

## Role of governments in supporting national evaluation capacity development<sup>1</sup>

A growing number of governments are strengthening national evaluation capacities, having included the evaluation function in the Constitution or mandated it via Acts of Parliament to deliver evidence to inform policy-making. Many are creating space for involvement of civil society is gaining momentum through evaluation dialogue and peer review mechanisms. There are examples of governments soliciting the advice and involvement of VOPEs in not only the formulation of evaluation policies and systems, but also in the implementation of evaluations consistent with those policies. However governments' existing capacity varies very significantly from country to country. Several VOPEs have been established together with support from government bodies and relevant ministries. In some cases, government authorities join hands with CSOs, to advocate with other relevant governing bodies and parliamentarians, for stronger national evaluation policies and systems.

Some ways in which governments can promote national evaluation capacities include:

- Be aware of the threats to independence, credibility and utility of evaluation and demand measures to safeguard these principles.
- Adopt and oversee the implementation of legislation and/or policies, which institutionalize the independence, credibility and utility of evaluation.
- Adopt and implement equity and gender focused national evaluation policies and systems.
- Put in place effective oversight mechanisms over the quality of evaluation.
- Use evaluation findings and recommendations in national and subnational policies, programmes and legislation.
- Seek and use evaluative evidence to establish the quality, value and importance of policies, to assess the extent to which citizens needs have been met, and to improve performance whenever possible.
- Understand evaluation as part of good governance that aims to ensure public resources are used effectively and efficiently to meet citizen's needs identified in governments or organizations strategies and plans.

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<sup>1</sup> This section is adapted from UNICEF, EvalPartners, IOCE in partnership with CLEAR, IEG World Bank, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, OECD Development Assistance Committee Network on Development Evaluation, UNEG and UNWomen. (2013). *Evaluation and Civil Society: Stakeholders' Perspectives on National Evaluation Capacity Development*. Available at [http://www.mymande.org/Evaluation\\_and\\_Civil\\_Society](http://www.mymande.org/Evaluation_and_Civil_Society)

## In Practice

### **Government taking the lead in South Africa to build a culture of evaluation<sup>2</sup>**

The most influential initiative led appropriately by South African government and supported by national and international initiatives, is the establishment of the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in 2010. DPME is placing evaluation units or departments in each of the three tiers of government, at the national level located in the Office of the Presidency, at the provincial level located in the Office of the Premier in each of the nine provinces, as well as in local government offices. In doing so, DPME has provided, amongst other things, a national evaluation framework, an Evaluation Plan, and evaluation standards and competencies, each strengthening an enabling environment for evaluation. This also lays a foundation for strengthening accountability, transparency and managing for results.

### **Ministry of Finance in Egypt champions Development Monitoring and Evaluation<sup>3</sup>**

The Ministry of Finance in Egypt began the process of strengthening development monitoring and evaluation (DME) in 2000. The Minister of Finance first championed this cause, starting with assembling a like-minded ministerial team on this issue. With World Bank support a diagnostic study on DME was undertaken, which provided the opportunity to raise the importance of DME among other ministries, donors and academics. In 2001, the Ministry of Finance in a widely covered international conference held in Egypt, announced the launch of the National Capacity Building Programme in performance based budgeting development monitoring and evaluation. The Minister communicated his vision for DME to the public, highlighting the provisional implementation strategy with five pilot line ministries (expanded to 9 ministries and 13 pilots upon implementation). The pilots chosen were closely linked to public service delivery in key development sectors such as budget and resource decision-making, education, health, taxation etc.

Advocacy efforts led by the Ministry of Finance proceeded at different levels. This included communications with Members of Parliament on the programmer's progress; engagement with the Parliament's planning and budget committee; periodic meetings among champion ministers to review progress and constant communications with the non-champion ministers. Efforts also included forming sub-ministerial committees to coordinate operations at individual line ministry level; assigning national experts to design capacity building programmes at the entry, intermediate and advanced levels of DME through individual ministry coaching; and meta-reviews by visiting international experts together with the Ministry of Finance.

Through press conferences with the media, the public was made aware of the value of DME in Egypt. In addition, the government, the World Bank and UNDP, developed bulletins and publications documenting increased capacities in performance-based budgeting monitoring and evaluation. From 2003 to mid 2004, over 1500 government officials were trained on establishing sustainable monitoring and evaluation systems at various levels of sophistication and different economic sectors. Technical coaching resulted in the preparation of the first, multi-year performance-based budgets for the pilot ministries. As an incentive towards the paradigm shift, the Minister of Finance pledged to retain ministerial budgetary allocations at a level no lower than that which had been requested earlier by the pilot line ministers.

The advocacy efforts and the demonstrated success of the programme resulted in the Ministry of Finance receiving requests from non-pilot ministries to subscribe to the capacity building efforts. The Ministry issued a decree to establish and fund sustainable monitoring and evaluation units in the state administrative apparatus on the night of a government re-shuffle (in 2004) that overthrew the entire group of champion ministers. In a short time-span, political priorities changed. However, the government together with support from CSOs, VOPEs and development partners continues to advocate for stronger DME in Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF, EvalPartners, IOCE in partnership with Cooperacion Espanola, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, UNEG, UNWomen. (2013). *Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs): Learning from Africa, Americas, Asia, Australasia, Europe and Middle East*, available at [http://www.mymande.org/voluntary\\_organizations\\_for\\_professional\\_evaluation](http://www.mymande.org/voluntary_organizations_for_professional_evaluation)

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