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| **Enhancing Evaluation Culture in Central Asia Region: Navigating Cultural Diversity and Building Inclusive Evaluation Capacities** | |
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**Abstract:**

In Central Asia (particularly – in Kazakhstan), as in many emerging economies, the development of a robust evaluation culture is still nascent, with significant gaps in understanding and differentiating between monitoring, assessment, and evaluation. This lack of clarity often leads to ineffective policymaking and the underutilization of evaluations in governmental and civil sectors. This abstract proposes a comprehensive framework to foster an inclusive evaluation system tailored to CA's unique cultural and contextual diversities.

Firstly, the need to navigate cultural and contextual diversity is paramount. Kazakhstan’s diverse demographic and socio-economic landscape requires an evaluation system that respects and integrates local realities and traditional knowledge systems into mainstream evaluation processes. This approach not only enhances relevance but also ensures that evaluations are culturally sensitive and more readily accepted by local communities.

Secondly, building inclusive capacity is essential for nurturing a homegrown evaluation community. This involves developing tailored educational programs that focus on the specific needs of various stakeholders in the evaluation process, including government officials, NGO representatives, and members of civil society. Such programs should aim to clarify the distinct roles and methodologies of monitoring, assessment, and evaluation, thereby enhancing the stakeholders' ability to participate effectively in the evaluation processes.

Additionally, in Central Asian countries, there exists a culture of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), but it is primarily associated with internationally funded projects. Therefore, alongside promoting an understanding of the different types of M&E and fostering an evaluation culture, one of the key tasks is to expand the community of qualified evaluators. These evaluators should possess the necessary knowledge and gain experience in real-world M&E practices, extending beyond the scope of international projects to encompass national and local initiatives.

Last (but not least), the formation of robust partnerships between civil society, the private sector, and the government can significantly bolster national evaluation capacities. By engaging diverse groups in dialogue and cooperation, these partnerships can leverage the unique strengths and perspectives of each sector, leading to richer, more comprehensive evaluations and greater communal buy-in.

In conclusion, by addressing these critical areas, Kazakhstan and other CA countries can develop an inclusive evaluation system that not only supports the sustainable development goals but also strengthens governance and public accountability. The proposed framework aims to catalyze interest and investment in evaluation cultures among all relevant stakeholders, laying a foundation for informed decision-making and effective policy implementation in the whole region.