



**CONTRIBUTION OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION TO PERFORMANCE AND
GOVERNANCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL SPACE AGENCY**

By

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ABSTRACT

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a critical function for ensuring efficiency, accountability, and evidence-based practices in the delivery of services by government departments and entities. South Africa thus introduced a Government–Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (GWMES) in 2007 to promote evidence-based decision making, enhance accountability and establish a more effective government. M&E is considered a key force for improving public sector performance, yet decades later government institutions face challenges relating to establishing effective M&E systems. This qualitative case study therefore examines M&E within the South African National Space Agency (SANSA) context to assess its contribution to performance and governance within this public entity. Findings of the study established the existence of an M&E system within SANSA, albeit with inadequate efforts towards its institutionalisation to promote evidence-based decision-making, improve performance and governance within the public entity. Key recommendations from the study are thus for SANSA to establish an M&E culture, build organisational evaluation capacity, strengthen advocacy for M&E and ensure effective dissemination and utilisation of M&E information. This can be achieved through the holistic institutionalisation of this entity’s M&E system. A need for capacity building interventions to strengthen internal M&E knowledge, create a conducive environment for employee engagement and promote accountability for performance outcomes was also established by this study. It is further recommended that such measures be augmented by routine communication to raise awareness of M&E practices, enhance transparency, and promote utilisation of M&E information for evidence-based planning and decision-making. The institutionalisation of M&E within the public sector was accordingly identified through this study as an area likely to impact government performance and thus requiring further research.

KEYWORDS

- Monitoring and evaluation
- Institutionalisation
- Performance
- Governance

DECLARATION

I, Vuyokazi Babalwa Ntshoko, (Student Number: 1734151), hereby declare that this research report is my own work submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of requirements for the Master of Management degree in Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation.

Vuyokazi Babalwa Ntshoko

DEDICATION

To all the Sansanites who willingly gave their time and encouragement in support of this study. May yours truly be a legacy of impact as you journey forward in pursuit of your mandate!!!

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AOPs	Annual Operational Plans
APPs	Annual Performance Plans
DPME	Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
FMPPI	Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information
GWMES	Government–Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NEPF	National Evaluation Policy Framework
NPM	New Public Management
SALS	South African Legislative Sector
SANSA	South African National Space Agency
SASSETA	Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) as a field has gradually gained professional dominance in the last two decades partly due to an increased awareness of the value of *“governance in society, and more specifically a focus on the conduct and operations of government”*, (Naidoo, 2011, p.1). Accordingly, South Africa has seen remarkable growth in public sector M&E since identifying a need to strengthen governance as a priority for government according to Masilo et al., (2021). Various legislative and policy mandates have since been defined to set parameters for the implementation of M&E throughout the country’s government institutions. Key M&E principles of the Policy Framework for Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation include a need for it to contribute towards promoting governance pillars of transparency, accountability, participation, and inclusion, (The Presidency, 2007). Monitoring and evaluation are thus critical cornerstones for the successful implementation of programmes and assessing progress toward expected results in the public sector.

Since the introduction of the 2007 Policy Framework for Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation the public sector has primarily focused on the establishment of M&E systems and structures. The framework, however, was not supported by similar efforts towards ensuring M&E institutionalisation across government departments and entities. This being in contradiction with the argument advanced by Kimaro, Fourie & Tshiyoyo (2018) of government managers needing evidence-based information to address growing demands for achieving results. This has likely served as an impediment to the effectiveness of M&E as a tool for enhancing public sector performance and accountability. On the other hand, it may have further contributed to the existence of somewhat disintegrated attempts to institutionalise M&E within public sector institutions.

Given the growing global prominence of M&E over the recent decades public institutions must continuously pay attention to the management of performance to ensure government delivers timely and quality services to citizens. The demand for

evidence has increased in African countries leading to the development of M&E systems dominated by monitoring, (Porter & Goldman, 2013). M&E aims to enhance management of the public sector environment with its vast complexities according to Kimaro, et al., (2018). Porter & Goldman, (2013, p.1) however, view its results-based inclination, as encouraging “*upward compliance*” at the expense of the institutionalisation and utilisation of M&E evidence for decision-making and developmental purposes. In keeping with government’s focus on public sector M&E, this study aimed to assess institutionalisation of the South African National Space Agency (SANSA) M&E system and its contribution towards enhancing organisational performance and promoting governance.

1.2 Role of Monitoring and Evaluation

The understanding of the role and importance of M&E within the public sector is critical in setting a context for this research study. Braid (2016) defines monitoring as the systematic and regular collection of data relating to specific indicators to establish the extent of progress made towards achieving identified performance objectives. According to The Presidency (2007) monitoring involves the collection, analysis, and reporting of data relating to inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts and related external factors supporting effective public sector management. The purpose of monitoring is therefore to inform decision-making by providing regular progress updates on performance results and early warning signals of challenges to be addressed (Porter & Goldman, 2013; Malatjie, 2017; Makadzange, 2020).

According to Scriven, (1991) an evaluation is a specific investigation (different to the empirical research used in social sciences) concerned about costs, ethics, and related political dimensions to make solid value judgments. Monitoring and evaluation serve as a critical bedrock for ensuring the successful rollout of key public sector programmes. This is important in the South African context and more so to public entities such as SANSA given the existence of government guidelines and frameworks aimed at establishing M&E systems for improving public sector service delivery, transparency, and accountability. According to Motaung (2018) M&E is a crucial public management tool for providing a continuous flow of information to improve

performance and guide decision-making relating to the achievement of organisational goals.

The understanding of governance as a concept is key to this study given its interest in assessing the contribution of M&E towards promoting governance within SANSA. Governance can be defined as *“the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs”*, (De La Harpe, et al., 2008, p.6). It encompasses mechanisms through which institutions enforce compliance and is considered as a continuous process for accommodating multiple conflicting interests and ensuring co-operative action. In keeping with government’s focus on public sector performance and governance, Naidoo, (2011) views M&E as having a critical role to play in supporting the performance and transformation of the South African public sector, thereby advancing governance. Value within public administration can thus be derived through organisation - wide acceptance of M&E as a critical role-player in systematically building a culture of high performance founded on efficiency and accountability.

An effective M&E system shifts an organisation from simple performance management towards what Kimaro, et al., (2018) refer to as performance governance aiming to address institutional M&E needs. A report by The Presidency, (2007) highlights the need for greater effectiveness in the public sector as a major challenge facing both South African government departments and public entities alike. M&E must therefore contribute towards amplifying transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement within an institution, effectively resonating with key principles of governance. In line with the increasing demand for governance, the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa requires government to deliver services that uphold rights of citizens and improve their quality of living. To this end, M&E is critical tool for enhancing public sector performance while promoting transparency and accountability by departments and public entities charged with the responsibility of delivering public goods and services.

1.3 Institutionalisation of Monitoring and Evaluation

Institutionalisation of M&E for purposes of this study, is considered within the context of the following definition as provided by Mtshali, (2015, p.25): *“the process in which M&E systems will gain an institutional (structural) role within an organisation and consequently contribute to effectiveness”*. Institutional strengthening is therefore a key element of an effective and sustainable M&E system according to Mtshali (2015). According to Mackay (2007), the sustainability of any M&E system requires the system to be entrenched and institutionalised within an organisation’s culture, policies, strategy, human resources, as well as its planning and budgeting processes.

Kimaro, et al., (2018) view M&E institutionalisation as relating to targeted mainstreaming within an organisation to monitor and report progress on pre-determined performance levels and track effective utilisation of M&E information to improve performance and governance. In this regard the importance of M&E extends beyond the prevalent public sector trend of merely utilising M&E as a compliance tool to track organisational performance.

1.4 Rationale and Significance of the Study

SANSA is a public entity established in 2010 through the SANSA Act (2008) under the auspices of the then National Department of Science and Technology, now known as the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI). This entity was through the SANSA Act (2008) tasked with a mandate of promoting proper use of space by coordinating space-related activities using research, technology, and space industrial development support. In the SANSA context, multiple public and private sector stakeholders have an interest in effective and efficient resource allocation and utilisation towards ensuring public good and the promoting governance within this entity. According to the documented 2011/12 to 2022/23 SANSA Annual Reports, this entity, however, is yet to fully deliver on its legislated organisational mandate as provided by the SANSA Act of 2008. The researcher therefore identified an opportunity to assess the M&E system of SANSA from the perspective of employees and management to determine its effectiveness in relation to organisational performance and governance.

Despite the 2004 Kusek and Rist model serving as a good practice guide for the establishment of effective M&E systems, relatively few studies have been conducted on M&E institutionalisation within the South African public sector. This has resulted in limited information on the effects of such institutionalisation on public sector performance and governance. Mackay (2007) and De Coning & Rabie (2014) are among the authors who have identified M&E institutionalisation as being crucial to the establishment and implementation of effective public sector M&E systems to drive service delivery. The poor institutionalisation of M&E within the South African context, however, remains a challenge as reflected in the DPME review of State performance over the period 1994 to 2019 which established difficulties relating to quantifying the impact of government interventions due to a general lack of M&E. This is re-emphasised in the Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans which cites the need for ensuring a coherent planning approach and the standardisation of M&E processes to increase utilisation of M&E findings and evidence (DPME, 2020).

The extent to which public sector M&E practitioners are capacitated to address complexities relating to institutionalising M&E systems (effectively translating government's M&E principles into practice) is also unclear. This status is despite authors such as Görgens & Kusek (2010) and Kimaro, et al., (2018) flagging the importance of adequate capacity for M&E institutionalisation in the public sector. Such a gap thus triggered the need to conduct this study aiming to explore the contribution of M&E towards improved organisational performance and the promotion of governance within SANSA.

Given the growing global, regional, and national interest in M&E the researcher believes more focus should be given to M&E institutionalisation across all spheres of government to improve service delivery, transparency, and accountability. This would strengthen the M&E contribution to the effective delivery of public goods and services and enhance public sector transparency and accountability in accordance with DPME (2011, 2020) requirements. The findings and recommendations of this study will aid the identification of gaps relating to institutionalisation of the entity's M&E system and contribute towards its transformation in support of improved organisational performance and governance.

1.5 Problem Statement

The South African public sector faces multiple governance challenges including ethical challenges as well as oversight, expenditure management, risk management and decision-making shortcomings (Siswana, 2007; Jacobs, 2019). Such challenges may in part be attributed to ineffective or absent M&E systems in public sector institutions, (Kimaro, et al., 2018; Jacobs, 2019). There are several challenges cited in literature relating to the institutionalisation and utilisation of M&E information to enhance performance, decision-making and governance within the public sector. Magagula (2019) cites examples of budgetary constraints; inadequate M&E capacity; a poor accountability culture and perceptions of M&E being an administrative rather than strategic function. Furthermore, Magagula (2019) cites a common trend in the public sector of focusing on monitoring rather than evaluation due to a lack of adequate evaluation specialisation within M&E units. Within the SANSA context, the situation at a glance, appears to be somewhat similar to the challenges uncovered in the review of other South African public entities.

Extensive research has been conducted on public sector governance challenges in relation to M&E to ensure it effectively contributes towards improved organisational performance and the promotion of governance in public entities such as SANSA. Studies by Patton, (1994,1997); Kusek & Rist, (2004); Siswana, (2007); Porter & Goldman, (2013); Twantwa, (2016); Mthethwa & Jili, (2016); Kimaro, et al., (2018); Jacobs, (2019); and Nyamambi, (2021) inter alia demonstrate concurrence in relation to M&E systems being critical for providing relevant data to guide decision-making. Porter & Goldman, (2013) highlight the importance of the design of public sector M&E systems in ensuring effective M&E institutionalisation including proper systems to capture, process, store and communicate M&E information. M&E is thus considered to be contributing towards improving performance and governance albeit with the existence of gaps relating to the design and implementation of standardised and practical management approaches to M&E institutionalisation in the public sector.

Reflections on evaluation as provided by Malatjie (2017) are aligned to accountability being a primary premise for governance. Evaluations are therefore deemed to be associated with five key principles of (i) conducting systemic inquiries;

(ii) demonstrating competence; (iii) respecting all people involved; (iv) upholding high levels of integrity and honesty and (v) being responsible for the welfare of the public, (Malatjie, 2017). Another key evaluation principle identified by Patton (1994), is that of participant involvement, which requires respondents to play a critical role in the determination of the evaluation goals in accordance with the element of participatory governance. Such participation may be seen at different stages of the programme lifespan or processes relating to strategy and policy implementation. It has also been central to conducting this qualitative case study of SANSA given the need to consider feedback provided by research participants as informed by their knowledge and experiences of the entity's M&E system. This is crucial for repositioning institutionalisation of M&E systems beyond structures, policies, frameworks, financial and human resources to strengthen effective use of M&E information in the public sector. M&E institutionalisation is a key to more effective utilisation of M&E information for planning, decision-making, organisational learning and ultimately improving performance and governance. This study therefore seeks to broaden the existing body of knowledge and enrich public sector M&E practice.

1.6 Research Objectives

The main objective of conducting this research was to explore the contribution of monitoring and evaluation towards improved organisational performance and the promotion of governance within the South African National Space Agency. The sub-objectives of this study were therefore:

- To examine the status of the institutionalisation of M&E within the Agency;
- To examine the contribution of M&E to organisational performance and enhanced governance within the Agency; and
- To identify existing gaps and necessary reforms for a more effective organisational monitoring and evaluation system that will enable the entity to better deliver on its mandate.

1.7 Research Questions

The key research question for this study was identified as follows:

To what extent does monitoring and evaluation contribute towards improved organisational performance and enhanced governance within the South African National Space Agency?

This research question was supported by the following sub-questions which seek to provide more insight into the research problem:

- How institutionalised is M&E within the South African National Space Agency?
- What are the existing gaps within the M&E system of the Agency?
- What are the necessary reforms for an effective organisational M&E system that will enable the Agency to effectively deliver on its mandate?

1.8 Overview of the Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative study adopted an explorative orientation to facilitate a descriptive presentation of findings based on the experiences and perceptions of the SANSA M&E system users in accordance with guidance provided by Creswell (2014); Bryman (2016) and Rashid et al., (2019). As informed by Bryman (2016) and Babbie & Mouton (2001), the study and its related data analysis places emphasis on the use of descriptive words rather than the quantification of data. A basic case study involves carrying out an intensive process of analysing the single selected case and the context-driven complexity and nature of such a case, (Bryman 2016). Given the context-specific nature of this study, seeking to conduct an in-depth exploration of the contribution of M&E towards improved organisational performance and the promotion of governance within SANSA the case study design was considered most appropriate.

Vasileiou et al., (2018) view the adequacy of sampling in a qualitative study as relating to ensuring that a sample size and composition are appropriate for the selected study. These authors argue that the sample size for a qualitative inquiry is mostly smaller than other approaches to ensure greater depth for case-oriented research such as this context-specific case study of SANSA. The non-probability sampling technique was utilised for this qualitative study particularly purposive sampling as guided by Creswell (2014) and Leavy (2014).

The required data for conducting this study was drawn from primary as well as secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected through a semi-structured interview guide to aid engagements with employees involved in the M&E system and seek their views on the SANSA M&E system. Institutional documents such as policies, frameworks, performance reports and plans served as secondary sources of data as guided by Bryman et al., (2016). According to Bryman et al., (2016) qualitative data analysis should begin with the identification of key indicators or themes for the review process to guide the determination of effectiveness, relevance, and efficiency. In conducting this study data analysis was accordingly informed by themes based on the study's research objectives and questions as supported by document analysis. In this regard participant feedback relating to this study was organised and analysed in accordance with identified key themes, emerging concerns and recommendations as flagged by the research participants for ease of analysis.

1.9 Organisation of the Chapters

The chapters of this research report have been structured as follows.

Chapter One: Provides an introduction and background to the study and outlines a brief history of M&E in both the South African and global contexts as well as an overview of SANSA. The chapter further outlines the problem statement, purpose of research and the research questions that have served as motivation for the study.

Chapter Two: The literature review chapter presents an overview of key academic arguments related to this research project and its subject matter. It was developed through the unpacking of key concepts linked to the research question and has incorporated literature from various sources including peer – reviewed publications, books, and research dissertations. The chapter outlines a discussion of general literature on M&E and its relationship with performance and governance in the South African public sector.

Chapter Three: Provides a detailed discussion of the methodology applied in this research, the research design, data collection tools, population and sampling strategies employed by the researcher in carrying out the necessary fieldwork. It

further unpacks the data analysis approach, limitations of the study, reflects on the positionality of the researcher, key ethical considerations as well as the trustworthiness and credibility considerations.

Chapter Four: This chapter provides an overview of the research findings which have been accordingly structured to align with the identified key thematic focus areas as aligned to the conceptual framing of this study.

Chapter Five: This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research findings and data analysis as informed by the problem statement and research questions.

Chapter Six: This chapter details a summary of the key research findings, conclusion, and recommendations of the study. It further reflects areas that were not explored through this study and are therefore proposed for future research.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises the research study within the existing body of literature relating to M&E, public sector performance and governance globally, in the African continent and within the South African public sector. In accordance with the problem statement, research objectives and research questions outlined in Chapter 1, focus is on M&E institutionalisation within the public sector, related governance challenges and the utilisation of M&E to address such challenges. The literature review chapter outlines a discussion of M&E within the SANSA context. The literature review thus engages on M&E, its importance and institutionalisation in relation to public sector performance and governance. To address the objectives of this study, however, it is important to define a few key concepts as outlined in the section below.

2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Concepts

Monitoring and evaluation are different yet interconnected concepts according to the DPME (2007); Naidoo (2011); South African Legislative Sector (SALS) (2014) and Stofile (2017). The is view is premised on evaluations being conducted based on monitoring data collected throughout the implementation of interventions. Arguing for M&E legitimisation by governments, Jacobs (2019) differentiates these two concepts by highlighting that monitoring provides progress measures while evaluation provides information on past performance. There is concurrence that monitoring and evaluation are complementary concepts as continuous monitoring feedback drives performance improvements while periodic evaluation feedback assesses past performance, (DPME, 2011; National Treasury; 2007; Jacobs, 2019).

In this regard, the definition of monitoring as provided by Görgens & Kusek (2010, p.2) is that of a *“a continuous function that uses the systemic collection of data on specific indicators, provides 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”*. Monitoring is also defined

as an “*on-going process that supplies information on where a project is at any given time, relative to respective targets and outcomes*” (SALS, 2014, p.12).

The 2023 Twende Mbele guideline that was developed to assist planners, monitoring practitioners and evaluators across government with the integration of M&E data into strategic planning and budgeting processes outlines the following categories of monitoring data required for planning: (i) Quarterly Performance Reporting System data – which is data collected on performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to short-term institutional plans. This data is mostly premised on programme - level activities and outputs; (ii) Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) progress - this is monitoring data generated on departmental performance against MTSF KPIs. Progress monitoring is focused on tracking sectoral performance in relation to the MTSF results which drive progress towards achievement of the long-term National Development Plan targets; (iii) Programme performance information - over and above the performance indicators reported in annual reports, departments establish M&E systems to collect programme performance data and information. The DPME (2020) advocates for several approaches or tools to aid planning and the generation of performance information and these include logical frameworks, results-based management and balanced scorecard approaches.

According to Görgens & Kusek (2010), monitoring is centred on continuously tracking the performance of policies, programmes, and projects. The quality of data collected for purposes of analysis therefore impacts project implementation, policymaking, and programme decision-making by oversight structures of public entities, management, and other key stakeholders. Kariuki & Reddy (2017) concur, and view monitoring as being aimed at continuously assessing progress made towards the achievement of pre-defined goals.

Scriven (1991) defines evaluation as the product of a systematic process aimed at determining the merit or value of something. According to (SALS, 2014, p.12) evaluations provide periodic evidence of “*why intended results (targets/milestones) have or have not been achieved*”. The Presidency (2011) and Görgens & Kusek (2010) on the other hand define an evaluation as a process of collecting evidence on projects, programmes, policies, and organisational functions in a systematic manner. This

includes objectively assessing issues relating to performance effectiveness and efficiency, the impact of programmes and the value-for-money principle to inform recommendations for improvements and future planning. Evaluations thus aid public institutions to improve learning; performance; accountability as they assess what is working and what is not working to generate knowledge and enhance institutional decision-making (The Presidency, 2011; Görgens & Kusek, 2010).

The key different types of evaluations are as follows according to Patton (1994), (i) formative evaluations undertaken during the policy or programme planning phases; (ii) process evaluations conducted in the programme implementation phase; (iii) summative evaluations conducted on completion of the implementation phase, as well as, (iv) impact evaluations which are useful in assessing the extent to which the desired impact of a developmental intervention has been achieved.

The types of evaluations listed above are not exhaustive and seek to provide an idea of evaluations that can be conducted in alignment with the M&E purpose relevant for answering research questions, (The Presidency, 2011; Stofile, 2017). An understanding of these various types of evaluations was important to the SANSA case study given its focus on ensuring the research questions are addressed through an assessment of this public entity's M&E system and its institutionalisation. Braid (2016) and Cloete (2009) recommend that South African public sector evaluations extend beyond individual employee performance to include organisational performance and other critical aspects including evaluations of policies and programmes which were historically not well-coordinated.

Ackoff (1981), defines a system as being predominantly characterised by multiple elements, the existence of interdependency which results from behaviour of individual elements, as well as interdependent sub-groups of elements that affect the whole. The relationships between the various elements making up a system may, according to this definition, thus be distinguished by their interconnectedness and interdependence. According to Görgens & Kusek, (2009) management toolkits of both public sector and private organisations are comprised of a variety of tracking systems which may include human resource management systems; financial management

systems; reporting and feedback systems; and governance systems to enhance transparency and accountability.

Cloete, et al., (2018, p.365) define an M&E system as *“a specialised unit or network of units dealing with the main questions and objectives that are to be addressed or attained through M&E efforts, as well as with the key aspects to be monitored and evaluated, including the measurement indicators, processes for data collection and verification, delegation of responsibilities, and prescriptions and deadlines for reporting of the results”*. In alignment with Cloete, et al., (2018), The Presidency (2007, p.4) defines an M&E system as the *“strategies, plans, indicators, information systems, reporting lines and accountability relationships, which enables national and provincial departments, municipalities and other institutions to discharge their M&E functions effectively”*.

A functional and effective M&E system must therefore provide a steady stream of information that is useful both internally and externally. Internally information from an M&E system is a critical management tool supporting management in ensuring performance targets are achieved through the provision of updates on progress relating to performance and identified challenges to aid the achievement of results. For external stakeholders outside of the organisation or public sector, the information generated by an M&E system is provides performance results and demonstrates the impact of service delivery interventions, thus building public trust in government, (Görgens & Kusek, 2009).

Accordingly, a results-based M&E system is essentially viewed by Görgens & Kusek, (2009) as a feedback system and management tool for measuring and evaluating outcomes, providing valuable information for governance and decision-making. In this regard, M&E institutionalisation is according to Mackay (2007) a key characteristic of a successful M&E system. This can be interpreted as implying that an M&E system can only be regarded as being successful once it is institutionalised to inform the generation and utilisation of credible M&E information.

2.3 Purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation

Different authors list various uses for M&E, however, the key purposes of M&E in the public sector can be summarised and differentiated as follows: (i) to bring about improvements in the policy environment by supporting evidence-based policymaking, (ii) to contribute towards the generation of knowledge to support improvements in relation to the government performance by encouraging the utilisation of M&E feedback to identify and address performance gaps; (iii) to improve levels of public sector accountability through promoting transparency relating to the achievement of results; (iv) to support institutional learning through the provision of credible M&E feedback based on past organisational performance and (v) to support evidence-based decision-making (Rossi, et al., 2004; Lawal, 2012; Stofile, 2017; Goldman et al., 2019). M&E systems must therefore aid timely identification of organisational challenges and bottlenecks with a potential to impede performance, (Kusek & Rist, 2004). A more detailed discussion of the purposes of M&E is outlined in the section below.

2.3.1 Monitoring and Evaluation as a Tool for Policymaking

South Africa's GWMES Policy Framework (2007) requires government to establish M&E systems with structures, processes, strategies, standards, plans, reporting and accountability systems that enable public sector institutions to perform effectively. In this regard, M&E must be positioned at the core of institutional governance arrangements to strengthen evidence-based policymaking. Mackay (2007) and Makadzange (2020) argue for M&E to be located at the centre of governance arrangements. This is due to its necessity for ensuring government institutions achieve evidence-based policymaking informing sound programme planning and resourcing and effective management. Furthermore, Porter & Goldman, (2013) assert that monitoring assists policymakers and public sector managers to understand the output produced from investments in government programmes and interventions. Evaluation determines value derived through such programmes, the difference made, why performance achievements were realised, lessons learned from government activities and how policy or programme implementation can be strengthened, (Porter &

Goldman, (2013). These elements are aligned with M&E principles and approaches as provided by National Treasury (2007) and DPME (2011, 2019).

Ojok (2016) noted the responses of governments, and their public entities aimed at addressing as having been focused on the institutionalisation of M&E systems to enhance their effectiveness. M&E as a function, however, must be institutionalised, adequately funded, and strategically located to inform policymaking processes, planning processes and service delivery improvements. In this regard, further efforts by governments included measures for improving transparency and building a high-performance culture that strengthens policymaking, Ojok (2016). Wongtschowski, et al., (2016) assessed the significance of M&E by considering the globalisation context and its related policy shifts that have introduced more complexities as M&E must play a traditional information generation role and additionally assess the impact of government policies. To this end governance systems require public sector policy-formulation processes to promote transparency and enhance service delivery.

According to Wongtschowski, et al., (2016) government's focus must extend beyond public sector capacity building towards policymaking that creates legitimate and efficient government performance frameworks to ensure the achievement of results. This implies managing public affairs in a transparent, participatory, and equitable manner. It entails effective participation in public policymaking, prevalence of the rule of law, an independent judiciary, institutional checks, and balances through horizontal and vertical separation of power, and effective oversight agencies (Ojok, 2016). M&E therefore has a critical role to play in terms of informing evidence-based policymaking processes of governments with a view to improve the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of policy reforms (Makadzange, 2020). It should further seek to promote the participation principle of governance by enabling citizens to play a role in the affairs of government, including policymaking.

2.3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation as a Tool for Managing Performance

There have been increasing demands from citizens across countries for governments to deliver and maintain quality services that improve the quality of life for people, whilst promoting transparency in relation to the public sector performance (Kusek & Rist,

2001; Mthethwa & Jili, 2016; Nyamambi, 2021). This requires greater effectiveness from governments in demonstrating responsiveness to stakeholders by delivering tangible results, hence the performance of government has become “*a global phenomenon*”, (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p.1). Despite this growth in demand for improved organisational performance outcomes Karanja & Yusuf (2018) noted that M&E uptake remains somewhat limited although it aims to support governments in improving performance and service delivery outcomes. These two authors flag the importance of M&E inclusivity in enhancing effectiveness citing that programme plans must be communicated throughout an institution to ensure common understanding and guide successful implementation of interventions. Morra-Imas and Rist (2009); Stofile (2017) and Jacobs (2019) further indicate that effective M&E provides reliable information relating to government performance towards delivering key programmes and projects. This can be best achieved through periodically comparing performance indicators to results to identify good performance and bad practices and exploring reasons for good or poor performance.

In keeping with the global shifts, the South African government developed a Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information (FMPPI) with a view to: “*Clarify definitions and standards for performance information in support of regular audits of such information where appropriate; Improve integrated structures, systems and processes required to manage performance information; Define roles and responsibilities for managing performance information; Promote accountability and transparency by providing Parliament, provincial legislatures, municipal councils and the public with timely, accessible and accurate performance information*”, (National Treasury, 2007, p.1). The provision of credible M&E information should therefore contribute towards improving the efficiency, relevance and effectiveness and organisational performance of public entities whilst positively influencing governance reforms, (DPME, 2011; National Treasury, 2007).

South African government institutions, however, are confronting perpetual challenges in relation to effective performance management. Mvuyana (2023) highlights one major challenge faced by the South African government as the effective implementation of M&E processes to support public sector performance and identify factors contributing towards the achievement of service delivery results. In this regard,

Jili and Enaifoghe (2023), are calling for performance management in the public sector to be positioned as a top government priority aimed at bringing about continuous improvement. This call was informed by a study conducted by these authors to investigate linkages between M&E and public sector performance as well as the challenges experienced in this regard. The study by Jili and Enaifoghe (2023), found among other challenges, a common lack of political will for instilling a performance culture within the public sector. It concluded that the achievement of a responsive, effective, and efficient M&E system requires government to establish a performance management culture supported by necessary technical and policy support.

Kusek & Rist (2004) identified further key challenges related to M&E effectiveness in improving public sector performance, given that the function has not yet reached the stage of fully playing its intended role. Firstly, developing countries are confronted by a lack of adequate M&E capacity to establish and maintain M&E systems as few public sector officials are trained in data collection, monitoring, reporting and evaluation methods, Kusek & Rist (2004). This constraint is also acknowledged by Kimaro et al., (2018) and Masilo et al., (2021) who point out a need for institutions to build adequate internal capacity for the production, interpretation, and translation of M&E information into tangible performance results.

Secondly, governments in developing countries are usually not well-coordinated as they focus on building strong administrative practices and cultures to develop and implement transparent financial and performance management systems. This impacts a government's ability to properly allocate resources to areas where they are needed to achieve desired performance outcomes and promote governance, (Kusek & Rist, 2004). Morra-Imas & Rist, (2009) and Jacobs, (2019) argue that this is critical given the contribution of accurate and credible M&E information towards improving organisational performance, transparency and ensuring evidence-based public sector resource allocation.

Thirdly, the development of a results-based M&E system requires the linking of organisational performance results to strategies that ensure effective management of public funds. Kusek & Rist, (2004) are thus calling for past performance results of public entities and performance information generated by M&E systems to be an

integral part of budgeting and resource allocation processes. Without the performance and budgeting linkages, the role of M&E in promoting evidence-based planning and resourcing of public sector programmes and projects is compromised (DPME, 2007; Kusek & Rist, 2004). This has created a situation where the effectiveness of public sector M&E systems in enhancing performance remains a global area of debate, (Ojok, 2016). Within the South African context, Mpande, (2016) and Masilo et al., (2021) among other authors put forward a positive argument for the utilisation of M&E information to improve public sector performance.

2.3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation as a Tool for Public Sector Accountability

Braid, (2016) describes public sector accountability as relating to government's responsibility towards being answerable for the decisions it takes on behalf of citizens and the related consequences of such decisions through reporting. Govender (2015) affirms the critical purpose of monitoring as contributing towards improved public sector effectiveness and the promotion of public sector accountability. Accordingly, Kusek & Rist (2004) point out that demands for enhanced accountability have been on the rise creating a need for results-based monitoring and evaluation in relation to public sector policies and programmes. In this regard, these two authors recognise M&E as a strategic public management tool which is useful in promoting accountability by government departments and entities.

According to Wongtschowski, et al., (2016) accountability is enhanced through M&E systems that allow successes and failures to be discussed openly. It must therefore be supported by an openness from donors, implementers and other stakeholders acknowledging failures as being part of the process. Parties must be willing to engage openly about what needs to change and how the identified failures will be addressed. In other words, there must be mechanisms in place to share, discuss and learn from failures within a context of a developmental State. It must be acknowledged that M&E within the public sector operates differently from other accountability-related contexts due to questions being centred around specific policies and public interest (Naidoo, 2011). Accordingly, citizens must be seen as critical users of M&E information and treated in a different manner to decision-makers within a bureaucracy for purposes of

ensuring the relevance of M&E information. This will enhance transparency and accountability to ensure effective governance (Naidoo, 2011). This is supported by Stofile (2017) who calls for enhanced accountability to encourage the correct organisational culture and behaviours.

Stofile (2017) recognises the importance of governance and accountability being anchored on written, spoken and behaviourally – demonstrated values. Such can be drawn from the following set of values provided by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996) to serve as a guide for the public administration: (i) the promotion of a high standard of professional ethics which must be maintained; (ii) promoting the efficient, effective and economic use of limited State resources; (iii) establishing a development – oriented public service; (iv) ensuring the impartial, fair, equitable and unbiased provision of public services; (v) responding to the needs of the people and encouraging public participation in policymaking; (vi) building an accountable public administration; (vii) fostering transparency through the provision of accurate and timely information; (viii) cultivating professional human resources demonstrated by career development practices to optimise human potential; and (ix) the public administration should be a broad representation of South Africans, with government practices premised on accountability, transparency, and fairness.

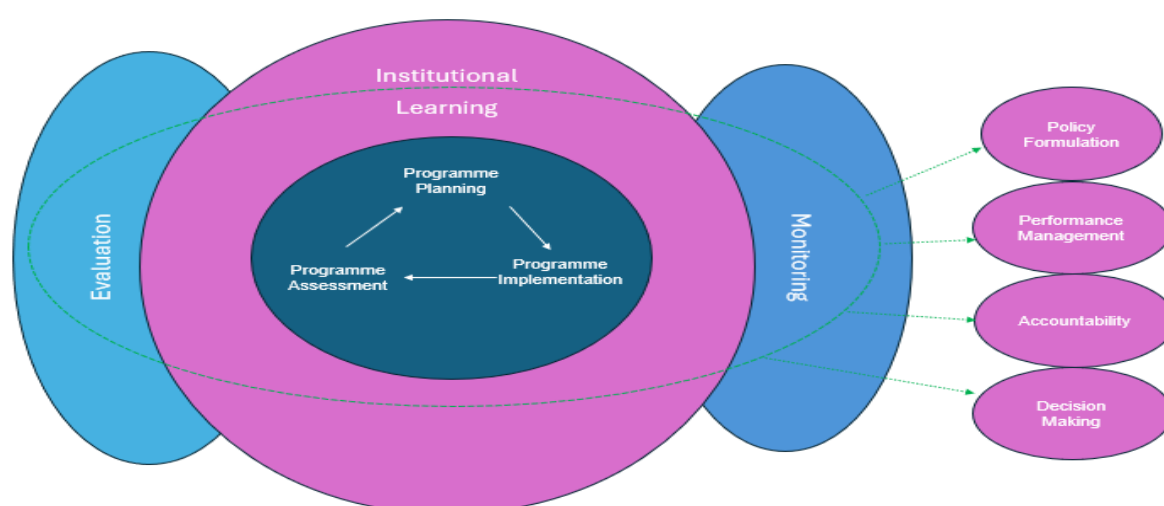
The usefulness of M&E information, however, extends beyond demonstrating the constitutional values as it also promotes transparency and collective accountability as core principles of governance. There are therefore calls by authors such as Naidoo (2011); Guijit (2008; 2012) and Stofile (2017) for a shift towards monitoring driven by accountability. According to Goldman et al., (2019) M&E findings and lessons have a significant role to play in strengthening public sector accountability, promoting transparency, and deepening democracy.

2.3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation as a Tool for Institutional Learning

Beyond aiding performance management and measurement, M&E has a critical role to play in promoting institutional learning and according to Govender (2015); Kusek & Rist (2004); Jacobs (2019) and Masilo et al., (2021) in instances where the monitoring

of data analysis is well - designed during project or programme planning phases. Through effective use of organisational systems to source M&E data, public entities can therefore analyse M&E findings and evidence, draw key lessons from it and adapt their programme activities accordingly during programme implementation phases as guided by Govender (2015). Wongtschowski, et al., (2016) argue that for M&E to be effectively used for learning purposes it requires the continuous involvement of M&E practitioners and relevant stakeholders in pursuing learning that is collaborative and enables the sharing of views, ideas, and perspectives by all stakeholders, without fearing adverse consequences. As depicted in Figure 1 below M&E feedback thus plays a critical role in informing institutional learning and influencing improvements relating to programme planning and design, programme implementation and programme assessment.

Figure 1. M&E as a Tool for Institutional Learning



(Adapted from Govender, 2015)

Monitoring information should enable mechanisms for the early detection of performance gaps and achievements and further provide necessary information for evaluation purposes, (Jacobs, 2019; Makadzange, 2020). As reflected in the figure above, lessons learned from M&E information enable organisations to adapt and improve the planning, implementation, and assessment of programmes. Accordingly, Stofile (2017) cites the primary purpose of generating knowledge as that of imparting M&E learnings and heightening the understanding of alternatives, possibilities, and limits for ensuring organisational posterity.

Discipline is thus required within an institution for the team to draw lessons from M&E information and it can therefore enable a life – long learning process given that it *“requires both the learning behaviour and culture to utilize available performance management information and systems for generating the necessary information at appropriate intervals”* (Govender, 2015, p.26). Britton (2005, p.10) re-enforces the existence of this relationship by stating that *“learning provides a real purpose for gathering monitoring data – indeed many would argue that learning directed at creating immediate improvements to project implementation constitutes the most important purpose for monitoring”*. This is supported by Morra-Imas & Rist (2009) making the assertion that learnings from M&E information bring about opportunities for institutions to improve strategy development and implementation. In support of the authors cited above, Krohwinkel-Karlsson, (2007) views the communication and availability of M&E information in a timely manner as being critical to organisational learning and continuous improvement processes to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in relation to resource allocation and utilisation. This author considers utilisation of monitoring information to enhance results and organisational learning as being related to the organisational capability to immediately respond to M&E feedback.

The South African government is aligned to the results-based approach, as evidenced by the introduction of a results-based M&E system as the ideal system for managing public sector performance. The Presidency (2007) therefore requires M&E to be integrated into the planning and budgeting processes of government departments and public entities to ensure it promotes continuous learning in the public sector. An effective M&E system is therefore instrumental in strengthening organisational learning whilst promoting sound governance (Estrella & Gaventa, 1998; Jacobs, 2019; Masilo, et al., 2021).

2.3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation as a Tool for Decision-Making

The GWMES requires government departments and entities to build M&E capacity, foster a governance culture and promote decision-making that responds to M&E findings and recommendations, (DPME, 2007). Public sector managers and stakeholders must effectively utilise M&E data related to performance results to inform evidence-based decision-making about programme design, resource allocation,

programme delivery, accountability, and reporting, (DPME, 2020). The National Treasury FMPPI (2007) further provides for the establishment of structures and systems for performance information management that are integrated with the existing organisational systems and processes. Responsibility is placed on the head of each public sector institution to ensure the institution has processes in place to identify, collect, verify, and store M&E information for use in planning and decision – making. Monitoring is therefore considered to be a management tool which can be systematically applied in data management processes to generate credible performance information that supports decision-making, (The Presidency, 2007; Kusek & Rist; 2004).

Kimaro, et al., (2018) and Masilo, et al., (2021) argue that M&E systems must be established to facilitate effective utilisation of organisational performance information for decision-making. Governments thus need to introduce measures for generating credible performance information that can be utilised for decision-making. According to Masilo, et al., (2021) in instances where M&E has been institutionalised performance information is provided and communicated through accurate reports generated by M&E systems. In this regard M&E systems are useful in informing management decision-making to ultimately improve the way the public sector operates to meet citizens' expectations.

Ojok, (2016) points out that the provision of evidence to guide decision-making through M&E systems is not aiming to replace management practices and processes but to rather support and enhance such practices and processes. This view is affirmed by Kusek & Rist (2004) stating that results-based M&E systems are required for effective public sector management and noting the integral role played by politics in decision-making. These two authors therefore emphasise the importance of credible M&E information in empowering managers and public office bearers to take evidence-informed decisions. Masilo, et al., (2013) support Ojok (2016, p.20) in noting the implementation of M&E as part of decision-making processes to be of more importance than the formal requirement for M&E systems arguing that *“the real accomplishments of M&E are not the reports or facts produced but comprise the higher quality of information procured”*. In this regard, high-quality decision-making is a product of monitoring and evaluation.

An effective M&E system must, however, challenge M&E practitioners and users of performance information to question data management processes as well as the related roles and responsibilities (Patton, 1997). According to Patton, (1997) data quality is critical to M&E practitioners in ensuring the collected data is relevant and able to guide decision-making as they strive towards generating performance information to support informed decision-making by both political and administrative stakeholders. The quality of data is critical for informing decision-making as management decisions in the public sector can be adversely influenced by the unavailability of accurate data and complete information according to Cloete, et al., (2014) and Masilo et al., (2021) thereby compromising the organisational M&E system.

Stofile (2017) regards public sector managers as having an important role to play in supporting institutional M&E systems by incorporating M&E information in programme plans and management decision-making. Wotela (2017) further recognises the monitoring and evaluation function as providing for accountability, transparency, and governance in institutions. A gap highlighted by Wotela (2017, p.1) in relation to existing literature is that discussions relating to monitoring and evaluation merely point it out to be a “*management and decision-making tool*” as they fail to draw linkages between M&E, developmental interventions, public policy, leadership, and governance.

This is relevant to this research study given that it was not only seeking to assess the contribution of M&E to the organisational performance of SANSA but also aimed to determine the extent of its institutionalisation and its linkages to the governance of the space agency. For monitoring and evaluation systems to enhance governance there must be mechanisms in place for M&E feedback to influence institutional decision-making (National Treasury, 2007; DPME, 2011). The establishment and implementation of an M&E system should therefore promote evidence-based practices supporting the generation of evidence-based M&E information to influence programme decisions (Jacobs, 2019).

2.4 Linking Monitoring and Evaluation to Governance

The globalisation advent has brought a growing need for governments to become more responsive to internal and external stakeholder demands improved governance for according to Kusek & Rist (2004). This globalisation context and its related policy changes and international aid dynamics has according to Wongtschowski, et al., (2016) steered the M&E function to higher levels of complexity. This is due to the need for M&E to assess the impact of policy, support performance and management improvements while promoting strengthened governance and accountability. Developing countries, however, continue to face overpowering governance challenges relating to development, poverty reduction and inequality. Several causes identified by Teklemariam & Guohua (2021), in this regard include corruption in government, planning failures, access to foreign capital among others. September (2015) argues that effective M&E has a critical role to play in the promotion of governance given that it provides mechanisms supporting governance pillars such as accountability and transparency by providing credible M&E information.

Mackay (2007) refers to a multitude of research studies conducted which show M&E as generally serving to bring about the existence of greater transparency and the promotion of governance. According to Mackay, (2007) the value of M&E thus lies in the extent to which public sector institutions and society at large utilise it to promote governance and accountability, thereby allowing learning and continuous improvement in policies, programmes and performance. This view is supported by Sebola et. al., (2014); Stofile (2017) and Masombuka & Thani (2023) who consider governance and M&E as requirements for an efficient, effective, sustainable, developed public sector characterised by transparency, and participation.

Some of the key discussion points relating to governance as outlined by Naidoo (2011), include noted improvements in government systems and policies which are likely to be mainly attributable to enhanced public sector governance and the existence of functioning M&E systems. Governance can therefore not be thought of as an intangible idea given its primarily relation to public policy concerns and government performance issues that are usually in the public domain. It should thus be considered as serving to uphold the constitution.

A study by Mpande in 2016, investigating the role of M&E in enhancing governance and project implementation within the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA) found the existence of effective M&E systems as positively impacting organisational performance. This is more likely in instances where evidence - based M&E serves as a tool to promote transparency and governance. Despite the South African government's intention of seeing its departments and public entities making use of M&E to promote governance, however, the SASSETA study established gaps relating to the implementation of M&E mechanisms for promoting governance.

Further studies by Kusek & Rist (2004); Goldman, et al., (2014) and Motaung (2018) among other authors revealed a perception of M&E generally being viewed by employees as creating suspicion and inculcating a culture of fear within organisations. Such perceptions are usually associated with governance weaknesses thus supporting the need for M&E to be prioritised by leadership, management, and employees alike across South African public entities. A study of the eThekweni Municipality conducted by Nonyane (2019), also recognises the important role of M&E in addressing public sector non-performance thereby assisting government to improve transparency and governance.

Govender (2011) argues for the influence of M&E to include participation by citizens and enhanced transparency to improve governance in the public sector. National Treasury (2007) further contributes to this argument by indicating that M&E should aim to promote improved governance by providing credible information on public sector resource allocation and utilisation that is open to public scrutiny. Developing countries including South Africa, however, face persistent challenges such as resource constraints and inadequate public sector M&E capacity which adversely impact governance according to Stofile (2017) and Goldman et al., (2019). M&E is therefore in itself not sufficient, for enhancing governance according to Mackay (2007), given that other factors are also likely to contribute to enhanced governance. Masombuka & Thani (2023) particularly point to a need for institutional reforms linking M&E to sound governance through efficient and economical utilisation of resources as guided by relevant frameworks of Government. Shah (2005) noted this as being more relevant to developing countries that are continuously confronted by governance-related

challenges. In this regard Kusek & Rist (2004) highlight the relevance of M&E towards increasing pressure on governments to adopt a responsive posture to stakeholder calls for effective governance and transparency to ensure delivery of public services.

2.5 Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

M&E systems are key mechanisms for assessing public sector performance and the implementation of programmes, (Görgens & Kusek, 2010; Goldman et al., 2014; Stofile, 2017). Although there is room to improve measurements of outcomes and impacts of government interventions, M&E systems have according to Cakici (2016) primarily gauged causes of good or poor public sector performance necessitating the strengthening of M&E institutionalisation. In this regard it is important for government departments and entities to view M&E in a serious light given its crucial role as a mechanism for managing institutional performance.

Kusek & Rist (2004) propose a ten-step model aimed at developing effective and sustainable results-based M&E systems comprising the following, (i) conducting a readiness assessment of the M&E system environment taking political, stakeholder consultation and participatory processes relating to the desired outcomes into consideration; (ii) identification and selection of outcomes to be monitored and evaluated; (iii) selection of good quality indicators to enable the provision ongoing feedback and performance information through an iterative process as informed by the inputs, the activities, the outputs, the outcomes, and the impacts; (iv) establishment of the qualitative and quantitative baselines relevant to each period of monitoring; (v) selection of performance targets to serve as steps towards the achievement of long-term outcomes; (vi) implementation and monitoring through the collection of quality performance data; (vii) a focus on the use, type, and timings of evaluations; (viii) analysis and reporting of M&E data to aid decision-making and programme, project and policy improvements; (ix) utilisation of findings to generate and share knowledge and learnings within public sector institutions; (x) establishing mechanisms to sustain the results-based institutional M&E system, enhance accountability and provide accurate and credible performance information.

Governments have been developing M&E systems with the aim of taking a results-based approach to policy formulation, budgeting, resource allocation, planning and managing programmes, whilst enhancing public sector accountability, (Stofile, 2017; Mackay, 2007). Public entities need to consider the abovementioned steps for developing result-based M&E systems in accordance with their institutional settings and requirements. Accordingly, Mataka (2015) and Mthethwa & Jili (2016), highlight the importance of internal and external environmental factors influencing M&E systems and need for government institutions to scan such factors prior to establishing and implementing M&E systems. This approach is aligned with the need to conduct a readiness assessment as a diagnostic tool to assist government in determining the key requirements for establishing results-based M&E systems as required by Kusek & Rist (2004). Results-based M&E systems are according to Estrella & Gaventa (1998) mostly utilised by donors and government institutions to ensure programme beneficiaries also account in accordance with the agreed performance goals.

Kusek & Rist (2004) and Mthethwa & Jili (2016) warn that public sector institutions in both developed and developing countries need to take account of a multitude of prevailing political, institutional, administrative, and political challenges that must be overcome to build sustainable M&E systems. Mackay, (2007) provided some key elements for the effective implementation of M&E systems which may serve to mitigate these challenges. M&E system data must be highly utilised to inform policy formulation, budgeting, the planning of programmes and projects as well as to strengthen accountability to internal and external stakeholders. The M&E system should provide good quality information that encourages use of the system by users. The high utilisation of the good quality M&E data should drive system sustainability and the achievement of planned outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The next section discusses challenges that may adversely affect the effectiveness and sustainability of public sector M&E systems.

2.6 Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Challenges

A review of the existing body of literature such as Kusek & Rist (2004); Ojok (2016); Mthethwa & Jili (2016) and Goldman et al., (2019) revealed that globally governments face challenges relating to the effective establishment and implementation of M&E

systems. A concern flagged in relation to the achievement of results by government departments and entities is that in most instances minimal attention is given to “*organizational, political, and cultural factors*”, (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p.23). This has been attributed to inadequate focus being directed towards gaining an understanding of the influence of such factors on the state of readiness to effectively measure the performance of government programmes and policies.

De Mello e Souza, et al., (2016) carried out a study of technical cooperation projects with Brazilian public institutions that found M&E practices to be still emerging thus contributing bottlenecks related to the rollout of programmes and projects. The study by De Mello e Souza, et al., (2016), established the existence of output – driven M&E practices with limited utilisation of M&E information as institutions were not fully engaging in M&E practices. M&E related challenges are, however, not unique to Brazil as a study conducted by Masuku & Ijeoma (2015), provides the following M&E challenges that are mostly faced by developing countries but are applicable to the developed countries and their public sector institutions.

2.6.1 Contextual Challenges

A key concern flagged by Masuku & Ijeoma (2015) in relation to contextual challenges is the current western approach of M&E which may fail to fully address challenges facing African countries, specifically those related to rural settings of the region. This concern is linked to Africa being viewed as a unique developing continent with vast cultural, historical, political, knowledge system and language dynamics. M&E practitioners in Africa may therefore find themselves focusing on global guidelines and indicators rather than the unique African context in the design of programmes. Molapo (2019) acknowledges the need for M&E systems to consider contextual factors and their complexity to adapt approaches to the relevant settings. Kusek & Rist (2004) point out that those responsible for the design of M&E systems at times miss contextual complexities relating to a specific country, government or institution thereby failing to consider end user needs in establishing M&E processes. The development and implementation of government M&E systems can therefore not be designed through a one size fits all approach given the unique circumstances and setting of each public sector institution (Masuku & Ijeoma, 2015; Molapo, 2019).

2.6.2 Coordination and Cooperation Challenges

These challenges relate to the coordination cooperation challenges which have been raised by De Mello e Souza, et. al., (2016) and similarly highlighted by Masuku & Ijeoma (2015) as most public sector institutions predominantly confront coordination challenges in relation to M&E. This is despite the South African Constitution (1996), providing for cooperation between national, provincial, and local spheres of government in driving the success of government initiatives including those aiming to institutionalise the GWMES. Balbuena (2014) views the establishment of clearly defined roles and responsibilities and strengthening coordination among public institutions as being critical for closing M&E coordination and cooperation gaps. Stofile, (2017) advises organisations to take deliberate M&E coordination steps supported by institutional strategies, policies, plans, structures, and processes driven towards achieving common goals to be continuously monitored and evaluated.

2.6.3 Institutional Challenges

Developing countries are according to Masuku & Ijeoma (2015, p.15) plagued by institutional challenges as most of them battle to establish and manage “*strong and effective institutions*”. Balbuena (2014); Stofile (2017); Kimaro, et al., (2018) and Goldman (2019) affirm the existence of institutional challenges within government citing a need for reforms to build institutional capacity for strengthening public sector institutions to improve performance and governance. Stofile (2017) states institutional capacity as involving policy formulation, the promotion of governance, leadership, communication, stakeholder engagement, and accountability to a multitude of national, provincial, and local stakeholders. The establishment of strong, capacitated, and well-managed public institutions and the coordination of transformational initiatives across government is thus crucial for enhancing M&E effectiveness.

2.6.4 Inadequate Stakeholder Involvement

Many developing countries disregard the role of stakeholder participation in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of government initiatives,

effectively depriving citizens a crucial opportunity to participate in government processes (Masuku & Ijeoma, 2015). According to Estrella & Gaventa (1998), participatory M&E is required for promoting accountability, transparency and enabling citizens to participate in the evaluation of government initiatives. Mthethwa & Jili (2016) also note that public sector challenges can be addressed through participatory interventions. Goldman et. al., (2019) further highlights the need for participation by stakeholders outside of government in M&E to bolster transparency and public accountability.

2.6.5 Compliance Monitoring and Evaluation

Compliance M&E has been a more predominant feature in the public sector rather than a results-based M&E approach for yielding results. This has unfortunately translated into poor results in relation to public sector performance, particularly in the African continent, (Masuku & Ijeoma, 2015). Kusek & Rist (2004, p.31) in concurrence with this stance raise the pertinent performance management question of “*so what*” as a guide for institutions to ensure the achievement of outputs and results over and above M&E compliance. This question seeks to promote results-based M&E by ensuring mechanisms for determining the extent to which consequences of government policy and programme efforts align with the intended or planned outcomes of such interventions.

Research conducted by Twende Mbele (2023, p.10) illustrates limited motivation for promoting more effective utilisation of M&E findings and evidence as there seems to be “*interest in M&E evidence, however whether people are motivated to use it in a meaningful way remains unclear*”. The dominance of a compliance culture may overshadow the need to use M&E information for learning and continuous programme improvement as officials with expertise in their respective technical areas may struggle to navigate the compliance landscape while using M&E reports to reflect and draw lessons. Kimaro, et al., (2018) point to the development of a results-driven culture as being key in motivating high-performance rather than an administrative culture focused on policy and regulatory compliance as primary objectives.

2.6.6 Challenges Related to Budgetary Constraints

Governments in developing countries continue to face challenges when it comes to the linking of planning, budgeting, the allocation resources, priority setting with monitoring and evaluation (Masuku & Ijeoma, 2015). Governments usually confront challenges relating to budget constraints impacting resource allocation towards the development and implementation of M&E systems as observed by Kusek & Rist (2004); Mthethwa & Jili (2016) and Jacobs (2019) among other authors. Jacobs (2019) therefore recommends a shift towards results-based M&E rather than focusing on outputs as such will enable public sector managers to assess the allocation of resources and follow an evidence-based approach to budgeting.

2.6.7 Challenges Related to Capacity Constraints

The lack of adequate M&E skills presents challenges for countries, and these include performance shortcomings, ineffective M&E systems and difficulties relating to poor governance and the achievement of developmental goals, (Lekala, 2019; Masilo, et al., 2021; Masvaure & Fish, 2022). The South African government, noted that weaknesses relating to the functioning of public sector institutions constrain government's ability to achieve planned developmental goals, (DPME, (2014). Accordingly, the DPME (2014), cites capacity gaps such as skills deficits and a lack of professionalism in the public sector as primary problems leading to service delivery shortcomings. Masuku & Ijeoma (2015) and Mthethwa & Jili (2016) noted persistent M&E skills shortages as often leading to reliance on consultants and other parties outside of government.

Masvaure & Fish (2022) also noted a growing focus on M&E capacity building initiatives by countries across the Global South, albeit, with limited literature relating to the effectiveness and the impact of such in Africa. Furthermore, they found that literature on measuring investment towards M&E capacity building does not exist despite its likely impact of the effectiveness of M&E systems, institutional performance, and public accountability levels. These authors further noted complexity related to measuring individual and organisational M&E capacity building citing those short-term initiatives adopted by some African states failed to yield the required results, (Mackay

2007; Masvaure & Fish, 2022). Molapo (2019) and Rosenberg & Kotschy (2020), are therefore calling for the development of sustainable M&E systems noting that such would require M&E practitioners to acquire new skills thereby advancing their innovative and technical abilities. This would ensure effective and credible M&E solutions and enable more robust M&E practices and approaches within public entities for enhanced service delivery, accountability, and transparency.

2.7 Monitoring and Evaluation in the South African Context

In alignment with global shifts in M&E approaches by governments, the South African government established a Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) to promote sustainable development and public sector governance through effective implementation of M&E mechanisms, (Nelson, 2016). Van den Brink, et al., (2011, p.124), however, observed that *“inadequate monitoring, evaluation, feedback and learning processes, treating monitoring and evaluation as ancillary rather than integral to service delivery”* continue to undermine public sector accountability and transparency. Presidential reviews conducted during the period from 2003 to 2019, according to Masombuka & Thani (2023) point to the existence of political will supporting the importance of the accountability brought by M&E. This reflection, however, comes with an acknowledgement of public sector performance and governance gaps necessitating improvement.

Within the South African public sector context, M&E plays an important dual role of contributing to both knowledge generation and learning, whilst providing critical tools and mechanisms for managing performance and promoting accountability according to Kusek & Rist (2004). Görgens & Kusek (2010) support this position by reflecting that the monitoring of organisational performance should serve as a core basis for generating, consolidating, and disseminating information relating to organisational programmes or policies. This will serve to guide the establishment of what is working and what is not working in support of knowledge sharing and the drawing of key lessons learned.

Masombuka & Thani, (2023, p.155) consider South Africa as being progressive in terms of *“leadership, culture and systems”*. They, however, noted a need for greater focus on building technical M&E capacity particularly around evaluations whilst improving the integration of planning, monitoring, and evaluation systems. These authors highlight diverse issues relating to the coordination of systems as a strain confronting government with more of the burden being on state agencies.

The role of DPME relates to coordinating monitoring reports relating to performance and priority outcomes of government. Public institutions on the other hand submit reports on financial monitoring to National Treasury quarterly. This, however, puts a strain on the line functions within departments and public entities due to duplicated reporting, (Masombuka & Thani, 2023). In recognising ongoing struggles related to effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems, Nonyane (2019), refers to the existing body of literature recognising such systems as being important for improving planning and implementation of government programmes. Although the role of M&E in relation to performance management is understood a key argument arising from the literature review is the need for further research to determine its role in promoting governance in the broader public sector.

2.8 South African Legal and Policy Monitoring & Evaluation Context

Monitoring and evaluation are important for ensuring effectiveness, transparency, and efficiency through evidence-based M&E practices within government institutions, (The Presidency, 2007; Jacobs, 2019). The Cabinet therefore adopted a Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (GWMES) in 2007 and a GWMES Policy Framework focusing on coordinating public sector M&E systems released by The Presidency in 2007. This was supported by the 2007 National Treasury Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information (FMPPI).

The GWMES (2007, p.3) outlines several critical M&E principles summarised as follows: (i) *“M&E should contribute to improved governance”* M&E processes should protect interests of the marginalised and findings are to be made available to the public for purposes of promoting transparency and accountability; (ii) *“M&E should be rights based”* with M&E processes centred on a rights-based culture that is entrenched in

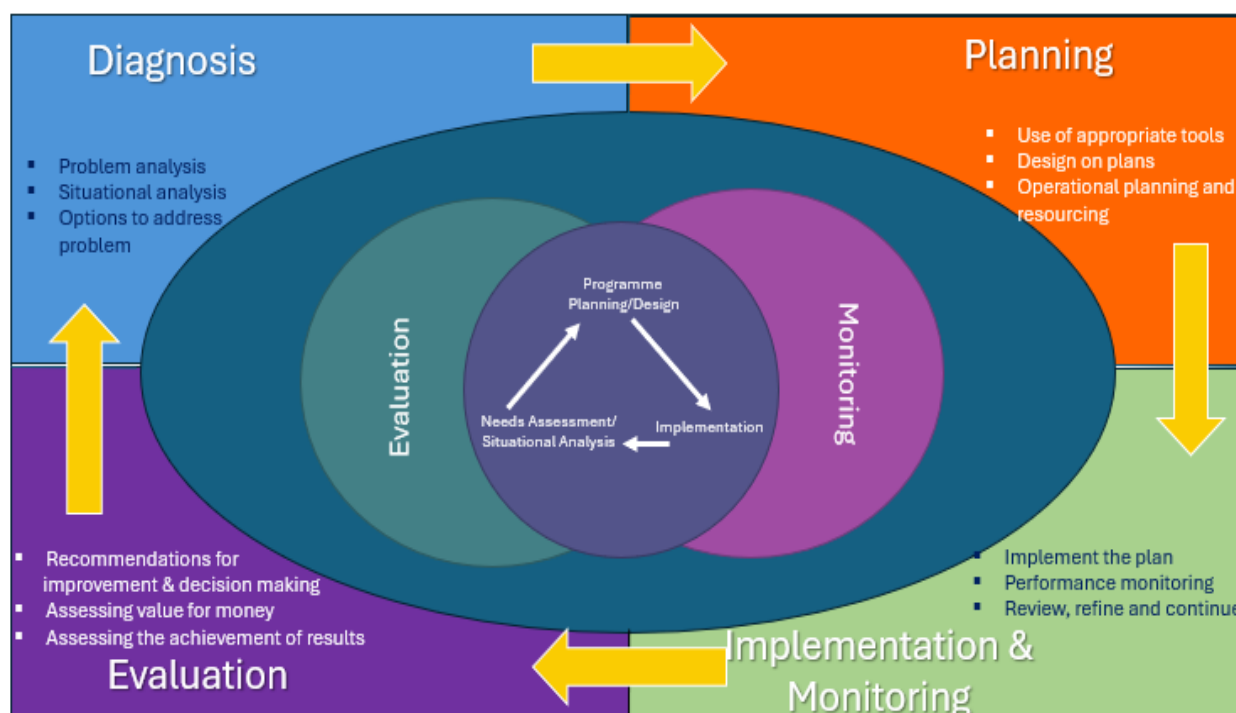
the value base; (iii) *“M&E should be development-oriented”* meaning systems nationally, institutionally and locally must have a pro-poor orientation, be service delivery and performance-driven, promote and nurture an appetite for individual and institutional learning (knowledge generation); (iv) *“M&E should be undertaken ethically and with integrity”* where knowledge and strategic needs are met through utilisation of M&E information as demonstrated through implementation of recommendations and public institutions openly maintaining openly accessible repositories of M&E reports; (v) *“M&E should be methodologically sound”* as indicated by the utilisation of multiple sources for purposes of building credible M&E findings (i.e., triangulation for improved data quality and trend analysis); and (vi) *“M&E should be operationally effective”* as a public management component M&E must be regular with robust systems. These principles are relevant to this study as they provide a solid foundation for the development and institutionalisation of an effective M&E system within a public entity.

Although the public sector has remained focused on the GWMES rollout, however, challenges faced by government post the 2009 elections related the delivery of public goods and services and governance issues, (Phillips, et. al., 2014; Lekala, 2019). Additionally, challenges such skills shortages, poor financial management, lack of accountability and ineffective M&E remain central to poor public sector governance, (Lekala, 2019). To align with national policy public entities of the South African government are thus required establish and institutionalise effective M&E systems to continuously improve organisational performance and promote governance. Such a system should provide performance feedback to guide decision-making by employees and managers, whilst enhancing governance through increased transparency and accountability. The assessment of the space agency’s existing M&E system was thus conducted using the abovementioned principles of M&E as a yardstick to determine its contribution to organisational performance and governance.

Further to the GWMES, the DPME (2019) developed the Diagnostic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle illustrating stages relating to the utilisation of M&E evidence in the planning and implementation of government programmes. As depicted in Figure 2 below, these stages involve diagnosing the problem through appropriate research mechanisms; use of appropriate planning tools to design plans; implementation and monitoring of the plans and conducting evaluations to assess the

effectiveness of the plans. According to the DPME (2019) M&E evidence adds value to all the four domains of the planning, monitoring and evaluation cycle and its related processes of improving government's developmental results relating to service delivery.

Figure 2: Diagnostic, Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Cycle



(Adapted from DPME, 2019)

Diagnosis – this domain requires a diagnostic analysis of current societal problems and exploring alternative government programmes or interventions aimed at addressing such problems. A good quality plan should according to the DPME (2019) include a diagnostic situational analysis to identify current factors or problems likely to serve as key drivers of strategic change. It must explain the relevant logic model or the theory of change informing the plan, causal relationships between “activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts”, (DPME, 2019, p.28; Jacobs, 2019). This then becomes the logical framework basis setting out a result- chain for the plan, the rationale and hypothesis informing the plan, its objectives as well as the specific targets it seeks to achieve. Jacobs (2019, p.69) concurs that the diagnostic analysis process is useful in determining the current “status quo, logic model and factors driving the development or change”.

Planning – is a domain involving the use of appropriate design tools to design plans, establish a theory of change, and design relevant budget projections and evaluations to be undertaken for assessing the relevance of indicators and assess implementation of the plan, (DPME, 2019). According to Jacobs, (2019) government institutions must after the design of programme interventions, assess the consistency, and logic of indicators and assess during implementation whether programmes are working or not. In addition to assessing the quality of indicators and underlying assumptions the DPME (2019) and Presidency (2011) require public sector institutions to ensure indicators developed are properly resourced to guide the effective implementation and measurement of programme outcomes.

Implementation and Monitoring – is a domain focused on the implementation of plans as informed by the set performance targets and indicators and utilisation of M&E systems to monitor progress relating to the achievement of results. It further involves a process of continuously reviewing and improving interventions through implementation evaluations (DPME, 2019). This according to the DPME (2007; 2019) and Kusek & Rist (2009) can be more effectively done through the development and institutionalisation of a results-based and government-wide M&E system.

Evaluation – which is a domain that involves undertaking evaluations to gain an understanding of how programme plans and policies were implemented with the aim of identifying necessary improvements. The DPME, (2011; 2019) states that evaluations must determine the extent to which targets beneficiary groups of government programmes have been provided quality services in an equitable manner in line with the Constitution. Post the implementation phase Kusek & Rist (2004); Stofile (2017); Jacobs (2019) and DPME (2019) require government institutions to conduct outcomes and impact evaluations for assessing how desired changes and value for money were achieved in rolling out programme interventions.

The domains, outlined above, however, cannot be successfully coordinated in the absence of an institutionalised and effective M&E system informing the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of government programmes and interventions. Accordingly, Mackay (2007) noted that the sustainability of an M&E

system is only possible if such a system is entrenched and institutionalised to form part of the institutional culture, structure, policy formulation, strategy development, programme and project resourcing and planning practices. In this regard, the diagnostic, planning, monitoring, and evaluation cycle discussed above was useful in mapping the literature and establishing a conceptual framing for this study. It is thus considered as being key to the generation of new perspectives on the institutionalisation of M&E by public sector institutions.

The diagnostic, planning, monitoring, and evaluation cycle discussed above also forms an integral part of the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) that was first drafted by The Presidency in 2011 and later revised by the DPME in 2019. The NEPF was developed in accordance with Section 195 of the South African Constitution, which provides for effective, transparent and economical use of public resources. This policy framework outlines the following four primary objectives of government evaluations (DPME, 2019, p.19):

“Improving performance (evaluation for learning)” through the provision of evaluation feedback to managers. Key questions considered could include whether this was the most effective and efficient intervention to address the identified objective - was it relevant and fit for the intended purpose? Was the selected mix of inputs, outputs and outcomes logical?

“Evaluation for improving accountability” considering how public spending has been allocated. Is the expenditure providing value for money and making a difference in the lives of citizens? Has the expenditure ensured equitable benefit for women and men? Has it eliminated access barriers for vulnerable and historically disadvantaged groupings of society?

“Evaluation for generating knowledge” increasing knowledge through research on what is working and what is not working in relation to public policy and / or government programmes thus enabling government to build a credible base of evidence that will inform the development of future policies and programmes.

“Decision-making” public policymakers, planners and those responsible for financial resources should be able to assess the value or effectiveness of an intervention. This will enable the determination of whether an intervention, policy, programme or project was successful. Are its objectives being met? Is it making a positive or negative impact (if any) on the lives of intended beneficiaries across the population, including targeted transformation groups such as youth, women, and persons with disabilities? Were there any unintended consequences emanating from the intervention? Is the intervention worth keeping, expanding, reengineering or discontinuing?

The above-listed objectives of the NEPF seek to build a developmental public administration that produces timely and accurate information to ensure accountability through results-based and sustainable government planning, budgeting and service delivery. The policy framework therefore serves as a basis for a credible evaluation system across government that guides and promotes efficient, relevant and quality evaluation processes, (The Presidency, 2011; DPME, 2019).

Despite the existence of the NEPF, however, there remains a noticeable imbalance when comparing South Africa’s legislation and guidelines for evaluations with legislative prescripts and guidelines on monitoring. This needs to be explored further as a possible contributing factor to the poor institutionalisation of evaluation across the National, Provincial and Local spheres of government. The DPME acknowledges current shortcomings relating to the existence of limited evaluation capacity across government and as the custodian of government evaluations plans to build and institutionalise the national evaluation system by providing technical and capacity development evaluation support (DPME, 2019).

2.9 Institutionalisation of Monitoring and Evaluation

Stofile (2017) describes institutionalisation as a process involving the embedment of learning acquired by individuals or groups relating to the organisational institutions including systems, structures, procedures, and strategy. Another description of institutionalisation is a growth and development process resulting in the policies, governance, processes, structure, practices, and values of an institution being entwined with the organisational environment and culture, (Cloete, et al., (2014).

Goldman et al., (2019) and Mackay (2007) concur with M&E institutionalisation being a key characteristic of a successful M&E system.

Cloete, et al., (2014); Kimaro et al., (2018) and Jacobs (2019) consider M&E institutionalisation as a process requiring the relevant institution to ensure necessary arrangements are in place to promote its sustainability. Cloete, et al., (2014), further indicate the following requirements for M&E institutionalisation: (i) the establishment of M&E policies and guidelines to aid the assigning of responsibilities; (ii) ensuring that reporting structures are specified; (iii) clearly outlining the M&E scope and purpose; and (iv) stating the guidelines informing the M&E institutionalisation process; and ensuring M&E information is central to evidence-based decision-making.

This is supported by Mackay (2007) who noted the utilisation of quality M&E information as being a good measure of the success and sustainability of an M&E system. Kimaro et al., (2018) and Masombuka & Thani, (2023) provided the below checklist outlining key features for assessing performance management elements to institutionalise M&E systems. The checklist consisting of the following elements is relevant to public sector institutions: a) defining the measurement object; b) formulating relevant indicators; c) collection and analysis of data; d) M&E reporting; and e) utilisation of the M&E information.

Table 1: Monitoring and Evaluation Features

	Element	Monitoring and evaluation checklist
a.	Definition of the measurement object	Strategic plans guided by M&E information.
		Cascade annual performance plans (APPs) from strategic plans.
		Institutional structures to support the M&E system.
b.	M&E system indicators formulated	M&E systems aligned to institutional plans.
		Indicators to measure implementation levels.
		Budgeting / resource allocation for M&E activities.
		Development / implementation of M&E policies / tools / procedures.
c.	Collection and analysis of data	M&E plan to outline mechanisms for the collection of data.
		Periodic collection of monitoring data.
		Evaluations conducted to assess effectiveness of programmes / projects.
		Information Technology infrastructure in place to support M&E data.
d.	M&E reporting	Generation of performance reports from the M&E system.
		Sharing of performance information with internal and external stakeholders.
e.	Utilisation of M&E information	Structural arrangements to enforce utilisation of performance information.
		Consequence management against performance (rewards and sanctions as appropriate for good or bad performance).
		M&E information to inform institutional planning, budgeting / resource allocation, programme / project implementation decisions and approaches.
		Performance information to inform the review of strategic and performance plans.

(Adapted from: Kimaro et al., 2018 and Masombuka & Thani, 2023)

Cloete, et al., (2014) further highlight the following components required to establish a monitoring and evaluation system: (i) the design of the M&E framework (ii) conceptualising, planning and designing the M& E system processes; and (iii) developing the requisite capacity to ensure institutionalisation and sustainability of the M&E system. A research study conducted by Molapo (2019) similarly revealed that institutionalising an M&E system comprises components such as (i) the system purpose and scope; (ii) critically reflecting on past activities and processes; (iii) adequate human resources in the form of highly motivated and capacitated employees; and finally (iv) management commitment to support the generation and utilisation of M&E information.

In addition to steering public institutions towards improved performance and governance M&E should facilitate enhanced public sector management in a complex environment that seeks to institutionalise M&E as a “*systematic, well-conceptualised phenomenon*”, Kimaro, et al., (2018, p.196). Governments are therefore inclined towards M&E institutionalisation as a mechanism for boosting the development of institutional skills, capacity, systems, processes, and structures, (Stofile, 2017). According to Ojok (2016, p.xiii) M&E must thus be adequately “*institutionalised, funded and located so as to mediate policy process, planning and service delivery*”. This author further highlights that public sector employees may resent the concept of performance measurement due to a lack of its understanding and commitment. Such resentment can lead to low levels of performance, poor governance, and a lack of accountability for government failures relating to the implementation of planned interventions. Public entities should therefore promote M&E institutionalisation by correctly locating M&E within organisational structures; integrating M&E into organisational policies and processes; allocating sufficient human and financial M&E resources and building a results-focused culture (Mackay, 2007; Stofile, 2017).

2.9.1 Institutionalisation of Monitoring and Evaluation in Africa

The need for establishing government-wide M&E systems hit African countries in the 1980s with momentum building as African governments pursued improved service delivery by measuring and tracking performance, (Makadzange, 2020). Many reasons exist for the increasing efforts of governments in Africa towards strengthening their public sector M&E systems according to Mackay (2007). These include pressures from the fiscal front and ever-increasing expectations of citizens which serve as an impelling force for African governments to ensure delivery of high-quality services to the public. The institutionalisation of M&E thus becomes more critical in this regard as governments in developing countries across the African continent seek to adopt public sector M&E approaches and tools of the more developed countries.

Kimaro et al., (2018, p.215) refers to the “*egg-and-chicken*” scenario in trying to establish the relationship between M&E and capacity as it may be challenging to determine which of the two comes first. A pertinent question raised by this author is whether M&E builds public sector capacity building for purposes of governance or

M&E requires capacity building for it to become an “*effective management tool*”? Lessons learned from the implementation of strategies to reduce poverty in Uganda point to M&E being a possible tool for building public sector capacity rather than being an unproductive data-collection system. Developing M&E capacity in Africa is thus critical for ensuring good governance and the efficient use of public resources Kimaro et al., (2018).

According to Masvaure and Fish (2022, p.4), institutional or organisational capacity-building interventions can be categorised into “*state sector and nonstate sector activities*”. Countries such as Kenya, Botswana and Tanzania are said to be directing state sector initiatives towards the institutionalisation of M&E across government departments by establishing and capacitating M&E units within their ministries and departments. Botswana is particularly noted by these two authors as directing its efforts towards the establishment of M&E units in government departments whereas Uganda has a few ministries that have appointed M&E practitioners while others are lacking M&E structures due to resource constraints. Kimaro et al., (2018), however, cite Botswana as having also faced capacity challenges which impacted this country’s efforts towards M&E institutionalisation.

Makadzange (2020), argues that the broader society and African parliaments have been placing pressure on governments to report their performance publicly to ensure greater transparency and accountability. Accordingly, this author views donors on the international landscape as facing similar pressures of being required to demonstrate tangible results for the quantum of financial aid they have been entrusted with, necessitating that they put pressure on supported African countries to have strong M&E systems in place. One of the many lessons from World Bank efforts aimed at helping governments in building effective M&E systems that support the developmental agenda is that considerable government demand is required for successful M&E institutionalisation, (Mackay, 2007). For this to be achieved, the M&E system should be capable of producing quality M&E findings that are valuable to key stakeholders and users of M&E information. This aligns with Ojok (2016), who flags the importance of institutionalising public sector M&E systems in developing African countries through ensuring M&E systems are supported and capacitated so that they can effectively play a role in the promotion of governance.

Kimaro et al., (2018) and Masombuka & Thani (2019, p.165) cite M&E institutionalisation as a key driver influencing M&E practices, including the “*demand for evidence-based decision-making in the public sector*”. Public sector M&E systems should thus be responsive to the demand for M&E as a function to enhance the use of M&E information and encourage the allocation of adequate financial resources that guarantee its future sustainability. Ojok (2016) noted responses by African governments as focusing on the institutionalisation of M&E systems to enhance effectiveness. In this regard, further efforts by governments included measures for improving transparency and building a high-performance culture that supports organisational management, policymaking and strengthens accountability.

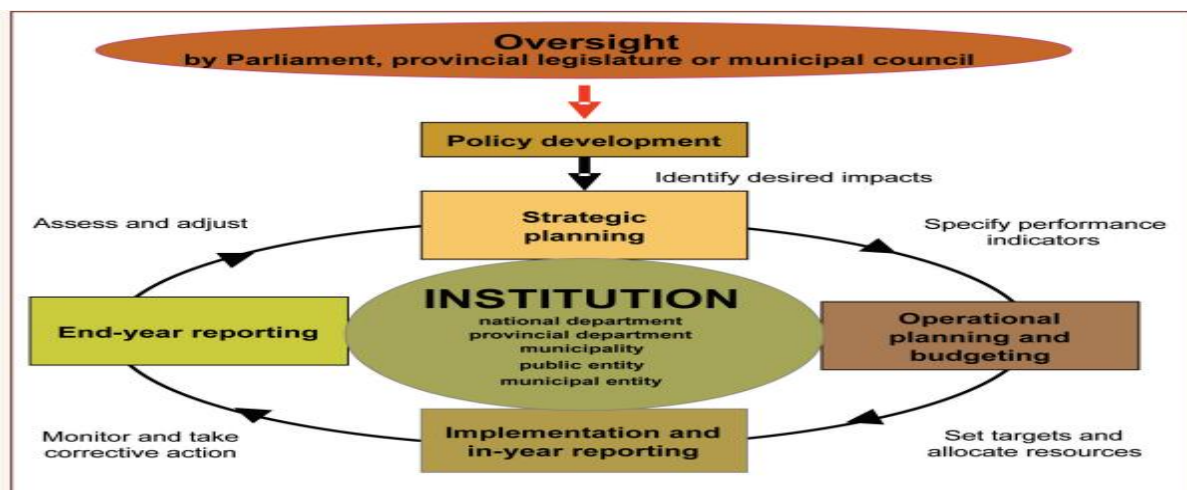
2.9.2 Institutionalisation of Monitoring and Evaluation in the South African Public Sector

Rabie (2011) advises that the institutionalisation of an M&E system must be well-planned to contemplate resources such as human resources, financial resources as well as supporting tools and technologies. Makadzange (2020), considers the M&E system as being an integral basis for M&E institutionalisation. In this regard a well-defined M&E structure with adequately skilled human resources and documented processes relating to organisational planning, budgeting and management of the M&E system is required (Goldman, et al., 2014; Makadzange 2020). Mataka (2015), points towards a well-functioning and sustainable government M&E system to generate quality M&E information as being crucial for success to be realised in terms of M&E institutionalisation.

Within the South African context, M&E institutionalisation must in addition to the structure be supported by an M&E framework, clear policies, and procedures to guide the implementation of organisational M&E practices, (National Treasury, 2007). Furthermore, there must be platforms for the collection, collation, dissemination, and effective use of M&E data (Goldman, et al., 2014; Jacobs, 2019; Makadzange, 2020). In alignment with the purpose outlined by The Presidency (2007) and DPME (2020), National Treasury (2007) concurs that institutional M&E processes should support management in ensuring regular performance reviews and determining appropriate

action to improve service delivery. Additionally, government departments and entities must ensure responsibility for managing performance information is cascaded to managers and employees through annual performance agreements. The planning, budgeting, and reporting cycle depicted in the figure below is instrumental in this regard:

Figure 3: Planning, Budgeting and Reporting Cycle



(Source: National Treasury, 2007)

The National Treasury (2007) and DPME (2020) guidelines align with Makadzange, (2020) as public entities are required to develop an M&E system to manage performance and ensure its integration with existing organisational systems and processes. This seeks to enhance reporting to Parliament and the citizens to which government is ultimately accountable as per the Constitution. The entrenchment of a results - driven culture of performance in the public sector through institutionalising M&E is thus not an option for entities as it is premised on a legislative foundation as determined by the government since introducing the GWMES in 2007. National Treasury (2007, p.13) reflects that *“the integrity of the institution's overall performance information depends on how conscientiously”* managers and officials fulfil their responsibilities. This is in relation to taking accountability for the establishment and maintenance of systems and processes to manage performance information in their respective functional areas. Masombuka & Thani (2023) and National Treasury (2007)

outline the below principles which serve as a guiding framework to assess the extent to which public sector institutions have institutionalised the GWMES:

- The system implementation plan must be integrated into and re-enforce existing public sector reform activities to optimise efficient use of resources and improve performance.
- The framework must align with M&E activities to improve public sector performance.
- A customised approach should be followed across government institutions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to optimise utilisation of resources.
- Reducing the administrative compliance burden by establishing clear lines of reporting and delegated sector-specific data sources across the national, provincial, and local government spheres.
- Integrates systems for ease of data exchanges through Information Technology enabled M&E systems.
- Credible M&E information standards should serve as prerequisites for evaluations to be undertaken.
- GWMES and other M&E policy frameworks are to be periodically reviewed during implementation and adapted accordingly as guided by changes in the environment.

Goldman et al., (2019), state that although requirements of National Treasury and the Auditor General have led to the implementation of the 2007 GWMES being driven by compliance institutionalisation of the national M&E system in public institutions remains critical. Despite its accountability focus it equally seeks to develop a performance-driven approach to public sector performance and should there create an enabling environment that encourages government departments and entities to proactively engage the system. This according to Goldman et al., (2019) would achieve a broader aim of shifting management behaviour from being compliance-oriented towards recognising value of the M&E finding in bringing about learnings and improve programme or project performance. The importance of this open and participatory approach to the coordination of M&E efforts is affirmed by Kimaro, et al., (2018) and Jacobs (2019) among other authors.

The preliminary literature review conducted for this study has indicated that there are no quick wins or short cuts in relation to the establishment and institutionalisation of effective M&E systems. Stofile, (2017) points out that developing a results-based M&E system is a rigorous journey and institutionalisation of an M&E system is thus crucial for ensuring the sustainability of such a system. The success of an M&E system, therefore, requires entrenchment of the system and its holistic acceptance by the institution. In this regard the quality of M&E data influences the uptake, demand, and utilisation of M&E information to inform decision-making, promote learning and improve performance thus ensuring value is continuously derived users of M&E information and other key stakeholders. To support the institutionalisation and entrenchment of a sustainable M&E system, Cloete, et al., (2014), provide the following necessary considerations and institutional arrangements:

- Institutional readiness particularly in relation to the organisational leadership and its management.
- The existence of relevant M&E policy instruments to guide the commitment of the system and its intent which is premised on sound leadership understanding.
- Allocation of adequate resources to demonstrate organisational commitment and support of the M&E system.
- The existence of a positive and progressive M&E culture built on the buy-in of managers and employees across all institutional levels.
- M&E role-clarity with institutional and system arrangements in place mandating and empowering the M&E unit to allow for M&E information to be cascaded across all levels of the institution.
- The M&E unit's human resources arrangements including capacity arrangements like M&E technical and expertise skills.
- M&E capacity building and development.

Porter & Goldman (2013, p.4) highlight the importance of institutional arrangements in strengthening M&E systems and outline the following key constraints relating to *“harmonisation in the implementation of the M&E system”*: (i) the existence of challenges related to fragmented M&E functions across public sector institutions which impact the ability of institutions to coordinate strong and coherent messaging

associated with M&E systems, processes and standards; (ii) the lack of a common vision that is shared across institutions on the role to be played by M&E towards ensuring broader public sector reform, resulting in different approaches towards *“managing for results”* within public entities Porter & Goldman (2013, p.5); (iii) institutions face competing and conflicting stakeholder demands for M&E information which may adversely impact poorly-capacitated M&E systems if not adequately harmonised. The importance of institutional arrangements is pointed by Görgens & Kusek (2010) and Jacobs (2019, p.21), advocating for M&E systems to form part of *“human resources, finance and accountability systems”* and central to organisational operations to become sustainable and provide reliable performance feedback.

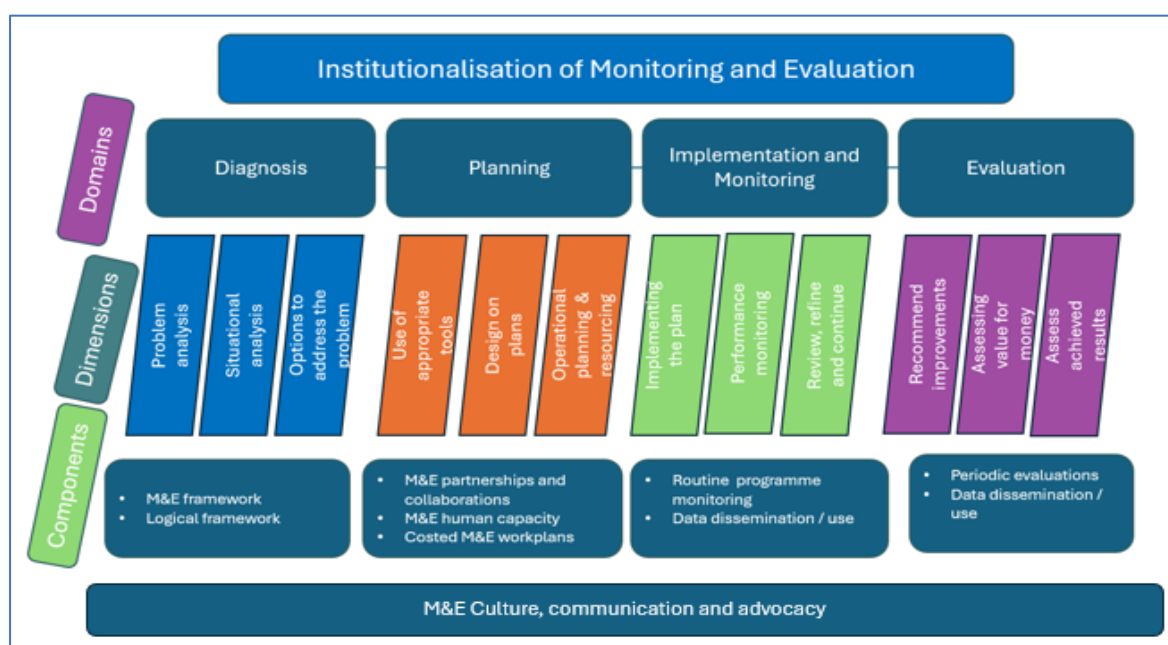
2.10 Institutionalisation of Monitoring & Evaluation: A Conceptual Framework

Given that South Africa has traditionally faced continuous challenges relating to public sector management the New Public Management (NPM) reform was adopted as an overarching tool for enhancing governance, public accountability, and the achievement of better results, (Kusek & Risk, 2004). According to Stoker, (2006); Stofile (2017) and Makadzange (2020) the NPM is a critical reform focused on managing inputs and outputs to ensure government service delivery is as professional and efficient as the private sector. Kusek & Risk, (2004) therefore noted NPM as a critical tool for government to achieve results-based management that is supported by an institutionalised results-based M&E system – accordingly there must be mechanisms in place for effective M&E institutionalisation across the public sector. In this regard, Ojok (2016) and Masombuka & Thani (2023) also noted the importance of establishing and institutionalising M&E systems in ensuring improved performance and promoting governance.

M&E institutionalisation is thus necessary for public entities to meet the NPM objectives of improving efficiency, performance, service delivery and accountability for better performing public sector. The section below discusses the conceptual framing for M&E institutionalisation and critical components for the successful institutionalisation of public sector M&E systems.

In alignment with the diagnostic, planning, monitoring, and evaluation cycle developed by the DPME (2019), Figure 4 below provides a conceptual framing for public sector M&E institutionalisation. The domains and dimensions have already been discussed in the sections above and focus will now be placed on key components required for the successful institutionalisation of public sector M&E systems as identified through the literature review.

Figure 4: Institutionalisation of Monitoring and Evaluation



(Adapted from DPME, 2011, 2019; Otundo, 2019)

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks – are according to Jacobs, (2019) critical documents that provide guidance on the institutionalisation of M&E, be it at institutional or programme level. Through an explorative study of the growing demand for M&E in Africa, Porter & Goldman (2013), noted a need for governments to develop policies and frameworks codifying how M&E systems are to operate. Such frameworks support the development of cohesive institutional M&E frameworks across governments. Within the South African context, The Presidency (2007) and DPME (2020) as custodian of the GWMES require government departments and entities to establish M&E frameworks encompassing integration of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities related to strategic interventions of government.

Logic frameworks – serve as management tools for improving the design of key government interventions through the identification of strategic elements such as inputs, outputs, outcomes, impacts and their causal relationships. Additionally, the relevant indicators, key assumptions and risks are identified to facilitate successful planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of interventions, (Kusek & Rist, 2004). The DPME (2020) supports the development of logic frameworks citing a need for logical connections between Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans (APPs) and Annual Operational Plans (AOPs) particularly in relation to the identified performance indicators and targets of government interventions.

M&E partnerships and collaborations – partnerships for planning, coordinating, and managing M&E systems are a key to the success and institutionalisation of M&E systems, according to Otundo (2019), at both national and organisational levels of government. M&E partnerships should thus complement institutional efforts relating to the planning and coordination of M&E processes to inform the alignment of M&E approaches and practices to the pre-determined objectives. Accordingly, Masombuka & Thani (2023) and Jacobs (2019) flag the importance of stakeholder partnerships and collaborations in the establishment and institutionalisation of M&E systems. Adequate institutional arrangements are required to monitor the achievement of targeted results with commitment towards building trust through transparent communication among the users and generators of M&E information (Kusek & Rist, 2004; National Treasury, 2007). The DPME (2013; 2022), highlights the need for including and soliciting inputs from non-government stakeholders in the planning and implementation of governmental policy and programme interventions. The involvement of citizens to gauge their experiences of government programme interventions is considered by the DPME (2013; 2022) to be critical for increasing the demand and uptake for M&E and strengthening M&E systems across government. M&E systems play an integral role in this regard as they provide feedback on the rollout of government services to enhance systematic utilisation of M&E findings and evidence for improving performance.

M&E human capacity – Kusek & Rist, (2004); Stofile, (2017) and Masombuka & Thani, (2023) acknowledge the importance of building sufficient institutional capacity for the development, maintenance, and institutionalisation of successful M&E systems. Such

capacity is, according to these authors, related to availability of adequately skilled M&E human resources as well as the provision of M&E training and technical support which leverages on institutional and intergovernmental capacity building mechanisms. Morra-Imas & Rist (2009), argue that skills and experience are critical elements in establishing and sustaining a results-based M&E system in an organisation. Within the South African context, The Presidency (2008), cites the improvement of M&E human capacity as a critical building block for institutionalising M&E systems across government. This serves to enhance performance and responsiveness of governments to the multitude of developmental challenges confronting the state. To build a developmental state, however, public sector institutions must focus on medium-term and long-term planning capabilities and institutionalise integrated M&E systems that strengthen coordination, planning, and M&E efficiencies, (The Presidency, 2008). Such capabilities are according to The DPME (2020, p.34), largely influenced by the way an institution is structured or configured, over and above the other internal factors impacting the institutional capability to “*deliver on its mandate*”.

Costed M&E workplans – according to Kusek & Rist (2004), institutional M&E workplans should align with other organisational plans to ensure a results-based M&E system. Such workplans assist managers in assessing the implementation of projects, programmes and policies through relevant inputs, activities, and outputs directed towards achieving specific project or programme outcomes. M&E workplans therefore need to be adequately costed and budgeted for with such plans outlining how allocated financial resources are to be used to achieve identified M&E objectives. Additionally, workplans must demonstrate how human resources, materials and time are to be utilised to ensure achievement of set M&E objectives, (Kusek & Rist, 2004; Otundo, 2019). Costed M&E workplans are therefore critical tools for achieving the DPME (2011, 2019) aim of ensuring M&E systems provide evidence-based performance outcomes and cost-effective decisions across the South African public sector.

Routine programme monitoring – Rossi et al., (2004, p.45) and Stofile, (2017) note programme monitoring as focusing on “*monitoring/tracking programme performance*” during implementation of each programme phase or throughout various stages of its life cycle. According to Masilo, (2021) and Kusek & Rist, (2004), programme monitoring is a continuous and routine function for ensuring systematic data collection

based on specific performance indicators to provide managers and key stakeholders progress updates on programme interventions. Programme monitoring thus assists government in determining what is working well and what is not working thereby guiding service delivery improvements, (Masilo, 2021). For M&E to be “*operationally effective*” as a critical public management tool it must be routine, regularised with institutionalised robust systems in place that are resilient and not based on individual employees, (The Presidency, 2007, p.3).

Periodic evaluations – among other authors, Rossi et al., (2004); Morra Imas & Rist, (2009) and Stofile, (2017) view periodic evaluations as being crucial to assessing effectiveness and efficiency with a view to improving the performance of programmes. In this regard evaluations aid the determination of the merit or value of programme interventions, thereby enhancing programme accountability through assessing overall effectiveness to guide future improvements (Rossi et al., 2004). Kimaro et al., (2018) acknowledge the role of periodic external performance evaluations in developing African countries whilst also calling for governments to ensure employees are adequately capacitated to coordinate project and programme evaluations. In this regard, the DPME, (2011; 2019) and National Treasury, (2007) require Accounting Officers of South African government institutions to establish M&E systems that enable the periodic assessment of past programme performance through evaluations.

Data dissemination and use – to stimulate a demand for M&E information Kimaro, et al., (2018) identified a need for national strategies linked to plans and budgets to strengthen the validity of the information and thereby create a demand for it. It is thus critical for governments to raise awareness about the benefits of M&E, thereby strengthening its demand and increasing the likelihood of government departments and entities effectively using M&E information to improve performance and strengthen governance. Accordingly, M&E information must be shared with key stakeholders and used to inform the planning and implementation of future programme interventions and enhance accountability for performance results (Kusek & Rist, 2004; Stofile, 2017; Makadzange, 2020). Public sector institutions must therefore establish an “*information dissemination plan*” through their M&E workplans to institutionalise effective dissemination and use of M&E information, (Otundo, 2019, p.2). The development of dissemination processes to publicise M&E reports on publicly accessible platforms

such as government websites is critical for sharing M&E findings and performance results with key stakeholders, (DPME, 2019).

M&E culture, communication, and advocacy – according to Otundo, (2019), M&E culture, communication, and advocacy relate to the existence of organisational policies, guidelines and strategies aimed at supporting the M&E function. It involves mechanisms supported across the institutional hierarchy to continuously communicate and advocate for M&E initiatives to instil an institutional M&E culture. Integrating M&E with institutional systems, planning and performance management frameworks is key to the promotion of effective utilisation of M&E information and establishment of an organisational M&E culture to instil M&E practices (Cloete, et al., 2014).

Porter and Goldman (2013) argue that public sector reforms require institutions to build an M&E culture enabling the use of M&E results in planning, budgeting, and decision-making. Accordingly, The Presidency (2007); DPME (2011); Stofile (2017) and Kusek & Rist (2004) acknowledge the result-based management approach as necessitating the establishment of an M&E culture that supports M&E institutionalisation. An organisation's structure, policies, processes, governance frameworks and values, should be interwoven with its environment and culture according to Cloete, Rabie & De Coning, (2014). Considering these discussions, it is evident that the various components required for institutionalising M&E systems will yield little to no success if they are not underpinned by a positive M&E culture, proper communication of M&E information and advocacy for M&E.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the M&E function and related literature on its institutionalisation within the public sector. The conceptualisation and discussion of key terms relevant to the M&E, performance management and governance discourse within government was important for providing greater insight to this study. The chapter further explored literature relating to the purpose of M&E, requirements for establishing effective and sustainable M&E systems as well as the key elements for establishing requisite institutional arrangements for M&E institutionalisation. The chapter concludes by outlining a conceptual framework for M&E institutionalisation

modelled from the existing DPME (2019) diagnostic, planning, monitoring, and evaluation cycle to guide the framing of this qualitative study and its literature review. Accordingly, the key components necessary for M&E institutionalisation were explored with a view to assess their contribution towards improving organisational performance and governance within the public sector. Such an analysis has been premised on M&E institutionalisation being viewed as a critical public management reform contributing towards improving public sector efficiency, performance, and governance.

3.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the research methodology and approach adopted towards achieving the research objectives. The study focuses on the extent of M&E institutionalisation within SANSA and assessing its contribution towards improved organisational performance and promoting governance. This chapter therefore provides an overview of the research methods employed in structuring this study and outlines the research paradigm, strategy, design, sampling, data collection and analysis strategies that guided the study. Furthermore, it details the limitations and feasibility concerns, the researcher's introspection in relation to both positionality and ethical considerations as these have been instrumental in shaping the research approach to ensure achievement of the research objectives.

3.2 Research Paradigm

This research study was conducted with a view to explore the contribution of monitoring and evaluation towards improved organisational performance and the promotion of governance within SANSA and it has drawn from the qualitative interpretivist approach. The use of a quantitative approach in conducting M&E studies is according to Black, (1999) not seen as a problem, rather the problem arises in cases where there limited or no interpretation of data resulting in the figures and statistics becoming the definitive answers to questions. The constructivist approach is according to Naidoo (2011) primarily concerned with social contexts and the issues they produce with an understanding that such problems can only be solved by returning to the same contexts. Social interactions therefore shape the individuals' reality. This was given due consideration by the researcher and ultimately informed the selection of the interpretivist approach as being more appropriate for this study.

According to Brown & Strega (2005) interpretive research is done to provide an outlook of the social reality of others as it reveals the values, meanings, rules, and interpretive systems they apply to life. In the interpretivist approach the researcher must provide

descriptions and draw conclusions from the study that make sense to the subjects of the study (and those in similar contexts) and allow others to also understand this reality for the truth to be discovered. Studies by Stofile (2017); Cloete, Rabie & De Coning, (2014) and Porter & Goldman (2013) among other authors demonstrate that M&E institutionalisation should be linked to organisational culture as it is impacted by the behaviours of people. The interpretivism approach was therefore relevant for determining individual perceptions to gain an understanding of the extent of M&E institutionalisation within the space agency. Siswana (2007) supports the argument that improvements to the institutional environment including the rules, norms and customs of an organisation greatly enhance accountability and improve public sector governance.

Magagula (2019, p.67) is also supportive of the view that the *“sustainability of an M&E system cannot be realised if it is not institutionalised or entrenched in the institution’s policies, strategies, structures, programmes, practices and budget planning cycles”*. This resonated well with the basis for this study which was initiated through an examination of the extent of M&E institutionalisation within the space agency prior to assessing its contribution to organisational performance and governance. Given the context-specific nature of this qualitative research an interpretivist lens was considered as appropriate for the exploration of these phenomena in response to the research questions.

3.3 Research Design

Babbie & Mouton (2001, p.288) define qualitative case studies as *“intensive investigations of a single unit, with its context being a significant part of the investigation”*. According to Babbie & Mouton (2001), case studies allow for the consideration of a multitude of perspectives while attempting to gain an understanding of social systems or subjects. The researcher thus considered the case study approach as most appropriate for gaining meaningful insights into the SANSA M&E system, the extent of its institutionalisation and its contribution to improving performance and promoting governance within the space agency.

Accordingly, the selected research design for this study was applied research premised on the action research design utilising the SANSA case study. Cornwell (1999) describes action research as a process involving a systematic self-reflective enquiry approach followed by participants who are also members of a research community. Its relevance to the SANSA context was premised on interactions with internal employees providing meaningful feedback and aiding identification of issues considered as being problematic by research participants. The aim was for such issues to then be further investigated with a view of bringing about change to the institution's M&E function. Findings and recommendations emanating from the research study will generate critical knowledge to strengthen M&E institutionalisation and its contribution towards enhancing organisational performance and governance within the space agency. This aligns with the action research design goals that involve making an intervention efficient and effective, empowering the participants, and bringing about the generation of knowledge, (Yang & Miller, 2008).

3.4 Research Strategy

Bryman (2016) describes qualitative research as a research strategy which places emphasis on the meaning of words rather than quantifying data for analysis in research. A qualitative study is an ideal research strategy as it allows a researcher to conduct in-depth exploration of complex phenomena within a determined specific context according to Rashid et.al., (2019). Given that qualitative research is usually associated with the exploration of context related phenomena it was therefore selected as the preferred research strategy for this study.

The study therefore followed a qualitative approach in exploring the SANSA M&E system and its institutionalisation preceded by the development of a semi-structured interview guide. Smith, Harrè and Langenhoven (1995, p.9-26) express the view that researchers in general *“use semi-structured interviews to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts, of a particular topic”*. This enables the researcher follow up on relevant avenues of interest as they emerge during the interview with participants provided an opportunity to expand their opinions on such avenues.

This aligned with the research objectives as it enabled the researcher to engage research respondents through utilisation of a semi-structured interview guide to solicit feedback from respondents. This was further augmented by document analysis and a literature review process seeking answers to the research questions. The qualitative research approach aimed to build an understanding of perspectives relating to the SANSA M&E system, identify challenges and necessary reforms to bring about improvements to organisational performance and governance.

3.5 Population and Sampling

A sample is best described as a segment systematically selected from the population for a specific investigation and it serves to ensure the process is seen as being fair and credible by the broader community, internal and external stakeholders (Cochran & Patton, 2007). Sampling approaches may include snowball, quota, accidental, convenience, purposive, volunteering, and simple random sampling methods, (Nonyane, 2019). The purposive sampling method is supported according to Babbie & Mouton (2001) and Morra-Imas & Rist (2009) as being most relevant in instances where the researcher is guided by a specific purpose. According to Patton, (1990, p.169) purposeful non-random sampling is a common sampling method in qualitative research given that it allows for the consideration of “*information rich*” individual participants, groups, and settings for selection. The selection of research participants was based on their direct involvement with M&E system and their proximity to the SANSA head office. The purposive non-random sampling method was considered a suitable approach due to the specific focus on management employees of the space agency who specifically play a role in the M&E system of the public entity.

The case study research was therefore pursued through a targeted sample comprising of the five programmes of the space agency, namely Programme 1: Administration; Programme 2: Earth Observation; Programme 3: Space Science; Programme 4: Space Operations and Programme 5: Space Engineering. To ensure broad coverage of respondents the targeted population comprised officials across all occupation levels of the institution from all the five programmes supporting SANSA's M&E system. Table 2 below outlines the distribution of respondents by occupation level:

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation Level

Occupation Level	Number
Executive Management	2
Management	10
Professional	11
Administrative	11
Total	34

3.6 Data Collection

The required data for this study was gathered through primary and secondary sources to gain an understanding of the M&E system within SANSA. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with employees involved in organisational performance management to solicit views on the SANSA M&E system, its institutionalisation and its contribution to organisational performance and governance. To enhance the data collection process the researcher assumed positions of participant or non-participant observer over a duration of a six months as deemed appropriate. The researcher at times assumed a non-participant observer role in strategic planning and performance feedback meetings led by the SANSA executives, where focus was on noting issues raised made by management and employees in preparation for fieldwork. Insights from these discussions were valuable during the planning phase of this study as relevant notes and observations informed development of the semi-structured interview guide with a view to ensure it can adequately address the research question.

Fusch et al., (2018) describe saturation as the point at which a researcher has collected all the required data with no further room for new relevant data or information to be collected from respondents. Given the subjectivity associated with reaching saturation, a study conducted by Mwita (2022) which was premised on a review of twenty-four journal articles discovered multiple views on determining the number of subjects that are sufficient for saturation as such vary from study to study with authors citing 5 to 9 to 17 respondents. Findings of the study are pointing out five key factors likely to affect data saturation, (i) the pre-determined codes and / or themes; (ii) the size of the selected sample; (iii) relevance of the respondents; (iv) the research

methods; and (v) the length or duration of data collection sessions, (Mwita, 2022). There were fifty targeted respondents for interviews to be conducted with twenty-eight of the thirty-four total respondents preferring to also provide additional written responses. In view of the factors cited above this was considered as being sufficient to reach saturation and ensure sufficient data is collected to support the drawing of research conclusions a pattern of recurring themes was emerging from the research respondents.

The process of gathering secondary data for this study involved exploring literature and conducting document analysis focused on relevant government and institutional M&E publications. Such documents included M&E policies and frameworks, SANSA Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans as well as annual reports. The researcher conducted the analysis of policies, reports, and other relevant documents to draw comparisons between the M&E system of the space agency and the relevant legislative policy frameworks and guidelines of government. Accordingly, the study further explored the research participants' understanding of these policies, guidelines, frameworks in relation to SANSA's M&E practices. The knowledge contribution will assist the entity with the identification of gaps and necessary measures to transform the M&E system and enhance its effectiveness as a tool for improving organisational performance and promoting governance.

3.7 Data Analysis

The research objectives and research questions were critical in framing the data analysis process. The researcher utilised elements identified in the preliminary literature review phase as being key in M&E institutional arrangements to formulate the semi-structured interview guide and manage data collection and analysis. The views and perceptions of respondents were solicited through a semi-structured interview guide which covered the broad dimensions outlined in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Semi-structured Interview Guide Dimensions

Dimension	Focus Area
The SANSA M&E system	M&E system alignment with government M&E policies, frameworks, and practices
Institutionalisation of M&E within SANSA	M&E system institutionalisation and effectiveness
M&E capacity within SANSA	M&E capacity building interventions
The role of the M&E function	Advocacy, communication, and use of M&E information
The effectiveness of M&E in promoting governance within SANSA	M&E governance and accountability
Reforms towards an effective M&E system	Mechanisms to strengthen the M&E system and its institutionalisation

The semi-structured interview guide utilised for data collection across the five programmes of the space agency was aimed at ensuring responses to the research questions are diversified to adequately address the research problem. The participant interviews were conducted by the researcher using English as the commonly accepted medium of communication within SANSA as a government entity. Responses were recorded by the researcher to aid the review and analysis of data for purposes of documenting findings. The semi-structured interview guide informed the data collection process rather than dictating thus demonstrating its importance in terms of allowing participants to provide necessary clarifications and more detailed accounts of their experiences as indicated by Smith, et al., (1995).

Bryman, et al., (2016) reflect that qualitative data analysis should be started by determining key indicators which serve as a guide for the review process to inform the emergence of themes. Thematic analysis is according to Naeem (2023, p.1), *“a highly popular technique among qualitative researchers for analyzing qualitative data, which usually comprises thick descriptive data”*. Accordingly, thematic analysis was deemed an appropriate approach for interpreting the data for this study by organising it into broad themes guided by the semi-structured interview guide dimensions outlines in Table 3 above. Steps followed by the researcher in conducting thematic data analysis as suggested by Charmaz & Thornberg (2021) and Naeem et al., (2023) are summarised below:

Step 1: Familiarisation – this is an important first step used by a researcher to gain a better understanding of or get to know the research data through an overview of collected data prior to analysing the feedback. Within the context of this study familiarisation involved data transcription and a deep dive into content by the researcher to determine the emerging themes relating to each dimension of the semi-structured interview guide. The selection of appropriate direct quotations bringing life into the data and aptly representing different views and patterns applicable to the objectives of this study was critical. To maintain the anonymity of respondents, direct quotations from respondents as discussed in Chapter 4 of this report were however not captured in a manner that links individual respondents to the responses.

Step 2: Selecting Keywords – according to Naeem et al., (2023) thematic analysis for qualitative research involves selecting the correct key phrases and terms as a crucial step. To accurately reflect the interpretations and perspectives of participants, researchers need to select frequently used and most suitable key phrases and terms to guide the creation of codes accurately reflecting underlying meanings of data. For this study the researcher sought relevant key phrases and terms through rigorously reviewing interview transcripts, documented participant responses, statements and quotations as provided through the semi-structured interview guide. This enabled the selection of meaningful keywords as the second step of the thematic analysis process.

Step 3: Coding – Charmaz & Thornberg (2021) cite coding as a critical part of thematic analysis requiring the highlighting of sections in the data including key phrases and sentences to establish labels or codes describing their content. The core idea or theme of a specific data segment helps the researcher to create meaningful, concise codes. Placing reliance on code development guidance provided by Naeem et al., (2023) the researcher found the selected keywords to be a critical basis in developing codes for this study. Accordingly, the researcher followed an approach of using selected keywords for identifying data patterns, coding, and grouping data categorically into broader themes in alignment with the semi-structured interview guide.

Step 4: Development of Themes – themes seek to provide “a significant link between research questions and data” (Naeem et al., 2023, p.10). This step according to Charmaz & Thornberg (2021) requires a researcher to assess the codes that have

been developed with the aim of, identifying emerging patterns and developing broader themes. This process may necessitate combining several codes to develop a specific theme. In developing the key themes for this study, the researcher transitioned from analysing the codes in detail and categorising them towards interpreting these through the creation of themes. The clustering of data into themes enabled the researcher to analyse the qualitative feedback, determine its meaning and organise it into thematic areas in accordance with the research objectives and questions.

Step 5: Writing Up – The final step taken by the researcher in conducting the thematic analysis for this study was the write up of the thematic analysis. Charmaz & Thornberg (2021) suggest that the thematic analysis write up should be directly aligned to the research question, objectives, and approach. This report accordingly outlines the methodology and data collection approaches followed by the researcher with the semi-structured interview guide serving as a basis for the thematic analysis of collected data. The presentation and discussion of research findings as outlined in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this report respectively addresses the key themes emanating from this analysis and reflects the interpretation of their meaning. The views and perceptions of respondents were thus critical in providing key takeaways to inform the data analysis process and ensure it adequately addresses the research objectives and questions.

3.8 Limitations and Feasibility

Creswell, (2014) cites limitations or disadvantages of qualitative research as including its limited generalisability beyond a specific pre-defined environment. Given that this is a qualitative case study focusing on SANSA and its specific context, the aim is not to broadly generalise its findings externally to public entity settings across government. A key limitation encountered in planning this research study related to time and budgetary constraints given the qualitative and context-driven nature of the study. The success of the study was dependent on the availability and willingness of participants across SANSA's five programmes as their lack of cooperation could have compromised the success of this research project. The researcher mitigated this challenge by reasoning with targeted participants to ensure they understood the importance of this study for identifying and implementing necessary M&E reforms.

Respondents therefore participated with the understanding that their feedback would contribute towards addressing the public entity's performance and governance related challenges through strengthening the effective use of the M&E system.

3.9 Positionality

According to Holmes (2020), positionality describes the individual's view of the world and their position in relation to a research study, its social or political context and it influences the way research is conducted as well as the research outcomes. A researcher's positionality is therefore identified in relation to the following areas: (i) the subject being investigated; (ii) relationship with research participants; and (iii) the context of the research. The researcher was instrumental in planning this research study, selecting the most suitable methodology and approach, identifying data collection and analysis methods that would be useful in engaging the management and employees of SANSA. This provided them an opportunity to share their perspectives of the entity's M&E system based on lived experiences.

The study was initiated through a process of reflection by the researcher to identify the research problem as guided by Crouch and Pearce (2012), thus emanating in an action research project being conducted to address the identified research problem and related research questions. Since researcher was in the unit responsible for developing and implementing the SANSA M&E system objectivity throughout the entire research process was key and reliance was placed on the primary and secondary data sources to mitigate any possibility of a biased position. This aligns with the viewpoint of Brynard & Hanekom (1997), which requires researchers to maintain the integrity of qualitative research through committing to viewing the world from the perspective of research participants by focusing on their lived experiences.

A challenge encountered by the researcher in this regard was mainly attributable to her positioning as an M&E Manager of the public entity directly reporting to the Chief Executive Officer and participating in senior management meetings. This initially impacted the researcher's engagements with research participants due to the existence of power dynamics as some respondents associated the researcher with leadership structures and were therefore hesitant to participate in the study. This to a

certain degree may have also driven some respondents towards providing feedback based on what they thought they were expected to say (e.g. positive feedback) rather than giving honest accounts from their lived experiences of SANSA's M&E system. The power dynamic was recognised early in the data collection phase, and it required continuous and intentional re-iterations by the researcher calling for honest, transparent, and free engagements to ensure objectives of the study were not compromised. It is anticipated, however, that the researcher being embedded within the M&E system of the space agency will serve as an advantage when it comes to motivating for use of findings and recommendations from this study to bring about future reforms relating to M&E institutionalisation.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Görgens & Kusek (2010) flag the need for a researcher to follow ethical standards in conducting research as ethics seek to protect the research subjects from harm. In conducting this study, consent letters ensured participants in the research were given an opportunity to provide consent for their participation in the study through a semi-structured interview guide approach. A letter of permission to undertake the study was duly submitted by the researcher to the Chief Executive Officer of the space agency seeking to utilise the public entity as a subject of the case study. Permission was accordingly granted for the study to be undertaken given its potential to make aid the identification of gaps and areas for improvement relating to the space agency's M&E system thereby enhancing its contribution to organisational performance and governance.

Ethical considerations relating to respect and truth, transparency and honesty remained central to all interactions with respondents within the space agency as the researcher took due care in ensuring that no coercion formed part of the research approach. Respondents were also informed of their right to voluntary participation in this research study and their right to privacy was safeguarded throughout the research process. The anonymity of the respondents was protected during all research phases related to the capturing, analysis, storage, and reporting of collected data. This was made possible by the researcher ensuring the semi-structure interview guide did not

provide for the recording of respondents' personal or identification details such as their programmes, names, surnames, employee numbers and designations.

3.11 Trustworthiness of the Research

Qualitative research delves into the complex details of human behaviour, attitudes, and experiences, focusing on nuances and context and ensuring trustworthiness is essential for establishing the credibility and reliability of research findings, according to Ahmed, (2024). Validity is primarily concerned with determining the extent to which research findings and conclusions are well – founded, according to Vasileiou et al., (2018). Trustworthiness on the other hand is related to the determination of credibility in qualitative research as an alternative to validity (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004). While researchers aim to be trusted to produce credible representations, unlike their quantitative counterparts who focus on repeatable generalisations, qualitative researchers must demonstrate trustworthiness and credibility in their work. Efforts to converge information from different sources including literature review and document analysis have been critical as a triangulation mechanism to strengthen the trustworthiness of this study and ensure credibility and dependability of the overall research outcomes.

The researcher further undertook pilot testing to identify areas of improvement relating to the respondents' understanding of research questions and language in the semi-structured interview guide as guided by Saunders et. al., (2012). Piloting the semi-structured interview guide to seven respondents assisted the researcher in determining their understanding of the instructions, content, and questions. This was useful in assessing the suitability of the research semi-structured interview guide as the selected research instrument with a view to ascertain the overall credibility, transferability, dependability of the research findings from this qualitative study. While reliability and validity may be critical to ensure quality quantitative research outcomes, where qualitative research paradigms are pursued credibility, transferability, and dependability become the more essential criteria for ensuring quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methodology, design and approach followed to collect the requisite primary and secondary data for this research project. The chapter further provided clarification behind the qualitative research methodology and case study design that were chosen as being best suited for undertaking this exploratory study. The chapter also outlines data collection tools, and the approach employed for analysing collected data, strategies selected to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study, the identified limitations of the study and reflections on the positionality of the researcher. The targeted strategies towards the use of triangulation by placing reliance on multiple sources of information proved to be instrumental in improving the trustworthiness of this qualitative research study as suggested by Johnson, (1997); Guba & Lincoln, (1985) and Tobin & Begley, (2004).

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the research findings and outlines an overview of SANSA as the case study unit, focusing on the public entity's mandate, M&E institutional arrangements, the institutional M&E framework, as well as the planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements. In attempting to address the research objectives and provide answers to the research questions, the data collected for this study was categorised into several key themes to aid the analysis and interpretation of findings.

4.2 An Overview of the SANSA Mandate

The study was conducted within a specific setting of SANSA, as a public entity established in 2010 through the SANSA Act (2008) under the auspices of the Department of Science and Innovation (formerly known as the Department of Science and Technology). The entity has an important mandate of promoting proper use of space through the coordination of space-related activities using research, technology, and space industrial development support.

The 2008 SANSA Act outlines the objectives of the Agency as follows: (i) promoting peaceful use of outer space; (ii) supporting the creation of an environment conducive for industrial development in space technology; (iii) fostering research in space science, communications, navigation and space physics; (iv) advancement of scientific, engineering, and technological competencies and capabilities through development outreach programmes and infrastructure development; as well as (v) fostering international cooperation in space related activities. The SANSA Act (2008) positions SANSA as a public entity responsible for utilising technology for driving the coordination and integration of national space science programmes, steering space and science related research initiatives and ensuring innovation is central to all space-related activities. M&E is thus considered to have a significant role in enhancing the performance of this public entity towards meeting the abovementioned objectives and

promoting accountability in accordance with its mandate and government's legislative requirements.

4.3 Institutional Arrangements

The SANSA vision, mission and programmes as detailed in the entity's revised 2020-2025 Strategic Plan are as follows. Vision: *"An integrated National Space Capability that responds to socio-economic challenges in Africa by 2030"*. Mission Statement: *"To provide leadership in unlocking the potential of Space for the advancement and benefit of humanity"*. Table 4 below outlines the structure and functions of the public entity's programmes that are responsible for achieving the institutional mandate.

Table 4: SANSA Programmes

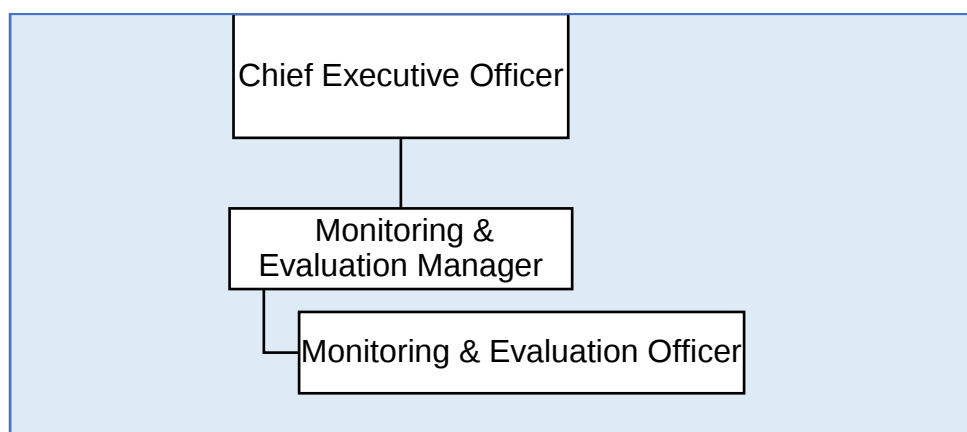
Programmes	Programme Functions
Programme 1: Administration	Responsible for providing administration, financial management, general management, and Information Communications Technology technical support to SANSA business units. It oversees operational efficiencies and the management of costs in alignment with legislative and governance principles while promoting the integration of SANSA programmes.
Programme 2: Earth Observation	Collects, processes, archives, and distributes Earth Observation data and related products and services for the benefit of private and public sector clients as well as society at large. Through this programme SANSA maintains a portfolio of Earth Observation sensors, provides platforms for research and development, collects and processes satellite images in support of science engagement and human capital development.
Programme 3: Space Science	This programme is required to lead space science research including applied and fundamental research. It further supports space related science through the acquisition, administration and coordination of scientific data while also providing magnetic technology and space weather products to both commercial and public sector clients.
Programme 4: Space Operations	The programme acquires satellite data as required by the Earth Observation Programme. It also provides ground segment support to SANSA clients while conducting various space operations, including satellite launches and mission support, testing and satellite lifecycle support for local, regional, and international space missions.
Programme 5: Space Engineering	This programme is primarily responsible for the provision of project management and space systems engineering expertise. It leads the South African satellite building programmes by partnering with multiple contractors, research and development institutions, private and public sector role-players.

The SANSA M&E function is structurally located within Programme 1: Administration as this function is largely considered to be fulfilling a compliance and administrative support function. Accordingly, the primary function of the unit is to provide strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation advisory, and technical and organisational

performance management to support SANSA programmes. This involves continuous engagements with SANSA programmes to coordinate the development of strategic, annual performance and operational plans outlining key performance indicators and targets to be pursued by each programme in a given financial year. The monitoring activities are then directly aligned with the key performance indicators to ensure tracking and reporting of progress relating to programme performance.

The findings of this study indicate that the overall M&E function has not been clearly positioned within the SANSA structure. In terms of the SANSA organisational structure a dedicated M&E unit comprising of an M&E Manager and M&E Officer was established recently by the entity. The M&E Manager and M&E Officer were appointed to their positions in May 2021 and January 2022 respectively. This followed a period of more than two years during which both positions were vacant with resultant gaps relating to the development and implementation of the institutional M&E framework.

Figure 5: SANSA M&E Unit Structure



The reporting line of the SANSA M&E unit as depicted in the figure above has been attached to the office of the Chief Executive Officer since the 2023/24 financial year. The unit reported to the Strategy and Governance Executive during the 2022/23 period and previously responsibility for the M&E function was assigned to the Finance unit under the leadership of the Chief Financial Officer. This was informed by the two-year gap in which there was no M&E human capacity in SANSA, M&E duties were therefore carried out on an ad hoc basis due to the lack of dedicated M&E resources. Such a situation and the resultant instability relating to the M&E function contravened National

Treasury (2011); The Presidency (2007) and DPME (2020) requirements for government departments and entities to ensure the M&E function is strategically positioned and capacitated with adequately skilled employees. In the SANSA context however, there were also inconsistencies found relating to the allocation of adequate financial resources for M&E activities. This was evidenced by a document review which revealed that budgets intended to support operations of the M&E unit were at times diverted towards other functions which were deemed more critical.

4.4 Biographical Information of Respondents

The respondents to this research study comprised employees, managers and senior managers involved in the organisational M&E system and actively employed by the public entity at the time of collecting data. A total of fifty respondents were approached by the researcher with sixteen of the targeted respondents having indicated their unavailability to participate in this study, resulting in a response rate of 68%. This was due to a multitude of reasons including outright refusal by respondents to participate in the study, time constraints, more pressing priorities, travel commitments, failure to honour scheduled appointments and the researcher's failure to reach others.

Distribution by Gender

Given the South African government's focus on gender equity and transformative approaches to all aspect of public sector planning, resource - allocation and rolling of key interventions the gender of research respondents was a critical factor. This assisted in the researcher in ascertaining broad and consultative employee engagements throughout the data collection and analysis processes.

Figure 6: Distribution of Respondents by Gender



As reflected in Figure 6 above the respondents who participated in this study were predominantly (59%) females while the fourteen males comprised the minority (41%) of the total number of respondents.

Distribution by Length of Service

Figure 7: Distribution of Respondents by Length of Service

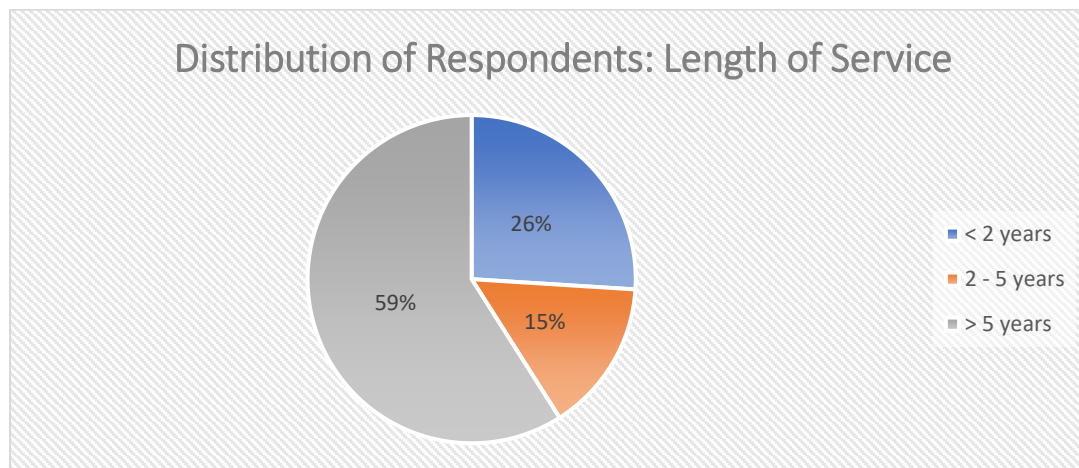


Figure 7 above outlines the breakdown of the respondents grouping in accordance with the length of each respective employee's term in the employ of SANSA. The selection of the respondents depicted in Figure 7 above was informed by their direct engagement in developing and implementing the SANSA M&E system. Since this was an exploratory study focused on the lived experiences and perceptions of respondents of the SANSA M&E system their length of service was important for ensuring findings were representative of their experience.

4.5 Key Research Themes

Key themes which were considered useful in determinisation of the extent of M&E institutionalisation within SANSA, identification of existing gaps within the institutional M&E system and establishment of recommendations to close the identified gaps in accordance with aim of this study can be summarised as follows: (i) An Overview of the SANSA M&E Framework; (ii) SANSA Logic Framework; (iii) SANSA M&E Partnerships and Collaborations; (iv) SANSA M&E Human Capacity; (v) SANSA M&E

Workplans; (vi) Routine Programme Monitoring; (vii) Periodic Evaluations; (viii) Data Dissemination, Communication and Use; (ix) M&E Culture and Advocacy; and (x) Reforms Towards an Effective M&E System. The dimensions of the semi-structured interview guide as discussed below were aligned to these key themes and informed the data collection process and presentation of research findings to ensure research objectives are adequately addressed.

4.5.1 SANSA Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

In keeping with the requirements of DPME's 2020 Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans, SANSA developed an M&E framework which was approved by the entity's Executive Committee in February 2021. The space agency's M&E framework outlines requirements for strategic and annual performance planning, operational planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes. The provision of clear M&E roles and responsibilities through this framework seeks to promote collective accountability for organisational performance.

As required per provisions of the National Treasury (2007) and DPME (2011; 2020) the framework serves to ensure establishment and implementation of an M&E system to guide the development and approval of Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans and Annual Operational Plans. It further makes provision for the related monthly, quarterly, annual, mid-term and end-of-term assessment and reporting requirements.

The key objectives of the framework are to (i) provide a coherent framework for the management of SANSA's performance information based on accountability; (ii) enhance the SANSA internal structures, systems and processes for managing performance information; (iii) promote collective accountability for the provision of timely, complete and accurate performance information in accordance with legislative requirements; and (iv) clearly outline the roles and responsibilities for managing performance information and guidelines for the communication and monitoring of its implementation.

The 2021 SANSA M&E framework further outlines roles and responsibilities of the governance structures, programmes, managers, and employees in supporting the institutionalisation of M&E. The roles and responsibilities related the implementation of the framework are outlined in the table below:

Table 5: M&E Framework Roles and Responsibilities

Person / Structure	Responsibility
Executive Authority	Provides an enabling policy and legislative environment and ensures SANSA develops clear outcomes, performance measures and targets aligned to national priorities of government and exercising adequate oversight.
Accounting Authority	Provides strategic leadership and oversight to ensure SANSA fulfills its mandate in adherence to the applicable legal frameworks.
Executive Committee	Actively participates in strategic planning processes and promotes collective accountability for delivery on the SANSA mandate.
Chief Executive Officer	- Establishes and maintains SANSA systems to manage performance information according to the National Treasury Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information. - Provides strategic leadership and sets the tone for a high-performance culture and collective accountability.
Chief Financial Officer	- Ensures performance management systems are integrated within existing management processes and systems (i.e., link between planning, budgeting, performance monitoring, evaluation, and reporting processes). - Ensures efficient and proper use of SANSA financial resources.
Monitoring and Evaluation Unit	- Establishes and reviews the entity's M&E framework as the basis for managing performance information. - Establishes effective systems and tools for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting against the approved SANSA plans. - Coordinates the provision of regular performance reports to SANSA oversight structures in support of effective oversight.
Programme Managers / Senior Managers	- Ensures SANSA annual performance and operational plans are cascaded annually to all employees through individual performance agreements to promote accountability. - Responsible for overseeing performance in their respective programmes and / or sub-programmes as well as ensuring timely collation and review of progress reports to be submitted to the M&E unit. - Analyse and use performance information for effective performance management and take necessary corrective action to improve performance.

Person / Structure	Responsibility
Business Unit / Line Managers and other Officials	- Responsible for effective implementation and maintenance of performance management systems and processes within their areas of responsibility. - Responsible for proper capturing, collating, and checking performance data related to their activities to enhance the completeness and accuracy of SANSA's overall performance information.
All SANSA Employees	SANSA managers and employees are to discuss and sign annual performance agreements aligned to the Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plans and Annual Operational Plan outcomes, outputs, performance indicators, and targets to ensure alignment of individual activities to organisational performance outcomes.

(Source: SANSA, 2021)

The SANSA M&E framework aims to promote a high-performance culture and enhance collective accountability for organisational performance results through effective performance management. This M&E framework is therefore critical for the establishment and maintenance of effective M&E processes and systems that align with the National Treasury and DPME standards. Although the study established the existence of SANSA's M&E framework, the implementation of this framework and monitoring of performance indicators was found to be somewhat disjointed in its application across the five SANSA programmes. There were instances where multiple programmes contributed towards the same performance indicators with no consistency in approach and processes relating to the coordination and reporting of performance across programmes.

This study was concerned with gauging the extent to which M&E has been institutionalised internally to strengthen its contribution towards improved organisational performance and the promotion of governance. Most (74%) respondents confirmed their awareness of SANSA's M&E framework. There were, however, also expressions of uncertainty concerning some (26%) of the respondents and their inability to clearly express awareness of the existence of the framework. Furthermore, the M&E framework failed to promote utilisation of M&E information across programmes according to respondents due to the poorly integrated efforts across programmes.

According to Masilo, et al., (2021), poor service delivery in South Africa is generally attributed to the lack of M&E systems or poorly coordinated M&E efforts within government institutions. To emphasise this point, these authors cite examples such as limited utilisation of M&E results or inadequate M&E capacity within public institutions as causal factors. To this end, Masombuka & Thani (2023) reflect that M&E systems need to be established and supported by an enabling environment with sufficient capacity and a positive institutional culture to function well and contribute to improved planning, decision-making and service delivery. The institutionalisation of M&E is therefore critical in ensuring a common M&E understanding in the public entity with adequate systems in place to support its sustainability, enhance performance and accountability. In this regard the SANSA M&E framework is a critical tool for assessing the extent to which the M&E system is institutionalised and used appropriately for improving organisational performance and governance.

4.5.2 SANSA Logic Framework

The Revised 2020 DPME Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans requires the entity to prepare and submit to the DSI for approval a 5 – year Strategic Plan outlining key priorities to be pursued in accordance with the mandate and objectives provided in the SANSA Act (2008). The entity has been fully compliant with these legislative requirements and the five-year 2020 – 2025 Revised Strategic Plan remains central to the monitoring and reporting of organisational performance outcomes.

The Revised DPME Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans (DPME, 2020) and SANSA's M&E framework (SANSA, 2021) further make provision for the preparation of Annual Performance Plans (APPs) by public entities and the tracking of progress against same through organisational performance reports on a quarterly basis. In keeping with the DPME and National Treasury reporting requirements, SANSA, through the Board as an Accounting Authority, prepares and submits quarterly performance reports to the DSI in support of the Shareholder's legislated oversight responsibility.

In relation to Annual Operational Plans (AOPs), the Revised DPME Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans (DPME, 2020) and SANSA's M&E framework (SANSA, 2021) provide guidelines for the development of AOPs and monitoring of programme interventions through monthly AOP progress reports. The routine monitoring of programme performance aims to enable the determination of early warning signals for potential non-achievement areas that may negatively impact organisational performance and put adequate interventions in place.

The study established SANSA's adoption of the logic framework and its related theory of change in developing the key indicators, outputs, and outcomes to be achieved by its programmes as guided by Kusek & Rist (2004) and the DPME (2021). This seeks to address identified developmental problems through programme interventions and promote evidence-driven M&E approaches and practices within the public entity.

4.5.3 SANSA M&E Partnerships and Collaborations

Goldman, et al., (2019) recommend collaborative public sector planning and budgeting processes that draw from M&E results indicating that key systems useful for embedding this include effective use of senior management performance agreements aligned to planned organisational performance outcomes.

Accordingly, this research theme focused on investigating the extent to which the entity's employees and managers who play a role in the organisational strategic planning and performance management processes viewed M&E as allowing them opportunity to contribute to the promotion of governance within SANSA. In discussing the mechanisms to promote transparency within government Saila (2017) notes the availability of information as being critical for measuring levels of transparency. The section below therefore outlines findings on the perceptions of respondents relating to M&E information within SANSA and how it impacts accountability and transparency as key principles of governance.

On the issue of determining the effectiveness of SANSA's M&E system in terms of a positive contributing to organisational performance outcomes and governance the

majority (64%) raised positive views in this regard. Respondents, however, indicated a need for greater M&E collaboration and engagement with programmes to increase the demand for M&E information and ensure SANSA's M&E system better contributes to organisational performance outcomes and governance. This was critical for enhancing institutional awareness of the role and importance of M&E, more so, considering feedback by Respondent 5 which indicates that *"M&E is sometimes seen as a policing function especially at business unit level"*.

According to most (53%) respondents their involvement and internal stakeholders in institutional planning and performance management processes provides them an opportunity to contribute towards the promotion of governance within SANSA. On the other hand, there were also respondents who indicated their uncertainty or disagreement. A strongly emerging view was the need for ongoing involvement of all employees in planning to drive not only awareness but also collective buy-in for enhancing organisational performance and governance within SANSA. This according to Respondents 16 and 8 would assist with regards to capacitating employees and *"embedding a culture of performance across the space agency"* and strengthen the *"adoption of the SANSA Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework across the agency for a top-down and bottom-up approach to performance"*.

Respondents 1 and 10 flagged a concern of *"M&E as a function not being well-understood by employees"* and its related reporting thus perceived to be *"a tick in a box exercise"* with inadequate follow-through on M&E findings and recommended mitigation actions to close performance gaps in some programmes. Other respondents were uncertain as to extent to which M&E information is adding value to the entity calling for greater engagement between the M&E unit and programmes to address this concern. This requires the entity to strengthen M&E collaborations and partnerships with both internal and external stakeholders for optimal value to be derived from M&E information.

4.5.4 SANSA M&E Human Capital Capacity

The National Treasury FMPPI (2007) places responsibility on the Accounting Officer of each public entity to ensure there are proper systems in place for the effective monitoring of organisational performance. Accounting Officers further need to ensure there is adequate M&E capacity within a public institution. As reflected above the SANSA M&E function is in the developmental stages and comprises of two human resources with one occupying a managerial role while the other is charged with the provision of administrative support.

The scope of work of the SANSA M&E function as provided by the 2020 DPME Framework for Strategic and Annual Performance Plans; the 2007 National Treasury FMPPI and the space agency's 2021 M&E framework is outlined below:

- Leading the development and implementation of the SANSA M&E system.
- Coordinating the development of APPs outlining strategic outcomes, outputs and targets aligned to the SANSA 5-year Strategic Plan and ensuring these are approved within the legislated timelines.
- Monitoring quarterly progress towards achievement of APP targets for reporting to Board Committees, Board, the Shareholder and Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Science and Innovation.
- Facilitating the development of AOPs aligned to the APPs, monitoring and reporting monthly progress for reporting to the Executive Committee.
- Ensuring SANSA compliance with Public Finance Management Act requirements for the development of Annual Reports for submission to National Treasury, the Shareholder and External Auditors within 5 months of the end of each financial year.
- Serving as the primary custodian of SANSA's performance information and thus being responsible for the completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of such information through verification of the related portfolio of evidence.
- Ensuring SANSA conducts periodic evaluations to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of its programme intervention as aligned to the institutional mandate.

- Serving as a key link between the public entity, external auditors, National Treasury, the DSI and DPME amongst other key stakeholders.

In keeping with the M&E scope of work outlined above respondents were required to outline their views on the key challenges likely to hinder the effectiveness of M&E in enhancing governance within SANSA. Respondent 2 pointed to inadequate resourcing of the M&E function by SANSA stating that: *“it must be adequately capacitated in terms of increased budget and appointment of additional resources.”*

The study also found that the M&E unit human resources possessed required strategic planning, monitoring, and reporting skills with extensive experience in these areas but with limited technical inclination towards programme evaluations. This is, however, not a phenomenon that is unique to the SANSA M&E unit as the general lack of evaluation capacity in the South African public sector is acknowledged by the DPME (2011; 2019) in its National Policy Evaluation Frameworks. The DPME through its 2019 - 2024 NEPF reflects government’s commitment towards building evaluation capacity of the state relating to evaluation methodologies and approaches. According to respondents a gap was identified in relation to the adequacy of the M&E unit’s capability to fully meet the legislative and policy requirements for effective planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Such a concern features prominently in the research feedback received regarding SANSA’s M&E capacity as respondents who indicated that SANSA’s M&E function is adequately capacitated to enhance the effectiveness of M&E system and governance were in the minority (47%).

Respondent 4 reflected the view that *“more resources would help embed a culture of performance”* and furthermore Respondent 6 stated that there are *“inadequate development – related workshops”* being conducted by SANSA to build M&E capacity. In this regard SANSA’s M&E capacity was not merely considered in relation to the knowledge and skills of the M&E unit but also regarding the extent to which they are able to fulfil M&E their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the M&E framework. This includes the provision of technical, advisory, and capacity building support to programmes. In relation to the capacity building respondents highlighted their awareness of M&E training and capacity building sessions held within SANSA over

the past two years though these were considered as not being carried out widely and frequently enough.

Respondents viewed the SANSA M&E function as not being sufficiently capacitated citing a need for the M&E team to be further capacitated from the both the human and financial resource perspectives. This would ensure the unit effectively carries out its strategic planning, organisational performance monitoring, reporting and evaluation duties and drives continuous M&E awareness and capacity building initiatives to build a positive M&E culture.

4.5.5 SANSA M&E Workplans

The DPME (2011; 2020) highlights the importance of M&E as a tool to aid evidence-based decision-making within an organisation. This needs to be anchored on the development of annual workplans and budgets to ensure effectiveness of the M&E function. The study found most (91%) respondents understand the importance of evidence – based policy making and recognise that M&E has a critical role to play in this regard. Respondents, however, indicated that M&E information does to a certain extent inform programme decisions linked to project planning, resource allocation and implementation. Room for improvement towards a uniform approach to the use of M&E information in planning and resource allocation was however noted by respondents as annual planning within the entity was not guided by the development of costed and resourced workplans.

Ojok, (2016) places emphasis on M&E systems needing to be appropriately institutionalised and resourced as failure to do this may result in employees resenting the M&E function. Traces of such M&E resentment by employees were detected in the case study of SANSA as Respondents 1, 6, 12 and 3 referred to M&E as a “*policing*” function that presents an “*administrative burden*” to programmes. This feedback was informed by perceptions of the M&E purpose being primarily that of organisational performance monitoring and progress reporting for legislative and regulatory compliance.

4.5.6 Routine Programme Monitoring

The role of the M&E function within SANSA is provide guidance to the organisation in relation to strategic planning processes as well as the monitoring and evaluation of programme interventions to ensure evidence-based decision-making. In keeping with DPME requirements and institutional M&E framework the function ensures credible information is generated in relation to progress made towards achieving organisational performance which is then regularly analysed to inform evidence-based planning and decision-making. Given that the SANSA M&E system is manual respondents raised a need for digital tools to support automation in the areas of M&E data collection, evidence archiving and reporting.

Respondent 17 highlighted the importance of M&E within the context of SANSA having a system in place to ensure availability of M&E information that *“encapsulates the goals, key performance indicators and key performance areas which are used as a yardstick to determine what the organisation must do to fulfil its mandate in terms of the SANSA Act”*. Respondent 26 further indicated a need for SANSA to strengthen the use of M&E information by ensuring *“lessons are incorporated into new strategies”* for informed planning and decision-making which would in turn positively influence the allocation of resources.

Further concerns raised by respondents related to the use of routine programme monitoring information to promote transparency and accountability. This they believe will aid the identification of early warning signals in instances where SANSA is not performing according to the required standards, to ensure allocated (and usually scarce) resources are used efficiently. Respondents hold the view that monitoring information also serves to improve the timeliness and quality of decision-making across the space agency. M&E information is thus required to ensure availability of timely and accurate performance reports for purposes of compliance with legislative requirements and to support oversight by the Accounting and Executive Authorities.

There were also concerns raised in relation to what Respondent 19 referred to as *“unreasonable reporting deadlines”* which contribute to the late submission of reports

by programmes and further exert undue pressure on the M&E unit given the risk of organisational non-compliance to statutory timelines. The manual reporting mechanisms were cited as a concern by Respondent 7 given that such negatively affect data collection and the quality of M&E reports with concerns raised that *“poor quality data may lead to poor quality reporting”*.

A question was posed through the semi-structured interview guide pertaining to the extent to which the M&E function within SANSA is perceived to be adding value to organisational programmes and whether it provides useful information relating to organisational performance. While the minority (12%) of the respondents were uncertain of these aspects the majority (88%) of respondents provided affirmative responses of M&E’s positive contribution to organisational performance. Explanatory responses provided in this regard reflected the existence of mechanisms for routine monitoring of organisational performance; partial alignment of SANSA programmes to the entity’s M&E framework; the identification of performance gaps and development of mitigation actions to improve performance outcomes as deemed necessary.

An overwhelming majority (76%) of respondents acknowledged the existence of an M&E system within the space agency acknowledging that regular (monthly, quarterly, and annual) M&E reporting forms an integral part of SANSA’s operational processes. Over and above the monthly and quarterly performance reports, SANSA’s Accounting Authority in exercising its oversight powers is required by The Presidency (2007); DPME (2020) and National Treasury (2007) to ensure the entity submits Annual Reports by 31 August annually to the DSI, National Treasury and the Auditor General. The annual reports enable SANSA governance structures to assess progress made towards achieving the entity’s desired outcomes and impact in accordance with the legislative mandate provided by the SANSA Act (2008).

The abovementioned planning and reporting mechanisms align with the guidance provided by Patton (1997) for an M&E system to effectively ensure compliance through data management processes. There were however also responses reflecting a need for the organisation to be trained further on M&E with strengthened support relating to the collection and collation of data and the evidence supporting reported programme achievements.

4.5.7 SANSA Periodic Evaluations

The semi-structured interview guide sought to establish a wholistic view of the respondent's understanding of the SANSA M&E system as guided by each individual employee's experience of the system. The study found that the entity's process of developing its M&E system was not fully in accordance with the results-based guidance provided by Kusek & Rist (2004).

The document analysis revealed that SANSA is non-compliant when it comes to the DPME requirement for 0.1% to 5% of each programme intervention's budget to be set-aside for evaluations. This has been attributed by respondents to budget constraints and the fact that the evaluation function within SANSA and generally across government remains in the developmental stages with no legislative compliance consequences meted to public institutions.

It was further established that the ten steps identified by Kusek & Rist (2004) as being critical to build sustainable results-based M&E systems were not fully followed within the public entity. Gaps in this regard related to SANSA's failure to periodically plan and implement evaluations (given its M&E efforts being focused on monitoring); institutional failure to analyse and utilise M&E in support of decision-making across all programmes and failure to use M&E as a tool for accountability, sharing knowledge and learnings.

On the main respondents recognised the contribution of monitoring reports in aiding decision – making within SANSA. There were however no indications of the extent to which M&E findings and recommendations influenced the coordination of periodic evaluations as this was found to be a gap in relation to the implementation of SANSA's M&E framework given the historical lack of coordinated periodic evaluations.

4.5.8 Data Dissemination, Communication and Use

Respondents were called upon to provide reflections on M&E data utilisation, communication and the use of M&E information to support decision-making by SANSA management and employees. This was primarily relating to the planning and implementation of key projects and initiatives. Although in the minority (38%), some respondents held the view that there is a lack of transparency in the way M&E reporting is carried out across SANSA programmes. This aligns with concerns raised by employees in the earlier sections of this chapter regarding perceived inconsistencies relating to the effective cascading and use of M&E information to inform decision-making at a programme level. It may also be viewed as pointing to a need for strengthening the dissemination approach to ensure timely availability of M&E information to all internal stakeholders by the M&E unit.

The study found a dominant view of M&E being perceived to be a compliance-driven priority by SANSA's management and this, according to respondents, was evidenced by the existence of systems to monitor performance and drive continuous improvement. There were, however, respondents who raised contrary views citing concerns relating to institutional failures in enforcing use of M&E information to improve performance. A reflection by Respondent 4 indicates that: *"M&E feedback is not considered at all by some managers and employees in performance management discussions and it does not ensure consequence management for areas of poor performance"*.

There was positive feedback on the usefulness of performance reports in guiding strategic planning and identifying performance gaps to be addressed although with indications of a need to broaden employee involvement in the development and implementation of the institutional M&E framework. The study, however, also found that SANSA had no mechanisms in place to promote the sharing and utilisation of M&E reports due to the lack of a centrally accessible repository of M&E findings and reports. Although monthly and quarterly M&E reports are discussed by the Executive Committee and Board governance structures respondents cited the inadequate cascading of M&E information to SANSA business units. This poor filtering of

information was linked by respondents to inadequate levels of transparency with resultant difficulties or delays in decision-making by the entity's leadership.

Respondent 8 cited that *“the M&E unit facilitates preparation of the monthly, quarterly, and annual performance reports required for legislative compliance”* yet according to Respondent 2 *“there is need to improve the internal communication, discussion and use of performance results at the programme and divisional levels”*. It was further noted that some of the Programme Executives include performance discussions in their monthly and quarterly programme meeting agendas, however, with no documented standard or procedure for ensuring this is done consistently across SANSA programmes. The lack of a documented standard has left this internal communication mechanism as being largely influenced by individual senior management preferences across programmes.

There were also proposals for the effective utilisation of monthly and quarterly divisional meetings as platforms to engage on planned organisational strategic outcomes, performance targets and assessing progress made with regards to performance and areas for improvement. A particular gap identified was the inadequate cascading of M&E reports and information from the senior management level to the individual divisions, business units and employees.

4.5.9 SANSA M&E Culture and Advocacy

Overall, the study affirmed the existence of a sound M&E system that is understood across the organisation, albeit with gaps identified in relation to the building an institutional M&E culture. This according to respondents would enhance the extent to which M&E information is utilised by programmes for purposes of learning, pursuing continuous improvement of programme performance and improving accountability. Respondent 10 stated the following: *“Although there is an M&E system in place there is still work to be done with regards to cultivating an M&E culture within the entity to ensure the monitoring and reporting of organisational performance outcomes goes far beyond compliance with legislative prescripts and contributes more towards improved accountability and governance”*.

There was also further indication from Respondent 1 that *“most of the employees do not know the importance of the unit”*. According to this respondent SANSA also needs *“to ensure that M&E is put as a key performance area on each and every employee’s performance agreement and for employees to hold each other accountable for the achievement of goals”*.

Respondents were able to articulate the key roles and responsibilities provided in the SANSA M&E framework and were aware of the specific business unit responsible for coordinating M&E processes across the public entity. They, however, also flagged a degree of uncertainty concerning advocacy for the M&E function throughout the various SANSA programmes, governance structures and stakeholders. A need was identified for the public entity to raise awareness of the M&E system as some programmes were coordinating their own M&E functions which were not driven by the institutional M&E framework.

While most (73%) respondents considered M&E information to be contributing towards enhanced accountability for delivery on SANSA’s mandate across all programmes of the entity an awareness gap was evident with Respondent 4 noting *“a need for increasing employee awareness on the role of M&E”*. This, the respondent argued, would *“improve transparency and accountability for SANSA’s performance results”*.

Feedback received relating to the use of M&E as a tool to enhance performance within SANSA also pointed to Respondent 12 viewing M&E as being *“misconstrued as an administrative burden”* by the space agency and therefore *“seen as only applicable to senior management (leadership)... and relegated to an afterthought on key initiatives”*. The inculcation of a positive M&E culture within the space agency is therefore critical for reinforcing the importance of M&E as a tool for enhancing performance, continuous learning, and evidence-based decision-making. Other challenges flagged by respondents pointed to what Respondent 1 termed *“ineffective approaches”* to planning and a lack of M&E readiness within SANSA. This was linked by this respondent to a perception that *“reporting is tedious and only for compliance”*. Respondents further pointed to a serious challenge relating to the institutional culture and the overall attitude of employees towards M&E which has a bearing on the extent

to which they have an appreciation of what Respondent 19 referred to as the “*value of M&E reporting beyond compliance*”.

Respondents further pointed to a perceived gap in relation to management transparency and accountability for organisational performance deviations which according to Respondent 16 they associated with managements’ “*misconception of the M&E function*”. This was associated by some of the respondents to what Respondent 1 viewed as a degree of “*reluctance in getting senior management, management and the Board to act on the feedback and report back on progress*” to the relevant organisational structures.

The study found that the role played by the SANSA Board and Board Committees in M&E advocacy to promote governance was neither well – understood nor appreciated by most respondents. Furthermore, respondents mostly (53%) did not consider the oversight work of the Board and its committees to be demonstrating a position of leading from the front in terms of encouraging M&E institutionalisation and encouraging utilisation of M&E information to improve performance and promote governance within SANSA.

Feedback from Respondents 1, 7, 8 and 12 reflected M&E as being a compliance tool with a perceived degree of “*policing*” or “*auditing*” at this level of oversight. Respondent 12 accordingly cited a need for “*less Board scrutiny*” focusing on M&E compliance. They called for an improved tone at the top to foster the development of a positive M&E culture by encouraging broader M&E advocacy and employee engagement in the development and implementation of SANSA’s M&E framework.

4.5.10 Reforms Towards an Effective SANSA M&E System

The SANSA M&E framework seeks to promote the institutionalisation of the space agency’s M&E system by developing an M&E culture to enhance accountability for organisational performance outcomes. Respondents, however, flagged the need for increased awareness of the role and importance of M&E as a function and a need for improved employee involvement in planning to drive collective accountability for the

achievement of positive performance results. Respondents also cited a need for building a positive M&E culture through employee increased awareness interventions where the importance of the M&E function is explained in detail, thereby driving the demand for M&E information.

Given the perceived inadequate level of accountability for institutional performance results, Respondent 3 raised a need for *“setting the right tone at the top”* to enhance M&E effectiveness within SANSA. Focus was therefore shifted to how M&E could be more effectively utilised to enhance governance at SANSA. Responses are summarised below:

Respondent 2: *“Identification of roles and responsibilities” relating to governance structures and ensuring mechanisms are in place to provide feedback on the effectiveness of policies, programmes, and services”.*

Respondent 26: *“Trends gathered from the data analysis collected over the years to be the basis for planning at strategy sessions and inform strategic shifts of the organisation. Further incorporate how projects or initiatives are informed by outcomes of M&E”.*

Respondent 7: *“M&E should be...be institutionalised. The performance reports should be published widely so that the performance by the entity is known, and engagements are improved. The perception that M&E is only reporting should be challenged and expanded to ensure that governance is enhanced (and extended) to all employees”.*

The lack of a centralised and openly accessible repository for M&E reports led to Respondent 6 stating that: *“The reports by M&E should be made available to the whole of SANSA employees. For accountability to be effective, constant communication of the strategic outcomes should be available. Consequence management should be effected should there be a lack of achievement of the outcomes”.*

4.6 Conclusion

The findings of this study provide a holistic overview the M&E systems and processes implemented within SANSA and outlines employee and management perceptions on whether M&E contributes towards improved organisational performance and promoting governance within the entity. An initial thread emanating from the study revealed the existence of an M&E system within SANSA that it is broadly understood by employees albeit with identified gaps relating to institutionalisation of the M&E system. The study found that the SANSA M&E system is largely perceived to be focused on compliance and thus viewed as a compliance ticking exercise by employees with a minimal positive impact on decision-making. Another key theme that has emerged relates to an apparent lack of appreciation by respondents as to the role and contribution of the Board and leadership in enhancing M&E advocacy thereby promoting more effective governance within the entity.

A recurring thread in the feedback from respondents has been a need for increased organisational awareness on the role of M&E and its importance as a strategic function that enhances organisational performance and governance rather than serving merely as a support function for compliance reporting purposes. These findings were to be somewhat anticipated given that literature highlights the existence of gaps in terms of the utilisation of M&E as a mechanism to enhance not only performance but also to drive transparency and accountability within South African public entities. The findings from this study focused on the SANSA – specific context will however assist the entity in terms of the identification of more effective mechanisms for driving M&E institutionalisation within this public entity.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines a detailed discussion and analysis of the research findings as guided by the relevant theoretical aspects of the literature review to address the research objectives. Porter & Goldman (2013) argue that public sector reforms towards results should be established on a foundation of institutionalised M&E systems that enforce utilisation of M&E information for purposes of planning, budgeting, and decision-making. M&E plays an important role towards improving public sector performance and promoting governance and its institutionalisation is key in addressing public sector developmental challenges. M&E institutionalisation has therefore served as conceptual framing for this study and the discussion of the findings outlined in this chapter is framed in accordance with the critical components required to successfully institutionalise M&E systems within the public service.

5.2 Overview of the Study

According to Creswell (2014), research approaches are informed by the identified research problem, research questions, the experience of researcher and the targeted audience of the research study. This study therefore aims to address the following key research question as outlined in Chapter 1 of the report: *“To what extent does monitoring and evaluation contribute towards improved organisational performance and enhanced governance within the South African National Space Agency?”*.

This key research question was underpinned by the following sub-questions to provide greater perceptivity of the research problem: (i) *“How institutionalised is M&E within the South African National Space Agency?”* (ii) *“What are the existing gaps within the M&E system of the Agency?”* and (iii) *“What are the necessary reforms for an effective organisational M&E system that will enable the Agency to effectively deliver on its mandate?”*

5.3 Institutionalisation of M&E within SANSA

This study established the existence and implementation of an M&E system within SANSA with noted gaps relating to the extent of its institutionalisation. Naidoo (2011) makes an interesting observation with regards to the institutionalisation of M&E by reflecting that compliance on its own is not enough to influence behaviour as it is not easy to determine whether compliance translates into behavioural improvements and the extent to which the transparency M&E reporting does indeed lead to organisational learning, a positive M&E culture and improved governance. This study uncovered poor M&E institutionalisation within SANSA with resultant gaps related to the capacitation of the function and the entrenchment of a positive M&E culture. There is, also a challenge relating to establishing the necessary arrangements for the institutionalisation of M&E across the public service as confirmed by the findings of this research study. The discussion of research findings as outlined below are thus premised on the key components required for SANSA to successfully institutionalise its M&E system.

5.3.1 SANSA Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The study revealed the existence of a SANSA M&E Framework as approved by the Executive Committee in 2021 with the aim of establishing and maintaining an organisational M&E system and processes that comply with National Treasury and DPME legislative guidelines. M&E frameworks of government departments and entities should according to The Presidency (2007) and DPME (2020) support the establishment of cohesive M&E systems to integrate M&E processes and approaches. This framework seeks to establish a culture of high-performance across SANSA that is underpinned by transparency and accountability for organisational performance. In attempting to address the identified research questions the study has uncovered the existence of several gaps within the M&E system of SANSA as discussed in the section below.

Respondents flagged gaps relating to the effective implementation of SANSA's M&E framework to enforce utilisation of M&E information and cultivate a positive M&E culture that promotes, information sharing, institutional learning, and collective accountability for performance results. Such gaps are in contradiction, not only with the internal M&E framework of SANSA but also with DPME's requirement for an institutional M&E framework to ensure transparency, accountability, participation, and inclusion. The implication of this is that SANSA's framework may not be adequately utilised as a tool for strengthening organisational knowledge through proper dissemination of M&E information for ensuring result-based planning, evidence – based resource allocation and decision – making. This may be attributed to the lack of requisite institutional and structural arrangements to institutionalise the M&E system as suggested by Porter & Goldman (2013); Cloete, et al., (2014); Kimaro et al., (2018) and Jacobs (2019).

5.3.2 SANSA Logic Framework

SANSA was found to be focusing the planning of its programme interventions on the identification of key developmental problems using logic frameworks and the theory of change to determine strategic outcomes, key performance indicators and targets. The establishment of Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan and Annual Operational Plan logical linkages that is done by SANSA as part of annual strategic planning processes aligns with DPME (2020) requirements and guidance provided by Kusek & Rist (2004). Furthermore, the space agency's M&E framework supports use of logic frameworks in guiding the process of mapping causal chains relating to the inputs, outputs, outcomes, impacts of programme interventions - and their causal relationships. This effectively aims to address the “*so what*” question raised by Kusek & Rist (2004, p.31) to steer government entities and departments towards programme interventions focused on achieving results rather than chasing M&E compliance.

5.3.3 SANSA M&E Partnerships and Collaborations

Although though the SANSA M&E system was found to be useful in terms of its ability to provide performance reports that guide strategic planning processes and aid the

identification of performance gaps a need was identified through this study for the broadening of employee involvement in the development and implementation of the M&E framework. This would ensure alignment with DPME requirements for the M&E system to serve as a tool for enhancing collective accountability for institutional performance outcomes. Masombuka & Thani (2023) and Jacobs (2019) highlighted the need for internal and external stakeholder partnerships or collaborations in establishing and institutionalising M&E systems. Furthermore, National Treasury, (2007) and Kusek & Risk, (2004) flag the importance of collaborative institutional arrangements and partnerships with relevant stakeholders to ensure M&E contributes to evidence-based planning and decision making.

5.3.4 SANSA M&E Human Capacity

This study has found the existence of a historic pattern of instability in relation to the reporting lines, human resourcing, and the capacity building support of the SANSA M&E unit since inception of the entity. Morra-Imas & Rist (2009); Kusek & Rist (2004) and DPME (2020) concur that the availability of sufficient and adequately skilled M&E human resources must remain integral to service delivery, programme, policy, and project implementation as they are central to M&E functioning. Accordingly, the importance of skilled M&E human resources cannot be emphasised enough as it is key to the effectiveness institutionalisation of SANSA's M&E system.

National Treasury, (2011) places responsibility for ensuring each public entity has adequate M&E capacity squarely on the shoulders of each Accounting Officer which can be referred to as the SANSA Chief Executive Officer for purposes of this study. Masilo, et al., (2021) also point to inadequate M&E capacity within the public sector as contributing towards poor performance and ineffective systems of monitoring and evaluation. As reflected in the literature review, authors such as Kimaro, et al., (2018) and Jacobs, (2019) have flagged the critical role of leadership in M&E and the need for its commitment towards the entrenchment a positive performance and M&E culture in the public sector. With the DPME (2011), Goldman et al., (2019) as well as Masombuka & Thani (2023) similarly highlighting the need for M&E to be given strategic prioritisation by leadership in public sector institutions. To this end SANSA

cannot be said to be meeting legislative requirements public entities to have systems for the effective monitoring of organisational performance. SANSA was found wanting in this regard particularly in relation to leadership advocacy for M&E that is evidenced by the allocation of adequate human resources and rollout of capacity building interventions to enhance M&E effectiveness. This is concerning given that institutional resourcing and M&E capacity impacts the way SANSA's M&E unit fulfils its roles and responsibilities in relation to strategically supporting the entity as well as producing accurate, credible, and reliable M&E information.

5.3.5 SANSA M&E Workplans

The institutionalisation of SANSA's M&E system was found to be impacted by an institutional failure to develop costed M&E workplans contributing to the sufficient allocation of financial resources towards the SANSA M&E system. This study found SANSA as not being compliant in this regard given its reliance on Annual Operational Plans rather than costed M&E plans to outline planned M&E activities. The poor effectiveness of the M&E system is thus exacerbated by both inadequate M&E human resource capacity and insufficient financial resources to support implementation of the institutional M&E framework. This is also attributable to the function not being properly institutionalised and thus viewed as administrative and compliance support by leadership and employees alike. Corroboration of this was drawn from document analysis pointing to recurring historic patterns of resources allocated to the M&E function being repurposed to service other core or more strategic functions.

The DPME (2011; 2019) recognises costed M&E workplans as critical tools to ensure the institutional M&E system generates credible information to support evidence-based and cost-effective decision-making. In accordance with National Treasury (2007) and DPME (2011; 2019; 2020) requirements key components of SANSA's M&E framework are strategy development, performance monitoring, reporting and evaluation through organisational performance management mechanisms. Furthermore, the DPME requires government institutions to budget for up to 5% of programme intervention budgets to be directed towards evaluations to assess the efficacy and effectiveness of interventions rolled out. This is not addressed in SANSA's

annual planning and budgeting processes due to evaluation capacity gaps and documented financial constraints related to rolling national budget cuts in government's three-year budgeting cycles. The successful operationalisation of the SANSA M&E framework, therefore, requires collective effort by the M&E unit, SANSA employees, managers, executives, and Board members towards the development and implementation of costed M&E workplans.

5.3.6 Routine Programme Monitoring

The study found that the M&E function is viewed as primarily responsible for M&E administrative and compliance support to SANSA programmes. Accordingly, the function is not strategically positioned to effectively drive M&E institutionalisation and the entrenchment of a positive M&E culture. Furthermore, the SANSA M&E framework makes provision for and outlines guidelines for routine programme monitoring to be undertaken by SANSA in accordance with DPME and National Treasury requirements. SANSA was accordingly found to have processes in place to routinely monitor programme and organisational performance through the collation and reporting of performance results and supporting evidence by generating monthly, quarterly, and annual reports on programme performance. M&E reports enable the entity to track progress relating to the achievement of planned performance targets and ensure fulfilment of reporting obligations to the Board, Executive Authority and Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Science and Innovation.

5.3.7 Periodic Evaluations

The study could not establish the existence of an evaluation system within SANSA as there were no documented evaluation approaches and processes found within the space agency's M&E framework. The document analysis revealed that the M&E system is largely effective in terms of continuous monitoring and reporting of programme interventions, however, SANSA is not focusing on the evaluation of its programmes. Furthermore, although the public entity's M&E framework outlines the need for periodic evaluations to be conducted this remains a developmental area for SANSA.

Respondents agreed that SANSA's M&E system was driven by a monitoring focus through the coordination of monthly and quarterly reports required for legislative compliance as discussed above. This is reflective of a failure on the part of this public entity to utilise periodic evaluations to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of its programme interventions. Furthermore, the benefits to be yielded from evaluations in terms of improved performance and evidence-informed planning as recommended by Rossi et al., (2004); Morra Imas & Rist, (2009) and Stofile, (2017) are yet to be realised by this entity. The DPME, (2011) and National Treasury, (2007) require government institutions to conduct periodic assessments of programme performance through evaluations and this role of the M&E function still needs to be fulfilled by SANSA. This gap has a significant impact on the public entity's levels of accountability for organisational performance given that SANSA programme managers may not be aware of factors affecting the efficacy and efficiency of their programme interventions.

5.3.8 Data Dissemination, Communication and Use

Generally, gaps were found in relation to the dissemination and utilisation of M&E information to guide programme decision-making across SANSA. Concerns from respondents in this regard related to the lack of a uniform approach to encourage use of findings and reports generated by the M&E system in planning and implementing programme interventions. A significant gap related to the implementation of the space agency's M&E framework was the lack of evidence pointing to the use of M&E findings and recommendations to conduct periodic programme evaluations.

Additionally, respondents flagged concerns relating to M&E information not being cascaded well throughout the organisation to inform decision – making. The M&E system of the entity has been primarily driven by Senior Management and focused on the monitoring and reporting aspect of performance management thereby leaving room for improvement in so far as the effective utilisation of M&E information to inform decision – making across all employee levels. Kimaro et al., (2018) consider such challenges as adversely impacting the embedment of a culture of performance, while Lekala (2019), sees them as contributing factors towards ineffective monitoring and

evaluation resulting in poor public sector governance. These challenges need to be addressed by this public entity to ensure alignment with the DPME, (2019; 2020) requirements for public entities to develop dissemination processes to publish M&E information on public platforms including institutional websites. The lack of a centralised repository of M&E findings and reports has further exacerbated gaps relating to promoting the dissemination and use of M&E reports to internal and external SANSA stakeholders. The public entity thus needs to establish documented standards for M&E communication to avert situations where the dissemination of M&E information is influenced by the individual preferences of programme managers.

5.3.9 M&E Culture and Advocacy

The SANSA M&E system was developed and implemented to ensure the entity's compliance with DPME legislative requirements. This may be a huge contributor to the difficulties encountered in relation to its institutionalisation and the lack of advocacy for the M&E function across this public institution. The SANSA M&E system was found to be predominantly driven by a culture of compliance rather than a results-based approach towards the achievement of results.

Research respondents indicated that the space agency's employees largely consider M&E reporting to be a compliance tick for the organisation due to a lack of an M&E culture that is entrenched across the entity. This according to Masuku & Ijeoma, (2015) may translate into poor performance results. Kusek & Rist (2004) and Kimaro, et al., (2018) advocate for the establishment of a results-based culture to motivate high-performance rather than an M&E culture that is administrative and compliance-driven. The contribution of M&E towards improving performance and promoting governance was thus hindered by a lack of an M&E culture and inadequate levels of capacity and resources directed to monitoring and evaluation.

Accountability in a public entity is not only influenced by the M&E system and the Board being an Accounting Authority needs to set a positive tone from the top in advocating for M&E to ensure its institutionalisation for improved performance and governance. Such a responsibility is reflected in the SANSA M&E Framework,

however, findings of this study indicated that the role of the SANSA Board and its Committees in promoting M&E advocacy is not well understood by employees.

The culture and advocacy gaps identified within SANSA are reflective of inadequate mechanisms for promoting continuous employee engagement to enhance a uniform understanding of and implementation of the organisational M&E framework. This is a critical aspect for the promotion of transparency within a public entity according to Saila (2017) as the availability of timely and accurate M&E information is crucial for enhancing accountability.

5.4 Reforms Towards an Effective M&E System

Ojok (2016); Kimaro et al., (2018) and Masombuka & Thani (2023) recognise the critical role that can be played by institutional reforms in enhancing public sector performance. This was key to the framing of this qualitative study exploring the institutionalisation of M&E and contribution of M&E to organisational performance and governance within of SANSA. The section below therefore outlines the key institutional reforms that are considered as being necessary for developing an organisational M&E system that is effective and enables SANSA to deliver on its mandate.

The achievement of planned performance results by SANSA thus needs to be built on a foundation of trust and commitment based on transparent stakeholder communication on M&E findings and recommendations. This will ensure the reporting and dissemination of M&E information is carried through effective internal and external stakeholder collaborations and partnerships. Furthermore, the public entity needs to continuously engage key external partners such as National Treasury and the DPME for M&E capacity building guidance and support.

The implementation of awareness, training and capacity building initiatives relating to the role and importance of M&E must be emphasised to ensure its value proposition is clearly understood by all internal stakeholders (employees, management, Board Committees, and the Board). Such value according to Britton (2005); Kusek & Rist (2004); Govender (2015) and Görgens & Kusek (2010) includes the role of M&E in promoting public sector accountability and improvements in organisational

performance while promoting a culture of life-long learning and continuous improvement.

The level of accountability for performance within SANSA must be informed by M&E interventions focused on initiatives aimed at ensuring M&E information enhances organisational accountability, learning and performance. It is therefore incumbent on the M&E unit to drive the development of an evidence-based M&E culture and advocate for M&E through the dissemination of credible M&E information.

Given the importance of governance structures in providing strategic direction to the Executive and exercising oversight the Board needs to be central to M&E advocacy and the establishment of an institutional M&E culture. This, however, requires buy in and advocacy by the SANSA executive leadership which then needs to cascade to managers and employees across the public entity.

The institutional reforms proposed by respondents and discussed above are thus necessary for ensuring SANSA develops and institutionalises an M&E system that enables the Agency to better deliver on its mandate.

5.5 Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate evidence of an M&E system having been established by SANSA although it was found to be poorly institutionalised with inadequate arrangements in place to support its institutionalisation. Identified areas of improvement are summarised as follows: (i) there is a need for SANSA's leadership to drive M&E institutionalisation and entrench a positive M&E culture within the entity; (ii) SANSA should undertake awareness and capacity building initiatives relating to M&E to enhance effectiveness of the function; (iii) SANSA should ensure adequate M&E capacity and structural arrangements are in place to promote the use of M&E findings for learning, decision-making, improving performance and accountability; and (iv) the entity needs to leverage on the review and implementation of its M&E framework to ensure adequate attention is paid towards building internal evaluation capacity and coordinating periodic evaluations to assess the effectiveness and

efficiency of its programmes. SANSA therefore needs to take cognisance of the issues discussed above with a view of implementing necessary reforms to enhance the contribution of its M&E system towards improving performance and promoting governance.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of key findings, recommendations, and conclusion to this study. The chapter further outlines identified areas that may be explored through future research as identified through the review of existing literature. This study explored the extent of M&E institutionalisation and its contribution towards improving organisational performance and promoting governance within SANSA. The exploration culminated in the findings and discussions outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report as well as the conclusions and recommendations detailed in this chapter. While the existence of an M&E system within SANSA was clearly established uncertainty remains within this public entity concerning the use and benefits of M&E information hence the need to institutionalise the M&E system to shape and guide the entity's M&E approach and practices. This is evident in the key findings and conclusions emanating from this research study as summarised in the section below.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

In relation to the development and implementation of an institutional M&E framework, the existence of an M&E system and SANSA M&E framework aligned to DPME and National Treasury requirements was established through this study. Poor institutionalisation of M&E within SANSA is, however, evident in the lack of prioritisation and inadequate allocation of resources to the function. The resultant situation is SANSA's M&E function not being properly structured and capacitated to make a more effective contribution towards improved performance and governance.

Furthermore, the SANSA M&E system was found to be predominantly driven by a culture of compliance rather than being results-based as recommended by Kusek & Rist (2004); National Treasury (2007) and DPME (2011; 2020). The lack of M&E institutionalisation was exacerbated by the space agency not having a commonly shared and entrenched results-based M&E culture to drive transparency and collective accountability for performance results and governance. This impacts the extent to

which the behaviour of employees and managers within the space agency is reflective of a general appreciation of the importance of M&E as a function whose role extends beyond reporting for compliance purposes.

Despite the existence of the M&E system being established its focus was found to be on the monitoring of organisational performance thus leading to the identification of gaps within the system when it comes to periodic evaluations. The infancy stage of SANSA's M&E system relating to evaluation capacity, and approaches resulted in glaring gaps regarding the planning and implementation of periodic programme evaluations. Such a system is thus not fully effective in enhancing organisational performance and governance primarily due to the lack of M&E institutionalisation and advocacy for the M&E function. Strategic guidance by the M&E unit and commitment from the SANSA Board and leadership to support the M&E system is critical for improving collective transparency and accountability for performance results. A need was established for the SANSA Board and leadership to demonstrate support to the establishment of an M&E culture thereby setting the right tone at the top. This will ensure institutionalisation of the M&E system in a manner that ensures its contribution towards improved performance and governance.

There is also room for improvement in relation to raising employee awareness of the role of M&E as a function and overall contribution of SANSA's M&E system to institutional performance and governance. M&E is viewed as compliance requirement and the function has attracted a negative stigma related to it being representative of a perceived administrative burden for SANSA programmes rather than being considered as making positive contribution towards organisational performance results, transparency, and accountability (which in turn promote governance). Additionally, the entity has not targeted sufficient attention towards the rollout of M&E capacity building initiatives and promoting broad employee collaboration in the development and implementation of its M&E framework.

Partnering with both internal and external stakeholders including SANSA employees, management, the Board, National Treasury and the DPME is yet another area requiring attention to bolster effectiveness of the M&E system. Reforms are therefore necessary for SANSA to shift towards an effective M&E System. According to the

research findings, M&E plays a positive role in terms of supporting decision – making within SANSA however there is opportunity to enhance the dissemination of M&E information and effective use of M&E reports at a programme level through strengthened internal communication.

Another critical aspect is the need for SANSA to introduce mechanisms to re-enforce accountability for performance and governance across SANSA in accordance with the roles and responsibilities outlined in the space agency’s M&E framework. This will ensure every SANSA employee, manager and Board member is fully aware of his or her individual contribution to the development and implementation of effective M&E interventions that promote organisational performance and governance.

6.3 Summary of Research Recommendations

This study established the existence and implementation of an M&E system within SANSA with noted gaps relating to the extent of its institutionalisation. Naidoo (2011) asserts that the institutionalisation of compliance – driven M&E is not enough to influence behaviour as compliance on its own may not translate into behavioural improvements. Results-driven transparency in M&E reporting is thus key to organisational learning, a positive M&E culture and improved governance.

This study, however, uncovered poor M&E institutionalisation within SANSA which has resulted in gaps related to the capacitation of the function and the entrenchment of a positive M&E culture. There is, however, a challenge relating to establishing necessary arrangements for the institutionalisation of M&E across this public entity as confirmed by findings of this research study. The research recommendations outlined below are therefore premised on the identified key components required for SANSA to successfully institutionalise its M&E system.

6.3.1 SANSA Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Given the established existence of a SANSA M&E framework guiding implementation of the entity's M&E system activities in accordance with National Treasury and DPME requirements, it is recommended that entity prioritises institutionalisation of M&E system within SANSA. The M&E unit supported by the SANSA leadership has a critical role to play in this regard. This would not only ensure more effective implementation of SANSA's M&E framework but also encourage utilisation of M&E findings and reports to promote, the sharing of information, drive the use of M&E information for institutional learning, and enhance accountability for performance results.

The SANSA M&E framework therefore needs to be leveraged as a tool to strengthen performance and disseminate M&E information to inform result-based planning, decision – making rather than being compliance-driven. This will require SANSA to ensure its institutional and structural arrangements support institutionalisation of the M&E system. The study further recommends awareness and capacity building initiatives targeted at familiarising SANSA employees with the institutional M&E framework to ensure common understanding of its approach and concepts in support of its implementation.

6.3.2 SANSA Logic Framework

The study found the utilisation of logic frameworks in the development of institutional Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans and Annual Operational Plans to be effective for structuring programme interventions and identifying performance indicators through a theory of change approach. It is recommended that SANSA should strengthen and maintain this approach to planning and further incorporate the soliciting of broader programme inputs in its strategic planning and budgeting cycles. This would ensure greater appreciation of the causal relationships between inputs, outputs, outcomes, impacts of organisational programme interventions in accordance with guidance provided by the DPME (2011; 2020) and Kusek & Rist (2004).

Accordingly, the achievement of results-based programme interventions will then supersede the existing organisational focus on compliance-driven M&E.

6.3.3 SANSA M&E Partnerships and Collaborations

SANSA's M&E system provides useful timely performance reports to guide organisational planning and ensure performance gaps are identified. It is however, recommended that the M&E unit puts mechanisms in place for promoting broader participation by both internal and external stakeholders in the development and implementation of the entity's M&E system. This can be achieved by building and maintaining relationships with both internal and external stakeholders through the generation and communication of credible M&E information.

National Treasury, (2007) and Kusek & Risk (2004) are calling for the establishment of collaborative approaches and institutional arrangements to strengthen stakeholder partnerships. It is suggested that SANSA must also leverage the opportunity of enhancing stakeholder inclusion by periodically soliciting feedback from citizens, programme beneficiaries and other non-government stakeholders as recommended by the DPME (2013; 2022). The involvement of government and non-government stakeholders is according to the DPME (2022) critical for raising the demand and uptake for M&E information.

6.3.4 SANSA M&E Human Capacity

The study found that the current organisational structure does not support the effectiveness of the SANSA M&E system. A recommendation in this regard is for management to conduct a review of the organisational structure to ensure it caters for adequate resourcing of the M&E function within the space agency. Gaps that must be addressed by SANSA include building of requisite internal evaluation capacity in partnership with the DPME and other identified key stakeholders.

Management needs to demonstrate M&E advocacy through the provision of requisite resources in support of M&E during SANSA's financial and human resource allocation processes. The augmentation of M&E capacity is recommended to enhance effectiveness of the M&E unit in relation to not only ensuring SANSA legislative compliance but further meeting requirements for establishing and institutionalising a results-based M&E system. Adequate M&E human capacity is according to Kusek & Rist (2004); Morra-Imas & Rist (2009); Stofile (2017) a key cornerstone for evidence – based policy making, planning, resource allocation, performance, and governance.

The study also found that SANSA's M&E unit is not conducting broad M&E capacity building interventions. This has led to employee awareness and knowledge gaps on the role and importance of M&E as function. The allocation of adequate funds to the M&E unit and leveraging on partners including National Treasury and the DPME for capacity building support is therefore recommended. This would inform the rollout of continuous training interventions to build SANSA's M&E capacity. This will raise awareness levels for SANSA employees, management, and the Board as the generators and users of M&E information. This will not only result in improved organisational performance, but it will enhance organisational learning, decision – making, accountability and promote governance. Once users of M&E information become adequately skilled and have a clear understanding of the purpose and importance of M&E, they will be better equipped to contribute towards enhancing M&E system approaches and practices.

In addition to the periodic rollout of training to programmes, a further recommendation is for the development of annual training plans focusing on the provision of continuous training and development support to the entity's M&E Unit. This would enhance the unit's knowledge of developments relating to the broader government-wide M&E landscape and build SANSA's internal M&E skills base and capacity. At a national level, National Treasury, DPME and the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association provide periodic M&E capacity building support to government departments and public entities, and these must be leveraged to re-enforce SANSA's internal M&E capacity building interventions.

6.3.5 SANSA M&E Workplans

M&E workplans outlining planned annual M&E activities do not feature at all in SANSA's M&E system. This is likely to contribute to the poor allocation of human and financial resources towards M&E as the existence of M&E plans ensures alignment between planned activities and resource allocation. It is recommended that the M&E unit should prioritise the development of costed M&E workplans to aid institutionalisation of SANSA's M&E system by ensuring the allocation of sufficient M&E resources. This will strategically position M&E as a function within the space agency and enhance the effectiveness of the M&E system through implementation of the institutional M&E framework.

The importance of costed M&E workplans is acknowledged by the DPME (2011; 2019) as such plans are critical tools for the institutionalisation of an organisation's M&E system to generate credible evidence-based M&E information. SANSA therefore needs to drive the institutionalisation of its M&E system by reviewing its organisational M&E framework to include the development and implementation of costed annual M&E workplans outlining activities to track progress and results of the space agency's planned programme interventions.

6.3.6 Routine Monitoring and Periodic Evaluation

SANSA has processes for monitoring and reporting on its programme interventions including those relating to the generation of monthly, quarterly, and annual reports on the implementation of programme interventions. This is in accordance with the entity's M&E framework and requirements of required by National Treasury (2007) and the DPME (2011; 2020). To strengthen the institutionalisation and sustainability of the entity's M&E system, however, the M&E unit must be supported by the SANSA leadership in ensuring strategic positioning of the M&E function through continuous awareness initiatives. Measures should thus be put in place to encourage the regularisation of routine monitoring throughout the entity's programmes by documenting processes for the consistent use of M&E information in planning and

decision-making. This will serve to positively shift the current narrative within SANSA of M&E predominantly being perceived to be a compliance tool.

Given that SANSA was found not to be focused on the evaluation of its programme interventions it is recommended that the entity should document and implement periodic evaluation approaches and processes. It is further recommended that the M&E unit should, in conducting a review of the M&E framework, prioritise the inclusion of documented processes relating to the evaluation of SANSA programme interventions to periodically assess their efficacy and effectiveness. This will ensure SANSA's alignment with requirements of the DPME, (2011; 2019) and National Treasury, (2007) for the entity to periodically evaluate the performance of its programmes. Furthermore, it is recommended that entity should prioritise strengthening its internal evaluation capacity as the M&E system cannot be effectively institutionalised in the absence of adequate evaluation capacity.

6.3.7 Data Dissemination, Communication and Use

The study found internal communication gaps within SANSA as respondents pointed to poor cascading of M&E information across the entity. To address such gaps, it is recommended that the M&E unit must ensure wide dissemination of M&E information across SANSA is clearly articulated in this entity's M&E framework. Further to the presentation of performance reports to governance structures such as the Executive Committee, Board Committees and the Board measures must be implemented by the M&E unit to cascade such reports to all SANSA divisions, business units and individual employees. This will require use of internal communication channels for effective M&E information sharing and knowledge dissemination to yield greater levels of awareness, transparency, and accountability.

It is further recommended that SANSA creates an internal environment where employees actively partake in the collection, collation, verification and reporting of M&E information. This would promote effective dissemination and utilisation of M&E findings to support decision – making, organisational learning, improved performance, and governance.

Another key recommendation is for SANSA to strengthen its communication mechanisms and broaden the involvement of employees and managers in relation to implementing the entity's M&E framework in accordance with government's participatory performance management approach. The SANSA M&E framework details the processes relating to the development of the entity's Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans and Annual Operational Plans in accordance with the DPME (2020) requirements. It further outlines roles and responsibilities relating to the monitoring and reporting of progress on the rollout of planned programme interventions through monthly, quarterly, and annual performance reports. The availability of accurate and complete M&E information is a critical component of performance monitoring and management should ensure this is central to all SANSA processes relating to the generation and disseminating of information M&E to ensure results-based performance management.

It is further recommended that the M&E unit should lobby senior management support in establishing mechanisms to coordinate and monitor utilisation of M&E information across SANSA programmes for performance improvement, planning and decision – making purposes. Promoting transparency according to Kimaro et al., (2018) encourages the entrenchment of a high-performance culture and builds public sector governance. The publication of M&E information on public platforms such as the SANSA website and establishment of a centralised repository of M&E findings and reports is critical for sharing information with internal and external SANSA stakeholders. In this regard it is recommended that the establishment of a centralised M&E repository be placed high on the entity's list of priorities to heighten transparency levels within this entity.

The lack of M&E institutionalisation within the public entity contributes to poor implementation of the M&E system and this can be addressed by SANSA's M&E unit and leadership taking a bold stance in relation to M&E advocacy to establish a positive M&E culture. To strengthen the institutionalisation of M&E it is recommended that the entity's communication strategy and annual communication plans provide opportunities for the dissemination of positive M&E messages by the Board and

Management. This will actively demonstrate leadership support for the M&E system, promote high organisational performance and sound governance. This will re-enforce collective accountability by the SANSA employee cohort and Management as well build active participation and involvement in planning and performance management in accordance the entity's M&E framework. In this regard emphasis by Management should be placed on systems for strengthening relations between M&E, organisational performance, and governance.

6.3.8 M&E Culture and Advocacy

It is recommended that the SANSA M&E unit provides guidance to the leadership in terms of necessary policy, functional and structural institutional arrangements to elevate the M&E system from an administrative to a strategic level. This will build M&E advocacy and strengthen the appreciation and understanding the importance of M&E by all employees of the public entity and stimulate a demand for M&E information. Employees will then be able to consider M&E reports, draw lessons from identified performance gaps and implement mitigations to improve performance and promote governance.

This will further inspire a positive view of M&E as a function and shift the current SANSA narrative of M&E being viewed as a compliance and administrative burden. It is further recommended that following the implementation of M&E capacity building initiatives adequately capacitated and skilled employees should then serve as change champions to promote M&E advocacy and entrench a SANSA-wide M&E culture. Such an approach would be in accordance with the DPME (2020) requirement for SANSA's M&E system to contribute towards enhancing participation, transparency, inclusion, and accountability within the entity.

6.4 Proposal for Future Research

Gaps have been identified in the existing knowledge and literature around the practical embedment of an M&E culture into the M&E frameworks of South African public sector institutions. There is therefore a need for future research to be conducted to explore the institutionalisation of M&E within South African public sector. This would enable the establishment of practical mechanisms to shift public sector M&E frameworks from being predominantly driven by compliance towards the embedment of a public sector M&E culture premised on utilisation of M&E information for policy formulation, learning and decision – making. In this regard such frameworks would steer the positioning of M&E as a strategic function within public sector institutions.

6.5 Conclusion

This study explored the extent to which M&E is institutionalised within SANSA and its contribution towards improved organisational performance and promoting governance. It established existing gaps within the M&E system of the entity and further identified necessary reforms for a more effective organisational M&E system that will enable SANSA to effectively deliver on its mandate. The literature review provided broadened perspectives in relation to M&E institutionalisation and challenges confronting the South African public sector and assisted the search for responses to the research questions.

The study identified key components that are critical for the successful institutionalisation of M&E systems in public institutions, however, these are not fully implemented by SANSA. The entity was found to have an existing M&E framework although it does not address all the critical components for M&E institutionalisation. The framework was also found to be driven by strategic planning, monitoring, and reporting legislative requirements with disregard for periodic evaluations and M&E workplans which are critical components for institutionalising M&E systems. The study also found that SANSA does not have adequate institutional arrangements to optimise institutionalisation of an M&E system premised on a results-based culture of performance and accountability. It further emphasises the importance of M&E

advocacy, ongoing M&E awareness, and evaluation capacity building initiatives for promoting transparency between employees, management, and oversight structures.

The study generally affirms the importance of M&E institutionalisation in the public sector and concurs that M&E has a crucial role to play in improving organisational performance and promoting governance in public entities. This study is therefore considered to have fulfilled its objective of exploring the contribution of M&E towards improved organisational performance and the promotion of governance within the SANSA. The researcher was able to identify existing gaps and necessary institutional reforms to ensure M&E positively contributes to performance and governance. There is however a road still to be travelled by SANSA in bridging the gap between its M&E system and the institutionalisation of same in a manner that enhances organisational effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Semi-Structured Interview Guide:

Contribution of monitoring and evaluation to performance and governance of the South African National Space Agency

Note to the respondents: Your willingness to participate in this research project is appreciated. Kindly be advised that your anonymity is guaranteed, and any contributions made through this questionnaire / and or any other related follow up interviews will remain confidential and shall be utilised for no other purpose than academic research. Your permission is hereby requested for all the responses you provide to be utilised for the specified purpose. Kindly indicate your acceptance or non-acceptance of these conditions below:

☐ Accepted

☐ Not Accepted

Section 1: Biographical Information

Please mark your selection with an X

1.1 Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

1.2 Occupational level in the organisation

☐ Senior Management

☐ Management

☐ Professional

☐ Administrative

1.3 Length of Service in the South African National Space Agency

< 2 years	
2 – 5 years	
> 5 years	

Section 2: SANSA Monitoring and Evaluation systems

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Additional Comments
2.1	Is there a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system currently in place at the South African National Space Agency (SANSA)?						
2.2	Does the SANSA monitoring and evaluation system align with government M&E policies, frameworks, and practices?						
2.3	Does the M&E function within SANSA add value to the work of Programmes by providing useful information on organisational performance? Explain your response in the additional comments column.						
2.4	Is M&E properly integrated into organisational management arrangements?						
2.5	The SANSA Strategic and Annual Performance Plans are communicated to all employees across the organisation						

Section 3: Institutionalisation of M&E

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Additional Comments
3.1	Are you aware of SANSA's planning, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and is M&E viewed as a priority by management with systems in place to drive continuous performance improvement? Explain your response.						
3.2	Is the SANSA M&E system effective and are there any challenges relating to its implementation?						
3.3	Does the monitoring of performance at a Business Unit level form part of monthly meeting discussions to ensure awareness and accountability by all employees. Explain your response.						

Section 4: M&E Capacity within SANSA

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Additional Comments
4.1	Is SANSA's M&E function adequately capacitated to enhance the effectiveness of M&E systems in enhancing governance? Explain your response.						
4.2	Have there been any M&E capacity building sessions / training / awareness sessions / other workshops held in the past 2 years?						
4.3	Are the entity's employees adequately rewarded for good performance results? Explain your response.						
4.4	Are M&E findings incorporated into organisational learning mechanisms to promote continuous improvement in performance? Explain your response.						

Section 5: The Role of M&E

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Additional Comments
5.1	Does M&E assist SANSA employees and management in decision making, project planning and implementation? Explain your response.						
5.2	Do you understand the importance of evidence – based policy making and the role of M&E in this regard? Explain your response.						
5.3	Does M&E promote transparency and advocacy for the SANSA mandate through the communication of performance reports to internal and external stakeholders?						
5.4	Do the monthly, quarterly, and annual performance reports provide early warning signals where performance is below the desired standards? Explain your response.						

Section 6: The Effectiveness of M&E in Promoting Governance within SANSA

No.	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Additional Comments
6.1	Are SANSA employees involved in organisational planning and performance management processes to allow them an opportunity to contribute towards promoting governance within the entity?						
6.2	Is M&E reporting done in an open and transparent manner across the Programmes of the organisation? Explain your response.						
6.3	Does M&E information enhance accountability for delivering on the SANSA mandate across all Programmes of the entity?						
6.4	Does the oversight work of the Board and its Committees enhance governance? Explain your response.						

Section 7: Reforms Towards an Effective M&E System

7.1 What are the mechanisms that can be put in place to strengthen institutionalisation of M&E to promote collective accountability for the achievement of SANSA's strategic outcomes?

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7.2 How can M&E information be used for purposes of enhancing organisational performance within the entity?

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7.3 What are the key challenges that are likely to hinder the effectiveness of M&E in enhancing governance within SANSA?

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7.4 How can Monitoring and Evaluation be used more effectively to enhance governance at the entity?

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Appendix B – Letter of Approval to Conduct Research

Appendix C – Consent Form

Consent Form

Title of project: Contribution of monitoring and evaluation to performance and governance of the South African National Space Agency

Name of researcher: Vuyokazi Babalwa Ntshoko

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
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I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
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I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
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I agree that direct quotations from the semi-structured interview guide may be used by the researcher in their research report	YES	NO
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I agree that this consent form and my responses to the interview questionnaire will be stored safely and only handled by the researcher during the research process	YES	NO
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I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in the semi-structured interview guide (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES	NO
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..... (signature)

..... (name of participant)

..... (date)

..... (signature)

..... (name of researcher)

..... (date)

Appendix D – Letter of Introduction

Title of project: Contribution of monitoring and evaluation to performance and governance of the South African National Space Agency

Name of researcher: Vuyokazi Babalwa Ntshoko
Wits Student Number: 1734151

Dear Participant,

I, Vuyokazi Ntshoko, a student at the Wits University School of Governance hereby invite you to participate in a research study that is required in partial fulfilment of requirements for a **Masters in Management: Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation** by completing a research questionnaire / or participating in a semi-structured interview process.

The study is about the Monitoring and Evaluation system of the South African National Space Agency and its contribution towards enhancing performance and governance within the public entity (refer to the attached research questionnaire).

There are no risks known by the researcher relating to your participation in this research study as your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all times during the research process.

The information collected from this study is to be used for academic purposes and may also be helpful to the organisation in terms of the identification of Monitoring and Evaluation gaps and the development of reforms to improve organisational performance and enhance governance. Your completed research questionnaire will be stored offsite (outside of the employer premises) and strictly handled by the researcher. Data collected will be handled in confidence and should it be published for academic purposes your identity will be protected.

Kindly note your participation in this research study is voluntary and you may therefore choose whether to participate or not.

For any further clarifications or concerns relating to the research study, please feel free to contact the researcher on the numbers provided below.

Sincerely,

Vuyokazi Babalwa Ntshoko