



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 addition 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:

[NEC 2022 | Stream B1 - Evaluation and Strengthened Governance - YouTube](#)

