

Republic of Rwanda



Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning  
(MINECOFIN)

# National Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Guidelines

— 2021 —

**Abridged Version**



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# Foreword

Rwanda has adapted an ambitious target to become an upper middle-income country by 2035 and high-income status by 2050 characterized by better livelihood for its people. This will be implemented through transformational policies, programs, and projects well designed and implemented through medium-term development strategies such as the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) and long term strategies i.e. Vision 2050.

The National Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Guidelines (NMEL) serves as an important tool to strengthen Result Based Monitoring Evaluation system in Rwanda. National Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plays an important role in tracking progress and facilitating decision making by providing credible and useful information, enabling the integration of lessons learned into planning and decision making processes for the strongest possible NST1 implementation.

NMEL will help to continuously rock the different interventions during the development journey by ensuring inclusiveness, accountability, efficient use of public resources and transparency in reporting by identifying what works and what doesn't in policy design, implementation and investment associated.

Rwanda has achieved substantial progress and an effective M&E system which will continuously enable improved environment to drive impactful results. As the guidelines highlight, they will enhance growing systems required to implement envisioned targets and development plans.

The development of the NMEL guidelines was a result of extensive consultations between M&E practitioners in local and central government, independent evaluators, and other international organizations. They lay a foundation for M&E practices in public entities and in other partners' interventions related to the development in Rwanda such as NGOs and private sector.

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# About Guidelines

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning has a key role to play in the successful implementation of policies, programs and projects which constitute the backbone of national development. An effective monitoring and evaluation system can positively help to obtain data and information required for the formulation and implementation of policies, programs and projects. It can also enable us to ascertain whether or to what extent, the economy is geared towards the achievement of a set of national goals by providing objective information.

The purpose of developing the abridged version of NMEL guidelines is to provide a brief snapshot of the monitoring, evaluation and learning context for easier distribution to M&E practitioners working in MDAs and NGOs. The M&E practitioners wanting to read more can refer to NMEL guidelines detailed version uploaded on the MINECOFIN website. The information in the abridged version of the guidelines highlights the purpose, process and periodicity of each monitoring, evaluation and learning milestone and its related deliverables. The abridged version of NMEL guidelines entails three sections:

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**Part A:** defines basic concepts of monitoring and evaluation, definition of monitoring, purpose, monitoring principles, planning indicators and targets and reporting procedures for projects.

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**Part B:** defines evaluation, when to evaluate, evaluation principles, ethics, quality and standards, categories and approach of conducting evaluation, institutionalising evaluation culture and steps for policy makers and institutions in order to facilitate sound evaluation of their interventions.

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**Part C:** defines learning and demonstrates the approach, standards and methodology used to develop and implement learning frameworks in an institution and within projects.

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The completion of the guidelines was made possible through the collective efforts of M&E Practitioners from different public institutions, independent evaluation networks, research and evaluation institutions; NDPR within MINECOFIN and support from other development partners who participated in the process and provided valuable feedback in the development of guidelines.



# List of Acronyms

<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisations
<b>CBM</b>	Chief Budget Manager
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>GoR</b>	Government of Rwanda
<b>IPAR</b>	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research-Rwanda
<b>IFMIS</b>	Integrated Financial Management Information System
<b>LODA</b>	Local Administrative Development Agency
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
<b>MDAs</b>	Ministries, Districts and Agencies
<b>MINECOFIN</b>	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
<b>MEIS</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation Information System
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>NISR</b>	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
<b>NMEL</b>	National Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
<b>NDPR</b>	National Development Planning and Research Directorate
<b>NST</b>	National Strategy for Transformation
<b>PME</b>	Planning Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>PIC</b>	Public Investment Committee
<b>RMEO</b>	Rwanda Monitoring Evaluation Organisation
<b>SMARTER</b>	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound, Explainable and Relative

# Part A

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## MONITORING GUIDELINES

The present chapter provides an introduction to monitoring and evaluation tools (section 1). It explains tools to be used for monitoring and evaluation planning at the level of the institutions. Furthermore, it defines the monitoring concepts and explains their use (section 2), as well as monitoring and reporting procedures to be followed by institutions (section 3). These sections provide a basic understanding of how monitoring works and contributes to achieving the objectives of projects, programs and policies if followed scrupulously.

# 1. Basic concepts in monitoring and evaluation

## 1.1 Results chain

The results chain consists of a series of expected achievements or positive changes, linked by causality (Fig.1). It contains five logically connected elements explained below:

- Inputs - are resources used to carry out activities.
- Activities - are actions carried out to achieve goals.
- Outputs- are results that emerge from activities.
- Outcomes - are results of outputs and form the second level of results.

**Figure 1: Results Chain**

RESULT CHAIN	
INPUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The financial human, and material resources used for the development intervention</li><li>➤ E.g In any project, inputs would include things like human resource, finances in the form of money, machinery such as vehicles, equipment.</li></ul>
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ They are the actions associated with delivering project goals</li><li>➤ In other words, activities are what the personnel or employees do in order to achieve the aims of the project.</li></ul>
OUTPUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Are the first level of results associated with the project.</li><li>➤ They are usually what the project has achieved in the short term.</li><li>➤ An easy way to think about outputs is to quantify the project activities that have a direct link on the project goal.</li></ul>
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Are the second level of results associated with a project</li><li>➤ Refers to the medium term consequences of the project</li><li>➤ Outcomes usually relate to the project goal or aim.</li></ul>
IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Are the third level of project results, and is the long term consequence of a project.</li><li>➤ E.g. Reduction in Poverty rates, Reduction in child mortality rates.</li></ul>

- Impact- is the consequence of the project, policy or program.

## 1.2 Planning for results

The Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) is composed of two stages used in project identification and formulation: **1. Analysis stage** & **2. Planning stage**. These two phases are carried out progressively during the identification and formulation of the projects to ensure the quality of design and therefore its implementation as well as its ex-post evaluation. The two main stages of the LFA can be summarised in the table below:

Analysis Phase	Planning Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Stakeholder analysis</b> - identifying &amp; characterising potential major stakeholders; assessing their capacity,</li> <li>▶ <b>Problem Analysis</b> - consists of identifying key problems, constraints &amp; opportunities; determining cause &amp; effect relationships,</li> <li>▶ <b>Objective analysis</b> - or solutions Tree consists in developing solutions from the identified problems; identifying means to end relationships.</li> <li>▶ <b>Strategy analysis</b> - identifying different strategies to achieve solutions; selecting most appropriate strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Developing Logical Framework matrix</b> - defining project structure, testing its internal logic &amp; risks, formulating measurable indicators of success</li> <li>▶ <b>Activity scheduling</b> - determining the sequence and dependency of activities; estimating their duration, and assigning responsibility</li> <li>▶ <b>Resource scheduling</b> - or "Budgeting". From the activity schedule, developing input schedules and a budget.</li> </ul>

The **Analysis Stage** should be carried out as an iterative learning process, rather than as a simple set of linear 'steps'. For example, while stakeholder analysis must be carried out early in the process, it must be reviewed and refined as new questions are asked and new information comes to light. Prior to initiating a detailed analytical work with stakeholder groups, it is important that those involved in the identification or formulation/preparation of projects or programs

are sufficiently aware of the policy, sector and institutional context within which they are undertaking their work. In general, it should not be the work of project planning team only to undertake 'new' analysis of development/sector policies or the broader institutional framework. Rather they should access existing information and then work to ensure that the development of the project idea takes account of these elements of the operating environment.

In the **Planning Stage**, the results of the analysis are transcribed into a practical operational plan ready to be implemented. It is the stage where the project is technically designed. This stage is again an iterative process, as it may be necessary to review and revise the scope of project and program activities and expected results once the resource implications and budget become clearer.

### 1.3 Logical framework

The logical framework (log-frame) is the basis for M&E work, which occurs at the design phase of any policy, program or project. A log frame helps to think through and analyse the results chain consisting of Goal (intended Impact), Outcomes, Outputs, Activities and Inputs in a systematic and logical manner.

A standard log frame generally consists of a 4 by 4 matrix, with a hierarchy of objectives from Activities, Outputs, Purpose to Goal (see Table 1: Template on Log Frame).

The Log frame is a living document, which should be consulted and altered throughout the intervention's life cycle. Projects which are very big; should use nested log frames, where outputs of the overall log frame become the purpose of a subsector log frame.

- All projects' concept notes submitted to PIC should include a logical framework.
- MDAs make sure that new programs and projects contain a logical framework.

**Table 1: Template on LogFrame**

Hierarchy of Objectives	Key Performance Indicators		Means of Verification	Critical Assumptions
Impact	Impact indicators			
The broader development impact to which the sector interventions contribute – at a national and sectoral level.	Measures the extent to which a sustainable contribution to the goal has been made, for example improving children’s nutritional status, reducing child morbidity and mortality.		Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it.	
Outcome	Outcome indicators			From outcome to impact
The specific and immediate impact of the strategic interventions.	Conditions achieved indicating that the purpose- level objectives have been achieved, generally referring to <i>access to</i> or <i>satisfaction with</i> services provided.		Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it.	Assumptions concerning the purpose/ goal linkage.
Outputs	Output indicators			From Program to outcome
The direct physical results of the plan, within the direct control of the implementing agency. All sub-programs will contribute to this.	Conditions achieved indicating that the output objectives have been achieved, for example, teachers employed, fertiliser provided, health workers trained.		Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it.	Assumptions concerning the program/ purpose linkage.
Activities	Input indicators	Implementation timeframe	Responsibility	Assumptions
The tasks carried out to implement the project and deliver the identified outputs.	Refers to the human, financial resources, etc. for implementing a strategy.	Indication of when activities will be undertaken.	Who is responsible for undertaking the activity?	Assumptions concerning the activity/ output linkage.

## 1.4 Monitoring and Evaluation plan

The Monitoring and Evaluation plan contributes to the effectiveness of the policy, program and project by assuring that comparable data will be collected on a regular and timely basis. The minimum requirements for an M&E plan include SMARTER indicators for implementation and results, baseline data for the policy, program and projects, as well as identified reviews and evaluation to be undertaken (check examples in detailed version).

- All policies, projects and programs shall include an M&E plan which should be built from the logical framework.
- The M&E plan is to be reviewed from time to time to ensure it remains relevant.
- At national level, NPPMD to prepare a rolling M&E plan after MDAs submit their plans (maximum 5 years and review it at least every 2years)

## 1.5 Planning of indicators and targets

An **indicator** is a unit of measurement that helps to determine what progress is being made towards the achievement of an intended result (objective). M&E practitioners in consultation with program heads should form a team for the development of indicators with support from the subject matter specialists.

A series of short workshops or consultations are best suited for the task, because indicators are likely to undergo several iterations before they are ready. The points for consideration during the formation of indicators are mentioned below:

- Limit the number of indicators to two or three per output preferably.
- Include at least one qualitative indicator per outcome statement.
- Think SMARTER.
- M&E practitioner should establish a baseline for tracking indicators.
- Indicators are to be gender-sensitive, wherever possible.

**Targets:** are the level of achievement as measured by outcome or output indicators during a specific time period. Project/program targets refer to a set of fixed goals or objectives that determine how a given project is expected to be done and what result or effect is supposed to be produced from its interventions. It is important for the institution to set for itself appropriate targets which can in principle be achieved in line with resources available.

## 1.6 Planning Tools

Different planning tools can be used by institutions during the planning process to provide a comprehensive view of the results chain and other factors such as assumptions and risks. Some of the tools that can be used by MDAs include Scenario Planning, SWOT and PESTEL analysis, Theory of Change, Log frame and activity-based costing.

- **Scenario planning:** can be used for medium to long-term planning or in preparation for a new planning cycle and is often appropriate for developing a situational or diagnostic analysis.
- **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) & PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal):** are used to identify key external and internal factors that must be taken into consideration during a situational analysis process.
- **Activity-based costing:** involves tracking resource use and costing final outputs. MDAs can use activity-based costing during operational planning.
- **Theory of Change:** process requires stakeholders to be precise about the change they want to achieve and why change is expected to happen. Once the results chain has been developed, the impact and outcomes should be reflected in the Strategic Plan, the outputs reflected in the performance review of strategic plan makers, operational staff, beneficiaries, and the general public.



## 2. Monitoring Perspectives

### 2.1 Definition and purpose of monitoring

Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators for an ongoing development intervention, to provide management and stakeholders with the extent of progress and level of achievement of objectives and, in the use of allocated funds.

The role of monitoring is to verify whether policies', programs' and projects' activities are being implemented on time and on budget, and whether or not the intended outputs are being achieved in accordance with the plan.

### 2.2 Why to do monitoring?

Monitoring gives information on where a policy, program or project is at any given time (or over time) relative to respective targets and outcomes. At the project level, monitoring will focus on outputs and progress toward achieving the desired objectives. At the program level, monitoring will focus on assessing the effects of the various interventions against set objectives and at the policy level, monitoring will focus on assessing the effects of the various interventions against set objectives.

The common elements of doing monitoring are, monitoring of indicators, project or follow-up visits, meetings on policy, program or project progress and progress reports and reviews.

### 2.3 Principles of monitoring

- ▶ **Managing for results:** Monitoring should focus on measuring the results of public policies, programs and projects.
- ▶ **Credibility:** Monitoring reports shall reflect consistency and dependability in data, findings, judgments and lessons learned.
- ▶ **Utility:** Monitoring must serve the information needs of the intended users.

- **Transparency.** Involves a clear communication with institutions on scope of monitoring missions and activities.
- **Disclosure.** The lessons from monitoring should be disseminated to policy makers, operational staff, beneficiaries, and the general public.
- **SMARTER indicators:** The institutions should develop SMARTER monitoring indicators denoted by the acronym (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, explainable and relative)

### 3. Institutionalising monitoring and reporting procedures

Monitoring and reporting on financial and non-financial performances are important for measuring the performance of policies, programs and projects. Financial information is critical in determining the costs and efficiencies of policy, program and projects objectives and activities while non-financial information is important in assessing progress towards predetermined service delivery or performance targets.

#### 3.1. Timelines for reporting

##### 3.1.1 Projects monitoring reports

- Monthly reporting:** M&E staff should submit quality & updated monthly progress reports on all projects implemented by their organisation to their Senior Managers for internal decision-making purposes. Public institutions need to organise at least one monthly meeting to discuss on the progress of their projects and take decisions or provide guidance (especially on those with challenges) to allow smooth running of their activities.

At district level this is done through the District Project Management Committee. The minutes should be approved by the CBM & the Head of the institution. The minutes are to be circulated to concerned departments, agencies or stakeholders involved for further actions.

- ii. **Quarterly reporting:** compares achievements against the quarterly targets planned with details on best practices/strategies used, risks, and challenges if any. Progress on all projects be domestically or externally funded, off budget or on budget implemented by ministries and affiliated agencies should be reported by CBM through the National M&E System (IFMIS project module). The districts will continue to report on the progress of projects through LODA MEIS which is linked with IFMIS module. The quarterly project progress reports are required to be submitted by all institutions within 15 days after the end of a quarter to allow MINECOFIN to do quality assurance and further submit a consolidated report to Cabinet.
- iii. **Annual reporting:** should be detailed enough to provide projects' achievements against annual targets set in order to provide feedback to national processes such as medium-term planning and annual budget planning processes. CBMs of institutions are required to submit annual reports to MINECOFIN through IFMIS system. The reports submitted by public entities on annual basis are analysed and consolidated by MINECOFIN and submitted to Cabinet.
- iv. **Project Completion/Closure Report:** is part of the internal evaluation prepared by an institution, once a project reaches early operating maturity. The primary objective of a project closure report is to provide a complete picture of the successes and failures of a project. The project closure report should include all important project information that helps stakeholders, auditors, and future project managers to clearly understand what was accomplished during the project and how the work was completed. The IFMIS software can be assessed at: <https://smartifmis.minecofin.gov.rw/ifmis-home-ui/login.do>

**Note:** For quarterly, annual, and end of project reports, environmental and social safeguards planned should be monitored or assessed to check, if they are respected as planned.

### 3.1.2 Programs and Policies monitoring reports

- Each institution should submit progress reports of programs in hard copies on an annual basis addressed to the Minister of Finance **CC** to the Minister of State in charge of Development Planning; a soft copy is sent through email **CC**: to NPPMD: [ndpr@minecofin.gov.rw](mailto:ndpr@minecofin.gov.rw). Programs under Ministry of Infrastructure, like Infrastructure Policy Development, M&E-Transport Infra-

structure Development and Maintenance etc., should submit the program progress reports to the concerned as explained above.

- For development policy progress, implementing institution should submit reports on an annual basis or as required by MINECOFIN.

## 3.2. Rating project progress and performance

In order to track the performance of projects, a combination of five parameters, grouped into financial (annual spending, cumulative spending) and non-financial (physical progress, time consumed and quality assurance or sustainability) is used. The analysis is done on the basis of financial and non-financial information provided by an institution to calculate the rating based on five-point scale (1-5). The details are mentioned below (Table 2):

**Table 2: Rating methodology used in quarterly and annual reporting.**

#	Rating	Criteria	Description
1	Completed		Successfully completed and closed.
2	Good	75-100%	Successful delivery of the project on time and there are no major significant and or outstanding issues to threaten delivery.
3	Satisfactory	50%-74%	Successful delivery appears feasible but significant issues already exist which require management attention.
4	Low	Below 50%	Successful delivery of the project is in doubt. Urgent action is needed to address problems.
5	Reset	Continuous low performance (stalled) over the years	Successful delivery of the project appears to be unachievable. The project or program may need re-scoping and/or its overall viability reassessed. Here it is in case a project was stalled for a longer period.

**Reporting by Local Government (LODA):** The planning and budget cycle for local government follows the same pattern as the one at the Central level. LODA is under the supervision of the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and has been mandated to monitor and evaluate district projects and to report to MINECOFIN. LODA MEIS is used as the channel for reporting by districts. The reporting is done on a quarterly basis to MINECOFIN through detailed reports and raw data in excel (template submitted by NPPMD). The responsibility for the implementation of development projects in districts lies with LODA with the support of MINECOFIN.

### 3.3. Implementing monitoring in institutions

- The NPPMD within MINECOFIN is the central M&E coordination unit and acts as an integrator of M&E information and as the champion of sound M&E practices, norms and standards implemented by all MDAs.
- Counterparts from MDAs should collaborate and communicate regularly on projects' performance, risks and challenges, if any, to allow timely support where needed.
- Heads of public institutions/CBMs should ensure that the M&E office is operational and strengthened. Directors of Planning, Project managers and heads of department have a responsibility to facilitate M&E practitioners with information sharing and ensuring that M&E policies and guidelines are fully implemented.
- CBMs or Heads of public entities should monitor progress of key Government indicators related to wider government priorities (such as the NST1, Vision 2050) against targets; gaps should be addressed in their projects, programs and policies.
- Directors of PME and M&E practitioners in public institutions should use monitoring information to assess and review progress against institutional objectives and associated indicators.
- The institutions which are involved in service delivery should regularly monitor adherence to their service delivery standards.
- Indicator selection and design should involve program/project managers to enhance ownership of the data generated under policies, programs and projects. NPPMD/MINECOFIN can support where necessary.



### 3.4. Project monitoring field visits

The purpose of project monitoring field visits is to ensure that project activities are implemented as expected and according to plans. It normally involves meeting with the people running the project, the participants and observing the activities. At the end of a monitoring visit, it is important to prepare a report that describes findings. These reports will document any discrepancies between the plans and actual implementation, as well as actions to improve the performance by the project team.

**Figure 2: Template for Field visit report**

<b>Name of the Project:</b>
<b>Name of the Institution:</b>
<b>Name of Person who performed the visit:</b>
<b>Date of the visit:</b>
1) Please comment on progress towards the project's agreed targets and objectives. Please focus on the core objectives identified in the project proposal highlighting evidence (e.g. numbers, observations).
2) Were any issues, risks or problems identified? If so, please explain what these were.
3) What plans have been put in place to deal with these issues? Does the project need any assistance?
4) Please comment on the project's expenditure.
5) Please outline any key actions from the meeting to be followed up by project/program management team
6) Do you have any observations on the organisational structure and resources of the project?
7) Generally, did the visit go well (was it well organised, did you access all necessary information/materials, etc.)?
8) Is there anything else you would like to comment on or report? Do you have any comments on personal areas of interest from the project or things that you have learnt?

# Part B

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## EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Evaluation plays a critical role in the development and implementation of government policies, programs and projects, providing a systematic process of collecting credible data and using it to inform decisions on whether or not the policies, programs or projects are achieving their objectives and remain the best response. Evaluation findings should also be used to inform future policies, programs and projects' development in order to drive continuous improvement in the delivery of government programs and projects. This section entails subsections that provide a detailed understanding of the evaluation process.

## 4. Evaluation Guidelines

### 4.1. What is evaluation?

Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed policy, project or program, its design, implementation and results. The aim of evaluation is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of Relevance, Coherence, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability.

The main objective of an evaluation is to draw lessons from the strengths and weaknesses experienced in the implementation of policies, programs and projects so as to improve their design and implementation results in the future. Evaluation also includes accountability of officials and institutions involved in the process of management and the use of public resources with an impact on the welfare of Rwandan citizens.

### 4.2. Why evaluate?

- Improving performance.
- Ensure good governance and accountability.
- Generating knowledge.
- Evidence based decision-making.

### 4.3. How is evaluation linked with monitoring?

Monitoring is integral part of evaluation. The difference between monitoring and evaluation lies in the perspective that each takes in assessing performance in relation to a logical framework for an operation, policy, program or project. Monitoring is the day-to-day management task of collecting and reviewing information that reveals how an operation is proceeding and what aspects of it, if any, need adjustment. Evaluation is characterised by events (e.g. surveys, studies, missions) rather than day-to-day data collection. Results-oriented evaluation focuses on outcomes and impacts and builds on monitoring information.



## 4.4. When to evaluate

Evaluation plays a distinct role at all stages of the project cycle. The selected policies, programs, projects are subject to the entire cycle of evaluation starting from ex-ante evaluation and ending with ex-post evaluation. A decision to determine whether a policy, program or project ought to be evaluated and when an evaluation is scheduled should be included as a priority in the preparation of the institutions' rolling evaluation schedule. One rolling evaluation plan per institution with other planning documents for the next fiscal year should be submitted to MINECOFIN for expenditure review and budgeting.

The rolling evaluation plan will be consolidated at national level for a period of 3 to 5 years; it should be updated every year to which all entities need to contribute by submitting their evaluation plans to MINECOFIN.

An MDA proposing a new project/program for the evaluation cycle may do so by preparing/submitting a project specific evaluation plan to MINECOFIN. Internal approval processes from CBM or Head of Institution need to be taken into account before rolling evaluation plans are submitted to NDPR/MINECOFIN for Public Investment Committee (PIC) approval. PIC will approve evaluation requests made by sectors on annual basis; most should be part of project plans, which does not prevent other higher authorities to propose evaluation of projects, programs and policies for different reasons.

The PME department within a public institution should plan the evaluation of policies. Programs should follow the same procedure as projects, since they also follow the same planning procedures. For local government projects, the district, LODA or MINECOFIN may commission an evaluation. Development partners need to work with line ministries to conduct evaluations and concerned ministries will be accountable to coordinate and report to MINECOFIN as the central/national NMEL organ.

- One rolling evaluation plan per institution should be submitted to MINECOFIN for expenditure review.
- Requests for conducting evaluations of policy, programmes or projects are approved by PIC in consultation with Lead Ministries across all sectors.
- MINECOFIN will provide directions on timing, process, and format for the submission of proposals as part of the annual budget processes



## 4.5 Evaluation criteria and ethics

- I. **Evaluation Criteria:** is based on six OECD standards which are relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence.
- II. **Evaluation Ethics:** Evaluation of projects, policies and programs should be designed and conducted in such a way that it respects and protects the rights and welfare of participants. Institutions should put in place and implement their own ethics policies (for instance consent forms should be administered during data collection). No evaluation should be published without having gone through an ethical review and cleared by relevant bodies. The most common five ethics principles which are used internationally and applicable to M&E are mentioned below.

- **Systematic Inquiry:** Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries about whatever is being evaluated.
- **Competence:** Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.
- **Integrity/Honesty:** Evaluators ensure that honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process is observed.
- **Respect for People:** Evaluators respect the security, dignity and self-worth of the respondents, program participants, clients, and other stakeholders with whom they interact.
- **Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:** Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of interests and values that may be related to the general and public welfare.

- III. **Evaluation Principles:** Evaluations in public institutions in Rwanda are guided by evaluation standards which need to be applied while conducting evaluations within Rwanda or in collaboration with development partners for policies, programs or projects.

- Evaluation needs to be planned early during the design of policies, programs or projects.
- Evaluation to be appropriately resourced in order to be achieved within time and budget constraints.

- Stakeholders are to be identified and actively involved in the evaluation.
- Evaluation needs to be timely and strategic to influence decision making.
- Evaluation needs to be transparent and open.

## 5. Undertaking Evaluations

There are many types of evaluations and evaluation methods, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data. Evaluation design, method, and cost vary substantially depending on the type of question the evaluation is trying to answer.

### 5.1. Policy, Program and Project Evaluation

- I. **Policy evaluation:** The ex-ante and mid-term evaluations are among the evaluations to be conducted while evaluating a policy. The PME department/M&E practitioner within the public institution shall plan the ex-ante evaluation of a policy. A mid-term evaluation shall be conducted after a certain period from its decision-making to ascertain effects of a policy and to assess if there is a need for its revision, or to plan for the development of another policy.

The request to conduct an evaluation of a policy may come from different levels/areas (existing plans, citizens, MINECOFIN, PMO, Cabinet etc.). However, if the Head of an Institution/CBM feels that it is appropriate - taking into consideration of factors like strategic priority, implementation progress reports of a policy, etc., to review or improve the policy s/he can request for an evaluation. The NDPR of MINECOFIN needs to be consulted during development policy evaluations planning in order to get their inputs and mobilization of resources required. At the end findings should be submitted for lesson learned to be incorporated in future policies.

- II. **Project evaluation:** is undertaken according to the rolling evaluation schedule developed by each institution depending on the type of evaluation to be conducted for projects.
- III. **Program evaluation:** programs should follow the same evaluation pro-

cedures of projects since they have the same planning procedures. New programs need to be selected or approved by PIC for the evaluation cycle (and included in rolling evaluation plans). Evaluation of ongoing programs shall be planned using respective templates and included in rolling evaluation plans, which are submitted in the planning process and subject MINECOFIN review and PIC approval. MINECOFIN will provide directions on the timing, process, and format for the submission of evaluation proposals as part of annual planning and budget processes.

**Note:** Monitoring is conducted at all levels – national, sectoral and institutional (Ministries, districts, agencies), and will constitute collecting data and producing reports for decision making on the implementation of planned activities and results. Evaluation will be conducted at National (National development strategy), sector (SSP) and program or project level. Each of the medium term and annual planning documents shall include a result framework for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation. The results framework shall specify long term and short-term results expected to be achieved, together with key performance indicators for measuring these achievements and their targets.

NISR shall review and provide visa for evaluation covering big areas such as sectoral, district, province and national territory after reviewing the methodology and protocols required. It will also play a critical role in supporting Sectors or Institutions in defining the metadata of the indicators agreed upon, the frequency of data collection and quality assurance of the data among others.

## 5.2 Steps for conducting program, project and policy evaluation

Effective program, project or policy evaluation is a systematic way to improve by involving procedures that are useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate. The recommended framework is to guide M&E practitioners in conducting an evaluation. The framework comprises of steps (Fig.3) in evaluation practice and standards for effective evaluation. The second element of the framework is a set of standards for assessing the quality of evaluation activities, organized in four groups. The basic standards for evaluating a program/project/policy are as follows:

- i. **Engage stakeholders:** stakeholders must be part of the evaluation to ensure that their unique perspectives are understood. Getting them involved early on will help to get different opinions and establish common expectations. This helps to clarify goals and objectives of the program, project or policy you'll evaluate, so everyone understands its purpose.
- ii. **Describe the program, project or policy:** a program, project or policy description is a summary of the intervention being evaluated. It should explain what the program, project or policy is trying to accomplish and how it tries to bring about those changes.
- iii. **Focusing on evaluation design:** No single evaluation design applies across all evaluations. The design will depend on the evaluation context documented by the evaluation team, time constraints, existing information and the resources available.
- iv. **Gather credible evidence:** qualitative and quantitative data are the two main forms of data you may collect. Qualitative data captures experience, behaviour, opinion, value, feeling, knowledge, sensory response, or observable phenomena. Quantitative data refers to information that may be measured by numbers or tallies. The methods for collecting quantitative data include counting systems, surveys, and questionnaires among others.
- v. **Justify conclusions:** compare evaluation data with targets set for the program, project or policy, against standards established by your stakeholders or funders, or make comparisons with other programs, projects or policies.
- vi. **Ensure use and share lessons learned:** when you present your findings and recommendations, it is important to know the values, beliefs, and perceptions of your group; build on the group's background and build on common ground; and state the underlying purpose for your recommendations before you get to the details.



Figure 3: Steps for conducting policy, program, and project evaluation



The Standard to be followed for effective evaluation are as under:

- **Utility standards:** Evaluation processes and products should meet program/project/policy stakeholders' needs.
- **Feasibility standards:** Evaluations should be designed bearing in mind effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Propriety standards:** Evaluation should be embedded in what is proper, fair, legal, right and just.
- **Accuracy standards:** Evaluation should lead to valid conclusions to the extent that users can find them dependable and truthful as appropriate source of reference for decision making.

## 5.3 Managing an evaluation process

Evaluation planning within public institutions is an important part of program, policy or project design. Evaluation is a set of linked activities and the process for undertaking an evaluation follows twelve steps. These processes (Fig. 4) need to be followed while planning and implementing any type of evaluation.

*Figure 4: Steps for managing an evaluation process*



## 5.4. Categories of evaluation

There are many evaluation approaches that exist. There is no single approach which is best for all situations hence it depends upon the M&E system used by countries. Evaluation is classified into four types conducted at different stages during the project cycle: ex-ante evaluation (quality at entry evaluation), mid-term evaluation, final or terminal evaluation and ex-post evaluation.

Evaluation Type	Description	Timings
Ex-ante Evaluation	This is preparatory research to ascertain the current situation prior to starting any policy, program or project often called a <b>baseline</b> and to inform intervention design.	Prior to design or Planning.
Mid-term Evaluation	For policy, program, projects over 24 months in length, some type of mid-term assessment, evaluation, or review should be conducted. A mid-term evaluation may allow for a reorientation of a program, project or policy.	During Implementation
Final Evaluation or Terminal Evaluation	A final/terminal evaluation assesses the achievement of the program, policy or project in relation to its set objectives at the end of the implementation period. A final evaluation should be conducted 3-6 months before the end of the program or project.	At completion
Ex-post or Summative Evaluation	The ex-post evaluation takes place after the completion of a program, project or policy. It provides evidence on the longer-term impact and sustainability of a program, project or policy.	After a certain period has passed since the completion.

There are other types of evaluations that may potentially be considered depending on the need of the program, policy or project. (a) Meta evaluation and (b) Impact evaluation.

**Meta-evaluation:** aggregates findings from a series of evaluations. The focus includes combining evaluation results, checking compliance with evaluation policy and good practices and assessing how well evaluations are disseminated and used for organizational learning.



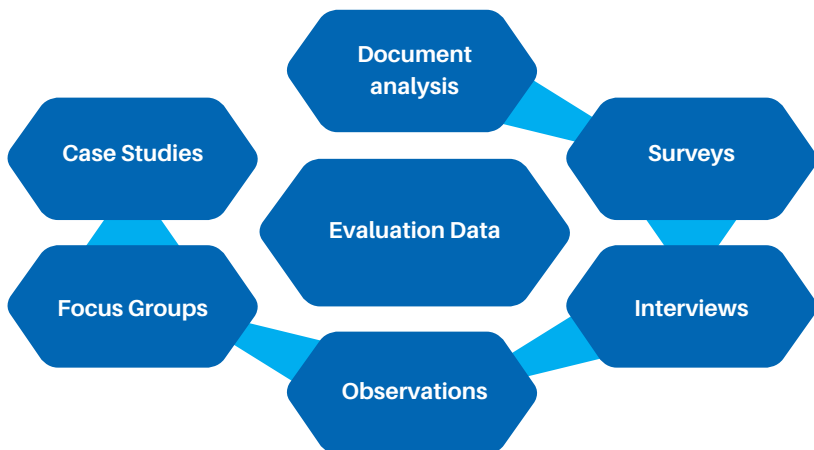
**Impact evaluations:** are usually undertaken after the intervention is completed but may also be done during implementation for a longer program, project or policy while the midterm evaluation is performed towards the middle of the period of implementation of the intervention. The impact evaluation tends to use experimental, quasi-experimental designs and non-experimental designs. The experimental design includes Randomized Control Trials (RCTs). Quasi-experimental design uses difference-in-difference and regression discontinuity. The non-experimental design relies on interpretation, observation or interactions such as realist and theory-driven approaches.

## 6. Collecting Evaluation data

### 6.1. Data collection methods

Data can be collected in many ways and no single way is the best way. Choosing the right method involves being clear about what is to be measured in an appropriate and meaningful way. There are a variety of data collection instruments or tools that can be developed and used with each collection method (see Fig. 5). The evaluation team needs to consider the following factors in data collection: (a) methodological rigour (b) cost-effectiveness and (c) validity, reliability and credibility for choosing data collection methods.

**Figure 5: Common data collection methods used in evaluation**



## 6.2. Sampling techniques for conducting evaluations

Sampling is the process of selecting units from a population of interest and then drawing conclusions about the larger population. The evaluator collects data from a subset of individuals and uses those observations to make inferences about the entire population. Sampling techniques are divided into two categories: (a) Probability and (b) Non-probability sampling. The points that need to be kept in mind while doing sampling is:

- Determine the population of interest who will be eligible for the program.
- Identify a sampling frame,
- Draw the desired number of units from the sampling frame using one of the available sampling methods.

## 6.3. Data analysis

The analysis of data should compare data from different sources and cross validate the information sources and critically assess the reliability and validity of data. All evaluations must be evidence based and must explicitly consider limitations affecting the analysis. Data analysis is always based on interpretation of the material drawn from various sources that might have unreliable elements. The analysis of quantitative data uses statistics that can be divided into 2 categories.

- **Descriptive statistics** is used to analyse census or non-random sample data by summarizing data collected from a sample of qualitative variable.
- **Inferential statistics** is used to analyse random sample data by predicting a range of population values for quantitative or qualitative variables.

## 7. Institutionalising evaluation in public institutions

### 7.1. Evaluation arrangements

Institutions should carry out evaluations by engaging internal or external parties as appropriate.

#### Criteria for conducting an evaluation internally

- ▶ Performance information indicating an unexpected result/quick management decision.
- ▶ Institution wishes to commission an evaluation using an internal resource.
- ▶ Inadequate funding for external evaluation, but internal capacity exists.
- ▶ Inadequate mechanisms available to procure an external evaluation on time, but internal capacity and availability exists.
- ▶ Capacity building, learning and practical experiences to staff in conducting evaluations.
- ▶ Promote a culture of learning.

The criteria for conducting external evaluation is as under:

#### Criteria for conducting an evaluation externally

- ▶ If the project or program required to be evaluated is more than 15 billion RFW or of strategic importance otherwise
- ▶ If request for an external evaluation is received from high level authorities or development partners.
- ▶ If project/program/policy evaluation requires a sophisticated methodology.
- ▶ High-profile projects, program or policies selected for an external evaluation.

## 7.2. Roles and responsibilities of institutions

Actors	Roles and Responsibilities
<b>The Office of the Prime Minister (PMO)/ Government Action Coordination Unit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Conduct monitoring of key Government programs/projects to generate policy advice for Cabinet.</li> <li>▶ Track the implementation of Cabinet decisions.</li> <li>▶ Provide leadership across all public entities, ensures proper coordination and oversight of M&amp;E activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Parliament</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Scrutinize various objects of expenditure and the sums to be spent on projects/programs.</li> <li>▶ Monitor the implementation of programs and projects, perform oversight &amp; accountability functions</li> </ul>
<b>Office of the Auditor General (OAG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Audit and report on public accounts of all public offices and any public corporation or other bodies established by an Act of Parliament.</li> <li>▶ Conduct financial, performance audit in respect of any project or activity involving public funds.</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Coordinate the elaboration of national development planning for both central and local government.</li> <li>▶ Coordinate the elaboration of the national investment programme and ensures synergy between the investment plans at all levels.</li> <li>▶ Ensure M&amp;E implementation of different government interventions to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of all public spending.</li> <li>▶ M&amp;E of projects at local level.</li> <li>▶ Ensure that all public investments approved by PIC have clear M&amp;E plans with resources to conduct M&amp;E activities.</li> </ul>

Actors	Roles and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Report periodically to Cabinet on the execution of different projects and programs.</li> <li>➤ Provide technical support and oversight on planning units in MDAs and SWGs to operationalize M&amp;E functions, design and implementation of annual rolling M&amp;E plans.</li> </ul>
<b>National Institute of Statistics (NISR)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coordinate, support, validate and designate as official any statistics produced by MDAs and LGs; and other independent researches.</li> <li>➤ Coordinate and clear all censuses and national representative of economic household surveys.</li> <li>➤ Ensure production, harmonization and dissemination of statistical information.</li> <li>➤ Strengthen statistical capacity of planning units in MDAs and LGs for data production and use.</li> </ul>
<b>Ministries Districts and Agencies (MDAs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sector Lead (ministries) should oversee the performance of its respective agencies and progress of sector interventions/projects/programs at national level and organize a quarterly meeting with all concerned stakeholders to timely handle any issues/risks identified; in line with this guideline,</li> <li>➤ Utilize M&amp;E findings to inform projects, programs, policies and resource allocation decisions.</li> <li>➤ Plan and allocate resources for monitoring and evaluation of major projects and programs annually.</li> <li>➤ Districts and agencies should also hold quarterly performance review meetings to determine progress towards achieving their targets.</li> <li>➤ Submit progress reports on progress against performance indicators to MINECOFIN for compilation.</li> </ul>

Actors	Roles and Responsibilities
<b>Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Produce results oriented Local Government Development Plans and annual budget.</li> <li>➤ Strengthen local governance and upwards reporting through developing Local Government systems and practices for monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>➤ Ensure proper coordination of monitoring activities at District and Lower Local Government levels. MINALOC has to oversee Monitoring and evaluation functions in Local government to ensure development objectives are aligned with the country intentions.</li> <li>➤ Ensure that all Local Government Planning units and District Projects Management Committees responsible for statistical production, monitoring and evaluation are operational.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Serve as an intermediary between local administrative entities with legal personality and donors especially those involved in financing development activities in those entities.</li> <li>➤ Monitor the use of funds allocated by LODA to development activities in the local administrative entities with legal personality.</li> <li>➤ Build capacities of local administrative entities with legal personality within the scope of LODA mission.</li> <li>➤ Coordinate Government's development activities in local administrative entities with legal personality.</li> <li>➤ Provide quarterly reports to MINECOFIN for compilation.</li> </ul>

Actors	Roles and Responsibilities
<b>Local Councils (District, sector, cell)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Oversee monitoring activities at District/Sector/Cell and Lower Local levels;</li> <li>➤ Organize a quarterly meeting with all concerned stakeholders to timely handle any issues/risks identified; in line with this guideline.</li> <li>➤ Utilize M&amp;E findings to advise executive local authority decisions.</li> <li>➤ Coordinate with District Management Committee to handle any project issue (challenge or risk) being faced.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Investment Committee (PIC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Approve all projects before they can be allowed for funding based on desirability, achievability and sustainability criteria.</li> <li>➤ Provide a decision-making point in regard to conduct an evaluation in public institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Sector Working Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop and implements a five-year sector strategic plan (SSP), containing a result orientated monitoring matrix and 5-year evaluation plan.</li> <li>➤ Establish and maintains a monitoring and evaluation function within the SWG secretariat.</li> <li>➤ Ensure proper coordination and oversight of M&amp;E activities in their sector.</li> </ul>
<b>District Project Management Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Undertake project identification based on district potentialities.</li> <li>➤ Coordinate district project formulation and design.</li> <li>➤ Follow up and coordinates district projects/programs monitoring and evaluation.</li> <li>➤ Hold quarterly meetings to discuss on projects progress and takes measures on challenges and risks identified during the implementation.</li> <li>➤ Report on projects implementation and participates in project closing.</li> </ul>

Actors	Roles and Responsibilities
<b>Other executing agencies (CSOs and private sector)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Participate in public sector planning processes at Local Government and sector levels.</li> <li>▶ Provide timely and quality data on the financial and physical implementation of projects for which they are the executing agency to the relevant MDA or LG.</li> <li>▶ Participate in discussion and decision-making committees at programme, sector and national levels.</li> </ul>
<b>Development Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide an external perspective on Government performance and results.</li> <li>▶ Provide feedback to domestic and international constituencies on Government performance and results.</li> <li>▶ Assist Government of Rwanda in financial, technical and other forms of assistance to strengthen its performance.</li> </ul>

### 7.3. Institutionalising evaluation culture in Rwanda

- i. **Building evaluation capacity:** Institutions need to add evaluation trainings or short-term courses in conducting evaluations in their Capacity Building Plans and submit to RDB and MINECOFIN.
- ii. **Rwanda Monitoring Evaluation Organisation (RMEO):** The public institutions through of support from MINECOFIN should find out ways how RMEO can foster culture of evaluation across national level with a broader focus on evidence-based policy development.
- iii. **Partnerships with research and evaluation Bodies:** public institutions and agencies may sign MOUs or explore ways to build evaluation partnerships with academic and research institutions (IPAR, universities and external agencies) to build capacity of their staff in conducting evaluations. Collaboration with universities is paramount to produce the required manpower in the areas of evaluation through masters, PhD and



technical short courses which can be used by public and private sector organisations.

- iv. **Nodal Agency for promoting evaluation culture:** The NPPMD within MINECOFIN together with development partners can provide support to public institutions and agencies in evaluation activity, provide oversight of evaluation practice and standards, and support capacity development.
- v. **Availability of budget for the evaluations:** The Head of Institution/CBM need to ensure that there is an evaluation budget for programs and projects to be evaluated. The Head of Institution may explore partnerships with regional or international organizations and institutions for funds for commissioning evaluations.

# Part C

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## LEARNING

Learning is a process through which information generated from monitoring and evaluation is reflected upon and is used to continuously improve projects, programs and policies' ability to achieve results.

## 8. Learning

### 8.1. How to implement learning in institutions?

M&E practitioners within public institutions, in consultation with CBM/ Head of institution can aggregate results from different policies, programs and projects to understand the wider reach of the institutions or can aggregate learning from different projects, programs and policies to guide the strategic development of new projects, programs and policies and funding opportunities.

It is good practice to share learning outcomes from project, institutional and organisational levels and results achieved by projects, programs and policies with partners, institutions and donors in response to their needs and the benefits MEL provides as well as the general public (through website).

### 8.2. Developing learning in project cycle

Lesson learning is a core component of M&E. The incorporation of learning into the project cycle will enhance the achievement of policies, projects and programs outputs, outcomes and impact.

Institutions can develop their learning skills through Mentoring, Training, learning groups, engaging stakeholders and including learning activities beyond traditional M&E.

The steps to be followed by institutions to incorporate learning into the project cycle are:

- ▶ Holding sessions internally within institutions to capture lessons learned in various stages of the project cycle.  
Participate in projects, programs and policies lesson learning events.
- ▶ Provide content for sharing across other projects, programs and policies and with external stakeholders.
- ▶ Establishing a platform for sharing key documents like share point, knowledge portal, group emails.



- Hold learning clinics each month to reflect M&E and other topics.
- Build and use a knowledge management system within institutions.
- New activities/ actions emerging from lessons learned to inform planning and decision making should be incorporated into the subsequent work-plans.





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