



**TWENDE MBELE**

GUIDELINE

# Establishing a **National** **Monitoring and** **Evaluation Policy**

MARCH 2022

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## TWENDE MBELE

### Twende Mbele Guideline No 1

Establishing a National Monitoring and Evaluation or Evaluation Policy

Created 10 March 2022

Updated

Addressed to	African governments who are considering establishing a national monitoring and evaluation or evaluation policy. Development partners interested in supporting such a policy.
Purpose	The purpose of this Guideline is to give practical guidance on how to develop a national evaluation policy.
Contact person for this guideline	Cara Waller E-mail: <a href="mailto:information@twendembele.org.za">information@twendembele.org.za</a>

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## 1 Introduction

Twende Mbele supports African governments to learn from each other and use monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to improve government performance and accountability.

This guideline seeks to help countries who are thinking of establishing a national monitoring and evaluation policy (NMEP) or evaluation policy (NEP), targeting the M&E champions in government, as well as their supporters in the wider M&E ecosystem. At present in Africa there are several countries with NMEP or NEPs, including Benin, Uganda, South Africa Ethiopia, Zimbabwe. This guideline draws from the experience of these countries and more widely, drawing on authors from those countries<sup>1</sup>. The context of each country differs, and so the policy needs to be contextually grounded. Examples are provided from different countries to illustrate some of the choices to be made.

The guideline covers why have a policy (section 3), when to develop a policy (section 4), whether to go for a M&E or evaluation policy (section 5), guiding principles (section 6), scope (section 7), and section 8 goes through each of the possible elements of a policy, illustrating choices and good practice, and some guidance on what to cover to guide implementation. Section 9 discusses the process of developing the policy, assuming it is not just outsourced to a consultant, with section 10 the challenges to be aware of and manage.

## 2 Purpose of the guideline

The purpose of the guideline is to provide practical guidance for governments in Africa on developing a national M&E or evaluation policy. It links to other resources which can assist governments and their development partners in this endeavour.

## 3 Why have a policy?

This section should briefly bring out the importance of M&E, gaps in the national M&E system, bringing out the need for a policy that addresses the gaps. The identified gaps in the National M&E system will inform “why a M&E policy” discussion.

The effectiveness of public policy is a major issue for the achievement of national and international development agendas. Since the 2000s the United Nations (UN) has been promoting reforms at global level to promote policy and programme effectiveness and advocating for results-based development management. M&E is increasingly seen as a crucial function that should inform decision-making, improve accountability and transparency regarding public expenditure and demonstrate what is working and not working and why, and how interventions need to be improved. The Paris Declaration also enshrined the evaluation of development programs and made it an obligation for both development partners and developing countries.

<sup>1</sup> The guideline was developed by Ian Goldman, Aloyce Ratemo, Damase Sossou, Nox Chitepo, Takunda Chirau, Edoé Djimitri Agbodjan, David Makhado, Thokozile Molaiwa, Cara Waller, Tim Lubanga, Andrew Asibeye, from Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda.

Monitoring has been institutionalised in many countries, but evaluation to a much lesser degree, despite the common use of the term M&E. There has been establishment of guidance and coordination bodies and in some countries the adoption of a national M&E or evaluation policy. But often those policies have not yet been fully implemented as an instrument to ensure effective public action and for ensuring that M&E evidence is used in policy-making, planning, budgeting and implementation. This is due to the absence of formal or legal requirements for M&E and particularly evaluation of public policies to ensure their effectiveness.

In the Guideline on National Evaluation Systems<sup>2</sup> it was indicated that:

An evaluation system is “one in which evaluation is a regular part of the life cycle of public policies and programmes ..... 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”. (Lázaro, 2015). In other words, evaluation systems are permanent frameworks, processes and cultures that institutionalise and standardises evaluation (Furubo & Sandahl, 2002).

We can widen this definition to cover a monitoring and evaluation system.

A national M&E policy is intended to promote, systematise and strengthen the practice and use of M&E to enhance the performance of policies, programmes and projects for effective and efficient delivery of goals and objectives. It identifies the M&E elements mechanisms and systems that need to be established and implemented for effective M&E, and it may well set standards for monitoring and evaluations at all levels of government.

In countries which do not have M&E systems, the NMEP will serve as a basis for establishing systems, processes as well as provide a guide for carrying out M&E across government agencies and the public sector. Recognising that many countries have policies on performance and accountability, this policy will complement other government policies<sup>3</sup> especially in generating timely and regular information for evidence-based decision making geared towards achieving the country’s development outcomes.

Some reasons for having a policy are:

- Ensuring leadership support for the system, by formal approval of the policy, seeking to ensure that M&E evidence is used for policy-making and implementation;
- Mobilising support across government and external partners, by having an agreed national system, to which stakeholders have bought in;
- Clarifying what the M&E system(s) is trying to achieve;
- Providing overall guidance on what M&E sub-systems (e.g. standards, or capacity development) should be developed and how they should be undertaken and how they must work together<sup>4</sup>;
- Showing the links to wider government M&E systems, e.g. guidelines...

Governments may have specific guidance on the structure of policies, but in general it is important to provide strategic guidance with what needs to be done, as well as an outline implementation plan to guide implementation, but without too much detail which can be developed in guidelines. Usually one

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<sup>2</sup> Insert weblink

<sup>3</sup> For example often sectors have legislation which empowers specific departments to monitor and evaluate their sectors

<sup>4</sup> Table 2 in the guideline on national evaluation systems suggests what may be components from the evaluation side.

does not want to change policies in less than five years, so dynamic elements which will emerge are better left to guidelines. In section 8 we suggest a possible structure for a M&E policy.

#### 4 When is a good time for a policy?

Countries do not have to start with a formally agreed policy to develop a functioning M&E system, with the need depending on the context. As Dye (1972) suggests, quoted in Howlett (2011, p15), public policy is what governments decide to do or not to do. It is important to have some guidance for the M&E systems but this does not need to be a formal policy. So even in some contexts where a M&E policy does not explicitly exist, governments can define the system through how they undertake M&E and develop national capacity to undertake M&E. It is important to have some guidance for the M&E systems but this does not need to be a formal policy. However, as M&E becomes used more widely, and enters public discourse, it may then become necessary to formalise and structure the system to ensure coherence. In some contexts the country may start with a diagnosis of national capacities on M&E to identify opportunities and challenges to establishing a national M&E system that aligns with the country's development agenda<sup>5</sup>.

When a national M&E policy has been in place, the next step to consider is to consider when legislation is needed to ensure M&E is systematised and the evidence used in planning and budgeting. The experience of countries like South Africa, Uganda and Benin suggests that around 5 years after a policy has been implemented is a good time to consider passing legislation, before there is fatigue about the rigorous work required for effective M&E, and a decline in political support.

#### 5 A M&E policy or an evaluation policy

Monitoring functions are typically carried out by many agencies, as it should be an essential part of management. Thus typically sector departments monitor their sector, a ministry of local government will monitor local governments, public agencies like gender commissions may monitor for particular ends, a national planning commission may monitor implementation of the national development plan, but at the end of the day all organisations must monitor their own activities, to undertake corrective action as needed. Hence monitoring responsibilities are dispersed through public agencies.

Evaluation is much less common in government, although widespread in international development agencies.

Based on this government may wish to develop a M&E policy, to systematise monitoring, and to provide for evaluation (e.g. Uganda), or if monitoring is well established, and there is a desire to focus on establishing an evaluation system, they may wish to focus on getting an evaluation system up and running (as in South Africa). This depends on the dynamics in the country. For example contestation between departments around roles in monitoring in South Africa also make it easier to develop an evaluation policy, than a monitoring policy. However having produced a highly regarded national evaluation policy, it did also raise the question why there was no equivalent monitoring policy. Context matters!

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<sup>5</sup> Section 7 of the NES guideline touches on this from the evaluation perspective. The Global Evaluation Initiative is developing a M&E Systems Analysis Tool (MESA) to provide guidance on this diagnosis.

## 6 Guiding principles underlying a M&E policy

This section suggests a set of guiding principles which should underly a national M&E policy:

1. **Alignment with the constitution and national priorities:** The policy should link to foundational documents like the constitution and relevant policies.
2. **Ownership:** This means emphasising the use of M&E systems internally, not just for external users, and promoting the capacity of all managers to use M&E evidence, not just those in M&E Units. This should lead to the development of a performance-oriented management culture and improvements in performance.
3. **Pragmatic:** The reporting burden is a big problem in many governments, with much time taken on data collection and reports which are not actually used. M&E information should contain appropriate levels of detail, avoiding collecting data that is not used for monitoring and reporting. Duplication of data collection and reporting within and across departments should be minimised. This can potentially be avoided by standardisation of business processes and optimal use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to automate data processes and link data entry and analysis across agencies.
4. **Accountability and transparency:** Accountability and transparency answer questions such as where is public spending going? How is spending tracked, and is this spending making a difference? Is it providing value for money? There should be openness in the generation, reporting of evidence of the effectiveness and efficiency of government's work, and how that evidence is then used in decision-making. Evidence reports (e.g evaluations, research, reviews, monitoring reporting etc.) should be made accessible to the public.
5. **Using M&E evidence:** Resources are allocated better when there is credible data to inform performance. Monitoring and evaluation provide data which should be used to inform planning and budgeting of government programmes and projects. The use of this data should be made clear and a requirement of planning and budgeting systems.
6. **Credibility and objectivity:** Persons undertaking monitoring and evaluation must have the requisite core competences and must exercise their function being reflective on their personal opinions or biases. This is closely tied with ethical principles. M&E should be seen to provide credible and objective evidence which decision-makers can use for decision-making.
7. **Ethics:** Monitoring and evaluation should respect and protect the rights, and confidentiality of all those involved in the programmes they monitor and evaluate. Those entrusted with carrying out M&E duties must adhere to agreed M&E standards which promote ethical practice.
8. **Learning:** M&E information should not be used (or perceived) as a punitive tool for poor performance, but rather used to promote learning, programme management and policy formulation. Lessons learnt must contribute to improved development interventions in the future.
9. **Participatory and inclusive:** M&E should involve all programme stakeholders which include the implementers as well as beneficiaries of the programme and respect principles of collaboration and consultation. This ensures that diverse interests, especially the vulnerable

groups which include children and persons with disabilities, are represented and not just the powerful.

10. **Timeliness:** Systems should ensure that reports and information from M&E are available when needed by stakeholders. Some monitoring data may need to be realtime (e.g. cases and deaths during the pandemic by geographical area), while others that take longer (such as evaluations) should be planned in advance to deliver when the evidence is needed (such as for decisions on the new phase of a programme).
11. **Technology:** Technology is an important enabler which facilitates capturing, analysis and reporting of data, potentially in real-time. Additionally, technology promotes more efficient delivery and presentation of performance information, capturing of data from different sources, and reduces the use of paper.

## 7 Scope of the policy

A key question for the policy is its scope – what it covers and does not cover. The first issue is whether it is a M&E Policy or an Evaluation Policy, discussed in section 5. Other scope issues include:

- Does it cover all levels/spheres of government?
- If a M&E Policy, as there are many M&E systems, does it cover all systems, or only some. For example does it cover financial monitoring which is likely to be done by Ministry of Finance, or what aspects of monitoring of the public service, or sectoral monitoring does it cover?
- Does it cover state-owned enterprises?
- Does it cover development partners?
- Is it guidance, or do the target users have to apply it.

For example Uganda's Policy applies to all public policies, strategies, programmes and projects managed by ministries, departments, agencies, local governments, parastatals and executing agencies of public programmes. While the 2019 version of South Africa's Evaluation Policy<sup>6</sup> includes local government and state-owned enterprises (SOEs), the 2011 version<sup>7</sup> was deliberately less ambitious and wary of capacity limitations, and focused on national and provincial government. Kenya's applies 'to all institutions in the public sector and other actors that partner with government in implementation of public policies, programmes and projects. These include; national government and its entities including constitutional commissions, independent offices and state organs; county governments; and non-state actors implementing public programmes'.

## 8 Possible content of a policy

This section is structured according to a possible structure of a policy. It discusses what would be needed to cover in a particular section, the choices which need to be made, and where useful provides examples from a couple of countries. Annexes 2-4 provide the contents pages of the approved national M&E or evaluation policies for Benin, South Africa and Uganda.

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<https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Documents/National%20Evaluation%20Policy%20Framework%20Nov%202019.pdf>

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<https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Evaluations/National%20Evaluation%20Policy%20Framework%202011%202011%202025.pdf>

## 8.1 Context

Context is critical in implementing a M&E system. It is important not to just copy what another country has done, and while it is possible to learn from other countries, local application depends on context. It is helpful to develop the policy based on a diagnosis of M&E functions, the strengths and weaknesses of both the supply and demand side. Table 1 shows the features outlined in the Global Evaluation Initiative's MESA diagnostic tool. Section 3 of the MESA gives an idea of what features might be covered in the context section of a policy. If the decision has been taken to do an evaluation policy then elements from section 5 may be covered in the context too.

**Table 1: Structure of the MESA<sup>8</sup>**

<b>1 Introduction to the MESA</b>		
1.1 Introduction to the MESA 1.2 Objective of the MESA 1.3 Methodology and process conducted 1.4 Structure of the report		
<b>2 Country Background</b>		
2.1 Country Profile 2.2 Government Structure 2.3 Political economy and link to M&E 2.4 Organizational culture of government and M&E 2.5 Interest in M&E at the beginning of the MESA		
<b>3 Overview of Planning, Budget and M&amp;E systems (PBM&amp;E)</b>	<b>4 Monitoring and reporting systems</b>	<b>5 Evaluation systems</b>
3.1 PBM&E legal and policy background 3.2 Key PBM&E actors 3.3 Planning and budget systems 3.4 M&E systems 3.5 M&E stakeholders (national statistics, audit offices, VOPEs 3.6 Statistical and administrative data 3.7 Resources for M&E 3.8 Communication of M&E evidence 3.9 M&E capacity development initiatives 3.10 Equity/gender considerations in the PBM&E systems. 3.11 Climate and environmental sustainability considerations in the PBM&E systems.	4.1 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at national level 4.2 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at subnational levels 4.3 Monitoring of government by Parliament 4.4 Government's monitoring and reporting capacity 4.5 Civil society role in government monitoring system 4.6 Systems/incentives for acting on monitoring 4.7 Use of monitoring information by government	5.1 Evaluation at national/subnational levels 5.2 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation 5.3 Government capacity to manage, commission or undertake evaluations 5.4 The systems/incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon 5.5 Capacity to undertake evaluations 5.6 Systems/ incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon 5.7 Use of evaluations by government 5.8 Use of evaluations by Parliament 5.9 Use of evaluations by civil society and the media 5.10 Role of civil society in government evaluation system
<b>6 Overall findings and conclusions</b>		
6.1 An overview of the status of the M&E system 6.2 Areas working well and areas for improvement 6.3 Opportunities for interventions which are triggers for wider system change/development outcomes 6.4 Conclusions		

It is important to use this information about context. So it is not just descriptive information but used to raise the importance of M&E, increase the appetite amongst leadership, and also mean that the policy is designed based on the contextual realities of what is likely to work well or not. Table 2 shows how leverage points in the context may influence decisions about the way the system and so the policy are designed.

<sup>8</sup> [https://mcusercontent.com/1f2a1ea0afb3b65dabccade00/files/876f222f-d95b-6cb7-40cd-bfd3c8decdee/GEI\\_MESA\\_GuidanceNote.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/1f2a1ea0afb3b65dabccade00/files/876f222f-d95b-6cb7-40cd-bfd3c8decdee/GEI_MESA_GuidanceNote.pdf)

**Table 2: Contextual issues which affect generation and use of M&E evidence, and so the policy**

Theme	Issue	Example of how this might affect the system
Perceived significance of M&E	Commitments made to international agreements	e.g. can you build on the commitment to monitor the SDGs.
	Levels of financial resources within government	Is there the potential of funding evaluations internally or cost sharing?
	Requirement for M&E in existing legislation	Is their existing legislation which requires M&E that can be built on?
Catalysts of change	Crises	Is there a crisis which can be used to illustrate the key role of M&E, e.g. COVID-19
	Pressure from development partners (DPs)	How could evaluations required by DPs be used to build the system?
	Pressure from civil society	This may mean it is essential to make M&E reports public.
Broader political and socio-cultural environment	Timing, for example, proximity to election period	If an election has just passed ministers may be more open to discussing how to implement their manifesto more effectively, and so M&E
	Space for public participation and civil society engagement	Depending on the context it may be important or not acceptable to involve civil society in a steering structure for the system, e.g. Costa Rica's National Evaluation Platform, or Benin's National Evaluation Council.
	Level of interest and engagement of stakeholders	As above this would lead to how to involve them.
Institutional environment	Systems and processes	e.g. what monitoring systems exist that should be built on, or changed
	Evidence champions	Who are the champions for the M&E system, where are they located and how can they be used in the M&E system, e.g. in a steering structure
	Leadership	What is the quality of leadership and where does it lie. How does this affect the way the system should be designed?
	Mandates and capacities	How might existing mandates and capacities affect the roles expected in the systems? <sup>9</sup>
	Culture – learning and accountability	How will a very punitive culture be addressed and changed, so that M&E is welcomed and used? How can islands of excellence in culture be built on?
	Linkages and relationships	What key linkages or relationships exist which can be built on? <sup>10</sup>

Source: Adapted from Goldman and Pabari (2020).

## 8.2 Objective/purpose of the policy

The purpose of the NMEP or NEP varies depending on the specificity of the country context. For some countries its aim is to promote an evaluative culture within the public administration, to contribute to

<sup>9</sup> For example in Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, there is internal monitoring by the agencies responsible for the system. In European evaluation systems, in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden there is an independent body that regularly assesses system functioning (Lazaro, 2015). In Africa (Benin, Uganda and South Africa), National Evaluation Systems (NES) are managed by units in the presidency or prime minister's office (Goldman et al. (2018).

<sup>10</sup> An example here is that in South Africa in developing the evaluation system, the initial agencies practicing evaluation were brought together to share their experience, this group went on a study visit to Mexico and Colombia in 2011, this group came together to co-develop the National Evaluation Policy Framework, and they formed the initial National Evaluation Technical Working Group, which supported the development of the system.

the optimisation and rational use of public resources and to strengthen accountability and good governance within the public administration. Table 3 shows examples of purposes from different countries.

**Table 3: Examples of objectives or purpose of national M&E or evaluation policies**

Country	Purpose/objective
Benin's Evaluation Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to promote the evaluative culture within the public administration;</li> <li>• to promote the tools necessary for the assessment of public policies;</li> <li>• contribute to the optimization and rational use of public resources;</li> <li>• to help capitalize on knowledge and disseminate good public management practices;</li> <li>• strengthen accountability and good governance within public administration;</li> <li>• to systematize accountability to institutions and citizens.</li> </ul>
Uganda's M&E Policy 2011	Purpose: Improve the performance of the public sector through the strengthening of the operational, coordinated, and cost-effective production and use of objective information on implementation and results of national strategies, policies, programmes and projects.
Kenya's Draft M&E Policy 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmonise M&amp;E systems for all public projects, programmes and policies at all levels (National and County);</li> <li>• Ensure timely and accurate reporting of progress and results at all levels (national and county);</li> <li>• Strengthen capacity to effectively monitor and evaluate policies, programmes and projects at all levels (national and county);</li> <li>• Ensure effective coordination of M&amp;E systems in the country;</li> <li>• Promote a culture and practice of M&amp;E in the country; and</li> <li>• Promote dissemination and communication.</li> </ul>
S Africa's National Evaluation Policy Framework 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving performance (evaluation for learning);</li> <li>• Improving accountability;</li> <li>• Generating knowledge (for research) about what works and what does not;</li> <li>• Improving decision-making.</li> </ul>

### 8.3 Rationale

This section should provide a justification for a national M&E policy in the country. How will the policy support the country in addressing existing M&E challenges? What do the country's laws say about M&E as a management tool? Explain how this policy links to existing policies or complements other policies in the country.

For example it might signal existing M&E challenges like:

- Low M&E culture and practice especially in the public sector;
- Weak M&E reporting structures;
- Multiple and uncoordinated M&E systems within and among institutions;
- Weak institutional, managerial and technical capacities in M&E;
- Lack of clarity of the roles of various stakeholders;
- Inadequate or lack of provision of financial resources for M&E function among others.

For example during implementation of Kenya's National Integrated M&E System (NIMES) it has faced a number of challenges including inadequate resources and capacities for performance tracking, weak M&E culture, weak linkages with other reform programmes, and a lack of timely and reliable data and

lack of local training institutions<sup>11</sup>. This calls for an M&E policy to ensure adequacy in resource and institutionalisation of M&E.

The rationale could highlight issues like: developing M&E capacities at all levels; the need for M&E structures, coordination and reporting formats at different levels of government; the need to increase efficiency in utilisation of resources and timely realisation of results leading to speedy development in the Country.

The rationale might want to link with the principles of results-based management, transparency, accountability, and efficiency as fundamental principles for managing all public programmes and projects in the Country.

In addition all countries are signatories to international development agreements which have progress reporting frameworks which require a well-coordinated flow of timely and regular information to support reporting on individual country's position in implementation of such agreements as well as facilitating peer reviews. Such agreements include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the African Union Agenda 2063; and regional economic blocs such as: Southern African Development Community (SADC); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); East African Community (EAC); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS also known as CEDEAO in French); Arab Maghreb Union (UMA); Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

The rationale may want to indicate how the policy proposes to fill gaps in existing policy documents, legal instruments and/or development frameworks towards implementation of an efficient and effective M&E system. In most countries there exist laws, policies and regulations on transparency, accountability and governance but a review of these reveal gaps in the provision of the appropriate policy framework for the establishment and operationalisation of an effective M&E function in the public sector. Some laws like those on financial management focus on use and reporting on funds which are inputs and not outputs and outcomes<sup>12</sup>. This policy will complement these efforts by providing mechanisms for monitoring of both financial and non-financial performance.

#### 8.4 Stakeholders and users

The development of National M&E Policy should involve a variety of stakeholders, ranging from the central government bodies to the decentralised government bodies, parliaments, audit general, social and economic councils, universities, capacity building programmes, as well as civil society organisations. The variety of these stakeholders depends on the scope of the policy, e.g. whether it covers all levels/spheres of government, or just some of them (see section 7 above). The NEP of Benin for example provides an extensive list of these stakeholders.

Some of the principles in section 6 have particular implications in identifying stakeholders:

- **Alignment with the constitution and national priorities:** The constitution is an important foundation to link the policy with and to identify which institutions should be part of the policy development process. Several countries have amended their constitution to provide various stakeholders with the responsibility to evaluate. In some countries evaluation is not

<sup>11</sup> Final Evaluation of NIMES Capacity Development Project (SIDA, 2014)

<sup>12</sup> For example whereas Kenya's Public Finance Management Act 2012 emphasises the need for M&E, the focus is more on financial performance (section 184).

specifically mentioned in the Consitution (e.g. Benin), while in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Madagascar, Morocco, the Consitution explicitly requests the Parliament, and the Audit General to evaluate public policy.

- **Ownership:** a national agency should lead in the development and implementation of the national policy, even when the process is supported by development organisations, such as UNICEF, UNDP etc. In Benin, the process was initiated by the cabinet of the Prime Minister, whereas in Madagascar, the Ministry of Economy and Finance led the process. A national steering committee can be put in place to provide a platform for various stakeholders to own the process. For instance, in Madagascar, the steering committee was co-chaired by high level representatives of both the central government and the Parliament.
- **Participatory and inclusive:** The ultimate goal is to develop a policy that represents a common ground for the planning, implementation and the use of evaluations. The process of developing the policy should be participatory enough to provide opportunity for the various stakeholders to reflect and agree on the various components of the policy. As such, it is very important to design stakeholder workshops to ensure genuine participation of the stakeholders (consider issues such as choice of location, timing, online or onsite activity, awareness, training activities etc.). The process of designing the policy and resulting ownership is as important as the quality of the document itself. The policy should reflect the diversity of points of view and standpoints of the stakeholders. This requires that some specific groups be included in the process of designing the policy in accordance with its targeted area. For instance, if a M&E policy covers state-owned enterprises, or interventions of development partners, it is essential that these actors be included in the process of its development.

Evaluation is not only a technical affair, but also a political process in the strategic choice of priorities to be evaluated and the judgements made on what works and what does not. As such, implementation of the policy can be facilitated at the political level by a joint high level platform, where stakeholders can provide guidance and ensure the legitimacy for the evaluations. This high level platform can be supported by a technical body. In Benin, this is the case of the National Council of Evaluation which is supported by the General Directorate for Evaluation and Observatory of Social Change<sup>13</sup> The Council as well as the Directorate played a significant role to ensure that line ministries use the policy. For instance, the Directorate has to ensure that line ministries develop a theory of change to demonstrate the rationale behind their programmes before they receive funding from the state budget. The Directorate provides a technical support to stakeholders, such as the monitoring and evaluation units within the line ministries, for the use of the policy. If such a cross-stakeholder platform is envisaged, the policy is a good location to indicate this and give its purpose, so providing it with a mandate.

## 8.5 Scope

This is discussed earlier in section 7.

## 8.6 Monitoring systems

If a M&E policy is being developed, this section should outline the monitoring systems in place and those envisaged under the policy.

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<sup>13</sup> Previously the Office for the Evaluation of Public Policies and General Actions (BEPPAG), now the Directorate General for Evaluation and Observatory of Social Change (DGEOCS). Another good example internationally is Costa Rica which has a National Evaluation Platform

### 8.6.1 National

This section should describe the national system that exists and planned, indicating how the challenges will be addressed.

Governments often have national systems of reporting for national departments and agencies, sometimes to ministries of finance, sometimes to ministries of planning, or presidencies. Some countries are yet to have systematic monitoring, except for of finances. In countries such as Ghana and Kenya, annual progress reviews are done by the central M&E champion, drawing on reports by these ministries, departments and agencies.

In almost all cases this monitoring is more for accountability than learning. In research conducted by Twende Mbele on M&E culture in South Africa, Benin and Uganda around only 70% of managers responding to the survey indicated that learning is documented and used to improve future results (Goldman et al., 2020). A key feature of the M&E policy should be to address this.

For example, at national level in Kenya, the M&E framework is known as NIMES, which applies to all national agencies and aims to provide government with a reliable mechanism to measure efficiency and effectiveness of implementation of government policies, programmes and projects. In South Africa national and provincial departments have to submit quarterly reports against their annual performance plans, reporting on progress against targets and finances.

### 8.6.2 Regional

This section should outline the existing and planned monitoring roles and systems of regional administrations or governments.

Many governments have subnational structures at regional or local government level. Here we look at the former. This section should outline the existing and planned monitoring roles and systems of regional administrations or governments.

In South Africa these are provinces which are semi-autonomous governments with their own elected governments. Ghana has regional structures of central government, and Uganda has no regional structures, only local government. Francophone countries often have 'departements', following the French model (not the same as departments in English), which are regional structures of national government, not governments in their own right. For example Benin has 12 departements.

In many countries these would have to monitor and report quarterly (e.g. South Africa) or annually as with national departments. Provinces are included in the evaluation system in South Africa, and some provinces have become prominent exponents (e.g. see Ishmail & Tully, 2020).

### 8.6.3 Local government

One of the major public sector reforms across Africa has been the development of local governments, as devolved local structures. This section should outline the existing and planned monitoring roles and systems of local governments.

For example Kenya implemented a local government system after the new Constitution of 2010 and created 47 counties as autonomous local governments. In Kenya tracking and reporting on implementation of development initiatives in the devolved governments is conducted through the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (CIMES). In Ghana the structures are called District Assemblies, in Benin communes, and in South Africa municipalities. In many cases some form of monitoring at local government level is happening, eg CIMES, and often some reporting to central government, often to a ministry of local government.

#### 8.6.4 Sectoral

This section should outline the existing and planned monitoring roles and systems of sectors. Most sectors have some monitoring systems tracking performance, e.g. within health, or education. How will the policy apply to these, and build on these? This section should outline the existing and planned monitoring roles and systems of sectors.

#### 8.6.5 Specific systems

Some countries have specific monitoring systems, e.g. of frontline service delivery etc. If these exist how will the policy cover them? How will the policy allow for the flexibility to develop new systems over time?

### 8.7 Evaluation systems

The linked guideline on national evaluation systems talks about when a NES is relevant, the components of a NES, and how a system can be developed<sup>14</sup>.

This section should outline what exists in terms of public sector evaluation and what is planned in national and subnational plans. Evaluation may be carried out but in many countries this is fragmented and not systematised. It is important to be realistic about what is feasible, and to suggest a phasing in of the development of evaluation at national/regional/local government levels, as well as phasing in the involvement of SOEs. In most countries where evaluation is being taken forward this started at national level and then went to regional or local government level.

As the NES guideline states a 'NES commonly operate through the *framework* provided by a national evaluation policy (NEP) which structures, systematises and institutionalise the practice of evaluation. A policy outlines the purpose, responsibilities and organisation for which public sector evaluators can carry out evaluations in a national evaluation system (Chirau, Waller & Blaser-Mapitsa, 2018). In this sense, NES find their normative framework in the NEP. The presence of a national evaluation strategy or plan further institutionalises the evaluation across the public sector. This is because evaluations will no longer be undertaken at ad hoc basis (Lazaro, 2015) but in a structured and systematised manner.' (p3).

Table 3 is taken from that Guideline which outlines some of the components of a NES. Some of these elements are covered more generally in section 8 of this guideline, and the sections are indicated.

The policy should provide guidance on each of these elements of the system, and provide direction which can be followed up in detailed guidelines or details of the system (such as implementing a National Evaluation Plan).

### 8.8 Data management

Data management is a key pillar of M&E and it is therefore essential to factor that in the system. UNICEF (2009) refers to data management as the collection, storage, processing/analysis, dissemination and efficient use of information in the context of M&E. Data management is a key pillar of M&E and it is therefore essential to factor that in the system, and mention it in the policy. It is essential to build data management into the overall plan from the beginning, and to anticipate this in the policy.

<sup>14</sup> Guideline on How to Establish a National Evaluation System,

**Table 3: Main components of the evaluation systems in Uganda, Benin and South Africa**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
<b>Policy</b>	
National evaluation plan	A national evaluation plan provides an opportunity to identify strategic policies or programmes which should be prioritised for evaluation. It also provides an opportunity to get political buy-in to selecting these. An example of national evaluation plans/agendas can be found at <a href="https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Pages/Plans.aspx">https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Pages/Plans.aspx</a>
Other evaluation plans	Depending on the structure of the state, as the system matures it may be appropriate to have evaluation plans for regions/states/provinces, or specific departments, again identifying priority evaluations to undertake (as in South Africa), or as specific reviews to be undertaken (eg local government Mid-Term County Reviews in Kenya)
<b>Methodology</b>	
Guidelines	The methodology for undertaking different elements of the system should be detailed. In the policy it is relevant to mention that guidelines will be developed, without necessarily specifying which guidelines. In some countries such as Benin or Ghana, one overarching guideline has been developed <sup>15</sup> , whereas in South Africa different guidelines have been developed for different elements of the system <sup>16</sup> .
<b>Organisation (section 8.12)</b>	
Central champion	It is important to specify in the policy who is the overall custodian of the M&E or evaluation system, and to indicate the roles they play
Line ministries	What is their role in the evaluation systems
Decentralised levels	What is their role in the evaluation systems
<b>Capacity (8.10)</b>	
Competences	Are there evaluation competences defined both for commissioners of evaluation and evaluators, or do those need to be developed?
Capacity building plan	Has one been developed, is one needed?
Short courses in evaluation	Are these available, are they needed?
Postgraduate courses	Are there postgraduate courses in evaluation run through national universities, or does this need to be developed?
Availability of local evaluators	Do local evaluators have the capacity to undertake evaluations, and potentially specialised ones such as experimental or use of specific tools like Most Significant Change? Does this need developing?
<b>Participation of actors outside government (8.12)</b>	
Parliament	Is Parliament's role defined? Do government evaluations have to be provided to Parliament?
VOPE	What role does and should the VOPE play in the system?
Civil society	What role does and should civil society play in the system?
<b>Quality and use</b>	
Evaluation standards	Have evaluation standards been developed and a system for appraising the quality of evaluations? If not does this need to be developed?

<sup>15</sup> <https://evaluation.gouv.bj/articles/18> - Ghana's can be found at <https://ndpc.gov.gh/media/NationalMEMManual.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://evaluations.dpme.gov.za/pages/guidelines-other-resources>

Component	Considerations
Improvement plans (8.9)	Is there a system of improvement plans following the evaluation and if not does this need to be developed? What tracking is needed of these? <sup>17</sup>

The policy should provide guidance on each of these elements of the system, and provide direction which can be followed up in detailed guidelines or details of the system (such as implementing a National Evaluation Plan).

According to UNESCO (2016) when planning M&E activities, it is important to ensure that relevant officials responsible for managing the data should be brought in at the very earliest stage to assist in providing the necessary support. Below are a few components of data management proposed in the business case for the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in South Africa on a centralised data management and analytical system for the M&E system. Key elements to be considered include:

### 1. Defining the data to be collected:

Data collection refers to primary and secondary data collection. The primary data may include surveys, interviews and focus group discussions. Government departments often collect and hold much data to understand the performance of policies and programmes. One of the key challenges is making the right data available at the right time. A mechanism to access and utilise data from other government departments for analysis and reporting should be put in place. Therefore, building data governance structures and partnerships with relevant government departments to access data for M&E is critical.

### 2. Data storage:

Data storage is the activity of organising the collected information in a convenient way for fast utilisation, be it access or analysis. Data storage includes central, secure and accessible measures to store data in a database. Storage should be guided by the government's security policy. The ICT team should play a critical role in developing platform for data storage.

### 3. Data analysis and reporting:

Data must be processed and used to generate insights and useful information and reports. Analytic capability should include descriptive analysis; predictive analysis/forecasting etc. Data analysis to produce appropriate report will require adequate skills set and it is essential to develop and recruit personnel with data analysis skills.

### 4. Visualisation of data outputs:

A dashboard can enhance the presentation, usefulness and value of data outputs, particularly for quick viewing purposes and for decision-maker accessibility. Therefore, relevant dashboard software should be considered to provide strong and versatile data sharing and reporting functionalities.

## 8.9 Ensuring use of M&E findings

It is absolutely critical that the M&E or evaluation system is designed to encourage use. M&E reports that are not used waste time and resources that could be better spent elsewhere. Evaluation in particular should be designed to encourage improved performance, but if evaluations are not used this is unlikely to happen.

In terms of *monitoring* some key elements include:

<sup>17</sup> Some lessons around this can be found in Goldman et al (2019).

- Seeing programme managers as the key owners of monitoring, who need to include monitoring as part of their routine management. M&E Units responsibility should be around corporate M&E;
- Making sure that monitoring and reporting is only done where reports are used, so not overloading staff with compliance monitoring;
- Making sure that monitoring reports are available rapidly so can give quick feedback into management;
- Making sure that monitoring systems are designed so that they include a reflective/learning component.
- As well as government monitoring, social accountability tools can be used to obtain and provide feedback on M&E results to beneficiaries and citizens of projects and programmes. The M&E results will be used as inputs in enhancing citizens' ability to hold institutional leadership accountable.<sup>18</sup>

There are a number of areas that can be covered to strengthen the likely use of *evaluation* and could be included in the policy:

- Ensuring *ownership* by those being evaluated so for example joint proposals for evaluations to be undertaken, joint funding, involvement of custodian departments in evaluation steering committees etc;
- Having a quality assurance process to maximise the likely *quality of evaluations*. This can include a quality assessment process, as exists in South Africa, where the quality is assessed and this can be used with policy makers to ensure that the quality is not queried.
- Ensuring that the *timing* of evaluations fit key policy needs;
- Ensuring there is *follow up to evaluations* by having an improvement plan process for evaluations, and tracking this follow-up;
- Increasing the stakes by having national evaluations considered at high level forums like Cabinet;
- Ensuring that *systems* like national/sectoral/departmental plans, or cabinet memoranda must refer to and use M&E/research evidence.

For both monitoring and evaluation it is key that oversight bodies such as Parliament, Commissions etc have access to M&E findings and use them.<sup>19</sup>

## 8.10 Capacity development

Almost all M&E policies note the lack of human resources and capacity for the implementation of monitoring and evaluation. The issue of capacity development is therefore central to their operationalisation. A national M&E policy does not always present a detailed capacity-building plan or strategy. However, it should provide guidance for the design and implementation of such a strategy, including identifying the actors who will have to carry out this capacity-building strategy. Again it may be appropriate to propose phased capacity development.

For example, in Kenya the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (MED) is responsible for developing a capacity development strategy, while in Uganda the policy has placed capacity development under the responsibility of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Uganda Evaluation Association and the

<sup>18</sup> An example of such a process is in Smith et al., (2020).

<sup>19</sup> For further exploration of promoting use of M&E and other evidence see Goldman & Pabari, (2020)

Uganda Institute of Management. In Benin, the capacity building plan is carried out by the national office of evaluation<sup>20</sup>.

The National M&E Policy of Kenya states: “the directorate responsible for M&E in collaboration with stakeholders shall develop a Capacity Development Strategy to guide M&E capacity development in the Country. This shall entail periodic assessment and review of the M&E curriculum and mobilization of resources for M&E capacity enhancement in the public sector. Continuous M&E trainings shall be conducted to both National and County government managerial and technical officers to improve their skills.” (p.11).

The capacity building strategy or plan should fill the capacity gap. It should target the stakeholders, but also help develop specific competences in accordance with elements of the policy (priorities, methodology, type of evaluation etc). In the case of countries which are at early stages in developing a national M&E policy, capacity building may initially focus on the unit in charge of the coordination of the policy. In the case of Benin, UNDP, UNICEF and the CLEAR centres have made a key contribution to strengthening the office's capacity. It might also be necessary to build capacity of decision makers, as well as the various units in charge of M&E within line ministries, parliaments, and other stakeholders.

Capacity building should not be seen as a separate phase of the development of the policy, but be integrated into its implementation (see Box 1).

**Box 1: Support on capacity development in Gabon, Madagascar, and Benin**

In Gabon, as well as in Madagascar, CLEAR Francophone Africa (CLEAR FA) is partnering with UNICEF and UNDP in supporting development of a national M&E policy. Capacity building activities have been implemented since the beginning of the process. In Benin, a mid-term evaluation of the policy has been implemented as a component of the capacity building strategy, and CLEAR FA has supported BEPPAG in implementing a meta-evaluation in order to gather lessons learned and develop a capacity building strategy.

Throughout the process of preparation, development and implementation of the policy, a set of capacity building activities is required depending on the needs of the stakeholders. These activities include advocacy, awareness raising, development of skills to commission evaluation, to manage the M&E process, to implement M&E and to use evidence. The ultimate goal is to help each stakeholder play its role in the implementation of the policy.

A capacity needs assessment may be needed to identify the existing gaps, at the system, organisational and individual levels, when there is not enough data to develop a national capacity building strategy. The CLEAR centers, with the support of the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI), have developed tools to conduct capacity needs assessment at the three levels: system, organisational and individual levels.

Capacity building actions can take the form of short-term training, the implementation or scale-up of existing university programs, or capacity-building mechanisms such as study trips, implementation of tools, coaching, technical assistance, etc. These actions require the intervention of various specialised actors including civil society, colleges, universities etc. This strategy should take stock of existing programmes and mechanisms aim to professionalise the M&E function. In francophone Africa, where there are ongoing reforms in the field of human resources in the public sector, it is essential to align

<sup>20</sup> Previously the Office for the Evaluation of Public Policies and General Actions (BEPPAG), now the Directorate General for Evaluation and Observatory of Social Change (DGEOS)

the capacity building strategy with these reforms. As such, the Ministry of Public Service should also play a key role in the design and implementation of such a strategy.

### 8.11 Funding of M&E

In this section the policy should explain how the M&E activities and systems will be funded at institutional level and project/programme level. Departments and agencies should provide resources in their annual budgets for the establishment or strengthening of internal M&E capacity. What proportion of a project's budget should be allocated to M&E? Some organisations recommend that 3-10% of a project's budget should be allocated to M&E (Frankel and Gage 2007, p. 11). A general rule of thumb is that the M&E budget should not be so small as to compromise the accuracy and credibility of results, but neither should it divert project resources to the extent that programming is impaired.

Government should fund M&E activities through the annual budget. However, governments often indicate a lack of resources for M&E, made worse in the last two years by budget cuts arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to justify why the investment in M&E is worthwhile, particularly for evaluations which can cost between \$100-300 000 depending on type of evaluation. The evaluation of South Africa's NES found that the return on investment for evaluations was between 1:7 and 1:13, a very good investment (DPME, 2018). It is important to advocate this with ministries of finance.

Funding shortfalls point to the need for joint funding implementation of the policy with development partners, using a hybrid financing model. This section should suggest how the country will mobilise additional resources to complement governments efforts in implementing M&E activities. The agency responsible for M&E in the country in collaboration with other stakeholders should explore developing resource mobilisation and capacity development strategies to supplement the government funding. These resources will be aimed at enhancing capacities to undertake monitoring and conducting evaluations.

If donor funding is significant, especially for evaluations, the creation of a basket fund for evaluations can be considered, with oversight from a multistakeholder structure that includes donors. Uganda had one such virtual facility as part of the Global Evaluation Facility, a virtual fund to finance public policy and investment evaluations.

### 8.12 Proposed roles of stakeholders in the M&E system

This section should identify the different stakeholders with roles to play in the M&E system. Table 4 has some examples.

**Table 4: Key stakeholders and their roles**

Agency	Roles
National M&E champion	Coordinates all role players for the implementation of the policy and ensures there is buy in for the M&E System. Serves as the coordinator and facilitator for development of M&E and implementation of M&E activities at national and sub-national level. Establishes key elements of the system e.g. policy, guidelines, standards etc. May lead on priority national evaluations.
Treasury/ Ministry of Finance	Provide funding for the implementation of the M&E system and to utilise evidence emanating from evaluations to inform budget allocation for service delivery interventions/ programmes. Provide budget allocation and expenditure data to inform evaluations that are cutting across sectors, so they can collect, collate and analyse sector

Agency	Roles
	budget and expenditure data to inform evaluations. Measuring the 'value for money' or efficiency aspects of governmental policy programmes.
Local government ministry	Institutionalising the M&E system at local government level and ensuring that there is capacity to implement the policy and utilise M&E within local government. Further, enabling municipal functionaries to align the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions with national government's priorities in alignment with the policy.
Ministry of public service	Ensure that there is adequate human resource capacity and competencies for implementation of the policy by departments as well as commissioners of evaluation and evaluators.
Sector ministries/ departments	Sector ministries often have M&E responsibilities from their legislation. Sector ministries vary in their exposure to M&E, and in many countries agriculture, education and health ministries have more exposure to M&E and systems for M&E than other ministries. They need to implement the M&E policy and ensure compliance to the policy when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the interventions/ programmes over the programme cycle.
National statistical agency	The organisation responsible for collection of data nationally which houses data on the population, companies etc. The agency is responsible for reliable data that is informed by standards, guidelines affecting all government agencies. Much of the data is key for baselines.
Parliament	Plays a role in utilising evidence from M&E for their oversight, policy and decision making and representation roles, holding government accountable.
Training/ higher education institutions/ academia	Universities, colleges, private sector organisations or public sector training institutes helping with M&E capacity development at undergraduate and post-graduate level
Voluntary Organisation for Professional Evaluation (VOPE)	Play an important role in raising awareness of the importance of both monitoring and evaluation and the use of the evidence in a country. VOPEs play an important role in organising trainings and conferences. They would often partner with the national M&E champion to implement the policy or system and ensure that non-government organisations are represented throughout the system.
Civil society	These can be NGOs, CBOs, think tanks etc. They play a role in the national M&E system through regular and systematic collection of information from citizens. They should participate in a cross-agency platform, evaluation steering committees, and stakeholder validation of evaluations.
Donors/funders	Provide assistance for supporting M&E in a variety of ways (e.g. direct funding; training; advice and other support) as well as serving as one of the 'drivers' for M&E development.
Cross-agency platform	e.g. National Evaluation Council, Benin; National Advisory Committee, South Africa. To inform the country's evaluation agenda and advise on the implementation of the different components of the M&E System.

### 8.13 Knowledge management

Effective knowledge management involves the collection, storage, synthesis and sharing of information. Knowledge management of both monitoring and evaluation processes and evidence is essential for governments to ensure that monitoring and evaluation is conducted transparently and ethically, and to facilitate a learning environment. Having a knowledge management plan enhances M&E efforts by sharing new knowledge with internal and external actors, and allowing policy makers to have easier access to evidence for decision making.

Examples of knowledge enhancing processes include creating databases of monitoring data, repositories of finalised evaluations, regular reflection points during an evaluation with the

implementing department, or creating a community of practice among practitioners. Such processes should ensure close collaboration with M&E staff and be aligned to the strategic needs of government.

Knowledge management plans must align with existing data collection and reporting plans, address gaps in knowledge collection (especially around process issues) and ensure that data is stored in an easy to use manner, while still protecting privacy of personal information.

Most governments leave knowledge management functions to communications staff. However, in order to foster greater sharing of information and program adaptation, a KM plan should link knowledge management interventions across various roles including program managers and M&E staff. In some government systems, it is appropriate for central M&E departments to play more of a knowledge brokering role. Additionally, building relationships with external partners to reflect and learn (e.g. with sector working groups, evaluation associations, think tanks) will improve government's ability to engage with new evidence, and government experiences of M&E.

### 8.14 Communication

Communication is a very critical part of M&E as it is required to continuously update stakeholders and the public about the work being done and progress. This is important so that stakeholders value and use M&E information in decision making around development issues. This section should outline what types of communication are planned, and should indicate key policy areas (such as M&E reports being made public), as well as some of the priority platforms and documents that should be produced. Some ideas for the type of content are suggested.

The first point is being very clear on the audiences for M&E information. Data representation should be tailor-made for the specific audience so that key decision-makers are not lost in the language. In general messages generated from M&E information for different audiences should use a range of formats e.g. political (short and to the point messages), technical audiences (more detailed) and other beneficiaries (using infographics, social media, audio visual platforms, etc.). Monitoring and evaluation reports should also be easy to read and minimise jargon, especially for stakeholders who are not M&E practitioners (see Box 2).

#### **Box 2: Examples of easy to read evaluation reports**

In South Africa a 1/5/25 rule has been adopted where in addition to a full evaluation report which may be 100 pages a summary report is produced which includes: a one-page policy summary of key policy messages for political principals; a 5-page executive summary for the executive leadership which summarises the whole report; and a 25-page summary report for those stakeholders with an appetite to go into more detail. The experience has been that ministers even often do read these reports. The 1/5/25 page summary report is one document.

For evaluation reports for example, the following activities could be considered: including the evaluation report, TORs, management response, improvement plan and quality assessment on a publically accessible repository; publishing the evaluation reports on relevant websites and social media sites; developing communication materials on the evaluation; presenting the findings of the evaluation to relevant parliamentary portfolio committees; sharing findings with other key stakeholders as well as the media, and creating/using information-sharing sessions such as learning networks, think tanks, brown bag lunches where the findings can be shared and deliberated on. Additionally, summaries of the evaluation can be sent to different stakeholders in a format that makes the delivery of the information meaningful and useful for that particular stakeholder.

### 8.15 Implementation plan

It is very important to be realistic in the policy of what can actually be implemented, and also to phase implementation. A policy that has not thought realistically how it can be implemented is unlikely to be implemented, and to remain a piece of paper. While there is unlikely to be much detail on implementation, it is important to give guidance on key elements needed for effective implementation and phasing. Table 5 indicates what was covered in South Africa's first national evaluation policy framework in terms of phasing implementation.

### 8.16 Evaluation/review of the policy

In practicing what we preach, an independent evaluation of the M&E system/policy should be undertaken every 5-10 years to ascertain the effectiveness of the implementation of the system and its impact, and to recommend how to strengthen the system, and if necessary update the policy. Any revision of the policy can then be evidence-based, informed by recommendations that are emanating from the evaluation. An improvement plan to address the recommendations of the evaluation should be developed and be consulted with the wider M&E ecosystem.

**Table 5: Phasing of implementation – South Africa's three year timeline for evaluation policy, systems and implementation**

	Policy and systems	Implementation
2011/ 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation Policy Framework adopted by Cabinet</li> <li>• 3 year and annual evaluation plan developed</li> <li>• Practice notes developed on key elements including TORs, contracting, and the different evaluation types</li> <li>• Evaluation unit created in DPME</li> <li>• PALAMA courses designed to support this approach to evaluation</li> <li>• Schedule of competencies for evaluators developed</li> <li>• Panel of evaluators created in DPME</li> <li>• Support agreed with international partners</li> <li>• Minimum standards agreed by Cabinet for programme and project plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 evaluations commissioned which test out these systems</li> <li>• Audit completed of all evaluations in the public sector from 2006</li> <li>• All evaluations hosted on DPME website</li> <li>• Evaluation Technical Working Group starts operation</li> <li>• Dissemination process for this Policy Framework</li> <li>• Capacity development process for evaluation designed</li> </ul>
2012/ 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems revised based on experience</li> <li>• System of standards for evaluators developed</li> <li>• Discussions with universities to take on this approach to evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 evaluations undertaken or started using standard procedures, of which at least 2 are impact evaluations</li> <li>• At least 60% of recommendations from evaluations implemented</li> <li>• Training of at least 200 people using PALAMA materials</li> <li>• University M&amp;E courses adapted</li> </ul>
2013/ 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems revised based on experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 evaluations undertaken or started using standard procedures, of which at least 4 are impact evaluations</li> <li>• At least 70% of recommendations from evaluations implemented</li> </ul>

	Policy and systems	Implementation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training of at least 500 people using PALAMA materials</li> </ul>
2014/2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems revised based on experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 evaluations undertaken or started using standard procedures, of which at least 5 are impact evaluations</li> <li>• At least 75% of recommendations implemented</li> <li>• Training of at least 500 people using PALAMA materials</li> <li>• All university public administration courses use adapted materials</li> <li>• Other university courses use adapted materials (e.g. development studies)</li> <li>• Evaluation of the impact of evaluations carried out to date.</li> </ul>

Source: DPME, (2011)<sup>21</sup>

## 9 Process of developing the policy

### 9.1 Diagnosing the state of monitoring and evaluation to decide on what is needed

Conducting a situation analysis is critical to developing a policy. The central institution providing oversight and coordination of country M&E should lead on the situational analysis. The institution could be a ministry, department for example (DPME in South Africa, and Ministry of Development Planning in Lesotho). This situation analysis could be supported by an agency such as CLEAR Centre, and/or contracting an in-country consultant (individual or firm) who has knowledge and knows the context of M&E in the country. The Global Evaluation Initiative has developed a M&E Systems Analysis tool, building on the experience of the CLEAR Centres, which provides detailed guidance<sup>22</sup>. However this should not just be outsourced, and if a support agency is involved this should be undertaken as a collaborative exercise, so government staff and the external agency/consultant work together on the situation analysis<sup>23</sup>. A possible sequence to use a MESA to lead into developing the policy is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Stages in using a consultant to undertake a country diagnostic/MESA**

Steps	What gets done	Output(s)
Preparation for in country fieldwork	Establishing the collaborative team working on the diagnostic. If needed, training of local consultant on the diagnostic	Situation analysis report
Determine stakeholders to be involved in the situation analysis and data available	Establish stakeholders to be interviewed for the situation analysis, and relevant documents	List of stakeholders to be interviewed

<sup>21</sup>

<https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Evaluations/National%20Evaluation%20Policy%20Framework%2011%2011%2025.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> [https://mcusercontent.com/1f2a1ea0afb3b65dabccade00/files/876f222f-d95b-6cb7-40cd-bfd3c8decdee/GEI\\_MESA\\_GuidanceNote.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/1f2a1ea0afb3b65dabccade00/files/876f222f-d95b-6cb7-40cd-bfd3c8decdee/GEI_MESA_GuidanceNote.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> If a partner like a CLEAR Centre becomes a support agency to the country, for example starting with a diagnostic, then drawing up a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is critical to establishing, and nurturing the relationship between them and the M&E champion. The MOU details the roles and responsibilities of the M&E champion and the service provider.

Steps	What gets done	Output(s)
Conduct the situation analysis	Data is collected using standardised checklists, and report structure	Raw data, recordings and field notes
Report collation and desktop review	Team analyses data and develops draft report	Draft diagnostic report
Validation workshop	Draft report is presented in the country to stakeholders	Final report drafted with input from validation workshop
Policy formulation	Final diagnostic report is used to inform development of the policy	Co-creating a Policy

## 9.2 Involving different stakeholders in developing the policy

Key stakeholders need to participate in the development of the policy to ensure that it is likely to be owned, implemented, and effective. Section 8.12 suggests the key roleplayers in the M&E system. Some ways stakeholders can be involved in developing the policy include:

- Being part of the diagnostic/MESA to analyse the current situation.
- Being part of a steering structure for development of the policy. This can become the cross-agency platform.
- Consulting with their members on what is needed in the M&E system.
- Participating in groups working on specific elements of the policy
- Being part of a core drafting group working on the policy.
- Being part of consultation meetings on the policy, at national or subnational level.

## 10 Challenges to be aware of

Some of the key challenges to consider in formulating the policy include:

- *Addressing unclear institutional arrangements:* Where there are unclear institutional arrangements it is difficult for a policy to assign M&E roles and responsibilities. Other ministries, departments and offices are established as result of legislation. While others are a result of executive powers without any legal promulgation backing them up. This has created turf wars regarding roles and responsibilities of M&E, resulting in duplication.
- *Existing templates:* Rigid policy templates created by government make it difficult to formulate policies. Governments have templates to provide structure and uniformity to their policies, but which can mean there is no latitude to changing the structure of the policy.
- *Inadquate knowledge:* The policy formulation process requires stakeholders with sufficient knowledge about the public sector and M&E. Lack of adequate knowledge on country M&E systems has a negative influence on the co-created output and its quality.
- *Lack of participation* by sector ministries (e.g. ministries of health, education and social development, academia, or NGOs) can deprive the policy formulation process of vital inputs into M&E best practice that can be highlighted and augmented by the policy. Cross-cutting policies such as a National M&E Policy require expertise and representation of various sectors. Participation of stakeholders with influence and power helps with the buy-in and ownership, and maximises the likelihood of implementation of the policy.
- *Lack of responsiveness:* Developing a policy requires consistent political will and senior management support from the central institution that provides oversight and coordination of the country M&E system. Where this is lacking this leads to delayed development and finalisation of the policy. In addition it can take a lot of time to solicit feedback from stakeholders.

## Annexes

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# Establishing a National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy



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**Telephone:** +27 (0) 11 717 3453 | **Email:** [info@twendembele.org](mailto:info@twendembele.org)

University of the Witwatersrand  
2 St David's Place, Parktown, Johannesburg  
Telephone: +27 11 717 3157; Fax: +27 86 765 5860



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