

6.4 | Session A4: Challenges and opportunities in institutionalizing National Evaluation Systems

Moderator

- ◆ **Candice Morkel**, Director, Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR- Anglophone Africa), South Africa

Panellists

- ◆ **Marcelo Guarany**, Deputy Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Economy, Brazil
- ◆ **Susan Sulu**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination, Solomon Islands
- ◆ **Gerard Jean Jacques**, Chief Development Planner, Ministry of Planning, Economic Development, Climate Resilience, Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy, Dominica
- ◆ **Sakina Bakari Mwinyimkuu**, Assistant Director-Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Systems, President's Office - Public Service Management and Good Governance, Tanzania
- ◆ **Nandrot Marat-Abyla Abala**, Director General, Evaluation of Public Policies, Ministry for the Promotion of Good Governance and the Fight Against Corruption, Gabon



What are the real-life challenges and opportunities in establishing and strengthening a National Evaluation System? How do we build on existing initiatives, how do we best link subnational M&E systems to country-wide systems, what are the particular challenges of Small Island Developing States, and what is really needed to institutionalize evaluation?

- ♦ **Crisis is an opportunity to bring about change and begin institutionalizing national M&E systems.** In Brazil, crisis in 2016 led to a realization of the importance of evaluating public expenditure, and to the creation of political space and support to begin establishing a national M&E system. In Dominica, a hurricane devastated the country, but created a sense of a blank state to rewrite, restructure, and rebuild the country, including building an M&E system.
- ♦ **Politics is a double-edged sword.** Political contexts can create opportunities to develop M&E systems, for example where there is convergence of demand from government ministries and politicians for evidence that policies are working. However, if the evidence presented is not appealing, or if there is fear that evaluation could lead to punitive responses, there may be resistance.
- ♦ **Lack of skills and recognition of M&E experts as a cadre within government hampers the institutionalization of M&E, as does lack of financing.** There is a need for greater skills in - and understanding of - M&E across government systems, as well as career development opportunities for M&E specialists. Small States also face the challenge of limited human resource pools, and an interconnectedness that may limit the independence and objectivity needed for good evaluation. Other challenges include lack of financing, a multiplicity of actors with a mandate for evaluation, proliferation of IT systems and sources of data that are not connected.
- ♦ **Small Island Developing States face challenging geographies and corresponding weaknesses in infrastructure.** The Solomon Islands, a country made up of several islands, faces information and communication technology challenges, and there is a need to strengthen digitization and data. In Dominica, mountainous terrain has similarly hindered development.
- ♦ **Linking national and subnational systems is a challenge for both large and small States.** For example, in Brazil, bringing about change in the M&E system means tackling the federal, state and municipality levels. It takes time to develop and test at the federal level and then take forward to the other levels. Fragmentation is also a challenge, if there are multiple institutions mandated to coordinate M&E at the central level; this in turn affects implementation at the subnational level. There may be pockets, which remain isolated and uncoordinated. For the system to work, local governments need capacities and systems in place that generate data which can feed into national policymaking.

Conclusion

There are multiple challenges to institutionalizing NES, including a (lack of a) culture of evaluation, fear of punishment, lack of human and financial resources, fragmented systems and data, and a need to coordinate multiple systems at multiple levels. Yet, there are opportunities which may present themselves in surprising contexts, such as crises, where the need for strong M&E systems becomes apparent and momentum is found.

Quotes

“



“In Brazil we took advantage of a particular political context to introduce a National Evaluation System, but now we are reaching a level of institutionalization where we won’t be able to go back, regardless of the results of elections, now that this is part of the law. This is not a matter of ideology, but is something that supports new levels of development and improvements in people’s lives. This is the strongest aspect of institutionalization of evaluation.”

— **Marcelo Guarany**, Deputy Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Economy, Brazil

“Ensuring sustained and continued efforts is key. We might have systems in place, or be moving to put systems in place, but it is tenacity that is needed. We need to sustain our efforts to institutionalize evaluation. There is hope. There is faith in humanity. Let us keep on keeping on.”

— **Susan Sulu**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination, Solomon Islands

“



Watch the session



Video recording of the Session A4:

[NEC 2022 | Stream A4 - Challenges & Opportunities in institutionalising National Evaluation Systems - YouTube](#)

