

IMPROVING EVALUATION DEMAND TO FOSTER ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION: THE CHALLENGES OF INSTITUTIONALIZING EVALUATION

The issue of how to institutionalize evaluation is inextricably intertwined with the issue of how to develop capacities, both in theory and in practice. Evaluation capacities, in essence, are part of the institutionalization plan, while the plan itself is a dimension of capacity. Evaluation has proved to be an increasingly important component of the management plan for development programmes and policies. Evaluation is increasingly requested by citizens seeking opportunities to contribute to or stay informed about the management of public resources, particularly in terms of transparency and efficacy. The demand for accountability does not come just from citizens from the North, who contribute to official development assistance (ODA), but also from citizens in the South demanding accountability. This is undoubtedly a reflection of growing aspiration for better governance and a larger democracy, though public authorities have been slow to meet this demand.

Demand for evaluation is based in laws and regulations, except in areas where ODA dominates as a main source of public sector financing. But even in these contexts, evaluation is required in the programmes and strategies supported and inspired by donor agencies.

Evaluation was introduced in Africa through ODA, as auditing was previously introduced, as a requirement for implementation of development projects. The improvement in such projects as a result of evaluation has been clearly demonstrated. (What gets measured gets done!) Political analysts are nearly unanimous in recognizing that evaluation is an effective tool of viable development for both nations and communities as long as the demand originates internally and the results of the evaluation are implemented in public policy. Evaluations are primarily intended to shed light on the financial decision-making process. They are also used to further the agenda of donor agencies, whether the agenda is stated or implicit.

For national development actors to prioritize evaluation, they must take initiative and be a driving force behind the effort. This objective must be accepted and facilitated by

60. Chair, Organisation Internationale de la Coopération en Evaluation.

public authorities and supported by the Partnership for Transparency Fund, with the active cooperation of civil society and the national private sector.

For an evaluation to be useful and to justify its cost, it must serve at least one of the following functions:

- **Managerial and decision-making functions:** It allows improvement in business actions, permits a desired action to be undertaken, appraises a positive action (one that produced clear results and may merit repetition or replication, but is at least recognized as a success) and/or terminates harmful, useless or failed actions. This function encompasses everything from budget allocation decisions to performance contracts.
- **Good governance and democracy functions:** It serves as an instrument for accountability by providing information about the quality of public action management and promotes informed dialogue about policy.

SOURCES OF DEMAND FOR EVALUATION

This paper investigates the origins of the demand for evaluation and for specific evaluations undertaken, as well as the channels and means for increasing demand for evaluation in deficit countries, in particular Francophone Africa and the southern Sahara. It sets out to discover the origins of the call for studies and evaluation missions in each country; whether the need originated in the institutional, legal, or regulatory spheres; and the point of view of the actors involved.

Demand at institutional and regulatory levels

In the institutionalization plans analysed to date, governments have played a central role in creating demand for evaluation. It may come from a variety of sources, such as a law, regulation or particular agreement. Demand may also come from regional structures (such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development or the European Union), international agencies or decentralized structures. International cooperation mechanisms appear to be a highly effective driving force if the process is properly planned and implemented, with sufficient participation from the ultimate beneficiaries of the evaluation. This was the case with European Union funds for European countries, but ODA has not seen the same results with African countries.

A study recently conducted on behalf of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development showed that very few countries in Francophone Africa had a specific legal and regulatory framework governing the evaluation process. However, nearly all of these countries' policies refer to the follow-up and evaluation of development programmes. But in practice, at this strategic and political level, the focus has been on planning and follow-up processes to investigate implementation indicators, and activities or control mechanisms such as audits or inspections. Few detailed evaluations of these policies have emerged that would lead to a report documenting results and impacts, particularly of any plans or methodology that were implemented.

The mandate for evaluation in certain strategic documents aimed at poverty reduction or the existence of M&E departments in various ministries is sometimes invoked as proof of a national institutional framework. This is the case in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea.

Benin has a state ministry charged with evaluation of public actions (Ministry of Economy, Prospective, Development and Evaluation of the Public Action). The authorities in Benin wanted to progressively submit all institutions, including ministries and public enterprises and projects, to evaluations and audits. Several ministerial institutions have mandates related to evaluations: the Inspector General, Chamber of Accounts of the Supreme Court, the Observatory for the Fight against Corruption and the judicial officer of the Treasury, all serving under the Presidency, and the Order of Expert Accountants and Chartered Accountants of Benin. However, of the named institutions, only one (the Order of Expert Accountants) has even an indirect or remote interest in evaluation.

In Niger, the General Directorate of Development Program Assessment exists within the Ministry of Finance. The poverty reduction strategy (PRS) document (implemented by the permanent PRS Secretary) includes a guide to monitoring and evaluation that stipulates establishment of a mid-point evaluation mechanism during the third year of implementation, as well as a final evaluation to be held during the fifth year. An annual review system provides opportunities to monitor the progress and implementation of the strategy. It should help to ensure that the information stemming from these evaluations is disseminated for improved decision-making.

A similar system exists in Mauritania with the director of studies, social development and development strategies in the Ministry of Economy. There are also economic policy documents with monitoring and evaluation plans that include the organization of regional workshops, sector-based reviews and other exercises destined to evaluate policy implementation. One must also note the recent creation of cooperation and planning directorates in Mauritania. They are responsible for monitoring all ministerial departments, as a good step towards institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation. The study of the assessment of evaluative capacities includes the following findings of the institutional plan:

- Poor integration of evaluation function within the State (technical ministries, Court of Accounts, Parliament);
- Predominance of the function of control;
- Virtual absence of function at the decentralized level;
- Few inter-actor or inter-instance relationships;
- More elaborate plans existed with development partners and certain organizations in society at large, particularly with larger NGOs.

Efforts to integrate evaluation institutionally have given rise to a variety of schemes, but in most cases the function of evaluation has been allocated to traditional planning structures (Ministry of Economic Affairs or Ministry of Finance, as in Niger) and/or to control structures, such as the court of accounts.

Actors and instruments at the origin of the demand for evaluation

By and large, the monitoring and evaluation practices revealed in the countries studied are the result of international cooperation through development projects and programmes

funded by the country. This was cited in 7 of 10 cases as the primary reason for conducting an evaluation in the above-mentioned study. However, certain initiatives and experiences carried out by national actors were reported, and while these actors are still timid, their actions reveal an increasing interest in evaluation. The State was the primary actor in these experiences, through national institutions in charge of monitoring and evaluation, but civil society also played a role, for example, in Niger and Benin.

In Senegal, the court of accounts is increasingly involved in evaluation, and even the State Inspector General has seen an increase in competency of local and central policy evaluations. However, these appear to be more declarations of intent, as no effective practices have yet been observed or reported. It is interesting to note that two alumni of the International Program for Development Evaluation Training are serving on the Court of Accounts in Senegal, which may explain that institution's interest in evaluation (2007-2008 data).

In other countries, such as South Africa, legal provisions and requirements of donor agencies have led civil society organizations to develop monitoring-evaluation-reporting systems to address their accountability obligations.⁶¹

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Success factors identified in the study included the existence of a ministry or other standard-bearer, engagement by public authorities for a decade or so and individualized approaches that back the results of demonstration projects and the exchange of experiences between administrative organizations.

It is worthwhile to look closely at South Africa, which successfully implemented a M&E system with characteristics different from those listed above: a provision in the constitution (chapter 10) gives a legal definition of good governance, enumerating nine principles that support a strong public administration and delegate responsibility to the national public service commission.

Among the numerous obstacles to the DCE that were reported, the most important were the absence of a political-administrative culture of responsibility (even without actual corruption), lack of evaluation auditing and accounting competencies, lack of available information on public performance and lack of institutional mechanisms to promote integration of monitoring results and decision-making evaluation.⁶²

OBJECT OF THE STUDY AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

In Africa, particularly in French-speaking countries, evaluation typically falls to development partners. It is perceived as a condition of debt-reduction efforts, and its objectives and reach are of little significance in receiving countries, except for the role it plays in disbursement of

61. Article presented during the 2006 Niamey conference by Beverley Anne Barry, on the institutionalization of evaluation.

62. World Bank, 'Renforcement des capacités de suivi et d'évaluation en Afrique' (Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities in Africa) precis from the Department of Operations Evaluation N° 183, Washington, World Bank, spring 1999.

funds. The exercise is organized and conducted as a 'necessary evil', an unavoidable step on the list of programme actions implemented by development partners.

Currently, evaluation is seen as a necessary and final step in implementation of development programmes, a 'formality' used to validate such programmes. Required by donor countries, evaluation is implemented mechanically and sometimes redundantly. The opportunity to conduct a study under conditions leading to convincing results is disregarded. The decision to evaluate a programme is made in advance and carried out when the time comes in a predetermined fashion.

Recent studies have shown the limits of public policy evaluation in Africa. In Mauritania, one of the first countries to have implemented the Strategic Framework in the Fight against Poverty (CSLP) since 2000, the reports on its operation have shown the lack of an effective monitoring and evaluation system. When CSLP was implemented (ex-ante), the process was largely participatory, with large pockets of the population represented through civil society groups. The extent and quality of this participation may be questionable, given the weak organizational capacity of civil society in general, but the participatory nature of the approach was recognized by all.

Inversely, the monitoring of the implementation and evaluation of the CSLP were not seen as effective, as several reports reveal. Strong points observed included:

- The existence of the CSLP in itself, as a global reference framework based on innovative ideas; national appropriation, participation.
- Political commitment to evaluation, particularly of participatory evaluation.
- Reflections in progress pertaining to implementation of an institutional framework and operational plan for monitoring and evaluation of new CSLPs in the planning stage (2005-2008 in Mauritania).
- A dynamic that is dedicated to strengthening M&E, analysis and modelling capacities.

The weak points observed included:

- The absence of a strategic framework or implementation plan for M&E activities, which entail specific validation exercises. If even limited monitoring activities are carried out, no evaluation exists, at least none that has an impact on policy at the global or sectoral level;
- The low capacity of participants in terms of organizational gaps, quality of participation and local involvement;
- The weakness in IT systems for monitoring and data collection. Data lacks coherence and is not always sufficient to monitor indicators for large development initiatives (WCO, CSLP 'Strategic Framework in the Fight against Poverty'; 'DHD, Sustainable Human Development', etc.). For example, in Mauritania, specific indicators were lacking for certain important sectors such as environment, gender, governance and employment, and monitoring problems were seen for transmission channels and intermediate indicators.
- The poor capacity for analysis.

The items submitted for evaluation were primarily projects or programmes. Rarely were public policies submitted in their entirety, with the exception of the poverty reduction strategy documents. Examples of periodic evaluations included in donor support programme action plans, particularly those of the United Nations system, were annual reviews of UNDP country programmes, evaluation of the SRP programme for the German Technical Co-operation in Niger, and evaluation of the decennial education programme (multiple donors, at times with shared evaluations).

Several examples were given of evaluations that affected national strategies and policies: The evaluation of the national strategic framework for the fight against HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, which will begin with the elaboration of a new 2008-2012 strategic framework in Republic of Congo; the redeployment of civil service agents (1986-1992) in Guinea; the evaluation of the first five years of implementation of decentralization in Benin; and the evaluation of the Adolescent Participation and Development Programme in Cameroon.

The evaluations discussed in various reports were focused primarily on implementation and, to a lesser extent, on how public action affected final beneficiaries. This situation confirms the observation that evaluation is used in execution of projects, programmes and public policies rather than in assessment of their impacts.

EFFECTIVE USE OF RESULTS

The purpose of evaluation is still widely misunderstood and the lack of understanding about the tools and products of evaluation poses a real problem, with reports sitting in file cabinets and recommendations rarely implemented.

Once an evaluation report is produced, it is almost systematically transmitted to donor agencies and typically to the entire public administration and final beneficiaries. Sometimes the evaluation report is kept confidential and sometimes it is presented in a press conference or posted to a website, making it available for public debate, but both of these actions occur less frequently. The study cited also emphasizes that when evaluators' recommendations contradict a widely held belief, evaluation reports are rarely followed up with any corrective measures. One example of this is a case in South Africa, in which the Public Service Commission and Parliament were identified as institutional users for the evaluation.

INCREASED DEMAND FOR EVALUATION

Information and advocacy for the usefulness of the evaluation

The evaluation is evidence for those involved in public operations who need to prove that their policies are relevant and effective. Political decision-makers at national and local levels are thus very interested in using quality evaluations, based on the idea that it is always better to confront the reality of the situation to continue to make progress.

However, to be useful, the evaluation must address subjects that present real concern for the actors involved. At this stage, questions arise: Who is the evaluation for? Who will conduct it? What is the purpose? The focus shifts from an assistance-based evaluation to one based on development, from an externally focused evaluation to an internally directed one, from

an evaluation that is simply endured to one that is desired, and seemingly more useful for questions of national interest. In our opinion, even if the evaluation was introduced to our country under the pretext of assistance, it is time to make it our own and to move forward into an evaluation of our programmes and policies and all sources of funding taken together.

Role of public authorities in creating demand for evaluation

The State must play a somewhat unorthodox role and demonstrate strong political will to make evaluation a common practice and an institutional management tool. The State must therefore create an appropriate institutional framework and a training programme that corresponds to the country's needs and incorporates existing training structures (universities and training centres).

The development of a culture of evaluation and national expertise occurs through the process of institutionalization. However, the question remains as to which should come first. In other words, is the existence of an institutional framework a prerequisite for the existence of a culture of evaluation as we commonly understand it, involving established practices, being well-accepted, having a culture of presenting and distributing information on public action?

The second to last government of the Fifth Republic of Niger created a ministerial post to oversee monitoring and evaluation. Unfortunately, before the ministry began its work, ministerial changes stifled this initiative, which could have led to effective recognition of the culture of evaluation at the upper levels of the State. This situation brings us back to the pressing question of the correct order of actions to structure an M&E sector to the multifaceted and sometimes complex contours. Among the measures recommended, the State has been asked to:

- Advocate to mobilize support for the values of evaluation;
- Systematize training of evaluation experts and make training offered by private organizations accessible;
- Raise the status of evaluation bodies;
- Introduce training in universities and colleges;
- Support networks to promote interest in evaluation;
- Promote citizen participation in evaluations by applying the 'learning by doing' principle;
- Organize an investigation into the state of evaluation locations in the country, to identify competency gaps that must be closed;
- Identify evaluation champions or leaders;
- Encourage the use of evaluation results.

Donor agencies and technical and financial partners

Donor agencies have a role in supporting national actors to implement institutionalization of evaluation action plans. This support may:

- Require that evaluation teams include experts from Southern countries to work alongside experts from the North so they can share competencies;
- Facilitate access to information about calls for bids and resources;
- Encourage national partners to integrate evaluation into their projects and programmes requiring cooperation;
- Encourage participatory evaluations by including them in cooperation documents and allocating adequate resources;
- Support the professionalization of national evaluation associations and networks, such as by allowing them to affiliate with larger networks as in Europe and by providing a framework for the profession;
- Encourage citizen participation, by contributing to promotion of their capacity for action.

Demand for evaluation may also come from regional structures (such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the European Union), international agencies or decentralized structures. Properly planned and implemented, international cooperation mechanisms can be highly effective in driving a culture of evaluation. They also need sufficient participation from the ultimate beneficiaries of the evaluation, as was the case with EU funds for European countries. Similar results have not emerged in African countries.

ROLE OF OTHER ACTORS: PROMISING PRACTICES

Civil society is called to play a fundamental role in advocacy and in raising awareness about the roles and benefits of evaluation at all levels. Civil society organizations have intervened to increase the quality of evaluations. An emerging trend in some countries is for civil society to be a 'prescripitor' rather than simply an 'object' or 'actor' in evaluation. For example:

- In Burkina Faso, civil society organizations conduct independent evaluations of the State and participate in CSLP reviews. Some networks made considerable contributions to the 2007 review through evaluations in their sector of intervention.
- In Senegal, civil society groups and local elected officials are increasingly interested in local evaluations.

Evaluation networks are seen as an important link in the M&E plan for a given location, a key element to institutionalization. Networks play an essential role in:

- Developing a national and international community of practice capable of influencing practices and therefore policies;
- Apprenticeships and knowledge management, network construction and sharing of documentary resources;
- Stimulation of critical analysis to improve theories and practices in analysis of public programmes and policies internationally;
- Diversity of exchanges;
- Professionalizing evaluation through work on standards.

ANNEX 1. CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO DIAGNOSING THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR EVALUATION⁶³

Table 1 synthesizes the various diagnostic operations recommended to appraise the supply and demand for evaluation, a list of control questions was initially proposed for each by the World Bank. On the basis of these findings, which should serve to identify both national and sector-level champions of evaluation as well as the road blocks or open hostility expected from certain public actors, the conceptual framework anticipates two final operations to formulate a DCE strategy.

TABLE 1. OPERATIONS FOR THE DIAGNOSIS OF EVALUATIVE CAPACITIES (ACCORDING TO THE WORLD BANK)

DIAGNOSIS OF DEMAND	DCE STRATEGY
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey of ministries (techniques and central) and other key groups (including supervisory bodies) to monitor projects, programmes and public policies, and to define their respective functions and relationships; 2. Analysis of the general framework for public action, particularly as regards the existing incentive scheme (civil servant career) and value system (administrative ethics); 3. Understanding of the factors that actually influence decisions pertaining to sector-based policy elaboration and budgetary orientations (negotiations between priorities); 4. Recognition of administrations' demands for information on the results of their public policies; 5. Recognition of the obligations to evaluate imposed by external forces, particularly supranational donor agencies; 6. Taking stock of public sector reforms, recent or planned (management by results, contractualization, asset-based accounting, status of public function), which present synergies and economies of scale for evaluation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Elaboration of a map of possibilities for the DCE, in terms of the respective strengths and weaknesses of supply and demand; 9. Preparation of a realistic action plan which stipulates, among other things, the DCE level and the pace for executing the planned measures.
<p>DIAGNOSIS OF THE SUPPLY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Examination of the competencies, resources, informational infrastructure and monitoring in the ministries as well as universities and other research institutions and private sector establishments. 	

63. Source: Frédéric Varone, 'Report on the study of evaluative capacities (meta-evaluation) in three pilot countries (Niger, Senegal and the Republic of Congo); organized by the International Organization of the Francophonie, UNDP and United Nations Population Fund, and through close collaboration with the Senegalese M&E network

ANNEX 2. FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OF M&E SYSTEMS

An inventory of 14 success factors was developed through implementation of national M&E systems published by the World Bank evaluation group (Keith Mackay). They include:

1. Substantial governmental demand
2. Significant incentives
3. Diagnosis of existing M&E as an initial measure
4. Key role of a powerful 'champion' of the cause
5. Centralized piloting by a competent ministry
6. A not overly complex conceptualization of the system
7. Reliability of data management systems at the ministerial level
8. Extent of use as a measure of success
9. Training in M&E and its use
10. Limited recourse to laws, decrees and governmental regulations
11. Structural plans to ensure M&E objectivity and quality
12. Evidence of long-term effort, requiring perseverance
13. Non-linear and unforeseeable elaboration
14. Regular evaluation of the M&E system itself

ANNEX 3. OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL EVALUATION PLANS (2006)⁶⁴

TABLE 1. NATIONAL EVALUATION PLANS: REPUBLIC OF CONGO, NIGER AND SENEGAL

SYSTEMS	REPUBLIC OF CONGO	NIGER	SENEGAL
By executive power	<p>Oversight of monitoring and evaluation of investments from within the General Directorate of Planning and Development (Ministry of Planning, Zoning and Economic Integration)</p> <p>Centre for the study and evaluation of industrial investment projects (Ministry of Planning, Zoning and Economic Integration)</p>	<p>General Directorate of programme evaluation (Ministry of Economics and Finance)</p> <p>Unit for monitoring and evaluation and an IT system for the permanent PRS secretary (Prime Minister's Cabinet)</p> <p>Oversight of monitoring and evaluation of development actions (Ministry of Zoning and Community Development)</p> <p>Oversight of sector-based ministry planning studies</p>	<p>Oversight of planning (Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development)</p> <p>Inspection of finances (Ministry of the Economy and Finances)</p>
By legislative power	Various permanent commissions of the National Assembly and the Senate	Various permanent commissions of the National Assembly	Parliamentary commission for general financial economy, planning and economic cooperation
By judicial power	Court of Accounts and Budgetary Discipline	Supreme Court Chamber of Accounts and Budgetary Discipline	Court of Accounts
Other evaluation support systems	<p>Various systems are charged with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring programmes (such as the interministerial committee, ad hoc structures in various ministries) Data collection (such as the National Center for Statistics and Economic Studies), Supervision (such as the State Inspector General and General Commissariat for Accounts within the Presidency) Consultation (such as departmental and communal councils) 	<p>Various systems are charged with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring programmes (such as the PRS plan, review of public spending and financial responsibility) Data collection (such as National Institute for Statistics) Supervision (such as State Inspector General, General Directorate for the inspection of finances) Consultation (such as Economic, Social and Cultural Council) 	<p>Various systems are charged with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring programmes (such as DSRP implementation units) Supervision (such as State Inspector General and financial control through the Presidency of the Republic) Consultation (such as Council of the Republic for Economic and Social Affairs, Mediator)

64. Source: Varone, op. cit.

**ANNEX 4. RESULTS (EXTRACTS) OF THE STUDIES
IN THREE PILOT COUNTRIES (2006)⁶⁵**

**TABLE 1. PURPOSE OF EVALUATIONS
(PERCENT OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE)**

EVALUATIONS PERTAINING TO...	REPUBLIC OF CONGO	NIGER	SENEGAL
Projects	45%	48%	27%
Programmes	32%	39%	52%
Public policies	23%	13%	21%
Total	100%	100%	100%

**TABLE 2. CONTENT OF EVALUATIONS
(PERCENT OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE)**

EVALUATIONS PERTAINING TO...	REPUBLIC OF CONGO	NIGER	SENEGAL
Implementation	22%	24%	9%
Results	13%	15%	4%
Implementation and results	65%	61%	87%
Total	100%	100%	100%

**TABLE 3. TIME OF EVALUATIONS
(PERCENT OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE)**

EVALUATIONS PERTAINING TO...	REPUBLIC OF CONGO	NIGER	SENEGAL
Before	0%	15%	22%
Halfway through	44%	52%	44%
After	56%	33%	34%
Total	100%	100%	100%

65. Source: Varone, op. cit.