

What is Monitoring and Evaluation?

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Contents

- What is Monitoring and Evaluation
- Monitoring: Definition
- Monitoring: Practices and challenges
- Evaluation: Definition
- Evaluation: Practices and challenges
- Issues relating to the M&E of governance improvement initiatives
- Using monitoring to support advocacy

What is Monitoring and Evaluation

- Key element of the programme management cycle: policy – planning – implementing – monitoring – evaluating – policy...
- Are distinct processes but should relate to each other and are often conflated
- In essence, should collect the evidence of various sorts needed for effective decision making at strategic (evaluation) and operational (monitoring) levels
- Two fundamental drivers: accountability (financial and political) and learning (improvement).
- Is rarely “M&E”ed itself: unclear what actual contribution it makes.
- Should be utilisation-focused.

Monitoring: Definition

Monitoring: Are we doing things right?

- Monitoring is a continuing function that aims to provide managers, decision makers and main stakeholders with regular feedback and early indications of progress or lack thereof in the achievement of intended results and the attainment of goals and objectives. Monitoring involves reporting on actual performance against what was planned or expected according to pre-determined standards.
- Monitoring generally involves collecting and analysing data on implementation processes, strategies and results, and recommending corrective measures.

Monitoring: Practices and challenges

- Overshadows evaluation in the SA public management terrain
- Generally makes crude use of the output-outcome-impact model and ignores complexity.
- Very indicator oriented: various dangers associated with indicator-heavy assessment systems (esp. Goal displacement)
- Data gets gathered but it's unclear what it gets used for: looking without seeing?
- Generally very technical and exclusive.

Evaluation: Definition

Evaluation: Are we doing the right things?

- Evaluation is a time-bound and periodic exercise that systematically and objectively assesses the relevance, performance, challenges and successes of programmes and projects.
- Evaluation can also address outcomes or other development issues. Evaluation usually seeks to answer specific questions to guide decision-makers or programme managers and should advise whether underlying theories and assumptions were valid, what worked, what did not and why. Evaluation commonly aims to determine relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.
- Evaluation should determine the need for modifications to strategic results frameworks and provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process.

Evaluation: Practices and challenges

- Very little rigorous, theory based evaluation in SA
- Should be framed around a clear programme theory and make use of techniques such as the definition of the underlying Theory of Change and etc.
- Are a wide range of evaluation techniques and the right one should be chosen depending on the reasons it's being undertaken... So why is it being undertaken?
- Terrain has become dominated by impact evaluation (attribution analysis) whereas what is really needed is more of an outcome-level orientation...
- Evaluation is very donor driven and does not have the regulatory framework that monitoring does.

Strategic issues

- M&E of governance improvement initiatives
- Using M&E to support advocacy

- Thank you.