



## “Responsive Evaluation: For Government, For Inclusions, For the Future”

### Call for abstracts

(May 2024)

#### 1 BACKGROUND

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim for a better world by 2030 and seek to end poverty, fight inequality, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. Evaluation can be a powerful tool for improving public accountability and learning, accelerating the implementation of the SDGs and positive development change globally.

Evaluation systems and capacity gaps at the national level, however, remain a major challenge in many countries. To address this, the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP ([UNDP IEO](#)) has organized biennial [National Evaluation Capacities \(NEC\) Conferences](#) since 2009 in partnership with various governments.

In 2020, UNDP IEO joined forces with the [World Bank IEG](#) and other partners to establish the [Global Evaluation Initiative](#) (GEI), bringing together different national evaluation capacity development initiatives under one umbrella, including the network of [Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results \(CLEAR\)](#) and training programmes such as [the International Programme for Development Evaluation Training \(IPDET\)](#). Since 2022 the NEC conference has been organized in collaboration with the GEI.

NEC’s audiences include:

- **Government officials from national and sub-national institutions** directly and indirectly engaged with evaluation and public policy, including central planning and finance ministries, sectoral ministries, evaluation units, national statistical agencies, and supreme audit institutions.
- **Civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector.**
- **UNDP/ UN agencies, international financial institutions, other development partners and global evaluation communities** engaged in supporting national governments with evaluation, governance, and the SDG agenda.

The [NEC conferences](#) will provide opportunities to:

- Share progress, lessons, innovations, experiences and perspectives in strengthening national monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Enhance the skills of those commissioning, conducting, using, and advocating for evaluation.
- Foster existing and new partnerships to strengthen national evaluation systems, with an emphasis on South-South Cooperation.

## 2 NEC 2024

The 2024 [National Evaluation Capacity \(NEC\) Conference](#) is the eighth in the series of conferences. The theme of the 2024 NEC Conference is ***“Responsive Evaluation: For Government, For Inclusion, For the Future.”*** This theme underscores the importance of sharing progress and lessons learned in strengthening national evaluation systems, their role in achieving the SDGs and other development goals, and how new technologies and approaches in evaluation can facilitate the achievement of the SDGs.

The Conference will take place in Beijing, China, from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The first three days (14<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> October) will be dedicated to the main conference, followed by a two-day post-conference training workshop (17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024).

**The Conference** will be designed to provide all participants with multiple spaces for engagement. A mix of plenary sessions and parallel strands on a range of topics will be organized, using a variety of formats including keynote speakers, paper presentations, and panel discussions, as well as innovative arrangements that facilitate more informal discussion and sharing of experiences between partners.

This is a ‘by invitation only’ conference. Conference participants are identified through UNDP country offices, regional bureaus, and partner organizations.

The registration will open in August 2024.

The main working language of the Conference will be English.

Simultaneous interpretation from English into Chinese, French, and Spanish will be available for all conference sessions.

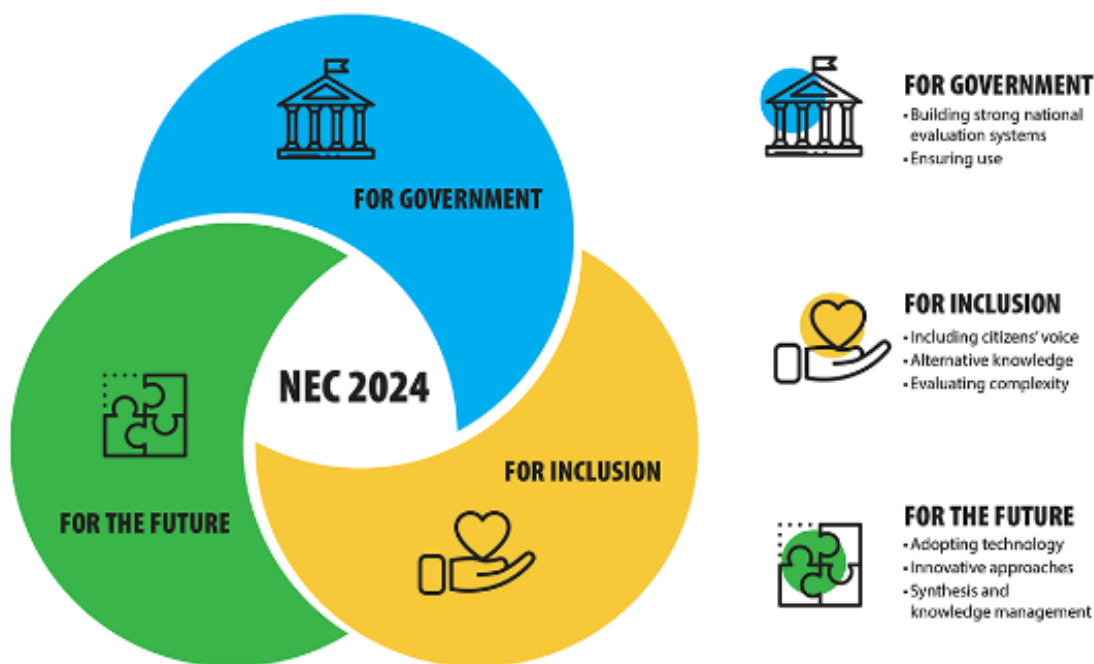
## 3 CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

We are pleased to invite government officials and other conference participants engaged in evaluation, governance, and the implementation of the SDG agenda to submit abstracts.

### Submission procedure

[To submit a proposal, please click here.](#)

**Submission is now open for proposed presentations or panel contributions until 28 June 2024.** The preferred language for submissions is English, but abstracts in Spanish or French will also be considered.



## Proposed topics

Submissions are encouraged around the following three thematic streams of the 2024 NEC Conference:

- **Stream A:** National Evaluation Systems – Building strong evaluation systems ensuring use.
- **Stream B:** Inclusive Evaluation Systems – Including citizens’ voice, alternative knowledge, and evaluating complexity.
- **Stream C:** Future-driven Systems and Approaches – Adapting technology, innovative approaches, synthesis, and knowledge management.

Potential topics under each Stream are listed below as a reference. **Practical, real-life examples** of interest to fellow practitioners are particularly welcome. This could include innovation (an innovative nationally-led evaluation, new methods, ways of integrating the SDGs into an evaluation); examples of recommendations informing policy or procedure (an evaluation that led to policy change, experiences of institutionalizing evaluations and policy frameworks, a discussion between an evaluator and an evaluand about how an evaluation has been used, successful stakeholder engagement, or new institutional arrangements); or of challenges faced and lessons learned.

### Stream A - National evaluation systems:

- **Building Robust National Evaluation Systems:** leaving no one behind.
- **Strengthening evidence-based decision making** at the country level: challenges and recommendations.
- **National policies and capabilities** for evidence-based planning and results-based governance. Overcoming challenges in institutionalizing evaluation.

- **Fostering Peer Learning and Collaboration to strengthen NES.**
- **Transparency and Participation:** Key Pillars of Effective National Evaluation Systems
- **Ensuring Data Quality and Accessibility:** Challenges and Solutions
- **Promoting Equity through Disaggregated Data:** Strategies for Inclusive Policy Development
- **Harnessing Technology for Data Collection and Evaluation**

#### Stream B - Inclusive evaluation systems:

- **Navigating Cultural and Contextual Diversity:** Tailoring Evaluation Systems to National Realities
- **Advancing Equity and Inclusion:** Strategies for Implementing Inclusive National Evaluation Systems
- **Beyond Numbers:** Capturing Impact with Inclusive Evaluation Frameworks
- **Inclusive Methodologies for National Evaluation Systems:** Bridging Gaps, Engaging Stakeholders and Empowering Communities
- **Building Inclusive Capacity:** Empowering Stakeholders for Effective Participation in Evaluation
- **Disaggregated Data for Inclusive Evaluation:** Addressing Disparities and Inequalities
- **Breaking Barriers:** Ensuring Accessibility in National Evaluation Processes
- **Equity Lens in Action:** Unveiling Systemic Inequalities through Inclusive Evaluations
- **Partnerships with civil society and the private sector** to bolster national evaluation capacities.

#### Stream C - Future driven systems and approaches:

- **Embracing technological change:** Strategies for Integrating New Technologies into National Evaluation Systems.
- **Innovative Approaches for Addressing Methodological Challenges** in Evaluation Practices.
- **From Complexity to Clarity:** Synthesizing Data in Evaluation Practices
- **Strategies for Enhancing Inclusivity** in National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Amid Technological Transformation
- **Balancing Tradition with Innovation:** The Role of Ethical Guidelines and contextualization in Modern Evaluation Methodologies
- **Harnessing the Power of Synthesis Approaches:** Using and mapping existing evidence to meet the SDGs.
- **Adapting to Change:** Building Resilient National Evaluation Systems in a Rapidly Transforming World
- **AI-Powered Evaluation and Ethical Considerations:** Exploring Opportunities and Challenges for National Monitoring Systems.

#### Selection process

The submitted abstracts will be reviewed by using the following criteria:

- a. **Relevance:** The proposed presentation should be aligned with the conference theme and one or more of the conference strands.
- b. **Clarity and quality:** The abstract should clearly explain the example to be presented. Authors should prepare their abstracts with care, ensuring that the reader will understand the background of the issue(s), and the objectives and relevance of the proposed topic for presentation.

- c. **Specificity and concreteness:** The abstract must present a topic that includes concrete and specific examples (a good practice, lesson learned and/or a challenge that was overcome, for example).
- d. **Innovation:** The abstract must show an innovation or introduce a new topic or application in the field of interest.
- e. **Gender equality and disability rights:** Speakers will be selected with diversity and inclusion in mind, to promote a broad range of perspectives.
- f. **Diversity:** Efforts will be made to provide space to as many different countries and cultural viewpoints as possible.

The NEC Secretariat will reach out to the authors of the selected abstracts before **1 August 2024** with information of assigned sessions and presentation form.

The authors of selected abstracts will be invited to submit a short paper (3-4 pages) to be included in a publication of the Conference Proceedings.

For any questions about the abstracts, please contact the NEC Secretariat at [ieo.nec@undp.org](mailto:ieo.nec@undp.org).

#### Annex 1: Past conference publications:

- NEC Proceedings
  - **7<sup>th</sup> NEC conference, 2022, Turin, Italy.**
    - **Resilient National Evaluation Systems for Sustainable Development**
  - **6<sup>th</sup> NEC conference, 2019, Hurghada, Egypt:**
    - **“Leaving No One Behind: Evaluation for 2030”**
  - **5<sup>th</sup> NEC conference, 2017, Istanbul, Turkey,**
    - **“People, Planet and Progress in the SDG Era”**
  - **4<sup>th</sup> NEC conference, 2015, Bangkok, Thailand,**
    - **“Blending Evaluation Principles with Development Practices to Change People’s Lives”**
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> NEC conference, 2013, Sao Paulo, Brazil,**
    - **“Solutions Related To Challenges of Independence, Credibility and Use of Evaluation”**
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> NEC conference, 2011, Johannesburg, South Africa,**
    - **“Use of Evaluation in Decision Making for Public Policies and Programmes”**
  - **1<sup>st</sup> NEC conference, 2009, Casablanca, Morocco,**
    - **“Strengthening National Capacities for Public Policy evaluation, through South-South Cooperation.”**
- [NEC Information Centre](#) (papers, presentations, [video](#) and photo gallery)

Annex 2: Abstract submission template (to be uploaded to the submission portal)

<b>ABSTRACT SUBMISSION TEMPLATE</b>	
Presenter's full name (title, name, surname)	Victor Kabwe
Nationality	Zambian
Gender	Male
Country of residence	Zambia
Institutional affiliation	Zambia Monitoring and Evaluation Association (ZAMEA)
Contact information including email and telephone	+26097749747, email: victorkabwe27@gmail.com
Title of the abstract	Enhanced Models for Capacity Building in Monitoring and Evaluation in the Public Sector
Conference session	<input type="checkbox"/> Stream A. Responsive National Evaluation Systems <input type="checkbox"/> Stream B. Inclusive National Evaluation Systems <input type="checkbox"/> Stream C. Future Driven Systems and Approaches
Name(s), title(s) and institutional affiliation(s) of all other authors/contributors (if applicable)	Victor Kabwe Chairperson for the Za
Preferred format:	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Formal presentation (maximum 10 minutes)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Participation in a panel discussion where the experience can be shared</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 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"/> <b>Yes</b>
Language to be used for presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>English</b>

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

**Title: Assessment of the National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Implementation in Zambia**

The Zambia Monitoring and Evaluation Association (ZaMEA) conducted a comprehensive assessment of the National Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy, which was launched in 2019. The policy aims to enhance M&E functions across ministries, provinces, spending agencies, and all stakeholders. This assessment focused on determining the implementation status and identifying challenges hindering its execution.

**Method:** The data collection strategy employed by ZaMEA involved the use of a semi-structured tool to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from various ministries and provinces. The respondents selected for data collection were primarily staff members from the planning and M&E departments. In addition, ZaMEA analyzed the financial allocations for M&E activities, as outlined in the yellow books for FY2023, concentrating on 25 line ministries.

**Results:** The assessment received responses from 14 out of 26 ministries and all 10 provinces. The findings revealed common challenges that significantly impact the successful implementation of the National M&E Policy. Lack of awareness regarding the National M&E Policy, absence of structured M&E frameworks, and standardized reporting templates affect the functionality of M&E systems. Other issues identified include delays in finalizing institutional strategic plans, inadequate human and financial resources, and insufficient M&E skills necessary for developing robust M&E systems. Furthermore, the assessment highlighted that M&E is not fully institutionalized in most ministries and provinces, leading to limited M&E capacities.

**Ministries and provinces cited several specific challenges:**

- **Delays in Finalizing Institutional Strategic Plans:** Many public sector institutions fail to conclude their institutional plans on time, which is crucial for aligning priorities across different institutions and the national development plan.
- **Inadequate Human Resources:** There is limited skilled personnel dedicated to M&E functions, impeding the development and implementation of effective M&E systems.
- **Insufficient Financial Resources:** Financial constraints were highlighted as a major barrier, with inadequate budget allocations for M&E activities affecting the overall capacity to monitor and evaluate programs effectively. A review of the ministries budgets revealed that less than fifty percent of the Ministries had a budget dedicated to Monitoring and Evaluation.
- **Lack of Sufficient M&E Skills:** The limited availability of personnel with adequate M&E skills hampers the ability to develop comprehensive M&E frameworks that clearly outline expected outcomes, outputs, indicators, and methods for tracking progress.
- **Limited Institutionalization of M&E:** The M&E function is not fully embedded within most ministries and provinces, leading to fragmented efforts and a lack of cohesive M&E practices.

**Conclusion:** The assessment underscores the critical need for timely finalization of institutional plans to align priorities and effectively contribute to the national development plan. The delay in developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks further complicates the ability to clearly outline expected outcomes, outputs, indicators, and tracking methods. To address these challenges, ZaMEA recommends fostering of strong partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders involved in monitoring and evaluation such as civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector, strengthening M&E technical capacity within ministries and provinces through a tailored M&E training program focused on

strategic planning and M&E specific to the National Development Plan (NDP). By addressing the identified challenges, public sector institutions can better align their efforts with the national development plan, thereby enhancing their overall effectiveness and impact.