

## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

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Preferred format:	<input type="checkbox"/> Formal presentation (maximum 10 minutes) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X Participation in a panel discussion where the experience can be shared <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X Participation in an interactive session where the example can be shared, without a formal presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____
I will need to apply for bursary support, if selected.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X No
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### Abstract Text (max. 500 words)

This article addresses the challenge of collaboratively designing customized national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems strengthening plans using the available diagnostic information of these systems. By doing so, the article proposes a common framework that could be applied in different countries and contexts.

The article relates to the task faced by the Center for Learning on Evaluation and Results for Latin America and the Caribbean (CLEAR LAC), and CLEAR Centers in general, which require developing M&E systems strengthening plans to orientate better its technical assistance, training and knowledge exchange efforts. The latter, collaboratively, with national M&E entities and key stakeholders working in the country. The article is inspired by previous experiences at subnational levels and ongoing implementation efforts in LAC countries.

First, the article introduces different sources of diagnostic information available for this purpose and how these are analyzed. Among these are the Monitoring and Evaluation System Analysis (MESA) tool and the National Evaluation Capacities Index (INCE). In addition, the use of primary sources is explained too such as semi-structured interviews or the information obtained from workshops or other participatory methods.

Then, the article explains how this diagnostic information is used to define a central problem and a group of specific problems associated with the M&E national system. Additionally, the article describes the participatory methods or instances available to assess, refine and validate these definitions with key actors. All this together is essential as the problems defined will constitute the backbone of the future M&E strengthening plan.

The article then develops in detail the pre-design phase of the process. This entails producing a first version of the M&E strengthening plan, including context information related to the M&E system, a brief characterization of the M&E challenges for each specific problem defined, the underlying causes explaining these challenges and potential components, such as technical assistance to develop an M&E legislation. Using a common and simplified format, this first phase provides a first overview of the structure of the M&E strengthening plan.

Then, the article addresses the design phase of the procedure. This starts once components have been agreed upon by key stakeholders and the national M&E ruling entity. This stage implies defining specific activities, resources needed and participant institutions for each component. As with previous sections, the article discusses participatory methods or instances to better inform and validate this design and start building a strong network to support the future implementation of this plan in the country.

Finally, the article reflects on the collaborative nature of the framework proposed by discussing how knowledge from multiple perspectives and efforts from different institutions are integrated into practice. This includes using diagnostic information from diverse sources to define problems and understand underlying factors, integrating different stakeholders in essential parts of the process, and providing a plan where actions being led by a multiplicity of institutions are part of a holistic plan to strengthen the M&E system in a country.