



Devising an Appropriate Strategy for Capacity Building of a National Monitoring and Evaluation System: Lessons from Selected African Countries

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April 2015

This note examines key stages of national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems' development in different country contexts and argues for tailored approaches to building M&E capacities. The development of national monitoring and evaluation systems (NMESs) rests on four building blocks—vision of leadership, an enabling environment, capacity to supply and analyze M&E information, and capacity to demand and use M&E information. Developing countries can differ significantly in their performance along these four dimensions—some have virtually no NMES, while others are at a much more advanced stage where reliable and timely M&E information is generated and used. Most developing countries likely fall in between. Using the example of five African countries, this note discusses the differences and similarities in capacity-building needs for countries at different levels of NMES development.

In recent years, emphasis is shifting to a new paradigm regarding national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity development—from a historical pattern of M&E being carried out primarily in the context of cooperation and development aid, to a new concept centered around national ownership and M&E capacity that is linked to the national vision of the country, accountability, and good governance (see, for example, Picciotto [2007] and Menon [2010]). As the frame of reference for national monitoring and evaluation system (NMES) development changes, the nature of the capacity-building strategy, including the support that may be given by the international community to NMES development, will need to be revisited. NMES development, including M&E capacity gaps, needs to be considered in a broader context and built around more than simply traditional training initiatives. To work toward the goal of a sustainable, effective, national, and country-owned NMES, key foundation pieces such as infrastructure and supporting institutions need to be developed, along with training of country officials.

This note¹ examines NMES capacity building in the broader context of the new paradigm, examining the state of NMES development in five countries in Africa—Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia, Mauritania, and Senegal—to explore and identify patterns and lessons that could help inform future NMES capacity development in general.

Background: A Framework for Developing an NMES

If an M&E system is to be owned by a country, it needs to be linked to the national development plan of the country and integrated into the operations and culture of government institutions. To be sustainable though, governments must believe in the utility of the NMES and understand its benefits to them. And, to do that, they must own the system. In other words, national ownership implies a particular cultural, social, and political context (Segone 2010).

With a broad goal of good governance as a driver behind developing an NMES, its development could be

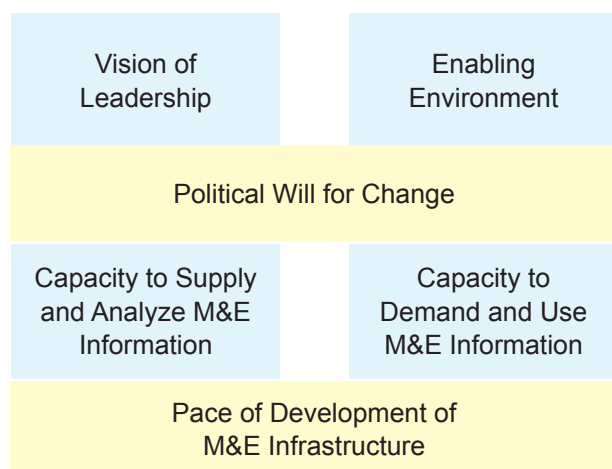
thought of as resting on two overarching influences: (i) the political will for change within a country and (ii) technical factors that will influence the pace of M&E infrastructure development. Upon these two foundation pieces sit four essential building blocks (figure 1; Lahey 2013).

- i. vision of the leadership within the country;
- ii. an enabling environment for an M&E system to develop and function;
- iii. the capacity to supply and analyze M&E information—the technical capacity to measure and analyze performance and provide credible and timely information; and
- iv. the capacity within the system to demand and use M&E information—key users include government institutions, ministries, citizens, media, and other stakeholders.

Political support is an essential driver to launch and fund the NMES exercise; lead the change in organizational culture that may be needed; provide the NMES champion(s); ensure an enabling environment; deflect resistance to M&E and the changes it might imply; and help ensure long-term sustainability of the NMES.

However, the successful development of an NMES takes more than political will. Even with a resource commitment to invest in M&E development, there may be technical hurdles that require a lengthy process to put in place and develop credible data systems. In addition, it takes time to train M&E specialists and educate managers throughout the system on how and where M&E information will be used. This is generally a lengthy and iterative process, as the experiences of most countries using M&E systems confirm, and one where allowance for continuous learning and improvement through oversight mechanisms is particularly beneficial to the improvement of the NMES.

Figure 1. Four Essential Building Blocks for an Effective NMES



Source: Author's illustration.

Historically, efforts in many countries have been directed at improving the supply of M&E information, though most often in the context of individual projects or priority sectors such as health or education, but generally not in a comprehensive fashion inherent in an NMES. Further, the demand for or use of M&E information has often been linked primarily to funding or reporting requirements from donors or international agencies—for example, requirements of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) funding or Millennium Development Goal (MDG) progress reporting. In other words, M&E systems, where they exist, are often piecemeal and not necessarily aligned with the broad set of the country's national development goals. Additionally, the NMESs quite likely are missing many key institutional components and the infrastructure needed to make them both national in scope and sustainable.

While each country is unique and faces its own challenges in “growing” its NMES, implicit in the framework of figure 1 are some important considerations for NMES development:

- A broad set of players needs to be involved in NMES development for it to be both effective and sustainable.
- The goal is not simply to create an M&E capability, but to use performance information to improve public sector management and governance. As such, a capability within government is being created to both generate (that is, supply) performance information as well as to use performance information in decision making by government managers.
- The use of (or demand for) M&E information will function if there are effective incentives built into the system.
- Training and development is required for both technical analysts as well as nontechnical managers in government—these are the eventual users of the M&E information who will need to understand how and where M&E information can help them in the management of their programs and policies. Senior and political officials need sufficient M&E knowledge so that they grasp the importance of the NMES to achieving the high-order goals of accountability, results-based management, and sound governance for the country.

The Importance of Understanding Current Level of NMES Development in a Country

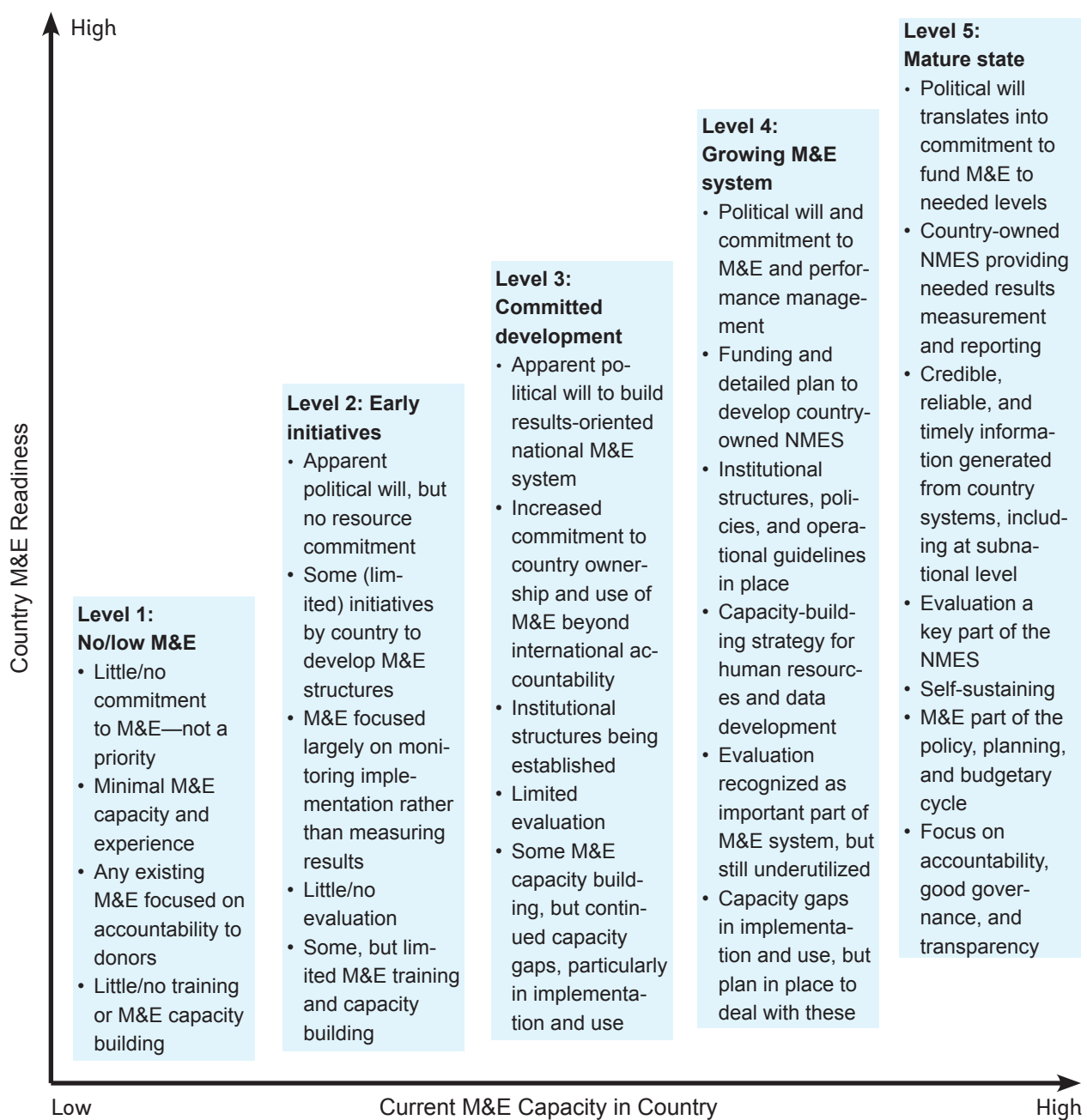
The four building blocks of figure 1 represent the foundation pieces of a country's NMES. Countries are at different stages/levels of development of what might be considered their national M&E system—everything from essentially no NMES to a point of having an effective and sustainable

NMES (regardless of what it looks like), and everything in between.

International experience has shown that national M&E capacity development is an iterative process, generally developed incrementally, sometimes in a piecemeal manner, and, not uncommonly, with false starts (Mackay 2007). For illustrative purposes, figure 2 shows what might be considered a *continuum* in the development of the four building blocks that comprise a nationally owned M&E system. In broad (and simplistic) terms, figure 2

shows five levels of NMES development. In between the two end states—that is, level 1 with no or low M&E, and level 5 with a “mature state”—there could be even more than three levels or stages of NMES development. And, as noted above, movement along the continuum, from one level to another, is not necessarily linear. It is still useful though to adopt a framework to assess where a country might be situated in terms of its NMES development and, from the perspective of the international community, consider what this might imply in terms of developing

Figure 2. Key Stages and Drivers to Reach Mature NMES Status



Source: Author's illustration.

or supporting an appropriate NMES capacity-building strategy and action plan.

While each country is unique in how far and how fast it may roll out a national M&E capability (and indeed, how that may be institutionalized), under the new paradigm, countries do share the broad goal of developing an effective and sustainable NMES, centered around national ownership and M&E that is linked to the national vision of the country, accountability, and good governance. It is important, however, to recognize that a country with a weak basis for an NMES (as determined through an M&E Diagnostic) likely needs a capacity-building strategy somewhat different than a country with a much stronger NMES capacity, that is, a country further along the continuum. The framework can help in devising a more comprehensive and country-specific strategy for NMES development than a generic strategy that focuses primarily on training country officials, in the absence of institutional changes and infrastructure development.

NMES Development in Selected African Countries

The framework of figure 1 and 2 was applied to five African countries: Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia, Mauritania, and Senegal.²

Figure 3 shows where each country is situated on the NMES development continuum, based on assessment of the development of each of the four NMES building blocks for each country. While the assignment of countries to a particular level is not an exact science, the *relative* placement of the five countries in relation to each other is likely close to an accurate depiction. A sixth African country, South Africa, is included in figure 3 for comparative purposes. While South Africa was not a

part of this study, there is considerable documented and public information about the state and development of South Africa's NMES from which to determine its relative placement along the continuum (see, for example, Goldman et al. [2012]).

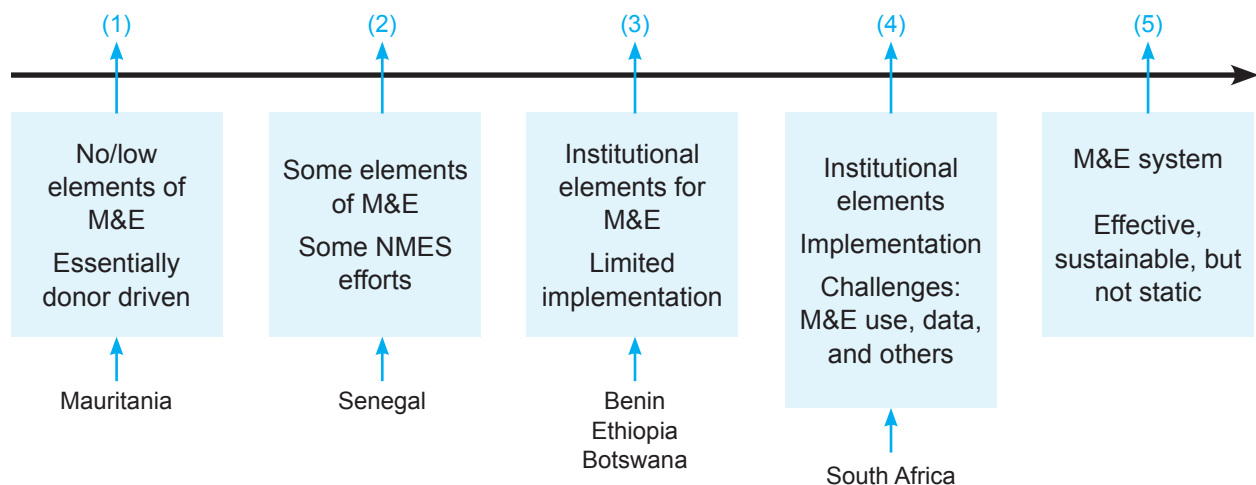
An assessment of M&E capacity and identification of capacity gaps was conducted for each country and examined specific factors aligned with each of the four NMES building blocks. CLEAR (2013) provides a detailed discussion of the assessment's findings for Benin, Mauritania, and Senegal.³

In examining the NMES building blocks and sub-factors, a pattern of development emerges, both within individual countries and across countries.

It would seem apparent that NMES development must start with the vision of country leadership, which provides not only adequate space to allow development of the NMES, but also demonstrates commitment to fund and develop a national M&E system. With this commitment, and often with the support or encouragement of international development partners, the focus quickly turns to training country officials to build capacity to supply M&E information. The capacity-building process may slow down or take considerably longer than anticipated by senior officials though, largely because of the need to clarify and establish the institutional arrangements, roles, and responsibilities of the various actors within the system. Institutionalizing M&E may indeed require some form of public sector reform, including national planning and budget decision making. In all level 3 countries examined, establishing the appropriate institutional arrangements so that generation of M&E information is a normal course of doing business has proven to be a lengthy exercise—and one that likely does not get enough attention.

Another important area of NMES development that clearly gets too little attention is developing the capacity to

Figure 3. Selected African Countries on the NMES Development Continuum



Source: Author's illustration.

use the M&E information within the particular country. The experience of the five selected countries suggests that this may be due to several factors:

- Less attention is focused on information use, including how to build the necessary incentives into the system to encourage/force use of M&E information in planning, management, and decision making in government.
- The vision for using M&E information is often narrow in scope and may derive largely from the historical need to satisfy accountability and reporting requirements of international agencies (for purposes of PRSP, MDG progress, and so forth), a valuable use but insufficient to support the broad needs of good governance and results-based management (RBM).
- In the five selected countries, there are problems with the quality of information currently generated by the M&E systems. These problems derive in part from fundamental problems with data in general and the need for national data development plans.
- There may be potential roadblocks arising from historical perceptions of M&E in general and evaluation in particular as being a threatening control-type function that serves largely to criticize. In other words, officials are not appreciating the knowledge-generating and learning aspects associated with evaluation as a tool of the NMES.

The other development aspect shown in figure 1 relates to various institutional elements that help enable NMES success and sustainability in a country—such factors as the existence of a national statistics agency (NSA), a systematic planning function in government, oversight bodies such as parliament and a national audit office (NAO), and others. Their development may be on a separate track from NMES development, due to, for example, the various initiatives to develop and improve the NSA in each of the level 3 countries examined. NSA (and data) development needs to be linked to development of the NMES. It must quickly be emphasized though that they are not the same thing,⁴ but there is a correlation between the two—if a high priority is being given to NMES development, priority also needs to be given to data development, along with associated statistical and analytical expertise. Similarly, the relationship between NMES development and other enablers needs to be recognized and fostered.

M&E Capacity Gaps/Challenges: Countries at Different Levels of NMES Development

In examining NMES development in the five selected countries, it should not be surprising that in level 1 and 2 countries there are fundamental needs and M&E chal-

lenges across *all four* building blocks. But what is perhaps surprising is that, even for countries well along the NMES continuum (countries at level 3 in this analysis), there are fundamental elements of the NMES development process that still represent challenges and capacity gaps. For the three level 3 performers in the sample though, the nature of the M&E issues and challenges is more subtle. In other words, it should not be assumed that some of the fundamental capacity building—for example, raising awareness and understanding of M&E among senior officials—is less important for these countries. Despite being at different levels of NMES development, there are still common M&E capacity challenges that each country in this sample faces. Where they likely differ is in the intensity of the challenge and appropriate intervention—given that, in some countries, there is a virtual absence or limited acceptance of M&E, while in other countries, M&E capacity development (in some form or other) has been ongoing for some period of time.

Listed below are key M&E issues/challenges observed to be common to all five countries examined:

- i. Awareness and understanding of M&E roles and uses
 - Need to raise awareness/understanding of the various roles and uses of an NMES to improve governance and management decision making
 - Clarifying what is meant by a national M&E system to increase understanding and buy-in at both the political and institutional level
 - Weak culture and understanding of evaluation and its importance to an NMES
- ii. Institutional arrangements for M&E
 - Where M&E units exist, key capacity challenges also exist—such as inadequate resources and not enough trained staff
 - Lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities and limited harmonization/coordination of various M&E efforts
 - Little/no institutionalization of evaluation—no systematic evaluation of government programs and policies
- iii. Human resource expertise
 - Not enough officials trained in M&E; high turnover; and lack of evaluation expertise
 - Little or no local training in M&E
 - Too little practical M&E training and common understanding of M&E tools and methods
- iv. Data issues
 - Need to improve reliability, quality, completeness, and accessibility of data
 - Sector data not always consistent with central data sources

- Not enough and high turnover of data experts and analysts
- v. Use of M&E within government
 - Potential for increasing the use of M&E in ministries and centrally, but many challenges
 - No evaluation of programs or policies and no link to policy/program development (exceptions may be internationally funded projects)
- vi. Performance measurement and reporting
 - Not enough focus on results (outputs and outcomes)
 - Common problems—no data to populate indicators; inappropriate indicators; poor quality data; too little analysis; timely release of reports
- vii. Functions/institutions that help enable NMES development
 - NSAs—challenges include not enough trained staff; data reliability; inadequate analysis; and processing, storing, accessing, and harmonization of data collection
 - Planning functions—M&E not always well linked to or integrated into planning
 - Oversight agencies (for example, the NAOs)—key focus of oversight bodies often on audit, control, and fight against corruption, which can negatively influence the perception of M&E and performance management
 - Civil society organizations (CSOs)—not always clear who speaks for civil society or what influence they may have.

It should be noted that this set of common M&E issues and capacity gaps observed across the five selected countries cover all four NMES building blocks. Where they tend to differ from one country to another is in intensity level, and therefore the appropriate responses will differ by country. In general terms, observations from the five countries suggest that a distinction needs to be made between level 1/level 2 countries and level 3 countries. This is particularly important when examining appropriate strategies and potential initiatives to support NMES capacity building.

Implications for Devising an Appropriate NMES Capacity-Building Strategy

Potential initiatives to be built into the strategy to support NMES capacity building in countries at each of the three levels examined are discussed below according to four broad categories, each with a variety of specific activities:

- i. training and human resource development;
- ii. advising/facilitating the institutionalization of NMES;

- iii. supporting evaluation capacity building; and
- iv. supporting the development of key enablers of the NMES.

This section examines each category briefly, and, drawing on the sample of five countries, illustrates similarities and differences across the three levels of NMES development in terms of the nature/focus of the capacity-building initiative identified as most appropriate for the specific country.⁵

(i) Training and human resource (HR) development

For all countries, regardless of level of NMES development,

- It is important to recognize the various audiences for M&E training/orientation: political and senior officials; officials needing more technical knowledge on generating M&E information; managers whose programs will be monitored; and the potential users of M&E information, both centrally and within ministries.
- The nature of training/orientation clearly differs across different audiences, with nontechnical M&E orientation designed for political and senior officials.
- Awareness/appreciation of the importance of evaluation (the “E”) as a critical tool in the NMES needs to be increased. For example, officials need to understand that RBM needs to be supported by *both* “M” and “E”—“M” on its own is not enough.

For the level 1 and level 2 countries examined,

- Limited formal exposure to M&E would indicate that the priority is to raise awareness and understanding (advocacy) at the political and senior levels regarding the role and various potential ways that a nationally owned, results-based M&E system can be used to improve public sector governance and management decision making. There needs to be a better understanding of RBM/performance management and its/their important link to M&E to help enable necessary public sector reforms, including national planning and budget decision making.
- Clarify with public sector leaders, as well as M&E champions, what is meant by an NMES, to increase understanding and buy-in at both the political and institutional level.
- M&E training areas need to be identified and a multi-year training strategy developed, including provision for introductory M&E training.

For the level 3 countries examined,

- The concepts of M&E and RBM are not new, and various efforts, some more successful than others, have been underway for some time to try to improve national M&E capacity. In this environment, expectations—particularly among senior officials—are likely

considerably higher than for level 1 and 2 performers. Not only is there a need to address existing M&E capacity gaps and challenges, but also a need to manage expectations—officials need to understand that NMES capacity building is long term and iterative. There is no quick fix.

- In the three countries examined, NMES efforts to date have been fairly narrowly focused (for example, progress reporting on the national plan), suggesting a need to broaden officials' understanding of the various ways that an NMES can support good governance, accountability, and improved management practices—in other words, the various roles and uses of M&E in general, and evaluation in particular, that could be built into the government's management framework.
- As NMES becomes institutionalized, the HR capacity gap grows and training needs become more immediate. Short-term technical needs likely require the introduction of more practical and applied M&E training incorporated into targeted NMES development. With too few in-country M&E specialists, international M&E experts are still required, though a mentoring component should be built into all contracts that include international M&E experts.
- An intermediate and longer-term training strategy and multiyear training plan should be developed that move beyond traditional in-class M&E training to also incorporate a plan to develop in-country training capacity via "train the trainer" and eventual development of M&E curricula in local and regional training institutions.

(ii) Advising and facilitating the institutionalization of NMES

For all countries, regardless of level of NMES development,

- Recognize the need for a plan for overall NMES development and a strong central player/agency within the country to serve as the M&E champion to help develop, operationalize, and drive the NMES.
- Adopt a phased approach to NMES development, piloting the introduction of new elements so as to learn, review, and make the necessary adjustments—as opposed to an immediate, whole-of-government rollout all at once. Capacity gaps typically rule out the latter.

For the level 1 and level 2 countries examined,

- With no or limited institutionalization of an NMES, high-level discussions would be needed, as well as the establishment of a steering and/or consultative committee. These could be initiated with the support of development partners or the efforts of a lead central

agency in the country. These could also serve as a follow-on to the M&E training/orientation of political and senior country officials, which are intended to explore the concept of institutionalizing M&E within the public sector. What this training might include: how best to introduce organizational and operational changes that may be needed, possible resource implications, pace of implementation, and more.

- Efforts should be made to help ensure all stakeholders are brought to the table—civil society, private sector, M&E partners, training institutes, M&E champions, and others.
- NMES institutionalization could be linked to ongoing or planned public sector reforms, as appropriate, as a means of clarifying the initiative and gaining broader stakeholder support.
- With the support of senior country officials, plans could be launched to create a central M&E unit to drive future NMES development efforts, and, eventually, the development of an appropriate multiyear NMES action plan.

For the level 3 countries examined,

- Analysis of all level 3 countries confirms that their respective NMESs are "still under construction"—the appropriate institutional arrangements for M&E are often not well established or resourced and there is a need to clarify roles, relationships, and accountabilities of the various actors implicated in the NMES. As noted above, establishing the appropriate institutional arrangements so that the generation of M&E information is a normal course of doing business has proven to be a lengthy exercise⁶—and one that likely has received too little attention in the past.
- This implies a need to work with senior officials to articulate how the current M&E system may need to be modified, both structurally and in its implementation, so as to improve its effectiveness in supporting results-based public sector management. This likely includes addressing issues such as: increasing the use of M&E information across government; expanding the role of evaluation; linking M&E results to the policy, planning, and budgetary cycle; improving the measurement, monitoring, analysis, and reporting of results; as well as potential structural and resource implications for central agencies or ministries.
- Many of the capacity-building efforts need to be aimed at implementation/operationalization challenges for the NMES, that is, moving from theory to reality and gaining full value from the NMES. International good practices are useful to assist this exercise and to arrive at an identification of possible modifications to the current NMES.

- Key agencies need to be implicated in the development and roll out of any NMES enhancements and institutional changes, either through participation in a high-level coordinating committee or via regular communications and updates from senior country officials.
- Once a high-level consensus is achieved, an appropriate NMES action plan is needed for the way ahead, with specific goals and milestones to be monitored. The central M&E unit needs to have the authority to proactively lead and champion this NMES development.

(iii) Supporting evaluation capacity building

For all countries, regardless of level of NMES development,

- Formal acknowledgement of “evaluation” in the NMES strategy as a tool to measure and analyze results-oriented performance of government programs and policies critical to RBM—in effect, moving the thinking of “E” beyond a control- or audit-type function to a tool that assesses effectiveness as well as accountability and, in doing so, generates knowledge for decision makers.
- Use of log frame (logic model/results chain) approach to developing results-oriented performance indicators and cost-effective measurement strategies.
- Incorporating evaluation as a key component of the curriculum for the long-term M&E training and development strategy.

For the level 1 and level 2 countries examined,

- Incorporate into M&E training an awareness of professional standards of practice and methods commonly employed in various types of evaluation.
- Introduce key elements associated with developing terms of reference and managing an evaluation.

For the level 3 countries examined,

- While having more experience and understanding of the NMES, level 3 countries still had considerable difficulty in measuring results—for a variety of reasons, one of which was the paucity of evaluations conducted (aside from internationally funded projects).
- Incorporate into NMES strategy specific actions intended to institutionalize evaluation as a tool of the NMES. This would include development of an evaluation policy, standards, and guidelines that outline expectations, roles, and responsibilities for the systematic use of evaluation in the NMES.
- The policy and guidelines would also include a clear expectation that evaluation is a part of the mandate of the central M&E function of government (conducting high-level and priority evaluations), and that it should

be integrated into ministry-level programming, where key programs of government would, over time, be evaluated for their effectiveness.

- Introduce, on a pilot basis, an evaluation of a priority area/topic for government. This should be conducted to serve as both a *demonstration* of the benefits that evaluation brings to the NMES as well as a *learning experience*, where country officials are actively engaged/mentored by international M&E experts.
- Identify a senior-level committee that would serve as a key forum for identifying priority topics for evaluation; tabling evaluation findings; and ensuring follow-through of evaluation recommendations.

(iv) Supporting the development of key enablers of the NMES

NSAs—data development

- Data challenges are common across all countries and they need to recognize the importance of investing in data development. But, in the case of NMESs, the need to resolve data issues is more immediate and pressing for level 3 countries, given the positive correlation between NMES development and data development.
- In the context of NMES development, data development should not simply be left to the NSA—there should be coordination among the key central agencies. Ministry roles also need to be clarified and integrated with the broader (national) data development.

Evaluation associations—national, regional, international

- For all countries, development of a national evaluation association can help promote an M&E network and community of practice, as well as support professional development.
- Linking to Web sites and networks of regional and international evaluation associations is a cost-effective method of information sharing regarding M&E practices, as well as for identifying potential developmental opportunities.

Oversight bodies—monitoring the implementation of the NMES

- Some form of oversight over NMES development and implementation is critical for all countries. Regularly reviewing progress against the plan enables continuous learning and strategy adjustment. It is therefore important to ensure that there are clear accountabilities for various components of NMES development.
- For level 1 and 2 countries, oversight could be assisted by development partners working with a lead central

agency. For level 3 countries, the central M&E unit (in a strong central agency), a high-level committee, or the NAO could play this role. For most NAOs, this would be a new role, thus requiring appropriate training or orientation.

Conclusion

Regardless of where a country may lie on the NMES continuum, it needs a strategy and action plan for NMES development if improvements are to be made—one that clearly articulates and assigns roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities along with milestones that establish expectations in terms of the pace and level of improvement. Monitoring its development and implementation in effect amounts to applying the concepts of M&E—both the learning and accountability aspects—to help grow and improve the NMES. Indeed, this is good practice at all levels of NMES development.

As an NMES matures, this level of oversight—addressing capacity gaps and identifying an appropriate strategy for building, enhancing, and modifying the NMES—implies being able to objectively assess the state, acceptance, and utilization of the current version of the NMES. This in itself could be threatening to officials aligned with NMES efforts. Without this knowledge though, of what is working and what is not (and why not), an appropriate capacity-building strategy will not be well informed or address any issues critical to NMES effectiveness and sustainability.

Finally, it should be noted that the NMES capacity-building initiatives presented in this note are not intended to be comprehensive—only illustrative of the differences (and similarities) observed across countries at different levels of NMES development. These observations reinforce the importance of conducting an M&E Diagnostic as a prerequisite to determining an appropriate M&E capacity-building strategy (Shepherd 2011). But even more, this note underscores the importance of addressing the fundamental issues of NMES development, even for countries that may appear to be further along the NMES continuum.

About the Author

Robert Lahey was the founding head of the *TBS Centre of Excellence for Evaluation*, the Canadian government's evaluation policy center. He has headed evaluation units in a number of departments and agencies over a 32-year career in the Canadian public service. Since establishing his own consulting firm in 2004, he has advised many countries and organizations around the world on building M&E capacity appropriate to their circumstances. He has written and

presented extensively to the international M&E community and is a member of Canada's *Evaluation Credentialing Board*. Lahey has been recognized by the *Canadian Evaluation Society* for his contribution to the theory and practice of evaluation in Canada.

Notes

1. The NMES framework is further elaborated in Lahey (2013) and Lahey (2014).
2. Robert Lahey assisted the World Bank's CLEAR M&E Center serving Francophone Africa in Senegal in the study of Benin, Senegal and Mauritania, conducted over 2012–13 (CLEAR 2013). He led a formal M&E Readiness Assessment for Botswana's National Strategy Office and the World Bank in 2013. In 2014, Lahey led an M&E Diagnostic for Ethiopia's National Planning Commission and the African Development Bank.
3. The M&E Diagnostic reports conducted for Botswana and Ethiopia are not currently available. In developing this report, however, analysis has shown strong similarities in terms of NMES development and capacity gaps between each of these two countries and Benin, deemed to be a level 3 performer, as discussed in CLEAR (2013).
4. While data serve as a critical element/input to enable an NMES, it needs to be emphasized that the NMES is not simply a mechanism to generate data. The NMES links information sets together and within a particular context to provide analysis, knowledge, and advice that facilitate critical thinking and evidence-based decision making.
5. A more complete discussion of potential initiatives to include in capacity-building strategies for countries at each of three levels is provided in CLEAR (2013).
6. In all countries, the adjustments needed to institutionalize M&E (on both the demand and supply side) may be cultural as well as organizational, and international experience has shown that this requires considerable time to evolve.

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