



planning, monitoring  
& evaluation

Department:  
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON DEVELOPMENT OF A REVISED NATIONAL EVALUATION POLICY FRAMEWORK 2019 to 2024

21 September 2018

Contact: Jabu Mathe [Jabu@dpme.gov.za](mailto:Jabu@dpme.gov.za)

## 1. Introduction

From 1994 to 2005, there was no central coordination of M&E in the South African government with elements led by the Presidency, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), National Treasury, and the National Statistics Agency (StatsSA). With no national system, evaluation practice in the public sector emerged in different ways. The policy framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation (GWM&E) system indicated the need for evaluation. In November 2011, Cabinet approved the NEPF. The NEPF and the development of the NES includes among others systems for national, provincial and departmental evaluation plans; standards; guidelines; courses; national and provincial champions (DPME and Offices of the Premier) and a follow-up system for evaluations.

The National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF), introduced in 2011, recognised that there was “a missed opportunity to (use evaluations to) improve government’s effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability” and inform planning, policy-making and budgeting. It adopted a utilisation-focused approach which aimed to use evaluation for programme improvement, enhanced accountability, effective evidence-base decision-making, and the promotion of knowledge creation and dissemination. The table below summarises the processes leading to the development of NEPF.

<b>2007</b>
<b>Policy framework for the GWM&amp;E system</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GWM&amp;E system was established because it was recognised that M&amp;E in South Africa was being conducted inconsistently, and was not being informed by policy.</li> <li>• The GWM&amp;E consisted of four areas of work, of which one was evaluation.</li> <li>• M&amp;E seen as a key lever for improving services and a Ministry in the Presidency was created</li> </ul>
<b>2010</b>
<b>DPME was established in the Presidency</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPME was established as the custodian of the M&amp;E system.</li> </ul>
<b>2011</b>
<b>DPME’s services were expanded to include the incorporation of an evaluation system</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPME’s initial focus was on monitoring, and the development of the MPAT which is a frontline service delivery monitoring system.</li> <li>• In focusing on evaluation, an initial consultation was held with departments already undertaking evaluations. This led to a group being formed to lead on evaluation development.</li> </ul>
<b>Study tour to Mexico, Colombia and the United States of America (USA)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study tour group included the departments that had been doing evaluations (DBE, DSD, PSC), the DPME’s Deputy Minister, and the DPME’s Director General (DG).</li> </ul>
<b>The NEPF was approved by Cabinet</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the study tour a “write shop” was held with the travel team and key evaluation figures in the country, drafting the policy framework which was sent out for consultation<sup>1</sup> in September 2011, and approved by Cabinet in November 2011. The NEPF sought to formalise a government evaluation system. This process was an innovative way to draft a policy paper very rapidly with broad buy-in.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) was included in the group that was consulted on the policy framework.

<b>DPME's Evaluation and Research unit (ERU) was established</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ERU was established as the custodian of the NEPF, and it was created in September 2011.</li> </ul>
<b>2011 – 2012</b>
<b>Pilot evaluation conducted on Early Childhood Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pilot was started in October 2011, to develop the system through practical application. The evaluation was completed in June 2012 with the first guideline drafted (on developing TORs) based on this experience in February 2012.</li> </ul>
<b>2012</b>
<b>First NEP developed and approved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NEPF recognised that capacity to implement evaluations is limited and aimed to focus on a limited number of strategic evaluations through a NEP. Underlying the system is a demand-driven approach.</li> <li>• The concept for a NEP was developed in January 2012. In most cases the evaluations are co-funded by DPME and the custodian line department through programme budgets. In addition to outlining planned evaluations, the NEP also summarises the status of ongoing evaluations including progress made, emerging issues and challenges</li> <li>• The first NEP (for 2012/13) was approved by Cabinet in June 2012, and the first NEP evaluations began in October 2012.</li> </ul>

## 2. What Approach Underlies The Evaluation System?

The NEPF which provides detail on the different government interventions that evaluations focus on including policies, plans, programmes, and systems guides the evaluation system. It envisages evaluation as a process carried out throughout the intervention life cycle, including prior to development of an intervention (*diagnostic evaluation*), to confirm the robustness of the design (*design evaluation*), to assess progress and how implementation can be improved (*implementation evaluation*), to assess impact (*impact evaluation*), and to see the relationship between costs and benefits (*economic evaluation*).

Interventions across government which are seen as a national priority are contained in the NEP which is updated annually. These comprise those that are large (in budget or footprint), link closely to the priority outcomes, are strategic or innovative, or address topics which are of considerable public interest. Evaluations are proposed by departments, as well as centrally. Selection in the NEP means that Cabinet will support that the topic is important, the DPME will support the department concerned to ensure that the findings are implemented, and the evaluation will be made public. It will require that the guidelines and minimum standards being developed for the NES must be used, for example, an improvement plan must be developed. The underlying purpose foreseen for evaluations is:

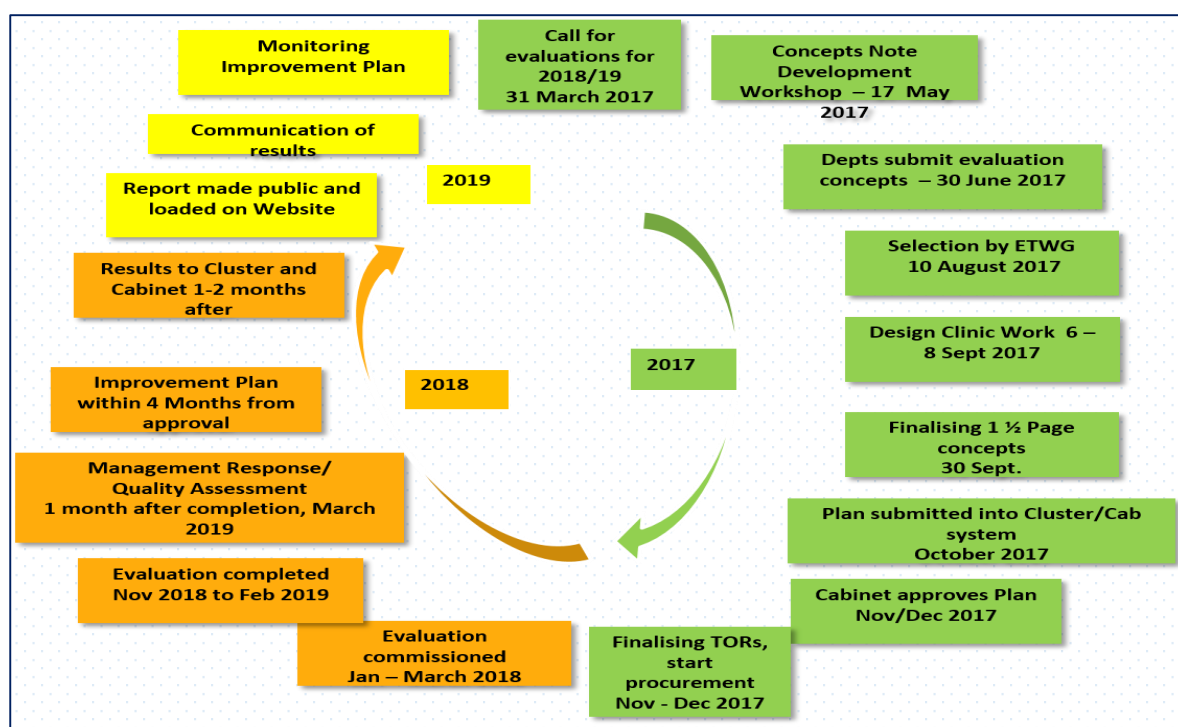
- Improving policy or programme **performance** - providing feedback to managers.
- Improving **accountability** for where public spending is going and the difference it is making.
- Improving **decision-making**, e.g. on what is working or not working.

- Increasing **knowledge** about what works and what does not with regards to a public policy, plan, programme, or project.

However often, and this is not unique to South Africa, results from evaluations that were undertaken are not used. Various reasons such as rejection of findings by programme owners or fear of judgement could contribute to this. This is a waste of money and a waste of an opportunity to improve government's efficiency and effectiveness. However, there are ways to ensure results from evaluations get used, which underlie the design of South Africa's system, notably by promoting **ownership** and ensuring **credibility** of the evaluations.

### How DPME Has Been Rolling Out Evaluations (Current Evaluation Model)

Guided by the NEPF a National Evaluation System was established which included different elements such as development of evaluation guidelines; commissioning evaluations; capacity building; quality assurance and monitoring the implementation of evaluation recommendations. The diagram below depicts the manner in which the evaluation system is implemented.



### 2.1. PROGRESS ACHIEVED SO FAR THROUGH THE CURRENT MODEL

DPME has established itself as the champion of evaluation in the public sector, providing considerable support across provinces and departments, and is a strong advocate for evaluation. Guidelines on evaluations have been developed and made public, quality assurance systems have been developed and capacity building has been provided across the system. Since the establishment of the NES, 69 evaluations were included in National Evaluation Plans (NEPs), of which eight were cancelled. In addition to NEPs, eight provinces, through their Offices of the Premier (OTPs), have developed Provincial Evaluation Plans

(PEPs), and 68 departments have developed Departmental Evaluation Plans (DEPs). These achievements were further validate by the Report on the Evaluation of the National Evaluation System (2018) which found that since the inception of the NEPF in 2011, great strides have been made in developing the system. The system has been institutionalised and well established and there is evidence of use of evaluation results in some departments. The study also highlighted some success factors by recognising that:

- Guidelines and templates on evaluations have been developed and are used by Government departments.
- Quality assurance systems have been developed and utilised to ensure credibility of evaluation reports.
- Capacity building in collaboration with various stakeholders has been provided across the system with over 1500 government staff trained.
- A system of improvement plans has been established to encourage use, which are monitored for two years.
- A number of communication tools are utilised including an accessible summary report (1-5-25); use of social media to highlight findings; submitting evaluation reports to Parliamentary portfolio committees.

Even though so much has been achieved by the DPME in rolling out evaluations in the country as listed above, the National Evaluation System had its pros and cons which critically affected the effectiveness of the system.

## 2.2. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE CURRENT MODEL

The current model of NES is consist of different elements which including: call for evaluations; commissioning evaluations; capacity building; partnerships and institutionalisation of evaluation in provinces. To provide a summary of what has worked against what has not worked a comparison will be conducted based on these elements.

### Call for Evaluations

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Encourages involvement of the users of the evaluation with an aim of promoting learning and ownership of the evaluation.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Promotes quality of the evaluation products. It is assumed that if evaluations are of good quality they will be credible and therefore used or implemented.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The approach provides freedom of choice to the Departments to choose which evaluation they want to be conducted.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Encourage more Departments to participate in conducting evaluations by</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Government Departments choose the programmes or projects which they are comfortable to be evaluated which might not be critical and problematic as a result evaluations are mostly not responsive and serve as an early warning system to decision makers to influence planning.</li> <li>▪ Because it is voluntary to respond to call for proposals cooperation and use evaluation findings also becomes a choice as a result most of the evaluations are delayed due to the availability of officials and overtaken by time and events resulting to them to be irrelevant.</li> </ul>

*changing the perception that evaluations are punitive to be seen as tool for learning to improve programmes and projects.*

- Number and cost of evaluations increased however whether government is getting value money is questionable.

### **3. Key Features of the New Evaluation Approach (2019/20 – 2024/25)**

Elements of the National Evaluation System that are working will be retained. The review process will only focus on refinement of areas that are not working. The new approach will therefore combine existing and new elements (Hybrid model). For examples whilst outsourcing large evaluations will still continue, however the new system encourages insourcing models, especially for rapid and short term evaluations. The selection of evaluations for the NEP will be decided centrally by the DPME and National Treasury. However, departments will be given an opportunity to submit proposals.

#### **3.1. Evaluation Synthesis and Sectorial Reviews**

- Undertake evaluation synthesis (cross cutting issues: how design affect policy implementation and use)
- Participate in developing Sectorial Reviews.
- Increase impact evaluations & economic evaluations

#### **3.2. Link up evaluation to planning, monitoring and budgeting (integration critical to be effective)**

The linkages between evaluation, policy-making, planning and budgeting is essential to inform planning, policy-making and budgeting. The adoption of the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2012 and the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) in 2014 as the five-year implementation for the long-term vision of the NDP provide guidance on government's strategic policy priorities. Hence, all evaluations to be undertaken and funded by the DPME should be aligned with NDP and MTSF. To ensure alignment, guidelines and tools should be developed to provide details on primary aspects for consideration for evaluations to be supported by DPME.

#### **3.3. Strengthen improvement plan system (integrate with planning and reporting)**

The improvement plan system is seen as a key element in enhancing use in the system and is seen as one of the key benefits the NES has brought about. There is currently no mechanism to mandate the creation of, or funding of the proposals from an improvement plan, which can lead to difficulties in implementing the recommendations. There is a need for a stronger system to track evaluation improvement plans, and a centralised system would be beneficial where departmental reporting on improvement plans can be entered, and reviewed by DPME.

#### **3.4. Rapid Evaluations**

## **Development of Rapid Assessment Guidelines**

More evaluation types should be considered and added to the menu of options including options requiring less resources, those that can be done quicker (rapid evaluations), and also more options for 'learning by doing', and internal evaluation types as appropriate. DPME should initiate and develop guidelines for rapid assessment exercises which can be conducted internally to reduce the budget cost as well and time to complete the project.

## **Consultation with internal and external stakeholders**

The consultation with various stakeholders should be held in developing the Rapid Assessment Guidelines and to suggest how internal evaluations should be undertaken bearing in mind the need for independence for major evaluations.

## **Piloting different Rapid Assessment methodologies**

This phase involves piloting of Rapid Assessment methodologies to have an opportunity to reflect on learning on what works and what doesn't work. Hence, different methods will be piloted, experimented and tested to inform the Policy shift. Some existing types of evaluation use rapid methodologies. These include design evaluation and some form of diagnostic evaluation. Below table summarises some of the Rapid Assessment Methodologies that will be piloted

### **3.5. Capacity Development**

#### **3.5.1. Internal**

- Aim for developing internal capacity within departments to undertake evaluations
- Use innovative & latest methodologies "Fourth Industrial Revolution" over and above traditional courses
- Promote sustainable learning

#### **3.5.2. External**

- Support initiatives to increase access for the SMMEs, youth, postgraduates, women and people with disabilities
- Utilise retired former senior public servant in evaluations
- Form linkages/ partnerships (locally and internationally) around capacity development
- Community of Practice and peer to peer learning critical
- Gender Responsiveness:
- Refine various elements of the system to be gender responsive

### **3.6. Extend scope and applicability:**

- Introduce NES at local government and
- State owned Enterprises (SOEs)

#### 4. Key questions/areas for consideration:

- What are the capacity implications for introducing new methodologies eg Rapid evaluations? Insourcing model/undertaking internal evaluations?
- What are implications if evaluations are identified centrally by DPME, NT and OTP s and PTs (Do they have authority & funding? How to ensure cooperation and use? Will these be managed by Steering Committees? etc.
- What are the implications (and feasibility) for extending the scope and applicability of the Policy to local government and SOES?
- What are the strategies for increasing access to women, youth/ unemployed graduates, retired senior managers and people with disabilities? How do we ensure that the system is gender responsive?
- What is the best model for linking up evaluation to planning, monitoring and budgeting (integration)?
- How to ensure that commissioned evaluations are completed within set time frames? Is it through introducing Evaluability assessment? Reintroducing a Panel of evaluators?

#### 5. Scope and length of evaluation

Below table provides a guide to complete each evaluation using broad time zone.

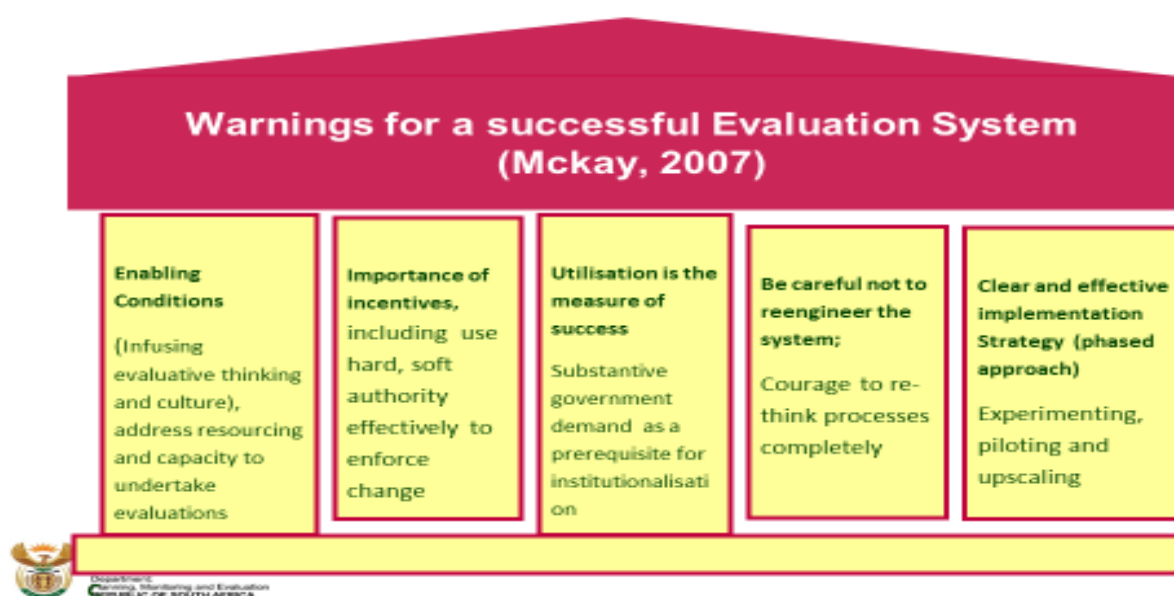
Length of evaluation	Scope of Evaluation	Time required to complete
Rapid Evaluation	Rapid Evaluation Quick evaluations are conducted during emergencies or as part of preliminary analysis to help determine priorities, identify emerging problems and trends, and enable decision-making to either support full-scale evaluation or project adjustments to meet the needs or project objectives. The implementation of this type of evaluation is usually faster, more dynamic and complex. This involves conducting a quick overview on a particular topic. Example includes Evaluative workshops – that may take 6 weeks; meta-evaluation analysis, traditional literature review (1 week to 2 months), quick scoping review (1-2 weeks to 2 months), review of reviews (often quicker than other types of full systematic review), evaluative workshops (Can range from a 2 hour meeting to a 2 day workshop). These types of evaluations should be carried out as part of self-evaluations and internal evaluations. A Guideline to be develop self-evaluations and internal evaluations	1 week to 3 months
Short Evaluation	Project Evaluation	3 months to 6 months



	This type of evaluation is usually carried out by internal evaluators from the M&E Unit of a department focusing on a particular sector project.	
Medium Evaluation	Programme, policy evaluation This type of evaluation should be carried out by external evaluators who have no previous links to the intervention focusing on a particular programme, or policy.	6 months to 12 months
Long Term Evaluation	Multi-sector / multi programme review /evaluation The Multi-sector evaluation tend to have a broader scope to understand the depth of the problem, and include cross-cutting themes that need to be monitored and evaluated. It involves participation of multi-sectorial team, which goes beyond the scope of one sector or programme. An example includes stunting and road fatalities that might require evaluation beyond one sector or programme to establish the root cause. Sectoral Reviews? The sectoral review / or sector evaluations are conducted as part of mid-term review and / or end of term to show improvement over time in implementing policies and programme. DPME should be involved in these type of reviews to establish whether the desired results are being achieved and identify gaps that need to be addressed.	12 months to 18 months

## 6. Critical Success Factors

### Critical success factors



## **7. What do we want to achieve from the PM&E Forum?**

DPME has embarked on the process of revising the NEPF (2011) to incorporate lessons learnt and align with the current thinking within DPME and broader evaluation stakeholders. Through the PM&E Forum, the broader evaluations community and other key stakeholders such as planners from all spheres of government, M&E practitioners, academics, civil society, private sector, researchers, policy and programme managers – will be given an opportunity to make inputs into the revised draft NEPF (2018) before it is subjected to formal approval processes of government.

As such, you are invited to engage with the documents mentioned below (point 6) which should suffice as material that you can use to make the necessary inputs into the revised policy framework for the national evaluation system.

## **8. Documents to be reviewed for the revision**

- 1) Paper on “Developing South Africa’s national evaluation policy” on the Africa Evaluation Journal Online
- 2) and system: First lessons learned
- 3) The concept note (to be sent out after DPME preparatory workshop)
- 4) The current NEPF
- 5) The revised NEPF
- 6) Presentation slides on the current and proposed approach

## **9. Key questions for the forum**

- 9.1. What worked well and how? - What do we need to take forward from our experiences from 2011 – 2018?
- 9.2. What is it that we need to improve on? - How do we work together to improve on these challenges?
- 9.3. How the members of the forum plan to collaborate DPME in taking evaluations forward?