RESILIENT NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEMS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PROCEEDINGS FROM THE 2022 NATIONAL EVALUATION CAPACITIES CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 2022, TURIN, ITALY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would like to thank all those who contributed to the 2022 National Evaluation Capacity (NEC) Conference.

The conference organization team and the IEO would like to recognize the work of the following organizations in supporting the 2022 NEC conference, including the hosts of the conference, the International Training Centre of ILO (ITCILO), and their highly professional team, for delivering the conference and ensuring it was a success throughout. The IEO would also like to recognize IFAD for their generous financial and technical support, and ILO, UNFPA, WFP and DEval amongst others for supporting panels and participants to attend the conference. We would also like to thank the World Bank IEG and GEI for their support throughout the planning, preparation and implementation of the conference.

We would also like to thank the participants, presenters and moderators who joined us at the conference and made the discussions and conversations extremely rich. We hope these proceedings have captured the richness of these discussions.

FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to present the proceedings of the 2022 National Evaluation Capacities Conference (NEC) which marks a significant milestone in evolution of the NEC conference series since the first NEC conference in Morocco in 2009. This was the seventh conference in the series organized by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP together with the Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI).

Today we are living in uncertain and challenging times, when evaluating the effectiveness of public policies has become not just a necessity but an imperative. Keeping public action accountable, and using data and evidence to learn from experience, should help our societies navigate through these difficult times. To avoid alienating vast segments of the population, public policies need to produce better results in terms of service provision, whether for health, education or housing, keeping inflation at bay, or providing citizens with the security to enjoy a decent life.

The COVID-19 pandemic - and the subsequent crises of fuel, food and fertilizer shortages that have hit the world since 2020 - changed how countries are facing the challenge of strengthening national monitoring and evaluation systems.

With an overarching theme of '**Resilient National Evaluation Systems for Sustainable Development', t**he conference gave renewed emphasis to sharing progress and lessons learned in strengthening national evaluation systems, and how, in light of the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, these systems are essential for countries to get back on track towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The conference brought together more than 300 participants from over 100 countries to exchange experiences on strengthening national evaluation systems for public policies. The deliberations were guided by questions such as: What is holding back the development of national evaluation systems? What is the role of the civil society in national evaluation systems? How can sectoral and subnational evaluation systems be integrated? How can national evaluation systems be financed? How can evaluation be conducted during crises? What methodological innovations are needed? What should the new agenda for national evaluation capacity look like?

The key outcome of the deliberations and commitments is the '**Turin Agenda'**, a framework for collective action in response to the challenges identified. It serves as a common framework for action and collective commitment by participating national governments, bilateral and

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multilateral agencies, international development and humanitarian agencies, civil society and the international evaluation community, to strengthen national evaluation systems rapidly and sustainably.

It is a call for strengthened partnerships to accelerate the development of resilient, agile, flexible, adaptable and forward-looking national evaluation and statistical systems, that are utility-focused, integrated into decision-making processes, and help ensure that better evidence is generated to support policies that improve peoples' lives. This is the ultimate goal of strong and robust national evaluation systems and building more resilient societies in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the SDGs.

The UNDP IEO is committed to continue the dialogues initiated at the conference and strengthen its engagement with partners in the international evaluation community and with national governments to further its support to national evaluation capacities. I hope that these proceedings will provide inspiration and insight as we move into the new era, with new challenges, but also with a renewed commitment to foster a more inclusive and sustainable development pathway.

Oscar A. Garcia
Director
Independent Evaluation Office
UNDP

ACRONYMS

AIDA	Artificial Intelligence for Development Analytics
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
CLEAR	Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results
CSO	Civil society organization
DEval	German Development Evaluation Institute
ECD	Evaluation Capacity Development
ERC	Evaluation Resource Centre
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEI	Global Evaluation Initiative
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
INCE	National Evaluation Capacities Index
IOCE	International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation
ITC	International Training Centre
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MESA	Monitoring and Evaluation System Analysis
NEC	National evaluation capacity
NES	National Evaluation System
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSSAP-SDGs	Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs
ReLAC	Latin American and Caribbean Network of Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VOPE	Voluntary Organization for Professional Evaluation
WFP	World Food Programme

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01 CHAPTER

NATIONAL EVALUATION CAPACITIES CONFERENCE 2022

The focus of the National Evaluation Capacities Conference 2022 was to emphasize the role of sharing progress and lessons learned in strengthening National Evaluation Systems (NES), and how these systems are essential for countries to 'build forward better' and get back on track toward the SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underlines the importance of high-quality data, generated at the national level, to track progress towards development goals and course correct where needed. This requires strong, localized evaluation systems. The experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic have only served to highlight this.

The NEC conference 2022, the seventh in the series, brought together 300 participants from over 100 countries to discuss the status of National Evaluation Systems and capacities. The conference was organized around four streams:

- **Stream A - Building National Evaluation Systems,** which explored the required elements of a robust and resilient National Evaluation system.

- **Stream B - Subnational and sectoral evaluation systems,** to explore lessons and challenges from subnational and sectoral systems.

- **Stream C - Evaluating global challenges: fragility, inequalities and environment,** looking at the role of National Evaluation Systems in addressing the biggest issues of our time.

- **Stream D - Methodological innovations for the new normal,** which explored new approaches and tools developed to strengthen National Evaluation Systems.

The conference culminated in the proclamation of the **Turin Agenda**, which provides a roadmap for the future development and strengthening of National Evaluation Systems and capacities. This NEC 2022 Proceedings report brings together the main findings from each session.

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Stream A **Building Resilient National Evaluation Systems**	Stream B **Subnation and Sectoral evaluation systems**	Stream C **Evaluating amidst global challenges: Fragility, Inequality and Environment**	Stream D **Methological Innovations for the new normal**
Keynote speech and Plenary 1. In an era of complexity and uncertainty, can we do without national evaluation systems?			
A1. Status of national evaluation systems	**B1.** Evaluation and Strengthened Governance	**C1.** The need for Evaluation in an unstable world	**D1.** Innovating to Evaluate beyond the 2030 Agenda
A2. Assessing National Evaluation System and Capacities	**B2.** Citizen's engagement to strengthen NES	**C2.** COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Evaluating National Interventions	**D2.** National Data Systems
Plenary 2. Rethinking evaluation to address the crisis in the Anthropocene			
A3. National Evaluation Policies	**B3.** Decent work and the SGDs	**C3.** Environmental Sustainability	**D3.** Evaluation methods to inform policy
A4. Challenges and opportunities in Institutionalising NES	**B4.** What can we learn from Sectoral Evaluation Systems?	**C4.** Approaches to evaluation during the pandemic	**D4.** Ethics and Evaluation
A5. Financing National Evaluation Systems	**B5.** Subnational Evaluation System	**C5.** Engaging Youth in Evaluation	**D5.** Digital Innovation in evaluation
Plenary 3. Fragility and Crisis as the new normal			
A6. Building National Evaluation Capacities	**B6.** Supporting the development of National Evaluation Systems	**C6.** Evaluating the SDGs	**D6.** Innovation M&E systems
A7. Engaging Society to strengthen NES	**B7.** Promoting USE of Evaluations by Government	**C7.** Evaluation in Fragile Settings	**D7.** Transformational Change

Day One · 26 October
Day Two · 27 October
Day Three · 28 October

02 CHAPTER

WELCOME ADDRESS

2.1 | Achim Steiner, Administrator, UNDP

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends,

It is a privilege to join the 7th National Evaluation Capacities Conference being held in the historic city of Turin. It is hosted by the Global Evaluation Initiative and the Independent Evaluation Office of the UNDP, or IEO.

The theme of this year's conference reflects on the importance of building resilient National Evaluation Systems. Heeding the harsh lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, building resilience must be at the centre of all our efforts: from shaping more robust healthcare systems; to reinforcing social protection; to rolling out new insurance solutions. This will enable countries and communities to be better prepared for the next crisis.

To give just one example, look to the Philippines where UNDP is working closely with the National Economic and Development Authority to develop and strengthen government evaluation systems. This is helping to ensure that there is stronger evidence and data-based decision-making, which is also helping to strengthen government accountability.

As we seek to support countries to build up-to-date national evaluation capacities, we must first look inwards and see where we ourselves can improve. For example, the IEO of UNDP is rolling out several new tools as it aims to get ahead of a rapidly changing development landscape.

Look, for instance, at the Artificial Intelligence for Development Analytics initiative, or AIDA. It aimed to tackle the challenge of extracting evidence from our archives, which was manual, resource-intensive, and time-consuming. AIDA is a machine learning model that extracts key insights from 6,000 evaluation reports stored in the IEO Evaluation Resource Centre, complete with a web portal to access the findings.

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Ultimately, by helping colleagues to extract crucial data from evaluations, it is ensuring that everyone in UNDP can make more informed decisions on their projects and programmes. There are also a range of new online courses so that UNDP and United Nations personnel can learn new evaluation skills - or keep up to date with new and emerging developments in the field.

We are also making a concerted effort to learn from our partners and outside sources. Consider, for instance, our call for submissions in advance of this conference which surfaced a range of innovative approaches. That included innovative data collection and management systems in countries as diverse as Eritrea, Belarus and Cabo Verde. The Belarusian statistical authority, for example, is finding new ways to combine data sources to improve reporting on the SDGs.

Other submissions include innovative ways to ensure that evaluation was maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic. That includes an example from Senegal, where mobile phone data was used to measure and address the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic.

Evaluation is not only helping UNDP to deliver even better results for the countries and communities that we serve as we advance the Sustainable Development Goals. By continuously updating our own evaluation systems, UNDP is also able to offer this expertise to our partner countries.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, the evidence demonstrates that evaluation strengthens the transparency of governments and ensures accountability to citizens. In doing so, national monitoring and evaluation systems play an important role in building stable, resilient societies.

Indeed, at a time when viruses and climate change pay no heed to borders, we must recognise that our common challenges require our collective intelligence. In this respect, this conference is an opportunity to share cutting-edge evaluation approaches and new solutions that can be the foundation for interventions that can help drive some of the tangible changes that we need. That includes everything from projects that can help countries decarbonize rapidly; to new ways expand access to clean energies; to infrastructure that can create new green jobs; to advancing gender equality.

Ultimately, evaluation can also provide decision-makers with the evidence they need to adapt programmes, projects and institutions that can help break our global uncertainty complex: helping to improve the health and wellbeing of both people and planet.

Finally, I wish you a most productive session.
Thank you.

2.2 | Gilbert F. Houngbo, Director-General, ILO

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ILO (International Labour Organization) is honoured to host the 7th National Evaluation Capacities Conference, at our International Training Centre (ITC). For the first time ever, this Conference includes all of the traditional ILO partners: governments, and workers' and employers' organizations.

Your topic, resilient National Evaluation Systems for sustainable development, is both relevant and timely. Development is still leaving too many behind. Progress has undoubtedly been made since the 2030 Agenda was adopted. But there have also been significant setbacks.

The COVID-19 crisis aggravated pre-existing economic and social crises. Just as we saw the first signs of recovery, the food, fuel and finance crises hit. It brought economic uncertainty, and deepening inequalities. All of this on top of the pre-existing crisis of climate change. These are massive challenges. Working together, we can, and we will, tackle them. But in doing so we must ensure that our hard-won advances in social justice are preserved. Not just preserved, but reinvigorated.

To do this we will need a new social contract, supported by a social justice coalition. This must be centred around human, environmental, economic and societal values. And it must be supported by the knowledge and evidence that quality evaluation can provide.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused great hardship. But it also led to innovation in development and humanitarian work. Access to data and real-time evidence allowed for rapid policy responses, supporting a human-centred recovery. For example, the ILO Evaluation Office issued guidance and protocols on how to continue evaluations during the pandemic. We also designed a 'nowcasting' model to track the disruption in labour markets caused by COVID-19. The ILO Monitor on the World of Work became the go-to data source for policymakers and development partners. Equally, ILO's traditional ways of working also stood the test.

Once again, we saw that social dialogue is key to economic and social cohesion – and good governance. It plays an important role in promoting harmonious labour relations. Good governance also goes hand-in-hand with evaluation. Evaluation promotes public accountability and contributes to public trust in governments.

Evaluations also show us the how and the why of the changes we need to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals - the SDGs. And evaluations can also offer accountability, transparency and learning. It is for this reason that evaluation must be seen as an essential partner in sustainable development.

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In the past decade ILO has placed increased emphasis on national evaluation capacities and systems. They play a vital role in assessing and boosting progress in our Decent Work Country Programmes - and by extension the SDGs.

With the support of our Evaluation Office, ILO has empowered governments and our social partners - workers and employers. Through capacity-development, they can contribute to National Evaluation Systems that measure progress towards the SDGs, including SDG 8 on Decent Work for All. Since 2018 the ILO Evaluation network has trained more than 500 tripartite constituents to track progress on the SDGs. The training covered knowledge systems – such as the ILO i-Eval Discovery database. And it showed them how to use these tools to improve decision-making.

The i-Eval Discovery database is public. And it contains thousands of evaluations reports, lessons learned and good practices. These can help shape policies and programmes, based on evidence of what works and why.

We still have a way to go. But I'm sure collaborations, such as this conference, will greatly advance efforts to create resilient National Evaluation Systems. And, in turn, these will support the goal of sustainable development.

Thank you.

2.3 | David Beasley, Executive Director, WFP

Ladies and gentlemen,

It's a pleasure to join you today for the 7th National Evaluations Capacities Conference. This year's event is taking place against the backdrop of an unprecedented global food crisis with the threat of famine and starvation growing all the time.

Today, 345 million people are marching towards starvation – that's more than two and half times the number before the pandemic. And 50 million people in 45 countries are literally knocking on famine's door. For many of these people, World Food Programme (WFP) assistance means the difference between life and death.

As we go all out to deliver emergency food aid and work with communities to build resilience and strengthen global food systems, it's critical that we learn what's most effective in the fight to end hunger, and that we apply these successes right across our operations.

That's why the focus of this year's conference on resilient systems and evaluation in fragile contexts is so important. Independent evaluations provide vital information about the effectiveness, the impact, and of course the sustainability of our work. They promote transparency and trust with our many donors and partners and shine a light on effective approaches that deliver tangible results.

And when tough decisions need to be made, we need access to the best possible evidence to ensure we make the right call.

Your work as evaluation experts underpins the frontline programmes that save lives and change lives every single day in the world's most challenging places.

Thank you for everything you do.
I wish you all a very successful and productive conference.

03 CHAPTER

OPENING REMARKS

3.1 | Giuseppe Casale, Director, International Training Centre of the ILO

Distinguished delegates and authorities, colleagues from UNDP and other United Nations organizations, ladies and gentlemen, Bongiorno!

It is my pleasure to welcome you at the International Training Centre of the ILO for this seventh National Evaluation Capacities Conference, which has been organized by UNDP Independent Evaluation Office in collaboration with the Global Evaluation Initiative of the World Bank. It is really an honour for me and my colleagues here at the Centre to resume our activities in person on a large scale with this NEC Conference, and in particular with this collaboration with UNDP. Thank you very much.

If we only go back for a second with our memories to what happened, at least here in this country, on 22 March 2020 and afterwards because of the COVID pandemic, this event really marks a major watershed in the organization of large events at international level, in particular in the city of Turin. It is really a great pleasure to see all of you here physically present, as well as those participants who are following this conference online.

As you know, this seventh NEC conference addresses the specific topic of resilient evaluation systems, particularly at a critical time for many countries in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and certainly in a world which is affected by political, economic and social turmoil, and unfortunately by too many armed conflicts, so the humanitarian toll is paying a very high price.

The International Training Centre, since its establishment here in 1964, has contributed through its training activities in reaching out to thousands of participants every year all over the world. Our main objective is to develop the capacity of our constituents to improve and implement decent work policies, for ensuring improved economic and social conditions,

so this NEC conference squares perfectly well into the ILO mandate, and we are pleased to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by leveraging the importance of evaluation systems to improve governance. As we all know, sound evaluation systems concur in tracking progress towards the achievement of our development goals.

We are also happy that the International Training Centre hosts this important conference on this beautiful campus, which is quite unique in Europe and in the city of Turin, which the Deputy Mayor Ms. Michaela Favaro represents here. Let me also say with the support of the Italian Government here, represented by Minister Marco Giungi, thank you.

On behalf of the Centre staff and those who really work hard and very closely with UNDP IEO organizers, let me once again welcome you to this important event, of course we remain at your disposal for giving you any support in the coming days. Let me also thank particularly our Welcome Ambassadors. These young volunteers have been doing tremendous work here to make sure that the organization of this conference runs smoothly.

Thank you, Merci, Gracias, Grazie!

3.2 | Oscar Garcia, Director IEO, UNDP

Capacity-development is at the heart of development. Today we are gathered here to share our experiences about developing evaluation capacity. Not just any capacities, but the capacities to conduct, to commission and to use evaluations.

Evaluation, as a discipline, is needed to assess progress made. Evaluation, as you all are aware, is embedded in the political process. And we need to be realistic. Assessing public policies is not easy as it brings transparency by asking the hard questions. Evaluation does not only ask why things happen but also who benefits from these results? Who wins? Who loses? And under what circumstances?

I come from Bolivia, one of the most beautiful and diverse countries in Latin America. It is also one of the most unequal. It hurts me to see that many people in my country cannot access quality education, nutrition or health care. Youth, and particularly young women, lack access to decent jobs. Their inability to have a dignified life today deprives them of the opportunities of the future.

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Every system is designed to produce results. The development model, as we know it, is not working. At least, not for the vast majority of the people in our countries. It doesn't yield the sustainable results we need as humans. Evaluators are part of the system and can contribute positively to its improvement, to deliver positive results for the people. We need to change the system based on the evaluative evidence generated by our collective efforts.

However, incremental change is not good enough. We need transformational change and for that we need to know what works, what doesn't and bring the necessary change at scale.

How can we strengthen national evaluation capacities in the midst of crises? How can we build resilience in the midst of fragility? What are the opportunities behind the compounded crises we are experiencing today?

Instead of falling into despair, I invite you to lift your eyes and look to the future. Look at the inclusive and sustainable future we want to build for our children, and for the children of our children. We have a responsibility to protect the vulnerable, the weak, the marginalized. We need to break free from old habits and build new avenues for hope.

In this conference room we have the hope, the will and the determination to bring about change and we will build together the new agenda for developing evaluation capacity. We will build the Turin Agenda for the NEC.

Let me close by thanking the many partners that together are building this new agenda.

I want to thank the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), with whom we are building the Global Evaluation Initiative; the CLEAR Centres who are at the forefront of this process; the bilateral partners with their invaluable support to this effort; my colleagues from the United Nations gathered in the United Nations Evaluation Group. Our colleagues from EvalNet, from OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) DAC (Development Assistance Committee) countries, colleagues from the regional development banks, from civil society organizations (CSOs) including the Voluntary Organization for the Promotion of Evaluation or VOPEs (Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation), colleagues from universities, colleagues from the IOCE (International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation) and from ALNAP, the humanitarian evaluation network.

I want to also thank the fantastic team of the UNDP IEO in New York, and our hosts from the ITC of ILO and, most importantly, I want to thank you, the representatives of more than 100 countries who are here today to share your experiences, your needs and your hopes.

Please speak up! We want to learn from you. This is your conference!

Many thanks for your attention.

3.3 | Alison Evans, Director-General, Evaluation, World Bank Group

Good morning, everyone, it is a genuine pleasure to see you all here.

This is a fantastic opportunity to come together after a period of us being all apart and working remotely and only seeing each other through that small aperture on the screen.

I suspect before COVID-19, we would have taken events like this very much for granted, but I suspect none of us is doing that today and we're all incredibly privileged to be here.

But let's not sugar-coat what is going on around us at the moment. We are living in hugely challenging and uncertain times where many areas of societal progress - poverty, inequality, education, health and environment - are facing massive shocks, and even reversals.

In a context like this the stakes of not making good decisions about where and how to commit resources that respond equitably and inclusively to the key challenges of today and seek to mitigate and avert the crises of tomorrow could not be higher. The dangers of our decision-makers *'flying blind'* without the right evidence they need to tackle hugely difficult choices and trade-offs are immense; and so are the risks of weakened or no accountability for the decisions that are taken in our name.

All of this serves to underscore the fact that it could not be a more important time to be focusing on the data and evidence needs of our decision-makers, and in particular, the sometimes hidden but undeniably vital role of National Evaluation Systems.

We've come a long way in evaluation, and I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that in recent decades we've seen nothing short of a revolution in the stature and the practice of evaluation. But while evaluation practice has evolved massively, embedding that practice in the rules, routines and behaviours of organizations, and most importantly in the mindsets of decision-makers themselves, remains a work in progress.

Experience tells us that whatever the context, leadership for building National Evaluation Systems has to be home-grown - country ownership really matters. We also know it's a complex process of institutional design, where many different actors ranging from evaluators themselves to commissioners to the multiple users from legislators to CSOs and informed citizens, knowledge brokers and translators of evaluation evidence. Collaboration and connection are therefore key - both amongst and between the many stakeholders working in and around evaluation.

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We're also acutely aware that the pressures are mounting all the time on all forms of evidence, including evaluation, to be more relevant, more timely, more agile, more focused on the big challenges and the big calls of the day, more inclusive, less northern, less elitist.

There's no single recipe book for responding to all of this, but there is by now a lot of accumulated good practice and excellent technical and non-technical knowledge that we can share amongst us to support the development of National Evaluation Systems.

This is the motivation behind the establishment of the Global Evaluation Initiative founded by the IEG of the World Bank group in collaboration with UNDP IEO, and now involving multiple partners across the global landscape, who all want to amplify global knowledge and support country-led efforts to build robust, reliable and resilient evaluation capacities and systems.

It's terrific to see here today GEI partnering with UNDP IEO on this NEC event, which brings me to the purpose and the power of a gathering like this where we can hear from all of you and learn from you about the progress and challenges in shaping evaluation practice and strengthening evaluation systems - not just rehashing the problems but finding the solutions for tackling the big challenges of today and tomorrow.

We have a clear mission here - to make this event count and to take it to the next level by committing to a shared ambitious Turin Agenda.

To close, I want to congratulate Oscar and all his colleagues for their vision and determination in pulling together this event and of course to our hosts here at the ITC ILO. We all know that everything is harder since the pandemic - even arriving here and getting our luggage at the same time.

These things are sent to try us - times are tough. But I know that you will join me in a very warm round of applause to thank Oscar and his team for a fantastic organization and we're looking forward to these three days.

Thank you!!

3.4 | Andrea Cook, Director, Evaluation, WFP

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Italy, which is the home of the United Nations World Food Programme and this year's National Evaluation Capacities conference.

The World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organization fighting hunger; and at the moment it's actively involved in feeding 130 million of the most poor and vulnerable in in the world in the face of the conflicts and challenges that we've been discussing.

As others have said, we meet at what I believe to be a really pivotal moment in international development as the world we live in today is not the one we imagined seven years ago when all nations united to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. At the World Food Programme we're acutely aware of the rise of hunger and food insecurity, the impact of long drawn-out conflicts and the desperate need to build peace. We know that the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 will be felt for many years to come and we're starting to wake up to the reality of the growing risk of climate change.

As Oscar and Alison have said, it's especially in these times of crisis where truth and objectivity are often lost, this is a moment for evaluation to really shine a light, so that our leaders and ourselves can make the best possible decisions based on evidence that informs our actions - so that we know what's working, what isn't and why, so that we can build forward better and most importantly make sure we're not leaving anyone behind. But to achieve this, evaluation must thrive in every nation. All countries need robust evaluation evidence, strong national systems, strong evaluation policies and above all the capacities to be able to be in the driver's seat of their own development agendas.

I stand here today because the World Food Programme is firmly committed to strengthening national capacities. In 2017, we took a step to create Regional Evaluation Units to respond to the commitments of the 2014 United Nations General Assembly resolution on building National Evaluation Capacities. The aim of that Resolution was to support governments and to partner with National and Regional evaluation institutions and experts to build and strengthen evaluation capacities around the world.

As Alison has said, I think we've seen in the past decade, and since 2014, a real acceleration in that progress and that's really heartening. But there's a great challenge before us as the era of the Sustainable Development Goals hits the midpoint. There is an urgent need to review activities and to track progress both globally and nationally, and evaluation is called upon to shine a much more powerful light on the achievement of the SDGs.

I would urge all of us here to seize this rare opportunity of being together across the many sessions that our colleagues have organized over these three days. I really encourage you to ask two key questions: firstly, how can evaluation, and the evidence it generates, be more relevant to the critical decisions being made in our countries; and secondly, how can we strengthen capacities, so that evaluations are more responsive to country needs, more empowering, more useful and more engaging and inclusive.

On this note I'd like to say a final word on an initiative that is gaining momentum this year, and this is an initiative which is being led by the Government of Nigeria supported by the World Food Programme, UNICEF, UN Women, EvalPartners, IDEAS, the United Nations Evaluation Group and others - and this is for a United Nations resolution on strengthening evaluation towards the SDGs.

We believe this Resolution will be a perfect complement to the 2014 Resolution, accelerating the progress that's being made in strengthening National Evaluation Capacities, and through country-led evaluations looking at progress towards the SDGs, looking at progress towards national policies and programmes to contribute to strengthening national evaluation cultures and ensuring that the expertise really does meet the demand for evaluative evidence.

With Nigeria here present through the office of the Special Senior Assistant to the President on the SDGs, I hope we'll have an opportunity to know more about this effort and I encourage you to reach out to discuss it. Finally, I'd like to thank our colleagues from UNDP for hosting this conference. It is really vital at this time to provide this space for discussion amongst partners, so that we can advance this dialogue, and above all learn from one another. So, I wish you all a pleasant and productive conference.

Thank you!

3.5 | Indran Naidoo, Director, Independent Office of Evaluation, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Good morning colleagues, it is good to see many of you who I have seen right from 2009.

My comments are going to be quite short. I echo the excellent introductory remarks by Oscar and Alison and Andrea, these are totally relevant and will help to shape this very important conference.

The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD based here in Italy, congratulates the IEO of UNDP under the very able leadership of Mr. Oscar Garcia and his able team as well as a Global Evaluation Initiative with Ms. Alison Evans and her team, for successfully co-hosting the seventh National Evaluation Capacity Global event here in Italy. It is a fantastic venue, and we all are extremely impressed by the excellent organizational capability.

This event comes at a time when resilient government systems are all the more important to mitigate crises like the ones we are still emerging from. The role of all United Nations agencies is critical, and in the food security sector, the one that I work for in IFAD, we find it has become absolutely relevant because we have seen what the impact of the crisis has had on increase in poverty levels.

The NEC series has now moved across the globe from its origins in 2009 in Morocco, and it has built steam and momentum over the past decade through very strategic partnerships with key evaluation entities and hosting governments, which include South Africa, Brazil, Thailand, Turkey and, in 2019, Egypt. This event is also fortunate in that it has all the partners here; it draws on the very formidable capacity of GEI offering more support to governments in the important work of delivering better results to citizens.

I wish to congratulate the organizing teams as well as all the partners and sponsors, and all of you for getting here. We welcome you to Italy and I'm sure the deliberations are going to be rich and fruitful, and as they would say in Italy - you really are going to have a fantastic time.

Thank you very much!

04 CHAPTER
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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

4.1 | María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd Session of the United National General Assembly

It is a true privilege to be with you today. My gratitude goes to the organizers, the IEO of UNDP and its Director, Oscar Garcia, the Global Evaluation Initiative, and our hosts Giuseppe Cassale and the International Training Centre of ILO.

Greetings to all present today, ministers, experts, academics, and the evaluation community.

It is not easy to come after such a thought-provoking analysis, after the wise words of experts and practitioners. I must confess that I am a little intimidated by the clarity and depth of what we have heard in the opening speeches today. And it is impossible to avoid agreeing with or repeating what has been said. However, I therefore would like to start by paraphrasing what we have just heard.

The world is facing profound, interconnected and simultaneous crises that span from the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic consequences to the climate emergency, the extinction crisis, transactional inequalities, wars and human security stress. And I could go on and on. And, as I often say, these are not the _problems_, but rather _symptoms_ of a more profound and systemic civilizational breakdown that requires a whole of government, whole of society, and a global and multilateral bold and effective response. That calls for collective action, creativity and responsibility.

The outlook is bleak; we know it. The COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine have unleashed an exponential increase in the cost-of-living due to the triad of energy, food and financial crises. The last United Nations report on SDG implementation is disheartening, and there is an evident backsliding in almost every SDG.

Let me share some numbers: 93 million were pushed into extreme poverty only in 2020. With the current national climate commitments, instead of achieving the Paris Agreement target to peak emissions by 2025 and reach net-zero by 2050, the trend shows steady growth with a rise of 14 percent by 2030. Today, the world is facing the most significant number of violent conflicts since 1946, with one-quarter of the population living in conflict-affected areas and 100 million having been forced to flee their homes by May this year.

And we already know, the highest price is always paid by the most vulnerable: women and girls, children, indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. And here again, child labour and child marriage numbers have seen unprecedented growth. Gaps and inequalities are persistent. A woman in sub-Saharan Africa has around a 130 times higher risk of dying from causes relating to pregnancy or childbirth than a woman in Europe or North America.

We often hear, and we heard from the very comprehensive and forward-looking report of the United Nations Secretary-General - Our Common Agenda - that we need a new social contract. Local, national, and global contracts for that matter; and I cannot agree more. We need to recommit to the basic principles of the United Nations founding Charter: cooperation, solidarity, peaceful coexistence, and respect for human rights. It all comes down to, and if you allow me to paraphrase and adapt President Roosevelt's four fundamental Freedoms: freedom from want, from fear, from speech and worship, and I would add, freedom to live in harmony with nature.

This leads us to the obvious question of what to do to face these challenges? And how to do it? And the paradox is that we live in the most sophisticated and prolific technological revolution; we have the knowledge, we know more and better, and we have the means, the resources, and the power, even if they are unevenly distributed. And so, why can we not act, respond, decide, and simply exercise our instinct of self-preservation? Why are we not able to learn from experience and not to repeat the same mistakes of the past? And, of course, the answer is not so straightforward. There is great difficulty in bridging the political, economic and cultural dimensions of decision-making and problem-solving, and identifying what is holding us back.

Our choices are twofold: we have the option to either stay in paralysis and despair; or to resolve to act, and by doing so, use crises as a lever for transformation.

A great example of what humanity can do, what our international community can do when we act collectively and responsibly, is the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Today, we need the same spirit, the same drive, the same leadership.

Against this backdrop, I propose three key words to reflect on the critical role that resilient and robust evaluation systems play in addressing the poly-crises we face, and how to find outlets and opportunities for more well informed, effective, transformative policy and action.

The key words are TIME, SCALE, and IMPACT.

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TIME

Let us start with TIME. Four disconnected time-cycles that call for adaptive, flexible and yet highly institutionalized evaluation systems. These four non-matching time-cycles are political, social, ecological, and crisis cycles.

- **First,** a political cycle is frequently related to a government's term and its public policy planning and evaluation performance, typically for four or five years. This is also associated with the political stability of countries.

- **Second,** the cycles of social change and adaptation. The time for societies to learn, adapt and respond to a particular policy or normative decision takes time, often longer time spans than the political cycles. For example, policies on using single-use plastics or energy austerity.

- **Third,** the times of nature to adapt to abrupt changes, to simply survive or regenerate, for example, massive deforestation or the changes in the atmosphere that cause climate change. These are long time-cycles that require both shock and urgent decisions and long-term planning and evaluation.

- **Fourth,** it is perhaps the more significant challenge of our times, which is how to govern in constant iterated crises and emergencies. It happens that today, making decisions in the midst of an emergency has become the new normal. Perhaps the best example is how communities, local authorities, national governments, and multilateral institutions responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was a magnifier of the dysfunctions of our societal arrangements, institutional designs, and the vulnerabilities of our societies. Regardless of a country's GDP [gross domestic product] or population, the pandemic found us unprepared, and called for the need to craft more resilient and adaptive systems to face emergencies. And we are not only speaking about the need for robust National Health Systems, but we are also talking about global supply chains, transport, and adequate means to learn and make critical decisions and do so using virtual means. At the United Nations, for example, the General Assembly had to adapt its technology and modalities to allow remote voting and remote approval of resolutions.

The issue is how to address the challenge of the simultaneity of crises and responses from the policy and the political perspective, and also about prioritizing and harmonizing decisions between urgency and crisis and mid- and long-term structural interventions and transformations.

The challenge is how to align these different time spans. One way is to close the knowledge, policy, practice and power gaps. And for that, we need well-informed, responsible and active citizenship. We need adaptive, resilient and effective planning and evaluation ecosystems that require solid institutions and social ownership. And we need systems and institutions that outlive specific governments and evaluations, and structures that are built in to the planning, practices and organizational culture of our governance architecture.

SCALE

The second key word is SCALE. If we go back to the idea of a troubled world of interconnected, interdependent, and simultaneous crises, we know that we need cross-scale solutions. We can take any example, such as COVID-19 or climate change. Communities, local governments, national governments, parliaments, regional integration bodies, and global multilateral institutions all have a role to play; they have specific mandates, are accountable to different constituencies. However, policy coherence and mutual accountability are not a given. Policy and decision-making on different scales are often disconnected, contradictory or duplicative.

Therefore, the global planning and evaluation ecosystem should allow for weaving across scales, a bottom-up and top-down flux to foster greater coherence and cooperation, more effective accountability and transparency, and better implementation capacity of global agreements, like the SDGs, the Paris Agreement or the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Therefore, I would say that an effective global evaluation ecosystem is an essential component of global governance.

Multilevel governance arrangements are the best way to address some of the most pressing deficits of our institutions and governing systems: the implementation, the inclusion, the participation, and the accountability deficits. I am sure you all have examples of how a lack of complementarity and coherence can adversely affect the achievement of the SDGs or the Climate Paris Agreement.

The idea of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to crisis-solving is written down in almost every good-governance manual. However, political tensions and differing views and priorities among levels of government are frequent, especially in highly polarized political environments.

Let me give you a concrete example, the climate crisis; we know that cities consume nearly 80 percent of the world's energy and produce around 60 percent of global emissions. In most countries, local authorities are primarily responsible or share essential aspects of public policies to regulate energy production and emissions. This means that energy transition national plans must adjust to the global goals established in the Climate Paris Agreement and include cities and local governments if we want to ensure implementation.

Once again, resilient, adaptive and well-institutionalized planning and evaluation systems are vital to ensure coherence and delivery capacity. I would even say that robust evaluation systems can and should help to bridge scale short-circuits and broker conflict-solving.

IMPACT AND TRANSFORMATION

I want to bring the third key word or rather key words to your attention: Impact and Transformation. Perhaps one of today's most critical issues is the trust deficit of people in institutions and in the capacity of those leading these institutions to deliver the rights and services that they expect and deserve.

The steady growth of poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and the fiscal stress of developing and developed countries cause disenchantment and a breach of citizens' trust in institutions. And this is true for local service providers, parliaments and national public services, to the global institutions, including the United Nations.

Recent surveys demonstrate a growing lack of confidence in governments among citizens. For example, an OECD study from last July shows that only four out of 10 people trust their governments. And in my region, Latin America and the Caribbean, eight out of 10 people do not trust political parties.

And trust-building is connected to making institutions and democracies deliver for people. Electoral democracies are not enough. Democracies face a performance problem-solving deficit. This means that there is a need to harmonize legitimacy through informed and sustained citizens' participation with efficiency in public decision-making. And, of course, accountability is vital to trust in - and legitimacy of - public decisions.

Again, robust and institutionalized evaluation systems should be at the centre of trust-building and accountability. This means that evaluation cannot be a technocratic exercise but rather a politically sensitive process for building co-responsibility, social ownership.

In sum: Strong, resilient, and effective evaluation systems are vital to strengthen democracies, to redress course, foster social ownership and see palpable positive outcomes of public policy and decision-making.

Coming back to our three key words, time, scale and impact, we can say that resilient evaluation systems should be adaptive and well-equipped to respond to unexpected changes. A resilient evaluation system should allow for snapshot assessments of a particular decision or action, a sort of an account of the past, and also be visionary, forward-looking, a scenario-building process to reflect, redress, change course and, in doing so, reinvent the future.

But what are the enablers for resilient and effective evaluation systems: I would also mention three: **planning, institutional capacity and reliable data**.

There is no evaluation without planning. As mentioned before, planning mechanisms at different levels of government and in the multilateral system should also be institutionalized, predictable, and yet, adaptive, flexible and shock resistant. Capacity and skills development are also vital to boost the resilience and reliability of evaluation systems. These enablers - planning, capacity-building, and quality data - should allow cooperation to be fostered among and within countries.

The challenge, therefore, lies in the ability of evaluation ecosystems to be institutionalized, predictable, systematic, independent, reliable, and allow for comparability. And, at the same time, be adaptive, context-sensitive, flexible, and open to innovation. This is perhaps how we can define resilience and effectiveness of evaluations processes.

We cannot simply assume that crisis and emergencies are the new normal and a manifest destiny, and remain in a state of paralysis. I would strongly argue that human made crises should have human made solutions. And we have a shared responsibility, a role to play for a renewed social contract.

As late Kofi Annan used to say, 'I am a stubborn optimist, we cannot afford the luxury of pessimism'. I know that we can look at the future with hope and not despair, with responsibility and not indifference. And we are gathered here today because we are not indifferent.

The evaluation community has a vital role to play in rebuilding trust in institutions and democracies, fostering accountability and designing prospects for a better future to close the gap between our aspirations and what is possible. That's what good politics are all about.

Thank you for your attention!

Allow me to close with a poem, from the great Canadian poet, singer and composer, Leonard Cohen:

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in

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05 CHAPTER

PLENARY SESSIONS

5.1 | Plenary 1:
In an era of complexity and uncertainty,
can we do without national systems?

Moderator
- **Dugan Fraser,** Programme Manager, Global Evaluation Initiative

Panellists
- **Viviana Casco Molinas,** Minister Executive Secretary, Technical Secretariat of Planning for Social and Economic Development, Paraguay
- **Susan Sulu,** Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination, Solomon Islands
- **Luc Joseph Okio,** Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister, in charge of State Reform, Republic of the Congo
- **Zoran Dimitrovski,** Deputy Minister, Ministry of Local Self-government, North Macedonia

How do we ensure National Evaluation Systems play a central role in responding to the pandemic and getting the SDGs back on track?

- ◆ **Inclusive and participatory approaches should be prioritized** to build strong and resilient NES. A multi-stakeholder approach that gathers private sector, civil society and academia is key to ensure resilient monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. This approach ensures the ownership and sustainability of evaluation processes and results.

- ◆ **Supportive legal and regulatory frameworks** that create demand for national M&E systems, adequate data and capacity of public institutions are critical to track the progress towards national development goals and inform policy design and implementation and evidence-based decision-making.

- ◆ There is a need to **embed M&E culture within public institutions and local governments.** Since the pandemic affected all sectors, the mobilization of resources changed, therefore all sectors should be able to evaluate and monitor the use of those resources.

- ◆ The crisis of the pandemic proved that it is important that **M&E systems are relevant and appropriate to the context,** which is a complex process that deals with systems, institutions and people. We need to be sensitive about how these systems are built.

- ◆ A common practice is to embed M&E into national development plans, linked to Agenda 2030. But **having evaluation plans does not guarantee political support for evaluation;** politicians need to have the political will and capacity to acknowledge the critical role of evaluation in addressing national development priorities.

- ◆ **Lack of resources - human and financial - impedes the successful establishment of NES** in developing countries. There is a need to strengthen both human and technical capacity in all levels of public institutions.

- ◆ **Demonstrating the added value of evaluation** for informed, evidence-based policy- and decision-making and learning can help to mitigate political resistance to reforms and implementing M&E systems.

- ◆ **National Evaluation Systems need to be appropriate and culturally-sensitive.** They need to intersect with subnational and local systems, and respond to local context and country priorities.

Conclusion

To be resilient, national M&E systems need to be context-specific, culturally-sensitive and institutionalized within public institutions and national planning and budgeting processes. Establishing strong NES can take a long time, and needs continued and sustained efforts from governments, partners and all stakeholders.

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Quotes

> *"The biggest realization is that setting up a National Evaluation System is a complex and multidimensional process. We are dealing with systems, institutions and people. We need to be sensitive about how we approach building a country-wide system. There is a need to take a collaborative approach, and this can often take time and resources, but in the end, it helps to build ownership and ensures sustainability".*

— **Susan Sulu,** Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination, Solomon Islands.

> *"You can make state-of-the-art systems and institutions that will address the issue of evaluation… but at the end it would be nothing if you don't have a political will to implement the evaluation practices and obeying the evaluation policy for better policies for citizens".*

— **Zoran Dimitrovski,** Deputy Minister, Ministry of Local Self-government, North Macedonia

> *"There is a lot to learn, especially from others. I hope this will contribute to our understanding to improve the evaluation systems in my country."*

— **Luc Joseph Okio,** Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister, in charge of State Reform, Republic of the Congo.

> *"As we look back at the pandemic, we need to ask ourselves, was the M&E system in the country resilient enough and bounced-back to respond to the changing context? Did people immediately turn back to the National Evaluation Systems for evidence that would inform decision-making?"*

— **Dugan Fraser,** Programme Manager, Global Evaluation Initiative

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▶ **Video recording of the Plenary 1:**
NEC 2022 | Plenary 1 - In an era of complexity and uncertainty, can we do without national systems - YouTube

5.2 | Plenary 2:
Rethinking evaluation to address the crisis in the Anthropocene

Moderator
◆ **Alan Fox**, Deputy Director, IEO, UNDP

Panellists
◆ **Indran Naidoo**, Director, Independent Office of Evaluation, IFAD
◆ **Andrea Cook**, Director, Evaluation, WFP
◆ **Anastasia Aladysheva**, Impact Evaluation Officer, Green Climate Fund, Independent Evaluation Unit
◆ **Bala Yusuf-Yunusa**, Senior Technical Advisor, Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs (OSSAP-SDGs), Nigeria
◆ **Olivier Cossée**, Senior Evaluation Office, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Development pathways have had a hand in shaping the Anthropocene. Evaluation must consider development impacts across all programmes and not only those addressing environment, climate and food security. Is evaluation facing up to this reality?

◆ **The world has fundamentally changed, and evaluators cannot be detached from this change.** There is a need for a new definition of development and a new way to measure development. We need to move from the anthropocentric approach that has dominated evaluation to one that is more environmentally focused and that amplifies marginalized voices. We need to be more activistic in our approaches and bring about the change that is necessary.

◆ **United Nations agencies are innovating to address new development challenges.** There is a need to increasingly focus on critical issues, looking at how to bring affected populations' voices into evaluation, how to bring in environmental aspects, a food systems perspective, a humanitarian-development-peace nexus perspective, without overburdening an already overloaded system. We need to build bodies of evidence that will help us to deliver on transformational change. Integrating systems-thinking helps make connections.

- **Better evidence is critical.** We need to better understand how evidence from development interventions can inform climate adaptation interventions, to know whether awareness of climate risks will lead to changes in behaviour. The humanitarian-development-peace nexus helps us understand how coherent approaches are needed to address vulnerabilities, but a climate angle needs to be added to the nexus paradigm. Impact needs to be looked at in multiple dimensions.

- **Country-led evaluation is powerful.** The 2030 Agenda was a universal call to action, to free humanity from the tyranny of poverty and to save our planet. Nigeria has taken this very seriously, establishing the Office of the Senior Special Assistant on SDGs, and commissioning of a country-led evaluation of SDGs 3 and 4 which will be used to strengthen policy formulation. Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are more useful when they are guided by evidence.

- **Too much evaluation is a bad thing.** Evaluation has become wiser and more institutionalized, but less disruptive. If by institutionalizing evaluation we prioritize coverage, we lose on utility. Evaluation has made less progress in the fields of agriculture, rural development and environment; there is an opportunity to promote evaluation in these sectors, while avoiding the challenges other sectors have faced. With respect to national evaluation capacity development (ECD), while training and other support is needed, it is important to support strong national evaluations, particularly in the agriculture and rural development sectors.

Conclusion

Evaluation has made significant progress in recent years but needs to shift further to be responsive to crisis and help address rising climate shocks and threats to the integrity of our planet, to serve sectors that have lagged behind, and retain its sharp edge. It needs to recognise where the need is and ensure it is well placed to inform decision-making in critical areas, times and sectors.

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Video recording of the Plenary 2:
NEC 2022 | Plenary 2 - Rethinking evaluation to address the crisis in the Anthropocene - YouTube

5.3 | Plenary 3:
Fragility and crisis as the new normal

Moderator
- **Oscar A. Garcia, Director,** Director, IEO, UNDP and Chair, United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)

Panellists
- **Andrea Cook**, Director, Evaluation, WFP
- **Juliet Parker**, **Director,** Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP)
- **Alison Evans**, Director-General, IEG, World Bank Group
- **Isabelle Mercier**, Director International Assistance Evaluation, Global Affairs Canada
- **Dr. Angelina Mattijo-Bazugba,** Associate Professor of Social Policy, and Dean/ Director of National Transformational Leadership Institute, University of Juba, South Sudan

Pivoting evaluation and developing new approaches to address global crisis needs and resilience. The role of evaluation in changing approaches.

- **Evaluations support transition** in and out of humanitarian crises, and stimulate looking forward. International organizations need to focus not only on what *they* can do, but what they are doing jointly with other humanitarian organizations. This increases the role of evaluations carried out by different partners.

- **Crisis evaluations propel real-time learning.** While learning within the humanitarian context is challenging and incremental, it provides an opportunity for adaptation and change, which is constantly happening in humanitarian settings.

- **Caution needs to be exercised when generalizing crisis situations.** Evaluating *during* crisis and evaluating crisis *responses* should be clearly differentiated. Evaluative evidence generated during a crisis should be nuanced from that generated in a normal development setting.

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- **In many countries, crisis is the normal way of doing things.** For example, South Sudan separated from Sudan in 2011, then a conflict started in 2013, another in 2016 and again in 2018. The country is currently in the transition phase to implement the peace agreements. Evaluations in these settings help to identify what works and why, so that legislation can be improved with information and timely evidence for policymakers.

- **Learning on operating within a crisis context has been slow.** While there has been some progress at technical level, a lot more needs to be done to improve accountability towards vulnerable populations. Adaptations at country level are not often commensurate with adaptations in practice at the sector level, and different levels of government, owing to resistance from central structures to change, especially where structural reforms are required.

- **COVID-19 was a real push for the evaluation sector** to real-time evaluating and learning processes which made faster movements to respond to the crisis. Modular approaches that define high-level questions and learning priorities can promote real-time learning.

- **Evaluators need a big dose of humility** as we don't have the right answers all the time, it is really important to understand how we fit into the learning process and be flexible enough to integrate into it.

- **There is need for clarity on where and when evaluation can play a role** in the real-time learning and when and where it can contribute with strategic elements that only evaluation brings.

- **Synthesis from the stock of knowledge and evaluations can play a key role** in the learning process and provide timely evidence for informed decision-making. Having an open discussion within the organization and stakeholders is critical for setting the right direction.

- **Trust between evaluators and the development community** is essential for evidence-based informed humanitarian programme funding decisions. Unless that trust is built, the decision-making process will not be effective.

- **Evaluation should be mindful of the context,** and be realistic and not generalist. It is critical to be flexible, open minded and sensitive to the local culture and contexts.

- **Evaluations in fragile settings should be cognizant of the challenges** posed when operating in difficult situations. While evaluations need robust and credible data, it is important to be humble and open to deep listening and non-traditional data sources and ways of working. Evaluators need to be bold and innovative and stop recommending the same things that have been recommended for years.

- **Evaluation results are not always translated into policy changes,** sometimes small incremental changes are sufficient, and evaluators should consider that and not always aim for a higher level of structural reform. There is a need to carefully consider ethical issues when evaluating in fragile settings.

Conclusion

It is important to make a distinction between evaluating *during* crisis and evaluating crisis *response*. More than real-time evaluation, real-time learning should be prioritized in fragile contexts. Methodological innovations and synthesis of knowledge from past evaluations can often play a central role in the learning process and provide timely evidence for informed decision-making.

Quotes

"We are rich in the availability of evaluations now. The challenge across humanitarian sector is to capture and instrumentalize that learning in order to make decisions".

— **Juliet Parker**, Director, ALNAP

"It is time to see what were delivered collectively and where we are failing collectively".

— **Andrea Cook**, Director, Evaluation, WFP

"As evaluators we need a dose of humility, and ask ourselves 'if we can, should we?'"

—**Alison Evans**, Director-General, Evaluation, World Bank Group

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▶ **Video recording of the Plenary 3:**
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06 CHAPTER

STREAM A.
BUILDING RESILLIENT NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEMS

6.1 | Session A1:
Status of National Evaluation Systems

Moderator
- **Alan Fox**, Deputy Director, IEO, UNDP

Panellists
- **Osvaldo Feinstein,** Professor, Complutense University of Madrid
- **Sven Harten**, Deputy Director, German Development Evaluation Institute (DEval)
- **Candice Morkel**, Director, Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results - Anglophone Africa (CLEAR- Anglophone Africa), South Africa
- **Sarah Klier**, Team leader Focelac+, DEval

What is holding back the development of National Evaluation Systems? Where are the "capacity traps", vicious and virtuous circles that explain these setbacks? How can conceptual frameworks help establish National Evaluation Systems and identify gaps?

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◆ **Evidence-based policymaking needs strong National Evaluation Systems.** NES can be strengthened through ECD, however the prerequisite for doing this is to understand the complexities of the NES and apply a systemic approach to ECD.

◆ **Training alone is often misconstrued and equated as capacity-development, without due consideration to the larger ECD framework and ecosystem.** There is a need to change the narrative and work on NEC with a system focus.

◆ **Evaluation supply and demand models are inadequate to address NEC.** It is not a linear chain. The assumption that working on the supply side will fix everything needs to be revisited.

◆ **There is a need to better understand the real challenges around ECD.** When addressing NES, there is a need to **unpack the capacity needs** of those commissioning, managing, conducting and using evaluation and differentiate stakeholder needs of the government (national and subnational), CSOs, think tanks, parliament etc. and how to better engage with them. Robust diagnostic tools can help increase our understanding.

◆ **Enabling environments such as laws, policies and practices for evaluation are a key component** to ensure coherence and sustainability of the entire NES, but not the only condition.

◆ There is not one NEC model that fits all contexts. We need to be **mindful of the local context, local needs and capacities**. NES needs to be linked to local evidence-use systems and not imposed by development actors.

◆ **There is weak integration of NES with government decision-making systems.** Most often ministries of finance (or treasuries) remain primarily responsible for fiscal planning and budgeting, which they do with little or no engagement with entities responsible for the generation and utilization of evidence, so evaluation findings rarely find their way into budget planning and decision-making.

◆ **The growing global consensus on the importance of M&E** brings with it an inherent danger that the effort required to undertake these challenging and resource-intensive processes becomes over-regulated, ritualized and loses its meaning. These processes then become a requirement that needs to be complied with rather than an opportunity for real-life learning and practical accountability.

◆ **Political leadership and political–administrative coherence is critical in championing the development of sustainable and effective M&E systems.** Embedding government-wide M&E needs strong political will, dedicated staff and active participation across all levels and institutions of government.

◆ **Systems-thinking helps to look at the whole national "M&E ecosystem",** where key components (e.g., policies, laws) and stakeholders (e.g., private sector, civil society) interdependently interact with and influence each other. It should be used for system diagnosis and to identify "leverage points" for system-wide impact.

Conclusion

National evaluation capacity needs to be embedded in the local context, needs and realities. While NES can be strengthened through ECD, there is a need to consider the complexities of the NES and apply a systemic approach to ECD. A systems perspective can enable analyse NES in a systematic manner to gain a better understanding of the functional aspects and interrelationships within a given evaluation system, in which international agencies and government bodies are only some of the important players, next to civil society actors, academic institutions and others. Grounding ECD in Systems Theory can help rethink the role of ECD practitioners in planning and implementing ECD activities and programmes together with different parts of the evaluation ecosystem.
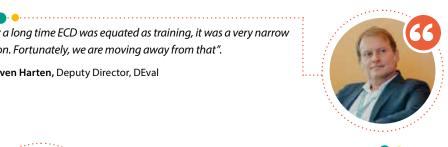
Quotes

"We need to consider the historical antecedent of the practice of evaluation in the development sector, especially in the global South. NES needs to be localized and consider indigenous ways to do evaluation - "to speak better to local needs".

— **Candice Morkel,** Director, CLEAR- Anglophone Africa, South Africa

"For a long time ECD was equated as training, it was a very narrow vision. Fortunately, we are moving away from that".

— **Sven Harten,** Deputy Director, DEval

"We have to be humble enough to recognise that there has been progress, but we still need more way to go".

— **Osvaldo Feinstein,** Professor, Complutense University of Madrid

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Video recording of the Session A1:
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6.2 | Session A2:
Assessing National Evaluation Systems and Capacities

Moderator

- **Edoé Djimitri Agbodjan**, Director, Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR- Francophone Africa)

Panellists

- **Craig Barham,** Chief Technical Director, Performance Management and Evaluation Branch, office of the Cabinet, Jamaica
- **Jorge Aquimo Sipanela**, National Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Mozambique
- **Prudence Kaoma**, Director Morning and Evaluation, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Zambia
- **Jose Enrique Velasquez**, General Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, Peru (Appearing Virtually)
- **Tiarinisaina Olivier Ramiandrisoa**, General Director of Economy and Planning, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Madagascar

How can NEC diagnostic tools support and strengthen evaluation systems? What are the issues, challenges and opportunities? What is needed to accelerate their implementation to strengthen systems?

- There are a **variety of starting points** and experience for setting up an evaluation system. The same applies to the **pathway and evolution for each country** in their NES, including many without an M&E framework in place.
- While the diagnostic approaches and models are different and adapted to each country context, they share the same objective of providing evidence for policy improvement.
- **Political will remains critical** in all models to support the creation and sustainability of the NES. Senior managers in government can be engaged as champions, Politicians need to be sensitized and brought on board, and civil society needs to be included and supported in the use of evaluation as a policy decision-making tool.

- Despite having set up NES several years ago, **most countries still face significant challenges** in terms of quality, coordination as well as implementation across ministries. The monitoring component of M&E has seen better implementation than evaluation in most cases.
- **Exchange of knowledge between countries on their NES** is common and a powerful instrument to create momentum to embark on the NEC journey.
- **Clearly the establishment of NES is a process** that needs regular checking and possibly course correction.
- **Different diagnostic tools address different needs,** and it is important to understand your overall need and goal. Some tools just look at sectoral systems or processes. Others may not consider the legal structures needed.
- **It is important to include stakeholders throughout the process** to ensure you have consensus and buy in. It important to be inclusive when undertaking diagnostic studies and it is also important to manage risk aversion towards both results-based management and M&E.
- **Assessing the National Evaluation System is key to push and improve the overall system** by better understanding the strengths and weaknesses and identifying gaps, but also for sharing experience and best practices.
- **E-governance, automation and digitalization processes** can support the NES.

Conclusion

Assessments of NES are i**nstrumental to create the right conditions and pathways toward a more robust system,** able to support the development of sound social public policies and resilient systems. However, the establishment of NES requires strong political will which needs to continue beyond the establishment of the systems and frameworks, to ensure NES are used effectively for learning and accountability. The inclusion of stakeholders throughout the process of diagnostic, establishment and implementation of National Evaluation Systems is essential.
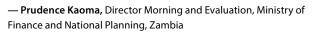
Stream A. Building Resilient National Evaluation Systems

Quotes

"System looks fairly mature on paper but not in practice and does not have a policy. What gets measured gets done"

— **Craig Barham,** Chief Technical Director, Performance Management and Evaluation Branch, office of the Cabinet, Jamaica

"MESA tool has been administered at the National Assembly of Zambia to understand the M&E processes and how evidence can be used for oversight, representation and debate"

— **Prudence Kaoma,** Director Morning and Evaluation, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Zambia

"There is a lack of conducting evaluations in the country due to lack of framework documents e.g. evaluation policy, frameworks and lack of financial resources"

— **Tiarinisaina Olivier Ramiandrisoa,** General Director of Economy and Planning, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Madagascar

"Creation of an ecosystem that can promote evaluations and decision-making so that in the future is guaranteed on the issue of utilization"

— **Jose Enrique Velasquez,** General Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, Peru

Watch the session

▶ **Video recording of the Session A2:**
NEC 2022 | Stream A2 - Assessing National Evaluation System and Capacities - YouTube

6.3 | Session A3:
National evaluation policies

Moderator
- ◆ **Megha Pradhan**, Director, Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR South Asia)

Panellists
- ◆ **Aldwin Urbina**, Officer-in-Charge Director, National Economic and Development Authority - Monitoring and Evaluation Staff, Philippines
- ◆ **Esteban Tapella**, PETAS Programme Director, Universidad Nacional de San Juan, Argentina
- ◆ **Taona Chaparadza**, Chief Director Monitoring and Evaluation, Zimbabwe
- ◆ **N'Dia Youssouf**, Director of Control, Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Planning and Development, Ivory Coast

Building robust evaluation policies for National Evaluation Systems: What hurdles lie ahead, and what battles need to be fought?

- ◆ **There is no single path to a national evaluation policy.** National evaluation policies are increasingly seen as a key ingredient to development strong National Evaluation Systems. However, there is no single pathway. A national evaluation policy can provide the framework for the development of other necessary elements of an effective NES. Or, a NES may be built incrementally, leading towards a policy. Engaging multiple actors – for example, the centre of government, parliament, supreme audit institutions, ministries of good governance or the equivalent, – helps lead to consensus on the content of the policy, as well as building an understanding of the role and benefits of evaluation, which facilitates policy implementation.

- ◆ **National evaluation policies can help institutionalize evaluation and its use.** A national evaluation policy can help govern the practice of evaluation by providing clear guiding principles and evaluation standards, setting forth evaluation criteria, defining evaluation competencies, mandating the creation of (monitoring and) evaluation units and functions, defining provisions for financing evaluation, and promoting the dissemination and use of evaluations.

- **Factors that support implementation of national evaluation policies include financial resources,** political will and development partner support to build the necessary individual and institutional capacities to commission, conduct and use evaluations. Even in the absence of an evaluation policy, legal frameworks – such as laws on public access to information - can support evaluation.

- **Challenges that remain include a weak culture of evaluation,** political polarization where there is heightened fear of exposing weaknesses to the opposition, fragmentation or lack of coordination between functions within the policy cycle, lack of financial resources, insufficient data, and insufficient capacity for evaluation within the public sector and civil society, and staff turnover.

Conclusion

National evaluation policies are important to provide an overall framework and direction for NES, but alone are not sufficient to institutionalize the commissioning, dissemination and use of evaluations. Fostering a culture of evaluation, financing for evaluations and building capacity to commission, conduct and use evaluations are fundamental components of a national evaluation policy.

Quote

"If an evaluation system is rigid and mechanistic, it will be pushed aside by arising changes in socioeconomic forces."

— **Taona Chaparadza,** Chief Director Monitoring and Evaluation, Zimbabwe

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session A3:
NEC 2022 | Stream A3 - National Evaluation Policies - YouTube

6.4 | Session A4:
Challenges and opportunities in institutionalizing National Evaluation Systems

Moderator
- **Candice Morkel**, Director, Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR- Anglophone Africa), South Africa

Panellists
- **Marcelo Guaranys**, Deputy Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Economy, Brazil
- **Susan Sulu**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination, Solomon Islands
- **Gerard Jean Jacques**, Chief Development Planner, Ministry of Planning, Economic Development, Climate Resilience, Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy, Dominica
- **Sakina Bakari Mwinyimkuu**, Assistant Director-Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Systems, President's Office - Public Service Management and Good Governance, Tanzania
- **Nandrot Marat-Abyla Abala,** Director General, Evaluation of Public Policies, Ministry for the Promotion of Good Governance and the Fight Against Corruption, Gabon

What are the real-life challenges and opportunities in establishing and strengthening a National Evaluation System? How do we build on existing initiatives, how do we best link subnational M&E systems to country-wide systems, what are the particular challenges of Small Island Developing States, and what is really needed to institutionalize evaluation?

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- **Crisis is an opportunity to bring about change and begin institutionalizing national M&E systems.** In Brazil, crisis in 2016 led to a realization of the importance of evaluating public expenditure, and to the creation of political space and support to begin establishing a national M&E system. In Dominica, a hurricane devastated the country, but created a sense of a blank state to rewrite, restructure, and rebuild the country, including building an M&E system.

- **Politics is a double-edged sword.** Political contexts can create opportunities to develop M&E systems, for example where there is convergence of demand from government ministries and politicians for evidence that policies are working. However, if the evidence presented is not appealing, or if there is fear that evaluation could lead to punitive responses, there may be resistance.

- **Lack of skills and recognition of M&E experts as a cadre within government hampers the institutionalization of M&E, as does lack of financing.** There is a need for greater skills in - and understanding of - M&E across government systems, as well as career development opportunities for M&E specialists. Small States also face the challenge of limited human resource pools, and an interconnectedness that may limit the independence and objectivity needed for good evaluation. Other challenges include lack of financing, a multiplicity of actors with a mandate for evaluation, proliferation of IT systems and sources of data that are not connected.

- **Small Island Developing States face challenging geographies and corresponding weaknesses in infrastructure.** The Solomon Islands, a country made up of several islands, faces information and communication technology challenges, and there is a need to strengthen digitization and data. In Dominica, mountainous terrain has similarly hindered development.

- **Linking national and subnational systems is a challenge for both large and small States.** For example, in Brazil, bringing about change in the M&E system means tackling the federal, state and municipality levels. It takes time to develop and test at the federal level and then take forward to the other levels. Fragmentation is also a challenge, if there are multiple institutions mandated to coordinate M&E at the central level; this in turn affects implementation at the subnational level. There may be pockets, which remain isolated and uncoordinated. For the system to work, local governments need capacities and systems in place that generate data which can feed into national policymaking.

Conclusion

There are multiple challenges to institutionalizing NES, including a (lack of a) culture of evaluation, fear of punishment, lack of human and financial resources, fragmented systems and data, and a need to coordinate multiple systems at multiple levels. Yet, there are opportunities which may present themselves in surprising contexts, such as crises, where the need for strong M&E systems becomes apparent and momentum is found.

Quotes

> *"In Brazil we took advantage of a particular political context to introduce a National Evaluation System, but now we are reaching a level of institutionalization where we won't be able to go back, regardless of the results of elections, now that this is part of the law. This is not a matter of ideology, but is something that supports new levels of development and improvements in people's lives. This is the strongest aspect of institutionalization of evaluation."*

— **Marcelo Guaranys,** Deputy Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Economy, Brazil

> *"Ensuring sustained and continued efforts is key. We might have systems in place, or be moving to put systems in place, but it is tenacity that is needed. We need to sustain our efforts to institutionalize evaluation. There is hope. There is faith in humanity. Let us keep on keeping on."*

— **Susan Sulu,** Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination, Solomon Islands

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session A4:
NEC 2022 | Stream A4 - Challenges & Opportunities in institutionalising National Evaluation Systems - YouTube

6.5 | Session A5:
Financing National Evaluation Systems

Moderator
- ◆ **Oscar Garcia,** Director, IEO, UNDP and Chair, UNEG

Panellists
- ◆ **Jerry Zanger,** Director, National M&E Unit, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Liberia
- ◆ **Venancio Mzonda,** Chief Economist, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs-Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Malawi
- ◆ **Mohamed Mahdad,** Governance Director, Ministry in charge of Investment, Convergence and Evaluation of Public Policies, Morocco
- ◆ **Karen Rot-Munstermann,** Evaluator General at African Development Bank
- ◆ **Teodora Recalde,** Director General, Budget for Results, Ministry of Finance, Paraguay

Systems need financing to succeed and ensure they are sustainable. How do we ensure that finances are available, and that NES show their worth?

- ◆ **During the pandemic, funding was redirected to the health response and away from evaluation in some cases.** As we return to normality there is a focus on monitoring over evaluation.
- ◆ **Not all M&E systems have the same level of maturity;** therefore they have different funding needs.
- ◆ **Funding is a result of the integration and recognition of the need for - and benefit of - evaluation and evaluation systems.** To assure financing for evaluation you need: i) legal frameworks recognising the role of evaluation; ii) robust evaluation systems, evaluative expertise and data systems; iii) normative and cognitive frameworks; and finally, iv) strong political will.
- ◆ **Pilot evaluations can help illustrate worth,** and it may be possible to leverage funding to illustrate this worth from non-government sources, such as the international community.

- ◆ **The COVID-19 crisis led to governments refocusing national budgets.** Moving forward we need to show the importance and impact of evaluation, its value for money, as well as identifying and safeguarding M&E funding.
- ◆ **In international agencies such as the African Development Bank and UNDP, budgets for M&E were less impacted** by the pandemic as they are institutionally embedded as part of the administration budget. This provides an example of a way forward to protect evaluation budgets in future.
- ◆ **In some countries, the M&E budget is included as a percentage of the development plan budget,** safeguarding availability, though often for monitoring rather than evaluation. However structural assessments, such as through Monitoring and Evaluation System Analysis (MESA) tools, found that financing and embedded finance was often lacking.
- ◆ **Equally, a general appreciation of evaluation/ an evaluation culture as such is lacking.** To show the value of evaluations for investment, some countries are looking for low-hanging fruits that will illustrate the value-for-money of evaluation.
- ◆ **We need evaluation champions to advocate for investment** in evaluation and evaluation systems at the policy and budget levels, and in discussions with policymakers.
- ◆ **A culture of evaluation needs to be anchored into public sector management,** incorporating a strong dialogue with CSOs and citizens. At the same time, evaluation needs to illustrate its utility for different stakeholders and their different needs.

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Stream A. Building Resilient National Evaluation Systems

Conclusion

National Evaluation Systems are not all at the same level of maturity - some are at incubation, and some are mature - therefore the resources required for sustaining the systems are not the same. To ensure adequate financing, NES need to show their worth. To ensure sustainable NES financing, systems need to ensure legal frameworks as well as normative and cognitive frameworks, and be supported by clear political will.

Quotes

"The international corporations cannot always avail funds, at some point they have to stop and governments should be able to draw from their public funds to fund the National Evaluation Systems and its several elements"

— **Mohamed Mahadad,** Governance director, Ministry in charge of Investment, Convergence and Evaluation of Public Policies, Morocco

"Evaluation is an investment, not an obligation"

— **Venancio Mzonda,** Chief Economist, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs-Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Malawi

Watch the session

▶ **Video recording of the Session A5:**
NEC 2022 | Stream A5 - Financing National Evaluation Systems - YouTube

6.6 | Session A6: Building National Evaluation Capacities

Moderator
◆ **Michala Assankpon,** Evaluation Officer, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, WFP, Panama

Panellists
◆ **Viviana Casco Molinas,** Minister Executive Secretary, Technical Secretariat of Planning for Social and Economic Development, Paraguay

◆ **Erick Chuquiej,** Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency, Guatemala

◆ **Maria Celeste Ghiano**, Coordinator, Latin American and Caribbean Network of Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization (ReLAC)

◆ **Seirah Ngcobo**, Assistant Evaluation Specialist, Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, DPME, South Africa

What is needed to ensure NES have robust capacity? NES need people: How do we ensure that those running the system have the skills and experience to operate effectively?

◆ **Evaluation systems have people at their heart.** Strong evaluation systems require not only individuals with adequate technical skillsets, but also soft skills like communication, negotiation and advocacy, in order to fully integrate and consider the perspectives and needs of the various stakeholders and institutions.

◆ An important step towards strengthening NES is to **establish the development pathways based on a clear assessment** of the institutional dynamics and processes in the country, and identifying the strengths, capacities and weaknesses in the existing institutional architecture, policy frameworks, and enabling environment.

◆ Tools like the **National Evaluation Capacities Index (INCE),** used by some countries in Latin America to measure capacity and monitor progress, can support this approach. INCE measures evaluation capacity by aggregating information related to the main dimensions of National Evaluation Systems, for example institutional structure, evaluation offer, quality of evaluations, participation and use.

◆ **Skills and training are vital to ensure that evaluative evidence can be both captured and used.** Proper training, including at tertiary level, is essential to establish skillsets and professionalize M&E practice. Policymakers also benefit from some level of training in how to implement and use evaluative evidence to greatest effect.

In order to ensure NES have robust capacity and operate effectively, it is important that:

◆ M&E is integrated with planning and other institutional processes to add real value.

◆ In addition to technical experts, senior officials in both administration and the political spheres are engaged and able to use evidence generated from M&E for decision-making processes.

◆ Evaluators have certain core competencies critical to ensuring quality evaluations, for example methodological acumen, data analysis and report writing.

◆ People are trained to be able to plan, undertake and use M&E and its outputs. This includes training of senior managers and leaders who are responsible for making evidence-based decisions.

◆ M&E courses are responsive to the evolving needs of the country and those involved in different aspects of M&E.

Conclusion

Evaluation systems are about people, systems and processes. Strengthening these systems requires an inclusive, multipronged and integrated approach that considers policies, capacities, institutional frameworks and the different capacity needs – for both technical and soft skills like communication, negotiation and advocacy. Skills development and training are vital to ensure that evaluative evidence can be both captured and used for decision-making.

Quotes

"The purpose of evaluation is the localization of public policy. Evaluators must have the capacity to translate the technical aspects of the evaluation into policy so that they are binding on political decisions".

— **Erick Chuquiej,** Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency, Guatemala

[evaluation unit directors] should not be afraid of reflecting on how we are doing [in term of the capacities of the evaluation system], as that will enable us to improve and strengthen the capacities we need"

— **Viviana Casco,** Minister Executive Secretary, Technical Secretariat of Planning for Social and Economic Development, Paraguay

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Video recording of the Session A6:
NEC 2022 | Stream A6 - Fortalecimiento de capacidades nacionales en evaluación Spanish - YouTube

6.7 | Session A7:
Engaging society to strengthen National Evaluation Systems

Moderator
- **Iryna Kravchuk,** Board member and co-founder of Ukrainian Evaluation Association

Panellists
- **Giorgi Kldiashvili,** Executive Director, Institute of Democracy and Freedom of Information, Georgia
- **Matodzi Amisi,** M&E Specialist, Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR Anglophone Africa), former Chair SAMEA, South Africa
- **Mamadou Coulibaly,** Permanent Secretary of the Ivorian Monitoring and Evaluation Network, Vice- President of the Francophone Evaluation Network, Ivory Coast
- **Kassem El Saddik,** Evaluation Practitioner/ Consultant, Vice President LebEVAL, Lebanon

> **What role do civil society, academia and Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs) play in strengthening National Evaluation Systems?**

- **Civil society plays a crucial and strategic role in establishing and sustaining resilient National Evaluation Systems.** They are, or can be, unique and strategic actors for democratic, inclusive, innovative and vibrant evaluation ecosystems and promoting constructive social dialogue and multi-stakeholder engagement.

- **Civil society plays many critical roles within a NES.** This ranges from oversight to design, management and effective functioning of the NES. They provide objective analysis of government policies, programmes and strategies through evidence-based research, data and information, help bridge the capacity gaps to rollout the NES, and bring in the voices of citizens to the evaluation process.

- **Civil society can be an important knowledge broker.** Citizens in influential M&E positions – notably academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector – can demonstrate the added value of evaluation by applying it to the main issues the government is trying to address as a policy enabler. They bring various interests into evaluation, including those who conduct evaluations, academics who teach courses related to evaluation, people who work in agencies that commission evaluation, those responsible for government policies and systems related to evaluation, etc. Different groups bring diverse skills and expertise and can play critical roles in the NES.

- **Civil society helps to co-create and enhance ownership of the NES** through their convening power, which can bring together different groups who have a stake in the government policies and programmes and shared values. This empowers stakeholders, increases co-ownership of policies and increases sustainability.

- **The representation and legitimacy of civil society presents a key challenge.** However, it is important to recognise that civil society does not constitute a homogenous group. They range from citizens to NGOs, academic institutions, think-tanks to VOPEs and other non-state actors engaged in delivering global public goods. To build legitimacy, there is a need to invest in building trust and relationships with State actors for sustained and inclusive dialogue, which leaves no one behind.

- **The engagement of civil society should not be an afterthought; it should be integral to the design of the NES.** They should be part of the process from conceptualization, design and implementation of the evaluations; engaging in the development of the TORs, developing evaluation questions, participating in reference groups, steering committees and communication and the use of evaluation results.

- **The role of civil society needs to evolve** from their conventional roles in capacity-building through training, advocacy for setting standards and quality assurance, to a greater role in shaping and establishing NES through facilitating, catalysing efforts to sustain results-based management practices, leveraging partnerships and playing an integral role in the successful implementation of reforms.

- **The role of civil society in not always apparent in the NES architecture.** There is a need to build incentives for their engagement through enabling policies and guidelines.

- **For a NES to be resilient, its key components should be resilient and able to adapt and recover quickly from challenges.** At the same time, for civil society to be resilient, it should recognise and address its internal tensions and external challenges. This requires critical reflection of its internal tensions, which includes governance, membership, mandate and increased professionalization.

Conclusion

Civil society plays a critical role in building resilient and sustainable NES. This can range from establishing evaluation policy and governance, standards and values, processes and resources, as well as the partnerships that govern, manage and support the demand, supply and utilization of evaluation to inform decision-making and ensure accountability and learning. While their enormous potential as key, strategic, influential actors in the NES is high, this needs to be further strengthened and made clear within the NES architecture. From a systems perspective, civil society is an important countervailing and contributing partner to keep NES vibrant, responsive and inclusive, and contribute to boosting creativity, collaboration and convergence.

Quotes

"Civil society plays a crucial role for any National Evaluation System".

— **Giorgi Kldiashvili,** Executive Director, Institute of Democracy and Freedom of Information, Georgia

"Civil society is a powerful ally to advance the practice of evaluation".

— **Matodzi Amisi,** M&E Specialist, CLEAR Anglophone Africa, (former Chair SAMEA), South Africa

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session A7:
[NEC 2022 | Stream A7 - Engaging Society to strengthen National Evaluation Systems - YouTube](#)

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07 CHAPTER

STREAM B.
SECTORAL APPROACHES AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

7.1 | Session B1:
Evaluation and strengthened governance

Moderator
- **Vijayalakshmi Vadivelu,** Chief of the Section for Corporate and Thematic Evaluations, IEO, UNDP

Panellists
- **Joerg Faust**, Director, DEval
- **Sarah Lister**, Head of Governance, UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support
- **Hur Hassnain**, Treasurer, International Evaluation Academy, European Commission
- **Flavia Smidt,** Acting Director of Advanced Studies, National School of Public Administration, Brazil

How will strong NES strengthen governance, democratic institutions and transparency to ensure that governments are accountable?

- **Society needs to be able to follow up with government on implementing evaluation recommendations within a policy cycle.** There are two potential perspectives on the future of evaluation capacities:

  - **The confident perspective** suggests that democratic governments will have good evaluation systems which will lead to improved public policy. However, in the past 10-15 years, there has been a decline in the democratization of government.

  - **The gloomy perspective** suggests that the environment is increasingly autocratic, with shrinking technocratic and political spaces needed for independent evaluation systems.

- **Transparency is the starting point for a functional NES,** inside government and also outside by civil society, academia etc. but also the endpoint in the policy cycle.

- **Today, a prerequisite of strong public administration and NES does not necessarily lead to evidence-based public policymaking.** Evaluation use is dependent on the broader political and democratic environment.

- **For ECD, the issue is not supply but demand. There are three factors influencing demand:**

  - **Structural factors:** the general level of modernization of the State and society.

  - **Institutional factors:** institutions in place demand evidence, regulation and laws to safeguard transparency and accountability.

  - **Actor level:** individuals in important positions in government demand evaluation and wish to change public administration practices.

- **Stakeholders have their own interests, and as a result there is a need to build incentives for each stakeholder to demand evaluation.** NES need to engage groups within and outside of authorities. For society actors, different narratives and incentives need to be built to address their respective interests in evaluation.

- **The crucial issue is independence (of evaluation), but also a healthy dose of pragmatism. Participation is a vital principle besides independence.**

- There is little data on SDG 16 for fragile and in-conflict countries, where the context is characterized by fluidity and unpredictability. Context should be the starting point for evaluation systems in such countries. Evaluators need to understand the triggers of violence and adapt any tools and methods designed for developed contexts to the conflict context.

Conclusion

A strong democratic, accountable and transparent government system is key to building and ensuring demand for evaluation and building strong and responsive resilient evaluation systems. However, today this is not always a given, and strong public administration and NES doesn't necessarily lead to evidence-based policymaking. In additional to institution-building, we need to broaden the inclusion of society, civil society, academia and others into NES to ensure demand for evaluations and evidence-based decision-making. The evaluation process needs to be more participatory.
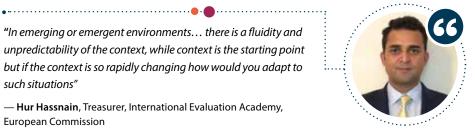
Quotes

"We have such a lot of worries about whether the findings of evaluations will be really will be in fact symbolic or will be will there be an effective use inside the policy cycle. I believe we should start with transparency but should also conclude with transparency when you're talking about evaluation!"

— **Flavia Smidt,** Acting Director of Advanced Studies, National School of Public Administration, Brazil

"*In emerging or emergent environments… there is a fluidity and unpredictability of the context, while context is the starting point but if the context is so rapidly changing how would you adapt to such situations"*

— **Hur Hassnain**, Treasurer, International Evaluation Academy, European Commission

Watch the session

▶ **Video recording of the Session B1:**
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7.2 | Session B2:
Citizen engagement to strengthen National Evaluation Systems

Moderator
- **Juan Carlos Sanz,** Evaluator, Focelac+ Project, DEval

Panellists
- **Carolina Zúñiga Zamora**, Evaluation Unit, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, Costa Rica
- **Mónica Ballescá**, Director General, Planning and Participatory Evaluation, Evalúa Jalisco, México
- **Luis Ángel Guamán**, Undersecretary of Evaluation, National Planning Secretariat, Ecuador
- **Nataly Salas**, Evaluator, Focelac+ Project, DEval
- **Xiaoling Zhang**, Associate Evaluation Specialist, IEO UNDP

How can the inclusion of stakeholders - including CSOs, academia and the private sector - contribute to the strengthening NES to build more robust and sustainable evaluation systems and approaches?

- **NES require the meaningful engagement of many different stakeholders.** It is important to identify which groups are part of the system, and clearly define every role. To promote engagement at national level, both political will and participatory decision-making processes are essential.

- **Without adequate funding, NES could fail.** Linking NES and ministries of planning and finance can help to bridge the funding gap.

- **National evaluation platforms provide a conducive space for interaction and the coordination of all involved actors.** Examples from Costa Rica and Ecuador highlight that engagement of civil society - both virtually and in-person - was critical to the success and ownership of evaluations.

- Strong NES should be **agile and able to adapt to emerging situations** such as COVID-19, which disrupted most NES. The engagement of civil society, academia, private sector and other key stakeholders can ensure flexibility, agility and broader usability of evaluation.

- **Integration of NES within national and subnational governance and digital transformation processes is critical.** E-governance promotes accountability and citizen inclusion, where citizens have access, but also entails the review of policies and procedures. When evaluating e-governance systems, NES need to take into consideration the digital divide and its impact on populations with access challenges.

- Some evaluation approaches, like **participatory evaluation, can achieve the commitment of stakeholders by sharing decisions related to the evaluation process.** Participatory evaluation requires adequate time and funding and must be well communicated. Digital governance can promote open government and facilitate citizen participation in the decision-making process.

- **Communicating evaluation findings is critical.** Having the evaluation report is half of the work, the other half is communicating the evaluation findings and recommendations and engaging decision-makers and political partners to ensure funding allocations and follow-up actions. Failure to communicate findings in a practical way can hinder the implementation of recommendations.

Conclusion

The meaningful engagement of citizens, civil society, academia, private sectors and national partners in the evaluation process, with clearly defined roles, including in decision-making, is critical for the usability and ownership of evaluations and strengthening NES. It ensures the required political buy-in and ownership, helps integrate and institutionalize NES in the national planning and budgeting processes and contributes to their sustainability. Embedding NES in national and subnational governance systems promotes accountability and citizen inclusion, where citizens not only have access, but also contribute to the review of policies and procedures. When evaluating e-governance systems, NES need to take into consideration the digital divide and its impact on populations with access challenges.

QUOTE

"National monitoring and evaluation systems should take into consideration the advancements and trends in e-governance and develop adequate approaches and processes to integrate them. Digitalized M&E systems - which are part of the e-governance architecture of a country - can facilitate the access, inclusion and participation of stakeholders in NES".

— **Xiaoling Zhang**, Associate Evaluation Specialist, IEO UNDP

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session B2:
NEC 2022 | Stream B2 - Participación ciudadana para fortalecer sistemas nacionales de evaluación - YouTube

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7.3 | Session B3:
Decent work and the SDGs

Moderator
- ◆ **Guillaume Mercier**, Programme Manager, Organizational Development and Project Services Programme ITC, ILO

Panellists
- ◆ **Patricia Vidal**, Evaluation Officer, ILO
- ◆ **Natalia Aquilino**, Monitoring and Evaluation Director, Secretary for Industrial Development of the Ministry of Economy, Argentina
- ◆ **Julius Cainglet**, Vice-President for Research, Advocacy and Partnerships, Federation of Free Workers
- ◆ **Fanny Sequeira**, Secretary General, Confederation of Workers Rerum Novarum, Costa Rica
- ◆ **Dejana Kuzmic**, Head of International Cooperation, Serbian Association of Employers

Bolstering National Evaluation Systems through tripartite partnerships: Lessons from countries on the decent work agenda in the SDG era.

- ◆ **Partnerships and agreements amongst governments, employers and workers to promote decent work at all levels are drivers for inclusive and sustainable growth.** Social dialogue can be built by bringing the different stakeholders together and creating an environment for participation among NES stakeholders. Building alliances with non-traditional national stakeholders often missing from the table, such as the ministry of finance, is essential to ensure a resilient NES.

- ◆ **Evaluation contributes to improving tripartite labour systems.** Evaluative evidence promotes transparency and acts as a powerful incentive to bring actors to the table. It helps facilitate negotiations between governments, employers' organizations and trade unions. Equally, trade unions and employers' organizations should be involved in national evaluations. There is still a lot of ground for improvement in the tripartite labour systems, and evaluation has much to contribute.

- ◆ **An inclusive evaluation system requires an inclusive public policy cycle,** including planning and implementation of public policies. National Evaluation Systems provide a platform to promote the participation of trade unions and employers' organizations and contribution to decision-making processes.

- **Employers' organizations need to expand their role in NES.** However, their evaluation capacities should be strengthened to enable their meaningful participation in the National Evaluation System and processes.

Conclusion

Social dialogue is a key instrument for economic and social cohesion and good governance. In turn, good governance and evaluation go hand-in-hand. Building strong, resilient National Evaluation Systems requires the effective engagement of all key stakeholders throughout the policy cycle. In the case of promoting decent work and economic growth (SDG8 and related indicators), the engagement of the government and social partners (workers and employers' organizations) in planning, implementation and evaluation is fundamental to advance the promotion of decent work and centre sustainable development around human, environmental, economic and societal values based on collective knowledge and the kinds of evidence evaluation can provide.

Quotes

"For a truly inclusive evaluation system, we need to promote a meaningful social dialogue that engages all stakeholders in joint planning, joint implementation, joint brainstorming, joint problem solving, joint decision-making, and joint evaluations".

— **Julius Cainglet**, Vice-President for Research, Advocacy and Partnerships, Federation of Free Workers

"Decent jobs are critical to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development. We need to be responsive to needs of the businesses as well as workers and provide an enabling environment for businesses which can provide sustainable companies that can offer sustainable jobs".

— **Dejana Kuzmic**, Head of International Cooperation, Serbian Association of Employers

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session B3:
NEC 2022 | Stream B3 - Decent work and the SDGs Spanish English - YouTube

7.4 | Session B4:
What can we learn from sectoral evaluation systems?

Moderator

- **Fabrizio Felloni**, Deputy Director, Independent Office of Evaluation, IFAD

Panellists

- **Orifjan Namozov**, Deputy Director for Strategic Planning, Programming and Analysis. The International Strategic Centre for Agrifood Development under the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan

- **Sanjeev Sridharan**, Country Lead, Learning Systems and Systems Evaluation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

- **Anastasia Aladysheva**, Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund

- **Alok Mishra**, Director General, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Food and Public Distribution, Press Information Bureau, Government of India

- **Shabnum Sarfraz**, Senior Advisor Social Sector and Development. Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan

Certain sectors (health, education and agriculture) have advanced further in building evaluation systems than cross-sector systems. What can we learn from these approaches?

- **Evaluation at the sectoral level needs to look at systems, not interventions.** In the health sector, a single intervention will not improve maternal health. The agrifood sector is similarly complex, with agriculture, food security and nutrition, climate change, conservation and biodiversity, water, energy, global turmoil and global logistics all impacting on results. This means that evaluation in the sector is also very complex, with implications for the capacity needed. There is a need to move beyond project evaluations to broader thinking at systems level, to create more collaborative spaces, rather than working in isolation on single evaluations.

- **Which should come first, a National Evaluation System or a sectoral evaluation system?** One panellist argued that it is essential to have a National Evaluation System, within which

a sectoral system can be situated, whereas a participant suggested that National Evaluation Systems are not gaining a lot of traction and it may be useful to develop sectoral evaluation systems that test out modalities for useful evaluations that inform management and policy, and then spread that to the State level. Another panellist suggested that the relation need not run one way or the other, but that one should be opportunistic.

- **There is a need for systems within systems,** that promote understanding of the whole story, from community to sectoral to national levels. This means that we need not just National Evaluation Systems, but national planning systems that link these levels.
- **Data is a critical foundation for monitoring and for evaluations.** Panellists from India and Pakistan illustrated the need for solid data and data management systems to support sectoral as well as national planning and monitoring, and provide a foundation for evaluation. The importance of presenting data in user-friendly formats for decision-makers was highlighted, as was the need to build compelling cases for investment in social sectors.

Conclusion

Systems are key. Single interventions and single evaluations of those interventions will not bring about sectoral-level change, as every development problem is complex and systemic responses are required. National, subnational and sectoral planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation systems need to be interlinked, and capacity-development of these systems needs to happen at multiple and not just individual levels.

Quotes

"*I think we have to be opportunistic. If there are lessons to be learned from the sectoral system, just be greedy just plagiarize them, and do as much as you can. There are pockets of great work in the sectors, and these have implications for National Evaluation Systems of any kind. You are dealing with such a complex system; it is uncreative to only look at National Evaluation Systems to learn about a National Evaluation System. We should take any lessons we can from sectoral work."*

— **Sanjeev Sridharan**, Country Lead, Learning Systems and Systems Evaluation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

"Resilience I think is an important thing and I think building the credibility and building data use and your technocratic skills to make compelling cases so that it becomes binding for the decision-makers and they cannot ignore it and we must never underestimate the ability that we hold in order to do so"

— **Shabnum Sarfraz,** Senior Advisor Social Sector and Development. Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session B4:
NEC 2022 | Stream B4 - What can we learn from Sectoral Evaluation systems - YouTube

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Stream B. Sectoral Approaches and Local Governance   **Stream A.**

7.5 | Session B5:
Subnational Evaluation Systems

Moderator
- **Stephen Porter,** Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, IEG, World Bank

Panellists
- **Zoran Dimitrovski** Deputy Minister, Ministry of Local Self-Government, North Macedonia
- **Cyprian Chillanyang,** Commissioner Policy and Planning, Ministry of Local Government, Uganda
- **Halima Ibrahim,** Head of Planning and Budgeting, County Government of Isiolo, Kenya
- **Eleonore Johasy,** Member of Parliament, National Assembly, Madagascar

How can we learn lessons from locally-developed evaluation systems? How do different needs drive different systems and how can local systems be linked to national systems?

- Does a well-institutionalized NES mean good evaluation practices? Not necessarily. Some experience suggests that **well-established systems may not lead to good practices.** In other places, good evaluative practices exist without a well-established and regulated system.
- **There is a need for high-level commitment and a legal framework** for evaluation to make sure that evaluations are conducted nationally as well as at local level.
- **Different sectors will implement and develop their evaluative capacity at different speeds,** and be targeted more through evaluations - especially the ones that will ensure votes at the next election.
- **In rural areas it is difficult to ensure equal development** (i.e. budget allocation) and exercise government control over projects in local areas, which makes them prone to corruption. You can cheat even the best-established institutions and evaluation systems.

- **Evaluation is constrained by underfunded M&E units,** as well as low demand and considered value added (i.e. other more pressing issues are prioritized), and fragmented data collection, analysis and visualization systems. This raises the question, do subnational M&E systems need to be linked to the national level?
- **Some countries have built systems linking higher-level and bottom-up approaches,** to strengthen M&E. Dual evaluation systems in Madagascar include a top-down national integrated evaluation system, combined with a bottom-up outcome mapping system that focuses on local approaches and the impact of interventions. Beneficiaries are made responsible for achieving their objectives, and can identify shortages and make adaptations.
- **There is a need to ensure the sustained capacity-development** of government staff to avoid the loss of institutional memory and capacity.
- **The collision of different systems and their needs:** donors have specific formats and requirements that might contradict government criteria, which brings up the issue of acceptability.

Conclusion

Sectoral and National Evaluation Systems will develop at different speeds and show considerable variance in connection and capacity. The development of sectoral systems is often politically driven. As NES are often challenged through systems development and constraints, funding and legal structures, the question is whether sectoral systems should wait, or be dependent on national systems to be developed and move forward.

Quotes

"Participatory approaches can increase accountability, improve service delivery and confidence in government."

— **Eléanore Johasy,** Member of Parliament, National Assembly, Madagascar

"Without communication, M&E will never be appreciated."

— **Halima Ibrahim,** Head of Planning and Budgeting, County Government of Isiolo, Kenya

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session B5:
[NEC 2022 | Stream B5 - Subnational Evaluation Systems - YouTube](https://youtube.com)

7.6 | Session B6:
Supporting the development of National Evaluation Systems

Moderator
- **Grace Igweta,** Senior Evaluation Officer, WFP

Panellists
- **Herman Maïssa,** Advisor – Director, General Secretariat of the Government, Department of Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies, Gabon
- **Tamiru Terefe,** Former Policy and Programme Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, Ministry of Planning and Development of Ethiopia
- **Stefanie Bitengo Ombati,** Assistant Director, Social Development and Programme Coordinator, M&E and MIS - National Social Protection Secretariat, State Department for Social Protection, Kenya
- **Elisée Vinadou Ouissouo,** Head of School Food Service, Ministry of Nursery and Primary Education, Benin
- **Valentina Prosperi,** Evaluation Manager, UNICEF Ethiopia

How can Governments and the United Nations work together to strengthen National Evaluation Systems?

- **A UNEG report reviewing the progress of 2014 United Nations General Assembly Resolution on national evaluation capacity illustrated several lessons in strengthening and establishing national ECD,** including:

  i. All United Nations agencies should conduct their evaluations in a way that fosters national capacity development.

  ii. United Nations agencies and their evaluation functions should continue to support the capacity-development of national evaluation ecosystems, including support to the enabling environment, institutional and individual capacity.

  iii. All United Nations agencies should coordinate and collaborate on national ECD at corporate, regional and country levels, allocating adequate time and resources.

- **The building of NES requires commitment and is a long-term process.** An enabling environment is very important in individual and institutional capacity-development. Evaluation should be conducted early to demonstrate the potential. Equally, evaluation should be conducted in a way which fosters national ECD.

- **United Nations agencies need to collaborate more in their support to national ECD as a system.** United Nations agencies should support nationally-led evaluations.

- **In Kenya, a social protection sector review was used to inform the development of social protection policy.** This was then used by United Nations agencies and other development organizations to shape their support. Indicators were aligned with the social protection policy and approaches to monitoring its indicators were agreed. Government worked with stakeholders to develop tools across the system and aligned with the social protection policy to allow for a monitoring and evaluation system.

- **It is important to have one plan and one national M&E system for all,** as parallel systems can be problematic.

- **Ethiopia recognised challenges including gaps in national evaluation capacities for results-based National Evaluation Systems and rigorous evaluation and monitoring,** as well as the collection and dissemination of data. An M&E capacity assessment was conducted, M&E guidelines were developed with associated key performance indicators, master reporting formats were developed to align sector approaches, and digital monitoring capacities built following a National ECD plan. The way forward is to encourage usage, implement a capacity-development plan, further coordinate partnerships with development partners, and improve financing.

- **To improve National Evaluation Systems, a way forward is to strengthen the legal framework for M&E,** reposition the monitoring and evaluation unit at the ministry, make monitoring and evaluation units more effective by involving the highest level of authority, and establish a national evaluation framework that brings together institutions of the United Nations system with those of the government.

- **All United Nations agencies should coordinate and collaborate on national ECD at corporate,** regional and country levels, allocating adequate time and resources.

Conclusion

National ECD should be central to the work of United Nations agencies, both in their mandates but also as part of their evaluations, using the process to support and strengthen national evaluation capacity. At the same time, coordination amongst United Nations agencies and most importantly with government partners and stakeholders must not be an afterthought. Not only in the implementation of individual evaluations but also in the implementation of recommendations and support to decision-makers.

Quote

"National evaluation capacity is a long process and needs commitment"

— **Valentina Prosperi,** Evaluation Manager, UNICEF Ethiopia

Watch the session

▶ **Video recording of the Session B6:**
NEC 2022 | Stream B6 - Supporting the development of National Evaluation Systems - YouTube

7.7 | Session B7:
Promoting use of evaluations by government

Moderator
- **Adeline Sibanda,** former President African Evaluation Association

Panellists
- **Nox Chitepo**, Director, Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, South Africa
- **Claudius Emmanuel, Permanent Secretary,** Department of Economic Development, St. Lucia
- **Francisca Moreno**, Head of the Social Policies Division, Ministry of Social Development and Family, Chile
- **Tashi Duba**, Senior Research Officer, Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat, Royal Government of Bhutan

How are countries using evidence from evaluation to inform decision-making, policy and strategy development? This panel shared examples from a number of countries where evidence has led to policy and strategy changes and discussed the factors promoting the use of evidence from evaluations in planning, programming and policymaking processes.

- **Evaluation use can begin during the evaluation.** In the case of South Africa, an evaluation of the detective service was requested by the South African Police Service. During the data collection phase, it came out that cold cases had been improperly investigated. As a result, the cases were reopened, which led to a rebuilding of trust between the community and police.

- **Who decides to do an evaluation influences its use.** In South Africa, it is the service in question that requests an evaluation, which means that the process is already owned from the outset. In addition, the evaluation may be co-funded by the requesting service, which creates motivation to use the findings to make improvements to the programme in question. Furthermore, the programme owners, not the independent evaluators, chaired the evaluation steering committee, which included other stakeholders such as the prosecuting authority, which meant there was interest in a full and fair evaluation.

- **Different types of evaluations serve different uses in the policy cycle.** In Chile, the main objective of the monitoring and evaluation system is to contribute to improving the quality of public programmes. Ex-ante evaluations support the design of programmes, monitoring during implementation helps to make course corrections, and ex-post evaluation helps future designs and decisions. Similar systems are in place in Bhutan, where ex-ante evaluations are underway to help design a national policy for persons living with disabilities, and an evaluation of the industrial development scheme is leading to adaptations. A unique tool in Bhutan is the Gross National Happiness screening tool.

- **Flexibility promotes use.** In St. Lucia, the monitoring and tracking tools and flexible results framework used in a Disaster Vulnerability Risk Reduction Project allowed for the operationalization of a "contingent emergency response component" when a national emergency was called due to COVID-19. This allowed for an additional release of funds and extension of the project, and the flexible framework continued to monitor progress towards the overall objective of benefiting people on the ground.

Conclusion

It is important to put systems in place to ensure that evaluations are actually happening, but also to work on building capacity, passion and excitement around evaluation to strengthen its use. The COVID-19 crisis has shown us that evaluation systems, structures and approaches need to be flexible, and be able to respond promptly to the immediate needs of policymakers.

Quote

"The biggest change brought about by this evaluation was an announcement by our President last year in the State of the Nation address of his intention to establish a "detective services university".

— **Nox Chitepo**, Director, Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, South Africa

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session B7:
NEC 2022 | Stream B7 - Promoting Use of Evaluations by Government - YouTube

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08 CHAPTER

STREAM C:
EVALUATING IN THE MIDST OF GLOBAL CHALLENGES: FRAGILITY, INEQUALITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

8.1 | **Session C1:**
The need for evaluation in an unstable world

Moderator
- **Alison Evans**, Director General, Evaluation, World Bank Group

Panellists
- **Kevin Watkins,** Visiting Professor of Practice at the London School of Economics, and former CEO at Save the Children UK and the Overseas Development Institute
- **George Gray Molina,** Head of Strategic Engagement and Chief Economist, UNDP
- **Isabella Kiplagat,** Economist, National Treasury and Planning, Kenya
- **El Hassan El Mansouri**, General Secretary, National Observatory of Human Development, Morocco

Are approaches to evaluation responding to new challenges? And how can evaluation systems play a more effective role in informing decision-making, strengthening accountability and building transparency in a rapidly changing world?

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◆ **Evaluation and evaluation systems are not sufficient to ensure policy changes,** since decision-makers at political level will often cut budgets despite having evaluation evidence urging the contrary.

◆ **Evaluation needs to be bolder,** challenge those in power more, moving away from the margins to address systemic issues.

◆ **Evaluation needs to recognise that, as an oversight function, it not only holds up the mirror to governments and organizations,** challenging the achievement of the SDGs, but also represents the people. In this way evaluation needs to change, moving away from looking at efficiencies with often broken systems and engaging more with the systems and political changes needed to bring about greater development and achievement of the SDGs.

◆ **Crisis, including the recent years of the COVID-19 pandemic, has shown us that evaluation needs to be more flexible** and focus not only on the *before* and *after*, but the changes taking place *during* and *in response to* crisis.

◆ **Remember who we work for:** SDGs are for the people, and evaluations should be as well. Evaluation should get direct feedback from citizens/users. Communication plays a critical role; without it evaluation results can be damaging.

◆ **We need to deploy rigorous evaluation methods without losing sight of reality,** and introduce agile ways to evaluate. We no longer have the luxury of time.

◆ **Strong, resilient, and flexible evaluation systems are needed,** but in many countries access to information/data is limited, defeating the purpose of evaluation systems and tools. There is a need to build demand for evaluation from people and policymakers.

◆ **Change is not achieved by just making problems** - such as environmental issues and poverty - visible. There is the need for action at political level. Ensuring political will is critical.

Conclusion

It is very important to ensure that evaluation is embedded within public institutions and that there is a strong evaluation culture to accept the findings and results of evaluations. However, there is also a need for evaluations to ask tough questions. Underlining this is the dichotomy of evaluation; being both user focused, to produce results that can be taken up, and at the same time accepting that it will be unpopular, speaking truth to power. Evaluation needs to be technically sound and rigorous, but not to the degree that it loses sight of the big issues by focusing on a narrow agenda within its control. To have impact, evaluation may need to take sides, a difficult consideration for evaluators.

Quote

"Yesterday evaluation was important, but today it is vital."

— **Chafika Affaq**, Governance Team Leader, UNDP Morocco

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session C1:
NEC 2022 | Stream C1 - The need for Evaluation in an unstable world - YouTube

8.2 | Session C2:
COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Evaluating national interventions

Moderator
- **Jozef Vaessen,** Evaluation Advisor, Global Evaluation Initiative, IEG, World Bank

Panellists
- **Dr. Larba Issa Kobyagda,** Director General of Economy and Planning, Ministry of Economy, Finance and Foresight, Burkina Faso
- **Nana Opare Djan,** Director General of the Monitoring and Evaluation Division, National Development Planning Commission, Ghana
- **Sophie Kang'oma,** Director Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Ministry of Economic Planning, Development and Public Sector Reforms, Malawi
- **Megan Kennedy-Chouane,** Head of Evaluation Unit, Evalnet Secretariat, OECD

Country COVID-19 responses are multisectoral, ongoing and include a range of different actors (both national and international). As such, several challenges emerge when evaluating national responses to COVID-19. This session addressed these challenges and explored and highlighted the importance of National Evaluation Systems that are coordinated, consolidated and country-led.

- **COVID-19 exposed that all countries have room for improvement** of their respective evaluation systems and the use of evidence in policymaking. The pandemic enabled governments across the globe to question the status quo and seek ways to do things differently. Out of necessity, governments and organizations opened up to new approaches to respond to increased demand for evaluation.
- **The existing evaluation architecture in development cooperation is fragmented,** creating an evaluative burden and missed opportunities for "learning by doing".
- **Evaluations of national COVID-19 responses generate lessons that can inform other crises,** including those of a protracted nature.

- **Evaluations of pandemic-related responses enable governments and organizations to understand the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of response efforts,** while also improving the design and implementation of future interventions. For instance, lessons learned from evaluating the urban cash programmes in Malawi can guide national and international stakeholders on future investments in cash transfers.
- **Evaluations of responses to complex crises like COVID-19 require concerted efforts of a broad range of stakeholders** at all levels to support processes of accountability and learning. This is particularly the case for national governments, who can use this information to inform efficient resource allocation. The learning from COVID-19 evaluations will feed into the response of ongoing efforts and can inform future crisis preparedness.

Conclusion

The pandemic illustrated the fragility of many government structures including weaknesses and fragile structures of many government evaluation systems. Evaluations of national responses to COVID-19 can have a significant ripple effect. The by-products include building government capacity, establishing partnerships, learning lessons for future crises, and spill-overs to non-crisis evaluations as well as the evaluation of future crises.

Quote

"COVID allowed a beginner mindset, where people could admit they did not have all the answers – and to seek out advice and inputs from evaluations."

— **Megan Kennedy-Chouane**, Head of Evaluation Unit, OECD

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session C2:
NEC 2022 | Stream C2 - COVID 19 Response and Recovery Evaluating National Interventions - YouTube

8.3 │ Session C3:
Environmental sustainability

Moderator
- **Patricia Rogers,** Footprint Evaluation Initiative and founder of Better Evaluation platform

Panellists
- **Andy Rowe,** ARCeconomics and Footprint Evaluation
- **Joana Varela**, Career advisor, Ministry of Finance and Blue Economy Plan, São Tomé and Principe
- **Elaf Zeinalabdieen**, M&E Officer, Sudanese Environment Conservation Society

> **How do we move from evaluating environmental interventions to ensuring environmental sustainability considerations are included across evaluations?**

- **Addressing sustainability in all evaluations is critical for all evaluation types and not only for environmental interventions.** We know that evaluations do not usually consider the effects of interventions on natural systems, and yet these can be significant and usually negative. Therefore, evaluation that does not consider environmental implications might find positive results on economic or other activities that address human issues, but ignore damage to natural systems that will eventually affect people. The focus of the work we do on development has to include the environment, and should consider the human-natural systems nexus from design stages to mitigate any such unintended or unintentional impacts. Sustainability-aware evaluation and evaluative activity can minimize net harm to natural systems and avoid the plundering of natural systems.

- **Coordination and inclusion are key to understand the relationship between human and natural systems.** All institutions representing the people, government and other stakeholders should be included to ensure that programme and project implementation and evaluation achieve results that benefit natural and human systems. The participation of all stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of interventions such as land and water management projects is critical to enhance their effectiveness, ownership and sustainability. It helps to improve equitable access to water and better land use planning and management. Tools like the KOBO toolbox, which was used in the Sudan Climate Change Adaptation Project, can help in collecting grassroots data using mobile phones and user satisfaction surveys.

- **Evaluations play an important role in addressing climate change,** especially in vulnerable small countries including Small Island developing States. National Evaluation Systems can help to address gaps in regulatory frameworks, coordinate national efforts between line ministries and bring stakeholders from government and civil society to identify specific actions required in the short, medium and long term. Such collaborative approaches in evaluation can have huge effects on the use of evaluation and the improvement of results.

- **Capacity strengthening is needed for evaluation teams,** and evaluation users, including professional development and preparing policy briefs for decision-makers. Guidance and other resources from the Footprint Evaluation Initiative can support the design, planning and management of monitoring and evaluation that includes environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

The interrelatedness of human and natural systems must be considered for all interventions so that monitoring and evaluation no longer contributes to worsening sustainability. This requires projects and development interventions to include a strong consideration of their possible environmental impacts from design to completion. Monitoring of impacts on the environment, intended and unintended, will need an all-of-society approach, ensuring all stakeholders are involved. Finally, all evaluations need to integrate an assessment of the environmental impact of programmes throughout their work.

Quote

> *"Environmental sustainability is not only the responsibility of the environmental sector."*
>
> — **Elaf Zeinalabdieen**, M&E Officer, Sudanese Environment Conservation Society

Watch the session

▶ Video recording of the Session C3:
NEC 2022 | Stream C3 - Environmental Sustainability - YouTube

8.4 | Session C4:
Approaches to evaluation during the pandemic

Moderator
- **Richard Jones**, Chief of Section, IEO, UNDP

Panellists
- **Santiago Ramirez Rodriguez,** Evaluation Analyst, IEG, World Bank Group
- **Baye Elimane Gueye,** Coordinator of the Socioeconomic Impact Monitoring Unit, Operational Office for Monitoring the Emerging Senegal Plan, Senegal
- **Jenna Smith-Kouassi,** Evaluation Policy Analyst, OECD

How did evaluation adapt to the pandemic to ensure continuity and inform decision-making? What lessons and approaches were learnt that should be taken forward?

- **Many organizations pivoted quickly in response to the pandemic,** producing evaluation guidance and principles focusing on doing no harm, broadening desk reviews, and working remotely using Zoom and WhatsApp.

- **There was also a growth in synthesis using pre-existing evaluations and experience,** often of responses to past natural and health crises, to provide lessons for different organizations and support decision-making. Partnerships were strengthened. Although we are back in the field, some things remain, such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and the formulation of Reflections.

- **Limited travel triggered the use of technology and data, sharing information, lessons and best practices, and better coordination amongst the evaluation community.** Local evaluators became essential to the evaluation process and there is a need to continue to build this capacity.

- **The pandemic has accelerated the use of triangulation methods** at country, portfolio and corporate levels through the response from relief, restructuring to recovery stages. In the context of COVID-19, the use of this method was essential to ensure the precision of the data, validate findings and understand the situation in depth.

- **The need for - and value of - collecting data through mobile devices** and the use of open data became increasingly important in countries under lockdown, to assess the social and economic impact of the pandemic and movement restrictions on the population. The collection of this data during the pandemic was key to propelling the participatory decision-making process, where stakeholders at various levels, including the government and academia, got involved.

- **Governments are now planning to utilize this experience** to continue to inform robust decision-making. However, there remain challenges in using mobile data, such as the digital divide, legitimacy, anonymity, and others.

- **Evaluation networks, such as EvalNet, are essential in: transforming relationships with programme stakeholders and decision-makers;** re-thinking how evaluation evidence is gathered and communicated; increasing communication, coordination, and collaboration across the global evaluation community.

- **Without the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity-building, information sharing and coordination, as illustrated** through the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition, would not have increased, so in the end, some positive shifts were triggered. Additional benefits of doing remote evaluations were reducing the carbon footprint and conducting remote interviews with a larger number of people in the comfort of their homes.

Conclusion

The pandemic pushed evaluators out of their comfort zone. *First,* it has accelerated the process of sharing findings that are good enough and not necessarily perfect. This means that timeliness instead of perfection has become a priority. *Second,* reliance on national evaluators increased their responsibilities on the ground. This has also sped up the transfer of the evaluation process from international to national levels, encouraging more collaborative work in a hybrid format. *Third*, the pandemic has also accelerated the adoption of innovative methods, and the experience of using those serves as the basis for fast and better decision-making.

Quotes

 "The data is not silent [...] the government of Senegal wants to launch a project to anticipate major crises [...] We want to use artificial intelligence, so our country is ready to react quickly and vigorously to counter the crises like pandemics in the future"

— **Baye Elimane Gueye,** Coordinator of the Socioeconomic Impact Monitoring Unit, Operational Office for Monitoring the Emerging Senegal Plan

"The pandemic pushed us to share what we have in the state that it is when it is needed in order to engage in the decision-making discussion."

— **Jenna Smith-Kouassi,** Evaluation Policy Analyst, OECD

Watch the session

▶ Video recording of the Session C4:
NEC 2022 | Stream C4 - Approaches to evaluation during the pandemic - YouTube

8.5 | Session C5:
Engaging youth in evaluation

Moderator
◆ **Gabriela Renteria Flores,** Chair, EvalYouth Global Network, Mexico

Panellists
◆ **Marco Segone,** Director, Evaluation Office, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

◆ **Aloyce Ratemo,** Director, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, the National Treasury and Planning, Kenya

◆ **Alfredo Domínguez,** President, International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)

◆ **Daniel Alonso,** Evaluation Specialist, IEO, UNDP

"Meaningful engagement of Youth in Evaluation": engaging youth agency and voice in evaluation to increase the transformative power of evaluation to reach the furthest behind.

Panellists discussed - from their own perspectives and within their roles - the importance of engaging youth in evaluation, and how to do it. They also exchanged ideas on the key challenges to meaningful engagement of youth.

Why is it important to engage youth in evaluation?

◆ Youth are already taking the lead in averting once-in-a-generation interconnected challenges

◆ It improves relevance and quality of evaluations

◆ It provides an opportunity to amplify the voice and agency of youth, while empowering them

◆ It enhances SDG implementation, monitoring and review, and holds governments accountable

- It brings out-of-the-box solutions and perspectives

- It contributes to the development of future leaders and prepares the next generation of evaluators

How to engage youth in evaluation?

- Strengthening institutional and individual capacities (technical and soft skills)

- Incorporating youth in governance structures, while recognising their importance

- Creating the demand for young evaluators, including mandatory requirements in evaluation

- Ensuring proper engagement in all stages of the evaluation process

- Strengthening and diversifying the role of youth in evaluation (e.g. not merely as key informants but also co-evaluators, co-advisors, co-decision-makers, and co-advocates for the use of evaluation)

- Continuing to support the global advocacy movement "Youth in Evaluation Manifesto" for meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation (with 500 signatories already)

Key challenges in engaging youth in evaluation:

- Inadequate knowledge, capacity and opportunity to engage

- Inadequate employment opportunities

- Lack of access to financial resources

- Digital divide, especially in rural areas

- Impact of intersectionality of vulnerability (education, gender, ethnicity, locality, etc.)

Lessons learned and good practices:

- Co-creation of standards to step up the practice and accountability towards engaging youth

- Enhance youth in leadership positions

- Establishment of youth-adult (experienced evaluator) partnerships

- Promoting youth participation in relevant networks

- Ensuring decent spaces of participation for youth among the different members of the evaluation ecosystem

- Leveraging the role of VOPEs in promoting capacity-building and the participation of youth

Conclusion

Engaging youth in the evaluation process is no longer a choice, but an imperative for the development process. Through different perspective (United Nations agencies, VOPEs, government and evaluators), panellists highlighted the importance of the meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation, as well as the need to create the appropriate avenues and incentives for their participation. Young evaluators, beneficiaries and young leaders are showing extraordinary leadership and innovation to build a global evaluation culture for SDG delivery and to increase the transformative power of evaluation.

Quotes

"Young people are our future and they must stand for themselves as the future of Kenya stands with them"

"Every country has different ecosystem; we need to understand them and create an opportunity for youth in them."

— **Aloyce Ratemo,** Director, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, the National Treasury and Planning, Kenya

"Let me say that Global South is leading in signing the Manifesto to engage youth."

— **Marco Segone,** Director, Evaluation Office, UNFPA

"We need to commit in building intergenerational bridges with young and emerging evaluators."

— **Natalia Aquilino**, Representative from Government of Argentina

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session C5:
NEC 2022 | Stream C5 - Engaging Youth in Evaluation - YouTube

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8.6 | Session C6:
Evaluating the SDGs

Moderator
- **Dirk Hoffmann,** Evaluator, Deval

Panellists
- **Bala Yusuf-Yunusa,** Senior Technical Advisor, OSSAP-SDGs, Nigeria
- **Carolina Zúñiga Zamora,** Evaluation Unit, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, Costa Rica
- **Ana Rosa Soares**, Chief Corporate Evaluations, IEO, UNDP
- **Ada Ocampo**, President, IDEAS
- **Eriko Pérez**, Technical Secretary of Cabinet, Government of Mexico

Have we failed to evaluate the SDGs and inform change? With seven years until 2030, the SDGs are far behind achievement - has evaluation done enough to draw lessons and inform policy? This session examined approaches and common challenges to evaluating the SDGs and emerging best practices, and how country-led SDG evaluations are informing VNRs.

- **Assessing SDG achievement is dominated by monitoring and progress reporting,** as illustrated by VNRs. However, governments can apply the capacity gained in undertaking VNRs to move forward with thematic SDG evaluations. This will require political commitment with matched financial resources, as illustrated by examples from Costa Rica and Nigeria:

  - In Costa Rica, the national plan is linked to the SDGs and 2030 Agenda, a basic condition to move forward with an SDG evaluation. The evaluation on climate change and biodiversity in the context of the 2030 Agenda was innovative for Costa Rica, since it was a complex thematic evaluation. It was the first time that this type of evaluation was led by the country and not by international cooperation.

  - In Nigeria, the SDGs have been embedded into national development plans and sector development plans. In addition to reporting on SDG progress through VNRs, the Government evaluated progress towards two priority SDGs (Health and Education) using the six OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and adding the 2030 Agenda principles of leave no one behind, human rights and equity. This supported VNRs, learning and accountability of the Government and their commitment to the SDGs.

- **Evaluations are often technically focused and do not address policy issues,** and need greater alignment with national plans at a political level.

- **The 2030 Agenda is not only about achieving the SDGs but incorporating its principles within national agendas.** Evaluations should also cover that aspect and not only focus on progress towards the goals.

- **Multi-stakeholder engagement in the evaluation of the SDGs is not only necessary, but politically and ethically required.** Furthermore, engagement of the non-state stakeholders is key to reflect their perspective, setting a baseline, and building on the collective experience.

- **Discourse on evaluating the SDGs is also important at the local level,** linking national and global discourse on achievement of the SDGs with local realities. Despite the challenges, a lack of clear narratives for local decision-making and limited local capacity, engagement on the subnational level can transform SDGs into a multidimensional, multifactorial and multiscale evaluation.

- **Considering the different levels of capacity, subnational level requires further capacity-strengthening.** Multilateral organizations and developed countries should provide financial support to developing countries to build capacity.

- **The syntheses of evaluative evidence of SDG achievements across the five pillars (5P syntheses) evaluation will capture the depth of learning and outline possible post 2030 Agenda development pathways after 2030.** The synthesis will be built on existing data, identifying what worked and what did not, and providing insights and analysis. The first synthesis will be on partnerships, currently resources are being mobilized and partnerships broadened to conduct the synthesis.

- **Developed countries should report on the achievement of SDGs** along with developing countries

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Conclusion

The achievement of SDGs since their inception has been dominated by monitoring and reporting on movement. This is yet to translate to evaluation and the capturing of lessons or ensuring accountability of achievement of the SDGs. As we hopefully transition to more evaluations of the SDGs, this needs to take a multi-stakeholder approach, to ensure that all perspectives are included. Evaluation of the SDGs requires political commitment with matched financial support both in the North and the South, and filling the capacity gap at subnational and national levels.

Quotes

"For evaluating the SDGs, the need for a robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting system cannot be overemphasized."

— **Bala Yusuf-Yunusa,** Senior Technical Advisor, OSSAP SDGs, Nigeria

"We come to the realization that we have a strategic moment ahead of us in terms of learning and thinking what comes after 2030 Agenda."

— **Ana Rosa Soares**, Chief of Section for Syntheses and Lessons, IEO, UNDP

Watch the session

▶ **Video recording of the Session C6:**
NEC 2022 | Stream C6 - Evaluating the SDGs - YouTube

8.7 | Session C7:
Evaluation in fragile settings

Moderator
◆ **Sarah Longford,** Deputy Director, Evaluation, WFP

Panellists
◆ **Rana Sallam,** Regional Evaluation Officer, WFP
◆ **Dr. Abdirizak Hassan Mohamed,** Senior Advisor, Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation of Galmudug State, Somalia
◆ **Dr. Sory Ibrahima Monekata,** Executive Director at Ebenezer International, Mali
◆ **Dr. Thuraya Edelbi,** Deputy Head of Planning and International Cooperation Commission, Planning and International Cooperation Commission, Syria

How do we evaluate in fragile settings? How do we overcome the obstacles and challenges? What do evaluative criteria mean in these settings and what other considerations must we take?

◆ **The success of evaluations in fragile contexts relies on adequate local knowledge.** Evaluation teams should include people familiar with the context with community ties to enable access and increase trust with interviewees.

◆ **Contextual sensitivities and the lack of reliable data pose a key challenge for evaluations in fragile settings.** Recruiting local teams familiar with the country and context, building trust with the interviewers, training them to recognise their biases, and consideration of the gender composition of the interviewers are essential ingredients for conducting evaluation in fragile contexts. Regional and national networks, evaluation associations, CSOs and academic institutions can often help and support the identification and recruitment of local evaluators.

◆ **The participation of citizens and CSOs can play a vital role in evaluations in fragile settings.** Their familiarity with the context, community ties and engagement of community champions can play a strong role in data collection, using innovative methods and advancing the evaluation process. However, there is a need to triangulate the data using different methods.

- **Evaluation in fragile settings comes with its own set of risks.** Among others, key challenges include geographical and administrative boundaries and inaccessibility, lack of M&E frameworks and mechanisms which can compromise data collection, or the censorship and control of the government over data and information. National, regional and sectoral reports, as well as data from statistical bureaux and annual surveys, can help bridge data gaps. In order to avoid the risk of data manipulation to attract international aid, triangulation using different sources should be done to validate the reliability of the data. Reports and data from United Nations and other international organizations can often help cross-reference the data collected.

- **Evaluations and sectoral studies can provide vital information about fragile contexts.** This information empowers citizens, keeps the government accountable and supports advocacy, decision-making, fundraising and awareness, and helps to direct funding where it is most needed.

Conclusion

Evaluations in fragile contexts pose challenges linked to availability of reliable data, inaccessibility due to administrative and geographical boundaries and contextual sensitivities. The success of evaluation in these contexts relies on adequate local knowledge, which can often be sourced through the engagement of local evaluators and CSOs operational in the area and familiar with the communities. Evaluative evidence generated through evaluations in fragile settings can play a powerful role in raising awareness, empowering communities and ensuring government accountability, while at the same time supporting advocacy, decision-making and targeting funding where it is most needed.

Quotes

"Evaluators working in fragile countries should train the local evaluators to build knowledge and strengthen local capacity."

— **Abdirizak Hassan Mohamed**, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation of Galmudug State, Somalia

"We should be mindful of how we support and complement each other, each bringing in different voices and not compete".

— **Sarah Longford**, Deputy Director, Evaluation, WFP

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session C7:
NEC 2022 | Stream C7 - Evaluation in Fragile Settings - YouTube

09 CHAPTER

STREAM D.
METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS FOR THE NEW NORMAL

9.1 | Session D1:
Innovating to evaluate beyond the 2030 Agenda

Moderator
- **Indran Naidoo,** Director, Independent Office of Evaluation, IFAD

Panellists
- **Mita Marra,** Associate Professor of Political Economics and Policy Evaluation, University of Naples "Federico II"
- **Dugan Fraser,** Programme Manager, GEI, World Bank Group

Is evaluation innovative and nimble enough for a rapidly changing world? Are innovations aligning with need? How do we bring about a systems-thinking approach for transformative change?

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- **There continues to be resistance to evaluation from those being evaluated.** Equally data collectors can be resistant to share information to better inform evaluation. The evaluation field may need to consider its communication and knowledge management and sharing approaches.

- **On the supply side, evaluations are sometimes required to fulfil a regulatory requirement, from a compliance perspective.** However, there is a risk that this makes evaluation a mandatory process, limiting its overall use and impact. It may require nudging and soft-power measures, e.g. legislation that requires evaluation after a certain amount of years from introduction, which may help in the institutionalization of evaluation as part of public policymaking.

- **On the demand side, there is increased demand** for evaluation to support evidence-informed decision-making. Social impact assessment, in public and private sector organizations, environmental, social and governance and impact investing are also demanding better data-driven evaluation.

- **Innovating evaluation will require addressing and recognising challenges** such as political polarization, new and emerging crises, complex theories of change and multiple sources of evidence and actor viewpoints.

- **This will require a greater focus on systems-thinking,** backward and forward linkages, and reflections on "reformongering" and the positionality of the evaluator to grasp emergence and embeddedness - while staying principled. It will need evaluators to step-up and engage meaningfully with the decision makers to ensure political will and recognition of the evaluative evidence to ensure evaluations lead to change and are used.

- **The structure of monitoring and evaluation systems, especially within the public sector, shows the level to which monitoring has been mainstreamed,** possibly due to cultures of accountability and control within public sector institutions, while evaluation remains on the margins and external.

- **Evaluation isolation has led to less cooperation and information sharing and, as a result, less innovation.** The pandemic forced evaluation to be more innovative, and increases in rapid evaluations illustrate this to a degree. However it remains compliance-oriented, a ritual framed around a fear of failure, with structures such as the DAC criteria restricting rather than allowing broader examination and understanding.

- **Systems-thinking requires us to be respectful of the system and take time to understand the systemic and individual roles.** Evaluation needs to take a "theories of use" approach, acting as a learning partner. A key contextual barrier is a widespread absence of authentic curiosity.

Conclusion

Evaluation should be bold/ brave and not step away from difficult discussions. Evaluation has a key role in challenging policy and decision-making. Evaluation needs to take a systems-thinking approach, understand systems and the actors in the systems, and be respectful whilst also recognising the challenges and constraints of evaluative approaches and that it is a political process and needs to be challenging.

Quotes

It is important to consider failure: "Experts themselves can get it wrong; we have to keep trying"

— **Mia Mara,** Associate Professor of Political Economics and Policy Evaluation, University of Naples "Federico II"

"We have to reflect on the mistakes we make and not only look to success"

— **Indran Naidoo,** Director, Independent Office of Evaluation, IFAD

"Too often, evaluation is part of a compliance ritual that institutions undertake. To cross boundaries, evaluation has to become a genuine learning partner."

— **Dugan Fraser,** Programme Manager, GEI

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9.2 | Session D2:
National data systems

Moderator
- **Timothy Lubanga,** Commissioner for Monitoring and Evaluation, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda

Panellists
- **Joao Cardoso,** President, National Statistical Institute, Cabo Verde
- **Nemariam Yohanes Mengistu,** Director, Ministry of Finance and National Development, Eritrea
- **Elena Kukharevich,** First Deputy Chairperson, National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus
- **Camille Spencer,** Programme Director, Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Planning and Development, Trinidad and Tobago

Evaluation needs data. How do we ensure our National Evaluation Systems, and the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the SDGs, are supported with credible national data systems?

- **Data is the key ingredient for decision-making and accountability.** Absence of high-quality data and information is one of the most significant challenges for generating evidence in an evaluation ecosystem for making informed decisions and policies.

- **Strong data and statistical systems are essential for National Evaluation Systems and measuring progress towards the SDGs.** There is a need to ensure alignment between regional and national development goals, indicators and targets and the SDGs. There is a need to increase the coverage of indicators as well as harmonization of internal and external data against them.

- **Weak and archaic national statistical systems remain a challenge.** While they are absent in some countries, they need to be modernized and made fit-for-purpose in others where they exist.

- Inadequate human resource capacity and skills, **insufficient coordination within and across ministries, between government, partners and national stakeholders, and limited political buy-in** for data and data systems at all levels of the government impedes progress in establishing and maintaining credible national data systems.

- **Strengthening national data systems requires a multipronged and holistic approach.** This can be done through:
  - Revitalization of NES by strengthening legislation on data and statistics; introducing state-of-the-art software and technology; promoting data innovation; and creating a national structure for development statistics.
  - Inclusion of data from the beginning of the national development planning and policy cycle (not as an afterthought) and making the required public and private sector investments.
  - Engaging in partnerships with universities, research institutions, development partners and international organizations to build capacity, harmonize efforts and bridge data gaps.
  - Institutionalizing a culture of results-based management in the government by strengthening government data collection and management systems, developing a national monitoring and evaluation policy and developing a national evaluation agenda that mandates data collection at all levels of government.
  - Ensuring high-level political ownership and buy-in, as it drives demand for and financing of data.

Conclusion

National Evaluation Systems support data-driven decision-making and government accountability. This requires strong data collection systems that are robust, timely and reliable. Strong data and evidence are essential for strong National Evaluation Systems and to build forward better, although challenges are not insignificant. Strengthening national data systems requires a multipronged and holistic approach. Statistical systems need: modernization and better coordination within and across national partners; better accounting for culture and context; stronger political ownership of data; and for data to become part of the policy cycle and integral to national planning and budgeting.

"Ensure political buy-in and ownership, start by moving the piano a little bit to the left as change is incremental and partner, partner and partner".

— **Camille Spencer**, Programme Director, Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Planning and Development, Trinidad and Tobago

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session D2:
NEC 2022 | Stream D2 - National Data Systems - YouTube

9.3 | Session D3:
Evaluation methods to inform policy

Moderator
- **Lycia Lima**, Professor at Fundacao Getulio Vargas and Deputy Director, Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR Lusophone Africa and Brazil), Brazil

Panellists
- **Gilson Pina,** National Director for Planning, Ministry of Finance, Cape Verde
- **Odilia Gnassingbe,** Executive Director, Autonomous Centre for Studies and Capacity Building for Development, Togo
- **Timothy Lubanga,** Commissioner for M&E, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda

Policymakers need answers quickly and can't always wait for a full evaluation to be completed. There is no single methodology for rapid evaluations, so how is rapid evaluation understood in different country contexts? What role does it play? The panel presented examples from Cape Verde, Togo and Uganda.

- **Rapid evaluation results have great potential to inform policy.** In times of upheaval, policymakers need information to adjust policies mid-crisis, as was shown during the pandemic when rapid evaluations helped to facilitate timely and targeted responses. Their utility also goes beyond crisis contexts: the potential for rapid evaluation results to affect policy decisions is much higher, due to the time constraints under which governments work.

- **Rapid evaluations should complement full evaluations, not replace them.** There will be gaps in the range of questions a rapid evaluation can answer, and they can't provide the depth and scope of information of a full evaluation. Managing this requires targeting, planning and awareness on the part of evaluators. Whether to undertake a rapid or regular evaluation depends on the question being asked, and its complexity. While recognising that evaluation happens at the end of a programme cycle, rapid evaluations during implementation can support course correction.

- **There is a balance to be struck between rigour and speed.** Rapid evaluations are simple in structure and methodology, cheaper to run, and intensive and participatory in their approach. Paying attention to design, reducing scope to essential topics, and promoting

collaboration can all support the production. Issues around independence, available resources and capacity require attention.

- **Institutionalizing evaluation requires the systematization of evaluative practice and the availability of capacity and resources,** more than a legal framework. It requires a structural system to be established, including strong linkages between the aspects involved in public policymaking processes (budgeting, planning and M&E).

- **Partnerships are crucial to ensure the availability of resources and capacity.** Governments should partner with CSOs, and universities, to augment technical skills for National Evaluation Systems. International organizations can also support where skills and systems are scarce, weak or unavailable within the country. Building strong linkages between the various aspects of policymaking can help to ensure that resources are available, and the evidence fulfils needs.

Conclusion

Rapid evaluations can provide important and timely support to policy decisions within short timeframes and with a smaller budget, to complement full evaluations. To institutionalize the practice and ensure a resilient system, the panel recommended: 1) improving linkages between bodies involved in policymaking to ensure resources are available and the evidence supplied meets demand; 2) involving civil society stakeholders more closely; 3) strengthening national capacities, skills and systems.

Quote

"The fact that you do the evaluation quickly and provide the answer when the appetite is still on the table, you have a very high chance of the results being used, as opposed to an evaluation whose answer you provide eight months later. By that time, things have moved on."

— **Timothy Lubanga,** Commissioner for Monitoring and Evaluation, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session D3:
NEC 2022 | Stream D3 - Evaluation methods to inform policy - YouTube

9.4 | Session D4:
Ethics and evaluation

Moderator
- **Tina Tordjman-Nebe,** Senior Evaluation Specialist, IEO, UNDP

Panellists
- **Professor Nicoletta Stame,** Vice-President, A Colorni-Hirschman International Institute, Italy
- **Laura Fantini,** independent consultant, advisor to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Adeline Sibanda,** former president African Evaluation Association, South Africa

**Ethics and Culture in Evaluation:
Moving from guidelines to practice.**

Ethics in evaluation is usually discussed in terms of the role of the evaluator who, together with being competent and independent, should be careful of "doing no harm" to the evaluand. This does not take into consideration the challenges met by evaluators in situations where change happens in unexpected ways, as a consequence of a multiplicity of factors and reverse causalities, involving different kinds of actors. To this end, recent guidelines and contributions have identified a larger area of ethics in evaluation, spanning from "tackling bad" to "doing good".

- **Ethical scandals periodically engulf public institutions,** including the United Nations, and are deeply troubling given the reputational risk and our collective mandate to fight disease, hunger and climate change, and protect those most at risk.

- **As evaluators and evaluation commissioners, we have a duty to support oversight on ethical questions** (e.g. disability inclusion, environmental standards, leave no one behind), and also to model behavioural independence and integrity while "doing no harm". There is great reputational risk associated with ethical issues.

- **Recent ethical guidelines of national, multilateral and bilateral organizations have shifted focus from "tackling bad" to "doing good"** (sometimes called the principle of "beneficence"). Three panellists shared their insights on what this means in practice:

  - The African Evaluation Principles firmly embed ethics into "made in Africa evaluation", emphasizing indigenous knowledge and inclusion/connectedness. The principles are meant to empower Africans and support evaluation that is robust, ethically sound and rooted in local realities.

  - 'Doing good', 'doing no harm', 'tackling bad' and 'preventing bad' are four complementary but distinct ethical perspectives. A theoretical framework was presented outlining how these stances can shape the future of evaluation ethics, going beyond "what works" to focus on "what needs to be done" and "what would help".

  - Two practical case studies were shared, showing how evaluators can help foster development practitioners' evaluative and ethical compass. Insights included the need to be sensitive to the values of the people being evaluated, to consider diversity and inclusion throughout the process, and to think of implementers as partners in the evaluation process.

- A lively discussion brought out several **behavioural standards** for evaluators and evaluation commissioners (see conclusion).

Conclusion

The session brought out suggested behavioural standards for evaluators and evaluation commissioners, to include:

- Make sure ethical issues are included when an organization decides *what* should be evaluated, as well as within the scope of each individual evaluation. Make sure evaluations cover the things that matter to people on the ground.

- When designing an evaluation, be mindful of power asymmetries, consider equity (not just equality) and try to give voice to affected populations, including direct beneficiaries.

- Use available processes for external ethical review of evaluation designs and methodologies. Make sure evaluations go beyond doing no harm and strive to do good.

- Give value to local knowledge and identify and collaborate with local champions. Learn from indigenous communities and adapt.

- Be flexible and reflective, and value critical feedback.

- Identify potential unintended effects on affected populations, both of the intervention under scrutiny, and of the evaluation itself.

Quotes

"The discourse of evaluation sometimes remains hidden so there is a role for evaluators as activists…activists against what we see in the field"

— **Laura Fantini,** independent consultant, advisor to Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

"We (evaluators) must learn and adapt global south and learn from Indigenous communities."

— **Adeline Sibanda,** former president African Evaluation Association, South Africa

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session D4:
NEC 2022 | Stream D4 - Ethics and Evaluation - YouTube

9.5 | Session D5:
Digital innovations in evaluation

Moderator

- **Claudia Oehl,** International Project Manager, evaluator and trainer, Organizational Development and Project Services Programme, ITC, ILO

Panellists

- **Daniel Jacobo,** Technical Advisor, Division of Evaluation of Development Policies - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Spain
- **Gonzalo Gomez**, Chief of Knowledge and Data Management, IEO, UNDP
- **Nodumo Fikile Magadlela**, Co-founder and CEO, KPI Lens Limited
- **Deo-Gracias Houndolo, Lead,** African Institute for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Impact of Development Policies, Programmes and Projects (Le Baromètre)
- **Toshiyuki Yokota,** Principal Evaluation Specialist, Independent Evaluation Department, Asian Development Bank

Which new pathways do data-heavy, cutting-edge technologies open to evaluation? Data are vital for understanding the progress and impact of development strategies. New technologies, coupled with increased computing power, are creating opportunities for gathering and analysing ever larger amounts of data from a greater range of sources. In addition, remote data collection is playing an increasingly important role, and can make evaluation nimbler when coupled with appropriate technology use.

This panel discussed some illustrative application cases and the new possibilities and limits encountered. What are the trends and where are the limits?

- Several examples were presented of **technological innovations in the use of artificial intelligence**, data collection and the availability of findings, and the use of geospatial data:
  - **The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs** presented their evaluation resource dashboard. The system illustrates how to construct a complete common reporting and analysis tool of their cooperation initiatives. Tagging of projects to the SDGs by project managers allows for filtering by SDG contribution. Artificial intelligence is used to further analyse items for their contribution to SDGs;

  - **UNDP IEO** showcased its AIDA project (Artificial Intelligence for Development Analytics) which uses 5000+ UNDP evaluation reports to extract and classify findings, conclusions and recommendations. The next phase is to develop the platform to generate insights from UNDP evaluations;

  - **KPILens Ghana** highlighted an award-winning cloud-based all-in-one M&E solution. It can track and report on KPIs linked to several projects;

  - **Le Baromètre (African Institute of Monitoring and Impact Evaluation of Public Policy Programmes and Projects, Benin),** showed their award-winning smart device application which provides on-demand SDG progress data relevant for evidence-based government decision-making at municipal, district and national levels;

  - The **Asian Development Bank Independent Evaluation Department** demonstrated the use of global datasets of geospatial data for portfolio and economic impact analysis.

- **Speakers discussed the use of data-heavy, cutting-edge technologies, which open new pathways for evaluation.** Data can be accessed more easily, and made more immediately and easily available to where they can make a change. In addition, technology helps to tap into and make sense of existing rich data and analysis.

- **Artificial intelligence offers considerable analytical advantages.** The Spanish portal INFOODS2030 is a complete homogenous reporting and analysis tool for their cooperation initiatives. Artificial intelligence is used to further analyse items for their contributions to the SDGs.

- **AIDA manages any query on any question with artificial intelligence,** and the system is able to recognise relevant data and its classification as finding, conclusion or recommendation. In this way, existing evaluations can be tapped into in a much more meaningful way than was previously feasible.

- **Future developments underway in AIDA include sentiment analysis and the creation of insights** based on the combination of primary evaluation evidence, programme data and external country context data.

- **Cloud-based all-in-one solutions make remote data collection instantly usable through mobile real-time input and analysis.** A Ghanaian start-up firm illustrated an all-in-one project M&E solution that combines the logical framework and indicator tracking to allow project managers and other stakeholders to track and access key data in real time.

- *Le Baromètre* **from Benin displayed another smart device based app which shows progress on SDG indicators** at municipal, district or country level, and makes it available in a geographical display to policy- and decision-makers.

- **Geospatial data are available retrospectively and remotely, which is particularly useful for evaluators** working in countries with data access constraints, including those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and in the context of fragility, conflict and violence. Another advantage is that data quality is comparable across countries.

- However, even with the advances being made in automated analytical techniques, such as those seen through artificial intelligence, including very strong document intelligence capacities, **it is important to include humans in the loop to ensure that lessons extracted are both useful and appropriately targeted**.

Conclusion

The data revolution is present in evaluation just as everywhere else. This session illustrated how old and new data can be used, and showed how new data science applications can be applied in thoughtful and meaningful ways. Technological innovation is not a panacea but is a tool for a purpose. It must be used with a clear purpose and for quality, and always with "the human in the loop". Technology also comes with a cost and has a lifespan. The challenge will be who develops, and who will use, the new solutions.

Quote

"The availability and accessibility of geo-spatial data has increased over the years. This is available both retrospectively and remotely, which is particularly useful for evaluators working in countries with constraints on their access to data, including those caused by COVID-19 pandemic".

— **Toshiyuki Yokota**, Principal Evaluation Specialist, Independent Evaluation Department, Asian Development Bank

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session D5:
NEC 2022 | Stream D5 - Digital Innovations in evaluation - YouTube

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9.6 | Session D6:
Innovations in the rural development and agriculture sectors

Moderator
- **Renata Mirulla** Facilitator of EvalForward, Office of Evaluation, FAO
- **Monica Lomena-Gelis** Senior Evaluation Officer, Independent Office of Evaluation, IFAD

Panellists
- **Rodrigue Siangoye Owoumbou,** Head of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Agricultural and Rural Development Project-Second Phase Gabon: (PDAR2), Ministry of Agriculture, Gabon

- **Mor Seck,** Permanent Secretary, Commission for the Evaluation and Monitoring of Public Policies and Programmes, Presidency of the Republic of Senegal

- **Konaté Sekou Tidiani,** Director of Coordination, Cooperation, Statistical Planning and Communication, Institute of Statistics of Djibouti

- **N'Dia Youssouf**, Director of Control, Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Planning and Development, Ivory Coast

The session addressed the questions on how to strengthen national capacities in M&E and how innovations can reduce the gap between M&E and decision-making. It examined specific challenges and opportunities in environment, agriculture and food security sectors. Representatives from four African countries shared their experiences around strengthening the national M&E systems and its use for decision-making in these sectors.

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This session explored innovations in M&E to better respond to the needs of decision-makers, with a focus on agriculture.

◆ **The panel addressed M&E capacity-development in four African countries** (Gabon, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Djibouti), focusing on the agricultural sector, environment and food security. Experiences were shared about how to strengthen M&E units in Ministries of Agriculture and how to conceive nascent and embryonic M&E systems in settings/sectors where these are largely absent.

◆ **The agriculture sector is fundamental to the economy of many African countries.** The EvalForward platform supports knowledge exchange on evaluation practices in agriculture and food security, with the aim of contributing to the development of national capacity. To strengthen connections to decision-makers, innovations such as geographical information systems are needed, stemming from national or regional agricultural research centres.

◆ **Some countries do have agriculture sector specific M&E systems, but they lack capacity and resources.** Reliable agricultural data remains a challenge and a constraint for policymaking and monitoring and evaluation. Supporting national statistical offices is key. The institutionalization of M&E systems is a relative issue; where it is institutionalized it assumes importance.

◆ **Country experience illustrated many of these constraints and lessons:**

  ◆ In Gabon an M&E unit is being developed to monitor and evaluate all agriculture-related projects, including those funded by donors. M&E plans exist at the department level, along with focal points in departments of the Ministry of Agriculture who are working on a common M&E action plan. Implementation of the plan continues to be a challenge.

  ◆ Ivory Coast adopted legislation on public policy evaluation. However, a challenge in moving forward on this legislation is the availability of evaluators with expertise in the sector.

  ◆ Senegal recently commissioned an evaluation of its agriculture policy (including other sub-sectors such as fisheries). After the evaluation, there will be revisions to the policy. The country lacks an agriculture sector M&E system and has not established linkages between various ministries in monitoring national programmes. The commission for evaluation and monitoring of public policies and programmes within the President's Office provides an overarching framework, and aims to offer a structure for sectoral monitoring and evaluation.

  ◆ In Djibouti, the Ministry of Agriculture has yet to start monitoring activities and agriculture currently accounts for less than 1 percent of GDP. The pandemic has prompted key actors to start with an agricultural census. The Association of Evaluators also has a role to play in advancing this agenda.

Conclusion

Agriculture could be the lead sector in M&E systems in some African countries because of its importance for economic and sustainable development, and in the light of renewed attention to the sector. This could spearhead a drive among other sectors to develop NES and evidence-based decision-making.

Quote

"The good news is that you don't have to fix a broken system – you can build new ones based on international best practice."

— Participant

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session D6:
NEC 2022 | Stream D6 | Innovations en suivi et évaluation dans les secteurs de l'agriculture - YouTube

9.7 | Session D7:
Transformational change

Moderator
- **Heather Bryant,** Evaluation Advisor, GEI/UNDP IEO

Panellists
- **David Marchesseault,** Evaluation Manager, Global Affairs Canada
- **Dr. Angelina Mattijo- Bazugba,** Associate Professor of Social Policy, and Dean/ Director of National Transformational Leadership Institute, University of Juba, South Sudan
- **Dr. Shabnum Sarfraz,** Senior Advisor Social Sector and Development, Served as Member Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan
- **Daniella Jacques**, President of the Board of Directors, Chamber of Commerce for Women Entrepreneurs of Haiti

Integrating human rights-based, gender-sensitive and feminist approaches in National Evaluation Systems for transformational change.

- **This session builds on two foundational ideas.** First, that the vision of the 2030 Agenda cannot be achieved without achieving gender equality and social inclusion. Second, that strong monitoring and evaluation systems are critical to transformational change. Thus, it follows that governments and institutions need M&E systems and practices that ensure all evaluations and evidence systems are gender- and inclusion-responsive. The session sought to answer the question, what will it take to get to that point?

- **Changing M&E systems require changing narratives.** Data can be used to illustrate development challenges from new perspectives and influence policymakers. For example in Pakistan, the emphasis used to be on gender-based violence as a reason to promote gender parity, but recently, experts have changed the narrative to emphasize economic arguments, e.g., that the returns on education are higher for women than for men, so there is a strong economic incentive for women to acquire more education.

Using disaggregated data and presenting it in persuasive ways helps to change minds even in a traditional, male-dominated world.

- **Canada has been at the forefront of integrating gender-sensitive approaches to evaluation and is now advancing feminist evaluation.** At its core, a feminist evaluation is an evaluation that subscribes to and tries to embody three core feminist beliefs: (i) there should be equity amongst humans; (ii) gender inequity leads to social injustice; and (iii) gender-based inequalities are systemic and intersect with other causes of discrimination.

- **Experience from South Sudan shows that strengthening government M&E systems and integrating gender-transformative approaches requires political will and legal and policy frameworks that address gendered norms.** The National Development Plan can be a starting point. Strengthening capacities and voices to express what is needed, and to question, is also important.

- **Lessons from projects in Haiti point to the need for innovative tools for data collection,** for regular data collection and adequate funding for field monitoring to capture the diverse experiences of women, to plan for M&E from the outset, and to link M&E to communication.

Conclusion

Establishing gender-responsive evaluation systems is a challenging task that will take time, effort and nuance. And yet, it is essential. As evaluators and technocrats, we all have a responsibility to continually bring the subject of gender equality and social inclusion to the table.

Quotes

"Think of evaluation as a political act. Evaluation is an attempt to create positive social change."

— **David Marchesseault,** Evaluation Manager, Global Affairs Canada

"Since we are talking about evaluation, as a final thought, I would like each of you to continue to evaluate the general situation of women in your countries, in your neighbourhoods, everywhere that you go, because I am certain that everything we have achieved could disappear in the blink of an eye, as we have already seen happen."

— **Daniella Jacques**, President of the Board of Directors, Chamber of Commerce for Women Entrepreneurs of Haiti.

Watch the session

Video recording of the Session D7:
NEC 2022 | Stream D7 - Transformational Change - YouTube

10 CHAPTER

TURIN AGENDA

Over 300 participants from more than 100 countries, representing national governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, international development and humanitarian agencies, civil society and the international evaluation community gathered in Turin from 25 to 28 October 2022 to discuss the development of resilient National Evaluation Systems that inform policy and other decision-making in a rapidly changing world.

This Agenda builds on the learning and experiences that were shared and discussed during the Turin conference. It serves as a common framework for action and collective commitment to rapidly and sustainably strengthen national evaluation.

We, the participants in the 2022 National Evaluation Capacities Conference (Turin Italy, October 25-28), collectively agree on the following.

We note that since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- At the midway point of the 2030 Agenda, progress towards the SDGs has slowed and reversed in many countries and regions of the world.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a global health and economic crisis impacting the ability of many countries to respond to crises.

- The health crisis has been compounded by rising geopolitical tensions, which are exposing the fragility of global systems and sustainable development pathways, as well as their vulnerability to disruption.

- Inequality has intensified, with profound and deepening disparities in access to resources and opportunities for different groups of people.

- Multiple crises have further intensified gender inequality with a regressive social and economic impact on women and girls.

- The negative impacts of climate change are accelerating and disproportionately affecting vulnerable nations and the populations least able to cope.

- Overlapping crises are challenging the very tenets of existing development paradigms, and we must re-envision our conceptual frameworks and push for greater innovation, creativity and adaptation in evaluation systems and practices.

- Development data and statistics fundamental to monitoring SDG progress as well as policy evaluations are evolving, but not at the pace required.

- The opportunities and possibilities offered through digital transformation show great promise, even as access to the internet remains beyond the reach of a third of the world's population and the risks of deepening social inequalities, disinformation and polarization continue.

We *further* note that:

- We are rapidly approaching the time when decisions will be made about the transition beyond the Sustainable Development Goals. To support this turning point in the international development agenda, evaluation must play a greater role in providing decision-makers with the evidence that they need to make decisions for the world today, and beyond 2030.

We *recognise* that, as a result, National Evaluation Systems need to:

- Be led by national governments, respecting the principle of national ownership over the development process and ensuring their sustainability through national resource allocation.

- Urgently develop capacities to provide timely, credible and robust evidence to policymakers and policy implementation processes, to support efforts to build forward better.

- Be ever more agile and flexible to rapidly meet shifting and urgent needs for evidence to guide policies and practices.

- Actively seek to connect with evidence generated by relevant - and not just traditional - research and statistical disciplines, as well as administrative data and monitoring processes and systems.

- Ensure linkages across sectors, spheres of government and geographical locations in more comprehensive National Evaluation Systems.

- Be led by contextual specificities in all aspects of evaluation planning, processes and practices.

- Consider fragility and resilience in all aspects of evaluation planning and implementation, including how evaluation can contribute to peacebuilding and rehabilitation, taking proper account of the context, relevant risks and threats.

- Prioritize inclusiveness and leaving no one behind, and efforts to address intersecting inequalities.

- Actively give voice to people from all walks of life, paying special attention to youth, women and girls, and those who are often excluded and marginalized.

- Meaningfully mainstream environmental sustainability and climate considerations when evaluating policies, programmes or portfolios of work, to foster the consistent integration of mitigation and adaptation efforts into system design and implementation.

- Prioritize access to, and the adoption of, inclusive digital strategies and solutions, especially those that also reduce the environmental impacts of evaluation.

Therefore, recognising these imperatives and the complex contexts within which we work, we will *strive* to:

- **Ensure** that our work improves people's lives, building more resilient societies, to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

- **Create** inclusive and transparent systems that actively engage with stakeholders, including government partners, parliamentarians, the private sector, citizens and civil society, and incorporate their diverse and informed viewpoints and expertise to generate credible evidence to support policies and programmes that leave no-one behind.

- **Ensure** that national and subnational evaluation systems respond to distinct national and local contexts and are aligned with national development programmes and strategies.

- **Ensure** that national and subnational Evaluation Systems are adequately and realistically funded and financed.

- **Ensure** that evaluation systems take into account the potential, current and projected impact of all policies and programmes on the climate and ecosystems in order to help avoid, mitigate and address these existential crises affecting our planet and human development.

- **Support** adaptive systems that can provide rapid information to aid crisis responses without compromising ethics.

- **Emphasize** gender equality and social inclusiveness in evaluations and evaluation systems.

- **Rapidly develop** and support the analysis and mapping of evaluation systems, as well as contextually relevant and culturally appropriate capacity-development strategies and metrics to measure their development.

- **Develop** targeted digital strategies that facilitate innovations in data and evidence collection and analysis, and their ethical use.

- **Create** ample space for young and emerging evaluators to lead and participate in shaping and strengthening National Evaluation Systems and future development pathways.

- **Strengthen partnerships and redouble our efforts** to accelerate the development of resilient, agile, flexible, adaptable and forward-looking national evaluation and statistical systems that are utility-focused, integrated into decision-making processes, and help ensure better evidence is generated to support policies that improve peoples' lives.

Watch the session

Video recording of the Turin Agenda:
NEC 2022 | The Turin Agenda - YouTube

ANNEX 1:
PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS, 25TH OCTOBER 2022

Pre-Conference Training Workshops are an integral part of the NEC conferences. Eleven in-person one-day training workshops were organized around the most pressing development challenges and how evaluation responds to them (for example: poverty and inequalities; exclusion and discrimination; violence and conflict; environmental degradation), to allow participants to explore subjects in depth with experts from around the world. The training sessions drew on the pool of expert trainers from GEI, UNDP IEO, ITC ILO, World Bank, DEval and the evaluation community.

We would like to thank the workshop facilitators who gave up their time to share their knowledge with participants.

Workshop 1:
Theory-based evaluation in practice
Trainer: Jozef Leonardus Vaessen

Workshop 2:
Evaluation Synthesis for the 21st Century: Data Science Augmented Approaches
Trainer: Stephen Porter

Workshop 3:
The Global Evaluation Initiative's Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Analysis (MESA) tool: a step toward a resilient national M&E Ecosystem
Trainers: Takunda Chirau, Edoé Djimitri Agbodjan and Thania de la Garza Navarrete

Workshop 4:
Knowledge Brokers Game-Based Workshop
Trainers: Dominika Wojtowicz and Tomasz Kupiec

Workshop 5:
Monitoring and evaluation of social protection policy, systems and programmes
Trainer: Zina Nimeh

Workshop 6:
Measuring employment-related outcomes of development interventions: Employment impact assessment
Trainers: Drew Gardiner and Jean Francois Klein

Workshop 7:
Participatory Evaluations- Concept, methods and practice
Trainers: Esteban Tapella, Juan Carlos Sanz, Jorge Chavez-Tafur

Workshop 8:
Using Evaluation Criteria for Accountability and Learning in a National Evaluation Context
Trainers: Megan G. Kennedy-Chouane and Jenna Smith-Kouassi

Workshop 9:
How to address environmental sustainability in your evaluations?
Trainers: Andy Rowe and Patricia Judith Rogers

Workshop 10:
Achieving National M&E systems resilience through incentive schemes
Trainers: Thania de la Garza Navarrete and Alonso M. de Erice Domínguez

Workshop 11:
Evaluations in the United Nations System
Trainers: Ana Rosa Monteiro Soares and Tina Tordjman-Nebe

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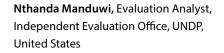
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