or control behaviour in general.

This research sought to explore the extent to which public sector monitoring and evaluation professionals employ knowledge management practices in acquiring, producing, storing, disseminating and using M&E knowledge products. When the primary purpose of the research is to explore, describe, or explain something, qualitative research is most appropriate approach (Leavy, 2017). There is currently limited research on this topic in the South African public sector, especially since the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework was approved in 2019. This research sought to explore the lived experiences of M&E professionals in using KM practices in their day-to-day work processes.

The researcher has taken note that this methodology is not without limitations as far as generalising the results. Edmonds & Kennedy (2017), however, stated the aims in qualitative studies is to comprehend or interpret phenomena in context of the meaning expressed by individuals and populations without attempting to deduce causation or generalize (i.e., external validity) but the findings can be generalisable to other individuals or populations if similar situation. Various designs to qualitative research exist, including grounded theory, ethnography, action research and phenomenological research.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a specific way of guiding the procedures that will be followed in a research study whether you are conducting qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is a plan for how the study will be

conducted (Lune & Berg, 2021). It describes the approach that will be taken to answer the research question.

Qualitative research questions, typically starting with words like "what" or "how," are open-ended, evolving, and non-directional, restating the study's purpose in specific terms to explore a central phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Research questions respond to the aims and objectives of the research inquiry. These questions should motivate meaningful discussions to address the research problem at hand. A characteristic that is also important when drafting the initial questions for a research study is the focus. Qualitative research questions assume two forms, namely, the central question and the relevant sub-questions that follow (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The nature of the central questions points out the exploration of the concept or phenomenon that the research study focuses on.

For the purpose of this study the researcher utilised an exploratory research design. Various definitions of exploratory research can be made in management sciences, but most generally it is defined as an attempt to discover and generate something new (Thomas & Lawal, 2020). In exploratory research, ideas and insights are gained into a problem situation posing a challenge to the researcher (Lune & Berg, 2021). However, non-exploratory research by definition results only in repeating what has already been discovered (Thomas & Lawal, 2020) with the intention to prove or disprove theory. Hence the main advantage of exploratory research design as compared to the conclusive research designs is a search for new discoveries which would cease without the ambition to discover something new.

The exploratory research design is conducted when there is little or no literature on the phenomena of interest with the purpose of exploring the problem with no intention to make any conclusive findings. The purpose of this study was to explore the KM subject within the M&E space in the public sector which is subject that is relatively misunderstood.

The advantage of this research design can typically be conducted by using literature reviews, experience surveys, and analysis of stimulating insights. Literature surveys expose the research to previous research results, data sources, and data types, while experience surveys target an individual with specific expertise in the area (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). This design also afforded the researcher with the opportunity to take

into account many different facets of a problem as they come to their attention during the course of the study. This design allows for flexibility and open-mindedness in how the researcher collects data

3.3 Data collection methods

Researchers can employ different methods/techniques to conduct research with the ultimate goal being to address the research question. Research methods can be referred to as “methods the researchers use in performing research operations” (Kothari, 2013). These methods can be for data collection, statistical techniques and analytical methods to evaluate the results. Since this is an exploratory study primary and secondary data can be collected by using secondary data analysis, expert surveys and focus groups research methods.

Data collection can be described as a “process of collecting and measuring information of selected variables in an established systematic manner” (Bairagi & Munot, 2019, p. 131). The main purpose of collecting data systematically is to allow the researcher to answer the research question and assess the results. As part of the data collection process, sampling and recruitment are used to identify the study parameters, collect information through observation and interviews, as well as documents and visual materials, and develop the data recording protocol (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Depending on what type of information the researcher needs, they would either need to collect primary data or secondary data, which is already collected and used. The primary methods of research are interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed interviews as a primary data collection method.

In qualitative research the most widely used method is interviews which can be unstructured or semi-structured. (Lune & Berg, 2021) define an interview as a conversation whose specific purpose is to gather information. When collecting data through interviews, individuals can provide responses either face-to-face, over the phone, or through computer-mediated communication (Brink et al., 2018). One of the advantages of using interviews is that they serve as a method to attain data saturation in a study (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

In (Jain, 2021) study comparing the effectiveness of interviews and surveys as data collection tools for exploratory qualitative research, the researcher recommended the utilization of interviews. This recommendation was grounded in the observation that interviews not only provided the opportunity to ask probing questions but also facilitated a personal understanding of the research participants, offering benefits for both the present study and potential future research endeavours. Interviews can be structured or unstructured. The researcher collected data for this study from September 2022 to March 2023.

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

In this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews for collecting primary data for the study. A semi-structured interview allows for emergent understanding to arise naturally, as well as the opportunity to hear complex viewpoints from those being interviewed without being limited by scripted questions (Tracy, 2020). This method was ideal for this study since the M&E professionals will ideally be able to identify cutting-edge issues and provide their own opinions and experiences regarding the use of KM in their work. By giving the experts the option to demonstrate their knowledge, the researcher gained insight into their diverse views and opinions.

Research instruments are tools used to collect the data; for qualitative researchers, these are the researchers themselves, together with interview questions, focus-group plans, and open-ended surveys (Tracy, 2020). The instrument that was utilised in this study was an interview guide. Interview guides provide the interviewer with a list of questions or topics to be discussed during an interview. According to Patton (2015, p. 644) the “guide is prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed”. Furthermore, (Fusch & Ness, 2015) state that it is essential that interview questions be structured to enable the asking of the same questions to multiple participants, without this structure, achieving data saturation becomes challenging, as it would be akin to pursuing a constantly moving target.

The interview guide for this study was designed to be either administered by the researcher or self-administered by study participants in their own free time. The process that was followed in developing the interview guide began with the central research question of the study and determining the sub-questions to address the main

question. The questions were also developed based on the main attributes for the focus of the study.

While developing the proposal, the researcher selected three crucial government departments that would help in addressing the research question. Later the researcher realised that the study would be benefit if it focused on individual M&E professional's experiences instead of focusing three departments which already had dedicated KM units. These departments were the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), Department of Public Administration (DPSA) and the National Treasury. The researcher then requested the required approval to carry out the study. During this process, the researcher was requested to clarify the nature of the research to the experts tasked with M&E within the respective departments. The discussions helped the researcher to comprehend the necessity for this research, as initially there was some hesitancy to participate, but following the engagement, participants displayed increased enthusiasm to take part. During these exchanges, the study questions were adjusted and the question guide was established. The questions underwent pre-testing by the researcher's supervisor, and one participant was interviewed in the process. This approach allowed for the refinement of the question formulation prior to the final submission of the proposal.

The utilization of this instrument guaranteed that the interviews were conducted in a more methodical and thorough manner. The participants used their own words and expressed their opinions as the questions were open-ended. The question guide included the following sections:

Section 1 was an introduction of myself as the researcher, the topic of the study, the purpose and also the ethics issues for participant's knowledge. Additionally the participant's permission to record the interview was also solicited.

Section 2 was establishing rapport and understanding demographics. Participants were asked to provide a brief introduction of themselves, in terms of who they are, educational background, work experience as far as M&E and their role and responsibility. This was an icebreaker question and it also assist the research to know if the participant has the relevant years of experience as the study sought to interview those at middle (level 11 -12) to senior management (level 13 – 15).

Section 3 had a set of 10 questions which were trying to address the research question and gather the M&E professional's experience with the use of KM in their daily execution of their work as they go about producing the M&E knowledge products. This questions where based on the literature. The interview guide has been attached as Appendix A.

The contacts of the potential participants were gathered during the conferences, webinars and from the departments that gave initial approval for the researcher to conduct the study. Which are the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), Department of Public Administration (DPSA) and the National Treasury.

The process that was used to conduct the MS Teams was to send an invite and upon approval by the potential participant a formal meeting invite would be sent. The initial plan was to conduct all the interviews on MS Teams, but as the researcher entered the field she had to be open-minded and flexible to gather the data. This was brought about by some of those approached at the DPME seminars requesting for a link were they can answer the questions on their own convenient time. As result the researcher developed a questionnaire using the online Google Forms website. It offers a user-friendly visual layout and is free to use. All the participants were sent an email with a link to the online Google form in all my invitations. This made it easier for participants to have options between the answering the questions themselves and participating in an online MS-Teams interview. As a result, only six forms were completed and the researcher later discovered that three of the participants had also been interviewed on MS Teams. This meant the researcher had to triangulate the responses between the two platforms because the questions in the questionnaire were framed differently.

It was observed that the MS Teams interview yielded more comprehensive answers in comparison to the self-administered questionnaire using Google Forms. This observation was also noted by Jain (2021) who states in a qualitative exploratory research, interviews proved to be more suitable than surveys, despite their time consuming and resource-intensive nature. Below is an example of the invitation that was sent by email to the participants.

Reply Reply All Forward



Mon 11/21/2022 4:03 PM

Limpho Molefe

Invite: Knowledge Management Practices of Monitoring and Evaluation Professionals in the Public Sector - Research Project for a Masters Programme

To: [redacted]@gov.za

Message Participant Information Sheet.pdf (265 KB)

Dear [redacted],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Limpho Molefe, I got your email at the DPME Evaluation Seminar last week. I am a Masters of Management (Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation) student at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am conducting a research study that explores the extent to which public sector monitoring and evaluation professionals employ knowledge management practices in acquiring, producing, storing, disseminating and using M&E knowledge products. The study title is "Knowledge Management Practices of Monitoring and Evaluation Professionals in the Public Sector".

I was wondering if you would like to assist me in this project by taking part in an interview, which will take place virtually on Microsoft Teams or on Zoom at your most convenient time. If you agree to participate the interview will last for about an hour. The research is purely for academic purposes to complete my studies. Your answers to the research questions will be more about expressing your own viewpoints and experiences.

Please do provide me with two alternative dates and time slots based on your availability. I have attached the participant information sheet and also included the link to the study survey below if you prefer this method:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc8osLRdAijkr4-lieVBBdwIkqgv9htb174PhpGgbvbG5UtvA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Kind regards

Limpho Molefe

886977@students.wits.ac.za

3.3.2 Desk review

Secondary data was collected using documentary analysis by searching the internet for, journals, conference papers, books, and M&E and KM policies in the public sector. (Patton, 2015) states that anything written can be a source of information for a qualitative analysis hence the use of documentary analysis. The documents were readily available in public platforms for analysis. This resulted in discovering new ideas and insights and, therefore, contribute to answering the research question.

3.4 Sampling

The term sampling refers to a selection process where a sum part of a total population is selected to make a judgement or inference about the total population. According to (Bairagi & Munot, 2019) sampling is the process of obtaining, retrieving, and selecting a sample from an entire population. It means picking a smaller group (a sample) from a larger group (population) for study because it's usually not possible to study the

entire large group (Bryman & Bell, 2019). It involves selecting people to interview, as well as selecting specific places, times of day, events, and activities to observe while conducting fieldwork (Tracy, 2020). There are two types of sampling techniques a researcher can employ such as probability and non-probability sampling. In this study the researcher employed the non-probability sampling technique.

3.4.1 Sampling techniques

Researchers use non-probability sampling to select potential subjects who are willing to participate, are readily available, or are present at the time of the research (Abdulai & Owusu-Ansah, 2014). The advantage of this techniques is that unlike a probability sample, non-probability samples may not require the list of all the possible elements in the entire population to be used, and it may also allow researchers to study populations that are highly sensitive or difficult to examine (Lune & Berg, 2021). This technique was fitting for the purpose of this study and allowed for only available M&E professionals who were conversant with the phenomena being studied to be selected for their views and experiences. Non-random sampling techniques include accidental, volunteer, quota, and purposive sampling techniques.

The researcher used purposive sampling to sample participants for this study. Researchers who practice purposeful sampling, at the very least, select data that fits the project's parameters, goals, and purposes in order to generate quality qualitative research (Tracy, 2020). This is one of the advantages of using this sampling method for this study in addition to its convenience and low cost. By using this approach, only M&E professionals who are likely to have the needed information were invited to participate in the study. This was done by utilising the DPME contact list which has email addresses of all M&E professionals in the public sector including the public entities.

The researcher also attended the annual SAMEA Conference, DPME Evaluation Seminar and the DPME National Technical Planning Forum and Community of Practice. This is where during breaks the researcher approached potential participants with the intent of introducing the research topic and purpose, if participant was interested an invitation to participate in the study was emailed. This personal interaction was beneficial, as the participants already knew who the researcher was,

making them more receptive than when the researcher was simply sending an email invitation, which often went unanswered. Identifying respondents through conferences and webinars presented several strengths. It provided access to knowledgeable professionals and diverse perspectives, allowing for rich insights into current trends in the field. This approach was not without challenges. Despite this approach, some individuals still did not respond. Coordinating interviews following events proved difficult, especially as participants had busy schedules. This experience underscored the importance of direct engagement in fostering interest and willingness to participate in research.

The above experiences reveal that purposive sampling is not without limitations as it is not used to generalise to a larger population due to selection bias, but to gain a deep-seated understanding of issues and cases from individuals who might share similar lived experiences. As asserted by (Lune & Berg, 2021) the use of purposive samples by researchers is often fruitful, despite certain limitations such as a lack of generalization.

3.4.2 Sample population

Primary data is collected by sampling a population (sample size) from a larger population (sampling frame) (Abdulai & Owusu-Ansah, 2014). In this study the sample population was M&E professionals working in the public sector within the national departments with three to ten years working experience. In South Africa, there are three distinct spheres of government: national, provincial, and local, each with its own constitutional responsibilities. The national government, including state agencies with departmental status, plays a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of legislation and policies set by Parliament or the Cabinet (Government Communications, 2021). The primary reason for selecting national government participants for this study was to focus on discussions around policy formulation, implementation, and potential reforms, which are primarily within the national sphere's mandate. This level of government provides a comprehensive view of national legislative impacts, making it an ideal choice for exploring policy-related matters. At the time of the study, there were forty-one national government departments, offering a broad range of perspectives from various sectors.

3.4.3 Sample size

A sample size is the number of participants from whom the researcher will collect data (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). The DPME conducted a Diagnostic Assessment on the State of Planning in National and Provincial Spheres of Government during 2022. In that report a survey on the number of posts with the responsibility for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation was also conducted. The results reveal that there were 340 posts with the responsibility for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME, 2022). Furthermore, the total number of filled posts from the 340 posts was 305. Of those 101 were solely responsible for the planning function. The results were collected from a total of 35 national departments. The researcher noted that at the time of the study, there were 41 national government departments which would mean that 85% of the population that are responsible for Planning and M&E in the report.

In terms of the rank there were 94 senior managers from level 13 upwards, with Directors alone counting for 71%. There were 211 Planning and M&E personnel from Level 12 (Deputy Director) downwards.

In this study the researcher selected both middle and senior management level participants with 3 to 10 years' experience in M&E. The reason for selecting those at middle management for the study was because one of the key competencies of Middle Management Professional/Production Specialists is problem solving and decision making (DPSA, 2005) which was crucial for the study. Although many of the occupations at salary levels 11 and 12 are considered "technical specialist" roles, they also involve significant supervisory and management responsibilities inherent to their job content (DPSA, 2005), making these participants particularly relevant for the research. In this study middle managers accounted 50% of total M&E participants.

The researcher also selected senior managers for the study because it is their responsibility to translate government policy mandates into effective departmental strategies, plans, and programmes. Additionally, they ensure the efficient use of both financial and human resources for performance delivery. One of their key competencies is Knowledge Management, which further enhances their relevance to the research. The salary levels of senior managers are 13 to 16.

The researcher selected participants with 3 to 10 years of experience in M&E because this range ensures a well-rounded perspective on how knowledge management

practices are understood and applied in the public sector. Additionally, by including both middle and senior managers, the study achieves a balance of perspectives between those responsible for framing policies and ensuring compliance (senior managers) and those tasked with implementing these policies (middle managers). This combination enriches the study with diverse insights on the generation, storage, sharing, and use of knowledge products.

In this study, the initial plan was to interview 20 M&E professionals at middle and senior Management level. This was because Creswell & Poth (2016) recommend 20 to 30 interviews for a phenomenological study, as these allow for in-depth exploration of individual experiences and themes. The researcher, however, interviewed 14 M&E professionals and 3 KM professionals. This was because 2 participants declined and 4 did not reply to the invite. The profile of the participants and the pseudonyms used are discussed in detail in the research findings, specifically in section 4.2.

While fewer than the intended number of M&E participants were interviewed, data saturation was still considered and effectively achieved. According to the literature, data saturation occurs when no new themes or insights are emerging from the data (Guest et al., 2006; Fusch & Ness, 2015). Studies suggest that saturation can often be reached with as few as 12 to 16 interviews, especially when participants share common professional backgrounds or experiences (Hagaman & Wutich, 2017). With 14 M&E professionals interviewed, combined with insights from 3 KM professionals, it is likely that sufficient depth and variety in responses were gathered to reach data saturation. This aligns with previous research indicating that between 6 and 12 interviews are often enough for saturation in homogeneous groups (Guest et al., 2006). By continuously monitoring the data for redundancy in themes and insights, the researcher ensured that the core research questions were fully addressed, despite the variation in participant numbers.

3.5 Process of Analysis

Data analysis is a process of separating data into segments and interpreting the information in a new light by moving it from the original context to a new context (Shkedi, 2019). Qualitative data analysis is a process that seeks to reduce and make sense of vast amounts of information, often from different sources, so that impressions

that shed light on a research question can emerge. Since data do not speak for themselves, data analysis helps us answer the question “What does it all mean” (Leavy, 2017).

Data was analysed using thematic analysis in which focuses on what is being said rather than the manner in which it is expressed (Bryman & Bell, 2019). The researcher identifies the themes “told” by a participant; where the meaning shifts to the “telling” and the story can be cast during a conversation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was done by transcribing the recorded face-to-face and telephone interviews utilising the Descript software which was downloaded into my laptop for privacy. The software allows for speech recognition and automatic speaker detection which are two aspects that simplified the audio transcription process. In addition the software allows for editing of the transcripts while playing the recording per word and by so doing, one is able to correct any errors.

The MS Teams interviews were transcribed during the interview process. But still having used that technological feature was not enough because the researcher had to check for errors and thoroughly check that the interviews were accurately transcribed, by reading word for word. This was really time consuming with some interviews that went on for more than two hours. At some point the researcher was overwhelmed with transcription.

The survey was downloaded from Google Forms and Teams Forms. An excel spreadsheet was then created and all the transcribed data was sorted according to the questions and answers. After organising data for analysis, the data was then examined using the TA methodology according to the approach outlined by Creswell & Creswell (2018). The TA technique involved a repetitive process of studying the transcribed data multiple times to ensure the researcher accurately grasps and documents the concepts. This method facilitated an understanding of the ideas expressed by participants and the meanings they intended to convey. Consequently, coding was executed to identify recurring patterns, including nonverbal cues, granting the freedom to analyse and interpret the data beyond its literal content. This process entailed working with textual data acquired during data collection and dividing sentences into distinct categories and assigning appropriate labels to these categories. These labels were drawn from the language used by the participants

themselves. The coding process was employed to derive a limited set of themes for the study. These themes represent the primary discoveries and were used as section headings in the findings section. They reflect a range of viewpoints from various participants and are substantiated by a variety of quotations and specific evidence. The method chosen to present the findings involved using a narrative style to communicate the results of the analysis.

3.6 Limitations, feasibility and positionality

As Bryman & Bell (2019) note, acknowledging the limitations of the study is crucial to maintaining transparency and ensuring that readers understand the constraints under which the research was conducted. The researcher was aware that such transparency allows for more accurate interpretations of the findings and a clearer identification of areas for future research.

One of the limitation of this study is the difference between the planned and actual number of participants interviewed. Initially, 20 M&E professionals from various national departments were targeted; however, due to scheduling conflicts and non-responses, only 14 participated. The absence of these 6 professionals potentially narrowed the range of perspectives, as those who did not participate may have had different experiences or insights, particularly concerning the integration of KM into M&E practices in their departments. This limitation is particularly relevant in understanding the implementation of the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework, where different departments might be at varying stages of awareness and application. The exclusion of those perspectives may mean that the study underrepresents the full scope of KM implementation across the national departments.

Another key limitation concerns the different understanding of KM among participants. KM is a concept with many definitions and interpretations, and as such, M&E professionals may perceive its application differently. This study found that most participants were unaware of the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework, and KM and M&E functions are often housed in separate divisions within departments. These structural and conceptual differences likely influenced how

participants approached the interview questions and framed their responses. As a result, the depth of the data on KM practices may have been impacted, and the findings should be interpreted within this context.

Additionally, the study excluded provincial departments, public entities, and municipalities, which represent different levels of government that may face unique challenges in implementing M&E and KM practices. These exclusions mean the findings may not fully capture how the relationship between KM and M&E is understood and applied across the broader public sector. The scope of the study is therefore limited to national departments, and as such, the results may not be generalizable to other levels of government.

While these limitations are significant, the researcher sought to mitigate them by ensuring a diverse sample of participants from nine national departments representing different clusters. Despite this, future research would benefit from expanding the scope to include provincial and municipal government officials to provide a more comprehensive view of M&E and KM practices across different administrative levels.

3.6.1 Researcher Positionality

The researcher's positionality in a qualitative research study involves sharing their background such as work experiences, cultural experiences, and history how it informs their interpretation of the information, and what they have to gain from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher, is currently a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) professional working within a national government department with more than ten years working experience in the M&E field. This professional background places the researcher in a unique position to critically engage with the intersections between these two fields. Importantly, the researcher approached this research with no preconceived notions about KM practices or their specific application to M&E. My curiosity stems from the practical reality that, in many instances, the coordination of KM frameworks is assigned to M&E units, a decision the researcher has observed but not fully understood.

My role within the field provided access to key stakeholders and a deeper understanding of the practical challenges faced by M&E professionals. However, this insider perspective also required the researcher to be continuously mindful of the potential for bias that the researcher professional experiences might bring to the research process. To maintain objectivity, the researcher consciously reflected on her own experiences and ensured that participants' perspectives were the primary focus of analysis.

Through this study, the researcher's goal was not only to deepen her own understanding of how KM and M&E intersect but also to provide valuable insights for other M&E professionals. The researcher hopes this research will help practitioners better comprehend the synergies between KM and M&E and how these fields can complement each other to enhance public sector performance.

3.7 Research ethics

Ethics is defined simply as the set of rules that govern the conduct of a professional or group of people (Chilisa, 2012). In this study, ethical considerations were guided by principles of "morality, fairness, integrity, and honesty" (Leavy, 2017). The researcher adhered to three primary ethical principles: personal autonomy and respect, beneficence, and justice and truth. These principles were achieved by minimizing the risk of harm, getting informed consent, maintaining anonymity and confidentiality (Mapitsa, 2021).

To minimize the risk of harm, the researcher took great care in ensuring that participants were fully informed about the purpose and nature of the research. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, who was given the option to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by assigning pseudonyms to participants (P1 through P17), protecting their identities throughout the research process and when presenting the findings.

Participants were not deceived during the study, and individual privacy was respected during the publication and writing of the results. This ensured that the integrity of the research remained intact while honouring the rights of participants.

To further comply with ethical standards, an application was made to the Wits University Ethics Committee, and ethical clearance was obtained. All relevant ethical documents, including the consent form and participant information sheet, are attached as Appendix B to D for further reference.

3.8 Trustworthiness and authenticity

Research findings are subject to reliability and validity, which are very important to all studies. There is often scepticism in qualitative research because they are said to lack rigor. Bryman & Bell (2019), state that qualitative study can be assessed by trustworthiness and authenticity. There are four measures that can be used as alternative to reliability and validity in qualitative research “the trustworthiness criteria of credibility (paralleling internal validity), transferability (paralleling external validity), dependability (paralleling reliability), and confirmability (paralleling objectivity)” Guba & Lincoln (as cite by Kumar, 2019).

To ensure credibility the researcher followed proper research procedures and used a combination of data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews and document analysis of government policies, journals and articles on KM and M&E. The final report was not sent to the participants so that they can confirm if the findings are consistent with their experiences. This was because the interviews were all recorded and the researcher made sure reiterate what the participants were saying. Their views were captured verbatim in all in the transcriptions.

In order to assess the transferability of findings to other contexts, the researcher ensured that she provides a detailed account of the participant's experiences. By creating a database for other researchers to use in assessing the likelihood that the findings will be transferred to other contexts. This database is stored in a password secured platform.

In order to establish dependability, the researcher maintained complete records during every phase of the research process, ensuring that those records are accessible for auditing purposes. To ensure confirmability criterion is met in this study, the researcher ensured that she acts in “good faith” (Bryman & Bell, 2019) by following all the ethical considerations in the research process.

3.9 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, the researcher described the research approach, design, sampling strategy, data collection methods, and analytical techniques used to gather and interpret data. Ethical considerations were highlighted, emphasizing the measures taken to protect participants and to ensure the study's integrity. Moreover, the chapter illustrates rigor and credibility through its discussion of trustworthiness and authenticity.

CHAPTER 4

4 PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the research that attempted to investigate the complex landscape of KM practices in the field of public sector M&E. The primary objective of this research has been to examine the degree to which M&E professionals in the public sector engage in KM processes throughout the acquisition, production, storage, dissemination, and consumption of M&E knowledge products.

After presenting a description of the participants, what follows is a presentation of empirical findings on the complementary relationship that exists between KM and M&E. Definitions of KM from the perspective of M&E professionals interviewed in this study, are explored in the first subheading. Next, the chapter looks into ways M&E professionals practically apply KM techniques. This theme explores the complexities of how knowledge is acquired, produced, stored, shared, and used. It reveals practical frameworks, effective methods, and areas that can be improved, making a significant contribution to the academic and professional discussion on KM in public sector M&E contexts. The chapter concludes with a thorough examination of obstacles that hinder the successful implementation of KM by M&E professionals. This examination aims to identify and explain these barriers, leading to a detailed understanding of organisational challenges. Simultaneously, it establishes the foundation for specific strategies that aim to create a more favourable environment for KM practices in the public sector M&E field.

4.2 Description of the participants

One of the very first questions asked by the researcher was a brief introduction of the participant, in terms of who they are, educational background, work experience as far as M&E and their role and responsibility. This question was asked to establish demographics and rapport. This was an icebreaker question and it also assist the research to know if the participant has the relevant years of experience as the study sought to interview those at middle to senior management level.

Table 1: M&E Participant's demographics

Participant ID	Gender	Rank	Platform	M&E experience	Public service experience	Qualification
P1	Female	Director Strategic Management	MS Teams	8	8	BAdmin (Honours)
P2	Female	Deputy Director Strategy, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation	MS Teams	5+	7	Post Graduate Degree
P3	Female	Deputy Director Evaluations	MS Teams	10	11	Masters Degree
P4	Female	Deputy Director Performance Reporting	MS Teams	10+	10+	Bcom Honours
P5	Female	Director: Evaluations	Google Forms	5+	13	Masters Degree
P6	Female	Director Strategy and Reporting	MS Teams	13	18	Post Graduate Diploma
P7	Male	Director Performance Monitoring	Face-face	14	14	Masters Degree
P8	Male	Deputy Director Monitoring and Evaluation	MS Teams	24	24	Bcom Degree
P9	Female	Evaluation Specialist	Telephone	8	8	Post Graduate Diploma
P10	Female	Deputy Director: Governance and Institutional Performance	MS Teams	3	16	Masters Degree
P11	Male	Director Monitoring and Evaluation	Face-face	19	19	Masters Degree
P12	Female	Director: Strategy Management and Communication	Google Forms	5	31	BA Honours
P13	Male	Director Governance and Institutional Performance	MS Teams	12+	20	Masters Degree
P14	Male	Chief Director	MS Teams	18	34	Not provided

Table 1 shows demographics of participants who were interviewed by gender, rank, work experience, and highest qualification. The identities of the participants were replaced with the pseudonyms labelled P1 to P 14 for M&E professionals who were interviewed. The numbering is not based on the order of interviews but on who finally participated. The letter P stands for Participant and will be used in the following sections. A total of 14 M&E profession participants from 9 national government departments. Of the total 14 M&E professionals interviewed 50% were at senior

management level (13 -14) and those at middle management also accounted for 50%. As a result of looking at position levels, the researcher was able to determine which specific views were shared by senior managers, i.e. policymakers, and middle managers, i.e. policy implementers.

The participants came from different educational backgrounds which shows the diverse educational backgrounds of participating M&E professionals. Almost all the participants had a postgraduate educational level.

The years of experience was very key in this research as the selection criteria was 3 to 10 at middle or senior management. Most of the participants had worked in more than one department, others also worked in national public entities. The years of experience span from 7 to 35 years in the public with one participant who had recently retired after 35 years of service. The years of experience as it relates to M&E range from 3 to 24 years. Others had been involved in the development of the Policy Framework for the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System.

Table 2: KM Participants demographics

Participant ID	Gender	Rank	Platform	M&E experience	Public service experience	Qualification
P16	Female	Director Research and Knowledge Management	Telephone	KM	11	Masters Degree
P17	Male	Chief Director Research and Knowledge Management	MS Teams	KM	13	Phd
P18	Female	Director Knowledge Management	MS Teams	KM	Not provided	Masters Degree

Table 2 shows the demographics of KM professionals who participated in the study. There were three KM professionals who were interviewed in total. Two were from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and one was from the Department of Science and Innovation. The KM professionals all had a postgraduate qualifications. KM professionals were interviewed as a way of triangulating the data for the study.

Table 3: Departments of M&E Participants

	Department	Number of participants
1	Civilian Secretariat for the Police Service	2

2	Department of Science and Innovation	3
3	Office of the Chief Justice	1
4	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	3
5	Department of Correctional Services	1
6	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development	1
7	National Treasury	2
8	Department of Public Administration	1
9	South African Police Service	1

Table 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the departments represented by individual Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Knowledge Management (KM) participants in this study. The varied representation—spanning nine distinct departments—reflects a rich tapestry of perspectives that contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding M&E practices and KM implementation within the public sector.

The diversity among participants is critical, as it ensures a range of experiences and insights that can illuminate the unique challenges and opportunities faced by different departments in their M&E and KM efforts. For instance, participants from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, which has a significant role in overseeing M&E practices across the government, may provide insights into overarching policies and frameworks that govern M&E activities. In contrast, perspectives from the Civilian Secretariat for the Police Service or the Department of Correctional Services can highlight sector-specific challenges, such as compliance-driven cultures or the impacts of organizational hierarchies on knowledge sharing.

The next subsections will delve into the data collected during the interviews, systematically organized according to the four main questions and their corresponding sub-questions. This structured approach allows for a detailed examination of each participant's responses, facilitating a nuanced analysis of their experiences in the context of the study's objectives. Each response will provide valuable insights into how M&E professionals perceive their roles, the effectiveness of KM practices, and the overall utility of M&E knowledge products in informing decision-making processes.

Moreover, the findings will contribute to identifying best practices and potential areas for improvement in M&E and KM integration within public sector frameworks. This exploration is essential for understanding how to foster a culture of knowledge sharing

and utilization, ultimately leading to enhanced organizational performance and accountability in the public sector.

4.3 Theme 1: Understanding the role of KM in M&E

In this sub-section unpacks Question 1: Understanding of the role that KM plays in producing, storing, disseminating and using M&E knowledge. This question was key to this research as it sought to explore whether there is appreciation for KM by the participants.

4.3.1 M&E professionals' description of KM

Participants were asked to provide their understanding of what KM is in their own opinion. This question was very key as the study is about exploring the practices employed by M&E professionals as far as KM is concerned in their day-to-day work processes. The findings in terms of what KM is were so diverse with one participant not knowing what it was until the invitation to participate in the study. The common themes that emerged during analysis are: organizing and structuring information for easy retrieval and use in decision making; processing, generating, storing information from different sources; managing institutional knowledge and addressing knowledge gaps; connecting data to information to decision-making; collecting, packaging, and disseminating information for organisational objectives; and transforming information into actionable knowledge and wisdom.

The participants below saw KM as the ability of organising information for easy retrieval and use in decision making. Abubakar et al. (2019) states that KM ties directly into decision-making.

"I would say knowledge management is basically structuring and storing information in such a way that it's easy to retrieve and use. To document and to learn from, and maybe to enable us as public servants to make better decisions". (Interview with Participant 1)

"So I think knowledge management for me it's about how you store and package different types of evidence such that when it is required it is accessible for use in a user-friendly manner. How you generate it, you

need to understand for who, for what and how you also store it and also make it available when it is requested". (Interview with Participant 9)

"It is management of information which entails collection, packaging and dissemination, among others. This becomes an accessible knowledge to be utilised in order to achieve the objectives of the organisation". (Interview with Participant 12)

Some participants believe that KM is about processing information from different sources, which must be analysed to ensure relevance and validity and then generating their own knowledge products which must be stored, shared and used for decision making. The other participants go further to mention that KM is about managing institutional knowledge and addressing knowledge gaps. See quotes below:

"Knowledge management is the process that is followed to source relevant information and how the information can be used. Furthermore it is the process of analysing information for relevance and validity. Over and above the following form part of knowledge management: Data collection; use of the information collated; record management, including the safe keeping of documents; information sharing and; decision making." (Interview with Participant 2)

"Knowledge management is essentially, generating, processing the information that we get from different sources, storing whatever you generate by creating, and information sources that make it easy for you to refer back to and use the information that was generated and also ensuring there's information access for the right stakeholders". (Interview with Participant 3)

"It involves identifying knowledge gaps and doing something to close those gaps i.e. doing research or evaluation; it also involves making sure that existing knowledge is accessible to those who need to make decisions; lastly it also involves making sure that institutional memory is retained". (Interview with Participant 5)

These participant did not know about knowledge management until the invite and started to research so that they can at least be able to engage in the process. To them KM is about connecting data to information to decision-making.

*“Honestly at first I struggled. I tried Googling everywhere to try and actually understand what knowledge management is and it was a challenge. For me it's more of having information at hand or acquiring information in whichever form in an organization and then managing it at different levels by converting data into useful information that can be used by management, to make informed decisions. It is about managing information by storing it, to ensure accessibility by everyone within the organization so that perhaps they can use it in a way at an operational level within their own units to improve on the work that they are doing”.
(Interview with Participant 4)*

Other participants were able to describe KM in relation to their work as M&E professionals and its overall role in government. To some of them KM is about the management of all the M&E knowledge products that they produce in the assessment of programme implementation, and storing them. One of them goes further to say KM is a key supporter of performance information management and argues that KM is the engine in departments.

“Broadly I would say knowledge management in the department deals with the whole range of information within our department, all the necessary information is stored in that directorate including our information as M&E, and of all the branches in the department, research within or outside the department you get everything from that directorate. So for me, it's deeper, because from our side as M&E, we become too specific. So knowledge management is about how we produce our reports, how we store our information, how we share it to the outside world, through our accountability documents like our APP, like our Annual Reports which get published”. (Interview with Participant 6)

“It sounded like a foreign concept in the government space, but we do it all the time in government when we store all the products we produce

like reports. So I'll say knowledge management then is the manner of storing information that you would have produced within the department. In the government context then it's more of either information is in terms of implementation of programs, understanding of how the programmes should be developed or should be implemented and then from our angle in the level of monitoring & evaluation is in terms of the reports that we produced for, performance monitoring". (Interview with Participant 8)

"Knowledge management is one of the key pillars of performance management and you can even argue that even the output of M&E is about knowledge management. So, for me knowledge management it's one of the big bones, one would argue that it's like an engine because if you don't have other parcels, you're not going to be able to know where you are going". (Interview with Participant 11)

These participants saw KM as the ability to transform information into actionable knowledge and wisdom which finally results in decision-making. This means that these participants have an understanding that knowledge has no value when it is passive.

"We have a lot of documentation, data, and information that is not processed to inform decision making. It means it's not knowledge yet. For me, knowledge management refers to intelligence, behaviour, and conduct displayed in our environment as a result of having analysed and converted all the large amounts of information all around us to be part of our own sense making. We can say it is about how you coexist with that knowledge, that intelligence, and how you utilize it to enhance decision making in our daily interactions in our environment". (Interview with Participant 7)

"Knowledge management is like a thread that connects all of us, and for me, let's just take a simple thing that within any organization, there is data that can be put somewhere, and if that data is just left there, it's not of any use until it gets to be worked on, and then it becomes information that helps us in terms of the decision making. In terms of even

influencing our actions from here and how we are to move into a future as an organization”. (Interview with Participant 13)

“The process of organizing, creating, using, and sharing collective information within an organization, converting this information into knowledge and then using this knowledge to develop wisdom for evidence based decision making”. (Interview with Participant 10)

As stated above by the participants, one can see that KM is still a sketchier subject within the participants. This is evident based on the fact that some participants provided KM descriptions that showed there was misunderstanding on what KM is, especially were other participants confuse KM with Records Management. Overall participants provided varying definitions according to their understanding which is not unique to the study. This is because there is currently no agreed definition of KM amongst the academics and KM practitioners alike.

4.3.2 KM Professionals description of KM

This sub-section discusses the description as per the KM professionals who are responsible for KM in departments. Data from KM professionals was collected as a result of having interviewed M&E professionals who insisted I also speak to their colleagues as they would also like to know from them what their work is all about. Others were willing to set-up meetings on my behalf so that I could interview their colleagues. This prompted the need to have discussion with those responsible for KM in the department, as these requests kept coming from almost all the M&E professionals' participants.

“I would say Knowledge Management involves the generation, the coalition, the storing and the sharing of key knowledge contracts, which will inform either a decision or it can also contribute to the policymaking or to whatever is being pursued in the department”. (Interview with Participant 15)

Although the professionals hold multiple perspectives regarding KM, there is a common theme amongst them. That is, KM is about “managing knowledge and

encouraging people to share knowledge to create value-adding products and services” (Anand & Singh, 2011, p. 932).

4.3.3 Participants’ understanding of organisational responsibility for managing knowledge

Participants were also asked to comment on their understanding regarding who they consider as accountable for managing knowledge in their organisation. There are varying views on who is responsible for managing knowledge, but the common theme was it was everyone’s responsibility. Some participants believe that it is everybody’s responsibility within the public service because decisions and resource allocation impact people’s lives. Others feel that KM is the responsibility of all units within the organization and that it is a collaborative process. Another perspective is that the responsibility lies with the Communications unit in collaboration with the ICT unit, as they have the expertise in storing, accessing, disseminating, and packaging information. One participant emphasised that the ultimate responsibility lies with the Accounting Officer, as everything in the department is in support of their responsibilities. The other went further to say that even the Executive Authority who is the political head is responsible together with the Accounting Officer of the department who must ensure systems and processes are in place to ensure proper KM.

However, other participants stressed that although everyone is responsible, the responsibility must be divided into two parts: the KM unit as coordinators and facilitator of knowledge, and individual managers as responsible for the technical and custodianship of the knowledge in their respective areas. There is also mention of Research and KM units being responsible for managing knowledge and packaging it. Below are the responses by the participants:

4.3.3.1 KM as Everyone’s Responsibility

Several participants view KM as a shared responsibility across the public service, where all units contribute to managing knowledge because their decisions impact people’s lives. Participant 1 explains this perspective clearly:

"I would say that knowledge management is everybody's responsibility in the public service because obviously we are responsible for making the decisions that impact on people's lives and we are also responsible for the allocation of resources that also impact on people's lives."
(Interview with Participant 1)

Similarly, Participant 2 highlights the participatory nature of KM:

"It is a process which is participatory. Like you do it with others, you can't do it alone. It is linked to how you are collecting information within your unit... It's the responsibility of all when it comes to sharing information and on how to use information." (Interview with Participant 2)

This view aligns with broader trends in organizational KM practices, which emphasize that knowledge is generated and utilized through collaboration across functions.

While there is consensus that KM is everyone's responsibility, several participants emphasize the need for a dedicated KM unit or function to coordinate efforts. Participant 3 illustrates this well:

"I think there has to be a custodian of the knowledge management system in an organization... that office has been underutilized, it's been put in some corner under CIO's office in the IT section and it's just gone and it's having a low death actually." (Interview with Participant 3)

Participant 7 expands on this by suggesting a dual responsibility approach:

"I believe each and every manager should be responsible for their information... The knowledge management unit of the department are the most qualified coordinators, facilitators that create platforms for all departmental knowledge to be housed." (Interview with Participant 7)

Participant 8 adds a nuanced view, stressing that the responsibility is distributed across different actors. The first responsibility lies with those producing knowledge, while the institutional level handles consolidation:

"I think the responsibility for managing this knowledge is really, I'll say distributed to different actors. I would say the first primary area of responsibility will be for those that are producing the report or whatever

information they're doing for the purpose of improving their programs or whatever. Then the second area will be at the institutional level in terms of consolidation. It depends on the consciousness and awareness of that particular department. In some instances, there's no one consolidating, so this information is laying all over in the different units that are producing the information." (Interview with Participant 8)

This perspective introduces a key point in the discourse: while individuals are responsible for managing knowledge in their areas, a dedicated KM unit is essential to ensure that the organization benefits from coordinated KM efforts highlighting the need for stronger consolidation mechanisms at the institutional level.

Another interesting perspective comes from participants who highlight the role of specific units, such as Communications and ICT, in managing knowledge. Participant 4 points out:

"For me, it's the Communications unit in collaboration with the ICT unit, including the actual owners of the information... ICT people to put systems in place... communication people ICT to disseminate and package the information." (Interview with Participant 4)

This view reflects a more technical understanding of KM, where certain units handle the storage, dissemination, and accessibility of information, while other units generate and own the content.

4.3.3.2 The Role of Senior Management in KM

Some participants stress that KM responsibilities are tied to senior leadership, particularly the Accounting Officer and, in some cases, the Executive Authority. Participant 6 emphasizes the ultimate responsibility of the Accounting Officer:

"Everything that we do is in support of his responsibilities... he needs to put up the system that can work; so unfortunately this also lies at the Accounting Officer's door." (Interview with Participant 6)

Participant 11 extends this idea, adding that the Executive Authority plays a role in KM through delegation to the Accounting Officer, who must ensure that systems are in place to manage knowledge:

"The Accounting Officer also delegates the roles in terms of knowledge management... The colleagues within the department... are also helping in that responsibility." (Interview with Participant 11)

This view acknowledges the hierarchical responsibility structure in public sector organizations, where accountability ultimately rests with senior leadership, but operational responsibility is distributed across various levels.

Overall, most participants believe that knowledge management is everyone's responsibility, while others highlight specific units or individuals within the department that are responsible. This view shows that participating M&E professionals have some level of understanding that KM is their responsibility as well. As much as M&E is regarded as a management tool, so is KM, which is at the centre of the day-to-day work process. These sentiments were also shared by the KM Professionals.

4.3.3.3 KM Professionals' Perspective

The KM professionals interviewed expressed similar views to the M&E professionals regarding the collective responsibility for knowledge management in the organization. They emphasized that KM is not the sole responsibility of a single unit, but rather a collaborative effort involving multiple units and functions across the department.

Participant 16 succinctly explained:

"The responsibility of Knowledge Management is for everyone that works in that organization because those that work in the organization have a responsibility of giving us that information and we have the responsibility of making sure that we store it and once we store it, if it's needed at a particular time or the other information that we already have, we can also share it with them." (Interview with Participant 16)

This reinforces the idea that while KM units or dedicated professionals play a central role in storing and disseminating knowledge, they rely on contributions from all employees within the organization. This perspective aligns with the general consensus that KM is a shared responsibility but requires centralized coordination to ensure proper management and access.

Participant 15 also highlighted the importance of having a champion or focal point to guide KM efforts across the organization:

"I think there should be a KM champion that also assists in developing the framework and the guideline within the organization, as the head of Research and Knowledge Management. But also, you need champions from different branches within the unit...you will also need to collaborate with IT... when it comes to dissemination you also involve communication." (Interview with Participant 15)

This emphasizes the need for a multi-unit collaboration, where KM professionals work alongside other units like IT and communications to ensure that knowledge is properly managed and shared. The involvement of champions from different branches ensures a more integrated approach to KM throughout the organization.

Overall the findings reveals a complex yet critical understanding of KM practices within the public service, as viewed by both M&E and KM professionals. A consistent theme throughout the interviews is the shared responsibility of KM, emphasizing that it is not confined to a single unit but rather distributed across various actors and departments. While participants acknowledge that everyone has a role to play in managing knowledge, they also highlight the importance of a dedicated KM function or unit to coordinate and facilitate these efforts.

Collaboration emerges as a key element for effective KM, with professionals pointing out that knowledge management requires breaking down silos, promoting communication, and fostering integration across units. Participants stressed the importance of both individual and collective accountability, where managers and staff must ensure the proper creation, storage, sharing, and use of knowledge. However, the need for leadership, whether from KM units, champions, or higher-level actors such as the Accounting Officer or Executive Authority, was emphasized as crucial in guiding and structuring these processes.

Ultimately, the study highlights the intersection between KM and M&E functions, reinforcing the idea that both are essential management tools that enhance decision-making, resource allocation, and service delivery. The reflections from participants

highlight that while KM is everyone's responsibility, strong coordination and institutional frameworks are necessary to ensure its effective implementation in support of public service objectives.

4.4 Theme 2: Application of KM processes by M&E professionals

This theme addresses sub-question ii: What are the experiences of M&E professionals in the use of KM in their work? In order to address this question there are several sub-sub-questions asked and this subsection provides the responses.

4.4.1 *KM practices included in M&E frameworks*

Participants were asked to explain KM practices which they had explicitly identified (documented) and linked to their M&E policy/framework. The results show that in their work as M&E professionals, the participants had identified various KM practices that are linked to their M&E policy/framework. These practices include process flows, developing knowledge products for induction programs, having approved policies, guidelines, templates and procedures in place. All those documents are developed in line with legislative mandates that govern the M&E work in the public service. However, most participants acknowledge that there are gaps and areas for improvement in documenting and formalizing these KM practices within their M&E frameworks.

Several participants referenced the existence of guidelines, policies, and procedures, yet highlighted a gap in the explicit integration of KM practices. For instance, Participant 1 noted the development of process flows and the significance of records management within their performance information management policy, but acknowledged that:

"We are not explicit to basically explain the link between performance information and knowledge management." (*Interview with Participant 1*)

This gap is further reflected in Participant 3's observation:

“So we’ve got an Evaluation Guideline which we kind of review as well but besides that, in the guideline we do make mention of some of the points but not explicitly.” (Interview with Participant 3)

This points to a common issue where KM practices, although somewhat embedded in frameworks, remain vague or inadequately documented.

“I’ll be very honest. I will say, we have not institutionalized it as such. In our M&E frameworks we have not done that to specify explicitly where, how, this will be kept. But in the main we have what we call the I-drive where we save these products. But I have not consciously stated in our framework to say this is how we’re going to manage and store information, we know that all the reports will go into the website. Those that are in terms of the statutory requirements need to be publicized on the website. So it’s kind of a practice that’s been done, but it’s not properly documented and formalized in terms of our M&E frameworks.” (Interview with Participant 8)

The reliance on tacit knowledge is a recurring theme indicating that while processes may exist, they are internalized and not formalized. Participant 10 acknowledged:

“We do have documents and if we have frameworks of some sort, but they’re not explicit to say how exactly we should be doing it. So I would say it’s in our head as far as knowledge management processes.” (Interview with Participant 10)

This reliance on tacit knowledge creates inconsistency and may affect long-term continuity or the transfer of knowledge between staff members. The gap between formal documentation and informal practices suggests that individual expertise plays a crucial role in KM execution by M&E professionals.

Participants also discussed the existence of process flows and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that help guide M&E work. For instance, Participant 4 emphasized that they have developed an approved process flow from acquiring information to disseminating it, ensuring compliance with government-wide frameworks.

“We have a document that shows a process flow of starting from the very first beginning of acquiring information. Converting the information into analysed reports and, how then the information is going to be disseminated, and all those things until the very end. It has been approved. The existing internal policy or framework has taken into consideration all other government wide frameworks as per the requirements to ensure that as an organization we are compliant with the frameworks and the policy.”(Interview with Participant 4)

Similarly, Participant 11 detailed the role of flowcharts and SOPs in safeguarding knowledge throughout the value chain of their M&E unit's processes.

“We have some SOP’s and the flow charts on how we run our business in terms of our unit, from planning, reporting, to M&E. In all the levels of what you are doing we ensure that the value chain of our processes are clear, we safeguard the issue of knowledge. Our flow chart will demonstrate to you from the start to the end how we do things, and then in terms of the actual product, one would argue that knowledge is produced during that process.”(Interview with Participant 11)

While these practices ensure structure, they appear to be more operational rather than explicitly linked to broader KM strategies.

The views below revolves around the integration of departmental practices with broader governmental frameworks to ensure effective performance management and policy implementation:

“We do have a framework and templates that we developed, which is linking to the, guidelines, and the, frameworks by DPME”. (Interview with Participant 2)

“We have an approved policy that has covered every angle and also procedures that we have revised our Policy based on recent government wide changes. How we collect and package information. Guided by the DPME and the other Treasury regulations and so on. Where we feel like we need to put more emphasis on certain issues, that’s where we issue

circulars and memos and so on. Just to cover and to ensure that the Policy is fully implemented". (Interview with Participant 6)

However, while these efforts show alignment with national policies, they do not necessarily translate into clear, formalized KM strategies. In the view of the participant 9 below knowledge is at the centre of policy/programme life cycle:

"In our department there is. We have developed the national evaluation policy framework and in there we have a diagram that shows knowledge is at the centre of policy/programme life cycle, evaluation guidelines together with the templates, evaluation plan and I think at some point I came across a document that talks about knowledge management framework and also standard operating procedures that deal with what to do when you require knowledge, and all that. But there are areas of improvement. You can find all the documents on our website". (Interview with Participant 9)

Across the board, participants pointed out that while there are elements of KM within their M&E frameworks, there is considerable room for improvement. The Government-wide M&E Policy Framework briefly mentions KM but does not offer clear guidelines on how to operationalize it in daily tasks. As a result, KM is often practiced informally or on a case-by-case basis, depending on the competency and discretion of individual M&E professionals. This lack of explicit processes for KM integration leads to uneven implementation and a lack of formalized knowledge management processes across departments.

4.4.2 Benefits of using KM in the generation of M&E knowledge products

The participants were asked to reflect on the benefits of using KM in generating M&E knowledge products. The findings show that the benefits of KM in the generation of M&E knowledge products include improved accountability, enhanced performance management, increased utility, improved efficiency, integration and collaboration, human capacity development and institutional memory and performance evaluation.

The benefits as identified by some M&E professionals are that KM improves accountability by ensuring that information is available and accessible, allowing for

greater transparency and accountability. This helps in the verification and audit of reported performance information. See the quotes below:

The processes in place have ensured that managers are accountable for implementation of the plans and the safe keeping of a portfolio of evidence. (Interview with Participant 2)

Allows the management to engage with the work done by M&E – allowing M&E to produce reports that are well understood and collectively accounted for. This makes our work easier and we receive information on time, which makes our work quite smooth. (Interview with Participant 4)

Other participating M&E professionals see the benefit being that of enhanced performance management. This allows for the review, analysis, and follow-up on action plans to improve divisional performance. The participants below expressed those views:

“Helps in ensuring the sub-programmes achieve their target annually through the quarterly monitoring of performance information. In addition to regular reviews and analysis of the reports, the follow-up on the implementation of action plans to assess the effectiveness also improved performance”. (Interview with Participant 2)

“The benefit is that we are able to utilise the evidence gathered through the knowledge management systems to reflect progress made in the implementation of programmes and projects. It enables us to conduct client satisfaction surveys which are utilized to evaluate our performance given our mandate”. (Interview with Participant 12)

The other participant felt that KM also increased utility in that KM helps in articulating how information will be made available and ensures that it is not dependent on individual knowledge. This facilitates learning through knowledge sharing and makes it easier for everyone, including external entities, to locate and access information. By doing so, KM can promote transparency with the oversight bodies such as government

bodies, parliament, and civil society who can use the M&E knowledge products for decision-making. See the quote below:

“So I think it helps also in terms of utility as well because you clearly articulate how the information will be made available and you just don’t leave it to an individual. M&E information is generated daily in our organization, so if we can just make it clear for everybody, we work with to know when you are done at whatever level or section you work in, these are the processes. We streamline according to responsibilities. It makes everyone’s life easy. In that way we as the central M&E Unit are able tap into the knowledge that they generate”. (Interview with Participant 3)

This participant below is of the view that KM improves efficiency through the use of electronic systems and platforms like SharePoint which enables the M&E unit to work and produce reports from anywhere at any time. Eliminating the reliance on physical files ensures that information is received and processed in a timely manner. See the quote below:

“We have seen the benefits. For example, the introduction of an electronic system/SharePoint has enabled the M&E Unit to work and produce reports from anywhere at any time, moreover, it has created the use of softcopies instead of hard copy files as POE”. (Interview with Participant 4)

KM facilitates collaborative learning by enabling the sharing of knowledge and expertise between individuals with different specialties. This promotes mutual learning and enhances overall organisational knowledge. Below are the views by some participants:

“I think for me, it allows for collaborative learning, because I can learn so much from your knowledge, and you can learn from me depending on my specialities”. (Interview with Participant 10)

“I believe that it actually gives such an important enablement and encouragement of sharing of ideas and those ideas come in a way that

sometimes it's something that you will find it's visible so that somebody can see it. Somebody can work with it, and sometimes it is something that requires that intellectual execution of the person in order for such a knowledge to find expression into a deliverable that helps with the broader collaboration within an organization". (Interview with Participant 13)

One of the participants believes that KM fosters knowledge sharing and enhances the skills and knowledge of employees. This empowers them to take ownership and pride in their work, ensuring that the human resource element of the organization is effectively utilized. See the viewpoint below:

"The most important part of any organisation is human resource, the implementer because you can go and hire a consultant. Draw a very beautiful business plan for you, but that person who's going to implement that piece of plan if they are not knowledgeable enough it will just remain a dream so the human resource not finance to me is the most important part of the business plan and knowledge management enables the human element". (Interview with Participant 7)

According to the participants below KM helps in managing institutional memory by preserving and organizing knowledge. It enables the utilization of evidence and knowledge gathered through M&E processes to reflect on progress and evaluate performance. This sentiment was shared by the following participants:

"Personally for me, knowledge is one of the key assets of the institution. Knowledge is also part of the institutional memory. If I'm leaving the organization and the institution is not managing me well. I will go with that particular knowledge. One would argue that the information that we produce during our M&E process in terms of the reports to the different stakeholders by doing that exercise, we are inculcating the culture of Knowledge Management because if we communicate whatever we are doing, the assumption is that every employee within the department, will be empowered". (Interview with Participant 11)

“I told them when I left, I said, I wish I could pluck a memory stick into my brain downloading the wealth of knowledge and experiences onto a hard drive. Imagine if everyone could access that repository, leveraging the principles and insights gained from my exposure to the environment over the 35 years of service. This desire stems from the recognition of a prevalent challenge in the public sector, where vacancies are filled through advertising posts, yet the transfer of accumulated knowledge and practical wisdom remains a significant hurdle. So knowledge management benefits us through knowledge retention.”(Interview with Participant 14)

4.4.3 Knowledge acquisition and creation in generating M&E knowledge products

Knowledge acquisition and generation are one of the first KM processes and as such participants were asked to provide their processes of acquiring information to generate their M&E knowledge products. The results show that participants utilize several methods to acquire and create M&E knowledge products.

The most common method as it relates to monitoring products is relying on programme manager’s information as they are responsible for day-to-day execution and implementation of programmes in departments. As Participant 1 explains:

“We rely mainly on the information that is provided by the program managers in order to compile and consolidate those documents, whether it be the annual performance plan, the quarterly reports or annual report.” (Interview with Participant 1)

Participants work closely with different units within the department by consulting and collaborating with departmental stakeholders, such as Deputy Director Generals and Chief Directors, Directors, to monitor programme targets and gather information. Depending on the size of the department, they also involve provinces, regions, and centres responsible for day-to-day collection and analysis of data and implementation at service delivery points. For example Participant 7 gives a category of clients and partners, both internal and external to their department.

“We went a little deeper and identified all our clients and partners in the development of all our unit’s products and services both inside and outside the department. So automatically my stakeholders are the DDG, Chief Directors and all those, who are the custodian of the information as implementers of the programmes. So that is where we start. We also check the issue of dependencies and the provinces and the regions as those are the ones who are collecting the information from source”.
(Interview with Participant 7)

Some participants use information such as Strategic and Annual Performance Plans as the basis for collecting information and as a result structured templates are customised per department as guided by the DPME to consolidate information and comply with reporting requirements. The information is then analysed, verified, and consolidated into institutional reports. The participant below emphasize that the process of acquiring information for M&E knowledge products has become more focused on complying with statutory requirements and using standardized templates. Participant 8 notes:

“So your first source will be the business line, approved plans and programmes. When the plans are tabled. We now produce some template that we issue to units. These things have become so, I’ll say statutory oriented. It’s a compliance matter to the DPME, you have DPSA enforcing these things. So the templates are no longer, I will say flexible”. (Interview with Participant 8)

Participant 2 below mentioned partnerships with academic institutions and other external stakeholders to assess risks and gather information related to their work. Such collaborations enrich the data collection process, ensuring that participants consider various external insights. See the below quote:

“I’ll obviously work in collaboration with the different units within the department. So most of the time I’ll deal with the senior managers and managers to acquire information. Our organisation has a working relationship with academic institutions, just to give an example, like UKZN. So one of the things that we do is to assess any risk that might

have been identified out of their research reports as it relates to our environment.”(Interview with Participant 2)

Some participants also collect information through reporting systems, such as SharePoint, where different units submit their reports as per the provided templates. The participants below reiterated:

“We collect information through different units. So reporting is done individually by units into their SharePoint. Various personnel within the M&E Unit have been allocated various units to analyse and verify the information. Then an institutional report is then going to be consolidated. ..., it's going to go through various processes until it reaches its final approval, by Accounting Officer”. (Interview with Participant 4)

This systematic approach ensures that all data is accounted for and verified before reaching final approval. Furthermore, Participant 6 described the systematic process of collecting, verifying, and reporting performance information in a large and complex organisational structure:

“So every single person responsible for Performance Information, from centre level as I’ve indicated that’s 248 centres. 48 Management Areas, 6 Regions and from branches at Head Office nationally, including ourselves that’s how information is managed. That is the primary source of information where source documents are. So once they put “Enter”, everything will auto calculate across the Country to National level. The report is rechecked and validated and goes through various quality checks before it is submitted to our external stakeholders”. (Interview with Participant 6)

For participants who are also responsible for the evaluation function training and skill development are said to be very crucial. They also mentioned the importance of having research and evaluation skills to analyse and interpret data. Participants mentioned accessing external resources through reading tools and guidelines from different organizations, attending webinars, and staying updated with the work of organizations like the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) to learn and apply relevant M&E practices.

“Reading different tools from different organizations to see how they approach this work. Also in attending Webinars; keeping in touch and in the loop with the work that SAMEA has been leading on, and other similar organizations are leading on because it’s clear. You can even check Africa, America and the rest, check what they’re doing just to see what’s relevant at the moment”. (Interview with Participant 3)

They stressed the importance of relying on existing knowledge and even utilizing grey literature. The key takeaway is the ongoing learning and professional development necessary in the field of M&E, especially evaluation. See the quotes below:

“With us even before you decide whether you are going to do the evaluation, we perform a thorough and rigorous document synthesis. It’s important for you to be able to rely on different sources of knowledge. In other words, it is existing knowledge that informs you of what has already been done before you create your scope. Even if it isn’t published and is grey literature, it is still knowledge that is useful to you”. (Interview with Participant 9)

This primary argument encompasses the various methods and processes discussed by participants, involve collecting data from multiple sources, including stakeholders, documents, research, and industry activities, and then synthesizing this information to develop M&E knowledge products. Whether it’s through stakeholder engagement, literature review, document synthesis, or performance information management, the central focus is on gathering and synthesizing data to inform M&E products.

The central idea is also to ensure that the data collected and analysed for M&E knowledge products are of high quality and accuracy. High-quality data is the foundation for effective M&E, enabling organizations to draw meaningful insights and make informed decisions based on the information they gather. This emphasis on data quality is essential for making well-informed decisions, hence the importance of identifying and consulting the relevant stakeholders who are users of the products and getting their buy-in and allowing them to take ownership is crucial.

4.4.4 M&E knowledge capture and storage

Participants were asked where they captured and stored their M&E knowledge products. Most of them made examples in terms of the reports they produce for monitoring purposes while others made reference to evaluation reports. The responses revolve around the central theme of Information Storage and Management, covering various aspects of KM, storage, and the role of reports in effectively managing and utilizing departmental information. One noticed when it comes to this process most departments are still at infancy while others are at advanced stages when it comes to systems for capturing and storing knowledge products. The results show that in some departments information is mainly captured and stored in individual laptops, hard copy files, and an external storage managed by a service provider. Other departments capture and store some knowledge products on shared drives, SharePoint, Intranet, One Drive, Teams, and the department's website. The knowledge products that are stored and captured in those platforms are final products, while the rest of the information remains in the individual compiler's laptops. Some other departments are still in the process of developing automated systems for records management and performance information for reporting. Until their implementation the manual processes are the order of the day. Below are the responses of the participants:

The participant discusses KM and its challenges within the department especially when it relates to technology and the ultimate use of manual systems to store knowledge products.

“Of the key knowledge management pillars, I think in our department we mainly address the first two, but the third one is a bit of a challenge.we are lacking with technology. Once we’ve compiled these knowledge products we store them on our own individual laptops and we have hard copy files as well. In my office there’s a few that are lying on the floor. There isn’t really a central repository”. (Interview with Participant 1)

This participant below discusses the use of excel based system and manual storage challenges related to information and accessibility challenges.

“Like any other department in the country most of the departments are faced with so many challenges in relation to storing of the information. Most of the information is manually stored there’s no system to ensure information is easily accessible. So accessibility becomes a challenge. But in relation to Performance Information we are using an Excel based system, working with IT, it is a shared system. Every person who is responsible for performance information can go into the system and punch the number and it will be accessible, wherever I would be seated”. (Interview with Participant 6)

For the participant below there are challenges and limitations related to information sharing and access within the department after transitioning to a cloud-based system.

“We just recently got upgraded to cloud, it is linked to a laptop, whatever you store, it will be on the cloud, but it’s not shared, obviously, only certain people, they will get that information. So for me, still limiting the flow of information, because if we are in the same unit, we need to have a way of getting this information without requesting it. So we use laptops. We don’t use much of the shared drive”. (Interview with Participant 10)

The participants state that reporting is still manually done and emphasizes the importance of data quality and the role of proper data input for the system’s effectiveness.

“We have procured an automated system but it’s still in Pilot Phase due for implementation in the new financial year. Currently we are using a manual system in terms of reporting templates. But we have a shared folder where all performance information is loaded including our POE, so even when AG wants access to our information they just go there. It’s controlled by a password. But the shared drive is for only final documents that have been approved”. (Interview with Participant 7)

This participant discusses information capture, reporting, and the use of technology tools to store knowledge products.

“We capture information gathered through reports. We’ve got templates that we use, just to show how we want the information to be packaged for evaluation specifically, even for reporting on the APP performance, we use reports. At the moment our Performance Management System is down so we’ve been reliant on Alfresco because it has the capability to store information. We’ve got a portal for submissions, and storing information”. (Interview with Participant 3)

The following participants utilise websites, portals, and knowledge hubs for sharing and disseminating information.

“There is a SharePoint used by the entire organization for reporting purposes... All the final reports... are stored there.”(Interview with Participant 4)

“We have a repository for evaluations... our website was our main storage and dissemination platform.” (Interview with Participant 5)

There are dedicated M&E Drives which can only be accessed by M&E units as alluded by Participant 8 and 9.

“We’ve got our own M&E I-drive, which we use to save our M&E products, but we also have our dedicated I-drive which also saves into the department’s I-drive. We don’t save the draft work there. It remains in my laptop and it’s only for the final products which have been approved and they’ve been presented in the various management committees”. (Interview with Participant 8)

“We use the M-Drive to store the various deliverables of our evaluation products. The system tells you where each evaluation is located, which stage and which national evaluation plan applies. Work continues even when others are not there”. (Interview with Participant 9)

Other participants emphasised the use of Knowledge Hubs to store their M&E products.

“So from our side, we store information through our website... there’s a knowledge hub for different types of knowledge or information.”

(Interview with Participant 11)

“The knowledge hub is in place where we store all the knowledge products that have been developed over the years.” (Interview with

Participant 12)

This participant emphasized the value and purpose of reports within departments, the presence of central hubs or repositories for relevant information and reports.

“With regards to knowledge storing—there’s a central database... all policies in the department... you can access them through links on that particular portal.” (Interview with Participant 14)

These responses collectively highlight the importance of effective KM, the role of digital tools in storage and dissemination, and the value of reports which are the main knowledge storage tool in M&E. They also highlight the challenges and considerations associated with these practices in relation to M&E knowledge products.

4.4.5 M&E knowledge products sharing and dissemination

Participants were asked to talk about how, when and to whom are M&E knowledge products shared. With regards to answering this question, participants stated similar answers. M&E knowledge products are delivered to the same people across the departments. Monitoring data is collected from the programme managers or those responsible for certain indicators. The M&E professionals then analyse the data and convert it into consolidated reports. The reports go through internal committees such as the Management Committees, Executive Committees, Audit and Risk Committees, Accounting Officer, DPME, National Treasury, AGSA, the ministry, SCOPA, and the Portfolio Committee.

The same reports are also shared on the websites of departments and on the intranet for those departments that have it in place. The processes are in compliance with the DPME guidelines and timelines as the custodians of the government planning, M&E

policies and frameworks. So one believes the products are widely shared to different audience's especially final reports that have been approved. Reports are also presented to the public through the portfolio committees to ensure accountability to citizens through live recording on television. However there are participants that feel there is a gap in terms of the sharing of information internally, especially since M&E products are not just legislated reports, but are about ensuring that M&E is a management tool that is for day-to-day work processes of any manager.

4.4.5.1 Structured Dissemination Process

Participants emphasized that M&E knowledge products, such as performance reports and evaluation findings, are shared with a wide range of stakeholders, from internal management committees to external oversight bodies including the general public. The dissemination process ensures accountability and transparency, particularly at the highest levels of government oversight, as evidenced in the quote from Participant 1:

"We would distribute these reports and plans because legislation also requires that we send our plans as well to the DPME, DPISA, and the Auditor General of South Africa and of course National Treasury. Not forgetting parliament." (Interview with Participant 1)

Similarly, Participant 2 discussed how M&E products are made publicly available and shared through community engagement forums:

"In terms of communicating information outside, obviously our plans and annual reports will be on our internet, so that's where the public will obviously have access to our information. And also in the, the imbizo's, that's where our Communication Unit will go and share such information. That's where they will go and advocate to the public on what we are doing, on what our responsibilities and mandates are." (Interview with Participant 2)

This process demonstrates a dual approach to sharing M&E knowledge, focusing on both formal channels and community engagement platforms to ensure public access and understanding of government performance.

The participant below shared how the sharing of information follows a hierarchical and structured process, ensuring accountability, transparency, and thorough examination of performance data. This demonstrates a meticulous process where performance data undergoes thorough review before being disseminated.

“M&E knowledge products are shared through a structured process, beginning with validation at various levels, such as centres, regions, and branches. Our Accounting Officer will call a review session where even the Ministry will come, and also the Deputy Minister’s office including the Finance part. After approval by the Accounting Officer, the reports are submitted to the usual external stakeholders including going through the reviews by the Audit Committee”. (Interview with Participant 6)

4.4.5.2 Tailoring Reports for Different Audiences

Several participants highlighted the importance of customizing M&E knowledge products to meet the needs of different stakeholders. These stakeholders vary from internal management committees to external oversight bodies and even beneficiaries of government programs. Participant 7 emphasized the need to tailor reports based on their specific audience:

"Each report is tailored differently depending on its audience. So I'm respecting my clients." (Interview with Participant 7)

This approach allows the department to communicate effectively with a diverse set of stakeholders, ensuring that each group receives the relevant information for decision-making. Similarly, Participant 8 noted the necessity of adjusting reports to fulfill different stakeholders' needs, with reports being reviewed by various committees before being shared externally:

"So all these reports will be tabled in the quarterly management meetings and then those will have to be consolidated for them to be submitted externally. Then they go to external clients like DPME... The annual reports will then go to AG and NT. But internal clients will then be

the management committee meetings and the Internal Audit Committee." (Interview with Participant 8)

This reinforces the structured and methodical approach to ensuring that reports reach the appropriate stakeholders in a format they can use. Participant 11 also reflected on the department's efforts to make M&E knowledge products accessible to both senior and junior staff internally, tailoring the dissemination of reports for different levels of the organization:

"We have introduced another mechanism to ensure the information is received by everyone internally. So we expanded the MANCO to extended MANCO. We are targeting your Assistant Director and up... But again, we further discussed performance information through staff meetings where your below level 9 are also targeted." (Interview with Participant 11)

This ensures that performance information is shared not only with top management but also with lower-level staff, promoting a more inclusive approach to internal knowledge sharing.

Furthermore, Participant 14 also highlighted a practical dimension to knowledge sharing, emphasizing the importance of tailoring communication strategies that reach all levels of the organization:

"For practical implementation, our approach extended beyond formal training to include continuous communication strategies. We prioritized sharing information at a national level, addressing policy perspectives and identifying potential red flags that signal the need for intervention. A crucial element of our dissemination strategy involves raising awareness, ensuring that policy frameworks reach every level, even down to station-level engagements during morning parades. These awareness campaigns play a pivotal role in formally introducing new policies to the 'boots on the ground.'" (Interview with Participant 14)

Participant 14's perspective highlights how communication of M&E products goes beyond reports to stakeholders; it includes active, day-to-day engagement at all

organizational levels. This approach ensures that everyone, from the top levels of management to frontline staff, is aligned with the organization's goals and aware of important developments.

In contrast, Participant 4 emphasizes the gaps in internal knowledge sharing, noting that M&E reports often do not reach everyone within the department. There is a sense of uneven distribution of information, particularly between management and lower-level employees. Participant 4's concerns highlight a lack of comprehensive communication, where only certain groups are made aware of reports, leaving others uninformed:

"There is a gap in sharing the information with everyone in the organization. This is a common issue in government institutions. In some cases, only middle managers or specific individuals are aware that a report has been released." (Interview with Participant 4)

This statement highlights a common challenge in large organizations, where crucial information is not always effectively disseminated to all staff. This limited sharing can impact the broader organizational understanding and engagement with M&E processes. When dissemination is exclusive, leaving many within the organization out of the loop, it risks hindering overall organizational learning and transparency.

Overall, the findings reveal that the dissemination of M&E knowledge products follows a structured, hierarchical process that involves both internal and external stakeholders. While participants acknowledge the thoroughness of these processes, they also identify gaps in internal communication, particularly with lower-level staff. Furthermore, tailoring reports to suit the needs of different audiences and utilizing informal sharing channels are essential practices in ensuring that M&E knowledge products are effectively communicated and contribute to organizational learning and accountability. The inclusion of community outreach and communication, as mentioned by Participant 2, adds another layer of transparency and public engagement in the dissemination process.

4.4.5.3 Evaluation-Specific Knowledge Sharing

Participants highlighted distinct processes for sharing knowledge products related to evaluations. Evaluation reports differ from regular M&E reports as they often involve multiple stakeholders and require careful dissemination to inform decision-making, program improvement, and public accountability. Participant 3 shared insights into the multi-level validation and sharing of evaluation reports, emphasizing the engagement of various sectors and stakeholders:

"With regards to evaluation reports, we have validation workshops with different stakeholders and different sectors, not only the government. Especially when we conduct evaluations. We work with different stakeholders within the space, involving them throughout most of the key stages of the process... Internally, information from the M&E unit is shared at Management Forums which is made up of Directors and Chief Directors who are the Program Owners." (Interview with Participant 3)

This approach ensures that key stakeholders are actively involved, making the evaluation process transparent and inclusive, while also fostering shared ownership of the findings. Participant 5 also noted that evaluation reports are shared not only internally but are made available to broader audiences to ensure transparency and stimulate public engagement:

"I made sure that all our evaluations were on the repository and website. We basically made sure there was transparency in the government learning process. By sharing the evaluations online, they were sometimes picked up by parliament and used for oversight. Civil society also used evaluations in their work." (Interview with Participant 5)

This process of public dissemination of evaluation reports ensures that evaluation findings are accessible to civil society and other oversight bodies, extending the impact of M&E knowledge products beyond governmental confines. Participant 9 emphasized the critical role of stakeholder analysis in ensuring that evaluation products are appropriately tailored and shared, stressing the importance of knowledge brokering to match stakeholder needs:

"When you are putting down your evaluation, you write on your terms of reference who are the stakeholders that have interest in this and begin to highlight what is their interest... It becomes very paramount to package knowledge products, like policy briefs, to suit the understanding and needs of different stakeholders. So that is why we talk about issues of knowledge brokering." (Participant 9)

This insight highlights the importance of aligning evaluation findings with the needs and expectations of various stakeholders, from government departments to civil society actors, to ensure the recommendations have a meaningful impact. Through these findings, it becomes clear that evaluation-specific knowledge sharing requires a more deliberate and nuanced approach, engaging stakeholders through various validation stages, packaging reports for accessibility, and leveraging public platforms to foster accountability and transparency in government operations.

4.4.6 Uses of M&E knowledge products

The participants were asked to talk about the use of the M&E knowledge products as it relates to how and who uses the products. The response to this question was more of the expression of frustration and challenges in some cases. In an attempt to gather the use in the responses of participants and not ignoring the challenges expressed which would be discussed in the next few sub-questions. One could say knowledge products are used by various stakeholders within the departments, including Parliament and other oversight authorities who require the information for their oversight role. Management also utilizes the reports and plans to make better decisions and drive the departmental strategy to some extent depending on which side of the coin you stand. The knowledge products in terms of reports are used by different clusters and committees within the organization.

The reports also assist in holding responsible managers accountable and contribute to decision-making at different levels. However, there are challenges with the utilization of knowledge products, especially in terms of evaluation and implementation of improvement plans. Efforts are being made by M&E professionals to ensure use from their side as the custodians to influence decision-making in planning, budgeting

and programme implementation. This they do by providing reliable data by tracking performance, reporting and proving adversary services. M&E professionals can only provide the necessary knowledge products and services but the decision on how to use them, depends on the individuals in departments. Ultimately, the use of knowledge products depends on the maturity of the organization and the individuals responsible for decision-making. These responses demonstrate the multifaceted use of knowledge products within the departments.

According to the views expressed by Participant 1, M&E knowledge products are used for oversight and for decision making but they express that there are gaps in this use especially internally:

“Firstly, parliament and the other relevant oversight authorities use our knowledge products to exercise their oversight function.

Frustration is, however, evident as they acknowledge that decisions do not are often reflect the knowledge generated:

Secondly, internally, the idea is that we develop these reports and plans so that management can utilize them in their decision making. You would find that, yeah, decisions are not based on the knowledge that we produce. If I can say that, which is unfortunate”.

This sentiment by participant 1 reflects a broader issue where the value of M&E products is undermined due to poor engagement from management.

For Participant 2 M&E knowledge products are used for planning but notes a lack of evaluative practices:

“We do use information, especially when it comes to the planning stage. Because we take every challenge, every risk that was identified through the monitoring process when we compile the next financial year plans and we hardly do evaluation. So the only part where I’ll say we do evaluation is, just only when we assess the effectiveness of the mitigating strategies or actions that we specified in the report”. (Interview with participant 2)

This observation by Participant 2 illustrates a critical gap in the feedback loop which is necessary for continuous improvement and effective programme implementation.

The participant 3 notes how various levels of management utilize M&E knowledge products. They further elaborate that monitoring is primarily used for compliance, which suggests that there is a narrow interpretation of M&E's potential impact. See the quote below:

“So the decision makers are the main users of what we produce. It’s mainly Management, at SMS level. So the Directors and the Chief Directors who are the Programme Owners, there’s EXCO as well. Obviously DG, and then the Minister and our beneficiaries as well. But I noticed that, there’s different levels of use right; there’s instrumental, symbolism and more. But I think for the most part in our department monitoring used for compliance. It’s just reporting on the APP which has the nice things to talk about that are easy to measure and easy to show evidence for”. (Interview with Participant 3)

Furthermore, Participant 3 notes that “There’s an illusion” to evaluation use.

“When it comes to evaluation, we evaluate topics that we get from the programmes. But anyway, there’s an illusion that it’s used but the truth is when you assess the implementation of the improvement plan none of the recommendations are used. Planning uses M&E information but it hasn’t been done well because at the Planning department they have low capacity. There’s only one person at the moment”. (Interview with Participant 3)

This demonstrates that while M&E products are utilized, their potential for informing deeper strategic decision-making is often overlooked.

Conversely, Participant 4 offers a more optimistic view, stating that the M&E knowledge products assist in holding responsible managers accountable.

“What I’ve realized honestly it’s that the information produced or the reports produced by M&E, they actually assist in holding responsible managers accountable. Honestly you’ll find them in meetings wanting to find out why an indicator is not implemented...” (Interview with participant 4)

This perspective highlights the potential of M&E reports to foster a culture of accountability within departments, where managers are expected to justify performance metrics during meetings.

The use of monitoring reports for planning, budgeting and individual performance reviews is also noted by participants. In addition participants also share the innovative means they developed to ensure use. Participant 7 states:

“Our monitoring products are used during the planning stage. Last year we came up with the APP assessment tool... I can tell you that it never happened before that in quarter 1 we achieved 70% compared to 40% previously. I also use them to account in a very transparent manner on how we use public funds as a department. Monitoring is used to enhance decision making and tell management what is happening. They may decide not to decide it’s still part of decision-making. So it’s up to them what they do about the information”. (Interview with participant 7)

Participant 8 echoed similar sentiments, explaining that M&E products are crucial for budgeting and planning purposes, creating a direct link between past performance and future objectives.

“M&E products, such as reports, are found to be helpful and are being used internally for budgeting and planning purposes. They provide a baseline for performance and help justify budget allocations. The M&E products are used to inform the APP and operational budgets, ensuring that new tasks are linked to past performance. There is a template in Excel that we created that includes targets, operational tasks, budgets, risks, and performance reports ensuring that there’s that interconnected

link. This approach is now seen as valuable, as operational plans are used for individual performance reviews". (Interview with participant 8)

Participants also acknowledge that the effectiveness of knowledge product utilization is influenced by individual roles and organizational maturity. Participant remarks:

"...it depends on the individual's role and preferences...many people use reports for compliance rather than proactive decision-making". (Interview with participant 10)

This highlights the necessity for M&E professionals to cultivate an environment where decision-making is informed by robust data rather than mere compliance

"I think at the beginning we were doing quite well. There are some positive evaluations that we can pick that found expression in programme development. For example the school nutrition programme and I was involved in the scholar transport. With some we had challenges. So I think it really depends". (Interview with participant 9)

Moreover, participants 11 emphasized that organisational maturity has a significant impact on how M&E knowledge is utilized.

"To me use depends on the maturity of the organisation. Especially the people who are expected to make decisions. So, yes, in our department the principles of M&E, we are really practicing. The EXCO is taking decisions based on the scientific method, which is the reports. So if your planning maturity is weak, you will produce products that do not add any value in the department". (Interview with participant 11)

Finally participant 11 highlights the importance of individual responsibility and accountability, supervision, control, oversight functions, internal audit, and risk management in applying knowledge effectively within the organisational context.

"When it comes to application or the use of knowledge, I think that is dependent first of all, on each individual's responsibility and

accountability. Secondly, then through supervision and control, and then thirdly, from the oversight functions and your internal audit as well as the risk management function". (Interview with Participant 14)

This statement encapsulates the essence of individual M&E professionals' experiences and challenges, illustrating that the successful application of knowledge products is intricately linked to the engagement of individuals within the organizational structure.

Overall, the insights provided by participants illustrate a multifaceted relationship between M&E knowledge products and their use by individuals within departments. While there are significant challenges and gaps in how these products are utilized, individual M&E professionals demonstrate resilience and initiative in striving to enhance their impact on decision-making and organizational learning.

To bridge the gap between knowledge generation and utilization, it is crucial for organizations to foster a learning culture that encourages reflection and learning from M&E findings. By valuing these insights, organizations can enable continuous improvement in program design and implementation. Additionally, investing in capacity-building initiatives is essential to equip M&E professionals with the necessary skills and resources to effectively interpret and apply knowledge products in their decision-making processes. Strengthening the integration of M&E practices into planning and budgeting is also vital; this requires moving beyond mere compliance to adopt a demand-driven approach that prioritizes transformative change. Furthermore, promoting collaboration between individuals in the M&E units and strategic planning, policy development, and budgeting departments will ensure that performance information is effectively utilized in decision-making. Together, these efforts will help unlock the full benefits of M&E practices in the public sector, ultimately leading to improved accountability and enhanced societal outcomes.

4.4.6.1 From Supply-Driven to Demand-Driven: Enhancing M&E Knowledge Utilization

In order to further gather the information on use the question on the demand and supply of M&E knowledge products was further discussed with participants. This was to gather their views on whether they share the belief that M&E products are supply

driven as opposed to demand driven and what must be done. The participants responded by stating that in order to ensure that M&E knowledge products are demand-driven rather than supply-driven, departments can implement KM practices. This includes understanding who the stakeholders and beneficiaries are and consulting with them to gather their input and feedback on the services being provided. This can be done through policies and principles like Batho Pele, which emphasize consultation and public participation.

However, there are challenges in the government sector as it tends to be more compliance-driven rather than demand-driven. M&E reports may not always be used to make meaningful changes or decisions, resulting in the information provided being underutilized. On the other hand, in the private sector and non-profit organisations, M&E reports are often used to drive change and inform decision-making. The key is to be proactive and formative in monitoring rather than reactive. By demonstrating the value of M&E and providing support and guidance based on standards and demands, departments can achieve a balance between demand and supply of M&E knowledge products.

The participants discuss the importance of having clear plans and details about the people or institutions they are supposed to help in order to effectively monitor and evaluate programmes. However, they also mention that corruption and fear of being exposed can lead to vague plans without specific beneficiaries. They highlight the need for a balance between being reactive and proactive in M&E, with a focus on providing early warning signals and identifying blind spots. The participants also mention the pressure to produce reports, but note that the feedback received is often minimal or non-existent. They emphasize the importance of being demand-driven and generating reports based on specific questions or needs from programme owners. Overall, they call for a culture of KM and using existing evidence in planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes. It is a demand and supply matter and there's a need to create equilibrium in the system. M&E professionals recognise that there is a need for participatory M&E. Which is very critical to ensure use.

Theme 3: Integration and collaboration

This section addresses the sub-question iii: How do they collaborate with other professionals in their departments to create and disseminate knowledge products?

Participants were asked to provide their own understanding of the connection between KM and M&E and collaborations with other professionals in the department as far as the development of M&E knowledge products. This question is at the heart of this research as it would determine the kind of relationship between KM and M&E professionals.

The results show that in terms of this collaboration with other professionals in their departments to create and disseminate knowledge products, participants provided varying responses. This is because of the complexities within different departments. Some participants mentioned that they work closely with KM units or other units such as ICT and Communications to share information and ensure documents are in line with record management protocols. While others mentioned that they have limited collaboration with KM specifically because it is not “visible or proactive”, “it is dead”. In addition, participants mention collaborating with other support units such as strategic planning, finance, risk management, internal audit, and project management, also HR. Some participants mentioned collaborating with external organizations such as the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association and the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results for knowledge sharing and publication of lessons learned. The analysis below highlights the varying levels of collaboration, the confusion around KM’s role, and the challenges that hinder effective integration between these two groups.

4.4.7 Varied Levels of Collaboration with KM

Some participants reported a close working relationship, particularly in managing knowledge products, while others encountered challenges such as limited visibility or passive KM units. Participants provided mixed responses when asked about their interaction with KM professionals. The extent of collaboration largely depended on the structural setup of KM within the department, the visibility of the KM unit, and the specific projects requiring KM's involvement. For example, some participants reported

close collaboration, particularly when working on specific projects such as creating evaluation evidence maps or knowledge repositories. Participant 9 noted:

“They were also helping us to put in an evaluation evidence map and a knowledge repository of all our evaluations. So we work with them closely.” (Interview with Participant 9)

This indicates that where M&E professionals had specific projects requiring knowledge storage and management, KM professionals became valuable partners in the process. On the other end of the spectrum, a significant number of participants reported either limited or no interaction with KM professionals. For these M&E professionals, KM is often seen as peripheral or even irrelevant to their work, largely due to structural, organizational, or visibility issues within their departments.

Numerous participants pointed to structural and organizational challenges that impede effective collaboration between M&E and KM professionals. One major issue is the placement of KM units within corporate services or ICT, which creates a disconnect between KM and the core M&E functions. For instance, Participant 11 noted:

“Let’s be honest, we don’t have any relationship because if you immediately put knowledge management in ICT, you already suggest that knowledge management is a product of ICT.” (Interview with Participant 11)

Similarly, Participant 10 pointed out the inefficiency of KM being located in a separate division:

“It’s not very integrated because it’s based in Corporate Services and we sit in different divisions. They were located in Corporate Services and were supposed to cut across all the divisions, but it was not that effective.” (Interview with Participant 10)

These structural barriers lead to weak collaboration, where KM is perceived as a siloed function rather than a partner in knowledge creation and dissemination. This structural disconnect impairs collaboration, as M&E professionals feel KM is too distant or irrelevant to their day-to-day work.

A number of participants also highlighted the lack of proactivity and visibility of KM units within their departments. KM professionals were often seen as passive actors, only engaging when necessary, such as uploading documents to online platforms or archiving knowledge products. This limited involvement prevents KM from playing a more active role in supporting M&E processes. Participant 7 articulated the challenge of KM's passive role:

"The knowledge management unit is also involved in archiving our knowledge products, but there is not much collaboration or planning with them... The unit is not very visible or proactive in promoting their services." (Interview with Participant 7)

Furthermore, Participant 1 described their experience of engaging with the KM unit only when specific requests were made:

"We are generally only reminded about KM when that KM unit requests that we send our knowledge products for uploading on the Internet." (Interview with Participant 1)

Similarly Participant 8 reflected on a weak link with KM:

"All we do at this stage is when we publish a report, they must extract from the website and then put it on their portal. But at this stage, the relationship is not so strong." (Interview with Participant 8)

The finding shows that the KM processes are not fully integrated into the M&E professionals' workflows and tends to appear as a final step in the knowledge dissemination process. This passive role further distances KM from M&E professionals, who are left to manage knowledge creation and dissemination largely on their own or with the support of other units. Overall the variation demonstrates that while collaboration exists in certain areas, it is inconsistent across departments and projects.

In some departments, KM units are entirely absent, leaving M&E professionals without any formal support in KM. Participant 4 shared this challenge:

"We don't have a dedicated KM unit in our department so that means my work is not linked with KM but I do collaborate with other units."
(Interview with Participant 4)

The absence of a KM unit eliminates the possibility of collaboration and forces M&E professionals to seek out other internal or external resources to manage their knowledge products.

4.4.8 Confusion between KM and Records Management

A recurring theme in the participants' responses was the confusion between the roles of KM and records management. Many M&E professionals viewed KM primarily as an administrative or archival function, limiting the perceived value of KM's potential contribution to strategic decision-making or knowledge dissemination. Participant 2's understanding of KM aligns closely with records management:

"For our organisation, knowledge management is actually information management... The next stage where M&E links to KM is the sharing of information to the stakeholders and the public." (Interview with Participant 2)

This lack of understanding reduces the role of KM to Records Management. Participant 3 admitted:

"Can you believe I only learned about the knowledge management office by talking to another colleague, a month ago. Imagine, and I've been here for such a long time. I didn't have real awareness. I was ignorant to the importance of knowledge management because everyone just thinks it is records management." (Interview with Participant 3)

This misperception hinders deeper collaboration and underscores the need for clearer role definitions within departments to distinguish KM from traditional records management.

4.4.9 Other Forms of Collaboration

Beyond KM, M&E professionals also collaborate with other professionals, such as ICT, Communications, and Strategic Planning, to support their work. For example, Participant 4 reflected on their personal experience working with ICT and Communications to disseminate M&E products:

“So there's ICT that assist in disseminating information like the audited annual report which they publish on the website. There's Communications too, that assist in terms of layout and editorial and everything. The internal communication unit also highlights the performance of the department in their newsletter. Right now that we're having this conversation, I'm realizing that we are not using them 100%. In terms of working with a knowledge management unit, we don't have a dedicated unit that deals with it”. (Interview with Participant 4)

In addition, participants also work with other support units in developing and disseminating the M&E knowledge products with a very limited role with the KM professionals. See the quotes below:

“In terms of collaboration with internal colleagues to develop M&E knowledge products, I work with various units such as strategic planning, finance, risk management, internal audit, and project management, also HR. There is a good and vibrant relationship among us, although there may be disagreements and debates at times. We worked with ICT for the electronic reporting systems, Comms for editing, design, publishing the AR. The knowledge management unit is involved in archiving our knowledge products, but there is not much collaboration with them. I plan to have a discussion with the knowledge management unit to explore ways we can work together more effectively”. (Interview with Participant 7)

Similarly Participant 8 also collaborate with implementation programmes and support professionals located in the administration programme:

*"In terms of how we actually produce these reports we generally rely on support from business lines and those units in the admin programme".
(Interview with Participant 8)*

Some professionals, like Participant 5, went beyond their departments and engaged with external bodies such as the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) and the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR-AA):

"We had a relationship with the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association. This was really helpful in building cadres of practitioners in government <https://www.samea.org.za/home>. We also had a relationship with the Centre for learning on evaluation and results (CLEAR_AA) at Wits. Very helpful in documenting our earlier lessons. We published our lessons in doing evaluations in government with the African Evaluation Journal <https://aejonline.org/index.php/aej/article/view/166>."(Interview with Participant 5)

The findings from this study illustrate the uneven and often weak collaboration between individual M&E professionals and KM professionals. The main challenges include the confusion of KM's role with records management, structural barriers created by organizational placement, and the lack of visibility and proactivity from KM units. Furthermore, the absence of KM units in some departments eliminates any possibility for engagement.

Despite these challenges, there are instances where M&E professionals work closely with KM professionals on specific projects, demonstrating that stronger collaboration is possible. In some cases, external partnerships have helped fill the gap left by internal KM limitations. To improve collaboration, departments need to redefine KM's role, better integrate KM with M&E functions, and ensure that KM professionals are more visible and proactive in supporting knowledge creation, sharing, dissemination and use.

4.5 Theme 4: Individual Barriers to Effective Knowledge Management

This theme addresses sub-question iv: What challenges do they face in implementing explicit KM processes and systems?

Participants were asked for their views and experiences, regarding the main challenges in terms of building processes and systems of knowledge management. The previous responses to the sub-questions shows that there are challenges in applying almost all the KM processes in managing M&E knowledge by participating M&E professionals, except for knowledge gathering and creation. In most cases the researcher didn't even have to ask the question because participants' first response would be a challenge or issue or problem. The key theme that emerges from the challenges identified in the responses regarding the implementation of explicit KM processes and systems is "Individual Barriers to Effective Knowledge Management."

This theme highlights various obstacles, both structural and cultural, that participants encounter when trying to establish and integrate KM practices. These barriers include a lack of awareness and understanding, the positioning and perception of KM within the departments, regulatory and policy gaps, limited collaboration and integration, a compliance and audit-oriented approach, challenges with information management, a lack of clear targets and performance measures, and a complex regulatory environment. These challenges collectively highlight the departmental factors that impede the successful implementation of KM processes and systems and highlight the need for addressing these barriers to enhance KM effectiveness. The next sub-heading discuss the main challenges experienced by the participants in integrating KM in their work.

4.5.1 *Lack of integrated storage system and data errors*

One significant barrier identified by participants is the challenge of accessing and storing knowledge effectively. The findings reveal that accessibility and availability of information, as well as the challenges of manual information storage, which not only hinder KM efforts but also result in misalignment and errors, particularly when handling large volumes of data, but further complicating knowledge sharing and application.

Participant 8 highlighted the absence of a central repository for knowledge products:

"Departments that are producing knowledge products, it's not properly stored somewhere where you could say, OK, we know that there's a central government's main portal or there's a central provincial portal, or still, whether it's the central intra-departmental portal." (Interview with Participant 8)

Similarly, the participants below emphasized the universal struggle with information storage which cuts across government:

"There are several key reports, a whole range of reports that need to be stored. But you may find that like any other department in the country most of the departments are faced with so many challenges in relation to storing that information." (Interview with Participant 6)

"Departments are producing knowledge products, it's not properly stored somewhere where you could say, OK, we know that there's a central government's main portal or there's a central provincial portal, or still, whether it's the central intra-departmental portal". (Interview with Participant 8)

"Government, as a whole, struggles with data management, extending beyond just M&E experts. Issues such as data theft and concerns about data quality persist. The challenge lies in finding a comprehensive solution to address these data management problems effectively." (Interview with Participant 11)

"So record keeping is still like, it's a bit of a challenge, especially with those units where they're dealing mostly with the hard copy files. And obviously I guess this will affect other departments or other public institutions because, mostly people are on manual processes". (Interview with Participant 2)

These personal reflections show how the absence of standardized systems directly affects their ability to access and store information in their daily tasks. Without integrated storage systems, they struggle to ensure data alignment and quality, a sentiment echoed by Participant 7, who noted:

"We currently don't have an automated system for reporting. We've introduced a manual system and a shared folder where performance information is stored. We maintain physical and printed copies as well."(Interview with Participant 7)

This lack of proper systems affects not only efficiency but also compliance with audit requirements, further adding to their workload and increasing errors, as Participant 6 explained:

"Everything was done manually. A person must sit with the calculator and add up performance and send the report. Somewhere, somehow we'll definitely lose that alignment in terms of information. There won't be that alignment. I still remember the last time we even got more than 100 findings and all those findings were related to wrong calculations. Looking at the PoE document and what a person has entered did not correspond". (Interview with Participant 6)

4.5.2 Cultural, Placement and Collaboration Barriers

The findings suggests that the KM function faces challenges or limitations in its current structural location, which create cultural barriers that hinder knowledge sharing and collaboration. This cultural aspect includes a lack of awareness and understanding of the importance of KM among individual M&E professionals. There is a need for individual professionals to recognize the value of KM as more than just a "nice to have" function. Without a culture that values knowledge sharing and sees it as a strategic asset, efforts to implement KM are likely to face resistance. Effective communication and awareness-building are crucial for changing the culture amongst individual professionals. This underscores the importance of communicating the purpose and benefits of KM to individual professionals. KM should be viewed as a strategic activity that directly contributes to personal growth, innovation, and overall success within one's role and the department.

The quotes below reveal that there is currently no direct link between individual M&E professionals and KM professionals due to structural location. This can lead to missed opportunities for leveraging KM resources and expertise:

"So that knowledge management function is located within our Policy Development and Research Chief Directorate. So there's already that separation in the department, which also creates the impression that the two are not linked."(Interview with participant 1)

This lack of integration reduces the visibility of KM. KM colleagues are “discouraged “tacked in a corner,” “low profile”.

"That office has been underutilized, tucked away in some corner under the CIO's office in the IT section. It's just languishing there, having a low profile. So at the moment, it is not linked with my work. KM colleagues within the department are discouraged, possibly due to internal dynamics and a lack of understanding of their work."(Interview with participant 3)

"I think a lot of the time the colleagues who are supposed to lead with it are discouraged or end up focusing on one element of it. The issue is that it was placed in a Unit that doesn't understand the function, so they just made it a Records Management function." (Interview with Participant 10)

According to the participant below KM is not visible in the department plan, hence limited collaboration and it is not unique to their department:

"The unit is not very visible or proactive in promoting their services. The lack of targets in the APP for the unit may contribute to our distant interactions with the knowledge management team. I can tell you I consulted some of my M&E colleagues in other departments and this is the way it is in most departments". (Interview with participant 7)

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping a department's culture. Without strong support and recognition of the value of KM from leadership, it can be challenging to drive a cultural shift towards knowledge sharing. Leaders need to set the tone for the department and champion KM as a strategic function. See the quote below:

“We've seen quite a number of leadership changes over the years. I think during my career, I had something like eight or nine different accounting officers. Now, each one of them comes with a new particular strategic focus and mandate. And they want to see things happening in a particular sense. So that complicates, policy implementation and sharing of knowledge and the implementation framework and causes delays in certain policy objectives and outcomes that were well anticipated at a particular point in time”. (Interview with Participant 14)

The results show that in departments where there is a KM unit they are just seen as librarians who just archive information for safe keeping. Participants highlighted that they are not involved in planning or M&E activities and it would seem as though they don't have any indicators on KM strategies. They are not visible. This sentiment is also shared by the KM Professional who closed with the words “suffocated in a small corner”. See the quotes below:

“In Departments there's misunderstanding of the KM function. We don't have any regulatory framework, not even a policy. The framework that we have is not going to take us anywhere. And there's an attitude towards KM that I have observed in all these years that have been in the space of KM. The perception is that we don't add any value and there are things that we can do to add value in government. If you were to ask me, KM belongs to planning, research, policy, and M&E. In fact, KM should indirectly, report to DG. Policy development, strategy are informed by KM which means it is a strategic function. With the current department it is located in Corporate Services which is concerned with the internal client. So, my function is actually four times zero. It's suffocated there. In that small corner”. (Interview with Participant 17)

4.5.2.1 Challenges of Collaboration between professionals

Collaboration and integration between different units is also highlighted as a challenge by participating M&E professionals. These personal experiences highlight the impact of siloed working environments and poorly defined roles and responsibilities on KM processes. The individual professionals share their frustrations with these barriers,

suggesting that silos limit information sharing, inhibit knowledge flow, and create unnecessary tension. Participant 10 expressed how this fragmented way of working affects data capture and flow:

“Roles and responsibilities are sometimes not clearly defined which causes some issues and tensions at times, especially with the Support Units. We have a lot of problems because, we have lots of silos. We have lots of non-collaborative ways of working. We don't transform easily and those things for me, they show that we don't capture data as we should, and it doesn't flow as it should.”(Interview with Participant 10)

This observation highlights how the lack of integration between units not only impedes collaboration but also affects the quality of data management. The professionals feel that departmental silos prevent smooth information exchange, further complicating their roles in knowledge generation and sharing. Similarly, Participant 3 illustrated how difficult it is to navigate these silos, even within the same Chief Directorate:

“I don't know if it's difficult or it's something that's just allowed that we work in silos. Can you believe in my Chief Directorate, there's Planning, there's Governance, there's Policy; but not unless you work very hard to get information from other colleagues, it becomes difficult.” (Interview with Participant 3)

This personal experience shows the disjointed nature of collaboration within the same organizational division. It suggests that even when units are structurally close, individual professionals must make extraordinary efforts to gather knowledge from their colleagues. The “mentalities” referenced indicate resistance to collaboration and sharing, making it hard for M&E professionals to integrate their work with other functional areas. When roles are not well-defined, it can lead to confusion, tension, and inefficiencies. Participant 3 shared their experience with this ambiguity:

“I think roles and responsibilities sometimes are not clearly defined, which causes some issues and tensions at times, especially with the Support Units.” (Interview with Participant 3)

This lack of role definition creates barriers to effective teamwork and collaboration, especially when interacting with support units. The absence of clear expectations results in misunderstandings and conflict, which not only hampers KM processes but also affects the day-to-day operations of individual professionals. Participant 7 further emphasized this point, detailing the personal consequences of such disorganization:

"People here, everybody. They're not even talking to each other. They don't even know who's supposed to do what? So, I realized that this chain is actually broken, and at the end of the day, I'm the one who suffers."(Interview with Participant 7)

This participant's frustration highlights how disjointed communication and unclear roles cause significant operational breakdowns. The "broken chain" metaphor reflects how systemic failures in collaboration leave individual professionals burdened and isolated, further complicating their ability to perform M&E tasks effectively.

There is also challenge in terms of advocacy for M&E knowledge products with other disciplines who believe they are too busy and their work is not measurable and can't be monitored or evaluated. This challenge is also noted by Simister (2017) who states that in certain domains, measuring work proves intrinsically challenging, with contested definitions of success; hence, in such instances, the sophistication of indicators, data collection tools, and analytical approaches becomes imperative. Below is the view expressed by Participant 8:

I've noticed in terms of my own observation that there are three types of disciplines that find M&E difficult, so we'll definitely need to go back to their schools and ensure that as they study these disciplines it is included in their training those are engineers, Accountants and Economists find M&E a nuisance. I don't know why. So it goes back to the training and it's not about personalities. I would say it's at the level of academic development where there is no exposure. (Interview with Participant 8)

The experiences of these M&E professionals highlight a pervasive problem of siloed operations and poorly defined roles within departments. These barriers to collaboration and integration directly affect their ability to capture, share, and use

knowledge efficiently. The lack of communication, role clarity, and integrated working methods not only frustrates professionals but also hampers effective KM.

For these professionals to fulfil their roles, it is crucial to address these individual-level challenges by promoting more collaborative work environments, clarifying responsibilities, and fostering cross-unit integration. The current structure forces professionals to navigate unnecessary obstacles, impeding both knowledge flow and organizational efficiency.

4.5.3 Government Emphasis on Audit Compliance over Impact

Another key challenge for individual professionals is the overwhelming focus on audit compliance, which often hinders the true potential of M&E work and KM practices. Participants felt that the current system prioritizes clean audits over meaningful impacts, resulting in a constrained environment for M&E professionals. This can result in a lack of innovation, adaptability, and responsiveness to M&E knowledge products. Participant 1 expressed frustration over this disconnect:

"The decisions are not based on the knowledge that we produce. Largely the ideal is that they would use these to make better decisions, to plan better as well and to enable us to then drive the departmental strategy in a particular direction."(Interview with Participant 1)

This focus on audits limits creativity and hinders the innovation of M&E practices, as Participant 8 explained:

"There's no room for trial and error. You can document the response in the manner that makes you accountable, but you are not necessarily satisfying the need out there."(Interview with Participant 8)

Participants also discussed how this audit-driven focus diminishes the role of M&E knowledge products, which are often overlooked in favour of compliance.

"I think that the government does not really fully appreciate M&E. The current system of APPs does not encourage real reflection and learning, it encourages people to doctor their planning and reports to avoid audit."

So the system basically creates a perverse incentive against performance". (Interview with Participant 5)

"So, from an M&E point of view it's unfortunate that we're now moving towards being compliance oriented, and audit focus across the government programs". (Interview with Participant 8)

"I'd rather become a priest" than work in the overregulated public sector.

"I would say it started off around about the year 2000, 2001 onwards, we've started overregulating the public sector,...for each and everything we've written a particular rule. It's frustrating and it's quite a challenge to ensure compliance in all aspects and if you look at the audit outcomes, there's non-compliance. To be honest with you, if I can have my life again, I think I'd rather become a priest really. I'd pray for those people in the public sector". (Interview with Participant 14)

4.5.4 Resource Allocation Constraints

One of the recurring themes was participants' experiences with the challenge of limited resources, which directly impacts their ability to implement KM effectively. Capacity issues, budget cuts, and technology constraints are common barriers they face.

Participant 6 detailed the overwhelming workload:

"We work like donkeys, the whole day until we knock off late. We do this, you know. Because of lack of capacity."(Interview with Participant 6)

Similarly, Participant 17, a KM professional, acknowledged:

"The only challenge that we have is the issue that we don't have capacity, but there's a lot that we can offer in knowledge management."(Interview with Participant 17)

Budget cuts exacerbate these challenges, especially post-COVID-19, making it difficult to fund advanced KM systems. Participant 6 explained:

CHAPTER 5

5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the finding of the study in relation to literature. The purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which public sector monitoring and evaluation professionals employ KM practices in acquiring, producing, storing, disseminating and using M&E knowledge products. In order to achieve that purpose the main research question was: In what ways do public sector monitoring and evaluation professionals understand and employ KM practices to generate knowledge products? The themes to answer the question are:

Theme 1: Understanding of the role of KM in M&E

Theme 2: Application of KM processes by M&E professionals

Theme 3: Integration and collaboration

Theme 4: Departmental Barriers to Effective Knowledge Management

5.2 Theme 1: Understanding the role of KM in M&E

5.2.1 M&E Professionals description of KM

The findings in terms of what knowledge management is were so diverse with one participant not knowing what it was until the invitation to participate in the study. The common themes that emerged during analysis are: organizing and structuring information for easy retrieval and use in decision making; processing, generating, storing information from different sources; managing institutional knowledge and addressing knowledge gaps; connecting data to information to decision-making; collecting, packaging, and disseminating information for departmental objectives; transforming information into actionable knowledge and wisdom.

Some participants believe that KM is about processing information from different sources, which must be analysed to ensure relevance and validity and then generating knowledge products which must be stored, shared and used for decision making. Other participants went further to mention that KM is about managing institutional

knowledge and addressing knowledge gaps. This validates the argument by Barbier and Tengeh (2023) who argued:

“KM is not about capturing, storing, or using knowledge for the sake of capturing, storing, or using knowledge. KM is about ensuring the correct knowledge reaches the correct public official at the correct time so that well-informed decisions are made that provide value to the South African government for it to achieve its objectives outlined in Section 195 of Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996” (Barbier & Tengeh, 2023, p. 171).

The study participants described KM as ‘collecting, packaging, and disseminating information for departmental objectives.’ Other participants were able to describe KM in relation to their work as M&E professionals and its overall role in government. To some of them, KM is about the management of all the M&E knowledge products that they produce in the assessment of programme implementation, and storing them. Another went further to describe KM as a key supporter of performance information management and argued that KM is the ‘engine’ in departments.

The participants perceive KM has the ability to transform information into actionable knowledge and wisdom which finally results in decision-making. This description of KM is in line with Abubakar et al., (2019) who states that knowledge becomes valuable when it is applied, replenished, and shared to generate outstanding performance (Abubakar et al., 2019). According to UNDP (2002, p. 77) “knowledge is content- and context-specific information capable of bringing change or more effective actions at a wider level that can contribute to new learning and knowledge”. In sum, this would mean that these participants have an understanding that knowledge has no value when it is passive.

As highlighted by participants in earlier discussions, it is evident that KM remains a concept with less clarity. This uncertainty is reflected in the participants’ descriptions, indicating a lack of a well-defined understanding of KM. Some participants presented KM definitions that demonstrated a misunderstanding of the concept, with instances of confusion between KM and Records Management. This confusion is also noted in the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework of 2019. According to

DPSA (2019) Records Management and KM work together to identify organisational learnings. The varying interpretations provided by participants underscore the absence of a consensus on the definition of KM, a challenge not unique to this study. The lack of an agreed-upon definition is a prevalent issue among academics and KM practitioners, leading to significant confusion in the field (Massaro et al., 2015).

Despite the existence of a KM framework, participants appear to be unaware of it, as indicated by the diverse interpretations they provided. The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) defines KM as “involving systematic approaches to find, understand, and use knowledge to achieve organisational objectives. It is about getting the right information to the right people at the right time” (DPSA, 2019, p.10). However, participants offered diverse interpretations of KM, highlighting the ongoing lack of consensus among both academics and practitioners in defining KM.

In the context of M&E, knowledge management is perceived as a process involving the collection, organization, and utilization of M&E information to enhance decision-making and improve departmental performance. This definition aligns with the perspective expressed by Odiwuor (2015), who emphasized that the integration of KM and M&E can contribute to enhanced performance across all levels of a department by ensuring better results and improved internal processes.

5.2.2 Participants’ understanding of departmental responsibility for managing knowledge

The findings reveal that participating M&E professionals believe KM is everyone’s responsibility in their departments, specific units should play the coordination role (KM, ICT, Communication and Research) and individuals within the department who are the custodians as far as the technical generation of knowledge products should be responsible for KM in their areas. Furthermore, managers at all levels to the Accounting Officer and the Minister should take responsibility. In contrast to the study participants’ position, Hulsebosch et al. (2009) disagrees with the perspective that KM is the responsibility of all employees, emphasizing instead that KM involves purposefully enhancing knowledge processes, a task not necessarily undertaken by every professional in the organization.

Public servants are knowledge workers and as such they create, develop, manipulate, disseminate, and use knowledge to contribute to the goals of their organization (Bosch-Sijtsema et al. 2010, cited in Fitcher, 2021). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) contends that an organisational structure characterized by a top-down bureaucratic approach hinders KM efforts. In such a setup, only top management possesses the authority to generate information, treating it as a tool rather than a tangible product. On the other hand, a bottom-up organisational model, where lower- and middle-level employees are solely responsible for knowledge creation, is also deemed unfavourable (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Hulsebosch et al. (2009) emphasize that although they acknowledge and emphasize continuous learning for everyone in the organization, they argue that not all individuals possess the responsibility of crafting KM strategies.

In the public service KM is seen as a strategic function and the coordination should be at that level. According to DPSA (2019) the coordination and facilitation role is recommended to the Strategy and M&E Units within Corporate Services Branches of national departments. Leadership should be provided by the Chief Knowledge Officer who is the relevant manager for Strategic Management DPSA (2019). The findings show that the M&E professionals feel that although the management of M&E knowledge is their responsibility, there should be a dedicated KM professional to coordinate KM at the departmental level.

Barbier and Tengeh (2022) note that despite the South African government's enthusiasm for KM, the absence of necessary implementation skills among public officials, combined with challenges like limited resources and resistance to change, particularly in adopting new technologies or learning methods, may impede the successful adoption of KM practices in government departments.

5.3 Theme 2: Application of KM processes by M&E professionals

5.3.1 KM practices included in M&E policies/frameworks

The findings of this study revealed that participants operating in roles as M&E professionals, have explicitly associated KM processes with their respective M&E policies/frameworks. The M&E framework is a comprehensive narrative document

outlining all M&E activities, including background information, specified indicators for measurement, and the implementation strategy for the M&E system (Görgens & Kusek, 2009). The documented practices encompass records management, process flows, the development of knowledge products for induction programs, and the establishment of approved policies, guidelines, templates, and procedures. These documents align with legislative mandates governing M&E work in the public service. Despite this alignment, participants recognize existing gaps and areas for improvement in documenting and formalizing these KM practices within their M&E frameworks. While there is some awareness and implementation of KM practices, there is a need for further development and integration into M&E processes, particularly in converting tacit KM processes into explicit forms.

During the formulation of M&E frameworks, participants emphasized processes, reporting lines, and fostering a culture of performance accountability, with less emphasis on information sharing across departments. Twende Mbele (2022) states knowledge management plan should be an integral part of the M&E framework as it strengthens M&E endeavours by facilitating the sharing of new knowledge among internal and external stakeholders, while also providing policymakers with improved access to evidence for informed decision-making. As the system matures, there is a growing acknowledgment of the importance of strengthening KM. Challenges in data management within the government were highlighted, indicating a need for improvement in data, information, and KM.

Existing literature highlights challenges in implementing Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System, as noted in recent studies by Eresia-Eke & Boadu (2019); Fraser & Morkel (2020); Goldman et al. (2015 & 2019); Phillips et al. (2014); Sebola (2021). These challenges are not unique to South Africa but extend to other African countries that have adopted similar systems (Fraser & Morkel, 2020; Goldman et al., 2019). In the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System, the M&E strategy should explicitly articulate its alignment with institutional Knowledge Management or Learning Strategies, emphasizing the integration and synergy between these frameworks (The Presidency, 2007).

The absence of standardized M&E framework guidelines has resulted in each department developing its own framework, leading to a lack of linkages with KM

processes. While the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework briefly addresses KM, the absence of clear guidelines for incorporating KM processes into day-to-day work processes poses a challenge. The DPME, as the lead department for M&E, is not at fault for this predicament. It took twelve years after the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System Framework of 2007, for the formulation of a National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework which was approved in 2019. Furthermore, the framework lacked implementation guidelines.

The M&E experts who were interviewed in this study were unaware of the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework. They also expressed pessimism about the Framework's usefulness due to insufficient legislative and regulatory power and implementation instructions. According to Barbier & Tenengeh (2022), the absence of a well-defined, structured framework, guidelines, and a clear implementation method poses challenges for government departments in implementing KM. The lack of explicit documentation for KM processes, except for data management, within M&E frameworks implies that these processes are carried out tacitly by individual professionals, relying on individual competency. The participating M&E professionals also highlighted that whatever KM they are doing is currently in their minds.

Acknowledging the identified gaps and areas for improvement, the findings emphasize the need for further development and integration of KM practices into M&E processes. The 2018/19 Assessment Report on KM in the Public Service highlighted poor performance in M&E (DPSA, 2020), reflecting a broader challenge faced by M&E professionals in recognizing and managing knowledge effectively.

5.3.2 Benefits of using KM in M&E

According to individual M&E professionals there are benefits of using KM processes in the generation of M&E knowledge products. KM processes are beneficial for “problem-solving, dynamic learning, strategic planning, decision-making and avoiding burnouts, and lead to increasing flexibility and organisational intelligence” (Namdarian et al., 2020, p. 86). The benefits of KM most often stem from improving decision-making by leveraging on the intellectual capital (Barbier & Tenengeh, 2023). This view is also expressed by Abubakar et al. (2019) who state that KM ties directly into decision-making.

The findings also show that some individual M&E participants believe that knowledge management promotes accountability by making information more visible and accessible, allowing for better transparency and accountability. After all, reporting on completed actions is only part of effective accountability; stakeholders must also be able to understand and respond to the entity's plans and activities in a transparent manner (CIPFA & IFAC, 2014). Yes, literature does provide that KM can assist with making M&E information and knowledge available and accessible (Elhussien, 2023). It must however be noted that, effective learning necessitates honest reflection on both positive and negative experiences within a safe environment, emphasising that KM should not be exclusively viewed as part of the overarching M&E accountability system (Thorpe, 2013). The balance between accountability and learning as far as M&E is concerned is more skewed on the accountability side. This view is also asserted by Twende Mbele (2022) who states that, in nearly every instance, monitoring serves the purpose of accountability rather than fostering learning.

Since KM tools can make it easier for everyone, including external entities, to locate and access information, it promotes transparency with the oversight bodies such as the executive, parliament, and civil society who can use evidence from M&E knowledge products for decision-making. KM can aid with designing data analysis and real-time decision-making systems that make it possible to make evidence-based decision without having to wait for finalisations of evaluations (The TOPS Program, 2017). It can be said that by providing accessibility and availability of information, KM can increase utility of M&E knowledge products. This is asserted by The TOPS Program (2017) which states that KM can drive information use in M&E by highlighting quality results and designing processes and tools for ensuring replication in ongoing implementation.

Improved efficiency can be achieved by utilising online tools such as SharePoint, allowing M&E workers to work and generate reports remotely and at any time. Eliminating the reliance on physical files ensures that information is received and processed in a timely manner. According to Asian Productivity Organization (2013) and Cong & Pandya (2003) benefits of KM are: improved organisational performance through increased efficiency, productivity, quality of tasks or services, and innovation, higher data integrity. Because KM processes facilitate the provision of methods for

tracking and monitoring the accomplishment of targets and goals by regularly delivering updates on performance information, this increased efficiency improves performance management. This makes it possible to evaluate, examine, and monitor action plans for better performance. Individual M&E participants indicated that KM promotes integration and collaborative learning by allowing individuals with diverse disciplines to share their knowledge and experience. The findings are in line with literature which states that KM can ensure better connections by translating information across technical and functional silos to build learning networks and connections that make M&E better (The TOPS Program, 2017). By fostering knowledge sharing, KM enhances the skills and knowledge of employees. One of the many benefits of KM in Anand & Singh, (2011) is that KM can create increased empowerment and improved skills of employees.

One of the other benefits of KM in the perspective of the individual M&E participants is that KM helps in managing institutional memory by preserving and organizing knowledge. This views are in line with the literature that states that organisational memory is system or warehouse that preserves information in different forms (Alavi & Leidner, 2001) including information about the organisations past decisions and their outcomes (Namdarian et al., 2020). It is possible for organisational memory to have both positive and negative effects on performance and behaviour (Alavi & Leidner, 2001).

5.3.3 Knowledge acquisition and generating M&E knowledge products

The findings reveal that participants use a variety of approaches to acquire and develop M&E knowledge products. The most typical approach for monitoring products is to rely on information provided by programme managers, who are in charge of the day-to-day execution and implementation of programmes in departments. Participants consult and collaborate with departmental stakeholders, such as Deputy Director Generals, Chief Directors, and Directors to monitor programme targets and gather information. Depending on the structure of the department, they also involve provinces, regions, and centres responsible for day-to-day collection and analysis of data and implementation at service delivery points. The findings are in line with the literature. Which states that one can look for knowledge inside the organization or from

sources outside the organization (Huber, 1991; Kaba & Ramaiah, 2020; Paliszkiewicz et al., 2017).

Information such as Strategic and Annual Performance Plans are used as the basis for collecting information and as a result structured templates are customised per department as guided by DPME to consolidate information and comply with reporting requirements. The results show that various methods and processes are used which involve collecting data from multiple sources, including stakeholders, documents, research, and industry activities, and then synthesizing this information to develop M&E knowledge products. Whether it's through stakeholder engagement, literature review, document synthesis, or performance information management, the central focus is on gathering and synthesizing data to inform M&E products. Knowledge management involves linking professionals to knowledge resources and empowering them to generate new knowledge and foster innovation (Hulsebosch et al., 2009).

5.3.4 M&E knowledge capture and storage

The findings reveal that when it comes to knowledge capture and storage skills, most participants are still at elementary while a few are at advanced stages. They also reveal that M&E reports are the most popular medium for capturing M&E knowledge. Some participating M&E professionals mainly captured and stored knowledge products in individual laptops, hard copy files, and external storage facilities managed by a service provider. Others capture and store knowledge products on shared drives, SharePoint, Intranet, knowledge hubs, One Drive, Teams, and the departments' websites. The knowledge products that are stored and captured in those platforms are final knowledge products, while the rest of the information remains in the individual compiler's laptops.

DPSA (2019, p.28) states that “departments should have effective Electronic Document Management Systems for knowledge storage with the ability to capture, describe and categorize, retrieve, share and reuse electronic documents regardless of format”. Additionally, Electronic Records Management System must be in place according. The findings reveal that some other departments are still in the process of developing automated systems for records management and performance information for reporting. Until their implementation the manual processes are the order of the day.

Government systems are supplemented by manual processes, which makes them vulnerable to intentional and unintentional manual-based delinquency and manipulation (AGSA, 2021). It is much more reliable and practical to implement automated controls than manual ones (AGSA, 2021). Despite this, implementation of an IT solution cannot eliminate the underlying business process design problems or compliance issues that are driving data problems (Treasury, 2011).

The Policy Framework for Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System states the M&E strategy of every department should pinpoint a central location where M&E outputs are collected and preserved for convenient access, awareness, and promotion of their use (Presidency, 2007). At the heart of this central M&E repository should consist of a dependable and readily accessible database containing studies along with their discoveries and suggestions, which should be accessible to anyone interested via the internet (Presidency, 2007).

As revealed in the findings in some cases accessibility and availability of information, as a result of the challenges of manual information storage, can hinder KM efforts and loss of valuable knowledge. The findings are not unique to this study, AGSA's (2021) report on the performance report finds the process of collecting performance information relies heavily on manual processes and is prone to human error that is not detected and corrected in time. Inadequate information storage practices and limitations in information access impede the successful implementation in the management of M&E knowledge processes and systems. KM is enabled in part by the use of technology, which facilitates the acquisition, organization, storage, sharing, and application of knowledge as such it is offers a cross-cutting support and enabler (Barbier & Tenengeh, 2023). Despite AGSA's identification of significant control limitations in government information systems over the years, no urgency has been shown to address these problems, leaving the systems vulnerable, causing project failures and financial loss. Even with all those tools for storage, if stored knowledge remains unused, databases can turn into data graveyards, providing no advantage for an organisation (Fitcher, 2021).

5.3.5 M&E knowledge products sharing and dissemination

Monitoring data is collected from the programme managers or those responsible for certain indicators. The M&E units then analyse the data and convert it into consolidated reports. The M&E products are interrogated through internal committees such as the Management Committees, Executive Committees, Audit and Risk Committees, Accounting Officer and the Ministries. They are also shared externally with DPME, National Treasury, AGSA and the Portfolio Committee. This shows that M&E professionals apply deliberate processes in converting their work experiences into knowledge that is shared and made common among a group or within an organization Chen (2018). Some reports are also shared on the websites of departments and on the intranet for those departments that have it in place. As stated by Hulsebosch et al. (2009) dissemination commonly occurs through documents, drawings, standard operating procedures, manuals of best practice, as well as the use of Intranet and online databases. The M&E products are widely shared with different audiences in different formats especially final reports that have been approved. Reports are also shared with communities during imbizo's and presented to the public through the portfolio committees to ensure accountability to citizens through live recording on television. The act of sharing knowledge with citizens and end-users, who may include street-level bureaucrats and public professionals dealing with diverse and urgent needs, becomes pivotal for organisational success (Bekkers & Noordegraaf, 2016).

The collaborative exchange of information enhances responsiveness and effectiveness in addressing the pressing and dynamic requirements encountered by these individuals. The processes are in compliance with the DPME guidelines and timelines as the custodians of the government Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation policies and frameworks. The International Institute of Environment & Development (IIED) (2019) also noted the strides that the DPME has made in enhancing capacity building by offering comprehensive support through standards, guidelines, and training, all conveniently accessible on the DPME website. Additionally the creation of data forums by DPME serves as real-time interactive spaces among key stakeholders, aiming to enhance comprehension of required datasets from various departments, promote information sharing, and provide technical support (IIED, 2019). DPME

employs an evaluation communication strategy, disseminating results through media channels, its electronic newsletter, presentations at conferences and forums, submissions to parliamentary portfolio committees, and maintaining a publicly accessible national evaluation repository on its website (Goldman et al., 2019).

The study findings show that the participating M&E professionals share knowledge products widely. As noted by Hulsebosch et al. (2009) a best practice database, coupled with face-to-face meetings, encourages professionals to collaboratively share experiences and generate innovative ideas, fostering the constructive application and creation of knowledge beneficial to the organization. This is because knowledge retained solely in an individual's mind does not contribute to organisational success unless it is shared with other employees within the organization (Mkhize, 2015).

However, there are participants who feel there is a gap in terms of the sharing of information internally, especially since M&E products are not just legislated reports but are about ensuring that M&E is a management tool that is for day-to-day work processes of any manager. Currently knowledge is shared with those at middle, senior and executive management level. The rest of the lower staff don't get to know what those M&E products are and what they are about. In the study conducted by Masilo et al. (2021), it was found that feedback from various forums has not effectively reached the operational level for utilization in decision-making and improving service delivery. Nevertheless, what's essential is a framework that considers all individuals within an organization, working collaboratively both horizontally and vertically. Consequently, the organisational framework should encourage communication across and within organisational confines and reinforce the interconnections among teams and networks (Skyrme, 2011 as cited by Chen, 2018). The more complex a programme or organization, KM becomes a heightened concern and facilitating learning at a programmatic level becomes more challenging, prompting the need for formal procedures to safeguard institutional memory, ensuring that lessons learned in one part of the complex entity can be shared or retrieved as needed by others (Simister, 2017a).

5.3.6 *Uses of M&E knowledge products*

In analyzing the use of M&E knowledge products, several contradictions emerge that reflect the complex dynamics at play in their application within the public sector. Smits and Moor (2004 as cited in Fitcher, 2021) emphasize that “the more knowledge is used, the more valuable it becomes for the people and the organizations involved.” This notion aligns with the expectation that monitoring is primarily utilized to support management and accountability, while evaluations are designed to foster learning and provide deeper insights into program performance (Masilo et al., 2021). However, the findings from this study present a mixed picture, with some individual M&E professionals articulating a sense of “illusion to use,” suggesting that despite the formal mechanisms in place, actual utilization of M&E products may be superficial or limited.

M&E products promote transparency in the use of public funds by providing clear insights into departmental activities, expenditures, and outcomes. They support accountability mechanisms by documenting performance against established targets and facilitating external scrutiny. In South Africa, M&E information is increasingly being used to improve accountability, inform policy-making and decisions, despite the compliance focus in government (Phillips et al., 2014). The findings reveal that M&E knowledge products were used for oversight and accountability. Oversight authorities, including Parliament, utilize these products to exercise their mandate, relying on the information compelled by legislation. The findings also highlight the crucial role M&E knowledge products play in holding responsible managers accountable, driving teams to enhance performance and contribute to the achievement of departmental goals. For M&E findings to be valuable, management must use the knowledge generated from M&E reports to guide their decision-making (Visser et al., 2014). According to the finding some participating M&E professionals noted that decision-making relies on M&E reports to some extent, utilized by management across different levels, including Directors, Chief Directors, Executive Management Committees, and even the Ministers.

While participating M&E professionals acknowledged the importance of the use of M&E knowledge products, challenges and frustrations were prevalent in their responses. The findings are in agreement with Visser et al. (2014, p.27) who asserted

that “M&E knowledge and experience is a knowledge source that is underutilised for improved individual and organisational performance.” This is because the utility of knowledge depends on the individual decision maker.

“Information is used when decision makers and stakeholders explicitly consider information provided to them in policymaking, programme planning and management, or service provision. The final decision or actions may not be based on that information alone but its use is a part of the process of decision-making” (Görgens & Kusek, 2009).

The findings show that M&E knowledge products are compliance driven as opposed to demand-driven. The findings in the studies by: Phillips et al., 2014; IIED, 2019; Goldman, 2019; Masilo et al., 2021; Fraser & Morkel, 2020, reveal that there is compliance driven culture in South African public sector, but a failure to use M&E for the purposes of reflection and performance improvement. Performance auditing has contributed to a culture of compliance, where departments plan for what is achievable and within their control, rather than what is transformational (DPME, 2023; Fraser & Morkel, 2020). In my view M&E products are demand-driven due to the requirements in the legislative frameworks which leads to a compliance culture. Monitoring knowledge products are supplied based on the predetermined objectives that are planned by departments in their strategic documents. The challenge is when those who planned the interventions are not using the feedback from monitoring activities as a means to learn and reflect and improve the interventions. So monitoring products are not supplied in a vacuum outside what was planned.

In order to achieve a successful M&E system, planning and budgeting are closely linked (DPME, 2019b; Phillips et al., 2014). This applies especially to monitoring compared to evaluation, as monitoring typically has shorter feedback loops, allowing for immediate changes to plans based on generated information, while evaluation influences changes at periodic intervals (Simister, 2017b). The findings reveal that M&E products especially monitoring products play a crucial role in the planning and budgeting stage, contributing significantly to the development of APPs and operational budgets according to some individual M&E professionals. They provide a baseline for performance, help justify budget allocations, and ensure that new tasks are linked to past performance. Ultimately, the insights provided by individual M&E professionals

assist decision-makers at various levels of the organization in making informed and strategic decisions that align with departmental objectives and priorities. One notes that efforts are being made by individual M&E professionals to ensure use from their side as the custodians to influence decision-making in planning, budgeting and programme implementation.

Despite the efforts made by individual M&E professionals, challenges persist. Phillips et al. (2014) note that M&E is not viewed as a key part of the strategic function essential for planning and budgeting, tracking progress, learning, and improving implementation. While some participants cited the use of M&E products in budgeting, they noted that this influence remains minimal. The monitoring information requested during the budget process is often treated as non-financial data, lacking any substantial impact on program budgets. This is because although monitoring information is requested during the budget process, its role is that, non-financial data, nothing more, it doesn't have any impact on programme budgets. Even though OECD (2008, p.2, as cite in National Treasury, 2011) state that "simply including information on performance in budget documents is a long way from performance budgeting". South Africa seems to still be using the presentational financial planning where performance information is included in the budget or MTEF documentation but there is not a direct link between performance and the funding allocations.

This complexity in the budgeting process is further supported by findings from DPME (2023), which state that although systems and processes have been established to support the utilization of M&E evidence in planning and budgeting, gaps remain—particularly in the interactions between M&E and planning, as well as between evaluation and budgeting processes. The results echo observations by Masilo et al. (2021), which indicate that strategic planning units, policy development units, and budgeting departments do not adequately utilize performance information in their planning processes or in allocating budgets. As a consequence, M&E activities often lack recognition or application in intervention programs, a situation described by Tuckermann (2007), who laments that M&E is frequently employed merely as a means of accountability rather than a vehicle for reflection on lessons learned. Consequently, M&E activities often lack recognition or application in intervention programmes (The TOPS Program, 2017). M&E is still too often used as an approach to account for the results achieved by development projects or programmes rather than for reflection on

lessons learned (Tuckermann, 2007). This is unfortunate because M&E knowledge products are generated as a result of the set departmental strategic initiatives and cannot operate outside those.

The findings show that evaluation products on the other hand are demand-driven because it is the programmes themselves who suggest the areas, they would like to have evaluated for inclusion in the National Evaluation Plan. Evaluation outcomes play a crucial role in informing cabinet-level policy decisions and are deeply integrated into national planning, with numerous evaluations driving changes in programs or policies (IIED, 2019). But even in this case it was discovered there are utility challenges. This is because as noted by Goldman et al. (2019) the influence of the evaluation on decision-making remains an ongoing effort. According to individual M&E participants improvement plans as per evaluation recommendations are not implemented and as such, they do not find expression in programme improvements. As a result in practice, evaluation findings are underutilized due to various factors such as insufficient capacity within the government, a weak enabling environment, absence of an evaluation culture, and a lack of stewardship in leveraging evaluation findings (Chirau et al., 2020).

Despite having the designation 'M&E' in their job description, the majority of participants barely conducted evaluations. Budgeting for evaluations presents a challenge, with the Treasury indicating that there will be no separate budget allocated for them, instead requiring funding from existing program budgets (Goldman et al., 2019). Additionally, another challenge lies in securing dedicated staff for evaluation tasks. The use of M&E knowledge would foster a generation of new knowledge if decisions are based on the lessons learned and recommendations. This would bring about continuous change and innovation in interventions set to bring about positive change in addressing complex societal problems the public sector seeks to address. As one note, the formation of knowledge is shaped by various institutional factors and interconnected pressures, including political-administrative positions, institutional histories, and power dynamics among professions (Laihonen et al., 2023). The direct impact of KM on organisational performance is evident when knowledge is utilized to create innovative products, or when the KM strategy aligns with the overall business strategy (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2015).

5.4 Theme 3: Integration and collaboration

Collaboration is essential in the public sector today because of the complex and demanding work environments (Asian Productivity Organization, 2013). The results show that in terms of this collaboration with other professionals in their departments to create and disseminate knowledge products, participants provided varying responses. This is because of the complexities within different departments. Knowledge creation and sharing in the public sector are facilitated through collaborative engagement, implying that knowledge evolves through social interaction, with each participant contributing equally to its creation (Mkhize, 2015). The results show that some M&E professionals work closely with KM units or other units such as ICT and communications to share information.

In addition, M&E professionals also work with other professionals such as strategic planning, finance, risk management, internal audit, and project management, also HR. Some participants mentioned collaborating with external organizations such as the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association and the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results for knowledge sharing and publication of lessons learned. Overall, collaboration and integration with KM units and other professionals vary among participants.

With regards to collaboration with the KM professionals in creating M&E products in their departments, the results show that 70% of participating M&E professionals had no collaboration and if it existed it was on a limited scale. Literature does show that linking M&E and KM is a challenge as noted in Chen et al., 2019; Suntaxi, 2013; The TOPS Program, 2017; and Thorpe, 2013. This collaborative challenge is not unique to this study.

The findings show that even though there is extensive literature, KM strategies are not effectively measured. There's a lack of clear targets and performance measures from KM units. This lack of performance measurement can affect the strategic impact of KM within as highlighted by the individual M&E professionals. Studies such as those by Firestone, 2000; Hulsebosch et al., n.d.; Kim, 2006; Liebowitz & Wright, 1999; Straus et al., 2010; S. D. Talisayon, 2009b; Shannak's 2009, proposed frameworks on how organisations can go about measuring KM. There are others such as

Davenport & Prusak (1998) who argue that knowledge cannot be measured by itself, but can be measured by the actions and outcomes resulting from its application. Wallman & Gold et al., 2001 (as cited in Loermans & Fink, 2005) are of the view that it is difficult to measure intangibles and its measurement is subjective in nature. Although M&E is vital to decision-making, it fails to tap into the full potential of human capacity regularly and is seldom able to address questions about knowledge and the role of knowledge in development (Hearn et al., 2011).

In the frameworks for both KM and M&E in the South African government M&E strategies must be linked to KM strategies and KM strategies must be monitored and evaluated. The findings reveal that integration of KM with other functions and systems, such as M&E, is often lacking. Silos within professionals' limits the sharing of knowledge across different units, by so doing hinder knowledge sharing and creation across and beyond these barriers. This may be due to the vertical divisions within and between department functions within public organizations characterized by silo mentalities hindering communication and collaboration (Asian Productivity Organization, 2013). There is a need to break down barriers between KM and M&E professionals and fostering cross-functional teamwork. As argued by (Visser et al., 2014, p. 27) "a key factor to use is the institutionalisation of M&E knowledge management in the organisation's structure and culture".

5.5 Theme 4: Departmental Barriers to Effective Knowledge Management

The findings underscore the various obstacles, both structural and cultural, that participating M&E professional encounter when trying to establish and integrate KM practices. These barriers include a lack of awareness and understanding, the positioning and perception of KM within the departments, regulatory and policy gaps, limited collaboration and integration, a compliance and audit-oriented approach, challenges with information management, a lack of clear targets and performance measures, and a complex regulatory environment.

These challenges collectively highlight factors that impede the successful implementation of KM processes and systems by individual M&E participants and highlight the need for addressing these barriers to enhance KM effectiveness. In the study conducted by Barbier & Tenengeh (2023), the results also indicate that public

officials in developing countries, including South Africa, encounter numerous challenges in the successful implementation of KM. This means these challenges are not unique to participating M&E professional. As noted by Barbier & Tenengeh (2023, p. 186), the “challenges include a lack of necessary skills, limited resources, cultural barriers to the adoption of KM practices (such as reluctance to share knowledge or hierarchical organisational structures that discourage collaboration), a lack of awareness and understanding of KM, as well as resistance to change (such as reluctance to adopt new technologies or methods of learning that hinders the adoption of KM practices)”. Additionally, in the public sector, KM is frequently hampered by rigid and inflexible organisational structures, work processes, rules, and procedures that are typically a hotbed of bureaucracy (Asian Productivity Organization, 2013).

The finding of the study reveal that without enabling environment, implementing KM processes is a challenge. Although the main focus of the study was on the KM processes followed by individual M&E professionals in their day-to-day work processes, the enablers proved to be a major barrier to proper implementation of KM processes in M&E. This means without proper a proper organisational structure, culture and Information Technology which are the KM enablers it is challenging to implement KM in organisations and the effect is also noted in implementing KM in M&E. This because the effectiveness of KM is significantly impacted by knowledge management enablers and processes (Abubakar et al., 2019). The study by Allameh et al (2011) noted that KM processes can be improved following the improvement of enabling factors status in the organization.

In conclusion, addressing these challenges and fostering a culture of effective communication, knowledge sharing, and data quality is crucial for improving KM in M&E by individual professionals. Additionally, the implementation and integration of KM systems in M&E system should be a strategic decision and not seen as a simple solution to complex issues.

5.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter the findings of the study were discussed in line with literature. The findings reveal that there are varying definitions of KM, but overall, individual M&E professionals believed that it is everyone's responsibility to manage knowledge within

the public service. The benefits of using KM in generating M&E knowledge products included improved accountability, transparency, and performance management. Participants acquired information for M&E knowledge products through collaboration, consultation, reporting systems, and partnerships. Knowledge products were mainly stored in individual laptops, hard copy files, and external storage, but there were challenges in terms of technology and automated systems for KM. Reports were shared and disseminated to various stakeholders, and there was a desire to improve their use in decision-making and performance improvement. Challenges to effective KM included a lack of understanding, limited collaboration, inadequate information storage systems, data quality issues, and an emphasis on audit compliance over impact. Resource constraints, capacity limitations, cultural barriers, departmental barriers, leadership changes, and budget limitations also hindered effective M&E and KM.

In this chapter it was evident that the implementation of M&E policies and legislation is often patchy, even in countries with clearly defined legislation (Fraser & Morkel, 2020). Barbier & Tengeh (2022) note that despite the South African government's enthusiasm for KM, the absence of necessary implementation skills among public officials, combined with challenges like limited resources and resistance to change, particularly in adopting new technologies or learning methods, may impede the successful adoption of KM practices in government departments.

CHAPTER 6

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter summarizes the key points from the research report and presents recommendations aligned with the study's purpose. The study aimed to explore the extent to which public sector monitoring and evaluation (M&E) professionals employ Knowledge Management (KM) practices to acquire, produce, store, disseminate, and use M&E knowledge products. It sought to answer the question: In what ways do public sector M&E professionals understand and use KM practices to generate knowledge products?

6.2 Summary of findings

The study explored various aspects of KM within M&E processes in the public sector departments. The findings indicate that while KM practices exist, they are often fragmented, with participants expressing varying definitions and understandings of KM. The study also revealed gaps in the integration of KM with M&E processes, particularly in knowledge sharing and internal collaboration. Many participants lacked awareness of the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework, and KM units were often underutilized or invisible.

Moreover, the compliance-driven culture in the public sector impacts the genuine use of M&E knowledge products, as many participants noted that these products are often treated as mere reports for oversight purposes rather than strategic tools for learning and improvement. Despite M&E knowledge products having potential to support decision-making and enhance accountability, their impact is often limited due to a disconnect between knowledge production and practical application.

The research also highlighted the importance of KM in creating M&E knowledge products, enhancing accountability, transparency, and performance management. However, challenges such as inadequate technology systems, limited collaboration, and cultural barriers affected the optimal use of KM in M&E. Participants emphasized

the need for professionalization in M&E roles, clearer guidelines for KM, and greater internal coordination to ensure knowledge products contribute to strategic decision-making.

In light of these findings, it is crucial for individual professionals within departments to foster a culture of learning and reflection, where M&E knowledge products are valued not just for compliance but for driving transformative change. The integration of M&E practices with planning, budgeting, and policy development must be strengthened to ensure that knowledge products contribute to ongoing program improvements and policy adjustments. Additionally, investing in capacity-building initiatives is vital for equipping M&E professionals with the skills needed to interpret and apply knowledge management practices effectively in their M&E processes. Lastly, future research should explore strategies for improving the integration of KM into M&E functions and investigate how M&E knowledge can be more meaningfully applied across various levels of government.

6.3 Recommendations on the study

This study contributes to understanding how KM can support M&E practices, but it also exposes several limitations, including gaps in KM awareness, lack of collaboration between KM and M&E units, and resource constraints that limit the effective application of KM. Recommendations based on these findings include:

Enhancing KM Visibility: Departments should conduct a thorough review of the strategic placement of KM units within their organizational structure. This review should aim to elevate the visibility of KM functions and ensure that these units are actively involved in M&E processes. By fostering a culture that recognizes the value of KM, departments can promote more effective collaboration and knowledge sharing, leading to improved outcomes in M&E.

Professionalizing M&E: Strengthening the capacity of M&E by recruiting and retaining individuals with the necessary skills and qualifications is essential for enhancing evaluation effectiveness. Departments should establish clear professional standards and pathways for career development within M&E, including targeted training

programs and mentorship opportunities. This investment in human resources will ensure that M&E professionals are equipped with the knowledge and expertise required to navigate complex evaluation landscapes and contribute to meaningful improvements in public sector performance.

Developing KM Guidelines: The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) should take the lead in developing comprehensive guidelines that clearly define the role of KM in producing, storing, and sharing M&E knowledge products. These guidelines should outline best practices for knowledge management that can be tailored to the unique contexts of different departments. By establishing a common framework, organizations can promote consistency and coherence in KM practices across the public sector.

Improving Technology Systems: The State Information Technology Agency (SITA) should proactively support the implementation and maintenance of technological systems that facilitate effective KM in M&E processes. This includes investing in user-friendly platforms for knowledge storage and sharing, as well as ensuring robust data management practices are in place. By leveraging technology to streamline KM processes, departments can enhance the accessibility and usability of knowledge products, ultimately improving decision-making and accountability.

Promoting Collaboration: To enhance the integration of KM and M&E, it is crucial to foster stronger collaboration between KM professionals, M&E specialists, and planning departments. This collaboration can be achieved through regular interdepartmental meetings, joint training sessions, and collaborative projects that encourage knowledge sharing and mutual understanding of each unit's roles and objectives. By breaking down silos and promoting a more cohesive approach, organizations can ensure that knowledge products are effectively utilized in decision-making processes, leading to improved policy outcomes and program effectiveness.

Encouraging a Culture of Continuous Learning: Finally, departments should strive to cultivate a culture of continuous learning and improvement that values feedback from M&E activities. This involves creating mechanisms for regular reflection on M&E findings and ensuring that insights are integrated into ongoing program development

and policy adjustments. By prioritizing learning from past experiences, organizations can better adapt to changing needs and enhance their capacity for effective decision-making in the public sector.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations like any other study. The limitations identified in this study are important to reflect upon as they shape the interpretation of the findings and their relevance to the broader public sector context:

The sample size and response rates posed a limitation to the study, as the original aim was to interview 20 participants, but only 14 interviews were conducted. This reduced the diversity of opinions, with two participants declining due to conflicting schedules and four not responding. This may have excluded potentially valuable perspectives, particularly on how KM and M&E are integrated across different departments. As a result, while informative, the findings are not fully representative of the entire M&E professional community within national departments.

In addition, the exclusion of provincial departments, public entities, and municipalities further limits the generalizability of the findings. While national departments play a crucial role in the South African public sector, other government spheres, such as provincial and local levels, may face different dynamics when integrating KM and M&E. Future research should seek to capture these perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of KM and M&E interactions across all levels of government.

Further, the participants had varied interpretations of KM, and some demonstrated limited awareness of the National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework. This conceptual gap may have influenced their engagement with the interview questions, potentially obscuring how KM can work together with M&E more effectively.

Moreover, many departments separate KM and M&E functions into distinct divisions, which may have hindered their collaborative potential. This structural separation could contribute to the lack of integration in practice, a theme that emerged prominently in

the findings. Future research should investigate how organizational structures can be designed to better integrate KM and M&E functions.

6.4 Wider Relevance of Findings

Despite the limitations, the findings of this study remain relevant for the wider public sector, particularly in addressing how KM can be leveraged to enhance M&E processes. In many government departments, M&E professionals are expected to integrate KM strategies with their M&E strategies, yet the practical coordination between these two functions remains ambiguous. This study highlights the need for stronger alignment between KM and M&E to ensure that knowledge products generated through M&E are not only stored and shared but are actively used to inform policy and improve organisational performance.

The insights gained from individual M&E professionals within national government departments can inform broader discussions about KM and M&E integration across all levels of government. While this study focused on national departments, its implications extend to provincial and local government, which may face similar challenges in aligning these functions. The need for a unified understanding of KM across government levels is crucial for promoting consistent practices and enhancing the value of knowledge products.

6.5 Suggestions for further studies

Given the limitations and findings of this study, several areas warrant further investigation. First, future studies should aim to include a larger and more diverse sample of participants, capturing voices from provincial and local governments, as well as public entities. This would provide a broader perspective on how KM and M&E operate across various government levels and departments.

Further research is needed to explore how KM can support the development of demand-driven M&E knowledge products. In addition, studies could investigate the role of information, records, and knowledge management in enhancing M&E processes, especially regarding the dissemination and use of knowledge products for policy-making and performance improvement. In addition future research should

investigate how organizational structures can be designed to better integrate KM and M&E functions.

Moreover, investigating the implementation of follow-up actions based on M&E findings and recommendations, as required by the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System, is another important area. Studying how Accounting Officers fulfil their requirement to submit reports every three years would shed light on how M&E findings are used to drive public sector improvements.

Additionally, alternative methodologies could be explored in future research. While this study relied on interviews, future research could employ mixed-methods approaches, including case studies and longitudinal research, to establish a more robust understanding of the relationship between KM and M&E. These methodologies could provide deeper insights into how KM and M&E integration evolves over time and across different administrative contexts.

By addressing these suggestions for further studies, future research can contribute to a richer theoretical understanding of the interdependencies between M&E and KM, ultimately informing the development of more effective integration strategies in practice.

6.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter synthesizes the findings of the study titled *Examining Knowledge Management Practices of Monitoring and Evaluation Professionals in the Public Sector*. It highlights the research's focus on how M&E professionals engage with KM practices in their work, emphasizing the importance of integrating these practices within public sector departments.

The chapter begins with a reflection on the limitations encountered during the study, including a limited sample size and the exclusion of perspectives from various government levels, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Recommendations are then presented to enhance KM visibility, professionalize M&E, develop comprehensive KM guidelines, improve technological systems, and promote collaboration between KM and M&E professionals.

This chapter also presents a summary of the research and concludes by offering recommendations for future research and interventions, informed by the research findings. As argued by Visser et al. (2014, p. 27), “a key factor to use is the institutionalisation of M&E knowledge management in the organisation’s structure and culture.” These recommendations aim to address identified gaps, ultimately fostering a more integrated approach to KM practices that can enhance the effectiveness of M&E within the public sector. The chapter concludes by emphasizing the critical need for further research to explore the relationship between KM and M&E, paving the way for future studies that can inform policy and practice in this essential area of public service.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Data gathering instruments

Appendix B: Ethics documents

Appendix C: Letters of permission from site of research

Appendix D: Consent form

Appendix E: Letter of introduction

APPENDIX A: DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

Question Guide for M&E Professionals

Section 1: Introduction

Hello my name is Limpho Moleleki, a Masters student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research for my degree. The topic for my research is “Examining knowledge management practices of monitoring and evaluation professionals in the public sector.” I am approaching you in your capacity as an M&E professional in the public sector. I am interested in asking you some questions.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview will not exceed 1 hour.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded?

Section 2: Questions for structured key-informant interviews

1. Please tell me a little bit about your professional background in the field of M&E? [For example, your qualifications, sector, and position in your organization, senior/junior]
2. In your own view what is KM and whose responsibility is it to manage knowledge in the organisation?
3. What would you say are the benefits of using KM in the generation of M&E Knowledge products?
4. In your work as an M&E Professional which KM practices have you explicitly identified (documented) and linked to your M&E policy/framework?
5. How do you acquire information to develop M&E knowledge products?
6. Where do you capture and store the information?
7. How, when and to whom should this knowledge products be delivered?
8. How and who uses knowledge products? In theory M&E knowledge products should be used to inform decisions & improvements would you say that is how you are experiencing in the field?

9. It is believed that M&E knowledge products are supply driven as opposed to demand driven, what is your view on that matter? What is it we can do as M&E professionals in the public sector to ensure that our knowledge products are demand driven?
10. What are your everyday challenges regarding using KM?
11. Which professionals do you work closely with in generating M&E knowledge products? What are the dynamics you experience in working with those professionals when it comes to generating knowledge products such as the KM, Communications and ICT?

Google Forms Self-administered interview example

docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc8osLRdAiJkr4-lieVBBDWlkqv9htb174PhpGgbvbG5UtvA/viewform

Knowledge management practices of monitoring and evaluation professionals in the public sector

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

The purpose of the study is to explore the extent to which public sector monitoring and evaluation professionals employ knowledge management in acquiring, storing, disseminating and using M&E knowledge products.

limpho.moleleki1@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Please select your gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other: _____

Please select your race

☐ Black

☐ White

☐ Indian

☐ Coloured

☐ Other: _____

What is your professional training (i.e. what qualification (s) have you obtained?)? *

Your answer _____

Which public sector institution (department/entity) do you work for? *

Your answer _____

Please briefly describe your main roles and responsibilities in your institution. *

Your answer _____

How long have you worked in monitoring and evaluation (i.e. 3 years, 2 months)? *

APPENDIX B: ETHICS DOCUMENTS



SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE WSG-2022-53

PROJECT TITLE: Knowledge Management Practices of Monitoring and Evaluation Professionals in the Public Sector

<u>INVESTIGATOR</u>	Limpho Moleleki
<u>SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR</u>	School of Governance
<u>DATE CONSIDERED</u>	24 September 2022
<u>DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE</u>	Approved unconditionally
<u>RISK LEVEL</u>	Low Risk

EXPIRY DATE Date of submission of the project Research Report

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 24 September 2022

CHAIRPERSON Rekgotsotse Chikane
Rekgotsotse Chikane

cc: Supervisor:

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

L. Moleleki
Signature

Date 28.09.2022

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE IN RESEARCH ETHICS

Name: Limpho C Moleleki

Student/Staff No: 886977

Date of Certification: 23 February 2022 - 22 February 2025 (This certificate is valid for a period of three years)

TRAINED BY:

PROFESSOR JASPER KNIGHT
(RESEARCH ETHICS)

SIGNATURE



ISSUED BY:

DR ROBIN DRENNAN
(DIRECTOR: RESEARCH
OFFICE)

SIGNATURE



This certificate is confirmation of successful completion of a training course in Research Ethics for Non-Medical human research, based upon achieving a minimum level of competence in different assessment tasks.

APPENDIX C: LETTERS OF PERMISSION FROM SITE OF RESEARCH



planning, monitoring & evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Head Office: Private Bag X944, Pretoria, 0001, Union Buildings East Wing, Government Avenue, Pretoria
Hatfield Office: 330 Grosvenor Street, Hatfield, Pretoria. Tel: 012 312 0000. www.dpme.gov.za

Ms. LC Moleleki



0001

Dear Ms LC Moleleki

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN DPME

1. It is our pleasure to inform you that your application to conduct academic research in the department is successful. However, you must comply with the following terms and conditions:
 - Submit proof of registration and a letter signed by the academic supervisor to the department annually;
 - Submit the final copy of your research report to DPME before it is submitted to the Higher Education and Training Institution (HETI);
 - Do not remove files and records from the archives of DPME;
 - Do not publish the records and the names of employees which appear in the official records;
 - Obtain permission of Chief Directorate: HR and Corporate Services or the host manager to conduct research (conduct interviews, administer the questionnaire, etc.);
 - The Department reserves the right to restrict access to the files which have sensitive information; and
 - Access to classified information will not be granted if you are not in possession of an appropriate security clearance certificate.
2. During this period, the Department will not be responsible for your travelling and accommodation expenses. Your co-operation to meticulously adhere to the aforementioned will be highly appreciated.

Kind regards

Dr NV Tshayingca-Mashiya
DDG: Corporate Services
Date: 15/08/2022

Enquiries: Mr Motseki Nthos, (012) 312 0962, Motseki@dpme.gov.za



national treasury

Department
National Treasury
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Plotter Bay 111, Pretoria, 001 - 40 Church Square, Pretoria, 001 - 54 - 42 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

Enquiries
Telephone
Email

Alfred Tau
(012) 315-5450
Alfred.Tau@treasury.gov.za

Ms Limpho Moleleki
WITS School of Governance
Johannesburg

Dear Ms Moleleki

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN NATIONAL TREASURY

The National Treasury acknowledges your letter requesting permission to conduct research within National Treasury and are pleased to confirm that your request has been granted. Mr David Shabangu within the Strategic Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Chief Directorate will assist you with collating the information required for your research.

While undertaking research at the National Treasury, the following terms and conditions apply:

- You are expected to follow reasonable instructions in relation to the terms of the right of access;
- You are required to co-operate with the National Treasury in discharging its duties under the Health and Safety Act and other health and safety legislation and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and others while in the National Treasury premises;
- You must observe the same standards of care and propriety in dealing with staff, visitors, equipment and you must act appropriately, responsibly and professionally at all times;
- All information you have gathered remains secure and strictly confidential at all times; and
- Furthermore, you should be aware that disclosure of unauthorized information is an offence, and such disclosure may lead to prosecution.

The department may terminate your right to conduct a research at any time either by giving a written notice to you or immediately without any notice if you are in breach of any of the terms and conditions described in this letter, or if you commit any act that NT reasonably consider to amount to serious misconduct, or to be disruptive and / or prejudicial to the interests and / or business of the National Treasury.

You are also requested to note that upon completion of your research, you are expected to share your findings and recommendations with the department for lessons learned.

Minister of Finance - General Mkhomo - National Treasury - Information Services Unit - 40 Church Square - Pretoria - 001 - 54 - 42 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

| @natsatv



national treasury

Department
National Treasury
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Please contact Mr David Shabangu, Deputy Director: Strategy and Planning, Strategic Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Chief Directorate via e-mail at David.Shabangu@treasury.gov.za to assist you with further arrangements, and coordination of information required.

Yours sincerely

LAURA MHERE
ACTING CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
DATE: 01-11-2022

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM



PARTICIPANT CONSENT SHEET

Knowledge Management Practices of Monitoring and Evaluation Professionals in the Public Sector

Limpho Moleleki – 896977

I agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio & video recorded	YES	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report)	YES	NO

..... (signature)
..... (name of participant)
..... (date)

..... (signature)
..... (Limpho Moleleki)
..... (date)

Appendix E: Letter of introduction



Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Limpho Moleleki. I am a Masters of Management (Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation) student at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Dr Nedson Pophiwa. I am conducting a research study that explores the extent to which public sector monitoring and evaluation professionals employ knowledge management practices in acquiring, producing, storing, disseminating and using M&E knowledge products. The study title is "Knowledge Management Practices of Monitoring and Evaluation Professionals in the Public Sector".

I am inviting you to take part in an interview, will take place virtually on Microsoft Teams or on Zoom at your most convenient time. If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last about 45 minutes.

With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview on the virtual platform. This data will be stored in my password protected laptop with a backup of the Wits Google Drive and the recordings will be erased within two (2) years of the publication of the research findings. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

During the research activity, I will need to ask for some general information about your position and the years of experience in the M&E field.

The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decide not to join. Taking part in the research study will cost you some data since it will be virtual. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday work life activities or your opinions as an M&E Professional. The only foreseeable risks, however, is that of discomfort on the questions asked. As stated above you do not have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher:

Limpho Moleleki, 886977@students.wits.ac.za, 076 0101 685

Supervisor:

Dr Nedson Pophiwa, nedson.pophiwa1@wits.ac.za, 0117174034

