**ABSTRACT FOR THE NATIONAL EVALUATION CONFERENCE 2024**

**TITLE OF THE PAPER:** EVIDENCE BASEDPROGRAMME PLANNING: A PRE-REQUISITE FOR INSTITUTIONALISATION OF EVALUATION SYSTEMS

**CONFERENCE STRAND:** NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEMS: BUILDING STRONG EVALUATION SYSTEMS ENSURING USE

1. **Introduction and Objectives**

**Introduction**

Significant reforms have been successfully implemented in the planning landscape in South Africa, to address the triple challenges that the country faces which are, poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Such reforms include a National Development Plan, a government wide strategic planning and annual performance planning system, and a monitoring and evaluation system for all of government.

The introduction of programme planning also provided an opportunity to embed monitoring and evaluation systems within government. This coupled with the introduction of planning methodologies such as the Theory of Change galvanized the planning, monitoring and evaluation practices within the South African government towards a shared vision of achieving the key priorities of government.

**Objectives**

The objective of this paper are to:

* Emphasise the importance of programme planning as an enabler to institutionalizing evaluation practices within government.
* Highlight the institutionalization of the Theory of Change methodology and results-based approach in South Africa as a prerequisite for programme planning.
* Share the South African experience of institutionalizing programme planning and its subsequent contribution to institutionalizing evaluations.
* Highlight the use of evidence for credible programme planning
* Highlight the promotion of equity through inclusive programme planning for women, youth and persons with disability.
* Highlight the good practice, lessons learnt and challenges that were overcome in the implementation of programme planning.

1. **Methods**

Information will be sourced from:

* Existing policies, frameworks, guidelines and evaluations that have been conducted on the planning and evaluation system in South Africa.
* Actual case studies of institutional plans including Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans and programme plans.
* Monitoring data of selected government institutions.
* Evaluations of selected priority programmes in South Africa

1. **Results**

The presentation seeks to achieve the following:

* Highlight that planning methodology underpins rigorous evaluation systems.
* Highlight the role of evidence in programme planning and in contributing to evaluations
* Highlight the inclusion of equity priorities underpinning all programmes (women, youth and persons with disabilities)
* Share the South African experience (challenges and successes) and lessons learnt on the role of planning in embedding credible evaluation systems.
* Recommendations on the institutionalization of programme planning as an enabler for evaluations.

1. **Conclusion**

Significant successes have been made in South Africa towards the institutionalization of planning and evaluation systems towards achieving the development goals of the country. These successes have not been without challenges. However, it needs to be understood that the institutionalization of planning and evaluation is a journey and not a once off event.

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