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| Title of the abstract | Ensuring data quality and accessibility for evidence-based decision making: A case of South African local government |
| Conference session | x Stream A. Responsive National Evaluation Systems   * Ensuring Data Quality and Accessibility: Challenges and Solutions   □ Stream B. Inclusive National Evaluation Systems  □ Stream C. Future Driven Systems and Approaches |
| Name(s), title(s) and institutional affiliation(s) of all other authors/contributors (if applicable) |  |
| Preferred format: | X Formal presentation (maximum 10 minutes)  □ Participation in a panel discussion where the experience can be shared  □ Participation in an interactive session where the example can be shared, without a formal presentation  □ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| I will need to apply for bursary support, if selected. | X Yes  □ No |
| Language to be used for presentation | X English □ French □ Spanish □ Chinese |

**Abstract Text (max. 500 words)**

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| In South Africa, the government operates through three distinct spheres. The national government sphere represents the central government of the entire country. It is responsible for matters that affect the nation as a whole, such as defense, foreign affairs, and national economic policies. The provincial government handles issues specific to their respective provinces, including education, health, transportation, and local economic development. Local government: operates at the municipal level. It includes cities, towns, and rural areas. Local governments focus on community-specific services like water supply, waste management, housing, and local infrastructure.  The South African National Evaluation System (NES) was introduced in 2011 through the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF), approved by the South African Cabinet. The NEPF guides national and provincial governments in conducting evaluations. While progress has been made in institutionalising monitoring and evaluation at the national and provincial levels through interventions that include skills development, development of guidelines, establishment of a community of practice, etc, challenges remain. Notably, local government was brought into the NES later, around 2018-2019.  Legislative requirements mandate that municipalities engage in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to assess their developmental efforts. The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Municipal Finance Management Act, and Municipal Systems Act established standards for financial management, accountability, and performance. These laws require effective resource utilization, availability of information on municipal websites, and the development of performance management systems with key indicators for monitoring and evaluating developmental initiatives.  Challenges in M&E processes include data quality (reliability, accuracy, completeness, and consistency) and data accessibility. Local government faces difficulties in ensuring quality and accessible performance information. The presentation will spotlight challenges in local government in Gauteng Province and share initiatives related to data management, verification, quality assurance and accessibility." |