



Strengthening Evaluation Alliance

19 July 2017

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SAMEA's Mission

SAMEA will cultivate a vibrant community that supports, guides and strengthens the development of monitoring and evaluation in South Africa as an important discipline, profession and instrument for empowerment and accountability.

SAMEA's Objectives

1. To provide a platform for interaction and information sharing among all those interested in M&E.
2. To promote high quality intellectual, ethical and professional standards in M&E.
3. To increase the use of M&E theory and practice.
4. To promote the development and adoption of M&E approaches and methods suitable to a South African and a developing context.
5. To promote post-graduate education and continuing professional development in the field of M&E.
6. To increase the profile of South African M&E at national and international level.
7. To help build understanding of international developments and trends in M&E.
8. To be a resource on monitoring and evaluation in South Africa.

Growth of VOPEs

Prior to 1995, there were only **5** regional and national evaluation organizations:

- the American Evaluation Association (AEA),
- the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES),
- the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES),
- the Central American Evaluation Association (ACE) and
- the European Evaluation Society (EES).

By 2013, there were over **155** groups, and the number is still rising (cf. UNEG & UNWomen 2013).

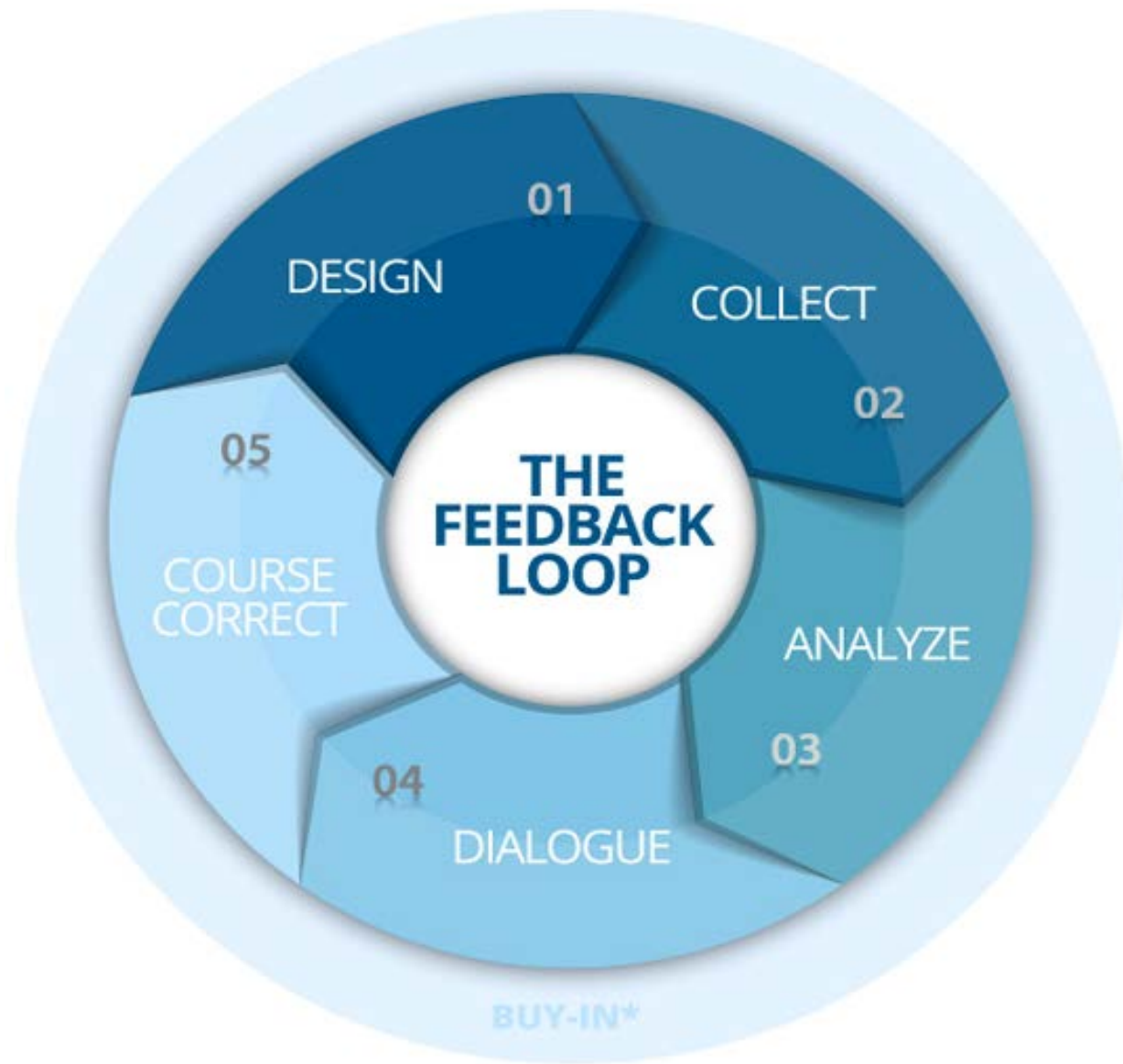
The idea of forging a global coalition of evaluators was born in 1995 at the AEA and CES conference. In 1999, the **International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)** was conceptualized, and it was inaugurated in Peru in 2003, with a mission 'to legitimize and strengthen evaluation societies, associations, or networks so that they can better contribute to good governance and strengthen civil society'.

The role of VOPEs (Volunteer Organizations for Professional Evaluation)

VOPEs are important, first and foremost, as professional networks or guilds where evaluators and commissioners of evaluation can meet and discuss issue of mutual interest including promoting the profession, strengthening member evaluation competencies, finding employment opportunities, partnering for professional collaborations, etc.

As the evaluation profession as a recognized, distinct profession is less than 20 years old, VOPEs have important roles to play in helping governments and civil society in their countries to understand what evaluation is, and the role evaluation can play in supporting better informed public policy and decision making." (IOCE, 2014)

<http://www.betterevaluation.org>



Taking Stock of Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements in the Context of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: Evidence from 20 Aid-Dependent Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa

Development Policy Review, Vol. 30, Issue 6, pp. 749-772, 2012

24 Pages • Posted: 13 Oct 2012

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Abstract

Shifts in thinking and practice concerning aid have posed serious challenges in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for both donors and recipients, but progress in reform remains slow. An important first step in any initiative involving M&E capacity development is the diagnosis of the systems' current status. This article presents a diagnostic checklist that captures issues of M&E policy: indicators, data collection and methodology; organisation; capacity-building; participation of nongovernmental actors; and use. It applies to a review of the PRSP M&E arrangements of 20 aid-dependent countries in sub-Saharan Africa to

Documented rules for data collection	Documented rules for data aggregation	Process for data verification	IT-based monitoring system		
Planned	Established	Planned	Planned	Ethiopia	National M&E Systems
Planned	Planned	Planned	Planned	Mexico	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Ghana	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Rwanda	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Senegal	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Tanzania	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Burkina Faso	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Benin	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Chile	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	India	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Mali	HIV/AIDS M&E Systems
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Nepal	
Planned	Planned	Planned	Planned	Malawi	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	South Africa	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Colombia	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Uganda	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Kenya	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Malawi	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Kenya	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Nepal	
Planned	Planned	Planned	Planned	Bangladesh	
Planned	Planned	Planned	Planned	South Africa	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Vietnam	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Belize	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Ethiopia	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Tanzania	
Established	Planned	Planned	Planned	Uganda	

Not specified / Mixed evidence
 Planned
 Limited
 Established

The Future of Evaluation

Global Trends, New Challenges, Shared Perspectives

Edited by

Reinhard Stockmann
Wolfgang Meyer



The current state of M&E in
developing countries

Perspectives from Developing
Countries

Susan D. Tamondong

Five indicators to observe the development of evaluation.

These indicators are:

1. national public **demand** for evaluation;
2. **supply** of evaluation as a specific service on an evaluationmarket;
3. institutionalization of **evaluation as a profession**;
4. offer of **professional university-based study courses** and trainings (capacity-building); and
5. **dissemination of evaluation findings** (number of evaluation studies and publications)

Some findings_1

- Although there are country-specific differences in the survey results, the common denominator is the need of developing countries **for more knowledge, skills and capacity-building in evaluation, at all levels, not only among the practitioners but also within the government sectors.** (p 59)
- By summarizing the results of the survey, the key factors that will influence the future of evaluation in developing countries are: (i) the changing **policies of governments** as a result of evaluation; (ii) the adoption of **evaluation culture**, which can be influenced by advocacy of civil society groups; and (iii) the presence of more **evaluation champions** within the government bureaucracies, which will reduce the donor-driven evaluations currently predominating in the developing world (p 60)

Some findings_2

- 1) The adoption of **evaluative thinking**, and building cultures that encourage evidence-seeking and questioning, **is still in its early stages** (Grino et al. 2013).
- 2) The **importance of transparency** and **the relevance of anticorruption** initiatives that emanate from evaluation studies are starting to gain more prominence and recognition in many countries.
- 3) **More acceptance of evaluation** is indeed having a positive impact on development.
- 4) Despite the increasing number of evaluation training courses provided by evaluation institutes and organizations, academic institutions and evaluation associations with the aim of building capacity in developing countries, there remains a lot to be done. **All developing countries, as evidenced by the survey, identify a need for more capacity-building and more evaluation training, regardless of their different stages of development.** (p 55)

Some findings_3

Among the common challenges identified are: (i) lack of technical expertise and financial resources; (ii) poor use of evaluation for policy-making; (iii) donor driven programs and underutilization of national experts; (iv) lack of independence; (v) lack of quality control; and (vi) corrupt practices. (p 60)

The lack of technical expertise in evaluation, which is common in all countries, is being addressed by promoting training and capacity-building. There are **not enough competent evaluators in-country**, and the national experts are underutilized, so the government engages consultants from the West. The **lack of financial resources** stems from the small budget allocated for evaluation, which is commonly viewed with suspicion.

Some findings_4

Interestingly, the focuses of the evaluations that have been done are mostly on poverty reduction and social sectors: **health, education and housing, social protection, agriculture and rural development**. The evaluations conducted also covered specific topics, such as women and work, child development, migration, governance and institutional reforms. However, there is no mention of finished evaluations in infrastructure sectors, except in water and sanitation.

Most of the evaluations were **done by universities, networks of evaluators, government evaluation units or donors themselves**. Some evaluations are published, as in the case of NGOs, for example the Asia Foundation. However, many of the results of evaluations are disseminated internally (within the government offices or agencies) or in limited circulation within the organization, while sensitive information is kept 'secret'. According to the survey there is now an increasing demand for public disclosure. (p 62)

Some findings_5

Perception of **private sector evaluation** is focused mostly on the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of investments and targeting reputational risks from the negative impact of projects.

On the other hand, **public sector evaluation** is seen as more focused on social development and the quality of the citizens' life. However, it is still perceived as looking for blame, rather than a learning process and a means to develop best practices.

NGOs play an important role in civil society – yet in evaluation practice, although they are useful, they are also perceived to adjust results to please the donors. This is not very encouraging. **Larger NGOs** are often more efficient than the smaller groups, as the latter run the risk of producing lower-quality work due to lack of technical expertise. One reason could be because few competent evaluators would accept low remunerations from **low-budget NGOs** with limited financial resources.

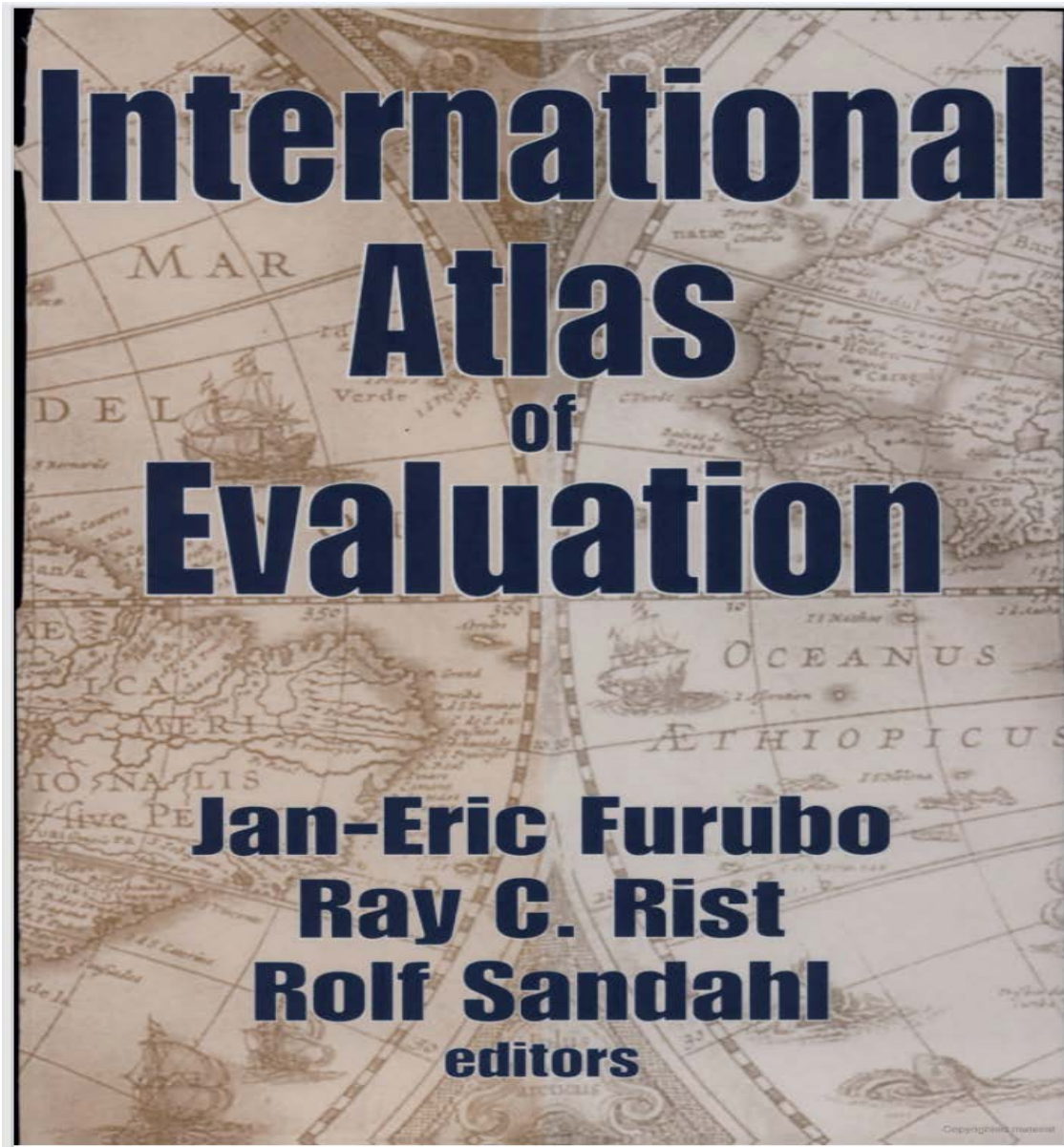
Future trends_1

The survey results, representing the view of experts from the Global South, predict that evaluation in general will go **in a positive direction** due to more demand for **accountability** and a greater need for transparency, and as a consequence of more knowledge and learning generated from capacity-building activities.

This is also a direct outcome from the initiatives of various evaluation networks supported by EvalPartners and others, and the **more active involvement of civil society** in evaluation processes.

Future trends_2

- Based on the perception survey of 15 developing countries, development evaluation can be made more relevant by increasing the country's political commitment, and raising evaluation awareness among policy-makers so that they can understand the value of evaluation and use evaluation results to make or change policies for the betterment of their countries. This awareness can be achieved through a process of communication, education, training and positive interaction between the evaluators and government. The involvement of civil society through evaluation networks and associations can influence potential 'champions' in government bureaucracy.
- Mentoring younger evaluators will also sustain the continuity of the associations' utility



- The International Atlas provided the first systematic comparative overview of evaluation cultures within a framework of selected indicators measuring nine dimensions. In 2001, evaluation cultures in 21 nations were described and analyzed.
- 19 OECD countries were then re-examined in 2015

Several reviews of (individual) national as well as sectorial evaluation cultures have been carried out since 2001. It is difficult to fully grasp a national evaluation culture. There is no single way of measuring it and changes in critical dimensions in several institutions need to be tracked. Furubo et al. (2002) refer to the following nine indicators:

- I. evaluation takes place in many policy domains;
- II. there should be a supply of evaluators specializing in different disciplines;
- III. discussions and debates fuel a national discourse regarding evaluation;
- IV. a national evaluation society exists;
- V. institutional arrangements in the government for conducting evaluations and disseminating their results exist;
- VI. institutional arrangements in Parliament for conducting and disseminating evaluations exist;
- VII. pluralism exists within each policy domain;
- VIII. evaluation activities occur within the supreme audit institution; and
- IX. evaluations do not just focus on inputs/outputs, but also on outcomes.

I. Evaluation takes place in many policy domains

There are frequent evaluation activities within **various policy** fields.

0: If evaluation activities take place only in a very **limited part** of the public sphere, perhaps in only one policy domain or only in relation to one or two programs or in relation to externally funded programs (e.g. EU or World Bank funded programs), we regard evaluation as an isolated activity, and the country will get a score of 0.

1: A score of 1 shall be given to countries where evaluation activities are clearly frequent, but where they are **not regarded as an integrated part** of the whole public sector.

2: To get a score of 2, evaluation activities must be taking place in **most** of the public sector.

II. Supply of domestic evaluators from different disciplines

There is a supply of evaluators from **different academic disciplines who have mastered different evaluation methods** and who conduct and provide advice over evaluations. This criterion is also intended to grasp the diffusion and pluralism of evaluation praxis in a country.

- 0: Countries where there exist perhaps only a handful of institutions conducting evaluations with a rather monolithic perspective get a score of 0.
- 1: Countries somewhere in-between these two positions receive a score of 1.
- 2: Countries with a flourishing supply of evaluators in which evaluative problems are seen from different perspectives, and with evaluators from different disciplines specializing in different methods, will receive a score of 2.

III. National discourse concerning evaluation

There is a **national discourse concerning evaluation** in which more general discussions are adjusted to the specific national environment.

0: Countries where the discussion is totally based on 'imported goods' get a score of 0.

1: The countries in between get a score of 1.

2: A score of 2 will be given to countries in which it is obvious that discussions about questions such as organizational structures, systems for training evaluators, evaluation utilization as well as potential adverse effects result from the country's own national experience and preconditions.

IV. Professional organizations

Evaluators have their own societies, networks or frequent attendance at meetings of international societies and at least some discussion concerning evaluation standards or ethics.

0: A score of 0 is reserved for countries with only ad hoc meetings.

1: Countries without societies but where meetings are held on a more or less regular basis receive a score of 1.

2: Countries that have networks or societies for evaluators get a score of 2.

V. Degree of institutionalization – Government

Institutional arrangements in the conducting evaluations and disseminating their results to decision makers.

In several countries, a large number of evaluations are conducted, but their results seem to reach decision makers more **by chance** than anything else. This criterion attempts to take into consideration permanent arrangements or systems whereby evaluation initiatives are commissioned to different evaluators and, at the same time, arrangements are developed to ensure that the evaluations conducted are put to suitable use. This is a form of **guarantee that utilization** – at least in formal terms – will take place.

0: Countries lacking such arrangements get a score of 0.

1: A score of 1 is an ‘in-between-value.’

2: Countries with well-developed structures and processes for conducting and disseminating evaluations get a score of 2.

VI. Degree of institutionalization – Parliament

Institutional arrangements are present in parliament for conducting evaluations and disseminating them to decision makers.

This criterion tries to cover the same kind of arrangements as criterion V, but this time at the **parliamentary level**. The reason for having the same criterion for parliament is that we find it more likely that different political groups will be involved and perhaps other kind of evaluative questions will be raised if the initiative comes from the parliamentary sphere.

0: Countries lacking such arrangements get a score of 0.

1: A score of 1 is an ‘in-between-value’.

2: Countries with well-developed institutionalization for conducting and disseminating evaluations get a score of 2.

VII. Pluralism of institutions or evaluators performing evaluations within each policy domain

An element of pluralism exists, that is, within each policy domain there are different people or agencies commissioning and performing evaluations. This criterion is obviously intended to capture the degree of pluralism.

0: A score of 0 is given to countries with a very monolithic structure.

1: A score of 1 is for countries in the middle.

2: A score of 2 is given to countries with a high ranking.

VIII. Evaluation within the Supreme Audit Institution

The existence of evaluation activities within the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) can be of different kinds. The SAI might conduct evaluation activities themselves (e.g. Performance/Value for Money Audits) or look at conditions for undertaking evaluations within the public sector or even carry out different forms of meta evaluation.

0: Where evaluation is absent, the score shall be 0.

1: A country which has evaluative activities within the SAI, but not to the same extent, or to countries which have only recently brought evaluation into the activities of their SAI, gets a score of 1.

2: A score of 2 shall characterize countries in which evaluation plays an important part in fulfilling the activities of the SAI.

IX. Proportion of impact and outcome evaluations in relation to output and process evaluations

The evaluations conducted should not just be focused on the relation between inputs/outputs or technical production. Some public sector evaluations must show **program or policy outcomes** as their object and raise such questions as whether the public interventions actually had impacts on the problems they were intended to solve.

0: A score of 0 is given to countries that seem to concentrate too heavily on input/output measurements or on the production process itself.

1: A score of 1 is given to countries in between.

2: A score of 2 is given to countries with a very pluralistic set of activities in this respect.

Findings

- High degree of maturity ($n = 15$): Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States;
- Medium degree of maturity ($n = 4$): Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Spain;
- Low degree of maturity ($n = 0$).

Original research

Open Access



State and use of monitoring and evaluation systems in national and provincial departments

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Abstract

Since 2009, South Africa has seen a major shift in emphasis concerning monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. This shift was partially stimulated by the South African government being faced with a number of pressures, key amongst which were persistent poverty and inequality and widespread service delivery protests. These pressures resulted in a greater willingness by government to address the poor quality of public services, and other governance problems that needed a greater focus on M&E to address these challenges. This led to the establishment of the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in early 2010. A comprehensive survey on the state and use of M&E systems in national and provincial government was conducted by the DPME as an attempt to understand the M&E landscape since 1994. The results were used to make informed policy and programme decisions. This paper outlines the findings of the survey.

The survey on the state and use of M&E systems was conducted with 96 national and provincial departments to provide a descriptive baseline on the underlying components of an M&E system.

The survey was administered through an electronic-based questionnaire that encompassed the following four components:

- Enabling institutional environment.
- Indicators and information planning.
- Reporting.
- Link between policy and planning and use of M&E information

Some findings_1: Enabling institutional environment

Organisation of monitoring and evaluation

- The majority of departments (89%) have a **dedicated unit for M&E** that is staffed by senior officials who are either the director (D), chief director (CD) or deputy director general (DDG).

Staffing of dedicated units

- A third of departments (34%) reported that all allocated posts were filled at the time. Twenty-one per cent indicated a vacancy rate of between 41% and 60%, and **39% had a vacancy rate of 41% to 80%**, which is high. In essence, this means that about half of all dedicated M&E units had not filled their vacancies (which would impact on their ability to perform at optimum).
- **Dedicated budget allocations**

Sixty per cent or more of departments did not have a dedicated budget for research or evaluations

Some findings_2

Roles and responsibilities

- Almost all (between 93% and 97%) departments noted that M&E is regarded as a responsibility of line managers. However, it is also noted that this responsibility is not adequately formalised, and that in under half of all departments, **the line managers lack key knowledge, skills or understanding required to fulfil the expected role.**

Integration of systems

- **Policy development, planning, budgeting and reporting:** Most departments reported full integration of M&E with reporting (72%) and planning (61%). However, only 26% reported this for policy development and even fewer (20%) for budgeting. **Nearly half of the respondents (46%) regarded integration with policy development as either non-existent (22%) or very limited (24%).**

This also suggests that whilst line managers are expected to play an active role in M&E and in using M&E information for decision-making, in almost all departments the responsibility may well be focused on **planning, output monitoring and reporting.**

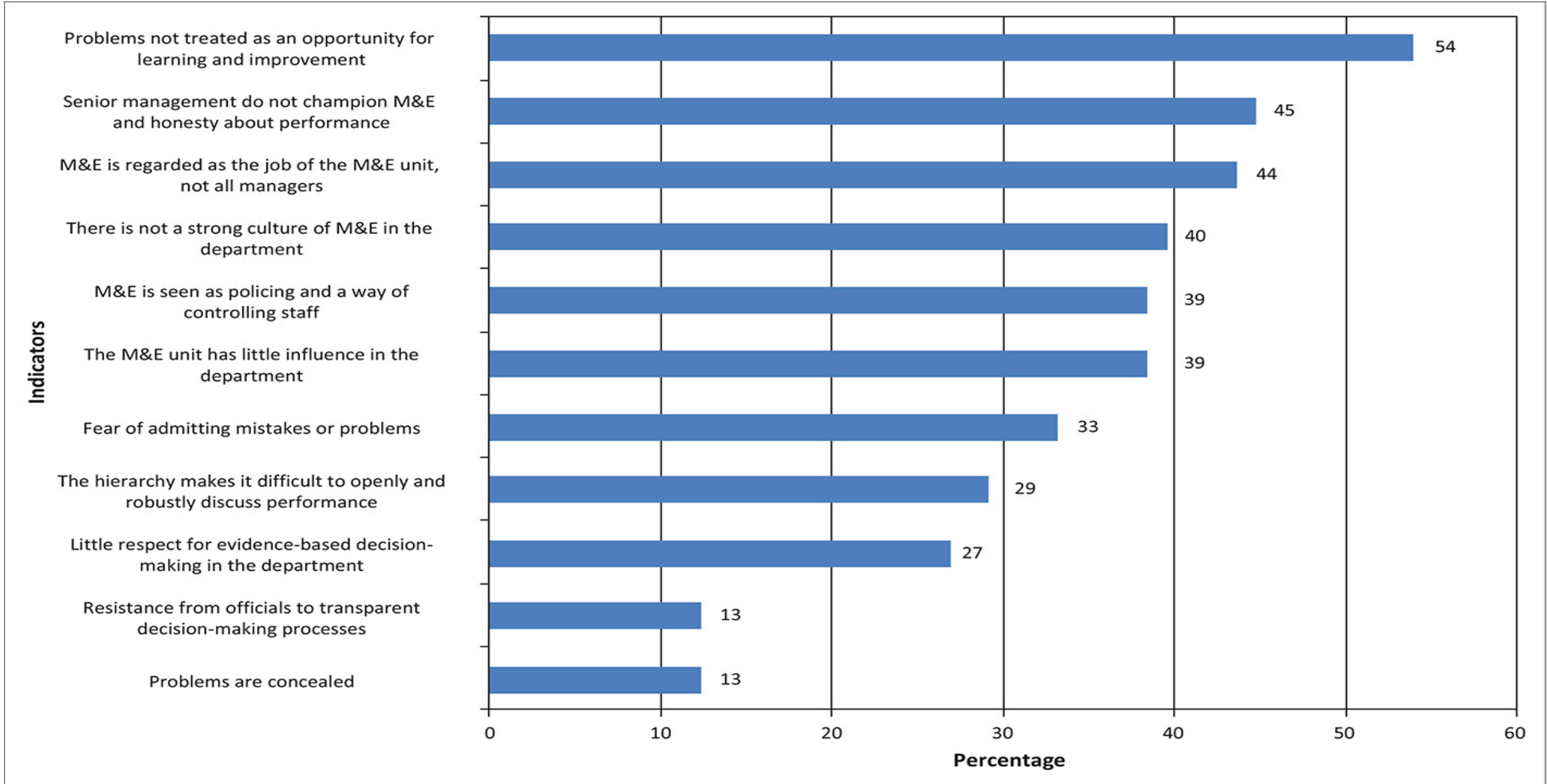


FIGURE 3: Distribution of responses on culture or values-related barriers.

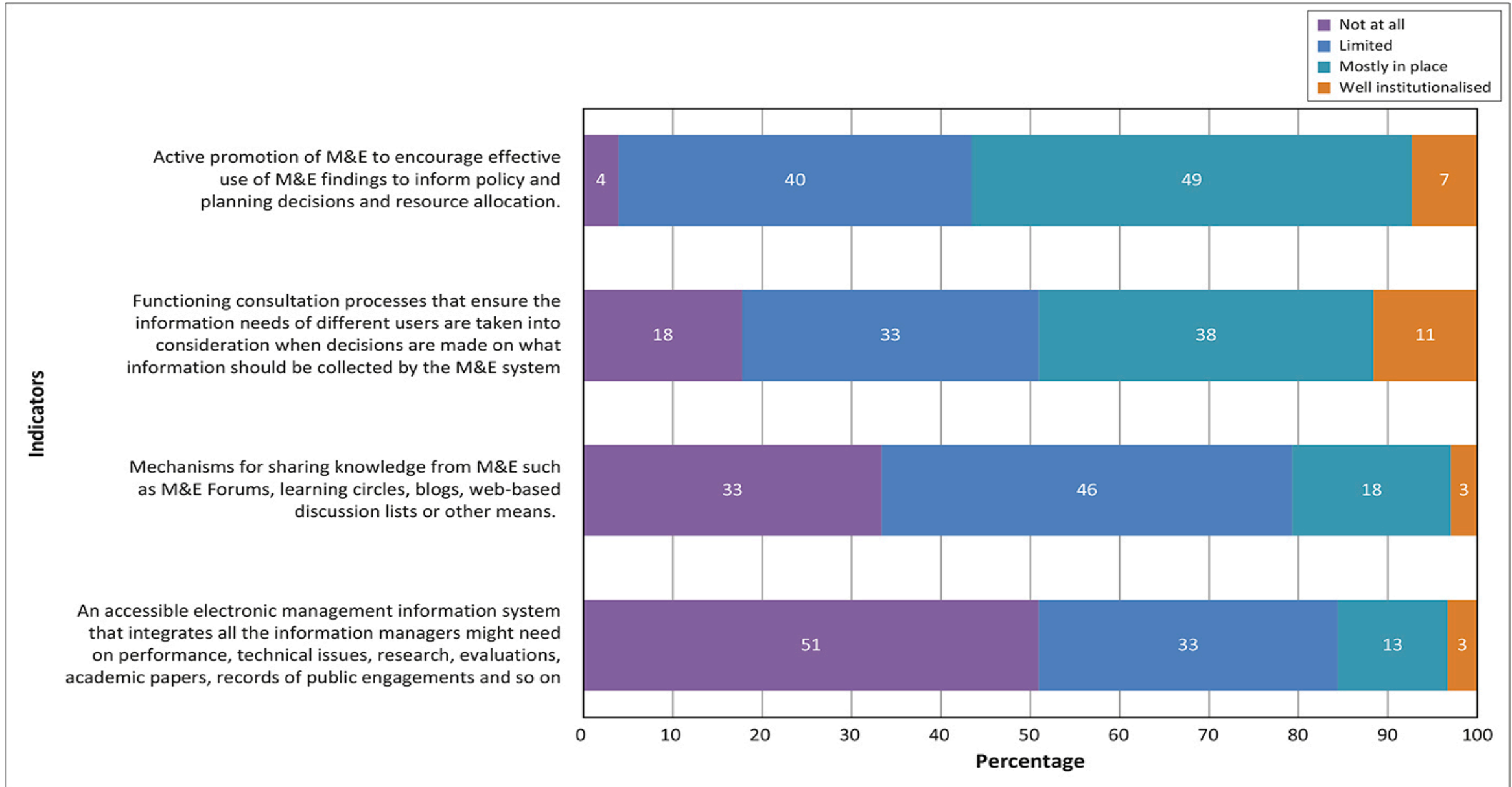


FIGURE 4: Distribution of responses on extent to which departments have institutionalised capacity in a number of areas.

EvalAgenda



Four essential dimensions of the evaluation system make up the core of EvalAgenda2020.

These are:

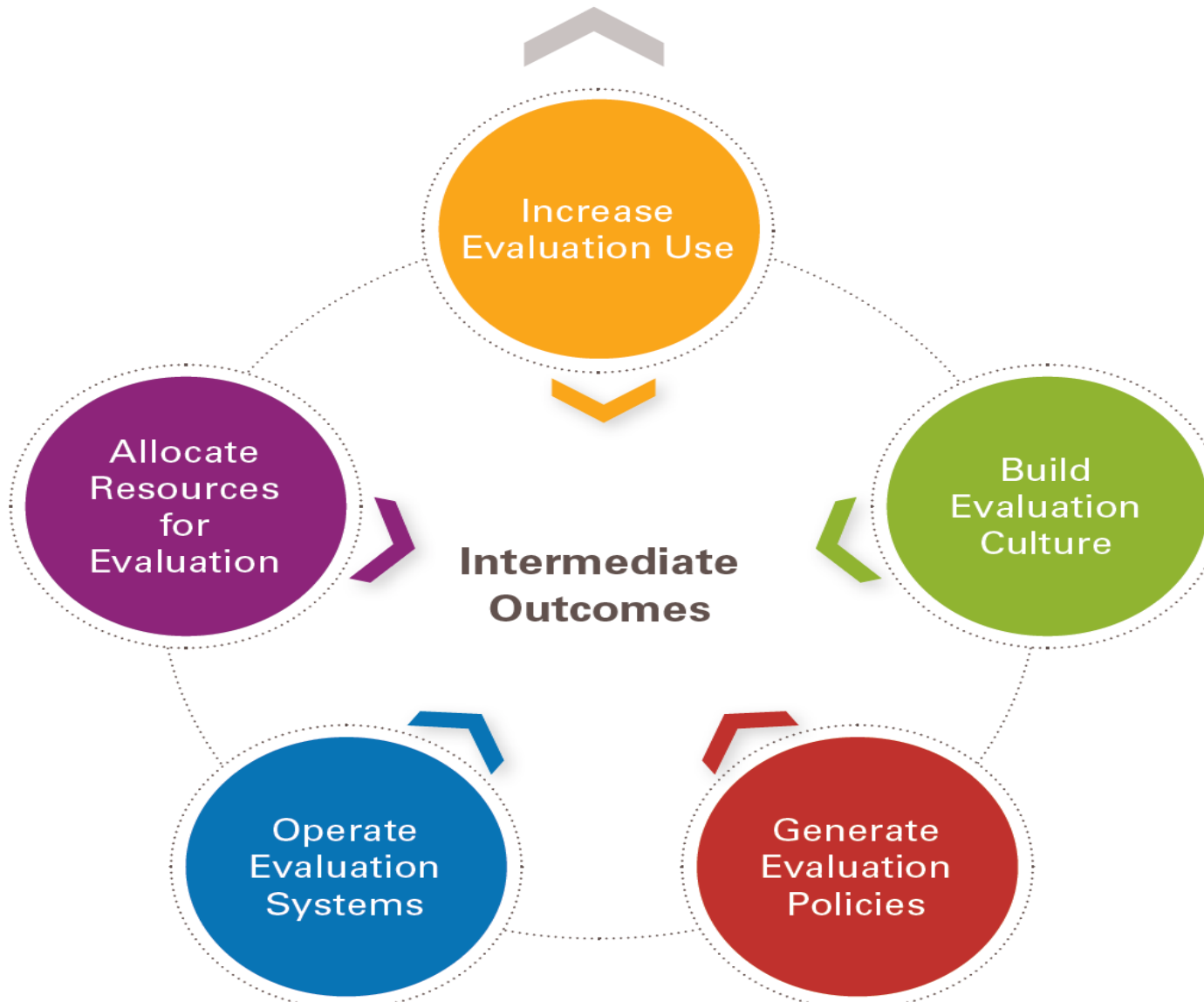
- (1) the **enabling environment** for evaluation,
- (2) **institutional** capacities,
- (3) **individual** capacities for evaluation and
- (4) **inter-linkages** among these first three dimensions.

Our vision of a strong **enabling environment** is that:

- All sectors of society *understand* and *appreciate* the value of evaluation
- Evaluation is explicitly required or encouraged in national evaluation *policies* and other *governance and regulatory instruments*
- Sufficient *resources* are allocated for evaluation, at all levels
- Credible, accessible *data systems* and repositories for evaluation findings are readily available
- Stakeholders are eager to *receive* and *utilize* evaluation information
- Evaluation receives due recognition as a profession
- The ownership of public sector evaluations rests with national governments based on their distinctive needs and priorities and with full participation of the civil society and the private sector

AIM:

Global, national and local society and decision makers understand, appreciate and use evaluation to create transparent and accountable processes that support learning and achieve positive outcomes for all.



Our vision of strong **institutional capacities** is that:

- A sufficient number of relevant institutions, including but not limited to Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation (VOPEs); government agencies, Civil Society organizations (CSOs), academia and institutions that generate and share relevant data exist to develop and support evaluators and evaluation
- These institutions are capable of appreciating and facilitating quality evaluations
- These institutions are skilled at collaborating with other relevant and involved institutions
- These institutions are able to resource quality data generation and evaluations as required, make information readily accessible and are ready to follow-up on evaluation findings and recommendations
- These institutions are able to continually evolve and develop as the evaluation field advances
- Academic institutions have the capacity to carry out evaluation research and run professional courses in evaluation



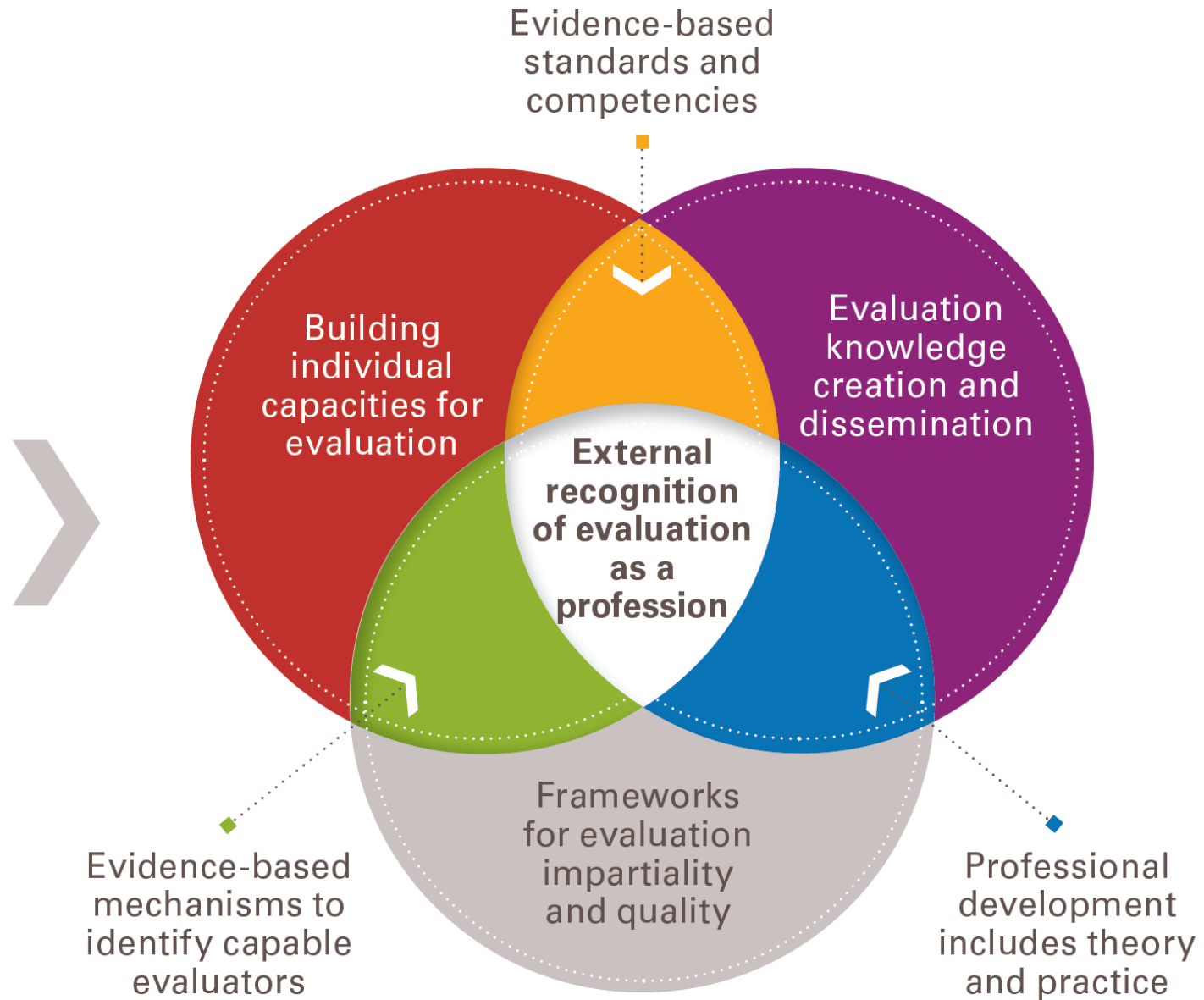
5 Domains of Strengthening Institutional Capacities

Our vision of strong **individual capabilities for evaluation** is that:

- Developing individual capacity for evaluation will be relevant not only to evaluators, but also to commissioners and users of evaluation
- Commissioners and users of evaluation will have a sound understanding of the value of evaluation, processes for conducting high quality, impartial evaluations; and more commitment to using evaluation findings and recommendations
- Sufficient *numbers* of qualified evaluators, drawn from a diversity of relevant disciplines, are available to conduct *high quality* evaluations in all countries and all subject areas
- These evaluators have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to make appropriate use of generally accepted evaluation *principles, theories, methods and approaches*
- Evaluators have integrated the **values** discussed above and are *culturally sensitive*
- Evaluators continually *learn* and improve their capabilities

AIM:

Evaluators and commissioners of evaluation are capable of planning and implementing high quality evaluations that are appropriate for the use of evaluation for policies, programs, projects or interventions and result in evaluations that make a difference for citizens.



Our vision of strong **inter-linkages** among these first three dimensions is that:

- Governments, parliamentarians, VOPEs, the United Nations, foundations, civil society, private sector and other interested groups dedicate resources to joint ventures in the conduct of evaluations, in innovation in the field of evaluation and evaluation capacity building
- A common set of terms exists in all languages to disseminate and share evaluation knowledge
- Multiple partners in evaluation regularly attend national and international learning opportunities
- The “No one left behind” principle stated in the SDGs is embedded as a key value that goes across three building blocks of evaluation system – enabling environment, institutional capacities and individual capacities for evaluation

In order to do this we propose an alliance

The proposed alliance will seek to contribute to developing a mature, evidence-led, inclusive country evaluation system in which:

- There is an ongoing national conversation regarding evaluation and its potential contribution to the development of SA
- The national evaluation association is strengthened
- There is a supply of evaluators specialising in different disciplines and approaches
- Evaluations are of an acceptable standard and are credible
- Findings are used