

MESA

Diagnostic Tool for a Monitoring
and Evaluation Systems Analysis

Foreword

As the Directors of the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group and the United Nations Development Programme Independent Evaluation Office and co-founders of the Global Evaluation Initiative, we are acutely aware of countries' needs for effective monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress on their national development strategies, to understand what is working, where and for whom, and where improvements are needed. The lack of robust monitoring and evaluation systems leaves many countries at a disadvantage and has become an ever more urgent development challenge in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

Countries recognize this – even before the pandemic, at an Africa convening event in 2019, participants from 24 countries committed to promoting a culture of evaluation and creating the conditions for greater use of evaluative evidence to inform public policies. There was also clear demand for support in building robust systems of monitoring and evaluation to deliver that evidence. The same year, at the National Evaluation Capacities Conference in Egypt, there was consensus amongst participants that evidence, strong accountability and learning generated through evaluation will advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Global Evaluation Initiative, launched in November 2020, is a broad and inclusive partnership, that acts as a platform for bringing together the various actors – national governments, civil society, development partners, international and regional organizations, and evaluators – who need to work together to close the global gap in monitoring and evaluation capacity. For both UNDP and the World Bank, capacity development is at the heart of what we do. Capacity development is about transformation that empowers individuals, leaders, organizations and societies. And capacity development, including of monitoring and evaluation systems, means building on the capacities that already exist.

Thus, a natural first step to strengthening capacities of a national monitoring and evaluation system is a diagnostic, an analysis of current systems and practices, of gaps and opportunities.

There are existing tools, developed in different contexts, examining different angles, to guide such diagnostics. The GEI drew on these tools to develop one that is comprehensive yet flexible, that could be used to guide initial reflections with partners as well as to do an in-depth analysis of a national, sectoral or sub-national monitoring and evaluation system.

The GEI Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Analysis – or MESA – is a tool aligned with the GEI conceptual framework, which looks at capacities at different levels. These are the enabling environment and the institutional and the individual levels. It recognizes that an effective monitoring and evaluation system needs to be integrated into public policy making mechanisms, into planning, budgeting, implementing and reporting systems. The tool is comprehensive, looking at monitoring and evaluation from multiple angles. It is also flexible and can be adapted to local contexts, needs and interests.

This publication presents the first version of the MESA and will also serve as a primer on national evaluation systems that reflects the principles of South-South Cooperation. It has a wide range of examples, illustrating each dimension proposed for analysis and providing models for inspiration from developing countries for developing countries.

The MESA is conceived of as a dynamic tool, one that will be regularly updated with new information, new examples and new models as the GEI and its partners gain even more experience in strengthening national evaluation systems. We invite readers and practitioners to use the tool, and to contribute to its further development.

We look forward to hearing from our partners and everyone who shares our interest in building strong monitoring and evaluation systems.



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This Guidance Note is intended to be a dynamic tool that will be regularly updated. For any comments, suggestions, or queries, contact: Heather Bryant (heather.bryant@undp.org) and Ketevan Nozadze (knozadze@worldbank.org)

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Acronyms and abbreviations

Note that this does not include acronyms and abbreviations that are explained and used only in a single example.

BEPPAG	Office for the Evaluation of Public Policies and General Actions (Benin)
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CLEAR	Center for Learning on Evaluation and Results
CONEVAL	Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (Mexico's agency responsible for evaluation of social programs)
CSO	Civil society organization
DEVAL	German Institute for Development Evaluation
DMEO	Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (India)
DNP	Colombia's Department of National Planning
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
ECD	Evaluation capacity development
FA	Francophone Africa
FCV	Fragile states, in conflict or suffering violence
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEI	Global Evaluation Initiative
GoJ	Government of Jamaica
IDEAS	International Development Evaluation Association
INCE	National Evaluation Capacities Index
LAB	Lusophone Africa and Brazil
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MESA	Monitoring and evaluation systems analysis
Mideplan	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, Costa Rica
MIR	Matriz de Indicadores para Resultados (logframe in Spanish)

MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NDP	National development plan
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission (Ghana)
NEC	National evaluation capacities
NECD	National evaluation capacity development
NES	National evaluation system
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NSO	National statistical organization
PBM&E	Planning, budgeting, and M&E
PMES	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System (of Jamaica)
RBM	Results-based management
RREIE	Regional Networks of Exchanging Environmental Information (Morocco)
SEDI	Strengthening the Use of Evidence for Development Impact Project
ToRs	Terms of reference
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
VOPE	Voluntary organization for professional evaluation
WFP	World Food Programme

About this guidance

In line with its objective to continue to strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems and practices globally, the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI) has developed a key diagnostic tool. Called the Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Analysis (MESA), the tool is a comprehensive and detailed guidance for facilitating the analysis of existing national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and capacities. It is hoped, in addition, that the MESA will inform national strategies for strengthening country M&E systems and contribute to the enhanced use of evidence in policy making.

Underlying principles of the MESA

GEI believes that effective policy making builds on a culture of evidence-based decision making. This, in turn, relies on a country's M&E systems. In order for countries to strengthen their M&E systems, it is important to first understand the current situation of these systems in a country – both de jure and de facto – and the prevailing economic, political, and social environment. Before new models for M&E and capacity-development strategies are developed, there needs to be a sound understanding of the current formal and informal M&E elements and processes. There also needs to be a good understanding of how policy makers view national M&E practices with respect to decision making. Gaining a solid understanding of a country's M&E systems is an important first step to understanding needs, priorities, and potential pathways for strengthening those systems.

Conducting a MESA allows governments and civil society and its development partners to build a mutual understanding of how the national M&E system functions and to identify opportunities to further strengthen capacities. If led by a GEI partner, a MESA can serve as an “ice breaker” for an initial engagement in the country. Building trust is essential for a longer-term partnership, as is having a mutual understanding of any shortcomings in the M&E system, as well as the opportunities that exist for strengthening the system. Drawing on good practices from countries around the world also forms part of the overall exercise. Other core principles include country ownership, learning, partnership, flexibility, and the need to be objective and credible.

The three broad objectives of a MESA

The main objective of a MESA as a diagnostic tool is to inform governments' evaluation capacity-development (ECD) strategies and initiatives based on the needs and priorities that have been identified. A MESA is not an end in itself, but **rather a means to gather, structure, and analyze** information to inform and shape improvements to a country's M&E systems.

- The MESA tool is also a guide for the initial engagement by a GEI partner and reflection with a partner country's government. It helps to generate a common and nuanced understanding of the existing M&E capacities and to identify opportunities for strengthening these capacities.
- The MESA tool is designed to culminate in a report that can serve as a baseline, and against which follow-up assessments can meaningfully capture change and measure progress.

The suggested approach

While there are many ways to carry out a diagnostic of an M&E system, the GEI MESA adopts a mixed-method approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This includes an exploration of the multiple dimensions of national M&E systems, facilitates the analysis of these systems through basic and in-depth questions, and provides an understanding of the national M&E capacities. The tool also draws on the experience of GEI partners and wide-ranging consultations.

A detailed framework for the analysis

The framework for the analysis makes up the bulk of the guidance and is organized around five key parts:

- **Background to the country and its current status in relation to M&E.** To understand the current M&E situation and possibilities for improvement, it is important to have essential background information on the country, such as socioeconomic variables, the government structure, and the political and cultural environment. It is also important to understand current levels of interest in M&E and motivation for strengthening the country's M&E system.
- **Overview of the country's overall public sector management capacity** with focus on planning, budgeting and M&E systems. This includes analysis of the legal and policy basis for these systems, the roles of key actors, how the planning and budgeting systems function, the key characteristics of the country's M&E system, the status of statistical and administrative data; resources available for M&E, how M&E results are communicated, and the extent to which equity, gender, climate change and environmental sustainability considerations are integrated into these systems.
- **Monitoring and reporting systems.** A more in-depth analysis explores monitoring and reporting mechanisms at national level, in line ministries and/or sub-national levels, the role played by parliament and civil society, the systems and incentives for acting on monitoring information, and how monitoring information is used.
- **Evaluation systems.** This section provides a more in-depth look into the country's evaluation systems and practices at national, line ministry and/or sub-national levels, including government capacity to manage, commission and undertake evaluations, capacities to manage and coordinate an evaluation system, systems and incentives to use, and actual use of evaluation findings by government, parliament, civil society and media.
- **Findings, conclusions and recommendations:** A MESA concludes with an analysis of what is working well, and less well, in the national M&E system, with recommendations for capacity development interventions that can trigger wider system change and improve development outcomes.

The actual process and documenting the analysis

There is also guidance on the actual process, such as setting up parameters for engagement with partners and stakeholders, ensuring shared understanding, building trust, and establishing appropriate structures for conducting the analysis. Guidance is also given on preparing the final report and agreeing on the way forward for responding to the findings and recommendations.

Structure of the guidance

- › **Chapter 1:** Outlines the principles, objectives, the conceptual framework and suggested approach to conducting the MESA.
- › **Chapter 2:** Presents the structure and detailed framework of the MESA analysis.
- › **Chapter 3:** Describes the MESA process and offers some useful tips.
- › **Chapter 4:** Summarizes the key milestones and tasks of a MESA.

1. Introduction to the GEI'S monitoring and evaluation systems analysis

1.1 The Global Evaluation Initiative

The Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI) is a global partnership that is committed to supporting countries to develop monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and capacities. The underpinning objectives are to promote the effective use of evidence in public decision making, enhance accountability, and achieve better development results in line with national strategies, and, where relevant, global instruments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To this end, the GEI works with regional and local partner institutions and responds to increasing demands from national governments and the international community to strengthen national M&E systems³ and enhance the use of evidence in policy making.

1.2 Why GEI proposes an M&E systems analysis

Countries' governments and parliaments make public policy decisions on a daily basis, on a range of issues such as budgetary matters; the design and execution of programs, projects and strategies; taxation; investment; and legislation. Policy makers make decisions based on information acquired from multiple sources – both formal and informal. These may include political principles and perceptions; the mass media; social media; societal beliefs; anecdotal evidence; lobbying forums; personal and collective experience; and scientific evidence arising from research.

Governments are committed to improving people's lives. Globally, 91 percent of countries' national development strategies that have been approved since 2015 refer to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. However, according to the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, only 35 percent of countries have reliable data and systems for tracking the progress of their policies and programs against these goals.¹ The GEI believes that both gathering and using better evidence to formulate more appropriate and targeted policies will help to close this gap.

Governments understand the need for solid national M&E systems to provide reliable and timely information to support decision making, and there is a high demand for resources and expertise to strengthen these systems.

In order to strengthen an M&E system, it is important first to understand the current M&E systems and practices – both formal and informal – as well as the decision-making mechanisms, and to identify what is working well, what is not working well, and the priority areas for improvement. To develop a national evaluation capacity-development strategy or plan that can address all this, an M&E diagnostic tool, or M&E systems analysis (MESA) is a logical first step.

¹ Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Making Development co-operation more effective: Headlines of Parts I and II of the Global Partnership 2019 Progress Report, 2019. https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-01/GPEDC_2019-Report_Glossy_EN.pdf

1.3 What is a MESA?

The MESA is a diagnostic tool. The objective of a well-conducted MESA is to enable countries to assess the current capacity of their national M&E systems, identify gaps, and inform potential capacity-development strategies to strengthen these systems. Sound evaluative evidence is then used to achieve improved performance of government services and programs, ensure better accountability, and to have an incrementally positive impact on people's lives.

A MESA is not an end in itself, but a tool for gathering, structuring, and analyzing information to inform improvements to country M&E systems. The MESA tool is designed for a wide range of users, such as governments, M&E practitioners, and policy makers, offering relevant examples of good practices and high-functioning M&E systems globally. The tool offers a set of guiding questions to understand potential areas for strengthening national M&E capacities.

The tool may be used in different ways: to guide an initial desk review in advance of or during the preliminary stages of engagement with a partner government; to conduct an initial assessment; or to undertake a longer-term more in-depth analysis. The MESA can be used with a view to analyzing entire M&E systems or only some elements of a system; it can be customized not only for countries, but also for subnational units or line ministries.

The MESA tool is designed to lead to a report which will not only serve as a guide for preparing a capacity-development strategy, but which can also be used as a baseline of the country's M&E situation, against which progress can be measured over time. In keeping with World Bank principles, such reports are regarded as a public good, and so may be made available in the public domain.

1.4 The MESA conceptual framework

The MESA is informed by GEI's conceptual framework on the National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD) and GEI's theory of change. As shown in Figure 1, the building of the M&E system takes place on three levels: (A) the enabling environment, (B) organizational capacity development, and (C) individual capacity development. (Annex 1 shows how the MESA framework and GEI's National Evaluation Capacity Development Framework intersect.)

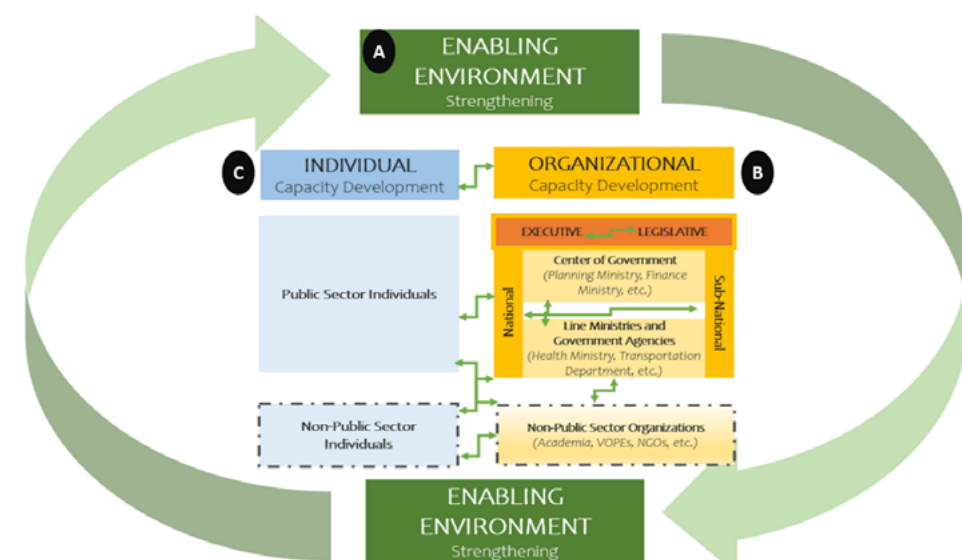


Figure 1: GEI's National Evaluation Capacity Development Framework

The enabling environment

The enabling environment of a country is the broad social system in which people and organizations function. This can include laws, rules, policies, power relations, and the social norms which govern civic engagement. The main factors influencing the enabling environment are the political context, culture, incentives, and levels of knowledge and understanding of what M&E is. It is not possible to fully understand the current M&E system in a country without learning about these factors. For example, the role of the media could benefit or inhibit the production and dissemination of evaluations. Electoral cycles may also influence the prevailing appetite for evaluation, with governments being more receptive to negative findings when elections are further in the future.-

These factors play a role in determining the potential for M&E systems and evaluation capacity development (ECD). It is essential to understand this broad context, including both the elements that are deeply engrained in society and which capacity-development efforts are unlikely to change, as well as others that can change rapidly and which the GEI may seek to positively influence. The MESA framework includes sections and questions for exploring different aspects of the enabling environment.

Organizational capacity development

The strength and effectiveness of the national evaluation capacities (NEC) of a country are not measured by the production of one single evaluation but relate to the management and coordination of a broad M&E system. The organizational and institutional capacities of the country are key, especially at the center of government. The M&E system is influenced by how the government and its institutions function. The existence of a planning body or a strong Ministry of Finance usually favors the development of a relatively strong M&E system. However, strong M&E systems may exist in line ministries without there being a national M&E system. For example, in Mexico, between 2000 and 2006 there was no national evaluation system, while the ministries of social development and health had relatively strong M&E systems. In federal systems it is also possible to have good state systems without a strong national system – as is the case in Brazil and India.

For these reasons, it is important that a MESA assess the institutional elements of the central government as well as devolved governments (see Figure 1: GEI's National Evaluation Capacity Development Framework). The assessment should include formal and informal arrangements, and the coordination and interaction among stakeholders. With parliament as a key policy-making institution, a MESA will also assess its role in the overall M&E system.

Individual capacity development

Institutions matter, but these are run by individuals. Individual M&E champions are extremely important for national evaluation capacities. A robust institutional arrangement can ensure the M&E system has a solid structure and a long life. But effective champions and experienced individuals make the M&E systems function, and an institution only functions well if it is driven by skilled and motivated individuals.

A case with the experience of a good individual champion for M&E is Chile in the early 2000s. The budget director in the Ministry of Finance (MoF) was able to build a significant evaluation unit within the Department of Budget of the MoF, while his political skills with other ministries and with the national congress ensured that evaluations were accepted by all stakeholders.

The quality of human capital in the evaluation units and those who will be using and applying the evidence from M&E is a crucial aspect of the M&E system. The presence of well-trained specialists in evaluation will be one indicator of the maturity and strength of evaluation systems. The MESA should assess the capacity of individuals in central government, line ministries, and subnational government in terms of evaluation, as well as monitoring. There are particular places in the analysis where this is relevant.

How the MESA structure links with the GEI National Evaluation Capacity Development Framework

Annex 1 is a table showing how the specific sections of the MESA structure map onto the National Evaluation Capacity Development Framework. For example, section 2 of the MESA looks at the Country profile (2.1), Structure of government (2.2), Political economy and link to M&E (2.3), and Levels of Interest in M&E at the beginning of a MESA (2.5). These would all be connected to the Enabling Environment (A) of GEI's National Evaluation Capacity Development Framework, while Organizational culture of government and implications for M&E in the MESA structure (2.4), would map onto Organizational Capacity Development (B). In section 3 of the MESA, which looks at a country's current M&E environment, M&E capacity-development initiatives (3.9) would map onto Individual Capacity Development (3.9) of the GEI framework. (For a comprehensive picture of the links between the two frameworks, see annex 1.)

1.5 The approach to undertaking a MESA

Overall approach to the MESA

There are many ways to carry out diagnostics of countries' M&E systems, and the GEI network employs three different but complementary tools (see box 1). The GEI MESA diagnostic tool has been informed by literature review and builds on the experience and work done by GEI partners, including the CLEAR Centers, UNDP, UNICEF, Deval, WFP and the World Bank, and others. The tool proposes a standard structure for a MESA, with multiple dimensions and subdimensions, and guiding questions, to elicit sound and relevant information (see chapter 2). A MESA does not need to cover all dimensions or guiding questions on all occasions. For example, if a country has done a previous diagnostic, then many of the questions may be answered through reviewing those documents and indicators.

Box 1: Three GEI tools for national monitoring and evaluation diagnostics

As a global partnership, the GEI supports countries in building sustainable and effective M&E frameworks and capacities, by leveraging local, regional, and global knowledge and expertise. The GEI places country demand at its core and works toward developing country-owned, sustainable M&E frameworks and capacities. At the same time, the GEI seeks to build an understanding of the global landscape of national M&E capacities, to build awareness and to promote knowledge generation and knowledge sharing

To establish a basis for long-term partner engagement at the national (or sub-national level), the GEI network employs two complementary diagnostic tools:

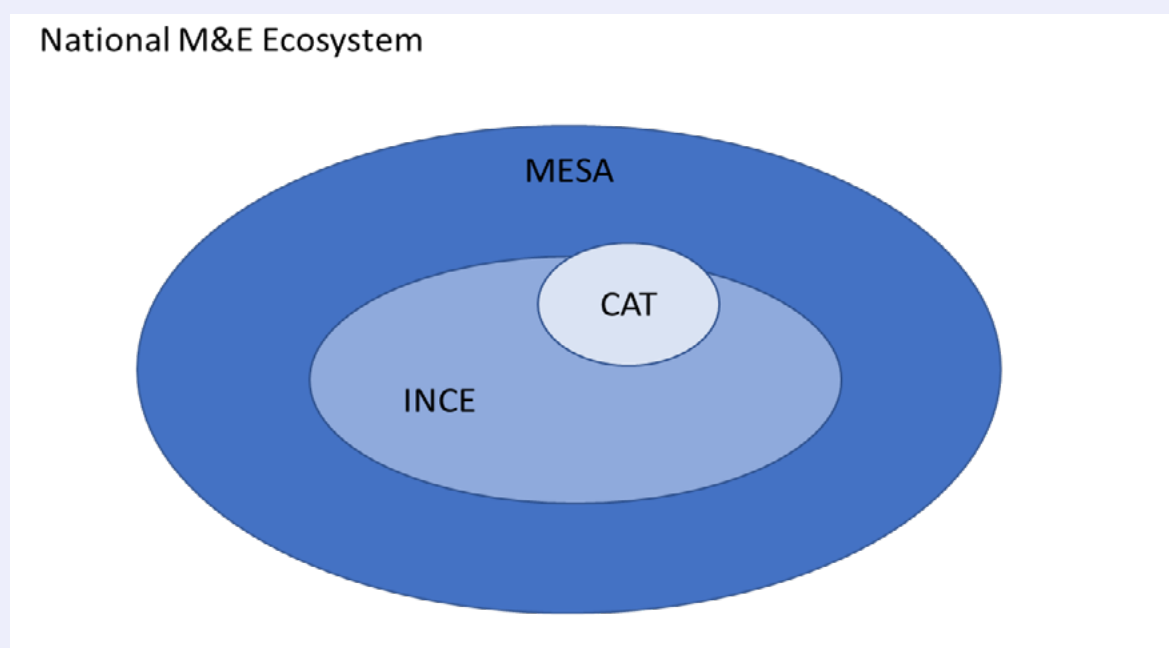
INCE (Indice de Capacidades Nacionales en Evaluacion): Developed by a broad coalition of partners in the Latin American and Caribbean Region, with a facilitation team led by DEval and WFP, the INCE has the objective of involving a range of governmental and non-governmental actors in a reflection about the state of evaluation in a country. The INCE diagnostics examine five dimensions: institutional structure, evaluation offer, quality of evaluations, multi-stakeholder dialogue spaces, and use of evaluations. The data collection process encompasses a survey and gathering background information through interviews and document review. The results are summarized in a quantitative index.

MESA (Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Analysis): the subject of this guide, the MESA is the most comprehensive of the GEI tools for diagnosing national M&E systems. As described in the present document, the MESA involves intensive consultation and data collection in collaboration with national partners, to develop a clear understanding of planning, budgeting, monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems as well as current practices related to use of evidence in policy and decision making, with a view to informing potential evaluation capacity development strategies. The MESA is designed to be flexible and tailored to individual contexts.

To understand the global landscape of national M&E capacities, the GEI has developed a third tool:

CAT (Country-level Assessment Tool): A set of standardized core indicators of characteristics of national M&E systems, the CAT relies on an efficient and rapid data collection process that is conducted systematically and periodically in countries across the globe. It can be used to track changes in national M&E systems over time within countries or regions and can facilitate broad-based cross-country learning.

The relationships between these three tools in terms of their scope are illustrated below:



The MESA is intended to be flexible as it is applied in different contexts. The MESA could be used with a view to improving an entire M&E system or only some elements of it; it could also be applied and customized to countries, regions, states, or line ministries. At the heart of each MESA are two overarching questions:

- What does the country's M&E ecosystem already have in place?
- Based on good practice, as well as a strong understanding of country needs and preferences, what are the opportunities to further strengthen the M&E ecosystem?

To guide decisions about what to cover in the MESA, chapter 2 of this guidance covers each section of the MESA with all the dimensions and subdimensions, explaining why they might need to be included. The accompanying questions help to guide the process.

The way the MESA process is carried out is as important as the final product. This is because, aside from the technical analysis, a MESA needs to build trust and partnerships for effective learning, successful implementation, and the eventual use of high-quality M&E evidence. Thus, the principles underlying the MESA are very important, particularly those relating to partnership. This is further addressed in chapter 3 of the guidance, which describes in detail possible processes for a MESA.

Methodology and sources of information

To ensure the most accurate and meaningful information is obtained in the MESA, a mixed-method methodology, using both quantitative and qualitative research approaches is advised. This means a variety of primary and secondary sources would be used, as appropriate. Primary research might involve surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. Secondary research would include a range of published resources, such as books, journal articles, reports, and official government statistics and documents. While useful sources are suggested for the different sections in the MESA framework in chapter 2, it is important that practitioners use their initiative and discretion in deciding what the most effective sources are.

The underlying principles to undertaking the MESA

The MESA needs to be flexible, so it can be adapted to countries' specific needs and circumstances. Nevertheless, it is important that the basic underlying philosophy is observed. For a GEI partner, this includes learning from the country, understanding its needs, working together towards improvement, and encouraging country ownership.

Box 2 shows a proposed set of underlying principles.

Box 2: The principles underpinning the MESA process

GEI and its partners share these principles for all MESA exercises:

- › **Country ownership.** GEI and partners should always be clear that sustainable M&E systems are about country ownership, where countries are deciding what they want to do to implement M&E systems, partnering with external support agencies as needed. Having a strong collaboration can inform an effective improvement process. Building effective M&E systems is a long-term process and so the partnership may need to be long-term.
- › **Listening and learning about what happens in the country,** informed by local contexts and cultural preferences. It is important to meet the country exactly where it is. A GEI MESA team will always be genuinely interested in how things are working in the country in terms of decision-making processes, maintaining ongoing dialogue with their partners around what is working or not, and how systems and practices can be strengthened. The GEI also needs to work with local partners who understand the local context.
- › **The MESA needs to be objective and credible.** It must be informed by both the local context and global good practices, so that government, local, and international external stakeholders see the exercise as valid and worthwhile and are prepared to invest in following up on the outcomes of the MESA.
- › **The MESA needs to be flexible.** Applying the MESA will depend on context, including resources and timing. The MESA should be customized to the needs of each country/region and GEI partner.
- › **The MESA should be forward-looking.** Experience shows that there is greater interest in diagnostics when follow-on action is envisaged from the outset.

2. Contents of a MESA

2.1 The MESA diagnostic

This chapter provides the analytical framework for the MESA. A map of the overall content of a full MESA is shown in table 1. Each subsection is explored in greater detail, explaining why the dimension is important and providing examples from different countries, as well as links to further information about the examples or the topic. Then, basic questions for answering the analysis are suggested, as well as possible questions for a more in-depth analysis. (The links between the sections and GEI's National Evaluation Capacity Development Framework are shown in annex 1.)

The final product will be a report. In line with the GEI principles of sharing, learning and transparency, this will ideally be made accessible in the public domain.

Once the MESA process is complete, the final report should have a clear executive summary (not more than two pages). The summary should capture the essence of the diagnostic and the key findings, and it should mention recommendations for ways to strengthen the M&E system in the short and longer term. While the analysis is based on the essential principles and some content is mandatory, there is flexibility about much of the content, as it needs to be designed according to the needs and priorities of the partner country. It is recommended that the maximum length of the publication is 15 pages, with additional information in annexes, where appropriate.

As table 1 shows, the MESA is divided into the following parts:

1. Introduction to the MESA

2. Country background

3. Overview of planning, budgeting, and M&E systems (PBM&E)

4. Monitoring and reporting systems

5. Evaluation systems

6. Overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations

Table 1: Structure of the MESA

Suggested introduction to MESA and the country profile	<div>1 Introduction to the MESA</div> <div>1.1 Introduction to the MESA</div> <div>1.2 Objective of the MESA</div> <div>1.3 Methodology and process</div> <div>1.4 Structure of the MESA report</div>	<div>2 Country background</div> <div>2.1 Country profile</div> <div>2.2 Structure of government</div> <div>2.3 Political economy and link to M&E</div> <div>2.4 Organizational culture of government and implications for M&E</div> <div>2.5 Level of interest in M&E at the beginning of the MESA</div>	
Flexible MESA analytical framework	<div>3. Overview of planning, budgeting, and M&E systems (PBM&E)</div> <div>3.1 Legal and policy basis for the PBM&E systems</div> <div>3.2 Roles of key actors in the PBM&E systems</div> <div>3.3 Overview of the planning and budgeting systems</div> <div>3.4 Overview of the M&E systems</div> <div>3.5 Role of other stakeholders in relation to M&E</div> <div>3.6 Statistical and administrative data</div> <div>3.7 Resources for M&E</div> <div>3.8 Communication of M&E evidence</div> <div>3.9 M&E capacity-development initiatives</div> <div>3.10 Equity and gender considerations in the PBM&E systems</div> <div>3.11 Climate and environmental sustainability considerations in the PBM&E systems</div>	<div>4. Monitoring and reporting systems</div> <div>4.1 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at the national level</div> <div>4.2 Systems for government monitoring and reporting in line ministries and at subnational levels</div> <div>4.3 Monitoring of government by parliament</div> <div>4.4 Capacity in government to undertake monitoring and reporting</div> <div>4.5 Role of civil society in the government monitoring system</div> <div>4.6 Systems/incentives for acting on monitoring</div> <div>4.7 Use of monitoring information by government</div>	<div>5. Evaluation systems</div> <div>5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level</div> <div>5.2 Evaluation systems at line ministry and subnational levels</div> <div>5.3 Government capacity to manage, commission, and undertake evaluations</div> <div>5.4 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system</div> <div>5.5 Capacity to undertake evaluations in civil society/academia/the private sector</div> <div>5.6 Systems/incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon</div> <div>5.7 Use of evaluations by government</div> <div>5.8 Use of evaluations by parliament</div> <div>5.9 Use of evaluations by civil society and the media</div> <div>5.10 Role of civil society in government evaluation systems</div>
Overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations	<div>6. Conclusions</div> <div>6.1 Overview of the M&E system and how it functions</div> <div>6.2 Areas that are working well and areas that are working less well</div> <div>6.3 Recommendations for interventions that can trigger wider system change and development outcomes</div> <div>6.4 Conclusions</div>		

2.2 The MESA framework

The following tables provide detailed guidance, suggestions, and possible questions for conducting MESA diagnostics. It also explains why certain aspects of the M&E systems may be important and provides examples of relevant M&E systems and practices internationally.

1 – Introduction to the MESA

This section proposes an outline for the introduction to a MESA. This might include why a particular approach was taken, the methodology, and the structure of the report.

Subsection	Dimensions covered	Annexes to the MESA report
1.1 Introduction to the MESA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Overall introduction to the MESA➤ Introduction explaining the parameters of the analysis and timeframe➤ The country and the broad characteristics of its current M&E system➤ The rationale for the MESA	
1.2 Objective of the MESA	The objective agreed for this specific diagnostic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❶ A copy of the MESA agreement between the country and the GEI
1.3 Methodology and process	Summary of the methodology, processes conducted, and the range of actors involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❶ Annex 2: Program❶ Annex 3: List of people consulted❶ Annex 4: Key documents consulted
1.4 Structure of the MESA report	Outline of the report structure	

2 – Background to the country and its level of interest in M&E

To understand better the current M&E situation and possibilities for improvement, it is important to have essential background information on the country, such as socioeconomic variables, the government structure, and the political and cultural environment. It is also important, from the start, to connect these elements with the current levels of interest in M&E and motivation for strengthening the country's M&E system.

2.1 Country profile

Why is this important?

This section provides an overview of the economic and social reality to present the context for the country, providing some key economic and social indicators. Countries with better economic performance may have the resources to build and improve their M&E rapidly, but these situations change. If a country is in an economic or social crisis, there may be less focus on improving its M&E system than in more stable times; thus, the improvement strategy should be different. At the same time, setting the context helps to situate the country in relation to GEI priorities (such as income levels and groups; levels of fragility, conflict or violence; vulnerability to climate change; and so on.)

Some examples

The case of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 is a good example of when countries' plans for M&E improvement changed dramatically.

Some months after the pandemic struck, India had started improving its M&E systems. However, UNICEF and partners suggested taking advantage of this impasse to keep working on some core elements of the evaluation system.

In South Africa, the effects of the pandemic have led to cuts in government budgets, including budgets available for evaluations.

For countries in the Caribbean, natural disasters such as hurricanes occur frequently and have a significant impact on the distribution of resources. Governments must act quickly and respond to these events. This affects planning and budgeting, and activities related to M&E may not be priorities.

Useful sources

- ❶ A country's national statistical agency will be a source for much of the data, but there are also global databases that can be used. The World Factbook is an excellent source of basic data on all countries, including economic, governance and population data, such as those required for in sections 2.1 and 2.2 in the diagnostic.²
- ❷ Other sources include the World Bank's Development Indicators³ and UNDP's human development indicators.⁴
- ❸ There are also specific scorecards. For example, for African countries, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (II AG) is a tool that measures and monitors governance performance in African countries.⁵

2 CIA: The World Factbook – Explore all countries. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/>

3 World Bank. "Databank World Development Indicators". Accessed February 14, 2020. <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

4 UNDP: Human Development Reports, accessed February 14, 2022, www.hdr.undp.org/en/data

5 Mo Ibrahim Foundation. "Ibrahim Index of African Governance". Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag>

2.1 Country profile

Suggested basic questions

- What is the GDP per capita?
- What is the current growth rate?
- What are the key economic sectors and how are they performing?
- What are levels of poverty and inequality? (Use international and comparable data on poverty and inequality; but national definitions and alternative measures could be used for a deeper dive.)
- Key demographics: median age, life expectancy, gender (for example, the percentage of boys and girls at school or the Gender Inequality Index); basic education (for example, the percentage of the population that have completed secondary school), health (for example, the rate of maternal mortality).
- Vulnerability to climate change (for example, incidences of drought, disasters, and weather).

Possible more in-depth questions

- Peace, conflict, and security issues. (For fragile states or those affected by conflict, this is key information).
- What are the levels of unemployment?
- CO2 emissions in relation to GDP.
- Migration: percentage of the population that are migrants – internal and external.

2.2 Structure of government

Why is this important?

It is necessary to engage with the government to get a general picture of the way the government is structured – including the executive and legislative arms. This informs how M&E systems might be structured and run.

It is also necessary to identify the role of a center-of-government agency or entity that might play a key driving role in M&E – such as the presidency or finance ministry. (This is explored in more depth in section 3.2.)

It is also important to identify the timing of elections as these are so critical in occupying the minds of politicians, and, by extension, government ministries. This will influence the space available for considering new options. These cycles also affect the potential turnover of members of parliament. For example, would it be worth investing in them if an election is imminent?

Some examples

Mexico has a federal government, while **Chile** and **Uganda** have unitary governments. This difference has important implications for the M&E framework. In Mexico, the power of state governors is such that the social law was only able to cover the M&E of the federal government. Implementing evaluation in states has to be done through more complex negotiations with multiple states. In Chile it is easier to implement a national M&E system.

Likewise, in a unitary state like Uganda, a national M&E policy is easily enforceable across all spheres of government. With parliaments, some countries like Philippines have bicameral parliaments, in which case both the senate and congress would need to be considered. In Sri Lanka, on the other hand, there is a single parliament.

2.2 Structure of government

Some examples

In some cases, a regional dimension needs to be included.

For example, in the Caribbean, CARICOM member states have signed a commitment with the community for developing and implementing results-based management (RBM) policies. Therefore, any progress in this area would consider CARICOM's elements and would be communicated to the Community. CARICOM has a role as a coordinating regional institution that is not the case for other regions.⁶

Useful sources

- ❶ The World Factbook is an excellent source of governance data on all countries.⁷
- ❶ For more information on governance in African countries, see the African Peer Review Mechanism,⁸ along with the Ibrahim Index of African Governance mentioned in section 2.1.⁹

Suggested basic questions

- What is the overall structure of government (for example, a federal or unitary system)?
- What is the parliamentary system?
- What are the dates/years of the last and next elections?

Possible more in-depth questions

- What are the policy-making mechanisms under multiparty/single party governance?
 - How do changes in leadership happen?
- (Note that section 3.2 explores the roles of key stakeholders in more depth.)

2.3 Structure of government

Why is this important?

The shape and current state of the M&E system can largely be explained by how the incentives of political actors have led to certain decisions. The structure of the government helps to explain formal relationships. However, it is necessary to go further and explore and learn, when possible, about the incentives of other stakeholders in the M&E system. It is important to know whether the original M&E idea came from the executive or from congress or any other institution – so the political economy of a country is key for determining this

Some examples

In the case of Mexico, understanding the political situation of both the executive and congress helped to move the M&E system forward. It was not until 1997 that there was a balance of power between the executive and congress, at which point congress decided to approve laws for transparency and evaluation. So any further improvement of the M&E framework will need to consider the Mexican congress. This is not the case in other countries.

In South Africa, presentations to parliamentary portfolio committees are preceded by presentations to the ruling party caucus on the committee. This is informal but standard practice. This means that any findings or key measures relating to M&E that the central M&E champion or line ministries want to make public are presented to party structures first. It is essential therefore to understand the party dynamics and not just the formal government arrangements.

India launched an Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) in 2014. The idea was to have a more independent institutional mechanism to conduct the evaluation process in central government. The IEO did not last long due to the imbalance of power between the Office of the Prime Minister and the IEO, together with the fact that in the same year, the government changed. However, the new Indian government launched the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), as part of NITI Aayog, a public policy think tank of the Government of India and the body that has been responsible for building an important evaluation system in India since 2015.

6 CARICOM. The Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015 – 2019: Repositioning CARICOM raises the importance of adopting RBM in the region as a mean to improve planning and budgeting for achieving the desired results. July 3, 2014. <https://caricom.org/documents/strategic-plan-caribbean-community-2015-2019/>

7 CIA: The World Factbook – Explore all countries. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/>

8 APRM (African Peer Review Mechanism). Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.aprm-au.org/page-about/>

9 Mo Ibrahim Foundation. "Ibrahim Index of African Governance". Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiaig>

2.3 Structure of government

Useful sources

- ❶ For an example of informal processes in South Africa, see this newspaper article from South African online newspaper, *Daily Maverick*.¹⁰
- ❶ The Strengthening the Use of Evidence for Development Impact (SEDI) project has been applying political-economy analysis to case study countries including Pakistan, Ghana, and Uganda.¹¹

Suggested basic questions

- What are the political forces that have driven the development of M&E or related practices/systems?
- How does accountability work in the government system and in parliament, in theory and in practice?
- Who will benefit from building an effective M&E system?
- Who will not benefit from building the M&E system?
- What are the implications of this for strengthening the M&E system?

Possible more in-depth questions

- What are the political forces (policies, laws, regulations, orders, etc.) that have driven the development of M&E or related practices/systems? (A deeper dive may be appropriate.)
- Who are the various stakeholders involved in policy making and how do they interact (for example, lobbying)?
- What is government's current political focus (for example, what are the priority outcomes) and how has this evolved?
- What role do CSOs play in relation to government (in relation to advocacy or service delivery, for example)?

2.4 Organizational culture of government and implications for M&E

Why is this important?

Using M&E for accountability may require a certain mindset shift – that government should be accountable for how it performs. Using M&E for learning and improvement may bring in a further shift in mindset, and a culture where problems are not avoided but used for improvement. Both of these are a challenge in many government systems, where the culture is often of compliance and fear to expose failures. It is important to understand the dominant culture, as well as a less dominant culture that may be receptive to using M&E, in order to design appropriate responses, and find possible champions or government structures that may drive M&E.

Some examples

In **Malaysia**, the Performance Management and Delivery Unit in the Prime Minister's Office¹² employed a "big fast results" methodology to diagnose key problems with stakeholders in a laboratory environment and identify how the problems could be solved. These were then monitored on a weekly basis by the relevant government minister, who indicated that "if you don't tell me problems, I assume everything is working perfectly". This demonstrated an effective problem-solving approach, which is central to the country's delivery unit model.

In **South Africa**, the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME) was only created in 2010. As a new department it was able to create an innovative and problem-solving culture, which meant it was able very quickly to establish a wide set of important M&E systems. Over the last four years, however, the performance of the system has been more uneven.

10 Daily Maverick. 2021. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-08-11-ramaphosas-testimony-exposes-the-vast-contours-of-the-ancs-shadow-state/>

11 Oxford Policy Management. Strengthening Evidence use for Development Impact (SEDI).¹¹ Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.opml.co.uk/projects/strengthening-the-use-of-evidence-for-development-impact>

12 Performance Management And Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) in the Prime Minister's Office, which has now closed.

2.4 Organizational culture of government and implications for M&E

Useful sources

- ❶ For more information on performance culture, read chapter 4 of the book *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice*.¹³ The chapter covers evidence use by African governments, and explores M&E culture in Benin, Uganda, and South Africa.
- ❷ For further information on the DPME model, read this journal article.¹⁴

Suggested basic questions

- Is there a demand from managers/technicians/parliamentarians/civil society for performance information to inform policy and program planning and budgeting?
- How do politicians and senior officials view the usefulness of M&E and results-based management? Do they see them as relevant for accountability? What about for learning and performance improvement?
- What are the dominant incentives in the public service (for example, fear of making a mistake, or achieving targets for bonuses)? Does this vary across departments so that some show a more transparent, learning, and performance-oriented culture?
- Is there a culture of learning and is there an interest and ability to cultivate this? Does this vary across departments?
- How does the government usually respond to negative M&E findings/evidence?
- Overall, what are your conclusions on the organizational culture within the public service?

Possible more in-depth questions

- What kind of decisions are guided by M&E information – in relation to planning, budgeting, and other key areas?
- These questions can also be explored in more depth, such as through using survey information or literature to deepen the analysis.

2.5 Level of interest in M&E at the beginning of the MESA

Why is this important?

Governments and people in government change all the time. It is possible that the reasons for starting an M&E system sometime in the past may be different from today's reasons. It is therefore essential to understand the technical and political reasons for the country's current levels of interest (or lack of it) in M&E. These answers might be different from those in section 2.3, and it would be important to know the difference.

Some examples

Colombia has had a long experience of evaluation, especially in relation to government regulations. Since 2020, the National Department for Planning (DNP) has been motivated to improve the use of evaluations and to enhance national capacity. It is keen to approve an institutional document for M&E improvement within the National Council of Social and Economic Policies (CONPES) to include stakeholders beyond the DNP. If this is done, the improvement and its implementation will be sustained long after the current government.

Worldwide, COVID has increased governments' motivation to bring evidence to bear on key decision making. This creates an opportunity for emphasizing the importance of sound M&E.

In **South Africa**, in the Western Cape Province, which has a strong M&E system, the decision was taken to undertake some rapid evaluations around key issues related to COVID. This was helpful in seeing the value that rapid evaluations could bring.

¹³ Ian Goldman et al., "Mere compliance or learning – M&E culture in the public service of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", in *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice*, eds. Ian Goldman and Mine Pabari (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2020), 54–74. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003007043-4/mere-compliance-learning-culture-public-service-benin-uganda-south-africa-ian-goldman-wole-olaleye-stanley-sixolile-ntakumba-mokgoropo-makgaba-cara-waller?context=ubx&refId=c513054a-4cdb-420d-b196-8ed35908fa53>

¹⁴ Sean Phillips et al., "A focus on M&E of results: an example from the Presidency, South Africa", *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 6, no. 4, (Dec 2014): 392–406. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2014.966453>

2.5 Level of interest in M&E at the beginning of the MESA

(cont.)

Sri Lanka has been through periods of actively championing M&E: in the 2000s, and then in 2015–19 – with less interest at other times. This is linked to the roles of individual champions as well as changes in government, and political perceptions of the relevance of M&E. It is important to understand these possible drivers and to be realistic about the current levels of interest, as well as the fact that there is fluidity and always the potential for change.

In **Dominica**, there is a dual interest in moving towards an RBM approach and having an M&E system. First, as a member state of CARICOM it has committed to expedite an RBM policy and practices.¹⁵ Second, having set the goal of becoming the first “climate resilient” country in the world, it has created a specific agency, the Climate Resilience Execution Agency for Dominica (CREAD), which has a strong alignment with RBM and M&E practices to reach this goal.

Useful sources

① Climate Resilience Execution Agency for Dominica (CREAD)¹⁶

Suggested basic questions

- How much interest is there in M&E now and from whom?
 - Why is a MESA diagnostic exercise likely to be of value at this time?
 - What is motivating the champion(s) or leading government agency or entity to build the M&E system?
 - Are there particular constraints around the development of M&E at this time – such as upcoming elections, or crises such as pandemics, or climate change-related disasters or events?
-

Possible more in-depth questions

- If there is resistance to M&E, what are its origins, and what is the level of interest and capacity to change these views?
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15 CARICOM. 2020. Decisions of the fortieth regular meeting of the conference of heads of government of the Caribbean community”, CARICOM Caribbean Community. Fortieth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, 3-5 July 2019. <https://caricom.org/documents/fortieth-regular-meeting-of-the-conference-of-heads-of-government-of-the-caribbean-community-caricom-decisions/>

16 CREAD (Climate Resilience Execution Agency for Dominica). Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.creadominica.org/>

3 – Overview of planning, budgeting, and M&E systems

This section is intended to provide an overview of the planning, budgeting, and M&E (PBM&E) systems, which are then explored in detail in section 4 (for monitoring) and section 5 (for evaluation). As evaluation in particular needs to inform plans and budgets, an overview of these planning and budgeting systems is provided.

3.1 Legal and policy basis for the PBM&E systems

Why is this important?

This section covers the legal and policy basis for the planning, budgeting, and M&E systems. In the case of planning and budgeting, these are important in relation to the extent to which they influence the use of M&E. There is usually a legal basis for planning and budgeting, but often not for M&E. Exceptions might be for line-ministry responsibilities and related legislation. For example, a health ministry may be bound by legislation that requires it to undertake monitoring in the sector. While evaluations might be developed in countries, having a binding law, regulations or policies provides a strong institutional base for the M&E system. It can also provide the M&E champion or leading government agency or entity with a stronger basis for requiring sector ministries to provide monitoring reports or to undertake evaluations. It also means that the system is likely to be more sustainable and less susceptible to political or administrative transitions and flux.

Some examples

The system of planning in **Costa Rica** is grounded in the National Planning Law of 1974 that incorporates the mandate to systematically evaluate programs, plans, and policies. However, the national evaluation system (NES) was not initiated until 1994, when a law conferred on the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (Mideplan) the responsibility to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate actions, programs, and development policies. A national evaluation policy was only formulated to guide governmental evaluation in 2018 – quite long after the NES had been implemented.

Cabo Verde's foundational law on the planning system (Lei de Base do Sistema de Planeamento) is quite detailed. It includes definitions related to the institutional framework, purpose, and governing principles, and guidance on M&E practices, data collection, and the respective roles and schedules for this.

In **Brazil**, the State of Espírito Santo was a pioneer in the development of a public policy M&E system (Simapp). According to the law, the state's governor is responsible for establishing Simapp's strategic guidelines. Thereafter, the Strategic Analysis Commission annually approves the state's M&E plan, and indicates which public policies will be monitored and evaluated throughout the year. There is always reference to the budget cycle of the current year and the state's multiannual plan. For following up, the Nucleus for Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies (Numa) coordinates the M&A actions that will be implemented by each sector each year.

In **Uganda**, the National Policy on Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation provides a clear framework for strengthening the coverage, quality, and utility of the assessment (M&E) of public policies and investments. Moreover, the policy proposes the allocation of funding for M&E within the national budget.

3.1 Legal and policy basis for the PBM&E systems

Some examples In **India**, the central government does not have a fully-fledged national evaluation policy or an extensive legal mandate for M&E. However, there are specific mandates that provide a legal basis for M&E. Since 2005-06, the Ministry of Finance has presented an outcome-based budget, with renewed focus on outcomes rather than expenditure. In 2009, the government introduced a results-framework document (RFD) under which it was mandatory for all ministries and departments to list goals for that financial year and the respective achievement rates against the specific indicators. However, at the state level, the Government of Karnataka has set up an independent evaluation unit and in 2000, developed an evaluation policy for the state. According to this policy, any scheme with a budget above a particular figure should be evaluated.

Useful sources

- 1 National Policy on public sector Monitoring and Evaluation, Government of Uganda¹⁷
- 1 IEG report on government M&E system in India¹⁸

Suggested basic questions

- Where do custodians of the PBM&E systems derive the mandate to provide oversight and coordination of PBM&E at varying levels (for example, constitution, laws, regulations, and executive powers, including policies)?
- Is there a national monitoring and evaluation policy, or a national monitoring policy, or a national evaluation policy?
- Is there national legislation or regulation for monitoring and/or national legislation or regulation for evaluations, or a national policy for monitoring and evaluation?
- If there is a law, regulation, policy on monitoring and/or evaluation do they include references to:
 - links between (results) monitoring and planning?
 - links between (results) monitoring and the budgetary process?
 - links between (results) monitoring and decision making in parliament (legislative)?
 - links between (results) monitoring and decision making in higher levels of government (executive)?
 - links between (results) evaluation and planning?
 - links between (results) evaluation and the budgetary process?
 - links between (results) evaluation and decision making in parliament (legislative)?
 - links between (results) evaluation and decision making in higher levels of government (executive)?
- the independence of the evaluation unit(s)?
- the necessary resources and staff of the evaluation unit(s)?
- Is there a regulation/agreement/long-term development agenda that obliges the government to communicate program results periodically, whether to the population, donors/agencies, for international obligations and/or between ministries?
- Is there a legal requirement or regulations requiring the use of evidence in decision making?

Possible more in-depth questions Explore further any legal requirement or regulations requiring the use of evidence in decision making – for example, when new programs are approved.

17 Ministry of Health Knowledge Management, Republic of Uganda. 2011. National Policy on Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation. <http://library.health.go.ug/publications/monitoring-and-evaluation/national-policy-public-sector-monitoring-and-evaluation>

18 Santosh Mehrotra. 2013. The Government Monitoring and Evaluation System in India: A Work in Progress. Independent Evaluation Group, The World Bank Group, No.28, October 2013. https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/reports/ecd_wp28_india_me_0.pdf

3.2 Roles of key actors in the PBM&E systems

Why is this important?

This section is intended to provide an overview of the roles of key actors in the PBM&E system in the executive arm (government) and the legislative arm (parliament). It would also identify the key drivers of M&E. It is important to understand the roles of ministries of finance, any planning authority, or the government agency or entity driving M&E, as well as any M&E champions. It is also important to understand how these structures map onto the line ministries, and in subnational governments.

In terms of questions asked and the competencies required, there are many similarities between research and evaluation. So it is worth finding out if there are existing research functions that take on the evaluation function. It is important to understand both the formal structure and how power plays out in practice. (This is explored more below.) This makes it possible to identify key organizations and institutions (rules of the game) and inter-institutional relationships that play an important role within the current and future M&E systems.

It is also important to bring out the role of service departments, which often have M&E functions and which may have specific roles prescribed by legislation which include monitoring, if not evaluation. Often the final use of evaluation recommendations may need to result in changes to standard operating procedures of these departments.

Some examples

It is important to elicit whether the government agency or entity driving M&E is an overarching department like the Office of the Prime Minister in Uganda, or does not have that authority over other departments, like the M&E Directorate in the Ministry of Treasury and Planning in Kenya.

In **Uganda**, the government M&E system has been in existence since 2006 and is integrated into ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), as well as higher local governments (HLGs). Custodianship and oversight of the public sector M&E system is invested in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). M&E is emphasized in the national, MDA, and district development plans, budgeting frameworks, and statistics development plans. The M&E Policy of 2011 defines the specific roles and responsibilities of the OPM, ministries, HLGs and other actors in the M&E system.

In **Jamaica**, the Planning Institute of Jamaica is the country's leading institution in the formulation of economic and social policies, plans, and programs for development. However, in order to achieve the desired results of those programs, the government, through the Cabinet Office, has implemented a performance monitoring and evaluation system (PMES) within the public sector: an improved system for monitoring and evaluating key performance activities, indicators, and targets, and reporting on results. The PMES is the responsibility of the Performance Management and Evaluation Branch, which works primarily with ministries and their portfolio departments and agencies to improve their strategic planning. The PMES is thus a recognized cross-ministerial tool within Jamaica.

In **India**, the Planning Commission was constituted in 1950 and was made responsible for developing five-year plans. In 1952, the Programme Evaluation Office (PEO) was established under the Planning Commission to evaluate government programs. The evaluation function at the state level was introduced at the same time. But from 1970 onwards, the unit's role and the importance attached to it gradually declined. Eventually, in 2009, M&E was given increased importance when significant changes were made to the role of the PEO. An independent evaluation office was also set up in 2013 and eventually, in 2015, the PEO and the IEO were merged under the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office. The primary mandate of this office is to monitor and evaluate the implementation of schemes under the national government.

In **South Africa**, the Department of Basic Education is responsible for primary and secondary education. It has a significant M&E function, including an education management information system, and a strong M&E and research function, with significant capacity. It has a legal mandate to undertake M&E of the sector.

3.2 Roles of key actors in the PBM&E systems

Useful sources

- ❶ This article discusses the roles of the agencies or entities that are driving M&E in Benin, Uganda, and South Africa.¹⁹
- ❷ For more information on Jamaica, see the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System (PMES) Framework and the Government Performance Management and Evaluation/PIOJ sites.²⁰
- ❸ India's Development and Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), for information on its vision, strategy and roles.²¹

Suggested basic questions

- Is there a central body responsible for monitoring?
- Are there decentralized bodies responsible for monitoring?
- Is there a central body responsible for evaluation?
- Are there decentralized bodies responsible for evaluation?
- What is the legal basis for these entities?
- Does the central evaluation unit set standards and provide support for evaluation across government?
- What are the roles of different stakeholders at national and subnational levels in the planning, budgeting, and M&E systems (including communities if relevant)?
- Are there individual M&E champions at the political and senior administrative levels in the country (for example, directors, permanent secretaries)?
- With respect to parliamentary roles, do laws, regulations, or policies make linkages between (results) monitoring and decision making in parliament?
- Do laws, regulations, or policies stipulate linkages between evaluation and decision making in parliament?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Are there research structures in government departments that could be built on – for example, for evaluations?
- What is parliament's role in the planning, budgeting and M&E systems?
- What does a power analysis of the main stakeholders reveal?
- It may be important to further explore the realities of the balance of power between institutions and stakeholders.

19 Ian Goldman et al. 2018. "The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", *African Evaluation Journal*, 6 no. 1, (March 2018): 253. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v6i1.253>

20 Performance Management and Evaluation Unit, Government of Jamaica. 2010. Performance Monitoring And Evaluation System (PSES) Framework." <https://cabinet.gov.jm/resources/performance-monitoring-and-evaluation-system-pmes-framework/> Office of the Cabinet, Government of Jamaica. Government Performance Management and Evaluation." Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://cabinet.gov.jm/government-performance-and-monitoring/> Planning Institute of Jamaica, accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.pioj.gov.jm/>

21 DMEO (Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office), Government of India. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://dmeo.gov.in>

3.3 Overview of the planning and budgeting systems

Why is this important?

This section provides an overview of the development of the planning and budgeting systems, which is informed by M&E, as well as the policy cycle, if one is defined. This may be covered at national and subnational levels. This probably does not need to be covered in depth but as a key use of M&E evidence is to inform planning and budgeting, it is important to have an overview of how this system works. While monitoring is looked at in detail in section 4, and evaluation in section 5, this guidance does not go into planning and budgeting in detail. More layered iterations of this diagnosis could explore program-based budgeting, the policy process, and the degree to which planning is participatory.

Some examples

In **Cabo Verde**, the National Planning Directorate (DNP) is responsible for defining the instruments and guidelines for reporting strategic programs to be carried out by all government agencies involved – provincial and sectoral. For the purposes of monitoring and evaluating sector plans, the DNP currently uses the logical framework models defined in the foundational law on the planning system as a "programming instrument represented by a matrix that links the costs of activities with the strategic objectives of a program, project or unit, translated into performance indicator targets and their respective sources of verification". In Cabo Verde, different sector strategies are now planned and monitored in line with logical frameworks and adequate indicator data.

As a regional example, the **Caribbean Community** (CARICOM) has institutions that deal with planning and budgeting at a regional level. It is important to understand these regional institutions in the Caribbean to learn from the evaluation systems within the member countries.

In **Mexico**, the budget cycle starts in May to prepare the proposed budget for the national congress in September. The evaluation strategy for social programs is aligned to the budget cycle to provide feedback to relevant budget stakeholders in a timely manner. Program evaluations are due in June to feed the proposal from the executive and the discussion in congress.

In **Brazil**, in the State of Espírito Santo a law made in 2017 links the state's budgeting and evaluation cycles. A report on the quality of public spending is developed annually; it discloses summaries of the evaluations carried out and ranks these by performance and the need for improvement when this is appropriate. The report informs the preparation and review of the state's annual budget.

Useful sources

❶ Mexican evaluation policy: La Política de Evaluación en México: 10 años del CONEVAL²²

Suggested basic questions

- How does the planning system work?
- Is there an established process for designing and implementing public policy? What are the steps and methodologies? Are there instances of approval where evidence can be applied?
- How does the budgeting system work?
- Are there processes for performance-based or results-based budgeting and is this culture well established?
- What evidence does the state use to inform government planning, budgeting, policy, and decision making?

22 CONEVAL: La política de evaluación en México: 10 años del CONEVAL. Accessed February 14, 2022. https://www.coneval.org.mx/InformesPublicaciones/Documents/CONEVAL_politica_de_evaluacion_10_A.pdf

3.3 Overview of the planning and budgeting systems

(cont.)

- Do laws, regulations, or policies stipulate the links between (results) monitoring and the budgetary process?
- Do laws, regulations, or policies stipulate the links between evaluation and national planning?
- Do laws, regulations, or policies stipulate the links between Evaluation and the budgetary process?
- Does the national plan have clear goals, indicators, and targets?

Possible more in-depth questions

- To explore the systems in more depth, there could be a deeper analysis of how these evolved, and not just how they are now.
- To what extent is the planning process participatory and inclusive (for example, at municipal, provincial and national levels)?
- The evidence used could be explored in more depth.

3.4 Overview of the M&E systems

Why is this important?

This section provides an overview of the M&E-related systems that are in place. The analysis needs to also discuss M&E-like systems. (Note that audit is discussed in section 3.5 below.) This overview should include: plans, such as evaluation plans; guidelines; standards; required competencies; follow-up systems, such as evaluation management responses or improvement plans; and any incentives for adopting M&E. This section may explore M&E policies and guidelines that might have already been mentioned in 3.1. (Sections 4 and 5 explore monitoring and evaluation in more depth.)

Some examples

In **Benin**, the National Evaluation Policy of 2012 defines the overall framework for planning and carrying out evaluations, as well as the use of information drawn from these evaluations.

The National Evaluation Council is supposed to be the body for guidance and consultation in terms of the evaluation of public policies in Benin, and it includes representatives of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation (VOPEs). The council is responsible for advising the government on evaluation and promoting the development of evaluation at national, departmental and municipal levels. However, it has not met since 2015.

There is no evaluation plan, so the policies or programs to be assessed are determined on an ad-hoc basis, based on requests from line ministries, recommendations from cabinet meetings, or the analysis of the national context, as well as the priorities of development partners (DPs).

Guidelines have been developed, as well as a repository of evaluations. There are now five universities offering master's degrees in M&E or evaluation.

Useful sources

- 📄 This article discusses the evaluation systems in Benin, Uganda, and South Africa.²³

23 Ian Goldman et al. 2018. "The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", African Evaluation Journal, 6 no. 1, (March 2018): 253. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v6i1.253>

3.4 Overview of the M&E systems

Suggested basic questions

- What are the different M&E systems: for example, of departments and projects monitoring against the national development plan, monitoring of SDGs, and evaluation systems?
- How have these evolved, briefly?
- Is there a national coordination body, such as a national evaluation council?
- What components of M&E systems are in place: for example, M&E policy/strategy, M&E frameworks, reporting systems, evaluation agenda/plans, standards, competencies, repository of evaluations, quality assessments – and how binding are they?
- Are results-monitoring data used to inform the national planning process?
- Are results-monitoring data used to inform the budgetary process?
- Are results-monitoring data discussed in parliament (or the legislative arm of government)?
- Do government documents on policies, programs, and projects contain results frameworks?
- Are data on the results of individual policies, programs, and projects collected and reported?
- Does the central evaluation unit commission and/or conduct evaluations?
- Do decentralized evaluation units commission and/or conduct evaluations?
- If there are no specifically designated evaluation units, do other entities commission and/or conduct evaluations?
- How many country-led evaluations have been commissioned and implemented by government in the past two to three years?
- To what extent are these evaluations perceived to be credible, independent, and impartial? (For example, do these evaluations report on challenges or poor results, or do they only highlight positive aspects?)
- Do evaluations inform the national planning process?
- Do evaluations inform the budgeting process?
- Are evaluations discussed in parliament (or legislative bodies)?
- Is there evidence of changes in programs/strategies/projects due to evaluation findings?
- Is there evidence that the evaluations are discussed at higher levels of government (the executive arm)?

Possible more in-depth questions

See optional modules in sections 4 and 5.

3.5 Role of other stakeholders in relation to M&E:	Why is this important?	There is often a range of other stakeholders who play important roles in the M&E ecosystem or are relevant for the M&E system. This section explores their roles.
National statistical organization (NSO)	This is covered in section 3.6	–
Audit offices	Audit often drives behavior. It is important to understand the audit role and how it links to M&E.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the role of audit offices? › Do they undertake performance audits or other functions which are close to M&E? › What is the attitude to audit and how does that affect M&E?
Role of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation VOPE(s)	This section provides an overview of VOPEs, their capacity, and operations. In the basic MESA this would probably not be detailed, but more detail could be provided if necessary.	<p>Basic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there an evaluation association(s) in the country? › When was the VOPE established, how many members does it have, and where do most members come from (for example, the public sector, CSOs, academia)? › Is there a selection process for members? › How active is it? › How does the VOPE work with government, civil society, and donor organizations in the country to promote evaluation and evidence-based policy making? › To what extent does the local VOPE influence M&E activities in the country?
		<p>In-depth questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the sources of income for the VOPE? › What are the M&E priorities for the VOPE in the next five years? › What are some of the challenges the VOPE is facing and how can they be addressed? › Does the VOPE have an active network of emerging evaluators?
	Some examples	In Uganda , the Uganda Evaluation Association (UEA) is registered as a professional association and is guided by a formal, documented strategy. The UEA builds capacity of evaluators, designs standards to enhance evidence, raises awareness of evidence use, and advocates for the use of evidence in policy development and implementation. However, the UEA's role is constrained, as the voluntary nature of the organization means that contributions are sometimes insufficient, thus posing a challenge to its sustainability. ²⁴

²⁴ CLEAR-AA. 2021. "Monitoring and Evaluation Situation Analysis Report for the Republic of Uganda." Unpublished report. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2021.

3.5 Role of other stakeholders in relation to M&E:	Why is this important?	There is often a range of other stakeholders who play important roles in the M&E ecosystem or are relevant for the M&E system. This section explores their roles.
Role of NGOs (or civil society) in the M&E system	This section explores what roles NGOs play in the M&E system – such as sitting on evaluation steering committees, or being involved in the selection of evaluations for evaluation plans/agendas.	Basic questions: In general terms, what role do other CSOs play (if any) in the national M&E system – for example, sitting on steering committees, or playing a role in the national coordination structure?
		In-depth questions: ➤ Do NGOs play an active role in requiring evidence from the government about results ex post and about policy choices ex ante? ➤ Do CSOs share with government evidence from evaluations of programs that have worked, and advocate for scale-ups?
	Some examples:	In Costa Rica , CSOs sit on the National Evaluation Platform, which guides the evaluation system. In South Africa , CSOs often sit on evaluation steering committees on issues in which they have a stake – for example, farmers’ associations, or where they can offer knowledge or expertise, such as think tanks.
Development partners	In many countries, development partners (multi-lateral, bi-lateral, etc.) play an important role in M&E systems, funding the development of elements of the system and/or funding evaluations. An enriched element would be obtaining details of the donor-funded evaluations being undertaken.	Basic questions: What M&E initiatives are funded by local and international development partners in the country – such as training, or the development of M&E policies and guidelines? Are any development partners funding government-led evaluations? Do any development partners conduct their own evaluations using country systems?
		In-depth questions: Over the last three years, what proportion of evaluations have been funded by donors? What other influence do donors have on M&E activities in the country?
	Some examples:	In Lesotho , UN agencies such as UNICEF, WFP, and the UNDP; the European Union (EU); the International Monetary Fund (IMF); and the World Bank play key roles in supporting development activities and in M&E. The various roles include strengthening M&E capacity by providing funds for training and, at times, offering training in the sector ministries they work with. For instance, the FAO, IFAD, and the World Bank finance various programs in the agricultural sector.

3.5 Role of other stakeholders in relation to M&E:	Why is this important?	There is often a range of other stakeholders who play important roles in the M&E ecosystem or are relevant for the M&E system. This section explores their roles.
Development partners (cont.)		They also provide technical assistance, such as the development of indicators. In 2019, both UNICEF and UNDP provided much-needed financial and technical support in the form of consultants to the Government of Lesotho during the process for undertaking the Voluntary National Review of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP supported the Government of Lesotho's participation at the 2019 National Evaluation Capacities Conference in Hurgada, Egypt. ²⁵
Media	The media play an important role in communicating evidence through multiple channels. They may play a negative role, such as in generating fake news. Or they could play a more positive role in reporting accurately on evidence emerging from M&E, and contributing to wider society by holding government to account. This section also identifies any work being undertaken to strengthen the capacity of the media to use M&E evidence.	Basic questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do the media use M&E evidence? › Are there references in the media to evaluations? › Has any training or support been undertaken to help the media use M&E evidence? By whom?
	Some examples:	In-depth questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How much is the value of scientific evidence recognized by the wider public in the country – for example, over COVID-19? › How prevalent is “fake news” – for example, covering COVID-19? <p>In Mexico, CONEVAL organizes workshops with media representatives about the evaluations that are in progress. When a special evaluation will be released, there are also meetings with journalists, and editorials that explain the results and the implications. The media thus make the evaluations public and, in general, they are better informed about them.</p>
Political parties	In many countries, political parties may be very dominant, and at times dominate government if they hold power for long periods. In such situations it is very important that they see the importance of M&E evidence. It is thus important to understand the attitudes to M&E and what advocacy work has been undertaken in this regard.	Basic questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do political parties lobby for evidence-based policy making? › Does the evaluation unit report evaluation findings to political parties?

25 “Monitoring and Evaluation Situation Analysis Report for the Kingdom of Lesotho.” Unpublished report. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2021.

3.6 Statistical and administrative data

Why is this important?

Monitoring and evaluation depend on the availability of data. This section explores the availability and quality of administrative data from departments' routine operations, and statistical data – such as from the national statistical office (NSO). More layered iterations could explore this in more depth: for example, the nature of frontline data collection and how these data are relayed upwards. The World Bank reviews the statistical capacity of countries, which involves an exploration of the methodology, source data, and periodicity of surveys/reports.²⁶ This can provide much of the information required, as well as the websites of the NSOs. However, it does not cover the quality of administrative data.

Some examples

In **Lesotho**, the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2006–2015 defines the system developed for national statistics and the custodian is the Bureau of Statistics (BoS). Key products include the 10-yearly census; the intermediate demographic survey; a quarterly continuous multipurpose survey (CMS) covering demographics, labor force, consumption and additional modules; the household budget survey (HBS), which is being added to the CMS; the labor force survey, which used to be every 10 years but which will now be every two years; the agricultural census; and the economic census. The BoS defines the poverty line (using the HBS). Reports are available to download from the website.²⁷ The BoS is also responsible for the Lesotho Statistical Quality Assurance Framework.

In **India**, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) is the apex institution for collecting and disseminating data. In India, MOSPI releases data on the census, sample surveys, surveys conducted by state governments, and administrative data. Some of the key surveys it releases include the Census of India and the National Sample Survey Organisation's surveys on specific topics. Administrative data collected by state governments are also released by MOSPI.

Useful sources

- ❶ The World Bank's statistical capacity country profiles²⁸
- ❷ India's Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI)²⁹

Suggested basic questions

- Is a population census conducted? How often?
- Is there a national statistical system?
- Does the government/NSO conduct a demographic census? How often?
- Does the government/NSO conduct other household survey (s)?
- How accessible are administrative data – are they shared in some way across government?
- What is the quality of administrative data (for example, are the data complete, timely, accessible, and reliable)?
- Are data disaggregated to track the situation of disadvantaged groups?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Is frontline data collection in electronic or paper format?
- If electronic, is this information aggregated and relayed upwards without time lags?
- Do departments/subnational levels conduct any surveys of their own? If so, which?
- Explore further the quality of administrative data. For example, are the data complete, timely, accessible, and reliable?

26 World Bank. "Data on Statistical Capacity". Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/>

27 Bureau of Statistics, Government of Lesotho. Ministry of Development Planning. Accessed February 14, 2022. www.bos.gov.ls

28 World Bank. "Data on Statistical Capacity". Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/>

29 Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Government of India. Accessed February 17, 2022. <https://mospi.gov.in/>

3.7 Resources for M&E

Why is this important?

This section explores the resources provided for M&E, in terms of budgets for M&E, the size of M&E units, and the resources that are specifically allocated for evaluation, or research (research and evaluation are often funded from the same source) More in-depth analysis could explore how M&E budget needs are determined.

Some examples

In **South Africa**, most national and provincial departments have monitoring and evaluation units, although these vary and may be located in different places in the organogram. They have corporate roles to play in relation to reporting on annual performance plans, sector reporting, and evaluation. For example, in the Department of Basic Education, the unit comprises ten people, four of whom have some evaluation specialization. The unit has an annual budget of around \$367 000, of which \$40 000 is for goods and services, including evaluations. Most funding for evaluations is from development partners, or the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME).³⁰ The DPME also has a specialist evaluation unit, with 15 staff, and a budget of about \$1,5 million, of which around \$800 000 is allocated for eight evaluations per year, to part fund evaluations with national departments.

In **Mexico**, the ministries at the federal level have resources allocated for completing the annual evaluation plan determined by CONEVAL and the Ministry of Finance. In addition, these two institutions have staff for coordinating, developing, and disseminating evaluations and their findings.

Useful sources

- ❶ M&E in South Africa³¹
- ❷ Twende Mbele Ghana scoping report³²
- ❸ Mexican evaluation policy (La Política de Evaluación en México: 10 años del CONEVAL)³³

Suggested basic questions

What resources does the government provide for M&E, in terms of budgets for M&E, the size of M&E units, and are resources specifically allocated for evaluation, or research?

Possible more in-depth questions

How are M&E budget needs determined?

3.8 Communication of M&E evidence

Why is this important?

If it is to be used, M&E information needs to be communicated. This section explores what mechanisms for communication are in place, including the packaging of evidence, and how it is shared and made available to the public, to parliament, and to the media. A more in-depth analysis could explore knowledge management processes in government.

Some examples

In **South Africa**, the key monitoring reports are made available on departmental websites; these include the quarterly reports and the annual reports against the Annual Performance Plan. The reports are tabled with parliamentary portfolio committees and are available in parliamentary records. Both these documents are used for accountability purposes. Evaluations are available in a repository. The communications units in all departments respond to emerging issues and key issues highlighted in reports, and they engage the media. The website is very informative and notes the publication of any new reports. Government administrative data are not accessible to the public.

30 Carol Nuga Deliwe: n.d. Chief Director, Department of Basic Education, Personal communication.

31 Sean Phillips et al., "A focus on M&E of results: an example from the Presidency, South Africa", *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 6, no. 4, (Dec 2014): 392–406. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2014.966453>

32 Twende Mbele. 2017. Report on a Scoping Visit to Ghana 13–15 June 2017. <https://twendembele.org/reports/scoping-visit-to-ghana-13-15-june-2017/>

33 CONEVAL: La política de evaluación en México: 10 años del CONEVAL. Accessed February 14, 2022. https://www.coneval.org.mx/InformesPublicaciones/Documents/CONEVAL_politica_de_evaluacion_10_A.pdf

3.8 Communication of M&E evidence

(cont.)

In **Mexico**, CONEVAL has a large catalogue of evaluation results and generated evidence. These include full reports, two-pager evaluations, databases, infographics, and executive summaries. Additionally, a communication strategy has been implemented to reach different users. This strategy includes face-to-face meetings, videos, seminars, social media, capacity-building activities for media representatives, and courses for congress staff.

In **India**, information on M&E activities is publicly available on the websites of state and central government ministries/departments. Some departments conduct surveys independently and publish the datasets on their websites. For example, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare publishes reports based on the National Family Health Survey conducted every year. In addition to this, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) releases data from surveys and administrative sources at the national and subnational levels.

Useful sources

- ❶ Reports and resources on M&E in South Africa³⁴
- ❷ The South African evaluation repository³⁵
- ❸ About Mexico's CONEVAL³⁶
- ❹ About the DMEO in India³⁷
- ❺ India's national data archive³⁸

Suggested basic questions

- Are there formal frameworks for reporting, debating, and discussing monitoring and evaluation results at different levels (for example, websites, media workshops)?
- To what extent are findings shared with the entire population, and in an easily accessible way (for example, policy briefs/accessible reports, practical/implementable solutions)?
- What is the percentage of government evaluations that have been made public in the past two to three years?
- Are there mechanisms to enable ease of access to government data and evidence (for example, repositories)?
- Does the country report on its contribution to the achievement of the SDGs?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Who is responsible for knowledge management in government departments?
- Are there academic journals or other media and forums for evaluation?
- To what extent does M&E information enter public discourse?
- Are there mechanisms to enable ease of access to NGO data and evidence (for example, repositories)?

34 Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa. Annual reports. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.education.gov.za/Resources/Reports.aspx>
Department: Basic Education, Republic of South Africa. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.education.gov.za/>

35 DPME (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation), Republic of South Africa. Evaluations. Accessed February 14, 2022, <https://evaluations.dpme.gov.za/evaluations.aspx>

36 CONEVAL. Accessed February 14, 2022. www.coneval.org.mx

37 DMEO (Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office), Government of India. DMEO Studies. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://dmeo.gov.in/evaluation/dmeo-evaluation-studies>

38 Ministry of Statistical and Programme Implementation, Government of India. National Data Bank. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://mospi.gov.in/web/mospi/national-data-bank-old>

3.9 M&E capacity–development initiatives

Why is this important?

It is difficult to develop an M&E system if there is no academic training available in M&E. For example, in the Philippines there is no postgraduate course in M&E and this limits the training available. This section explores what courses are available, at what level, and what support for capacity development is being provided. Enriched questions would explore who is being targeted, what M&E components there are in other course (for example, in public administration) and some detail on the content of the courses – such as, to what extent evaluation is covered.

Some examples

In **Costa Rica**, there are master's degrees in evaluation in most universities. Among them are those offered at the University of Costa Rica, with a demand of around 30 – 40 students per year, the Central American Institute of Public Administration, and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO). Universities have also developed links with other universities in the region, most recently with Ecuador, to enhance South-South cooperation in the areas of evaluation.

In **Mexico**, together with CLEAR LAC, CONEVAL promotes courses around M&E. Additionally, CONEVAL has developed an impact evaluation incubator to deliver training and encourage the development of impact evaluation among public officers. On each course, around 80 public officers attended the incubator.

In **Zambia**, The University of Zambia (UNZA) offers a one-year postgraduate diploma (PGD) in M&E.

Useful sources

- ① UNEG Costa Rica case study on NECD³⁹
- ① Mexico's CONEVAL: Incubator of evaluations with impact⁴⁰

Suggested basic questions

- Which institutions provide formal degree/postgraduate M&E training and what courses do they provide?
- At what level are the trainings pitched (certificate, post-graduate certificate/diploma, master's, doctorate)?
- Which institutions provide short M&E training and what courses do they provide?
- Are there any courses specifically designed for public-sector M&E (for example, an Introduction to M&E in the public sector) and by whom? Are they tailored to specific audiences (for example, technical staff, mid-level managers, senior managers, politicians)?
- Are there M&E capacity-development plans in place? Are processes under way to develop and strengthen M&E capacity in government and society more broadly – such as, how to produce, manage, and use evidence?
- Has there been any technical assistance, capacity building, or training in M&E currently over the past two years for any level of government (national, regional, or local)? Who provided this assistance and within what framework or reform process?
- Have M&E competencies been defined for the public sector?

Possible more in-depth questions

- How many people were trained on M&E during this year, and by which institution?
- What is the weighting of courses for both monitoring and evaluation?
- Are there M&E modules offered as part of other courses/degrees/qualifications (for example, as part of bachelor degrees in sociology or development studies)?
- Are there any other professionalization initiatives?
- What difference has the training that has been provided to date made?

39 UNEG. Evaluation Reports. Accessed February 14, 2022. <http://www.uneval.org/evaluation/reports>

40 CONEVAL. Incubadora de Evaluaciones de Impacto. Accessed February 14, 2022. https://www.coneval.org.mx/Evaluacion/ESEPS/Paginas/incubadora_impacto.aspx

3.10 Equity and gender considerations in the PBM&E systems

Why is this important?

Poor equity and gender outcomes contribute significantly to poor development outcomes. These elements are core SDG goals (SDG 5: Gender Equality, and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities). This section investigates whether the country M&E systems are gender- or equity-informed, and to what extent they are specifically included in M&E systems. More in-depth questions would explore how far these issues are mainstreamed in M&E systems and how far systems and training are taking on board the transformation of M&E to make it fit for purpose in addressing complexity. Another element would be if evaluations are specifically targeting these issues.

Some examples

An RBM situational analysis for **CARICOM** revealed that gender was a key issue that required attention. As a result, the work plan of phase 1 included the development and application of gender-sensitive principles in M&E within the region. A set of gender-equality indicators were proposed to monitor them and keep track of what the region does in this area.

In **India**, NITI Aayog, which is the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, has developed an SDG India Index. Through this, it tracks India's progress towards each of the SDGs. To this end, the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) has published a report highlighting where India stood across different SDGs in 2018. It also maintains an SDG India Index Dashboard, which collates information and data relevant to specific SDGs and which includes goals specifically related to equity, gender, and environmental sustainability.

Useful sources

- ❶ NITI Aayog's SDG Index⁴¹
- ❶ India's Ministry of Statistics National Data Archive⁴²

Suggested basic questions

- Do the legal framework, policy, and/or regulations include specific considerations on gender mainstreaming in monitoring and/or evaluation?
- Do the legal framework, policy, and/or regulations include specific considerations with respect to mainstreaming equity considerations in monitoring and/or evaluation?
- To what extent do monitoring and/or evaluations in government take into account gender and inequality issues? Are there formal forums at which these are discussed and taken seriously?
- Are there other ways gender, inequality, and equity issues are mainstreamed in M&E systems – such as the use of equity criteria in all evaluations?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Is there monitoring by civil society on gender and equity issues? By whom and at what level?

41 National Portal of India. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.niti.gov.in/reports-sdg>

42 Ministry of Statistical and Programme Implementation, Government of India. National Data Bank. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://mospi.gov.in/web/mospi/national-data-bank-old>

3.11 Climate and environmental sustainability considerations in the PBM&E systems

Why is this important?

Climate change is affecting all countries and is a key element of the SDGs, including: SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life below Water), and 15 (Life on Land). This section investigates whether country M&E systems are accounting for their environmental footprint and whether the country has adequate climate change mitigation and adaptation M&E frameworks, strategies, and data-collection systems in place. This may include whether national and subnational levels are involved and whether data are accumulated across sectors, for example. The more in-depth questions will help to explore how far these issues are mainstreamed in M&E systems and how far systems and training are taking on board the transformation of M&E to be fit for purpose in addressing complexity.

Some examples

In **Morocco**, Regional Networks of Exchanging Environmental Information (RREIEs) were involved in the development of the M&E system for each subnational region. Each RREIE is composed of representatives from decentralized sectoral services affected by climate change and with information that is relevant to M&E of adaptation strategies.

Useful sources

- ❶ National biodiversity assessment 2018: the status of South Africa's ecosystems and biodiversity: synthesis report⁴³
- ❷ NITI Aayog's S-D-G Index⁴⁴
- ❸ India's Ministry of Statistics National Data Archive⁴⁵
- ❹ GLZ guidebook for developing national adaptation monitoring and evaluation systems⁴⁶

Suggested basic questions

- Do the legal framework, regulations, and policies include provisions for mainstreaming climate change into M&E?
- Do the legal framework, regulations, and policies include mainstreaming a sustainable development perspective in M&E?
- Is there monitoring or evaluation by government on climate change, or issues of environmental sustainability (for example, the collapse of species and ecosystems and the depletion of natural resources). By whom and at what level?
- Does the country's PBM&E system track and inform on the environmental footprint?
- What monitoring and what evaluations on climate change and sustainable development are happening in government? Are there formal forums at which these are discussed and taken seriously? (For example, South Africa has the Presidential Climate Change Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality.)
- Are there other ways in which these issues are mainstreamed in M&E systems – for example, the use of environmental sustainability criteria in all evaluations?

Possible more in-depth questions

- How is climate change-related M&E used and by whom? (For example, Nepal's Climate Change Program Coordination Committee is responsible for coordinating data on climate change M&E and it is used to inform new policies and programs.)
- Is there monitoring by civil society on climate change, or on issues of environmental sustainability, gender, and equity? By whom and at what level?

43 SANBI. 2019. National Biodiversity Assessment 2018: The status of South Africa's ecosystems and biodiversity. Synthesis Report. <https://www.sanbi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NBA-Report-2019.pdf>

44 National Portal of India. Reports on SDG. accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.niti.gov.in/reports-sdg>

45 Ministry of Statistical and Programme Implementation, Government of India. National Data Bank. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://mospi.gov.in/web/mospi/national-data-bank-old>

46 Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. 2015. Developing national adaptation monitoring and evaluation systems: A guidebook. https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/download/uploads/giz2015_Developing_national_adaptation_M&E_systems_-_A_guidebook.pdf

4 – Monitoring and reporting systems

This section explores monitoring and reporting systems in detail, with an emphasis on output- and outcome-monitoring rather than activity monitoring. Looking at the reporting function is important to understand what happens with monitoring data, and the extent to which it is used for decision-making.

4.1 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at the national level

Why is this important?

This section explores monitoring and reporting systems at the national level. While this should explore formal systems, it should also look at informal systems (for example, how the ruling party is engaged), and distinguish systems in theory from what is happening in practice. In some cases, the regional dimension may be important, for example in small countries belonging to regional economic unions. Where this is the case, this could be included as part of a more in-depth enquiry.

Some examples

In **South Africa**, there are a number of monitoring systems. Line ministries have their own monitoring systems. In terms of central monitoring, each department has to produce a five-yearly strategic plan and an annual performance plan (APP). Reports on the APP are produced quarterly, and they are sent to the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME) and tabled at portfolio committees in parliament. The Auditor General also reviews the reports and comments on them. At the end of the year an annual report on the APP is produced. These reports are all for accountability purposes and are not learning focused.

In **Jamaica**, there are M&E technical groups within each ministry, responsible for gathering, validating, and reporting diverse information across the ministry, to incorporate it into their planning. Also, all ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) produce annual reports to document their performance. These are taken into account by the Ministry of Finance for its mid-term fiscal review on budgeting and planning.

In **Cabo Verde**, an M&E system platform is currently being implemented, supported by the World Bank and the UNDP, which will allow for a better follow-up of programs, projects, and sectoral units. The planned periodicity for feeding data is the product (monthly), program (semi-annual), and the plan (annual). It is expected that the new system will improve the bases that support the M&E process, with a better quality of information produced.

Useful sources

- ❶ M&E in South Africa⁴⁷
- ❶ Colombia's national M&E system (SINERGIA)⁴⁸
- ❶ Jamaican government M&E website⁴⁹

47 Sean Phillips et al. 2014. "A focus on M&E of results: an example from the Presidency, South Africa", *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 6, no. 4, (Dec 2014): 392–406. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2014.966453>

48 DNP (Department of National Planning). Synergia. Government of Colombia. Accessed February 16, 2022. <https://sinergia.dnp.gov.co/Paginas/Internas/Seguimiento/Que-es-seguimiento.aspx>

49 Office of the Cabinet, Government of Jamaica. Government Performance Management and Evaluation. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://cabinet.gov.jm/government-performance-and-monitoring/>

4.1 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at the national level

Suggested basic questions

- What are the main monitoring systems at the national level and who are the custodians of these?
- Is there monitoring and reporting of the national development plan, and other formalized plans?
- What monitoring and reporting systems are in place for outputs, for outcomes, and for budget/expenditure?
- What roles do line ministries play in monitoring?
- Are there incentives or sanctions in place to ensure that sectoral ministries and/or subnational governments adopt M&E practices in their daily work and report as required?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Are there other systems that are not called PM&E but that in fact are PM&E systems?
- How is information collected on expenditure/inputs/outputs/, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes and impacts?
- The evolution of these systems could be explored in more depth, as well as the implications for where they are headed.
- What mechanisms are there for government to share monitoring evidence and engage stakeholders (for example, CSOs) on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)?
- What are the main monitoring systems at the regional level and who are the custodians of these?

4.2 Systems for government monitoring and reporting in line ministries and at subnational levels

Why is this important?

This section explores monitoring and reporting of subnational levels, as well as deconcentrated levels of national government. This is particularly important in federal/semi-federal systems like India, Nigeria, and Mexico, where the states have their own governments and their own reporting systems. Within devolved units there are often lower levels of devolved local government.

Some examples

In Ghana, there are two main levels of government – national and district. There are also 10 regions with regional coordinating councils (RCCs) as the regional coordination structures. They are administrative levels of government and not governments in their own right. They provide guidance to districts in the development of their M&E plans and collate district data, which they pass on to the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and other stakeholders. They review and collate district annual performance reviews (APRs) to produce the regional APR and facilitate the evaluation of the district plans and make recommendations for a policy review. Decentralized sector departments have offices at the regional level, which provide guidance to decentralized departments at the district level, including on how to implement their sector M&E plans, collating district data. District assemblies are the local governments. Decentralized departments at the district level collect data on sector-specific indicators and report to the district planning coordination units (DPCUs) and heads of departments at the regional level. They also support the DPCUs in conducting evaluations and participatory M&E exercises.

Useful sources

- ❶ Twende Mbele Ghana scoping report⁵⁰

50 Twende Mbele. 2017. Report on a Scoping Visit to Ghana 13-15 June 2017. <https://twendembele.org/reports/scoping-visit-to-ghana-13-15-june-2017/>

4.2 Systems for government monitoring and reporting in line ministries and at subnational levels

Suggested basic questions

- What are the main monitoring systems coordinated by line ministries?
- What are the main monitoring systems at subnational levels and who are the custodians of these?
- What monitoring and reporting systems are in place for outcomes and for outputs at these levels?
- What lower-level monitoring and reporting do line ministries do?
- How does this link with local government or state governments?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Is there formalized monitoring and reporting of a subnational development plan and other plans? At state or other local government level?

4.3 Monitoring of government by parliament

Why is this important?

This section explores how the legislative arm carries out oversight of the executive. This may be through using the products of government's monitoring systems, but also their own tools to monitor government. For example, some parliaments have research departments, with library sections that sometimes generate evidence or collate existing evidence.

Some examples

Sri Lanka has a unicameral parliament. It has select committees, sectoral oversight committees, ministerial consultative committees, legislative standing committees, and committees for special purposes. The select committees are ad-hoc committees appointed from time to time as needed. The sectoral oversight committees do all or any of the following:

- review and study the application, administration, execution, and effectiveness of legislative projects and programs addressing subjects within its jurisdiction;
- review and study the organization and operation of departments and Institutions having responsibilities for the administration and execution of legislative projects and programs addressing subjects within its jurisdiction;
- engage in future research and forecasting on subjects within its jurisdiction.

The Secretary General and their staff function as secretary to all committees established by parliament. Staff with functions relevant to M&E include the library, with nine staff and a research unit with five staff. Most of what research staff provide is data relating to the operations of departments, which is made available to individual MPs or committees. They do not access evaluations. A proposal has been developed to bring an evaluation function into the research unit.

In **Uganda**, parliament has three units – an M&E unit, a research unit, and a budget office. The research unit has 36 staff, of whom 30 are allocated to committees. There are 16 sector committees and 14 select committees. The M&E unit handles the internal M&E of parliament. There is an M&E framework that is used to monitor parliament. There are not evaluators per se but the researchers are members of the evaluation association and the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS). They undertake the analysis of legislation and post-legislative scrutiny, and impact assessments related to bills. The team carries out data collection and analysis itself. It sometimes uses evaluations produced in government.

4.3 Monitoring of government by parliament

Useful sources

- 1 African Parliamentary Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE)⁵¹
- 1 Book on African parliaments and evaluation⁵²
- 1 Report on the use of evidence in African parliaments (VakaYiko, DFID)⁵³

Suggested basic questions

- How does parliament monitor government performance?
- How is government monitoring information used in parliament?

Possible more in-depth questions

- How effective is this monitoring?
- Do committees feel they can get an in-depth understanding of what the departments are doing and how effective it is?

4.4 Capacity in government to undertake monitoring and reporting

Why is this important?

This section explores the institutional and individual capacity for monitoring and reporting, and any capacity-development plans at different levels of government. At the institutional level, it is important to understand what capacity for monitoring there is, including numbers of staff, capability of staff, and what systems are in place to support monitoring. At the individual level it is important to understand what training people have had, and how familiar they are with monitoring approaches like RBM. An enriched module would involve getting more detailed information on individual capacity, possibly derived from a survey.

Some examples

The following extract from a past diagnostic illustrates a mix of strengths and weaknesses in a country:

M&E arrangements and practice at all levels – national, line ministry, provincial, and district – were found to be poor. Sector ministries, provinces, and districts did not have permanent M&E units and dedicated M&E staff, except for the central planning ministry, and a few sector ministries, such as health and education. The country-level M&E system was not providing stakeholders with adequate information for informing critical development processes, such as policy making, decision making, planning, budgeting, resource allocation, and advocacy. Capacities for M&E were acknowledged as lacking across the system. However, a structure responsible for coordinating M&E across government and automating data management and information flows was being set up. The government was making other positive changes, including the adoption of a national planning and budgeting policy five years prior to the diagnostic, and the development of a national performance framework, an M&E plan, an M&E management information system, and had recently adopted a national monitoring and evaluation policy. There was however no M&E capacity building program in place. Development partners were providing support that was considered key to the strengthening and institutionalization of M&E practice in the country.

In the case of **Mexico**, the Ministry of Finance, together with CONEVAL in Mexico, decided that all social programs should have a results framework (Matriz de Indicadores para Resultados) (MIR) and they should update it every year. As this was new for programs, a large training process started in 2007 and has continued every year since then. CONEVAL received assistance with this from Chile through the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES-ECLAC). The monitoring capacity increased dramatically in a few years. Today in Mexico, talking about MIRs in ministries and states is common.

51 African Development Bank. Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV). African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE). Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://idev.afdb.org/en/page/related-page/african-parliamentarians-network-development-evaluation-apnode>

52 Linda Kumalo et al., eds. 2021. African Parliaments Volume 1: Evidence Systems for Governance and Development. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media. DOI:10.52779/9781991201454

53 African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs. 2018. Evidence in African parliaments. <https://www.inasp.info/sites/default/files/2018-04/Evidenc%20i%20parliaments.pdf>

4.4 Capacity in government to undertake monitoring and reporting

Useful sources	① World Bank article on institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation systems for improvement ⁵⁴
	① World Bank-sponsored note on devising an appropriate strategy for capacity building of a national monitoring and evaluation system, based on selected: African countries ⁵⁵
Suggested basic questions	➤ Are there skilled personnel in government with the technical capacity for performance monitoring (for example, gathering, analyzing, and reporting on the performance of government policies and programs)?
	➤ What training have they had?
Possible more in-depth questions	➤ Overall, is there institutional capacity to undertake meaningful monitoring that feeds back into management? At what levels?
	➤ Is there a capacity-strengthening plan for monitoring skills in government (for example, training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance/support)?
	➤ A special MESA-related module, such as a survey, could collect more detailed information on individual capacity.

4.5 Role of civil society in the government monitoring system

Why is this important?	It is important to understand any specific roles that CSOs play in government monitoring systems – for example, in community-based monitoring, or sitting on monitoring structures, such as district health committees. These can help to ensure the relevance of the information collected, and challenge government when systems are not working appropriately.
Some examples	<p>In South Africa, the Framework for Strengthening Citizen-Government Partnerships for Monitoring Frontline Service Delivery, done through the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), was approved by the cabinet in August 2013 and a community-based monitoring system has been used to get citizen feedback on particular issues or in particular areas. There are some specialist think tanks, like the Health Systems Trust, which have played an important role in sectoral monitoring.</p> <p>In Ghana, an NGO, CDD Ghana, was involved in undertaking knowledge-brokering, using government monitoring data at local government level, and drawing up a district league table, which showcased which district assemblies were performing well or poorly in a range of services. This case highlights the effects of strengthened evidence use in assessing sanitation performance at the local level: citizens putting pressure on district assemblies for improving performance in sanitation; more effective channels for citizen-level engagement with a source of pressure being created at district level; civil society using the evidence for their own project planning; and district assemblies being motivated to improve performance.</p>

54 Keith Mackay. Institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation systems to improve public sector management (English). Evaluation Capacity Development Working Paper series, no. ECD 15 Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/715431468325271413/Institutionalization-of-monitoring-and-evaluation-systems-to-improve-public-sector-management>

55 Robert Lahey. 2015. Devising an Appropriate Strategy for Capacity Building of a National Monitoring and Evaluation System: Lessons from Selected African Countries. 2015. Note sponsored by the Poverty Global Practice of the World Bank Group. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22079/Devising0an0ap0ed0African0countries.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

4.5 Role of civil society in the government monitoring system

Useful sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❶ Citizen-based monitoring⁵⁶❷ Uganda Evaluation Association⁵⁷❸ Use of monitoring evidence in Ghana's district league table⁵⁸
Suggested basic questions	Are there any specific roles that CSOs play in government monitoring systems – such as sitting on monitoring structures, or being involved in community-based monitoring?
Possible more in-depth questions	What CSOs involved in social accountability and audit mechanisms exist to monitor government?

4.6 Systems/ incentives for acting on monitoring

Why is this important?	<p>Ultimately, the prevailing incentives and sanctions, whether formal or informal, tend to influence what actually happens in government. This can be in the form of rewards, such as recognition and promotion, or sanctions on the lack of follow-up or strong messaging from leaders about the importance of follow-up.</p> <p>This section explores whether there is a system for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of monitoring evidence, such as performance dialogues on quarterly reports, or sections in performance agreements which explicitly refer to follow-up on problems identified). It also looks into whether the systems may provide negative incentives, with negative effects.</p>
Some examples	In South Africa , the quarterly reporting by government departments is followed up in some cases by performance dialogues. In these dialogues, the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME), the National Treasury, and the relevant departments come together to reflect on performance monitoring information, budget information, and evaluations, and how performance is going and what changes are needed. This provides incentives to follow up on the reports. Similarly, as these reports are tabled at parliamentary committees, they come under some scrutiny. This also sometimes results in parliamentary questions being asked.
Useful sources	❶ For more information on performance culture, read chapter 4 of the book <i>Using Evidence in Policy and Practice</i> . ⁵⁹ The chapter covers evidence use by African governments, and explores M&E culture in Benin, Uganda, and South Africa.
Suggested basic questions	Is there a system for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of monitoring evidence (such as rewards, sanctions, and messaging from leadership)?
Possible more in-depth questions	Explore the above in more depth and how this relates to culture.

56 DPME (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation). Republic of South Africa. Citizen-based Monitoring. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/cbmSite/Pages/default.aspx>

57 Uganda Evaluation Association. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://ugandaevaluationassociation.org/web/ugandaevaluationassociation/default.aspx>

58 Ian Goldman et al. 2020. "Mere compliance or learning – M&E culture in the public service of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", in *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice*, eds. Ian Goldman and Mine Pabari, 54–74. Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003007043-4/mere-compliance-learning-culture-public-service-benin-uganda-south-africa-ian-goldman-wole-olaleye-stanley-sixolile-ntakumba-mokgoropo-makgaba-cara-waller?context=ubx&refId=c513054a-4cdb-420d-b196-8ed35908fa53>

59 Ibid.

4.7 Use of monitoring information by government

Why is this important?

This section explores whether and how monitoring information is used to inform management decision making and any lessons that may emerge.

Some examples

In the **Ghana** case outlined before, an NGO, CDD Ghana, was involved in undertaking knowledge brokering using government monitoring data at local government level and drawing up a district league table (DLT) which showcased which district assemblies were performing well or poorly in a range of services. The DLT has been successful in contributing to strengthening evidence use, particularly at the district level. The capacity strengthening of civil society groups, coupled with access to DLT data, strengthened the confidence and capabilities of citizens to engage in evidence-based advocacy. This created pressure points on government actors to improve service delivery, particularly at the subnational level.

The ranking of districts using the DLT has created a sense of competition among district officials. District assemblies that perform poorly on the DLT are flagged at the national level and peer pressure from other districts together with the evidence informed advocacy from civil society act as incentives to improve service delivery.

Useful sources

- ❶ District league table case: CLEAR-AA policy brief on evidence use for improving sanitation in Ghana⁶⁰

Suggested basic questions

- How does monitoring information within government inform decision making: planning, project or program management, budgeting, and performance reporting?
- What examples are there of the use of monitoring information in national plans, strategies, and government programs?
- How does the government usually respond to negative M&E findings/evidence?

Possible more in-depth questions

- What is the role of each department within the state in making these decisions based on M&E?

60 Dede Bedu-Addo and Mohammed Awal. 2020. All hands in the community bowl: Evidence use for improved sanitation in Ghana. CLEAR-AA Policy Brief. <https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/29177/Evidence%20Use%20for%20Improve%20Sanitation%20in%20Uganda.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>

5 – Evaluation systems

This section goes into the country's evaluation systems in detail. Here, the MESA focuses not only on the production and use of single evaluations, but on the status of the evaluation system as a whole.

5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level

Why is this important?

Mirroring section 4.1 on monitoring, this section explores evaluation systems and practices at the national level. Building on the overview in section 3, this is one of the most important parts of the MESA, as it explores the center of the evaluation system and its main components. It will be important to look into both formal and informal systems, as well as distinguish systems in theory from what is happening in practice. This section focuses on the identification of the main stakeholders of the evaluation system within government, their roles and how they interact with each other. In some cases, where there are strong regional links, it may be important to highlight practices at the regional level, such as CARICOM in the Caribbean.

Some examples

Most of the literature and many evaluation diagnostics provide information on this (CLEAR LAC and Deval INCE for Latin America, for example). They identify how governments have built evaluation systems. There is a range of useful examples:

Chile originally developed its evaluation system around the Department of the Budget, within the Ministry of Finance. For many years this was the only evaluation unit in the country. However, in 2011, the Ministry of Social Planning (later the Ministry of Social Development and now the Ministry of Social Development and Family) also started evaluation for the social sector. Doing a MESA for Chile today involves assessing the evaluation processes in both ministries and their strategies for coordinating with each other.

In **South Africa**, the driving agency in government is the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME), housed in the Presidency. A national evaluation policy was adopted by the cabinet in 2011 (and revised in 2019). This promotes a utilization-focused approach, with evaluations conducted at national, provincial, and ministry/department levels. Since 2012, a national evaluation plan has been produced annually, with evaluations conducted as a partnership between the DPME and the respective sector department. DPME part-funds the evaluations, and the reports go to the cabinet along with a management response and an improvement plan. These are large evaluations, a mix of diagnostic, implementation, and impact evaluations. Seventy-three evaluations have begun, covering projects and programs to the value of around US\$10 billion of government expenditure. By 2021, 50 evaluations had been completed and closed⁶¹. Twenty-seven guidelines/templates have been produced, which are available publicly, along with a repository of evaluations, standards, and required competencies.

This section can also identify changes in evaluation tools and the reasons for those changes.

In the **USA**, during the G. W. Bush administration, a useful evaluation tool called the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) assessed public programs based on direct answers covering the life cycle of programs. This tool was terminated during the Obama administration. Exploring the reasons for this change could shed light on the M&E systems, goals, and challenges.

In **Mexico**, the M&E guidelines launched by CONEVAL and the Ministry of Finance in 2007 have been shaping the M&E system ever since. These guidelines specify the way several elements should be addressed: the annual evaluation plan, types of evaluations, the need to make all evaluations public, programs' log frameworks, the periodicity to assess results indicators, and the mechanism to follow up on evaluations' recommendations.

5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level

In **Uganda**, the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (NIMES, 2006) has been managed through sector working groups: the National Monitoring and Oversight (NM&O) Working Group and the Evaluation Sub-Committee (ESC). It is through the NIMES and the sector working groups that Uganda established its national evaluation system.

In Uganda, in its work on developing evaluation agendas, the Office of the Prime Minister partnered with Twende Mbele⁶² in 2020 and 2021, working through CLEAR-AA, and collaborated with health-sector CSOs to develop the Health Sector Evaluation Agenda, which is aligned to the National Development Plan III (2021/21–2024/25).

Useful sources

- ❶ CLEAR LAC and Deval's INCE are important readings to show assessment of different evaluation systems in Latin America.⁶³ This guidance suggests using questions from the Deval/WFP INCE to assess section 5 of THE MESA.
- ❷ Progress in the South African system⁶⁴
- ❸ The DPME website⁶⁵
- ❹ The M&E Guidelines for Mexico, issued in 2007⁶⁶

Suggested basic questions

- Who are the custodians of the evaluation system at regional/national level?
- What is the extent of the coverage of the evaluation custodian or evaluation unit across government?
- Is evaluation of the national development plan, ministries' plans and other plans formalized/institutionalized?
- How are line ministries involved in evaluation?
- What roles do they play regarding evaluation?
- How effective are public entities in managing evaluations?
- Is there a demand from line ministries for external evaluations?
- Which type of interventions/programs/sectors are evaluated by the system?
- How are evaluations funded?
- What type of evaluations are typically conducted (for example, design, implementation, outcome, and impact)?
- How are the credibility, independence, and impartiality of evaluations fostered??
- Are there mechanisms in place to ensure quality?
- What is the quality and technical rigor of the evaluations performed?
- Do countries have methodologies/guidance to define recommendations?
- What mechanisms are there for government to share evaluation evidence and engage stakeholders on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)?

62 Twende Mbele. A knowledge sharing platform to improve M&E in Africa. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://twendembele.org>

63 Gabriela Perez-Yarahuan and Glaudia Maldonado, eds. National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems. Experiences from Latin America. CLEAR-LAC, 2020. <https://clear-lac.org/3d-flip-book/national-monitoring-and-evaluation-systems/>

64 Ian Goldman et al., "The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", African Evaluation Journal, 6 no. 1, (March 2018): 253. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v6i1.253>

65 DPME (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation), Republic of South Africa. Evaluations. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Pages/default.aspx>

66 CONEVAL. Evaluación De La Política Social. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.coneval.org.mx/Evaluacion/NME/Paginas/LineamientosGenerales.aspx>

5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level

Possible more in-depth questions

- Is there a willingness to overcome current negative perceptions about evaluation in the public and nongovernmental sectors?
- Does a classification of program performance exist?
- What is the quality of the ToR for conducting evaluations?
- What is the degree of impartiality in evaluation processes?
- If so desired, the systems at regional level (for example, CARICOM) can be explored. The questions for the national level can be used here.
- How many country-led evaluations commissioned or implemented by government started in the past two to three years?

5.2 Evaluation systems at line ministry and subnational levels

Why is this important?

In this section, it is important to assess the main elements of evaluation systems in states, municipalities, and the subnational level, if they exist. To learn fully about the evaluation system in a country, it is important to understand the existence and status of the evaluation systems at the levels of line ministries and subnational levels, which could include subnational governments. This is crucial if countries have a federal system. Ideally, similar questions to those asked at the national level should be asked. An additional element is to assess the level of coordination around evaluation between the central and local levels.

Some examples

It is not possible to understand the evaluation system in India or in Mexico without learning what type of evaluation systems have been set up at the state level.

In **India**, Karnataka and Odisha are two states with well-established evaluation systems.

In **Mexico**, Mexico City, the State of Mexico, and Oaxaca have well-structured evaluation systems, while the systems in other states are not yet as well developed.

In **South Africa**, eight of the nine provinces have had provincial evaluation plans and have implemented some evaluations. Limpopo and Western Cape are examples of provinces that have taken evaluation seriously. Western Cape has implemented a very structured process and conducted over 50 provincial evaluations. These evaluations are outsourced and conducted by consultants or universities. Both Limpopo and Western Cape have tested models of rapid evaluations, conducted by government staff, as mechanisms to reduce both the costs and time involved in completing evaluations.

In **Brazil**, state governments rely on public research institutes that conduct evaluations and which are staffed by civil servants, such as the João Pinheiro Foundation in Minas Gerais. These institutes establish relationships with local universities to support the development of evaluations.

Useful sources

- ❶ The State Evaluation Assessment undertaken by CONEVAL in Mexico assesses evaluation practices and norms at the state level⁶⁷
- ❶ This article reviews the provincial evaluation system in the Western Cape, South Africa⁶⁸

67 CONEVAL. Diagnóstico Del Avance En Monitoreo Y Evaluación De Las Entidades Federativas. Accessed February 14, 2022. https://www.coneval.org.mx/coordinacion/entidades/Paginas/Indice_diagnosticos_temp.aspx

68 Zeenat Ishmail and Victoria L. Tully, "An overview of the provincial evaluation system of the Western Cape Government of South Africa as a response to the evaluation of the National Evaluation System", *African Evaluation Journal* 8, no. 1, (April 2020): 425. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v8i1.425>

5.2 Evaluation systems at line ministry and subnational levels

Suggested basic questions

- In this section, it will be important to include similar questions as the ones asked for the national level, including additional questions about the coordination between the central government and local government:
- Who are the custodians of the evaluation system within line ministries?
- Who are the custodians of the evaluation system at the state/district/municipality level?
- What is the extent of the coverage of the subnational evaluation custodian or evaluation unit in the state/local government?
- Are the evaluation of the state/district/municipality development plans, or of ministry/sectoral plans, and/or other plans formalized or institutionalized?
- How are subnational line ministries involved in evaluation?
- How effective are subnational entities in managing evaluations?
- What type of interventions/programs/sectors are evaluated at subnational level?
- How are evaluations funded?
- What type of evaluations are mainly conducted at the subnational level?
- How are credibility, independence, and impartiality encouraged in conducting evaluations?
- What is the quality and technical rigor of the evaluations performed?
- Are there mechanisms to ensure quality?
- Does the subnational level have methodologies/guidance to define recommendations?
- What mechanisms are there for the subnational government to share evaluation evidence and engage stakeholders on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)?
- Are there formal and informal mechanisms for coordinating the subnational evaluation system with the central government system?
- Does subnational government produce evaluations together with the central government?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Does a classification of program performance exist?
- What is the quality of the ToR for conducting evaluations?
- What is the degree of impartiality in evaluation processes?

5.3 Government capacity to manage, commission, and undertake evaluations

Why is this important?

This section focuses on the government's capacity to directly manage evaluations, commission them, and potentially also conduct evaluations using internal staff. (Section 5.4 looks at the capacity to manage a running evaluation system.) It is very important to determine if the government is an efficient enabler of evaluations in the country at the technical level, and to identify its main partners. The capacities can be both institutional and individual. Often a limitation is the lack of technical skills in government to both produce and manage evaluations. Developing capacity around these elements will be an important part of a capacity development plan for the evaluation system as a whole.

5.3 Government capacity to manage, commission, and undertake evaluations

Some examples

When **Costa Rica** started to implement its evaluation system in a significant way, it started with only 15 evaluations, in the period 2015–18. Its current plan is to conduct 60 evaluations. Some of these evaluations are to be undertaken externally, particularly in 2020–21, with government budgets under strain due to the COVID pandemic.

In **Mexico**, at the subnational level, when the state government of Oaxaca started to demonstrate interest in evaluation, CONEVAL's assessment was that evaluation skills were relatively weak. Through capacity-building strategies, where both the Ministry of Finance and CONEVAL partnered with the state, it was able to improve its evaluation capacities within five years. The same happened with the State of Yucatán.

Useful sources

- ❶ Mexico states' M&E Index, CONEVAL⁶⁹
- ❶ For evaluation capacity and systems in Benin, Uganda, and South Africa⁷⁰

Suggested basic questions

- Are there skilled personnel⁷¹ in government with the technical capacity for undertaking or managing evaluations?
- What is government's capacity to commission evaluations (for example, managing and sponsoring one or more evaluations)?
- What is government's capacity to conduct evaluations itself, either centrally or in ministries?
- Is there a capacity strengthening plan for evaluation skills in government (for example, training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance/support)?

5.4 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system

Why is this important?

It is possible that governments are able to produce single evaluations. However, being able to coordinate an entire evaluation system requires not only technical abilities but institutional and political abilities and systems too. Because running an evaluation system involves systems and not just individual evaluations, learning about this is crucial for each country, whether at the national or subnational level. This section is linked to sections 3.1–3.4 for monitoring, where regulations and formal institutional arrangements are explored. In this section, the focus is on the realities of the institutional settings for running an NES in greater depth.

Some examples

South Africa has developed significant capacity in the Department of Planning, M&E (DPME) to oversee the evaluation system. This has enabled many elements of the evaluation system to be developed: around eight significant national evaluations conducted per year, and the development of capacity across the whole of government. These evaluations were co-funded by DPME and the relevant sector department.

National departments have M&E units, and in some cases, these have significant evaluation capacity, while in some departments there are no people with evaluation expertise. Central offices in each province also have some capacity, with some having dedicated evaluation capacity, such as Western Cape, with four staff members. The tightening of the fiscal situation since the mid-2010s and especially the prevailing context of COVID-19, have put considerable strain on evaluation budgets, which has actually stimulated an interest in the use of rapid evaluations that are conducted internally.

69 CONEVAL. Publicaciones Sobre La Colaboración Con Entidades Federativas. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.coneval.org.mx/InformesPublicaciones/InformesPublicaciones/Paginas/Colaboracion-con-Entidades-Federativas.aspx>

70 Ian Goldman et al., "The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", *African Evaluation Journal*, 6 no. 1, (March 2018): 253. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v6i1.253>

71 Define "skilled" before asking, for example, post-graduate qualification in M&E, experience of undertaking evaluations, and so on.

5.4 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system

Useful sources

❶ For capacity and systems in Benin, Uganda, and South Africa⁷²

Suggested basic questions

- How able is government to manage and run an evaluation system (in relation to knowledge, skills, human and financial resources)?
- How many evaluations have been conducted and with what coverage?
- What capacity is invested in the entity running evaluations and in developing the systems, such as plans, frameworks, standards and training?
- How effective is coordination among stakeholders in building an ecosystem across government, including with nongovernmental stakeholders?
- Is government able to plan and implement a national evaluation agenda/plan?
- What is the involvement of a range of government institutions and non-governmental stakeholders to agree on and monitor the evaluation agenda?
- What is the involvement of a range of government institutions and non-governmental stakeholders in dialogue around the system?

5.5 Capacity to undertake evaluations in civil society/academia/ the private sector

Why is this important?

In most cases, government does not undertake evaluations itself – it commissions third parties. To do this there needs to be sufficiently capacity in civil society, academia, and the private sector to undertake high-quality evaluations. These skills could have been built because these organizations are undertaking evaluations for development partners, for CSOs, or from experience in undertaking evaluations for government. In addition, the country is better off in terms of M&E if civil society produces evaluations even if the evaluations are not commissioned by government. It is important to understand the capacity that exists, so that if evaluation systems scale up there is the capacity to undertake the expansion in demand.

Some examples

The Twende Mbele Project⁷³ has funded studies to look at the supply of evaluators and demand for evaluations in Benin, South Africa, and Uganda.

In **South Africa**, many professional service providers do not employ permanent evaluation staff – rather, they form evaluation-specific associations with individuals with the required qualifications, expertise, and experience. There is therefore a pool of people, some evaluation specialists and some sector specialists, that can be drawn on by evaluation consultancies. Many of them work for a range of different evaluation consultancies. Their interest in carrying out evaluations often depends on factors such as who the client is, the track record of the client in terms of the way in which it manages evaluations, the quality of the ToR, and whether the budget is realistic. Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude that to date, supply has generally been adequate to meet demand, apart for some exceptions for highly specialized evaluations. A lag and increase in demand and in supply should be expected, due to the time required for capacity building.

A study on impact evaluation skills in **Sub-Saharan Africa** found that some countries (notably South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda) have a strong supply of impact evaluation specialists, although this is concentrated in a few sectors, mostly health.

72 Ian Goldman et al., "The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa", *African Evaluation Journal*, 6 no. 1, (March 2018): 253. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v6i1.253>

73 Twende Mbele. A catalyst for Knowledge Sharing. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://twendembel.org>

5.5 Capacity to undertake evaluations in civil society/academia/ the private sector

(cont.)

In **Mexico**, various CSOs have started doing evaluations themselves. This contributes to intensifying accountability and pressure on government to perform. Furthermore, there have been seminars and workshops where evaluations commissioned by CONEVAL coincide with evaluations done by CSOs.

In the north-east region of **Brazil**, there are several universities that have been conducting evaluations of public policies: Federal Universities of Ceará (UFC), Bahia (UFBA), Pernambuco (UFPE) and Paraíba (UFPB). Within these academic institutions, research centers and labs have also been created to conduct evaluations:

- M&E Study Lab (LEMA), at UFPB
- Public and Economic Policy Evaluation Group (GAPPE), at UFPE
- Results-based Management Center (CGPR), at UFC

In addition, UFC has recently created and is offering the Professional Master's Program in Public Policy Evaluation (MAPP).

Useful sources

- ① CLEAR-AA study on the state of monitoring and evaluation in Anglophone Africa⁷⁴
- ① Comparative study on the institutionalization of evaluation in Europe and Latin America⁷⁵
- ① Scoping the impact evaluation capacity in sub-Saharan Africa⁷⁶
- ① Examples of CSOs in Mexico doing evaluations⁷⁷

Suggested basic questions

- Who are the local providers of evaluation services (for example, consulting firms, auditors, independent consultants, academia)?
- To what extent are evaluations commissioned by government, donors, and CSOs conducted by local evaluators?
- Is there a sufficient supply of quality local evaluators?
- Are the country's universities producing evaluations on a systematic basis?

Possible more in-depth questions

- How many evaluations have been produced by non-governmental institutions every year?
- What types of evaluations are done by non-governmental institutions?

5.6 Systems/ incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon

Why is this important?

The prevailing incentives (explicit or tacit) are key elements of the country's evaluation system. It is important to understand how evaluation findings are used, and whether this is systematic. This will guide some of these elements needed in follow-up work to strengthen the system. Even where evaluations are completed, there may be a limited capacity to make use of the findings of the evaluation. According to Goldman and Pabari (2020), the use of evidence is particularly encouraged when policy makers have the motivation, capability, and the opportunity to use it. Evidence use may be encouraged by the existence of specific internal systems, for example, improvement plans, which require government to plan for improvements as a result of the evaluation. The improvement plan is an example of providing opportunities to use the evidence, and possibly motivation, if there are consequences for not following up. It is also possible that the system is not mature enough to overcome negative incentives arising from the challenges found during the evaluation process.

74 Dugan I. Fraser and Candice Morkel. 2020. "State of monitoring and evaluation in Anglophone Africa: Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results in Anglophone Africa's reflections", African Evaluation Journal 8, no. 1, (Nov 2020): 505. <https://aejonline.org/index.php/aej/article/view/505/936>

75 Blanca Lázaro. 2015. "Comparative study on the institutionalisation of evaluation in Europe and Latin America", Study n. 15 Series: State of the Art Area: Public Finance, EUROsocial Programme (July 2015). http://sia.eurosocial-ii.eu/files/docs/1456851768-E_15_ENfin.pdf

76 Ibid.

77 Mexico Evalua. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.mexicoevalua.org/>

Animal Politico. Accessed February 14, 2022, <https://www.animalpolitico.com/>

Mexicanos Contra la Corrupcion y la Impunidad. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://contralacorrupcion.mx/>

5.6 Systems/ incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon

Some examples

Both in **South Africa** and in **Mexico**, there are annual evaluation awards, where the central evaluation units hold a public event to award government officials in various M&E categories. One is about the proper use of evaluation findings. In this way, the M&E systems seek to include positive incentives to use the evaluation findings, trying to offset the potential negative ones. Similarly, countries have systems of improvement plans to institutionalize the application of the findings.

In **Brazil**, the newly launched Evidence-based Policy-making Award (Prêmio Evidência) is a joint initiative between FGV EESP CLEAR LAB, the National School of Public Administration, and the Institute of Social Mobility. The award generates significant visibility of public policies that showcase the use of evidence at different stages of implementation.

The award will feature municipal-, state-, and national-level public programs that have demonstrated, through the use of evidence, the promotion of social mobility and the reduction of inequality in Brazil. This initiative intends to recognize and showcase public policies that make use of evidence in its multiple stages, as well as to foster collaboration between scientific research and public policy management.

Useful sources

❶ The impact of impact evaluation⁷⁸

Suggested basic questions

- Are there mechanisms for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of evaluation evidence (for example, evaluation steering committees to institutionalize ownership of evaluations, or improvement plans or management responses following evaluation)?
- Is there a management response/improvement plan-type process to respond to evaluation findings and recommendations?
- How is the implementation of such an improvement plan monitored?
- Describe how the government usually responds to negative M&E findings/evidence?
- When there is poor performance in an area or in a program/policy, what is the process to ensure adjustments and improvements happen?
- What is the link between evaluation results and program/policy budget allocations?

Possible more in-depth questions

- What is the greatest fear that program managers have around the implementation challenges arising from evaluations?
- Do program managers participate in the generation of recommendations as part of the evaluation process?

⁷⁸ Richard Manning, Ian Goldman, and Gonzalo Hernández Licona, "The impact of impact evaluation: Are impact evaluation and impact evaluation synthesis contributing to evidence generation and use in low- and middle- income countries?", WIDER Working Paper 2020/20, (March 2020). <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/Publications/Working-paper/PDF/wp2020-20.pdf>

5.7 Use of evaluations by government

Why is this important?

In this section, the MESA should find concrete examples of how evaluation findings have been used in public policy by government. Together with section 5.6, this is one of the most important sections of the MESA. If the information coming from the evaluation systems is used by government to learn about how to improve public policy, then the evaluation system makes sense. This important phase of the evaluation cycle has never been easy. While section 5.6 shows the potential problems, this section aims to find concrete examples of the use of evaluations by government. Sometimes the government uses the findings of one evaluation, and sometimes there are systems that make stakeholders use the evaluation findings every year. Finding positive examples is important in building the case for an evaluation system, and the cost benefits of the system. In many countries, the use of evaluation evidence requires the changes to be embedded not just in changes of policies but in the standard operating procedures of programs and services.

Some examples

Fortunately, there are many examples of evaluations being used by governments in different countries.

The **Philippine** government was able to use the findings of at least three impact evaluations: the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Conditional Cash transfer, the Kalahi-CIDSS⁷⁹, and the Special Program for the Employment of Students. The government was able to make changes in the three programs due to the evaluation findings.

In **Benin**, the evaluation of agricultural policy in 2010 contributed to significant changes in agricultural policy, including to the significant expansion of cotton production in the country.⁸⁰

In **Mexico**, part of the evaluation process is a mechanism for tracking evaluation findings (Mecanismo de seguimiento de aspectos susceptibles de mejora). After the evaluation is finished, the program/ministry agrees to address certain findings and they write down their commitment in an Improvement plan, which is made public. CONEVAL tracks these improvements. In this way, it is possible to measure improvements made in public policy based on the evaluation findings.

Useful sources

- ❶ Book on using evidence in policy and practice, with lessons from Africa.⁸¹ This includes a series of case studies of using evaluation evidence, including the Benin example above.
- ❷ The impact of impact evaluation⁸²
- ❸ Mexico's mechanism for tracking evaluation findings⁸³

Suggested basic questions

- What examples are there of evidence from government evaluations informing government decision making: planning (including of national development plan), policies, project or program management, budgeting and performance reporting?
- Does government draw on M&E evidence from stakeholders (for example, NGOs, think tanks, development partners) to inform government planning, policy, and decision making, and if so, how?

79 Known as the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services.

80 Bonaventure Kouakanou et al., "The potential and the challenges of evaluations to positively influence reforms: Working with producers in the Benin agricultural sector", Using Evidence in Policy and Practice, eds. Ian Goldman, Mine Pabari (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2020), 152–168. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003007043-9/potential-challenges-evaluations-positively-influence-reforms-bonaventure-kouakanou-dossa-aguemon-marius-aina-abdoulaye-gounou-emmanuel-david-gnahoui?context=ubx&refId=da33ea01-bb97-4414-90a7-d399b6d3e23a>

81 Using Evidence in Policy and Practice, eds. Ian Goldman and Mine Pabari (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2020). <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003007043/using-evidence-policy-practice-ian-goldman-mine-pabari>

82 Richard Manning, Ian Goldman, and Gonzalo Hernández Licona, "The impact of impact evaluation: Are impact evaluation and impact evaluation synthesis contributing to evidence generation and use in low- and middle- income countries?", WIDER Working Paper 2020/20, (March 2020). <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/Publications/Working-paper/PDF/wp2020-20.pdf>

83 CONEVAL. Informe De Seguimiento A Los Aspectos Susceptibles De Mejora De Los Programas Y Acciones Federales De Desarrollo Social 2020-2021. Accessed February 14, 2022. <https://www.coneval.org.mx/Evaluacion/CMPE/Paginas/Informe-de-seguimiento-asm-2020-2021.aspx>

5.7 Use of evaluations by government

Possible more in-depth questions

- What lessons are there from why evaluation evidence was used in these cases?
- Does the use of evaluation findings change according to the government cycle?
- Is there any evidence of evaluation findings being used in voluntary national reviews and in the follow-up to the national SDG agenda?

5.8 Use of evaluations by parliament

Why is this important?

Ideally, evaluation findings should be used by many stakeholders. An important potential user is parliament. Parliaments are part of the center of government, making important decisions, such as on issues like the budget and legislation. If the M&E system works properly, parliaments should use evaluations produced by governments. At the same time, parliamentary research staff can produce their own evaluative studies, or draw from performance audits. In a number of countries, evaluation findings are sent to the legislative arm of government, such as parliament or the congress. It is not clear, however, that these findings are actually used by them for key decisions. In this section, the MESA should find concrete examples of how the evaluation findings have been used by parliament, and how parliamentary committees could use evaluative evidence.

Some examples

In **South Africa**, government evaluations are tabled in parliament once they have been to cabinet. In one case, parliament specifically requested an evaluation to be undertaken, which was done. Thus, evaluations are considered, although it is not clear to what extent they influence decision-making.

In **several countries**, parliaments are very interested in accessing evaluations and so are tabling bills to apply the evaluation system in legislation. These include Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Benin.

Useful sources?

- ❶ Book on African parliaments and evaluations, first volume⁸⁴
(Forthcoming, second volume on institutions and practice)

Suggested basic questions

- Do parliamentary portfolio committees consider government or non-governmental evaluations in their oversight and legislative work?
- Do parliamentary portfolio committees commission evaluative studies from their parliamentary researchers?
- Does parliament draw on evidence from non-governmental stakeholders (for example, NGOs, think tanks, development partners) to inform their work?
- What are the key challenges affecting the use of evaluative evidence in parliament?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Are there sufficient capacities within parliament (for example, parliament M&E/research units and portfolio committees) to draw on and utilize M&E evidence?
- Are there sufficient capacities within parliament (for example, parliament M&E/research units) to undertake evaluative studies, including synthesizing from existing evaluations?

84 Linda Kumalo et al., eds. 2021. African Parliaments Volume 1: Evidence Systems for Governance and Development. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media. DOI:10.52779/9781991201454

5.9 Use of evaluations by civil society and the media

Why is this important?

If evaluations are part of the democratic process of countries, then the role of civil society is important – not only to use the evaluations produced by government, but also to promote, commission, and produce evaluations. Civil society and the media are important stakeholders for demanding the production and use of evaluations for public policy and accountability purposes. An active civil society is part of the enabling environment that promotes and demands the production and use of evaluations.

In this section, the MESA should determine the extent to which civil society (such as CSOs, schools and universities) and the media access and use the evaluations produced by various stakeholders, especially the government. They may also use their own evaluations for advocacy with government, and thus exert significant influence on the government.

Some examples

When evaluations can be accessed in public repositories or on websites they can be used by the wider public as part of their advocacy work.

In **Bangladesh**, a large nutrition program was being planned with World Bank support, based on an apparently successful program which had resulted in greatly lowered levels of malnutrition. However, this being attributed to the World Bank-funded program was challenged by an evaluation conducted by Oxfam. Instead, it was found that the lowered malnutrition levels were common to areas outside the program, and in fact the main factor was the drop in the price of rice.⁸⁵

In **Mexico**, the media have been an important part of the enabling environment for the M&E system, especially since 2000. Evaluation findings are clearly of potential interest to the media. In an open democracy (the case in Mexico since 1997) the media use evaluations to show potential challenges in the government's public policy. A recognition of the importance of the media by high-ranked officials has contributed to shaping the Mexican M&E system. For example, before evaluations are launched, CONEVAL runs workshops with the media, explaining the contents of the evaluations. The media have also helped to highlight challenges in programs and thus have helped to improve them on some occasions. Using the power of the media to enhance the M&E system is always important in democratic countries.

Suggested basic questions

- Is there evidence from civil society demanding evaluations of government programs (pressuring government to do evaluations, or to be able to access evaluations)?
- Are there examples of NGOs using government evaluations to put pressure on government about results ex post and about policy choices ex ante?
- How often does the media show information coming from the evaluation system?
- Are results of government evaluations commonly used in public discourse and in the media?

Possible more in-depth questions

- Is there evidence of CSOs sharing with government evidence from their evaluations of programs, and advocating for changes/scale-ups?

85 Howard White and Edoardo Masset. "Assessing interventions to improve child nutrition: a theory-based impact evaluation of the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project," *Journal of International Development*, 19, no. 5, (2007): 627–652, DOI:10.1002/jid.1344

5.10 Role of civil society in government evaluation systems

Why is this important?

Government can be very inward looking, sometimes suspicious of civil society and seeing it as potentially undermining the state. Civil society has the potential to represent beneficiaries of government policies and programs, as implementors of some services. It also includes advocacy organizations that work on human rights and the environment, for example, often representing disadvantaged groups and communities. These organizations can thus present important perspectives on whether programs and policies are working or not. They can also present important perspectives if they participate in aspects of the evaluation system. It is important to understand whether and how civil society participates in the evaluation system and has the potential to influence it, including government and parliament. This role may in fact help to strengthen the sustainability and impact of the system.

Some examples

In **Costa Rica**, civil society is one of the stakeholders represented in the national evaluation platform, which has around 30 participants per meeting and includes representatives from the legislative assembly, the auditor general, and civil society.

Similarly, in **Uganda**, to ensure wider participation, an evaluation subcommittee was established with the mandate to provide management and oversight support in the implementation of the evaluation system. The committee includes a range of key state actors, non-state actors from academia, civil society development partners and government-financed research institutions. This collaboration was shown to have contributed to the effectiveness of the system.

In **South Africa**, the VOPE plays an active role. Civil society often participates in evaluation steering committees, where it frequently make significant contributions.

Useful sources

- ① Use of evidence in a complex social program: Case of an evaluation of the state's response to violence against women and children in South Africa⁸⁶

Suggested basic questions

- Do civil society organizations or representatives play specific roles in structures and systems related to government evaluations (for example, steering committees, a national evaluation council)?
- What is the role of VOPEs in the national and subnational M&E systems?
- How involved are citizens, civil society organizations, or other actors in specific government evaluations?

Possible more in-depth questions

- What is the degree of maturity of VOPEs?
- See also questions on VOPEs in section 3.

86 Amisi Matodzi, Thabani Buthelezi, and Siza Magangoe, "Use of evidence in a complex social programme: Case of an evaluation of the state's response to violence against women and children in South Africa", *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice*, eds. Ian Goldman, Mine Pabari (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2020), 92–114. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003007043-6/use-evidence-complex-social-programme-matodzi-amisi-thabani-buthelezi-siza-agangoe?context=ubx&refId=967c993d-21eb-4bed-8514-9963534bc702Ann>

6 – Overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations

The MESA should result in objective and credible findings. As in evaluations, these findings should provide a solid analysis and be the basis for developing a collaborative capacity development plan with the country. They should also enable the country to proceed with acting on some of these issues immediately. This section covers these elements.

6.1 Overview of the M&E ecosystem and how it functions

Why is this important?

This section provides a brief overview of what is already in place, based on the preceding analysis.

Some examples

The monitoring system in some assessed countries includes the monitoring of government departments, the monitoring of projects, and the monitoring of priority outcomes. However, there is not always much evidence that this monitoring is used to influence decision making. In terms of evaluation, some key systems are in place, including a national evaluation policy. However, governments are not undertaking evaluations systematically and those that are being carried out are initiated and funded by donors. The respective parliaments are not using evaluations at present and are focusing on using government statistics as well as tracking government performance using departmental administrative data. Master's level training in M&E is available in these countries and there is a reasonable supply of local evaluators that can be used for evaluations.

Suggested basic questions

What is the overall picture of the current M&E ecosystem? (In three to four paragraphs this can provide a baseline to compare against in future.)

6.2 Areas that are working well and areas that are working less well

Why is this important?

This section summarizes the most important advances as well as the challenges of the system.

Some examples

In 2020, CLEAR-AA undertook a MESA exercise in Zambia. CLEAR-AA was able to assess Zambia's M&E system with the objective of having a partnership with the government to improve the system. It produced a full report that was made public.

In 2017, Twende Mbele conducted a scoping visit to Ghana to assess its M&E system. The table below is drawn from that report.

What works well

✓ There are well-established monitoring systems nationally and in sectors and strong links between district/regional/national levels.

✓ Some monitoring systems involve direct data input at the district level and so are immediately available (for example, in the health sector).

What works less well

✗ There is a disconnect between data-collection systems and current plans and data needs.

✗ M&E systems are weaker in agencies, such as in the health sector.

6.2 Areas that are working well and areas that are working less well

What works well	What works less well
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There is some M&E and data-collecting capacity with units in all ministries, departments, agencies and district assemblies, with planning/M&E and statistics/research divisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ There are delays in the monitoring systems. Many are not real-time, and so are seen by the Ministry of Monitoring & Evaluation as historical. Data-collection tools can be in short supply.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There is a well-established institutional driver of M&E, the Ghana Statistical Services (GSS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Units are small, and capacity is limited, particularly in evaluation. Staff are usually not trained in M&E, except for in one or two short courses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evaluations are taking place in Ghana with an established link to project/program cycles. There is oversight from a range of stakeholders and donor funding for evaluations is available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ There are challenges with data quality and it is less focused on administrative data and more on surveys.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There are well-established Ghanaian evaluation consultants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Evaluations are donor driven with no overall policy framework to guide them; there is no evaluation system; the evaluations are not freely available; and there is no central repository.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Short reviews are carried out internally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ There are no established M&E competencies. The indicated outputs from the Ministry of Health are not always of good quality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There is capacity for M&E in the country and some M&E courses were scheduled to start in September 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Capacity for evaluation is limited – for example, for compiling good, comprehensive TORs.
Useful sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Monitoring and evaluation situation analysis report for Zambia⁸⁷ 📄 Scoping report on visit to Ghana⁸⁸
Suggested basic questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are the strengths of the system (areas that work well)? ➤ What are the weaknesses (areas that work less well)?
Possible more in-depth questions	<p>The questions above could be addressed separately and in more detail for monitoring systems and evaluation systems, and perhaps also for the use of M&E evidence.</p>

87 CLEAR-AA. "Monitoring and Evaluation Situation Analysis Report for the Republic of Zambia." Unpublished report. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2021.

88 Twende Mbele. 2017. Report on a Scoping Visit to Ghana 13-15 June 2017. <https://twendembele.org/reports/scoping-visit-to-ghana-13-15-june-2017/>

6.3 Recommendations for interventions that can trigger wider system change and development outcomes

Why is this important?

The previous section identifies strengths and weaknesses in M&E systems. For making any improvements in an M&E system it is important to note that there are many possible entry points. These can be slow, incremental changes, or bigger, more dramatic changes. This section identifies areas where M&E capacity can be strengthened, and where partnerships may contribute to this.

Some examples

In 2017, Twende Mbele representatives conducted a scoping visit to **Ghana** to assess its M&E system. They produced a report of the visit, which included next steps and recommendations.

The key change in the Ghanaian system is the introduction of the new ministries of planning and M&E in the Presidency. There is a strategic opportunity to assist the ministry and help it to play a strong role, drawing from others' experience.

Both the roles of the BEPPAAG⁸⁹ in **Benin** and DPME in **South Africa** have similar elements to the new ministry in Ghana and there can be constructive sharing between them, to help build a strategic M&E function within the Presidency in Ghana.

While there is experience in monitoring in Ghana, the NDP is very keen to take forward the evaluation system, including the National Evaluation Policy, which has links with the system and capacity development components. The key question is around funding for evaluations, as donor funding has declined due to the country being upgraded to lower middle income country status. It is not clear whether government has funding for evaluations, but it is likely over the next few years that donor funding can be coordinated and used in a more effective way – like Uganda does with its basket funding through the Government Evaluation Facility. Even simple tasks such as creating a repository of existing evaluations would be valuable, as well as supporting Ghana to develop its National Evaluation Policy. This would have to cut through what seem to be strong sectoral silos such, as health or agriculture.

In **Cabo Verde**, after conducting an M&E diagnostic (based on MESA), CLEAR LAB, in partnership with the government, was able to identify opportunities and, together, they developed a capacity-building strategy for the country. The tailor-made strategy encompassed advisory in building a national M&E system. Workshops were held with high-level government officials, resulting in a draft design of the national M&E system. Along with this strategy there were other capacity-building activities, such as trainings, mentorships for pilots of rapid evaluations, as well as the collaborative production of guidelines with context-appropriate M&E content.

Useful sources

❶ Scoping report on visit to Ghana⁹⁰

Suggested basic questions

- What are the opportunities for M&E capacity development that would appear to have the most significant effect, be easiest to implement, and have in-country support?
- Is there an obvious order of priority, bearing in mind the interests of government?

89 Twende Mbele. Accessed February 16, 2022. <https://twendembele.org/countries/benin/>

90 Twende Mbele. 2017. Report on a Scoping Visit to Ghana 13-15 June 2017. <https://twendembele.org/reports/scoping-visit-to-ghana-13-15-june-2017/>

6.4 Conclusions

Why is this important?

National stakeholders (government, academics, civil society) may be well positioned to begin implementing changes to the national M&E system, but there may also be scope for GEI partners to further support the county to develop a concrete evaluation capacity development strategy. This concluding section can provide an overall comment on what has been found and the opportunities which arise and make a bridge to a possible next phase of support which could be designing the capacity development plan with all the potential stakeholders.

Some examples

The example of the previous sections was about Ghana. For next steps it was possible to differentiate between what the country could do and what partners (in this case Twende Mbele) could do to help them improve the system.

Useful sources

Scoping report on visit to Ghana⁹¹

Suggested basic questions

What are your overall conclusions on the state of the PBM&E systems?

What are your recommendations for action in key areas?

91 Ibid. <https://twendembele.org/reports/scoping-visit-to-ghana-13-15-june-2017/>

3. The MESA process: steps and examples

This chapter summarizes approaches and good practices in the processes involved in preparing for a MESA, and in writing up and using the results of the MESA. Drawing extensively on the CLEAR centers' experiences in conducting M&E diagnostics, this section is largely oriented towards a MESA that is conducted by an external team. For a MESA that is conducted by practitioners from within the country's own M&E system, the approach would obviously be slightly different. Nevertheless, there are useful resources and suggestions for all forms of diagnostic, and practitioners would need to use their discretion in deciding what is useful.

There are 12 key steps in the process:

1. Making initial contact
2. Coming to a common understanding on the MESA
3. Formalizing the understanding
4. Identifying relevant stakeholders and formulating agreements
5. Establishing structures to increase and embed country ownership
6. Establishing the team for undertaking the MESA
7. Building capacity to undertake diagnostic work and the MESA
8. Launching the MESA assessment – ensuring transparency
9. Keeping stakeholders informed during the process
10. Validating the MESA
11. Overseeing a peer review of the report
12. Designing a contextually relevant response program

3.1 Making initial contact

Different entry points

Typically, for an externally led MESA, a government entity approaches GEI or a partner for support on national evaluation capacity development (NECD). The request for support could be for the whole M&E ecosystem or only for some of its elements. The request may come from national and subnational governments, as well as a line ministry. Another possibility is that the initial contact comes from a regional organization, as was the case of collaboration between CLEAR LAC and CARICOM (see box 3).

Box 3: CLEAR LAC and CARICOM

CARICOM, the Caribbean Community organization, includes 15 member states and 5 associate members from the region. In 2019, CARICOM approached CLEAR Latin America and the Caribbean (CLEAR LAC) for support in developing and strengthening results-based management (RBM) in the region. There was an early agreement between CARICOM and CLEAR LAC about the initial needs of CARICOM. The agreement included a preliminary diagnostic analysis (preparedness diagnostic), which started in 2020. At the beginning of the engagement, the idea was to start the diagnostic exercise as a pilot in three countries and three regional institutions. The finding of the diagnostic would be part of the new agreements on the future plan for strengthening RBM.

The concrete demand from CARICOM thus defined the specific elements of the diagnostic for the region. This is the type of process that is at the core of the MESA.

It is possible that the first communication between a country (or a state, or a region, or a line ministry) and GEI and/or other partners may not be on M&E, but on general development support for the country – for example, the improvement of the health system. In this case, during the initial agreements GEI and partners (such as the World Bank) could suggest that strengthening the M&E in the country (or in a specific sector) could enhance the results of the initial development support – for example, the improvement of the national health system. While investing in M&E may require fewer resources than those required for upgrading the health system, those resources could have an ultimately greater impact because of the impact on improving the overall system's performance, especially if evaluation becomes a significant part of the system. Thus, while the initial request may not be for M&E support, interest in it and demand for support may emerge, at which point a MESA may become appropriate.

Initial steps: scoping meetings, desk reviews, and discussions

A first step is likely to be initial scoping meetings to explore what the country is looking to do with its M&E system and what kind of support it is seeking. This may change later, depending on what emerges from the MESA. Box 4 shows how initial discussions in African Lusophone countries led to a decision to undertake a MESA.

Box 4: CLEAR LAB's MESA for Lusophone African countries

The CLEAR Center on Lusophone Africa and Brazil (CLEAR LAB) developed diagnostic tools that were tailored according to the needs of different Lusophone countries. The discussions with countries started after an international M&E convening event in Ghana in 2019 focused on strengthening M&E capacities on the continent. An action plan was developed in which participants agreed to prioritize the conducting of an M&E diagnostic in each country and the provision of M&E training. The conference participants became the focal points for conducting M&E diagnostics in their home countries and MESAs have been tailored to their country needs.

A subsequent early step for a MESA team is likely to be a desk review to assemble existing diagnostic information as well as holding discussions with a few stakeholders who know the country's M&E ecosystem, and to anticipate areas where collaboration may be fruitful. The guiding questions in section 2 can help with the desk review.

3.2 Coming to a common understanding on the MESA

Once there is an initial agreement on the importance of conducting a MESA, it is important that all stakeholders develop a common understanding of what that particular MESA will involve.

Initial contacts and agreement on the mutual understanding are important for building a strong relationship of trust with the country partner. This time is also important for identifying what GEI and partners can do to start working together. An initial scoping mission is ideal, if the MESA team is not in-country, and if circumstances (such as COVID-related constraints) allow.

1. Clarifying the purpose of the MESA

The first step is for all stakeholders to consider the main reasons for conducting a MESA exercise. This typically involves:

- Generating a common understanding on the status of:
 - M&E stakeholders and practices in a country – both formal and informal;
 - Individual and institutional capacities for monitoring and evaluation and the use of evidence from M&E;
 - Opportunities and options for strengthening those capacities.
- Building initial partnerships in the country by starting a dialogue with national players and facilitating a collaborative approach to undertaking the diagnostic which can build a platform for a partnership at the implementation stage.
- Providing a baseline against which follow-up assessments can capture meaningful changes emerging from the collaborative program.

During the initial dialogues it is important that stakeholders are clear that the MESA tool will be adapted according to country needs and mutual agreements among stakeholders. Both the final MESA tool and the improvement plan to strengthen national evaluation capacities should actually reflect the country's needs, while being objective, credible, and practicable.

2. Determining the scope of the MESA

Developing a common understanding of the scope of the MESA is important (see resource 1):

Resource 1: Steps for developing a common understanding on the specific MESA tool

- Determine the specific demand coming from the country. Identify GEI and its partners' interests in supporting a MESA exercise.
- Find out how much time and what resources stakeholders have at their disposal to participate in the MESA process.
- Find out whether prior M&E diagnosis work has been done that can be built on in the current MESA.
- Determine the parameters of the MESA and the levels at which it will be conducted: regional, national, subnational, line ministries.
- Have a common understanding about concepts such as monitoring and evaluation and related planning terminology. Countries may name M&E and planning activities in a variety of ways.

Previous M&E diagnosis work in the country could have been done by other national or international institutions, or by the government itself. The MESA exercise should build on these, as past diagnoses can be used to summarize many of the MESA guiding questions, and then the MESA team can concentrate on areas of particular interest. For a MESA led by a GEI partner, this will be done in a spirit of partnership – a key element of GEI's approach.

For example, when CLEAR-FA worked in Gabon, the Ministry of Good Governance requested CLEAR-FA to conduct a MESA as a complementary analysis to existing assessments that UNICEF had already conducted in the country. To ensure a common understanding of M&E concepts and terminology, partners could generate agreements based on experience, suggestions, and a common reference.

3. Developing a roadmap for the MESA

Once there is an in-principle agreement, it is important to have a roadmap for the MESA. This will be used by all stakeholders during and after the MESA process, and can be refined as and when it is appropriate (see resource 2).

Resource 2: Key contents of the MESA roadmap – based on an exercise in Burundi

CLEAR FA designed a roadmap for its MESA exercise with Burundi in 2021.

The broad headings of this roadmap could be useful for all roadmap design.

1. Context
2. Objectives
3. Introduction to the approach to the diagnostic
4. Methodology
 - Preparation
 - Document review
 - Data collection (questionnaires, interviews)
 - Analytical framework
 - Approach to drafting and validating the report
5. Implementation mechanisms, roles and responsibilities
6. Implementation schedule

3.3 Formalizing the understanding

It is recommended that the agreements about the MESA be formalized and documented. The format this takes will depend on partner-specific requirements.

Agreeing the plan or terms of reference for what needs to be done

The MESA roadmap could be complemented by a specific plan or terms of reference (TORs) for the GEI/ country team that prescribes the responsibilities and activities for undertaking the MESA. The plan/TOR should be a clear, accessible, and practical guide that outlines the concrete steps in the MESA. This will also constitute the formal agreement on the process to be undertaken and the timeline.

This is an example from the ToR used for a diagnostic tool applied in Lesotho (see resource 3).

Resource 3: MESA terms of reference – based on an exercise in Lesotho

This was a collaborative exercise between the South African and Lesotho governments based on an agreement to conduct a joint assessment of Lesotho's M&E system. These are the main elements of the ToR:

1. Background
2. Intended outcome
3. Scope
4. Proposed activities and program. (The program included all the activities for every day of the assessment.)
5. Preparatory activities
6. Composition of the teams

Other kinds of formalized agreements

The MESA roadmap and TORs are examples of written documents showing the initial agreements between GEI and partners and the country partner. There are others.

For example, CLEAR LAB has used the following:

- Concept note: includes history of relationship and description of product/service, with no direct agreement between parts (usually for trainings);
- Technical proposal for Angola: includes tentative scope to be agreed between parts, cost and timeline;
- Technical proposal and contract (through CLEAR-AA) for Mozambique;
- Cooperation Term (since there is data sharing) and following work plan for Cabo Verde (draft minutes, to be approved by the government).

CLEAR FA for Madagascar developed a roadmap and then an inception report (at the completion of the scoping phase). In Burundi, only a roadmap was required.

3.4 Identifying relevant stakeholders

An important step in the MESA is deciding which stakeholders need to be involved in the process. There are different categories of stakeholders, who may have separate or overlapping roles in the MESA process. Here are some useful questions to ask for determining this (see resource 4).

Resource 4: Analysis of the MESA stakeholders

- › Which stakeholders are the official clients of the MESA?
- › Which stakeholders have the power to facilitate or block the process?
- › Which stakeholders are most actively involved in the MESA process?
- › Which stakeholders will be the end-users of the diagnosis?
- › Who are M&E champions?
- › What structures and institutions do the stakeholders represent? (For example: government, line ministries and subnational government; M&E staff within the government; regional agencies, such as CARICOM; development partners supporting M&E, such as CLEAR; VOPEs, parliament; consultants; and CSOs.)

If a more in-depth study is desired, other exercises can be carried out, such as: looking at the impact and influence of each stakeholder, a power analysis, or a political economy analysis. (Section 2.3 of the MESA suggests some of these).

A well-informed M&E champion would be able to help identify the key stakeholders, as would support agencies working in the sector such as CLEAR centers, VOPEs, or development partners working in the sector. Other key informants may be able to help when working with subnational agencies (for example, a ministry of local government).

3.5 Establishing structures to increase and embed country ownership

For a MESA led by a GEI partner, local ownership of the exercise is crucial. Following the principle of partnership and trust, it is recommended that local oversight structure(s) be established to oversee the MESA process.

The type of structure set up in a country will depend on the country and the agreements among stakeholders. One possibility is to use existing structures to be part of the process. For example, if there are existing planning committees whose mandate includes M&E elements, these could provide oversight of the process and make decisions along the way. In this case, the committee(s) should be part of the initial discussions and agreements on MESA. An example is that given in box 5, which describes the shadow team that CLEAR LAC established in the Caribbean.

Box 5: Shadow team in CARICOM

In 2021, CLEAR LAC and the Secretariat of CARICOM agreed to have a “shadow team” work in parallel with the CLEAR LAC team in the diagnostic process. The CLEAR LAC team developed the diagnostic for three countries and one regional institution. At the same time CLEAR LAC supported the shadow team to learn about the diagnostic methodology and implementation processes, and then the shadow team conducted diagnostics of two additional regional institutions, accompanied by CLEAR LAC. In the future, the members of this shadow team can contribute to future diagnostics or follow-up actions, further enhancing local capacity development and awareness.

Another possibility is to have short-term structures, such as a MESA steering committee or MESA technical committee. These committees would be part of the MESA process and they should also be involved in the plan/ToR and roadmap agreements and development. These structures ensure that the partner country, state, or line ministry have a sense of ownership of the MESA process and product (see resource 5).

Resource 5: Support structures for MESA

- › GEI and partners should suggest having one or more local structures to support the MESA process.
- › The country should select an already existing committee or set up a new one.
- › It is advisable to have two type of structures: a technical one and an institutional/political one.
- › Ideally, members from the Ministry of Finance, Planning, key line ministries and the Presidency should be part of these committees. In some cases, a member of parliament could be invited.
- › In all cases, there must be agreement on the objectives and functions of the structures.
- › Where an existing local structure is selected, it is important to invite them to the initial discussions and agreements on MESA.

3.6 Establishing the team undertaking the MESA

As mentioned in the Introduction to this guidance, the underlying principle for the MESA is partnership between the government and the GEI implementing partner (such as a CLEAR center). There needs to be agreement on the work they will collaborate on, and a commitment to ensuring an objective and credible diagnostic.

The constitution of the team carrying out the MESA may take many forms. Ideally, there should be a high-level government champion leading or overseeing and facilitating the implementation of the MESA

(see resource 6). In CLEAR LAC's work in CARICOM, an executive coordinator was designated in the CARICOM Secretariat to oversee the whole collaboration, and then each country or regional institution engaged in the process also designated an executive coordinator. To further facilitate coordination and communication, a focal point person was also designated in each relevant ministry, department, or agency.

Strong country ownership is likely if a joint team undertakes the assessment, for example with three to four members from government and two to three members from the GEI partner, as was the case in Lesotho in 2016. This would make it a co-production exercise. There could also be a local consultant in the team, acting on behalf of government or as part of the GEI partner's team. In this way the assignment can be a genuinely joint project, owned by both parties. It is then likely to reflect both the understanding of the national team members of the national context and their sensitivity to national priorities, with the expertise of the external team.

Other options may involve less direct involvement by government, where a GEI implementing partner undertakes the diagnostic, but with strong steering from the country through an oversight body. The relevant body would agree on the plan and methodology, and review and validate the findings and the report. (In section 3.12, the possibility of an oversight body that the team can report to, such as a steering committee is explored.)

Resource 6: Terms of reference for a government team leader

Possible terms of reference for an internal team leader could be:

Purpose: To manage the internal team and the effective participation from the side of government

Tasks:

- › Participate in the conceptualization of the study and development of the approach and terms of reference for the diagnostic.
- › Lead the preparation work, including sourcing background documents, identifying key respondents, and setting up interviews, focus groups, and workshops.
- › Participate in the research phase of the assignment, undertaking interviews, writing up notes, and participate effectively in team meetings.
- › Contribute to the diagnostic report.
- › Ensure government team members play their assigned roles in relation to preparation, research, and writing.
- › Keep the principals (for example, in the CLEAR LAC-CARICOM case, the executive coordinator at the Secretariat) informed on progress of the diagnostic, feeding back to the joint team.

The team could be divided into pairs where appropriate, for example, for undertaking interviews, with one external member and government staff member. This means work can be undertaken in parallel, thus maximizing what can be undertaken in a short space of time.

Time needs to be allocated for the team to meet and get to know each other, before the intensive work begins. Government team members may also need to receive training if they are unfamiliar with research processes. (See, for example, the “shadow team” with CLEAR LAC in box 5).

3.7 Building capacity to undertake diagnostic work and the MESA

It may be useful to complement the conduct of the MESA with training. For example, key policy champions may benefit from a course on results-based M&E. This may help them gain an understanding of why evidence is important for decision making and the valuable role that M&E can play in providing such evidence, while also further strengthening the understanding of the importance of doing a MESA.

Including government staff in MESA teams is an excellent way to strengthen ownership and capacities. MESA team members need sound research skills. These include how to conduct document reviews, interviews, and focus groups, and how to analyze the data. It is also important that team members understand the structure of the MESA and can participate effectively in meetings to refine the structure of the report to be prepared, and to understand how the research tools will be used to answer the underlying questions of the report. It may be very helpful for the team to undertake a two-day course in research methodology, to build a common understanding and strengthen skills, which they can then practically apply in the research phase. CLEAR LAC trained government staff along the way, including training of coordinators and the shadow team. Box 6 shows the trainings that CLEAR-FA provided in three countries.

Box 6: Training provided by CLEAR FA for Francophone African countries implementing a MESA

Gabon: a training of key stakeholders was conducted to make sure that they were able to differentiate “evaluation” from “performance review”, “audit”, “inspection”, and other concepts. Seventy professionals have been trained in total. They come from ministries, the National Assembly, the auditor general, universities, civil society, VOPE, and consulting firms. The theme of the training was Creating a National Evaluation System: actors, principles and methods. As part of the training, the participants were asked to conduct their own assessment of their NES using the MESA framework. This helped in discussing the strategy to build the national evaluation system.

Burundi: Training workshops were important because CLEAR-FA implemented an assessment remotely with the support of a local consultant. They wanted to make sure that the respondents understood the approach and that they did not simply consider the guide as a questionnaire they would quickly complete. Two training workshops were held during the implementation of the MESA, which helped to clarify the rationale behind the MESA framework, its requirements, as well as to answer questions.

Madagascar and Burundi: CLEAR could not travel to the country because of COVID-19 and national consultants were selected to conduct the interviews. The national consultant was also trained on the approach and the understanding of the questions.

3.8 Launching the MESA assessment – ensuring transparency from the outset

The MESA is conducted when there is an agreement and demand for the M&E diagnostic to inform the strengthening of national M&E systems. Stakeholders, including national or subnational governments or line ministries, need to be familiar with the M&E capacity-development process, particularly as they will be overseeing its implementation. An open MESA process has the following benefits:

- It makes sure that all stakeholders are informed about the process.
- It avoids making the process seem as though it is the initiative of a single institution.
- It avoids bypassing an important player who could be important in the future, or who may become an obstacle for the implementation of the recommendations in the future.

Depending on the context, it may be appropriate to have a launch event. The lead government agency may want to inform the entire administration and stakeholders of the launch of the MESA and to encourage them to be available for interviews and data collection. For example, when CLEAR-FA engaged in a diagnostic with Madagascar, there was a launch event with the Steering Committee, chaired by the General Secretary of the Government. CLEAR-LAC had launch events in every country and every regional institution with whom it was doing diagnostics (see boxes 7 and 8).

Box 7: The experience of CLEAR LAC

CLEAR LAC starts by asking for a set of documents. In the case of CARICOM, the appointed champion (the executive coordinator) fills in a set of basic questions, sends some information and specific documents, and is asked to suggest respondents to be surveyed and to be interviewed. The semi-structured interviews (SSIs) are adapted for each respondent. LAC starts by interviewing the key informants identified with the executive coordinator (including, for example, permanent secretaries) who may provide further key respondents to interview. They conduct around eight interviews per country, with customized questions. This information is used to develop customized online questionnaires. A national questionnaire is filled out by different key informants identified together with the executive coordinator, and a ministry-level questionnaire is completed by different thematic experts in each ministry, who, in turn, are coordinated by the focal person for each ministry.

Box 8: The experience of CLEAR LAB

The first phase is the completion an off-line Word questionnaire, possibly by a member of the central M&E department, at this stage probably without consulting other line ministries/stakeholders. To fill in the gaps, CLEAR LAB asks the focal-point person in each country (M&E authority representative), for the referral of key actors to be interviewed. These are mainly M&E technical staff in line ministries (about six staff) who have a more developed M&E practice, plus one member of VOPE, plus one member of a university. This method of choosing interviewees gives a strategic overview, but care must be taken that this does not result in biased responses.

3.9 Keeping stakeholders informed during the process

Keeping stakeholders informed during the MESA process is absolutely critical. A communication strategy should be developed for this. In this way, the process itself helps stakeholders to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and engage for future actions. The communication strategy also helps to remind stakeholders about the main principles of the MESA. Resource 7 suggests some elements of a communication plan.

Resource 7: A communication plan for stakeholders

The MESA could take between one and six months, depending on the nature of the process agreed. In all cases it is important to keep stakeholders informed. Some good practices include:

1. Taking good minutes in every meeting, especially about decisions, which are shared with all those participating in the meeting.
2. Keeping track of the planned timeline, checking progress and any corrections needed.
3. Summarizing the emerging M&E diagnostic findings at least every fortnight, and giving feedback, for example through the steering committee.
4. Keeping track of challenges in undertaking the MESA and potential solutions.
5. Having regular meetings with main stakeholders – every fortnight – to inform on all the above.

For example, CLEAR-LAC had weekly meetings with the Secretariat of CARICOM and periodic meetings with the network of executive coordinators. Additionally, CLEAR-LAC is in constant contact with the executive coordinators via email or WhatsApp.

3.10 Validating the MESA

It is very important to validate the findings from the MESA research process, and to receive feedback from stakeholders. This will help to test the findings, and to make sure that recommendations are relevant, implementable, and action oriented. The validation process in itself also has a conceptual value, in helping stakeholders to enrich their picture of the M&E ecosystem, with the benefit of an external perspective. Giving stakeholders an opportunity to express their views also increases trust among them and increases the credibility of the exercise, strengthens ownership over the results, and lays a strong foundation for the way forward.

Typically, the findings and recommendations are tested in a workshop with stakeholders. This can either be before the MESA report is written and the conceptual testing of the findings and recommendations, or it can be based on the draft report, where the text can be critiqued by stakeholders. If there is a concept to be tested, it may well be worth testing it in a presentation at an early stage rather than waiting for the draft report (see box 9). If there are not significant conceptual changes to be made, and the emphasis of the consultation is on the detail, then testing the draft report in a workshop may be more appropriate.

Box 9: CLEAR LAB in Mozambique

CLEAR LAB met with the central M&E department representatives and key support agencies, presenting the key findings in the dimensions they were assessing. Each dimension was split into “Description” (such as background information), “Analysis” (framing the challenge) and “Opportunities” (possible solutions and how to move forward).

A sample workshop program is shown in resource 8.

Resource 8: Sample MESA validation workshop program

Objectives: By the end of the workshop participants will have validated and added to the findings and recommendations of the MESA diagnosis.

PROGRAM

Time	Item	Responsible
08.00	Registration	
08.30	Objectives and flow of the day	Chair
	Introductions	
08.45	Overview of the national M&E system	M&E Champion
09.00	Introduction to the MESA	
	Overview of the MESA diagnosis – background, TORs and process	External/internal team leaders
09.20	Discussion	Chair
09.30	MESA findings and recommendations	
	Presentation of findings and recommendations	External/internal team leaders
10.15	Discussion	Chair
10.30	Coffee	
10.50	Group work on findings and recommendations	
	Introduction to the group task	MESA team member
11.00	Groups work on different sections of the findings and recommendations	All
12.30	Lunch	
13.30	Report back	Chair
	Groups report back on the main issues emerging and cross-cutting issues	
14.45	Quick tea break	
15.00	Discussion on cross-cutting issues	External/internal team leaders
15.30	Way forward and closing	Chair

GROUP TASK

Background: detailed work on the findings

The group session is where the detailed work to validate and enrich the findings gets done. Groups are allocated different elements of the report to look at:

- 1 - Section A
- 2 - Section B, etc.

You will have been allocated one of these topics.

Objective

The group has validated and enriched the findings and recommendations for one or two sections of the report.

Process

1. Someone will have been allocated the role of facilitator, and someone to take detailed notes.
2. Select someone to do the report back.
3. Each group will be given some sections of the report.
4. A resource person presents the findings and recommendations of these sections (15 minutes).
5. Have a general discussion about the picture that is emerging (15 minutes).
6. Go through the findings and recommendations one by one, asking:
 - Does the finding make sense?
 - Is the recommendation appropriate to the finding? Is it realistic and will it make a difference?
 - The rapporteur should capture major issues and the secretariat should make detailed changes.
7. Draw out what seem to be the major comments to report back on:
 - Overall, do you agree with the thrust of this part of the report?
 - What are major changes to the findings/recommendations you would like to see (if any)?
 - Are there any cross-cutting issues which need to be discussed in plenary?

3.11 Overseeing a peer review of the MESA report

It is good practice for quality assurance to have peer reviewers who know the country to check the quality of the report – both in terms of content and the soundness of the methodology used. The peer reviewers could be from another CLEAR center, the GEI global team, another country which has done a MESA, another international organization, or local academic institutions. The peer reviewers could assist with the tasks suggested in resource 9.

Resource 9: Possible roles for a peer reviewer

Deliverable	Role of peer reviewer	Time allocation (days)
Plan/TORs	If the peer review is commissioned in time it would be beneficial to get comments on the TORs	0.5
Data-collection methods, instruments and other tools	Comment on the tools and methods, including the proposed sampling methodology and instruments	0.5
Draft MESA for review	Comment on report	1
Possibly a workshop with stakeholders to discuss the draft report;	Possibly participate	1
The final report	Comment on the first and final draft of final report. Also write up short report summarizing main issues from the peer review, and the learnings.	1
Participate in developing the improvement plan	Possibly participate	1
Potential total time allocation for the MESA and follow-up		5 days

3.12 Designing a contextually relevant response program

Following on from the agreed findings and recommendations which stakeholders have endorsed, a plan needs to be developed for a suitable response program. There are several ways this can be developed. One way would be within the joint team which would define a set of possible improvement outcomes (for example, short-term outcomes for changes in systems and capacities), and then to widen it to a workshop with stakeholders to define a set of improvement outcomes, identifying the outputs and activities to achieve these.

Box 10 shows how CLEAR LAB sent preliminary ideas for subsequent work.

Box 10: The experience of CLEAR LAB

Along with the Diagnostic Report, CLEAR-LAB also produced a “Preliminary Ideas for a Development Plan Report”. These were sent and presented during a meeting to the authorities covering M&E, planning, and budgeting. The “Preliminary Ideas” were derived from the diagnostic and showcase potential projects to tackle the challenges identified, whether they would be addressed through CLEAR or not.

Countries were advised, after the presentation, to come up with a set of priorities from the preliminary ideas. Then, jointly with CLEAR, they would assess which plans could be supported by the center, to then formalize the partnership around these plans.

Resource 10 (next page) shows a possible format for a plan, building on the improvement plan in the South African evaluation system.

Resource 10: Possible format for an M&E strengthening plan⁹²

Improvement outcomes	1 xxx, 2 xxx, 3 xxx, ...
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Outcome 1								
Outputs to achieve the objective	Priority L/M/H	Activity to achieve output	Person/institution responsible	By when? (Deadline)	Target	Embedded where ⁹³	Budget available	Current situation/ Progress report ⁹⁴

⁹² Based on the improvement plan system used in the South African national evaluation system.

⁹³ Which system, plan or document is this embedded in – such as a departmental plan or program plan?

⁹⁴ This is to report on what the current situation is, and would be used in progress reports to update the situation.

4. Summary of the key MESA milestones

This chapter summarizes the key MESA milestones and tasks involved in the process of undertaking the MESA.

1. Preparing for the MESA
2. Undertaking the MESA
3. Writing up the MESA report
4. Developing the response program

4.1 Preparing for the MESA

The preparation stage builds on the understanding of what the specific country needs are and what the MESA should cover (sections 2.1–2.7). In terms of carrying out the MESA, GEI recommends the following steps:

1. **Identifying potential team members and having those officially appointed** (see section 3.6 in the MESA). This often requires the support of a national consultant or focal-point person for a successful engagement with stakeholders. The direct human interaction in the field is still key to recruiting respondents and collect documents. If a consultant is used, it is critical to get the right profile (a person with a strong network and good social capital can be very useful).
2. **Collecting basic background documents** based on desk research to get an overview of the system;
3. **Deciding on the MESA report structure** (see annex 2) and which sections will be included;
4. **Deciding on the research design and identifying the detailed questions** to be asked and how these questions will be answered; (the table in annex 2 can be adapted.)
5. **Developing the detailed methodology**, tools and instruments⁹⁵ including:
 - A survey instrument to implement with the main M&E champion; if it is a federal/semi-federal system then it will be the decentralized units; and potentially with line ministries.
 - Drafting a letter to accompany requests for the completion of the survey, as well as the interviews;
 - Checklists for semi-structured interviews (which can be drawn from the methodology matrix), are adapted for different categories of respondents, and identifying the main people to be interviewed;
 - Planning for any workshops, including selecting dates;
6. **Doing a detailed activity-based plan** and budget for the MESA process;
7. **Confirming the steering committee for the exercise**, if appropriate, and getting the plan approved (see 3.6);

⁹⁵ This has to take into account whether the work will be done remotely, or in person.

8. **Organizing initial interviews with key respondents**, notably with the key M&E stakeholders.
9. **Developing and implementing an offline survey** (using the interviews) to get key data before the intensive research phase.
10. **Identifying remaining respondents to interview**, including key planning and budget staff, key M&E staff in government (central institutions and line ministries), parliament, VOPEs, and development partners supporting M&E.

If the exercise is to be conducted virtually, there is more flexibility over timing. However, if it is to be a physical visit then it is likely to be an intensive phase of two to three weeks of fieldwork.

4.2 Undertaking the MESA

The main stages of the MESA are likely to include:

1. **Desk research:** Review existing literature and relevant country information to inform the specific country MESA approach and design.
2. **Interviews:** These may well be in pairs of external support agency and a government staff member.
3. **Focus groups:** Possibly with several staff members – for example, from the M&E champion.
4. **Regular meetings:** of the team every two to three days to reflect on the emerging picture and do detailed planning.
5. **Initial findings:** These would need to be identified, agreed, and articulated in writing.
6. **Validation workshop:** On the initial findings and recommendations.

If the intensive phase is physical, all of these steps would be undertaken probably within a two–three-week visit. If it is done remotely, it could be longer. (Preparation time could be much longer, possibly several months.)

4.3 Writing up the MESA report

Writing up the MESA report entails analyzing qualitative and quantitative information received about the country M&E systems and processes. Once the MESA diagnostic content has been agreed in the preparatory phase, appropriate people should be assigned to write specific sections for the report in line with the interviews they conducted. Ideally, government members should contribute to this MESA process in the data-collection process and in writing up examples, as well as being involved in their national M&E processes, as this also helps to promote and embed ownership. The analysis and findings need to be drafted by an independent MESA team.

4.4 Developing the response program

It is likely that the main MESA report would identify the key areas of work proposed, but the development of a response plan would be a subsequent step following the MESA. This may be best undertaken in a workshop, where the overall objectives/outcomes and outputs can be defined and groups could work on the detailed planning of the components. This constitutes the next phase, and does not form part of this guidance.

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Annexes

Annex 1: The GEI's National Evaluation Capacity Development Framework and relevant sections of the MESA

Enabling environment	Organizational capacity development	Individual capacity development
2.1 Country profile 2.2 Structure of government 2.3 Political economy and link to M&E 2.5 Level of interest in M&E at the beginning of the MESA	2.4 Organizational culture of government and implications for M&E	
3.8 Communication of M&E evidence 3.10 Equity and gender considerations in the PBM&E systems 3.11 Climate and environmental sustainability considerations in the PBM&E systems	3.1 Legal and policy basis for the PBM&E systems 3.2 Roles of key actors in the PBM&E systems 3.3 Overview of the planning and budgeting systems 3.4 Overview of the M&E and related systems 3.5 Role of other stakeholders in relation to M&E 3.6 Statistical and administrative data 3.7 Resources for M&E	3.9 M&E capacity-development initiatives
4.5 Role of civil society role in the government monitoring system 4.6 Systems/incentives for acting on monitoring	4.1 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at national level 4.2 Systems for government monitoring and reporting in line ministries and at subnational levels 4.3 Monitoring of government by parliament 4.4 Capacity in government to undertake monitoring and reporting 4.7 Use of monitoring information by government	4.4 Capacity in government to undertake useful monitoring and reporting.
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 systems	5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level 5.2 Evaluation systems at line ministry and subnational levels 5.3 Government capacity to manage, commission, and undertake evaluations 5.4 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system 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 systems	5.2 Government capacity to manage, commission or undertake evaluations 5.4 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system 5.5 Capacity to undertake evaluations in civil society/ academia/ private sector

Annex 2: Structure of the MESA with linked questions

This table consolidates all the questions from the MESA in chapter 2. The table starts as section 2, as there are no questions for section 1.

2. Background to the country and its level of interest in M&E

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
2.1 Country profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› What is the GDP per capita?› What is the current growth rate?› What are the key economic sectors and how are they performing?› What are levels of poverty and inequality? (Use international and comparable data on poverty and inequality; but national definitions and alternative measures could be used for a deeper dive.)› Key demographics: median age, life expectancy, gender (for example, the percentage of boys and girls at school or the Gender Inequality Index); basic education (for example, the percentage of the population that have completed secondary school), health (for example, the rate of maternal mortality).› Vulnerability to climate change (for example, incidences of drought, disasters and weather).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Peace, conflict, and security issues. (For fragile states or those affected by conflict, this is key information).› What are the levels of unemployment?› CO2 emissions in relation to GDP.› Migration: percentage of the population that are migrants – internal and external.
2.2 Structure of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› What is the overall structure of government (for example, a federal or unitary system)?› What is the parliamentary system?› What are the dates/years of the last and next elections?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› What are the policy-making mechanisms under multiparty/single party governance?› How do changes in leadership happen?› (Note that section 3.2 explores the roles of key stakeholders in more depth.)

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
2.3 Political economy and the link to M&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the political forces that have driven the development of M&E or related practices/systems? › How does accountability work in the government system and in parliament, in theory and in practice? › Who will benefit from building an effective M&E system? › Who will not benefit from building the M&E system? › What are the implications of this for strengthening the M&E system? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the political forces (policies, laws, regulations, orders, etc.) that have driven the development of M&E or related practices/systems? (A deeper dive may be appropriate.) › Who are the various stakeholders involved in policy making and how do they interact (for example, lobbying)? › What is government's current political focus (for example, what are the priority outcomes) and how has this evolved? › What role do CSOs play in relation to government (in relation to advocacy, for example)?
2.4 Organizational culture of government and implications for M&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there a demand from managers/technicians/parliamentarians/ civil society for performance information to inform policy and program planning and budgeting? › How do politicians and senior officials view the usefulness of M&E and results-based management? Do they see them as relevant for accountability? What about for learning and performance improvement? › What are the dominant incentives in the public service (for example, fear of making a mistake, or achieving targets for bonuses)? Does this vary across departments so that some show a more transparent, learning, and performance-oriented culture? › Is there a culture of learning and is there an interest and ability to cultivate this? Does this vary across departments? › How does the government usually respond to negative M&E findings/evidence? › Overall, what are your conclusions on the organizational culture within the public service? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What kind of decisions are guided by M&E information – in relation to planning, budgeting, and other key areas? › These questions can also be explored in more depth, such as through using survey information or literature to deepen the analysis.
2.5 Level of interest in M&E at the beginning of the MESA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How much interest is there in M&E now and from whom? › Why is a MESA diagnostic exercise likely to be of value at this time? › What is motivating the champion(s) or leading government agency or entity to build the M&E system? › Are there particular constraints around the development of M&E at this time – such as upcoming elections, or crises such as pandemics, or climate change-related disasters or events? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › If there is resistance to M&E, what are its origins, and what is the level of interest and capacity to change these views?

3. Overview of planning, budgeting, and M&E systems

This section is intended to provide an overview of the planning, budgeting, and M&E (PBM&E) systems, which are then explored in detail in section 4 (for monitoring) and section 5 (for evaluation). As evaluation in particular needs to inform plans and budgets, an overview of these planning and budgeting systems is provided.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
3.1 Legal and policy basis for the PBM&E systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Where do custodians of the PBM&E systems derive the mandate to provide oversight and coordination of PBM&E at varying levels (for example, constitution, laws, regulations, and executive powers, including policies)? ➤ Is there a national monitoring and evaluation policy, or a national monitoring policy, or a national evaluation policy? ➤ Is there national legislation or regulation for monitoring and/or national legislation or regulation for evaluations, or a national policy for monitoring and evaluation? ➤ If there is a law, regulation, policy on monitoring and/or evaluation do they include references to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • links between (results) monitoring and planning? • links between (results) monitoring and the budgetary process? • links between (results) monitoring and decision making in parliament (legislative)? • links between (results) monitoring and decision making in higher levels of government (executive)? • links between (results) evaluation and planning? • links between (results) evaluation and the budgetary process? • links between (results) evaluation and decision making in parliament (legislative)? • links between (results) evaluation and decision making in higher levels of government (executive)? • the independence of the evaluation unit(s)? • the necessary resources and staff of the evaluation unit(s)? ➤ Is there a regulation/agreement/long-term development agenda that obliges the government to communicate program results periodically, whether to the population, donors/agencies, for international obligations and/or between ministries? ➤ Is there a legal requirement or regulations requiring the use of evidence in decision making? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explore further any legal requirement or regulations requiring the use of evidence in decision making – for example, when new programs are approved.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
3.2 Roles of key actors in the PBM&E systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there a central body responsible for monitoring? › Are there decentralized bodies responsible for monitoring? › Is there a central body responsible for evaluation? › Are there decentralized bodies responsible for evaluation? › What is the legal basis for these entities? › Does the central evaluation unit set standards and provide support for evaluation across government? › What are the roles of different stakeholders at national and subnational levels in the planning, budgeting, and M&E systems (including communities if relevant)? › Are there individual M&E champions at the political and senior administrative levels in the country (for example, directors, permanent secretaries)? › With respect to parliamentary roles, do laws, regulations, or policies make linkages between (results) monitoring and decision making in parliament? › Do laws, regulations, or policies stipulate linkages between evaluation and decision making in parliament? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there research structures in government departments that could be built on – for example, for evaluations? › What is parliament's role in the planning, budgeting, and M&E systems? › What does a power analysis of the main stakeholders reveal? › It may be important to further explore the realities of the balance of power between institutions and stakeholders.
3.3 Overview of the planning and budgeting systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How does the planning system work? › Is there an established process for designing and implementing public policy? What are the steps and methodologies? Are there instances of approval where evidence can be applied? › How does the budgeting system work? › Are there processes for performance-based or results-based budgeting and is this culture well established? › What evidence does the state use to inform government planning, budgeting, policy, and decision making? › Do laws, regulations, or policies stipulate the links between (results) monitoring and national planning? › Do laws, regulations, or policies stipulate the links between (results) monitoring and the budgetary process? › Do laws, regulations, or policies stipulate the links between evaluation and national planning? › Do laws, regulations, or policies stipulate the links between Evaluation and the budgetary process? › Does the national plan have clear goals, indicators, and targets? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To explore the systems in more depth, there could be a deeper analysis of how these evolved, and not just how they are now. › To what extent is the planning process participatory and inclusive (for example, at municipal, provincial and national levels)? › The evidence used could be explored in more depth.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
3.4 Overview of the M&E systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the different M&E systems: for example, of departments and projects monitoring against the national development plan, monitoring of SDGs, and evaluation systems? › How have these evolved, briefly? › Is there a national coordination body, such as a national evaluation council? › What components of M&E systems are in place: for example, M&E policy/strategy, M&E frameworks, reporting systems, evaluation agenda/plans, standards, competencies, repository of evaluations, quality assessments – and how binding are they? › Are results-monitoring data used to inform the national planning process? › Are results-monitoring data used to inform the budgetary process? › Are results-monitoring data discussed in parliament (or the legislative arm of government)? › Do government documents on policies, programs, and projects contain results frameworks? › Are data on the results of individual policies, programs, and projects collected and reported? › Does the central evaluation unit commission and/or conduct evaluations? › Do decentralized evaluation units commission and/or conduct evaluations? › If there are no specifically designated evaluation units, do other entities commission and/or conduct evaluations? › How many country-led evaluations have been commissioned and implemented by government in the past two to three years? › To what extent are these evaluations perceived to be credible, independent, and impartial? (For example, do these evaluations report on challenges or poor results, or do they only highlight positive aspects?) › Do evaluations inform the national planning process? › Do evaluations inform the budgeting process? › Are evaluations discussed in parliament (or legislative bodies)? › Is there evidence of changes in programs/strategies/projects due to evaluation findings? › Is there evidence that the evaluations are discussed at higher levels of government (the executive arm)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › See optional modules in sections 4 and 5.

3.5 Role of other stakeholders in relation to M&E

National statistical organization (NSO)	This is covered in section 3.6	
Audit offices	Audit often drives behavior. It is important to understand the audit role and how it links to M&E.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the role of audit offices? › Do they undertake performance audits or other functions which are close to M&E? › What is the attitude to audit and how does that affect M&E?
Role of voluntary organizations for professional evaluation VOPE(s)	This section provides an overview of VOPEs, their capacity, and operations. In the basic MESA this would probably not be detailed, but more detail could be provided if necessary.	<p>Basic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there an evaluation association(s) in the country? › When was the VOPE established, how many members does it have, and where do most members come from (for example, the public sector, CSOs, academia)? › Is there a selection process for members? › How active is it? › How does the VOPE work with government, civil society, and donor organizations in the country to promote evaluation and evidence-based policy making? › To what extent does the local VOPE influence M&E activities in the country? <p>In-depth questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the sources of income for the VOPE? › What are the M&E priorities for the VOPE in the next five years? › What are some of the challenges the VOPE is facing and how can they be addressed? › Does the VOPE have an active network of emerging evaluators?
Role of NGOs (or civil society) in the M&E system	This section explores what roles NGOs play in the M&E system – such as sitting on evaluation steering committees, or being involved in the selection of evaluations for evaluation plans/agendas.	<p>Basic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › In general terms, what role do other CSOs play (if any) in the national M&E system – for example, sitting on steering committees, or playing a role in the national coordination structure? <p>In-depth questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do NGOs play an active role in requiring evidence from the government about results ex post and about policy choices ex ante? › Do CSOs share with government evidence from evaluations of programs that have worked, and advocate for scale-ups?

3.5 Role of other stakeholders in relation to M&E

Development partners	<p>In many countries, development partners (multi-lateral, bi-lateral, etc.) play an important role in M&E systems, funding the development of elements of the system and/or funding evaluations. An enriched element would be obtaining details of the donor-funded evaluations being undertaken.</p>	<p>Basic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What M&E initiatives are funded by local and international development partners in the country – such as training, or the development of M&E policies and guidelines? › Are any development partners funding government-led evaluations? › Do any development partners conduct their own evaluations using country systems? <p>In-depth questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Over the last three years, what proportion of evaluations have been funded by development partners? › What other influence do donors have on M&E activities in the country?
Media	<p>The media play an important role in communicating evidence through multiple channels. They may play a negative role, such as in generating fake news. Or they could play a more positive role in reporting accurately on evidence emerging from M&E, and contributing to wider society by holding government to account. This section also identifies any work being undertaken to strengthen the capacity of the media to use M&E evidence.</p>	<p>Basic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do the media use M&E evidence? › Are there references in the media to evaluations? › Has any training or support been undertaken to help the media use M&E evidence? By whom? <p>In-depth questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How much is the value of scientific evidence recognized by the wider public in the country – for example, over COVID-19? › How prevalent is “fake news” – for example, covering COVID-19?
Political parties	<p>In many countries political parties may be very dominant, and at times dominate government if they hold power for long periods. In such situations it is very important that they see the importance of M&E evidence. It is thus important to understand the attitudes to M&E and what advocacy work has been undertaken in this regard.</p>	<p>Basic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do political parties lobby for evidence-based policy making? › Does the evaluation unit report evaluation findings to political parties? <p>In-depth questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Has any effort been made to brief political parties on M&E evidence? › How important has this briefing been in influencing decision making in the country?

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
3.6 Statistical and administrative data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is a population census conducted? How often? › Is there a national statistical system? › Does the government/NSO conduct a demographic census? How often? › Does the government/NSO conduct other household survey (s)? › How accessible are administrative data – are they shared in some way across government? › What is the quality of administrative data (for example, are the data complete, timely, accessible, and reliable)? › Are data disaggregated to track the situation of disadvantaged groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is frontline data collection in electronic or paper format? › If electronic, is this information aggregated and relayed upwards without time lags? › Do departments/subnational levels conduct any surveys of their own? If so, which? › Explore further the quality of administrative data. For example, are the data complete, timely, accessible, and reliable?
3.7 Resources for M&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What resources does the government provide for M&E, in terms of budgets for M&E, the size of M&E units, and are resources specifically allocated for evaluation, or research? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How are M&E budget needs determined?
3.8 Communication of M&E evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there formal frameworks for reporting, debating, and discussing monitoring and evaluation results at different levels (for example, websites, media workshops)? › To what extent are findings shared with the entire population, and in an easily accessible way (for example, policy briefs/ accessible reports, practical/implementable solutions)? › What is the percentage of government evaluations that have been made public in the past two to three years? › Are there mechanisms to enable ease of access to government data and evidence (for example, repositories)? › Does the country report on its contribution to the achievement of the SDGs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Who is responsible for knowledge management in government departments? › Are there academic journals or other media and forums for evaluation? › To what extent does M&E information enter public discourse? › Are there mechanisms to enable ease of access to NGO data and evidence (for example, repositories)?

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
3.9 M&E capacity-development initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Which institutions provide formal degree/postgraduate M&E training and what courses do they provide? › At what level are the trainings pitched (certificate, post-graduate certificate/diploma, master's, doctorate)? › Which institutions provide short M&E training and what courses do they provide? › Are there any courses specifically designed for public-sector M&E (for example, an Introduction to M&E in the public sector) and by whom? Are they tailored to specific audiences (for example, technical staff, mid-level managers, senior managers, politicians)? › Are there M&E capacity-development plans in place? Are processes under way to develop and strengthen M&E capacity in government and society more broadly – such as, how to produce, manage, and use evidence? › Has there been any technical assistance, capacity building, or training in M&E currently over the past two years for any level of government (national, regional, or local)? Who provided this assistance and within what framework or reform process? › Have M&E competencies been defined for the public sector? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How many people were trained on M&E during this year, and by which institution? › What is the weighting of courses for both monitoring and evaluation? › Are there M&E modules offered as part of other courses/degrees/qualifications (for example, as part of bachelor degrees in sociology or development studies)? › Are there any other professionalization initiatives? › What difference has the training that has been provided to date made?
3.10 Equity and gender considerations in the PBM&E systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do the legal framework, policy, and/or regulations include specific considerations on gender mainstreaming in monitoring and/or evaluation? › Do the legal framework, policy, and/or regulations include specific considerations with respect to mainstreaming equity considerations in monitoring and/or evaluation? › To what extent do monitoring and/or evaluations in government take into account gender and inequality issues? Are there formal forums at which these are discussed and taken seriously? › Are there other ways gender, inequality, and equity issues are mainstreamed in M&E systems – such as the use of equity criteria in all evaluations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there monitoring by civil society on gender and equity issues? By whom and at what level?

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
3.11 Climate and environmental sustainability considerations in the PBM&E systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do the legal framework, regulations, and policies include provisions for mainstreaming climate change into M&E? › Do the legal framework, regulations, and policies include mainstreaming a sustainable development perspective in M&E? › Is there monitoring or evaluation by government on climate change, or issues of environmental sustainability (for example, the collapse of species and ecosystems and the depletion of natural resources). By whom and at what level? › Does the country's PBM&E system track and inform on the environmental footprint? › What monitoring and what evaluations on climate change and sustainable development are happening in government? Are there formal forums at which these are discussed and taken seriously? (For example, South Africa has the Presidential Climate Change Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality.) › Are there other ways in which these issues are mainstreamed in M&E systems – for example, the use of environmental sustainability criteria in all evaluations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How is climate change-related M&E used and by whom? (For example, Nepal's Climate Change Program Coordination Committee is responsible for coordinating data on climate change M&E and it is used to inform new policies and programs.) › Is there monitoring by civil society on climate change, or on issues of environmental sustainability, gender, and equity? By whom and at what level?

4. Monitoring and reporting systems

This section explores monitoring and reporting systems in detail, with an emphasis on output- and outcome-monitoring rather than activity monitoring. Looking at the reporting function is important to understand what happens with monitoring data, and the extent to which it is used for decision-making.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
4.1 Systems for government monitoring and reporting at the national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the main monitoring systems at the national level and who are the custodians of these? › Is there monitoring and reporting of the national development plan, and other formalized plans? › What monitoring and reporting systems are in place for outputs, for outcomes, and for budget/expenditure? › What roles do line ministries play in monitoring? › Are there incentives or sanctions in place to ensure that sectoral ministries and/or subnational governments adopt M&E practices in their daily work and report as required? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there other systems that are not called PM&E but that in fact are PM&E systems? › How is information collected on expenditure/inputs/outputs/, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes and impacts? › The evolution of these systems could be explored in more depth, as well as the implications for where they are headed. › What mechanisms are there for government to share monitoring evidence and engage stakeholders (for example, CSOs) on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)? › What are the main monitoring systems at the regional level and who are the custodians of these?
4.2 Systems for government monitoring and reporting in line ministries and at subnational levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the main monitoring systems coordinated by line ministries? › What are the main monitoring systems at subnational levels and who are the custodians of these? › What monitoring and reporting systems are in place for outcomes and for outputs at these levels? › What lower-level monitoring and reporting do line ministries do? › How does this link with local government or state governments? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there formalized monitoring and reporting of a subnational development plan and other plans? At state or other local government level?
4.3 Monitoring of government by parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How does parliament monitor government performance? › How is government monitoring information used in parliament? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How effective is this monitoring? › Do committees feel they can get an in-depth understanding of what the departments are doing and how effective it is?

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
4.4 Capacity in government to undertake monitoring and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there skilled personnel in government with the technical capacity for performance monitoring (for example, gathering, analyzing, and reporting on the performance of government policies and programs)? › What training have they had? › Overall, is there institutional capacity to undertake meaningful monitoring that feeds back into management? At what levels? › Is there a capacity-strengthening plan for monitoring skills in government (for example, training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance/support)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A special MESA-related module, such as a survey, could collect more detailed information on individual capacity.
4.5 Role of civil society in the government monitoring system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there any specific roles that CSOs play in government monitoring systems – such as sitting on monitoring structures, or being involved in community-based monitoring? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What CSOs involved in social accountability and audit mechanisms exist to monitor government?
4.6 Systems/incentives for acting on monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there a system for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of monitoring evidence (such as rewards, sanctions, and messaging from leadership)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Explore the above in more depth and how this relates to culture.
4.7 Use of monitoring information by government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How does monitoring information within government inform decision making: planning, project or program management, budgeting, and performance reporting? › What examples are there of the use of monitoring information in national plans, strategies, and government programs? › How does the government usually respond to negative M&E findings/evidence? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the role of each department within the state in making these decisions based on M&E?

5. Evaluation systems

This section goes into the country's evaluation systems in detail. Here, the MESA focuses not only on the production and use of single evaluations, but on the status of the evaluation system as a whole.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
5.1 Evaluation systems at the national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Who are the custodians of the evaluation system at regional/national level? › What is the extent of the coverage of the evaluation custodian or evaluation unit across government? › Is evaluation of the national development plan, ministries' plans and other plans formalized/institutionalized? › How are line ministries involved in evaluation? › What roles do they play regarding evaluation? › How effective are public entities in managing evaluations? › Is there a demand from line ministries for external evaluations? › Which type of interventions/programs/sectors are evaluated by the system? › How are evaluations funded? › What type of evaluations are typically conducted (for example, design, implementation, outcome, and impact)? › How are the credibility, independence, and impartiality of evaluations fostered?? › Are there mechanisms in place to ensure quality? › What is the quality and technical rigor of the evaluations performed? › Do countries have methodologies/guidance to define recommendations? › What mechanisms are there for government to share evaluation evidence and engage stakeholders on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there a willingness to overcome current negative perceptions about evaluation in the public and nongovernmental sectors? › Does a classification of program performance exist? › What is the quality of the ToR for conducting evaluations? › What is the degree of impartiality in evaluation processes? › If so desired, the systems at regional level (for example, CARICOM) can be explored. The questions for the national level can be used here. › How many country-led evaluations commissioned or implemented by government started in the past two to three years?

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
5.2 Evaluation systems at line ministry and subnational levels	<p>In this section, it will be important to include similar questions as the ones asked for the national level, including additional questions about the coordination between the central government and local government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Who are the custodians of the evaluation system within line ministries? › Who are the custodians of the evaluation system at the state/district/municipality level? › What is the extent of the coverage of the subnational evaluation custodian or evaluation unit in the state/local government? › Are the evaluation of the state/district/municipality development plans, or of ministry/sectoral plans, and/or other plans formalized or institutionalized? › How are subnational line ministries involved in evaluation? › How effective are subnational entities in managing evaluations? › What type of interventions/programs/sectors are evaluated at subnational level? › How are evaluations funded? › What type of evaluations are mainly conducted at the subnational level? › How are credibility, independence, and impartiality encouraged in conducting evaluations? › What is the quality and technical rigor of the evaluations performed? › Are there mechanisms to ensure quality? › Does the subnational level have methodologies/guidance to define recommendations? › What mechanisms are there for the subnational government to share evaluation evidence and engage stakeholders on policy and performance matters (such as through platforms like workshops or public hearings)? › Are there formal and informal mechanisms for coordinating the subnational evaluation system with the central government system? › Does subnational government produce evaluations together with the central government? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Does a classification of program performance exist? › What is the quality of the ToR for conducting evaluations? › What is the degree of impartiality in evaluation processes?

Subsection	Suggested basic questions
5.3 Government capacity to manage, commission, and undertake evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there skilled personnel¹ in government with the technical capacity for undertaking or managing evaluations? › What is government's capacity to commission evaluations (for example, managing and sponsoring one or more evaluations)? › What is government's capacity to conduct evaluations itself, either centrally or in ministries? › Is there a capacity strengthening plan for evaluation skills in government (for example, training, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance/support)?
5.4 Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How able is government to manage and run an evaluation system (in relation to knowledge, skills, human and financial resources)? › How many evaluations have been conducted and with what coverage? › What capacity is invested in the entity running evaluations and in developing the systems, such as plans, frameworks, standards and training? › How effective is coordination among stakeholders in building an ecosystem across government, including with nongovernmental stakeholders? › Is government able to plan and implement a national evaluation agenda/plan? › What is the involvement of a range of government institutions and non governmental stakeholders to agree on and monitor the evaluation agenda? › What is the involvement of a range of government institutions and non governmental stakeholders in dialogue around the system?

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
5.5 Capacity to undertake evaluations in civil society/ academia/the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Who are the local providers of evaluation services (for example, consulting firms, auditors, independent consultants, academia)? › To what extent are evaluations commissioned by government, donors, and CSOs conducted by local evaluators? › Is there a sufficient supply of quality local evaluators? › Are the country's universities producing evaluations on a systematic basis? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How many evaluations have been produced by non governmental institutions every year? › What types of evaluations are done by non governmental institutions?

¹ Define "skilled" before asking, for example, post-graduate qualification in M&E, experience of undertaking evaluations, and so on.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
5.6 Systems/incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there mechanisms for institutionalizing and incentivizing the use of evaluation evidence (for example, evaluation steering committees to institutionalize ownership of evaluations, or improvement plans or management responses following evaluation)? › Is there a management response/improvement plan-type process to respond to evaluation findings and recommendations? › How is the implementation of such an improvement plan monitored? › Describe how the government usually responds to negative M&E findings/evidence? › When there is poor performance in an area or in a program/policy, what is the process to ensure adjustments and improvements happen? › What is the link between evaluation results and program/policy budget allocations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the greatest fear that program managers have around the implementation challenges arising from evaluations? › Do program managers participate in the generation of recommendations as part of the evaluation process?
5.7 Use of evaluations by government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What examples are there of evidence from government evaluations informing government decision making: planning (including of national development plan), policies, project or program management, budgeting and performance reporting? › Does government draw on M&E evidence from stakeholders (for example, NGOs, think tanks, development partners) to inform government planning, policy, and decision making, and if so, how? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What lessons are there from why evaluation evidence was used in these cases? › Does the use of evaluation findings change according to the government cycle? › Is there any evidence of evaluation findings being used in voluntary national reviews and in the follow-up to the national SDG agenda?

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
5.8 Use of evaluations by parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do parliamentary portfolio committees consider government or non governmental evaluations in their oversight and legislative work? › Do parliamentary portfolio committees commission evaluative studies from their parliamentary researchers? › Does parliament draw on evidence from non governmental stakeholders (for example, NGOs, think tanks, development partners) to inform their work? › What are the key challenges affecting the use of evaluative evidence in parliament? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are there sufficient capacities within parliament (for example, parliament M&E/research units and portfolio committees) to draw on and utilize M&E evidence? › Are there sufficient capacities within parliament (for example, parliament M&E/research units) to undertake evaluative studies, including synthesizing from existing evaluations?
5.9 Use of evaluations by civil society and the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there evidence from civil society demanding evaluations of government programs (pressuring government to do evaluations, or to be able to access evaluations)? › Are there examples of NGOs using government evaluations to put pressure on government about results ex post and about policy choices ex ante? › How often does the media show information coming from the evaluation system? › Are results of government evaluations commonly used in public discourse and in the media? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there evidence of CSOs sharing with government evidence from their evaluations of programs, and advocating for changes/scale-ups?
5.10 Role of civil society in government evaluation systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do civil society organizations or representatives play specific roles in structures and systems related to government evaluations (for example, steering committees, a national evaluation council)? › What is the role of VOPEs in the national and subnational M&E systems? › How involved are citizens, civil society organizations, or other actors in specific government evaluations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the degree of maturity of VOPEs? › See also questions on VOPEs in section 3.

6. Overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations

The MESA should result in objective and credible findings. As in evaluations, these findings should provide a solid analysis and be the basis for developing a collaborative improvement plan with the country. They should also enable the country to proceed with acting on some of these issues immediately. This section covers these elements.

Subsection	Suggested basic questions	Possible more in-depth questions
6.1 Overview of the M&E ecosystem and how it functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the overall picture of the current M&E ecosystem? (In three to four paragraphs this can provide a baseline to compare against in future.) 	
6.2 Areas that are working well and areas that are working less well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the strengths of the system (areas that work well)? › What are the weaknesses (areas that work less well)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › These questions could be addressed separately and in more detail for monitoring systems and evaluation systems, and perhaps also for the use of M&E evidence.
6.3 Recommendations for interventions that can trigger wider system change and development outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the opportunities for M&E capacity development that would appear to have the most significant effect, be easiest to implement, and have in-country support? › Is there an obvious order of priority, bearing in mind the interests of government? 	
6.4 Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are your overall conclusions on the state of the PBM&E systems? › What are your recommendations for action in key areas? 	

