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Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in Five African Countries

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DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

Current status of the National Evaluation System in Uganda

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Acronyms

3ie	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
AfDB	African Development Bank
CLEAR-AA	Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results - Anglophone Africa
CSBAG	Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
ECB	Evaluation Capacity Building
ECD	Evaluation Capacity Development
HEI	Higher Education Institution
JLOS	Justice Law and Order Sector
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
NDP	National Development Plan
NES	National Evaluation System
NIMES	National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System
NPA	National Planning Authority
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
UBoS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDN	Uganda Debt Network
UEA	Uganda Evaluation Association
UMI	Uganda Management Institute
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In 1986, the Ugandan government was emerging from years of conflict and political instability that had left state institutions in a weakened state and the economy in shambles. The early reforms as such, focused on pursuing macroeconomic stability, to revive the economy and restore law and order. Over the course of the next 10 years, structural adjustment policies and market liberalization reforms were undertaken, and the constitution was promulgated. In the following decade, between 1997 – 2007, three Poverty Reduction Strategic Plans were implemented. With these developments emerged an interest to establish if these processes were impactful and to determine whether or not these policies were delivering desired results, consequently, an M&E system for country development programs began to emerge as calls for improved governance and accountability grew stronger.

Policy instruments including the Poverty Eradication Action Plan policy matrix, and the annual policy implementation review 2000 were developed in 1998/99 as part of broader M&E initiatives tied, to the Poverty Assessment programs. These processes set the foundation for the emergence of a national evaluation system in Uganda. In 2007, a key recommendation from a comprehensive evaluation of the national poverty plans called for the development of a National Development Plan as the development framework for the country with the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (NIMES) set up to track progress and contribute to the government development agenda (Goldman, I., Byamugisha, Gounou, A., Smith, Ntakumba, S., Lubanga, Sossou, & Munstermann, 2018). By 2011, a national level M&E policy was drafted and later approved in 2013 with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) tasked with the mandate to oversee the M&E function in the country. The OPM coordinates the various functions of the system, working together with the National Planning Authority (NPA), the institution responsible for drafting & updating the National Development Plan (NDP), the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) responsible for the budgeting process and the Office of the President/State House which reports on the NRM party (ruling party) manifesto. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) generates development statistics for the country while line Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) report on implementation of government programs and the NDP. The oversight roles of the Parliament and Office of the Auditor General are legislatively specified.

Development partners, civil society, the Uganda Evaluation Association (UEA), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the private sector are involved in the national evaluation system as key institutional players albeit not as extensively as required. Over the past two decades, Uganda has managed to establish a sound technical and institutional environment for evaluation practice to emerge with a fairly robust, partly donor-driven but generally government-led approach towards driving demand for evaluation-based programming. This has led to a surge in demand for evaluation primarily from development partners and an equally responsive growth in evaluation supply through investment in evaluation capacity building efforts. This diagnostic report is an attempt to delve into workings of the 10 functions, focusing on technical, institutional and culture issues that determine the state and nature of the national evaluation system.

1.1 Purpose

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

1.2 Approach

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

1.3 Defining concepts

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

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

While the precise definition of an ***M&E system*** varies between different organisations and guidelines, in this report, an M&E system will be used to refer to indicators, tools, and processes used to measure if an intervention (programme/policy/project) has been implemented according to the plan (monitoring) and is having the desired result (evaluation). ***M&E*** itself will refer to processes and systems generating programme/project performance information, and not systematic analysis/assessment of achievement of outcomes and impacts, which is what evaluations provide.

An ***evaluation system*** or ***NES*** will be used to refer to a system that exclusively defines the undertaking/commissioning and use of evaluations. This report uses a combination of the Furubo and Sandahl (2008) and Lazzaro definitions of evaluation systems, which state that an evaluation

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

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

1.3.1 Conceptual framework: 10 Functions of a National Evaluation System

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

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

2. ***Performance monitoring*****:** Evaluations do more than just monitor performance; in fact, in Africa in particular, evaluation systems are often explicitly designed to assess whether a programme has performed effectively or not, and why. Given the tremendous investment in political will, resourcing, and institutional strength, although focusing on assessing

performance may constitute a disproportionate part of a NES and contribute relatively little in addition to monitoring systems, it does merit its own function.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. ***Shaping axiologies*****:** Evaluation systems are designed around value systems in the way they define and measure results. Through a systemic practice of evaluation, particularly

through the local ownership of evaluation systems in Africa, the process through which values are reinforced is changing.

2. Findings of the Diagnostic Study

The findings of this diagnostic report are discussed within the conceptual frame of the 10 functions described above. The findings are further analyzed along the three sub-themes that expound on the technical, institutional and culture issues at play in each of the 10 functions.

2.1 Defining Results and Planning

The role of defining results, planning and setting direction for the country's national evaluation system is dominated by the OPM with significant input from NPA at the national level, driving the planning and budgeting work by MDAs while at sub-national level, the Local Governments (LGs) oversee planning processes for districts. The LGs are involved in national planning however to a larger extent, they focus on planning for monitoring processes and are not overly involved in evaluation. This structure is aligned to the pre-existing institutional arrangements established for delivery of National Development Plans and the sectoral plans. The private sector, specifically evaluators are contracted as consultants in the planning for evaluations of government programs. The key challenge for this function is the duplication of roles evidenced by how the constitutional mandate for M&E by government lies with the NPA while the executive has actually shifted this responsibility to the OPM.

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Technical	• The technical resources for defining results and planning are present in country systems. The OPM oversees the NES technical working group that includes representatives from MDAs, the Parliament, Local Government, and CSOs. However, this system is mainly functional at the national level. • Execution of the National Monitoring and Evaluation policy across government is varied and indeterminable - certain provisions are implemented by the OPM however the state of the policy implementation by MDAs is unclear. An example of one provision is the budget allocation for M&E which is mandated at 5 - 10% of the total project budget. For a project that is worth $20,000, this amount is not sufficient to facilitate the entire M&E function of the project. • According to the OPM, only 8 out of the 18 sectors in the country have sector strategy plans with fairly well-developed results framework aligned to the NDP. • To some extent, defining results and planning within the NES is influenced by donors and development partners at as they contribute to the financial resources available within the NES.
Institutional	• There is a comprehensive national planning framework that includes the Country NDP Vision 2040, Sector Plans and the MDA strategic investment/development plans. Linkages between the OPM, MDAs and Local Governments are fairly strong although within MDAs, intra-departmental linkages remain weak. • In addition, MDAs and Local government place more effort in addressing M&E concerns of the OPM with much less focus on their internal M&E needs.

	Despite efforts of the OPM for wider coordination of work around defining results, improved function is only slowly growing, and concentrated at the national level. • Sectoral M&E systems particularly Health and Education extend to the subnational and local levels. These systems are mainly donor-driven, with alignment to SDGs and to some extent, the NDP, but are not entirely integrated in emerging national evaluation system. • At the national level, some CSOs are involved in defining results and planning, however, their linkages and representativeness of broader civil society across the country is still weak. CSOs generally plan and define their results according to donor defined guidelines that typically require alignment to SDGs. • OPM will be conducting a mid-term review of the National M&E policy next year which provides an opportunity to include and address the policy issues raised at this workshop.
Cultural	• There is some measure of consultation among central planning institutions i.e. the OPM, NPA and to some extent the UBOS around planning for country results. The coordination effort with MDAs and local government however, largely sits with the OPM, as it is responsible for the preparation of the Government Annual Performance Review Report (GAPRR). More effort and investment in the coordination process around defining results and planning is necessary to sufficiently cover the scope (MDAs, Sectors, CSOs and NGOs). • Furthermore, within government departments, the role of M&E is situated in policy and planning units and undertaken by economists and statisticians due partly to synergetic compatibilities of the functions and resource constraints that make it difficult to set up fully fledged M&E units in government departments. Since economists have traditionally dominated the policy agenda, defining results and setting direction is dominated by their specific axiology. However, with the emergence of the function M&E in government and a plethora of multidisciplinary M&E specialists have emerged with varying viewpoints, creating friction over methodological approaches. • In sectors, the culture differs distinctly, with more emphasis placed on regular consultative processes among key stakeholders - MDAs, local governments, CSOs and donors around defining results and planning. This is firmed up by collaboration and joint coordination of programs however it is limited to donor funded programs, leaving sector level planning for results processes fragmented across various country projects/programs.

2.2 Performance Monitoring

Performance monitoring is a more dominant function in than evaluation within the Ugandan national evaluation system. At the strategic level, the focus of performance monitoring is on outcomes emerging at output level as well as monitoring of broad government outputs.

The national and local governments remain dominant in this function due to the major roles they play in setting performance indicators and their oversight on the day to day performance assessment of different government programmes. The national government and local governments commission and oversee periodic performance assessments including the Local Government Annual Performance Assessment. Other players such as political parties through their members in parliament participate in assessing performance. This involvement is usually aligned with particular interests around issues of service delivery that they monitor, interrogate and use the information generated in debates in the parliament.

Civil society organizations on one hand, through the work they do to support direct service delivery, conduct monitoring on programs they implement and on the other hand, support government and local government departments technically and financially to assess performance of their various programs. CSOs that work in governance such as Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) and Uganda Debt Network (UDN) monitor government budget execution to assess performance and provides a platform for citizens to discuss pertinent issues arising from their monitoring efforts.

Technical	• Within the government (national and subnational levels), technical resources to undertake performance monitoring are available and function in tandem with national planning and reporting cycles. • At National level, the OPM coordinates bi-annual government performance reviews where different respective Ministers present performance reports from their Ministries. This is possible largely because of the multi-functional nature of roles of staff that undertake monitoring e.g. at local government level, the monitoring function sits with the economists/statisticians, in the health sector, biostatisticians perform the monitoring function. • This multipurpose approach is to some extent a result of overall scarcity of financial resources and technical capacity gaps particularly at local government level. • It generally affects the quality of data produced since limited technical & financial resources do not cover quality assurance exercises such as data validation and support functions e.g. budget for purchase and maintenance of equipment (vehicles, computers, printers etc.). • Funding of CSOs and NGOs by donors/development agencies provide budgets for M&E and require that CSOs hire M&E staff to perform this function. However, it is not clear whether the donor funding is enough to facilitate the full spectrum of the M&E function to achieve the CSOs' organizational and program objectives.
Institutional	• The monitoring function is far more developed compared to the evaluation function, this is reflected in how the broader national evaluation system relies more significantly on data emerging from government monitoring efforts to inform medium-term and long-term planning. Performance monitoring provides a snapshot of major outputs.

	• However, it is becoming increasingly important for the government to gather evidence on performance to support the anticipated shift away from output-based budgeting to performance-based budgeting. As per the structure of the national evaluation framework, line ministries monitor at output level, sectors are concerned with performance at outcome levels while local government focuses on processes and inputs. • Performance monitoring remains fragmented and the contributions of CSOs and NGOs remain untapped. The extent to which performance monitoring conducted outside of government systems (by CSOs, NGOs and other players) is integrated with the government performance monitoring is still quite minimal.
Cultural	• The function of performance monitoring is associated with a strong culture of compliance that is tied to the continuity and survival of institutions. • Performance monitoring is hinged on the mandate and obligations of the MDAs & other government agencies to deliver on the NDP and upon which national budget allocations are availed. • The situation is similar for CSOs & NGOs whose dependence on donor funding translates into a high demand for monitoring data for the continuous progress reporting. • However, due to limited resources (human and financial), output monitoring is prioritized at the expense of outcome reviews and impact evaluations. • In the case of government, only indicators tied to budget allocations are monitored which do not fully fit the complete set of national evaluation system indicators therefore presenting an incomplete picture of the state of affairs.

2.3 Institutional Arrangements

Formal institutional arrangements for the Ugandan national evaluation system are set out through official legislative mandates of the various government institutions characteristically/historically engaged in delivering the National Development Plan/development framework of the country. As such, government is viewed as a key player in driving this function and this comes through strongly in the way the Ugandan NES is largely government-centric (mostly at the national level) with limited broad-based involvement of other stakeholders such as CSOs, development partners and the private sector.

The fact that the Ugandan NES is limited to a narrow, concentrated section of the Ugandan NES ecosystem i.e. centre of government institutions, a few MDAs, the VOPE, specifically selected CSOs and development partners creates questions around the origination of the idea of a national evaluation system and the purpose it seeks to serve in the development agenda of Uganda. As an initiative, it is not clear whether the NES was demanded for by citizens and thereby if its ownership by the government is legitimately rooted in citizens interests. Civil society organisations serve as bridging institutions that provide oversight on behalf of citizens over government's programs.

Therefore, citizen engagement remains a critical factor for any institutional arrangements of the NES given that citizens are the beneficiaries of the system and are determinants of the ultimate value the NES. Another point of weakness is the issue around reliance on donor funding to establish and maintain the NES, which leaves the NES establishment process exposed to shifting priorities and spending patterns of donors, thereby raising questions around the sustainability of the NES if donor priorities suddenly change.

Technical	• The major resource at the disposal of the NES is its human resource. Across all MDAs, the pool of human resource to support the national evaluation system is made available through accommodative institutional arrangements. The institutional arrangements order the roles of the various organizations in the national evaluation system according to function. The main challenge lies in utilizing the human resources available to reasonable capacity - this is hampered by limited financial and technical resources. • The effect of development partners funding for the M&E function over the past decade has created an allocative anomaly in the spread of M&E expertise in the Ugandan NES. Increase in demand for M&E specialists and the resultant shortage of M&E professionals to service this demand has driven up salaries and contractual wages of M&E specialists. This translates into an exclusion of M&E expertise from the CSOs, NGOs and government agencies that can scarcely afford the higher remuneration rates. Inarguably where the need is greatest, expertise is lacking while it remains is concentrated at the points where the donor resources are concentrated, usually with specific sectors such as Health and Education or with centre of government institutions like the OPM. • As such, the role of MDAs and other government institutions in the national evaluation system are remain largely unfacilitated since the bulk of financial and technical assistance is directed to central institutions and sectors such

	as OPM, Health, Education and JLOS. The Ministry of Finance also provides for the NES and government efforts are supplemented by donors. • A large part of funding for CSOs and NGOs programming and by extension for program M&E, emanates from development partners. The funding is often competitively awarded and structured in such a manner that creates rivalry among CSOs.
Institutional	• Institutional arrangements are in place primarily to facilitate the function of the national evaluation system. Budget allocations from the Ministry of Finance to MDAs are tied to the completion of quarterly M&E performance reports. MDAs implement and report to OPM on quarterly basis as per established guidelines and structures. OPM then report bi-annually to the Cabinet for decision making. • Integration and engagement of stakeholders outside of government particularly of CSOs is limited to what is described as light participation' - in consultative meetings, providing guidance to the design and formulation of indicators and frameworks. • Donor engagement is largely limited to the programs that are donor funded with exception of their role at the strategic, policy level where government usually engages with donors and selected CSOs. • The Uganda Evaluation Association (VOPE) has developed and is promoting guidelines that shape evaluation in this country. However, these guidelines are not widely disseminated and the association is yet to enforce uptake and adherence. • Academia/private sector (evaluation consultants) role is demand-driven and although their involvement is a strength for the institutional arrangements, it is largely contingent on availability of funds.
Cultural	• The culture around framing institutional arrangements is enshrined in the national evaluation policy which provides a framework within which institutions operate when it comes to the national evaluation system. • However, the system is limited by coordination challenges emanating financial and technical constraints. • This allows for the emergence of parallel systems within MDAs, Sectors and CSOs that gravitate towards institutional arrangement of other dominant actors e.g. donor/funding agencies. • Citizen engagement in the NES is not defined in line with what is perceived or demonstrated as the value of the NES to society. • The machinations of CSOs and NGOs in competition over donor funding and limited oversight over their ethical practices has led to negative patterns of behaviour emerging e.g. doctoring of results and findings by evaluation practitioners in this regard, altering their program objectives and organizational structures to remain competitive and continue to access funding.

2.4 Evidence Production and Research

Demand for evidence at sector and program level has grown tremendously over the past 10 years. There are a host of institutions operating at country, continental (Afrobarometer), regional and international levels involved in evidence production and research. Across sectors, government institutions, Higher Education Institutions and civil society organisations play active roles in research and evidence generation that could fit into the national evaluation system.

In the course of undertaking and monitoring their mandates, the National Planning Authority and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics are an example of government institutions that generate evidence on a large scale. Even when they are not directly involved in generation, they commission consultants or work with development partners to produce required evidence which could be channeled into the NES. As it stands, there was no indication that a systematic mechanism designed to achieve this capability exists.

Academia on the other hand are situated at the nexus of research and M&E whereby, as researchers they are engaged in the process of generating research and evidence, and because of this expertise, they are also approached by government institutions to conduct evaluations. This unique positioning makes them a critical resource for this function within the NES, however, it should be underscored that academia are only optimally consulted and engaged with by government if funds are available to cover their consulting fees.

Both international and local NGOs/civil society working across different sectors are key players in the area of evidence production and research particularly with funding from development partners and donors. A significant amount of evidence is generated through this channel however it largely remains in the confines of the producers (NGOs) since there are no established pathways through which the evidence can feed into the NES.

The Uganda Evaluation Association and their membership have the legitimacy and expertise in their members to lead evidence production and research, however, the potential has not been exploited due to a host of issues around availability of a functional and updated database of expert, challenges of integrating of this database with similar existing databases and systems, and the limited efforts by the VOPE to address the issues since growing the practice of evaluation rather than evidence production and research is their core business.

Technical	• UBoS plays a significant role in evidence production, with adequate technical staffing and budgets to generate data for the national statistical bank of country and development statistics. • Evidence production and research within sectors (Health and Education) is mainly funded and led by development partners (World Bank, UNICEF, USAID, DFID) to complement the implementation of programmatic interventions. The MDA through their technical working group, collaborates with development partners to define the research agenda, review research protocol, procure expertise locally and internationally and review findings. In the case of the health sector, the technical working group is comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Health and Makerere University School of Public Health. • Within CSOs, the capacity to conduct high quality research is still quite weak and not well facilitated. Donors and development partners direct their funding for evidence production and research to MDAs and Universities.

Institutional	• The OPM engages with MDAs, sector programs and other evidence production and research processes as consumer of the evidence and research. Their representatives at sector technical working groups filter through the evidence and have access to summary reports. Periodically, the OPM selects some programs, especially those implemented and funded directly by the government and conducts further evaluations. • At sector level, efforts at evidence production and research are jointly coordinated across various organizations. For Health and Education sectors, the role of the UBoS is paramount in supporting key research efforts e.g. Uganda Demographic Health Surveys conducted every five years, they provide technical guidance on evaluations. In some instances, some donors provide the planning department funds to undertake research on their programs. For instance, UNICEF funded the planning department to undertake a study on deployment and retention of teachers in hard to reach areas. • Despite financial constraints and as part of their programming efforts, CSOs engage in a significant amount of evidence production mainly through undertaking community scorecards designed to assess service delivery. With the advent of mobile technology for research applications, there are more opportunities to generate evidence and research at lower costs. The biggest challenge that remains across the spectrum is the constrained financial resources dedicated to evidence production and research.
Cultural	• The function of evidence production and research is contingent on the capacity to finance. The donors and development partners are the main funders of research and are influential in setting the tone for evidence production and research. • There are efforts to jointly set the research agenda and for government to drive efforts on research. Within the health sector, the Uganda National Health Research Organization coordinates research and is responsible for generation of the research agenda alongside main stakeholders like Makerere University School of Public Health. • Furthermore, the Ministry of Health has a strong culture of evidence production as it is tied to the performance monitoring function which is fairly strong. This is driven by demand for evidence on program performance from policy makers within government and donor circles. • For CSOs and other non-state stakeholders, accessing government generated evidence and research to complement their own evidence production and research remains a challenge. • Government is often hesitant to share data particularly with non-state stakeholders e.g. VOPE and civil society. This behavior is also reflected within the CSO space albeit for different reasons. Harsh competition among CSOs for donor funding contributes a culture of hoarding raw datasets, information is typically shared in form of already compiled analytical reports.

2.5 Evaluation Practice

Evaluation practice is increasingly being influenced by the evaluators who are the main suppliers of evaluation expertise. This category, also referred to as the private sector, is comprised of academics, independent consultants, former government officers bring on board a diversity of professional expertise that shapes the nature of evaluation practice in Uganda particularly in regard to innovations around methodologies, approaches and tools. The advent of more sophisticated phone based and online data collection systems, increasingly deployed by private sector players are an advantage that the NES stands to benefit from. However, this potential has not been adequately tapped into and is closed out of the evaluation practice due to the risk averse nature of commissioners of evaluations. The national evaluation policy developed by the OPM has provisions for the operation framework of the NES and alongside it, are the guidelines of evaluation practice that was developed by the Uganda Evaluation Association. However, since the NEP and guidelines are focused mainly on evaluation practice in the public sector with little consideration of CSOs and are not widely referenced or popularized, their influence on evaluation practice is somewhat muted.

Influence of development partners like the UN agencies and the greater donor community have on evaluation practice in Uganda remains quite significant. The requirement for almost every intervention funded by development partners reinforced the need for program M&E units and practice to the extent that programs that do not demonstrate capacity for M&E do not receive funding. The challenge however is that most donors place more emphasis on systems that feed their interests and less on the interests of the NES and other stakeholders. Ultimately, evaluation practice is affected by funding constraints. Budgeting for M&E within public sector remains limited, disparately allocated and without specific guidelines or standards to shape what is considered acceptable conduct of M&E. The budgets set aside for M&E (for government programs and NGO projects) are typically provided for within programme budgets and are usually exhausted before evaluations are undertaken. In donor funded programs within public sector, the monitoring function in M&E is routinely undertaken alongside programme implementation while evaluations are budgeted for and undertaken independent of program budgets however, a dichotomy arises where external evaluators will lead the processes supported by national evaluators regardless of whether the capacity to lead evaluations is available locally.

Technical	• The national evaluation policy provides a framework for monitoring, evaluation and review functions in the public sector. It provides for a budget for evaluations of all programs and projects which are undertaken by the OPM. The OPM and other stakeholders in the NES receive technical and financial support from development partners. Evaluations commissioned within the MDAs and sectors are usually donor-led and link into the NES when there is a specific request. • Across the board however, different programs and projects (within the public sector) undertake evaluations with human, technical and financial resources independent of the national evaluation system. It is not clear whether evaluations conducted by CSOs, NGOs, Donors and others follow the principles and policy requirements stipulated in the 2013 national policy.

	• While local capacity to undertake evaluations is growing although most of the evaluations conducted are still primarily led by external evaluators. This is common with externally funded programs and projects across all levels.
Institutional	• According to the national M&E policy, evaluation of government funded programs follow a 3-year evaluation agenda presided over by the OPM with contributions from MDAs and other stakeholders (OPM, 2011). The OPM sits at the apex of the NES and plays a major role in conducting national evaluations. • At sector level, evaluations are initiated and conducted for different programs and supported by development partners. In the health sector, technical working groups review the evaluation protocols to ensure that they comply with the standards set by the Ministry. The dominant players in evaluation practice in Uganda are the international evaluators, academic Institutions, the donors and the commissioners of evaluations. • According to the Uganda Evaluation Association, the membership is dominated by CSOs, NGOs and government. The membership and visibility of M&E professionals and practitioners continues to grow although the ability of the VOPE to influence effective evaluation management and use in the country remains quite limited.
Cultural	• The culture of evaluation is largely influenced by the demand for evaluation evidence which emanates majorly from donors, development partners and government. However, donors and development partners are the primary funders of evaluations, their influence on evaluation practice is dominant. • Over the past decade, this influence has generated a gradual shift in the broad understanding, awareness, practice and culture around evaluation among stakeholders in the national evaluation system. • At sector and program levels, evaluations are mainly conducted on programs that have received external funding while CSOs and NGOs commit to undertaking evaluations as dictated by the terms of their funding agreements. • Despite this, evaluation is a complex, costly intervention that suffers at the expense of the performance monitoring function. Information to satisfy the high demand for results within the public sector can easily be met through the monitoring function.

2.6 Disseminating Evaluation Results

Dissemination of evaluation results for is still conservatively undertaken. Typically, one day dissemination workshops are conducted as part of the process of releasing findings from the evaluation. Reports emerging from evaluation processes tend to be bulky, does not encourage deeper analysis and engagement with the content by the audiences.

Civil society advocacy groups are active in this space, seeking available information in various forms, conducting analyses and sharing widely for advocacy purposes. They have pushed the boundaries by experimenting with technology to improve dissemination.

Technical	• Evaluation results are disseminated at planned workshops with representatives of key institutions/stakeholders from different sectors. At MDA level, the planning departments generate summaries, especially recommendations from evaluation reports which are shared internally with the top management and policy makers. • There are limited financial resources for dissemination of results as such, the function is usually limited to validation/dissemination workshops and sharing of the huge volumes of hard and soft copy reports. • Use of websites to disseminate information generally has become a norm for most organizations including government including CSOs And NGOs. • Data-viz applications have the potential to transform the process of disseminating and sharing results however the technical skills for scale up is limited.
Institutional	• OPM is involved in various dissemination arrangements that include convening government performance conferences, parliamentary committee hearings and other platforms such as Uganda Evaluation Week. In March 2017, Uganda hosted the biennial AFREA conference as a key advocacy event for evaluation and evidence use for country systems. • There are weaknesses in preparing reports, many are large & bulky and summarizing/customizing reports for different audiences remains a challenge.
Cultural	• The culture around dissemination results is still conservative and does not show signs of adapting to the changes brought on by the advent of new technologies. • There may be a high demand for reports on performance monitoring from decision makers within government, the mechanism of sharing information remains largely traditional and follows the bureaucratic patterns of government work. One perspective put forward is the poor reading culture that means most of the reports prepared are not read. • However, certain actors in the CSO space are now beginning to dabble with data viz applications, using social media and tech to share results. It will take time to see if these efforts can translate to a larger shift towards improving dissemination within the NES.

2.7 Evaluation Use

Evaluation is generated however it is not clear if it is used at the various levels of decision making within the spheres of the national evaluation system. The channels for evidence flow from the sources are well established and followed as mandated and several players are involved in using evidence. Knowledge and advocacy networks for instance, identify evidence that is related to issues affecting the community or citizens and use those findings to prepare their advocacy interventions. Political parties are another entity that tend to consume evaluation findings to inform debate and oversight function on the programs the government implements in their constituencies. The evidence they get is also used to inform their scrutiny of plans and budgets before they can be passed.

Technical	• National and local governments and national planning departments use findings from evaluations for planning, policy making and programming. Evaluation evidence is passed on to the executive and other interested parties that seek to intervene in the areas where evaluations have been conducted. • International NGOs use findings from evaluations in several ways, but purposely for informing the development and design of programs and projects and for reporting to their donors on program performance. NGOs also use the evaluation findings to write papers that are presented at conferences to show case cases, achievements, new models of practice for learning purposes. • High level policy makers within government and the development partner circles are the key technical resource for evaluation utilization. While the culture around evaluation is growing and the number of evaluations implemented within the NES is increasing, the utilization of the evaluation evidence by policy makers is limited. • The space for policy makers and other consumers of evaluation evidence to engage with and use evaluation evidence is constrained. As one respondent put it, the end goal of evaluation is not attained since evaluation evidence generated is not entirely utilised in a coherent manner. In cases where evaluation evidence is contrary to political expectations, it's use may become compromised.
Institutional	• There has been a change in behaviour of the public service over the past 10 years with the emergence of M&E systems. Communication of results from MDAs to the Cabinet at bi-annual government performance reviews has improved. • However, the change of behaviour is growing slower to subnational levels of government than anticipated. The added value of evaluation is that it highlights gaps in government performance to the public, as such, through CSOs, citizens are able to interrogate and engage more on substantive matters. • Financial constraints play a role in evaluation use particularly when prioritizing government remedial action as a result of analysing recommendations. Recommendations that do not require additional

	financing are implemented immediately while others are delayed to be incorporated in the next planning cycle for financing. • At sector level, use of evaluation evidence is often hampered by the evaluation design, that is suited to donor concerns and interests, which may not necessarily reflect the needs of the MDA thus curtailing the use of the evaluation product generated.
Cultural	• Evidence reaches to the highest level of decision making in government given the fairly robust, centrally effective national evaluation system – with keen participation of government and civil society institutions however decisions remain largely unaffected. • One explanation for this is that the 'teeth' of the government wide evaluation system currently sits with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development which does not have authorization to take hard political decisions, for instance, evidence generated from performance assessments require action from the Cabinet to penalize poor performance. • Evidence generated from performance monitoring is used to ensure accountability which in turn assures continuity. The focus of use is much less on learning or to inform programming. In some cases, if evaluations are donor-led, they may be seen as 'policing'.

2.8 Building Evaluation Capacity

Capacity to perform the M&E function at the centre of government is fairly strong, a feature of the well-functioning technocratic structures that have formed the foundation on which the national evaluation system rests. Academic institutions in Uganda like UMI, UTAMU, Makerere University, Uganda Martyrs University, Mbarara University provide training in M&E at postgraduate level. There are several smaller institutions that offer certificate courses and to a greater extent have contributed to capacity building in M&E. These efforts are hampered by the lack of a standardized evaluation training curriculum. UTAMU is working on a curriculum with Saarland University from Germany, an effort that was geared towards standardizing content that is used specifically for M&E courses.

Technical	• The M&E skills portfolio available within the Ugandan NES are diverse and range widely from highly qualified, emerging to entry level. Government has established a functional Government Evaluation Facility and ensured that staff are trained to enhance their capacity to make it functional. At MDA level, it is the responsibility of the individual staff to access and finance trainings on evaluation. • According to the OPM, 40% of M&E positions have been created at central level to improve evaluation practice. While at the local government level, the numbers are unknown but markedly much less. • Higher Education Institutions such as UMI, UTAMU and Uganda Martyrs University have done fairly well in capacitating public-sector personnel in M&E. They offer certificate courses and post graduate diplomas on Project M&E. Emerging evaluators however face a challenge in that the M&E is not yet embedded enough in the NES to provide employment opportunities. • At sector level, the Makerere University School of Public Health is largely involved in building capacity of evaluation practitioners in the health sector while the Uganda Martyrs' University's Faculty of Agriculture offers a Masters Degree program on M&E.
Institutional	• At the OPM, work continues on improving national evaluation systems through further training programs on evaluation use and use of electronic online systems. These efforts are supported by development partners that include Twende Mbele, CLEAR-AA, 3ie, World Bank, UNDP, AfDB and other international organizations and VOPES. The M&E policy recommends all that government programs above $20,000 should be evaluated and sets a standard of 5% of the program budget to go towards M&E functions however in reality, not all these programs are evaluated due to financial constraints (OPM, 2011). • Uganda Evaluation Association as a VOPE has contributed to capacity building efforts by organizing trainings, seminars and identifying members who are fronted for international exposures through conferences. They conduct periodic seminars where practitioners and seasoned evaluators from Uganda and abroad provide capacity building to the UEA members. The participants believed that these services need to be enhanced and publicised as most of them were not aware.

	• Growing numbers of aspiring evaluators practitioners join the Uganda Evaluation Association to improve skills but their demand/requests have changed from upskilling to professionalization of M&E to improve their opportunities in search for jobs and career opportunities. • Higher Education Institutions are focal in efforts to professionalize M&E. There are attempts for universities and ECB/D stakeholders across the continent to collaborate on standardization of M&E curriculum. All degree, post graduate and Master level courses are examinable therefore there is a level of standardization as they are accredited by the Council of Higher Education.
Cultural	• M&E capacity building efforts have been growing drastically over the past decade however there is still no consensus on what M&E means as a profession given the variations in the form of M&E practiced across sectors and contexts. Even as the interest in M&E as a field grows, the capacity to manage evaluations is still quite low. • International donors and NGOs require that their programs and projects have a functional M&E system and have provided capacity building either through facilitating trainings for their staff, and setting hiring requirements for M&E skill sets which has compelled many people to acquire the skills • Demand created for M&E by development programmes over the past two decades has resulted in public sector personnel increasingly pursuing M&E as a supplement to their current professional roles. For many, it is a way to build a career/promotion plan within the public sector e.g. biostatisticians, statisticians and town clerks.

2.9 Shifting Norms

There has been a growing demand for accountability from citizenry that has emerged over the past two decades. With an educated, empowered generation of youth and life expectancy rising from 42 to 75 years, the nature of debate in the country has evolved and expectations of citizens from the government has changed drastically. Despite this, the appreciation for M&E is still rather minimal across the public sector particularly as institutions grapple with operationalizing M&E in their day to day activities which competes with their mainstream functions. Many are largely unaware of the M&E policy, what it entails and that a body exists within the OPM that is mandated to oversee the country M&E function. Few are yet to realize the full benefits of instilling an M&E culture within the public sector and how that contributes towards achieving better organizational and programmatic objectives.

Citizens have a high interest in government plans and priorities especially with regard to service delivery for their communities. Citizen monitoring efforts on implementation of government plans and budgets has been on the rise, seeking to give feedback and seek accountability through several forums including community meetings. The OPM organizes community barazas to channel some of the feedback through into government planning processes. I

Local councils, politicians/political parties monitor and are monitored to the extent of delivery on their oversight mandates. Citizens and CSOs are using community scorecards to monitor the performance of the local councils and elected government officials keeping the politicians active and engaged. In addition, the opposition parties especially the opposition in parliament through their leader of opposition are engaged in utilizing evaluation evidence to provide alternative position papers to counter ruling party and technocrats' reports. Religious and other faith-based organizations are actively involved in the evaluation processes, championing conformity to religious norms and values.

Technical	• With the development of the evaluation policy, there are signs of a shift away from traditional public administration and budgeting to program and results-oriented administration and budgeting. MDAs and sectors refer to the policy while budgeting which provides them a leverage to include evaluations and holds the OPM responsible for conducting these evaluations. • New practices are emerging within the NES as the system changes from paper-based M&E to use of digitized electronic systems. This is reinforced by the development of a Management Information System for M&E function in the public sector. • This has increased access of CSOs and non-state users of evidence to critical government generated evidence who have previously expressed challenges in accessing data generated by government agencies.

Institutional	• The government has changed strategy away from poverty reduction to long term development with a focus on implementing the National Development Plan. It has set the foundation for reforms within the public sector that include less reliance on donor funding. Reducing the percentage of donor funded programs in the national budget by up to 50%. • At sector level, MDAs and sector institutions have become evaluation sensitive, ensuring that major programs are evaluated and to a large extent the recommendations are deliberated on by policymakers and, incorporated in programming. MDAs are beginning to actively engage in resource mobilization for evaluation through driving the evaluation and research agenda to focus and design evaluations that serve the interests of the Ministry. • The existence of the Ugandan NES has provided avenues for citizens, CSOs and others to access evaluation evidence that is used to improve service delivery, policy making and program implementation.
Cultural	• Technological changes in communications such as the rise of mobile telephone use has implications on the norms emerging in all aspects of Ugandan society. • Furthermore, social media use for public expression has grown drastically within urban areas across the country. A culture of critiquing of government is emerging and gaining foothold among citizens. The government however has responded by imposing taxes on social media use, in what appears as efforts to curb the growth of this trend. • Traditional channels of communications such as public radio talk shows, demonstrations and elections remain popular however and are used by citizens who are becoming more vocal in demanding more from government. • Efforts by CSOs and the media generally tend towards focus on high visibility and sensational issues such as corruption scandals which are popular with the socially connected masses. Less effort is placed on generating evidence to support improvement and learning by the government.

2.10 Shaping Axiologies

There have been significant achievements for Uganda with the development of systems, structures and mechanisms to enhance the M&E function, there is, however, need for more commitments in terms of using evidence generated from the system for the benefits of the system to begin to emerge.

Religious and faith-based institutions play a big role in ensuring norms and values, religious and faith-based institutions. Political parties provide checks and balance over government's conduct of business.

Technical	• Generally, the drivers of values in Uganda are religious institutions and to a smaller extent cultural institution, opinion leaders in business and society. The Joint Christian Council and the Uganda Muslim Education Association are consulted by government when adjusting the education system to ensure that curricula are sensitive to culture and religious values of the country. • The constitution of the country remains foundational in public discourse however various amendments such as removal of presidential term and age limits have led to a trust deficit, this by extension affects the image of other public institutions. • Through elections, citizens are generally able to express their views on certain positions e.g. there was an 80% turnover of MPs from the previous parliament session which is a signifier of good levels of public participation and contention with government. • Although these factors are determinants of the broader value system in Uganda, it is difficult to establish what would influence/determine the nature of an emergent national evaluation system in Uganda.
Institutional	• Development is the main driver and shaper of the way M&E is perceived in the country. This is due to their high levels of investment in M&E systems for sectors. In addition, there is high participation of development partners in the national evaluation system since they tend to use national M&E systems to support their own M&E reporting. • The OPM has taken steps to encourage a culture of accountability built around community engagement and communication of results. In 2010, the OPM set up the 'Citizen Barazas' which are a community-based M&E model that monitors performance of service delivery at community level. Expansion of such programs would be a channel through which government could actively institutionalize evaluation-oriented practice in the public service.
Cultural	• Overall, the current M&E policy is reminiscent of existing practices and the legacy of public administration, governance and economic reforms of the country. • For the most part, indigenization of public programs and projects by both government and CSOs occurs unintentionally. Attempts have been made to be more deliberate in infusing existing cultural values and practices to programs. For instance, the citizen barazas have been built around existing

	cultural practices, borrowing from the way the villages meetings were organized 'under the tree arrangement' and chaired by local chiefs.

3. Conclusion

The Uganda national evaluation system has strengthened significantly over the past decade in response to the increase in demand for improved public sector management and service delivery from citizens. Performance monitoring and capacity building efforts around M&E in the country have strengthened significantly driven mainly by resources invested in the space by development partners. While functions that rely on strong coordinative capabilities such as defining results, planning and setting direction, establishing favourable institutional arrangements and dissemination and use of evaluation results display signs of fragmentation due to the challenges around coordination as a whole within in the public sector. Evaluation practice in Uganda reflects the challenges faced in the broader national evaluation system with limited awareness about the national evaluation policy, little consensus on the typology around evaluations and the conduct of evaluations. With this outlook, there is potential for further improvements of the functions in the national evaluation system. This optimism however will be tempered by the major hindrance facing the Ugandan evaluation system, that of political will and capacity to systemize and ground the fruits of the emergent National Evaluation System.

4. Stakeholder Map

	Anchor Stakeholder	Core Stakeholder	Stakeholder	Stakeholder	
1. Defining Results (Planning)	Planning Commission	Treasury	Civil society	Donors	Departments
2. Monitoring Performance	Audit Institutions	Civil society	Treasury	Local government	Departments
3. Institutional Arrangements	OPM/ equivalent	Parliament	Donors	VOPES	
4. Evidence Production and research	Statistical Agencies	Universities	Civil Society	Think Tanks/ Consultancies	
5. Evaluation Practice	VOPES	Donors	Universities	Consultancies	Departments
6. Disseminating	Line Departments	UEA	Donors	Universities	Media
7. Use	Departments	Parliament	Civil society	Donors	Local government
8. Building Capacity	NIPA	NGOs Universities	NSGs	VOPES	CLEAR
9. Shifting Norms	Multilaterals	Donors	Civil society		
10. Axiologies	Political parties	Civil society, religious groups	Thought/ cultural leaders	Traditional leaders	Media

5. References

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