

SENEGAL: THE SENEGALESE EXPERIENCE WITH EVALUATION: OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING SYSTEM

BY ABABACAR DIALLO¹³

PROSPECTIVE STUDY FOR PLANNING IN SENEGAL

A prospective study was undertaken with the time horizon of a generation (25 years) involving a global reflection on Senegalese society and on its natural and international environments. This study involves a retrospective reflection and also unveils a broad range of plausible scenarios for the future as well as the paths that must be taken to arrive at each scenario. This basic reflection must be evaluated and adjusted every 19 years to better assess the evolution of the overarching direction of society and to anticipate changes in its international environment.

This study will lead to the definition of strategic axes representing long-term trajectories that would guide Senegal in a scenario of harmonious development. The prospective choices for the long term (25 years) are intended to clarify and guide strategic decision-making in midterm (6 years) orientation planning.

Orientation Plan for Economic and Social Development

The Orientation Plan for Economic and Social Development establishes a six-year horizon for implementation of exit strategies and the intermediate objectives that must be reached to move progressively from the current situation (a conservative case based on current trends) towards the long-term future to which society aspires. The plan sets out a midterm vision shared by all actors involved in social and economic development. It can be revised at the three-year mark.

Triennial Public Investment Programme

The Triennial Public Investment Programme is the instrument used to execute the orientation plan. It has a horizon of three years, and during the first year the consolidated investment budget is integrated into fiscal law. The programme is reviewed each year.

13. Head, Sector Planning and Project Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Primary tasks of the programme

- Identification and feasibility study by technical ministries;
- Development of macroeconomic framework by the planning directorate;
- Evaluation and selection of project, programmes and reforms by the planning directorate and the economic and financial cooperation directorate;
- Creation of a physical and financial balance sheet for projects by the economic and financial cooperation directorate.

Policy evaluation methodology

- Identification of objectives: response of investment programmes and reforms to the problems at hand and to the policies in the development plan;
- Analysis of implementation methods: accounting and contribution of projects and reforms with the orientations and programmes retained in the development plan;
- Examination of the participative process in searching for solutions and for internal and external mobilizations around the objectives and issues raised by the plan;
- Study of the effect of the agreed-upon course of action and the investments made to boost the economy, as well as their potential impact in terms of changes in behaviour or in the environment regarding long-term national development.

Tools used to evaluate projects and programmes

- Software using the 'effects method' to evaluate directly productive projects;
- A tool for monitoring investments at the regional level;
- A tool for studying regional disparities for investment purposes;
- A tool for monitoring the labour market;
- A tool for monitoring educational trends;
- A scorecard for social indicators;
- A RAPID Model, for increased awareness of population policy;
- A macroeconomic model for triennial reflections.

EVALUATION OF THE PLAN

The evaluation of the plan is conducted in several stages involving both internal and external actors. It is led by department managers charged with planning, evaluating and selecting programmes and the monitoring and ex-post analysis of public action programmes developed by the Macroeconomics and Synthesis Commission. This exercise also allows evaluation of plan implementation and creates an opportunity to assess the interest in and capacity to explore other approaches to evaluation, programming and monitoring for global development strategy actions.

The exercise also makes it possible to prepare the annual plan advancement report. This report, sanctioned by the Macroeconomics and Synthesis Commission, is submitted to the Interministerial Council for Monitoring the Execution of the Plan to relay pertinent information about adjustments and improvements to strategies. This approach requires:

- Adherence to the strategic orientations of the plan;
- Development of a macroeconomic framework oriented towards simulations (impact of current policies on various selected scenarios or trends), the search for variants (alternatives or leeway options strategy managers) and both the retrospective and prospective observations regarding the evolution of the economic, regional and international environment (based on factors pertaining to the chosen development strategy or what could be influential in the long term);
- A system to monitor the development of action lines across successive investment programmes and the reforms undertaken;
- Rapid availability of an exhaustive balance sheet (published less than two months after the deadline for the physical and financial execution of projects) supplemented by a precise account of capital spending for the year. The ministry in charge of controlling the plan thus has access to the precise reference points to carry out technical arbitration and finalize the future triennial plan as well as objective recent data to revitalize static situations and accelerate the mobilization of resources (boost investments);
- Strengthening participation by local actors in developing and evaluating the anticipated effects of projects and programmes, from the preliminary selection stage through the planning process (with choice in terms of the appropriateness of the global development strategy), and the complete implementation of the project and its expiration (real ex-post project effects);
- Increased participation of socio-economic sectors to obtain a shared vision of the pace of progress in the country;
- Availability of a meso-economic impact assessment (ex-post or while the plan is still being implemented) to allow decision-makers to verify that the triennial programmes are aligned with the strategies they must execute. This exercise will allow adjustment of strategic orientations to align with long-term goals (strategic axes);
- Strengthening of capacities in analysis and monitoring of economic policies.

Difficulties encountered

- Weak planning capacity of technical ministries;
- Strong competition between the finance and planning functions;
- Lack of adherence to system procedures;
- Insufficient quality and quantity of technical staff;
- Poor quality of evaluation tools used.

New apparatus for evaluation follow-up

- No ex-ante evaluation because no project/programme files were received;
- The ex-post evaluation is conducted according to requests and available resources;
- Alignment of the poverty reduction strategy paper (2006–2010) with MDGs:
 - Increased involvement of the policy department in the public policy evaluation process;
 - Five thematic monitoring groups; secretariat function undertaken by the policy department.

Results

- Increasing importance of monitoring and evaluation activities
 - Systematic with partners;
 - Weakness in the intra-ministerial exchanges about project files (sectoral triennial public investment programme not discussed);
 - Weak connections between the sector monitoring system and the plan (planning units eliminated in 1990).

Constraints

- Lack of funding dedicated to the evaluation of policies and programmes;
- Files presented by technical ministries lacking in quality and number;
- Absence of guides to evaluate projects that are not directly productive and to evaluate policies;
- Low level of diversity in evaluation techniques (the effects method was the most commonly used);
- Insufficiency of policy evaluation;
- Absence of a standardized framework for evaluating projects and programmes;
- Difficulties in collecting statistical data required to measure sector performances;
- Institutional instability in ministerial departments;
- Lack of harmonized methodologies for collecting information for projects;
- Weak correlation between sectoral indicators and national strategy indicators;
- Diversity in data sources;
- Insufficient ongoing training for technical ministerial evaluation agents;
- Lack of analysis and real substance on the relevance and efficacy of sectoral policies and difficulty in establishing a strong correlation between budgetary allocations and sectoral results.

CONCLUSIONS

- Evaluative practices are not conducted regularly or continuously.
- Public policies are poorly evaluated, focusing primarily on projects and programmes and not on public policies.
- There is poor understanding of the quality of public services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to revitalize the national planning system by:

- Harmonizing the relationship between finance and planning and their integration into an approach to global development;
- Redefining the missions of various institutions;
- Improving mechanisms to coordinate and circulate information;
- Operationalizing planning units within technical ministries;
- Strengthening the capacities of technical ministry agents, planning units and other actors;
- Regularly publishing and using evaluation results;
- Training evaluators in specific fields;
- Strengthening the functioning of evaluation monitoring apparatuses;
- Developing norms and quality standards for evaluation;
- Developing an evaluation reference and templates for all types of evaluations;
- Promoting evaluative research;
- Formalizing the Senegalese network of evaluators (Seneval);
- Institutionalizing policy evaluation and involving all actors;
- Generalizing the results-driven management approach by systematizing the medium-term sectoral expenditure framework in all sectors of social and economic life to promote the programme approach from within the technical ministries.