



# Kenya – Country-Level Experiences in Building Demand and Developing Institutional Capacity for Evaluation in Kenya

**SAMSON MACHUKA**

Director, Ministry of Devolution and Evaluation,  
Monitoring and Evaluation Department

## INTRODUCTION

The Government of Kenya introduced a government-wide structured monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in 2004 called the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (NIMES). It was conceived during the Government's implementation of the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERSWEC) aimed at jumpstarting the economy after years of negative economic growth. The system also came about when a popular democratically elected government was in place.

Chapter seven of the ERSWEC sets out the need for an integrated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. At the national level, the implementation matrix provided a logical framework for M&E that included targets and indicators that were to be disseminated to the lowest level. These indicators were also made available to the District Information and Documentation Centres (DIDC) to assist communities in participatory M&E. The DIDCs are now being renamed County Information and Documentation Centres (CIDCs) in line with the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

NIMES was designed to provide the Government with reliable information that tracked implementation of policies and programmes in the Five Year Medium Term Plans. Information from the system was expected to provide the Government with a reliable feedback mechanism for efficiently allocating or reallocating resources.

Under the NIMES framework, existing departments and institutions play a key role in implementing specific actions while ensuring active participation of the private sector, civil society organizations and target communities. The framework aims to support regular sharing of information with stakeholders through workshops, retreats, seminars and information and communication technology as defined in presidential circular No.1 of 2003.

The integrated process was intended to encompass all efforts aimed at:

- harmonizing existing systems of data collection, reporting and review to encourage, facilitate and advocate for the use of M&E information to inform policy and resource allocation at all levels of Government;
- supporting information gathering and analysis;
- supporting the dissemination and use of M&E information with respect to providing evidence of delivery of the Government's intended development strategy (as laid out in the ERS 2003–2007); and
- encouraging participation of stakeholders drawn from all sectors of the economy, including the private sector, civil society organizations, and development partners in joint assessments.

The aforementioned presidential circular helped to set up the Monitoring and Evaluation Department (MED) under the then Ministry of State for Planning and National Development. The department was mandated with coordinating the implementation of NIMES.

The introduction of NIMES revealed national and local capacity gaps in the public and nongovernmental sectors, which led to the first master plan for the implementation of the system covering the period 2008–2012. This master plan prompted the preparation of a capacity development proposal that aimed to address seven key results areas. With support from development partners, the capacity development programme has been able to address the key result areas as follows:

1. Development and universalization of relevant M&E tools;
  - preparation of a National Indicators handbook every five years to assist in tracking progress;
  - development of metadata for the selected indicators;
  - development of methodological and operational guidelines;
2. Increase the culture of accountability through increased capacity for coordination of NIMES in various institutions;
  - working with universities to train M&E trainers;
  - development of minimum M&E curriculum guidelines;
  - influencing universities to introduce M&E courses;
3. Ensure technical and management competencies at both the national and devolved levels are assessed and strengthened;
  - provision of training;
  - exchange/learning and study tours;
4. Ensure timely reporting using information and communication technology in producing M&E instruments and products;

- development of an executive dashboard is in progress;
  - development of a NIMES website;
5. Encourage multisectoral partnerships to ensure sustainability and continuous support for NIMES implementation;
    - hosting a national M&E week on annual basis;
    - integrating aspects of knowledge management in NIMES implementation;
    - collaborating with the African Community of Practice on Managing for Development Results;
    - supporting the establishment of the Kenya Community of Practice on Managing for Development Results;
    - collaborating with the Evaluation Society of Kenya;
    - collaborating with private sector and civil society organizations;
    - collaborating with devolved governments and national ministries;
  6. Ensure public sector support toward professionalization of the M&E sector by introducing a scheme of service for M&E officers in the public service; and
  7. Work towards transforming the MED into a semi-autonomous government agency to build independence of operations.

Implementation of NIMES at the local level supports the devolution of power as one of the modalities for ensuring effective and efficient service delivery to communities. Several actions under this strategy were expected at the level of counties, sub-counties, local authority, constituency and community. The idea was to empower communities with the knowledge to help them demand services at the local level and question the leadership on the outcomes of development interventions.

NIMES implementation is coordinated by MED, which exists within the Ministry of Devolution and Planning. Specifically, MED is positioned within the Department of Planning. The operations of NIMES are guided by Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) whose membership report to the Technical Oversight Committee (TOC). The TOC ultimately reports to the National Steering Committee that is chaired by the Principal Secretary in the State Department of Planning and Statistics.

The five TAGs cover the following areas: (i) results and research, (ii) project monitoring, (iii) indicator development, (iv) capacity coordination and (v) dissemination and advocacy of monitoring and evaluation results and findings. Membership of the TAGs is drawn from: private sector, other ministries, development partners, experts from think-tanks, civil society organizations and the Government. Membership of the TAGs encourages wide stakeholder engagement in the institutionalization of NIMES.

Since 2005 MED has been producing annual progress reports, quarterly M&E reports and public expenditure reviews. The department has also prepared a national indicators

handbook for monitoring and/or reporting on the government blueprint, Kenya Vision 2030, and its medium-term plans. A limited number of evaluations on malaria, the Constituency Development Fund, education, agriculture (maize and value addition), infrastructure and tourism have also been commissioned.

Implementation of NIMES has faced a myriad of challenges including:

- inadequate performance-based public management culture;
- insufficient demand for M&E;
- weak links between M&E results reports and development of national budget;
- delay in production and submission of M&E reports by implementing agencies.

MED is in the process of supporting counties to establish M&E institutional structures. This will assist in the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of policies, programmes and projects at the county and lower levels of development units. It will also assist in providing feedback for further improvement.

Other efforts by MED include building capacities at the lower-level structures; assisting citizens understand planned programmes and hold the Government to account; encouraging transparency in design and implementation of policies and programmes; encouraging stakeholder involvement at all levels (county and sub-county) in participatory M&E and reporting on the implementation of government policies, programmes and projects; increasing stakeholder participation in providing M&E data; and strengthening institutional linkages to encourage information sharing.

Overall, M&E is expected to provide accurate and timely information on implementing policies, programmes and projects and guide the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and annual performance budgeting.

A lot still needs to be done in supporting M&E in Kenya. Areas meriting special consideration include support for evaluation practice with emphasis on education, health, infrastructure, agriculture and devolution and support for SDGs. The three areas that MED has prioritized are resource mobilization, strong statistical systems and capacity-building.