

RWANDA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY: MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

BY BARNABÉ SEBAGABO MUHIRE,²⁴
FRANÇOIS SEKAMONDO²⁵
AND GODFRE KABERA²⁶

INTRODUCTION

To monitor and evaluate the performance of the Economic Development & Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008-2012 (EDPRS), the government of Rwanda has decided to institute an integrated results and performance framework. This complex of instruments, processes and institutional arrangements is used primarily, but not exclusively, by the government to monitor progress towards achieving objectives. These objectives are usually expressed as a set of targets that serve as values for particular indicators at specific dates. For the framework to be useful, its data and information streams and associated decision outcomes are integrated into the planning and budgeting process. In this way it can strengthen priority setting and realism in sector plans; domestic accountability; predictability of resource mobilization and allocations; efficiency in planning and budgeting where resources are constrained; clarity of cross-sector strategic outcomes; and identification mechanisms of future costed investment in core strategic areas. The framework also can serve as the basis for resource mobilization and predictability of donor support. This integrated monitoring and evaluation framework has been in place since 2008.

The EDPRS results framework enhances accountability in two ways: One, it enhances the government's political accountability to the electorate. Regular publication of outputs and outcomes achieved during the EDPRS period allows political leaders to hold senior civil servants to account for delivering the government's programme. Two, it assures mutual accountability of government and donors. The apex of the EDPRS monitoring system is a

24. Director of Planning, Reform and Capacity Building, Ministry of Public Service and Labour.

25. Social Sector Policy and Programmes Expert, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

26. Policy Analyst and Research Expert, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

series of linked indicator matrices from which the common performance assessment framework (CPAF) is derived. It contains indicators to be used by the government and all donors in assessing the government's performance. It is complemented by another matrix, the development partners' assessment framework (DPAF). This is composed of indicators based on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which are used by the government and all donors to assess donor performance.

The integrated results framework for the EDPRS consists of three components: the national results and policy matrix, the CPAF and the DPAF.

EDPRS NATIONAL RESULTS AND POLICY MATRIX

The EDPRS National Results and Policy Matrix is a policy coordination instrument that builds on the logical linkage between desired performance targets and the policy actions necessary to achieve them. For the purposes of this matrix, it is useful to distinguish between policy actions, outcomes and impact. Governmental implementation of policy actions through the annual budget generates results and outcomes. Some actions provide opportunities for individuals to consume or invest in goods and services supplied by the government, such as schooling and health care. Other actions, such as good roads and an efficient legal system, provide opportunities for business to operate profitably. Individuals and firms that take advantage of these opportunities generate values for outcome/result indicators, such as school enrolment rates or company profitability. Finally, the process of consuming and/or investing in these goods and services enhances key performance indicators such as GDP growth.

The matrix provides a clear mapping of stakeholders' responsibilities for achievement of EDPRS performance targets and the potential linkages and synergies within and among sectors to achieve identified performance set at outcome level.

Purpose of the matrix

The matrix has three main purposes. First, it serves as a planning tool to improve public sector performance and aid effectiveness. It fulfils this function by helping policymakers to recognize problems in policy implementation and identify poor policy outcomes sufficiently early to allow corrective action. In contrast to the management information systems of projects and line ministries, which track implementation progress and results on a daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly basis, the matrix is not designed to report more frequently than once or possibly twice per year. However, it brings together quarterly data to spot problems and provide feedback to the relevant authorities.

A second purpose of the matrix system is to halt, and if possible reverse, the trend towards adopting ever longer lists of indicators to monitor national development performance.

Third, the matrix promotes transparency and accountability in policymaking. Transparency is achieved through publication of a baseline and targets for indicators, which clarify the government's priorities. If an indicator goes off track, thereby prompting analysis that leads to a change in policy, the monitoring system has provided, and is seen to have provided, the evidence for the change.

Matrix monitoring model

The logic of change is that a set of policy actions can positively influence an outcome while, in turn, improvement in a given set of outcomes is part of what characterizes attainment of a given objective. Cutting across individual performance areas or flagships and associated outcomes is the expectation of improvement pertaining to a small set of key strategic results areas, reflecting increased GDP growth, income poverty, inequality and human development.

For each of the key results areas and outcomes one or more indicators have been identified and targets established, and the monitoring and evaluation system reveals success or failure. Data on these indicators come from different sources, but in most cases they are measurable annually. The established schedule of surveys by the Rwanda National Institute of Statistics affords an opportunity for reporting on key strategic results indicators every three to five years.

The matrix identifies key policy actions every year in areas of reform considered high priority for development and poverty reduction. These actions serve as triggers for the release of budget support funds. These priority actions were chosen after close consultations with each sector. For this reason, no changes are made to this matrix without consultation with relevant ministries and public agencies. Some of the policy actions have been expressed in a manner that allows for quantitative observation, although most reflect institutional changes that need to be subjected to more qualitative judgment.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

To monitor the implementation of the EDPRS at national level, the different implementation working groups/clusters prepare an annual report outlining how they are performing against their stated objectives in the national results and policy matrix. These annual reports list all stated objectives and assess them case by case to determine whether progress is on track to achieve the targets and policies specified. The information has to be collected from the sector M&E frameworks. The idea is that for each key performance indicator, the implementation working groups provide a description of progress to date. If performance has been limited this must be explained. This information is presented in an accessible and user-friendly way (figure 1). The traffic light colour coding rates progress: green indicates 'on track', amber, 'too early to say', and red, 'off track'. Essentially, it is a report card that summarizes progress in a way accessible to non-technicians.

Common performance assessment framework

The national results and policy matrix is used by domestic stakeholders to track progress towards EDPRS goals. The CPAF, selected by development partners in consultation with the government as a subset of the matrix, provides the basis for development partners to hold the government accountable for its use of development assistance. This approach aligns the perspectives of Rwandan policymakers and donors and reduces the transaction costs of monitoring.

FIGURE 1. 'TRAFFIC LIGHT' REPORTS TO MONITOR PROGRESS

INDICATOR (Examples)	PROGRESS (Description and assessment of progress)	'TRAFFIC LIGHTS' INDICATOR OF PROGRESS
Primary school net enrolment	Primary school net enrolment increased from 72% in 2000 to 90% in 2006 and is well on track to achieve the 100% target for 2010. The challenge is to maintain rates at this high level and increase the quality of education.	<p>On track</p> 
Gini coefficient of income inequality	The Gini coefficient increased to 0.50 in 2006, up from 0.47 in 2000. Even with concerted efforts, it is unlikely that the 2012 target of 0.40 can be achieved.	<p>Off track</p> 
Population growth rate	The population growth rate has fallen from 2.9 per cent in 2000 to 2.6 per cent in 2006. Although the 2012 target of 2.4 per cent is within reach, actual population levels are beyond target and a faster reduction in population growth would be desirable.	<p>Too early to tell</p> 

Donor performance assessment framework

Though the CPAF is derived from a broader set of EDPRS national level indicators, mutual accountability between the government and development partners remains incomplete without a mechanism for both parties to assess donor performance. The introduction of the DPAF, based on compliance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, is used to provide such a mechanism. The government and development partners discuss and agree on indicators included in the DPAF. The matrix facilitates monitoring the outcomes against donor commitments as well as other commitments relating to the volume and quality of aid provided.

EDPRS MONITORING INSTITUTION FRAMEWORK

EDPRS central monitoring secretariat

Monitoring of EDPRS progress is the prime responsibility of the central monitoring secretariat. It is a permanent technical body staffed by economists, statisticians, policy analysts and researchers. The secretariat is responsible for analysing information from a variety of sources including ministry data, management information systems, surveys and sector reviews. It can also conduct detailed research and undertake timely analysis to provide quick solutions to emerging bottlenecks.

The secretariat works with planning units from all ministries and districts that have a mandate to monitor sector or district development strategies and plans. Since 2008 officers in charge of monitoring and evaluation (EDPRS facilitators) have been provided to all ministries leading development sectors and to the five provinces.

Implementation working groups

For effective implementation and monitoring of EDPRS priorities, three clusters – economic, governance and social – were formed. These clusters are closely aligned to EDPRS priorities and CPAF indicators and policy actions so they can facilitate monitoring and evaluation. Focal points provide monitoring information and analysis to the central monitoring secretariat on implementation progress of the EDPRS and CPAF indicators and policy actions. They obtain this information from the EDPRS facilitators, located for this purpose in the line ministries and provinces. Each focal point serves also as a channel of communication between the central monitoring secretariat and the cluster in his/her area of responsibility.

At the political level, monitoring and evaluation is carried out through a single EDPRS review framework that stresses accountability by the government and development partners (figure 2). The EDPRS progress is reviewed each semester (twice yearly) and annually by the implementation working groups (clusters) using the annual progress report mechanism. It draws on the semester joint sector reviews and quarterly District Imihigo evaluations. The semester and annual progress reports are subsequently submitted to the cabinet. The joint sector reviews are supported by regular public expenditure reviews (which match public expenditures against objectives), public expenditure tracking surveys (which track whether public expenditures reached targeted beneficiaries), citizen report cards and community score cards.

FIGURE 2. EDPRS INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

