

**Strengthening evaluation *capabilities: anchoring evaluation into the machinery of Government (MoG).***

***When?***

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**Ian Goldman (****ian.goldman@wits.ac.za****)**

Ian is an International Advisor on Evaluation/M&E and Evidence Systems, President of the International Evaluation Academy and an Adjunct Professor at the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, University of Cape Town. He worked in the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, South Africa, where he established and ran the National Evaluation System to 2018 and was a founder of the Twende Mbele African M&E Partnership. Since 2018 Ian has been researching, training and consulting internationally in evidence use, monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as on M&E for just transition. He advises on M&E with the South African Presidency, Global Evaluation Initiative, CLEAR Anglophone Africa, and Operation Vulindlela in South Africa, and is on the International Evaluation Academy and South African Parliamentary Institute Boards.

**Gonzalo Hernández Licona (ghlicona@gmail.com) :** He is a Mexican economist. He is currently Director of the Multidimensional Poverty Network (MPPN), belonging to the University of Oxford, through the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). The MPPN brings together more than 60 countries and more than 20 international institutions to understand and promote the generation of multidimensional poverty measurements at the national level. Dr. Hernández Licona has been a member of the Board of Governors of El Colegio de México since 2016; He is also a Senior Research Fellow of the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).

**Emmanuel Jimenez (****ejimenez@adb.org****)**  is Director General, Independent Evaluation Department of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Reporting to ADB’s Board of Directors, his responsibilities include assessing ADB’s development effectiveness, as well providing lessons to inform ADB operations. Prior to joining ADB, Mr. Jimenez worked as an Independent Consultant who provides advice, and conducts research and training on evaluation, economics, development management, education and social protection programs. Prior to this, he was the Executive Director and CEO of 3ie. In this role, he led and conducted impact evaluations and evidence reviews. He provided strategic direction to the organization as it championed the generation and use of evidence to guide decisions regarding policies and programs that improve lives in low and middle-income countries. Previously, Mr. Jimenez had worked for 30 years in the World Bank Group (WBG) and held several senior management roles across several departments such as the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), the South Asia, East Asia, and Pacific Groups, and the Policy Research Department. Mr. Jimenez was a faculty member of the Economics Department of Western University in London, Canada. Throughout his career, he has published extensively, including articles in peer-reviewed professional journals, books and reports on economic development and served as managing editor of several international development journals.

**Denis Jobin** (Djobin@unicef.org) has established a track record over the past 24 years, demonstrating expertise in program planning, monitoring, and evaluation at national (Canada) and international levels. Since 2018, Denis has worked as a Senior Evaluation Specialist within the Evaluation Office, leading the education, equity, and poverty portfolio of the 2022-2025 strategic plan. This role has seen him at the forefront of UNICEF’s initiatives in Social Protection, Unicef work in Urban and Slums settings, and Poverty Reduction, in addition to spearheading the review of EO QA/QC processes and the development of quality assurance procedures.

Denis held the role of Chief of PME and Field Coordination (2010-18) for UNICEF Nigeria, where his contributions spanned a broad spectrum of sectors of UNICEF program areas and settings, including leading impact evaluation studies in emergency context. He has contributed to shaping international discourse on evaluation through his active involvement as IDEAS vice president and authorship of numerous publications and reports. These works primarily focus on Evaluation, Evaluation capacity and capabilities, and Impact Evaluation, highlighting his commitment to advancing the field.

**Introduction:**

Following the UN General Assembly Resolution on strengthening country-led evaluations, this panel aims to explore the integration of evaluation capabilities within broader public sector reforms and frame around the Pinciple of Public Adminsitration (SIGMA-OECD)[[1]](#footnote-1) as possible entry points for building a national evaluation system (NES) embeded within the national public governance arrangement. While much emphasis has been devoted to evaluation capacity (the skills, assets, and institutional arrangements at individual, organizational, and contextual levels), evaluation capabilities (the ability and aptitudes to put these assets in motion beyond the national evaluation units) within the wide machinery of government[[2]](#footnote-2) have received little attention.

The Principles of Public Administration follows the six thematic areas set out in the 2014 Enlargement Strategy:

* Strategy
* policy development and co-ordination
* public service and human resource management
* organisation, accountability and oversight
* service delivery and digitalisation
* public financial management.

The 32 Principles outline values, behaviours and outcomes, while the 270 sub‑principles provide more detailed guidance on how to achieve these results and ensure adequate administrative capacity.

We will delve into the drivers of the ability of organizations and individuals in the whole government to put in motion the evaluation activities for a vibrant, integrated, national evaluation ecosystem of strategic alignment, capacity building, cross-sector collaboration, and other key linkages that strengthen government evaluation capabilities. The panel will provide insights into how these linkages can be effectively implemented in diverse contexts and environments. Key drivers of enhancing government capabilities include, but is not limited to: Political will to learn from experience including failures, seeing that improving development outcomes will lead to electoral benefits; Incentive mechanisms within Ministries and agencies in support of the demand for performance information and supply quality evaluation; Integration for the assessment within the public management process; Strategic alignment and central agency support; Capacity building and training of civil servants; Programme and performance budget structuring; Close linkage with other evidence functions such as research, national data; strategic management government and reporting; The role of incentives for the key national stakeholders to work towards results using the best possible evidence; Guidelines and templates; Use of government wide IT systems; Engagement and transparency with internal, external and citizens engagement; Evaluation, harvesting failures and continuous learning.

**Why this panel matter for the NEC 2024?**

**NEC theme** Stream A: National Evaluation Systems – Building strong evaluation systems ensuring use. And Stream B: Inclusive Evaluation Systems – Including citizens’ voice, alternative knowledge, and evaluating complexity**.**

The proposed panel "Strengthening Government Evaluation Capabilities" aligns seamlessly with the theme of the 2024 National Evaluation Capacity (NEC) Conference, "Responsive Evaluation: For Government, For Inclusion, For the Future." This panel explores the integration of evaluation capabilities within broader public sector reforms following the UN General Assembly Resolution on strengthening country-led evaluations. By framing the discussion around the Principles of Public Administration (SIGMA-OECD), we will identify potential entry points for building a national evaluation system (NES) embedded within the national public governance framework.

While considerable attention has been given to evaluation capacity—encompassing skills, assets, and institutional arrangements at various levels—evaluation capabilities, defined as the ability to mobilize these assets effectively within the broader Machinery of Government (MoG***;*** the interconnected structures and processes of government), have been less explored. This panel will delve into the factors enabling organizations and individuals to implement evaluation activities, fostering a vibrant, integrated national evaluation system. We will focus on strategic alignment, capacity building, cross-sector collaboration, and other key linkages that enhance government evaluation capabilities and delve into the MoG. The discussion will provide insights into how these linkages can be effectively implemented in diverse contexts, supporting evidence-based policymaking, accountability, and public trust.

By addressing key drivers such as political will, incentive mechanisms, strategic alignment, capacity building, and integration within the Machinery of Government, this panel will offer a comprehensive roadmap for governments and development partners. The objective is to better understand and support the development of evaluation capabilities, ensuring they are aligned with national goals and integrated into the broader public governance framework. This panel is essential for highlighting practical approaches to strengthen NES and enhance the role of evaluation in achieving sustainable development goals.

**Objectives and enduring questions:**

1. To discuss the importance of the key drivers for an NES within the context of the Machinery of Government (MoG).
2. To clarify the distinction between capacity building and capability development in the context of NESs.
3. To examine organizational structures, processes, and cultures that support the practical application of evaluation capacities and capabilities.
4. To present the MESA diagnostic framework in assessing National Evaluation Capabilities asnd its implications for the MoG.
5. To examine the role of collaboration and cross-pollination across different modern public management functions, especially the management within the context of the Machinery of Government (MoG).
6. To examine how evaluation systems can support evidence-based policymaking, accountability, transparency, and public trust and engagement.

**Key list of questions from which the panel will select a few to delve into**:

1. How do evaluation capabilities differ from evaluation capacities in the context of enhancing national evaluation systems (NES) within the context of the Machinery of Government (MoG)?
2. What strategies increase internal demand for evaluations, and how does this demand drive the enhancement of evaluation capabilities?
3. What strategic alignments and central agency support are essential for activating evaluation capabilities within within the context of the Machinery of Government (MoG).?
4. How can capacity building for civil servants be effectively transitioned into actionable evaluation capabilities?
5. What organizational changes support the practical application and sustainability of evaluation capabilities?
6. How evaluation is integrated into the public management process (and the MoG) and not a function apart?
7. How does program and performance budgeting link with the development and implementation of evaluation capabilities?
8. What mechanisms ensure continuous learning and improvement from evaluations, including learning from failures?
9. How can evaluations promote transparency and accountability to public trust and engagement?
10. What is the role of incentives in MoG?
11. What type of training is important to enhance national evalution capabilities?

**The panel**

“Strengthening Government Evaluation Capabilities” is designed to significantly contribute to identify pathways to strengthen National Evaluation Systems (NES), addressing key aspects of strengthening government evaluation capabilities embedded within the context of the Machinery of Government (MoG).

The discussion will provide a roadmap for governments and development partners to better understand the importance of capabilities, in support of their capacity development, enhance their evaluation capabilities, aligning them effectively with different pathways as need be and move towards more integrated CLES.

**Outcome:**

The panel will produce a set of insights for better integrating evaluation capabilities to CLES. It also linked with EvalSDG knowledge platform to encourage Blogs, and guidance.

**Targeted audience**

This panel invites Government officials from both national and sub-national levels involved in evaluation and public policy, such as those in central planning and finance ministries, sectoral ministries, evaluation units, national statistical agencies, and supreme audit institutions. Additionally, civil society organizations, academic institutions, and the private sector play significant roles. Internationally, UNDP/UN agencies, international financial institutions, other development partners, and global evaluation communities are crucial in supporting national governments with evaluation efforts, governance initiatives, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda.

1. OECD (2023), The Principles of Public Administration, OECD, Paris, <https://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Principles-of-Public-Administration-2023.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See for instance : [Machinery of government changes | Institute for Government](https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainer/machinery-government-changes) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)