

Monitoring and evaluation



1. Introduction. Monitoring is a continuous function that uses the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an on-going development intervention with indications of the extent of progress, early indicators of problems that need to be corrected and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. It usually reports on actual performance against what was expected. Evaluation is a time-bound and periodic exercise that seeks to provide credible and useful information to answer specific questions to guide decision making by staff, managers and policy makers.

The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability (Policy Framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation framework). An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision making process of both recipients and donors. Monitoring gives information on where a policy, program, or project is at any given time relative to respective targets and outcomes.

Evaluation gives evidence of why targets and outcomes are or are not being achieved. Evaluation is a complement to monitoring in that when a monitoring system sends signals that the efforts are going off track (for example, that the target population is not making use of the services, that costs are accelerating, that there is real resistance to adopting an innovation, and so forth), then good evaluative information can help clarify the realities and trends noted with the monitoring system. . Monitoring and Evaluation System. A monitoring and evaluation system is a set of

organisational structures, management processes, standards, strategies, plans, indicators, information systems, reporting lines and accountability relationships which enables national and provincial departments, municipalities and other institutions to discharge their Monitoring and Evaluation functions effectively. In addition to these formal managerial elements are the organisational culture, capacity and other enabling conditions which will determine whether the feedback from the M&E function influence the organisation's decision-making, learning and service delivery. The Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework seeks to embed a management system within public sector organisations which articulates with other internal management systems such as planning, budgeting and reporting systems. (Policy Framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation framework). Monitoring can be done at the project, program, or policy levels.

For example, in looking at infant health, one could monitor the project level by monitoring the awareness of good prenatal care in six targeted villages. At the program level, one could monitor to ensure that information on prenatal care is being targeted to pregnant women in a whole region of the country. Evaluation, like monitoring, may be conducted at the project, program, or policy level. To take an example of privatizing water systems, a project evaluation might involve the assessment of the improvement in water fee collection rates in two provinces.

At the program level, one might consider assessing the fiscal management of the government's systems, while at the policy level; one might evaluate different model approaches to privatizing public water supplies. Monitoring

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and Evaluation can also be conducted at local, regional, and national levels of government. It should also be noted that a functioning Monitoring and evaluation system provides continuous flow of information that is useful both internally and externally.

Information from the monitoring and evaluation system is used as a crucial management tool for the public sector manager in achieving results and meeting specific targets. Information on progress, problems, and performance are all key to a public manager striving to achieve results. Likewise, the information from a monitoring and evaluation system is important to those outside the public sector who are expecting results, wanting to see demonstrable impacts from government action, and hoping to build trust in government that is striving to better the life of its citizens.

Governments and stakeholders can also use monitoring and evaluation for formulating and justifying budgetary requests. In contrast to the earlier implementation-based approach, results based monitoring and evaluation focuses attention on achieving outcomes important to the organization and its internal and external stakeholders. Monitoring and evaluation systems can help identify potentially promising programs or practices. 3. The importance of Monitoring and Evaluation in government departments. Government must be more effective in its actions. It must improve the quality of its services.

Since 1994 the South African government have successfully expanded access to services. The quality of services has however been low standard. Massive increases in expenditure on services have not always brought the

results the citizens expected (Improving Government Performance: Our Approach). Monitoring and evaluation the public service, is a key mechanism for improving efficiency, effectiveness and development of the public service. The main focus of monitoring and evaluation is the only way in which a sustainable improvement in service delivery can be achieved.

Monitoring and evaluation is aimed at developing a more modern management culture which involves regularly measuring and analysing indicators to inform changes to the way in which things are done.

Government's major challenge is to become more effective. Monitoring and evaluation processes can assist the public sector in evaluating its performance and identifying the factors which contribute to its service delivery outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation helps to provide an evidence base for public resource allocation decisions and helps identify how challenges should be addressed and successes replicated.

Governments are increasingly being called upon to demonstrate results. There are growing pressures on governments and organizations around the world to be more responsive to the demands of internal and external stakeholders for good governance, accountability and transparency, greater development effectiveness, and delivery of tangible results. Governments, parliaments, citizens, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, international organizations, and donors are among the stakeholders interested in better performance. As demands for greater accountability and real results have increased, there is an attendant need for enhanced results-based monitoring and monitoring and evaluation policies, programmes and projects. Results-based monitoring and evaluation is a

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powerful public management tool that can be used to help policymakers and decision makers track progress and demonstrate the impact of a given project, program, or policy. Results-based monitoring and evaluation differs from traditional implementation-focused monitoring and evaluation in that it moves beyond an emphasis on inputs and outputs to a greater focus on outcomes and impacts.

Building and sustaining results-based monitoring and evaluation systems is not easy. Results-Based monitoring and evaluation system requires continuous commitment, time, effort, and resources. Once the system is built, the challenge is to sustain it. Just as governments need financial, human resource, and accountability systems, governments also need good performance feedback systems. There has been an evolution in the field of monitoring and evaluation involving a movement away from traditional implementation based approaches toward new results-based approaches.

Governments and organizations may successfully implement programs or policies, but have they produced the actual, intended results. Have governments and organizations truly delivered on promises made to their stakeholders? For example, it is not enough to simply implement health programs and assume that successful implementation is equivalent to actual improvements in public health. One must also examine outcomes and impacts. The introduction of a results-based monitoring and evaluation system takes decision makers one step further in assessing whether and how goals are being achieved over time.

Stakeholders are no longer solely interested in organizational activities and outputs; they are now more than ever interested in actual outcomes. Have policies, programs, and projects led to the desired results and outcomes? How do we know we are on the right track? How do we know if there are problems along the way? How can we correct them at any given point in time? How do we measure progress? How can we tell success from failure? These are the kinds of concerns and questions being raised by internal and external stakeholders.

Governments are also facing increasing calls for reform from internal stakeholders, for example, to demonstrate accountability and transparency, devise fair and equitable public policies, and deliver tangible goods and services in a timely and efficient manner. Access to public services have improved, particularly the quality of life in those areas neglected under apartheid. However, it should be acknowledged that the state has not performed optimally in relation to public expectation. Quality and service standards have not always improved. In some areas service quality and standards have decreased.

It is more important that the government monitor and evaluate their performance to ensure that the citizens of the country are satisfied. 4. The aims of the Monitoring and Evaluation. Monitoring is carried out in order to track progress and performance as a basis for decision-making at various levels, in the process of an initiative or project. Evaluation, a more is a systematic process to establish the extent to which an initiative or program has achieved its goals or objectives. Evaluation of government interventions can be undertaken for a number of purposes.

The four purposes of an evaluation system are improving performance, evaluation for improving accountability, evaluation for generating knowledge and decision making. The aim is to provide feedback to programme managers. The questions could be: was this the right intervention and was it the most efficient and effective way to achieve the objectives, where is the public spending going, is this spending making a difference in the people's lives, is it providing value for money, Is the intervention (be it a policy, plan, programme, or project) successful - is it meeting its goals and objectives?

Is it impacting on the lives of the intended beneficiaries? Is the intervention impacting differentially on different sectors of the population? Are there unintended consequences? Is it worth expanding it or closing it? The Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation system aims to: provide an integrated, encompassing framework of M&E principles, practices and standards to be used throughout Government, and function as an apex-level information system which draws from the component systems in the framework to deliver useful M&E products for its users.

The first democratic government's term of office was concerned primarily with the fundamental restructuring of the apartheid state into a modern public service. The second term was concerned with coordination and integration of government systems and services. The third term has a number of strategic priorities but key amongst these has been the challenge of increasing effectiveness, so that a greater developmental impact is achieved. One of the ways Government is increasing effectiveness is by concentrating on monitoring and evaluation.

This is because it is a pivotal competence that has positive effects both up and downstream: it improves policies, strategies and plans as well as improving performance and optimizing impact. Improving Monitoring and Evaluation leads to improvements in the quality of planning which is driven by comparisons between what was planned and what was done and implementing the systems so that they are able to record what services are delivered and what results they achieve.

The GWM&E system is intended to facilitate a clear sequence of events based on critical reflection and managerial action in response to analysis of the relationships between the deployment of inputs, the generation of service delivery outputs, their associated outcomes and impacts. Policy Framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System. Improving Government Performance: our Approach. Basic Concepts in Monitoring and Evaluation. National Evaluation Policy Framework.