



**THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION: PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH

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Abbreviations

AGSA	Auditor General
APP	Annual Performance Plan
COGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
FMPPI	Framework for Management of Programme Performance Information
FSDM	Frontline service delivery monitoring
GIS	Geographical information systems
GWMES	Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System
ICT	Information and communications technologies
IMS	Information Management System
IT	Information technology
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MPAT	Management Performance Assessment Tool
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
MINCOMBUD	Ministerial Committee on the Budget
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPF	National Evaluation Policy Framework
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSS	National Statistical System
NT	National Treasury
PALAMA	Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
PME	Performance monitoring and evaluation
PSC	Public Service Commission
RBM	Results-based management
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAMEA	South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SASQAF	South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency

Table of contents

Abbreviations.....	i
Table of contents	ii
Minister’s Foreword	iii
Part A: Introduction	1
1 Background	1
1.1 Purpose of this document	1
1.2 The role of M&E in building a capable and developmental state	1
1.3 Existing M&E policy	2
1.4 Roles and responsibilities for M&E.....	3
2 Current challenges with M&E in South Africa	5
Part B: Purpose and key principles of M&E.....	6
3 Purpose of M&E.....	6
4 General principles of M&E	6
5 Mitigation measures to avoid unintended consequences.....	8
Part C: Implementing M&E	9
6 Monitoring.....	9
6.1 External monitoring.....	9
6.2 Internal monitoring is core to the management process.....	10
6.3 What should be monitored internally.....	10
6.4 Using indicators and targets appropriately	11
6.5 Alignment of monitoring and reporting	11
7 Evaluation	11
7.1 What should be evaluated	11
7.2 Implementing evaluations.....	12
8 Performance information systems and data management.....	12
8.1 Performance information systems.....	12
8.2 Data management	13
9 Developing M&E capacity	13
Part D: Acting on M&E findings	14
10 Using M&E findings to inform improvements	14
11 Linking M&E to policy making, planning and budgeting.....	14
12 Accountability and consequences for poor performance.....	15
Part E: Conclusions.....	16
13 Conclusions.....	16

Minister's Foreword

Our democratic government has evolved over the past 20 years, showing great strides in transforming the state machinery by integrating several public administrations through the 1996 Constitution, and developing a suite of new legal prescripts, policies and strategies. The implementation of the National Development Plan demands a developmental and capable state that has better leadership and management capabilities which include, among other things, better planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices across government.

The intent of this document is to strengthen M&E practices by stimulating discussion on the key principles and approach to M&E that will help us to improve performance. The outcome of such a discussion will inform us of the appropriate route to take going forward, such as having M&E policies and guidelines or developing M&E legislation.

Since 2009, we have introduced a range of M&E programmes that seek to achieve our vision of ensuring continuous improvement in service delivery. We implement these programmes collaboratively with other departments and the Offices of the Premier. Our experience in implementing these M&E programmes and evidence from our research indicates a need for DPME to produce more comprehensive guidance on the key M&E principles and practices that should be followed by all public service institutions. This document is a step towards meeting this need. It is supplemented by a more detailed toolkit of supporting frameworks and guidelines that is available on the DPME website.

Honourable Jeff Radebe, MP.
Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Part A: Introduction

1 Background

1.1 Purpose of this document

- 1 The National Development Plan (NDPⁱ) points out that the creation of a developmental and capable state is a prerequisite for addressing South Africa's challenges. Performance monitoring and evaluation (PME) is one of the management interventions which can contribute to building both the capability of the state and the development impact of its services, programmes and projects.
- 2 The aim of this document is to provide a basis for a discussion in government, in Parliament and in society about performance monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in government. The document proposes a set of basic principles and an approach to performance M&E that is intended to result in continuous improvement in government performance and increased accountability. It makes suggestions regarding the M&E practices that need to be implemented to achieve this and how to institutionalise them.
- 3 The key objectives of the document are to:
 - a) Build consensus on the objectives of performance M&E and how M&E should be implemented
 - b) Establish basic principles for good practice M&E
 - c) Provide guidance to departments regarding the implementation of M&E.
- 4 This document draws some of the key principles from existing policies and guidelines but does not cover their content in detail. For example, with regard to evaluation, there is an existing National Evaluation Policy Frameworkⁱⁱ and DPME has published a number of supporting guidelinesⁱⁱⁱ for evaluation. These documents are available on the DPME website.
- 5 In 2009 DPME submitted a document entitled "Improving Government Performance: Our Approach"^{iv} to Cabinet and Parliament, to set out the policy framework for the outcomes system. The 2009 document remains our policy for the outcomes system and is not replaced by this document, which focuses on the underlying principles of PME. Implementation of the basic M&E principles in this document across government will help us to strengthen the implementation of the outcomes system and instil a culture of continuous improvement in the execution of policies and plans.
- 6 The document provides a context for the future development of additional guidelines and standards that will be used to further enhance M&E in government.

1.2 The role of M&E in building a capable and developmental state

- 7 The NDP points out that the creation of a developmental and capable state is a prerequisite for addressing South Africa's development challenges: "*capable in that it has the capacity to formulate and implement policies that serve the national interest; developmental in that those policies focus on overcoming the root causes of poverty and inequality, and building the state's capacity to fulfil this role*" (NDP, p 409).
- 8 The NDP (p 474) also emphasises the need for active citizenry and strong leadership. All spheres of government "*can enhance citizen's participation through a variety of two-way information gathering and sharing forums and platforms between citizens and government. While these platforms can enable government to inform, they also enable citizens to give feedback to government and monitor performance...Active citizenship requires inspirational leadership at all levels of society.*" Citizen-based monitoring and participatory M&E approaches provide practical opportunities to build this leadership culture in society. The NDP points out that M&E practices "*could be enhanced via improving everyday bottom-up mechanisms that enable citizens to communicate their grievances and seek redress at the point of delivery. Routine accountability would enable citizens to provide on-going insights into service delivery.*" Citizen-based monitoring

mechanisms enabling dialogue between citizens and government regarding evidence of performance and improvements can strengthen participatory democracy and active citizenship, and contribute to building a capable and developmental state. There are a number of government initiatives in this regard, including hotlines, front-line service delivery monitoring, and citizen satisfaction surveys. The PSC has played an important role in driving a participatory and deliberative approach to monitoring and evaluation, with several citizen-focused tools and approaches having been developed and implemented. DPME has recently developed a national policy framework for citizen-based monitoring^v.

- 9 Further, the NDP notes that weaknesses in how government institutions function constrain the state's ability to pursue its developmental objectives. It identifies the primary problem as weaknesses in capacity (a deficit in skills and professionalism), which lead to weaknesses in performance. It then makes a range of proposals for addressing this problem, including the development of managerial skills. One of the areas in which skills are generally lacking is monitoring and evaluation.
- 10 We need to improve our capacity to plan and implement services, programmes and projects. Monitoring is a management tool for checking progress with the implementation of plans. Evaluation is a more specialist function which focuses on asking whether we are doing the right things, are being effective, efficient and providing value for money, and how we can do things better. Box 1 provides some definitions for 'monitoring' and 'evaluation' and differentiates them from 'auditing'.

Box 1: Definitions of M&E and auditing

Monitoring^{vi} involves the continuous collecting, analysing, and reporting data on inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts as well as external factors, in a way that supports effective management and continuous improvement in performance.

Performance monitoring^{vii} is a formalised system for measuring the performance of an organisation or service

Evaluation is the periodic and systematic collection and objective analysis of evidence on public policies, programmes, projects, functions and organizations to assess issues such as relevance, performance (effectiveness and efficiency) and value for money, and recommend ways forward. Evaluation is critical for generating in-depth evidence for improving performance and decision-making.

Inspection/investigation detects wrong doing and verifies information.

Auditing of performance against predetermined objectives involves auditing of actual reported performance against predetermined objectives, indicators and targets as contained in the annual performance report in order to conclude on compliance with relevant laws and regulations and the usefulness and reliability of reported performance information^{viii}.

Performance audits seek to determine whether money was well spent (whether goods and services were acquired economically, applied efficiently and managed effectively towards achieving the desired goals).

1.3 Existing M&E policy

- 11 Since 1994, M&E has been developed in government as part of a series of reforms to strengthen its systems and operations, backed by a range of statutes and other prescripts. For example:
 - a) The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) introduced an employee Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).
 - b) Through the Treasury Regulations, National Treasury introduced the use of output targets and performance reporting against these in departmental strategic plans, annual performance plans (APPs), and annual reports. This regulation is supported by various National Treasury guidelines on the formulation of performance targets and reporting against these, such as the Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information (FMPPI)^{ix}. These guidelines are results-based and require departments to identify activities leading to outputs, outcomes, and finally, impacts on citizens. The National Treasury guidelines emphasise the need for strong logical links

- (or theories of change) between the activities and the intended outcomes and impacts.
- c) The Auditor General followed by auditing reported performance against the pre-determined objectives in the APPs, as part of the annual audit of departments which is included in the annual report of departments.
- 12 In 2005 Cabinet adopted the Government-Wide M&E System (GWMES) and in 2007 the Presidency released the Policy Framework on the GWMES. The GWMES framework is supported by National Treasury's Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information (FMPPI); Statistics South Africa's South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF)^x; and the 2011 National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) produced by DPME.
- 13 The GWMES focused on the coordination of M&E systems. This document complements the GWMES by proposing basic M&E principles to underpin the institutionalisation and implementation of M&E in government. While it might be expected that this basic principles document should have come first, we have had to go through the experience of the GWMES and various M&E initiatives, including the outcomes system, to identify the need for this basic principles document.

1.4 Roles and responsibilities for M&E

1.4.1 External and internal M&E

- 14 'External' M&E is monitoring or evaluation by an external party, as opposed to 'internal' M&E, which is self-monitoring or self-evaluation. Both types of monitoring are important and can contribute to improvements in performance, if well implemented.

1.4.2 Separation of powers between the Executive and Legislative branches of the state

- 15 The Constitution provides for the separation of powers between the Legislative and Executive branches of the state, both of which need to conduct M&E in order to perform their functions. This should not be seen as duplication or overlap. In a constitutional democracy it is important for the Legislative branch to carry out independent external M&E of the Executive branch, in the interests of oversight, accountability and creating checks and balances. It is also important for the Executive branch to carry out its own internal M&E as a means of improving its performance.
- 16 There should be coordination and collaboration between the M&E bodies which report to the Legislature and the M&E bodies which are part of the Executive, to ensure that duplication of M&E work is minimised and that departments and municipalities are not overloaded with reporting requirements.

1.4.3 The role of Parliament in M&E

- 17 The various committees of Parliament, especially the Portfolio Committees, should use M&E information to strengthen their oversight over the Executive. Portfolio Committees can obtain M&E information from a range of sources, including from the Public Service Commission (PSC), Chapter 9 institutions, National Treasury, the DPSC, DPME, line function departments, as well as from non-state bodies. M&E information can assist Portfolio Committees to have a better understanding of performance in their sectors, including the causes of good and bad performance.
- 18 Parliament is able to draw on the work of the independent Chapter 9 institutions to carry out its oversight of the Executive branch. In particular, the Auditor General (AGSA), the Public Protector and the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) are all constitutionally mandated to play a role in assisting Parliament (and provincial legislatures and municipal councils in the case of the AGSA) with independent M&E of transversal administrative functions and service delivery. Parliament is also assisted by the PSC, as described in more detail below.

1.4.4 The role of the Public Service Commission in M&E

- 19 The Constitution (Chapter 10) states that the PSC is an independent body which is accountable to Parliament.
- 20 The PSC is mandated by the Constitution to promote the nine values and principles set out in section 195 of the Constitution and to monitor and evaluate the organisation and administration, and the personnel practices, of the public service. It can propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the public service. It is also empowered to carry out public service investigations on the receipt of complaints.
- 21 The PSC presents its reports to Parliament and also makes them available to the Executive arm of the state.
- 22 The PSC has used M&E as a key instrument of its work. In 2008 it produced a resource manual^{xi} on basic concepts in monitoring and evaluation, which focused on M&E of the nine values and principles in section 195 of the Constitution. This document is consistent with and builds on the contents of the PSC resource manual. The difference is that this document goes into much more detail about internal monitoring in departments in particular. This document also serves a different purpose – it is a discussion document produced by the Executive, proposing policy positions to be taken by the Executive.
- 23 The PSC is not a part of the Executive arm of the state. It can make findings and give directions and advice to the Executive, but it cannot make decisions on behalf of the Executive and it cannot develop M&E policies on behalf of the Executive.

1.4.5 M&E within the Executive Branch of the state

- 24 The Executive Branch needs to develop its own M&E policies and to carry out its own internal monitoring and evaluation for purposes of coordination, performance assessment and promoting continuous improvement.
- 25 National and provincial departments and municipalities should conduct M&E of their own projects, programmes and services, for purposes of sound operational and strategic management and to improve services and their impact. National sector departments (such as Health and Basic Education) should conduct M&E in their sectors (including monitoring of their provincial counterparts) for similar purposes and to promote coordination within the sector.
- 26 Statistics South Africa plays a key role in undertaking surveys that measure progress in a range of areas and produces a wide range of statistical products. The National Statistical System (NSS) within Statistics South Africa drives the implementation of the South African Statistical Quality Assurance Framework.
- 27 The Presidency (through DPME), the Offices of the Premier, as well as national and provincial departments responsible for local government, conduct M&E of other departments and municipalities for purposes of coordination, performance assessment and promoting continuous improvement.

1.4.6 The role of DPME

- 28 DPME in the Presidency is the custodian of M&E within the Executive branch of the state. It assists the Executive to carry out M&E of itself.
- 29 DPME's custodial role for M&E is similar to the custodial role of National Treasury for financial management or DPSA for human resource management. DPME develops national M&E policy frameworks, guidelines and other tools to promote sound M&E practices. It also provides support and capacity development related to M&E.
- 30 DPME assists the President with his or her coordinating role by facilitating the development of cross-cutting delivery agreements for priority outcomes and assisting the President and Cabinet to monitor their implementation^{xii}. DPME assists the President and Cabinet to monitor various aspects of government performance, through the national evaluation system, frontline service delivery monitoring, the Presidential Hotline, and assessments of the management performance and quality of service delivery of national and provincial government departments^{xiii} and municipalities.

- 31 In addition to the M&E work done by DPME, line function departments need to carry out their own M&E of their projects, programmes and services. DPME draws on, rather than duplicates, the M&E information produced by other departments. Similarly, DPME draws on the M&E information produced by other transversal departments such as National Treasury and DPSA.
- 32 DPME collaborates with the Offices of the Premier in promoting sound M&E practices at provincial level.

1.4.7 The roles of other transversal departments in M&E

- 33 Transversal departments such as National Treasury and DPSA conduct M&E of transversal administrative functions (i.e. financial management, supply chain management and human resource management) for the purpose of improving operational performance across government.
- 34 In terms of the Public Service Act, the Minister of Public Service and Administration has a responsibility to establish norms and standards relating to a variety of aspects of the public service, including its functions, organisational structure, conditions of service and employment practices, labour relations, health and wellness, information management, integrity, ethics, anti-corruption, transformation, reform, innovation, and improving effectiveness and efficiency and service delivery to the public. DPSA carries out M&E of these aspects of the public service and DPME draws on the M&E information produced by DPSA.
- 35 The task of establishing national overarching norms and standards for M&E is the responsibility of DPME, as the custodian for M&E. This does not displace the need for sector-specific norms and standards for M&E. Transversal departments have responsibility for setting norms and standards related to their particular areas of responsibility, while sectoral departments have the equivalent responsibility for their sectoral areas. This document provides general principles which are intended to inform sector-specific M&E.

2 Current challenges with M&E in South Africa

- 36 DPME has undertaken a range of surveys^{xiv} and diagnostics^{xv} to understand how M&E is understood and used by M&E practitioners in the national and provincial governments in South Africa. The main findings are summarised in this section.
- 37 There is generally an absence of a strong M&E culture in government (54% of 96 departments surveyed), with M&E being seen as a policing and controlling function (39%) rather than a continuous improvement function. There is a widely-held perception that monitoring is an activity carried out by monitors who monitor the work of others, and limited appreciation of the importance of managers themselves monitoring and evaluating their own work. While there is an important role for external monitoring in ensuring accountability, there is an equally important, if not more important, role for internal monitoring in driving performance improvement. 'Internal monitoring' involves managers setting performance targets for their programmes or work activities, measuring performance against the targets, analysing the reasons for poor performance, and introducing changes to their programmes or work activities to improve performance.
- 38 In practice the dominant culture is one of compliance rather than one based on learning and improvement. More than half of respondents (54%) identified the fact that problems are not treated as opportunities for learning and improvement as a significant barrier.
- 39 81% of departments are not planning or conducting any evaluations of any of their major programmes^{xvi}. In other words, evaluation is still only applied sporadically in government and is not adequately informing planning, policy-making and budgeting.
- 40 M&E often has little influence in departments due to a lack of understanding of the value of M&E amongst political and administrative leadership. Senior management often fails to champion M&E, and there is often weak alignment of M&E to policy priorities, planning and budgeting.

- 41 In 61% of departments, one of the primary barriers to the effective use of M&E for decision-making, learning and accountability is that departments focus more on monitoring activities and outputs rather than outcomes and impacts, which indicate their effect on wider society. In addition indicators are often not consistent and of poor quality.
- 42 Other problems identified by departments include poor quality of data and IT systems supporting M&E work and inadequate capacity development for M&E.
- 43 Some M&E staff (27%) cited the lack of a common guiding framework to harmonise M&E concepts and practices across the public service as a problem. 60% of M&E staff indicate that they have adequate competencies to implement M&E but need support via a national policy framework for M&E in order for them to be able to get their departments to use M&E more effectively.
- 44 This document aims to clarify many of the above issues, and seeks to ensure that there is a close relationship between M&E, planning and budgeting. It provides guidance for strengthening M&E practices so that M&E is not just a compliance exercise but is used to improve performance and increase accountability.

Part B: Purpose and key principles of M&E

3 Purpose of M&E

- 45 M&E should not be carried out for its own sake but to fulfil one or more of the purposes below:
- a) To inform the development and design of government policies and plans
It does this by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing policies for the purposes of designing new policies and plans. The target group is the Executive, management and the public who are the beneficiaries of such policies.
 - b) To improve the performance of institutions, programmes, projects and operations
This involves improving both strategic and operational management. The target group is the Executive, management and the public. This should result in improved efficiency, economy and effectiveness.
 - c) To improve accountability and transparency
This involves providing evidence of the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of government's work. The target group is the public and Parliament, which benefits from sound M&E practices that enhance their oversight role.
 - d) To support decision-making
This involves providing evidence relating to the implications of options to be considered. This could also include decisions about consequences of not implementing M&E recommendations and improvement plans. The target group is the Executive and management. M&E information can also result in improved resource allocation through having better information on the outcomes and impacts of expenditure.
 - e) To generate knowledge
Knowledge about what works and does not work should be generated for wider application, and for building new theories and models. The target group is the public sector as a whole as well as knowledge institutions such as researchers and academic institutions. This should result in increased learning between and within organisations.

4 General principles of M&E

- 46 Based on international literature^{xvii, xviii} and good practice experience, the following general principles should be applied for M&E systems to meet their purpose:
- a) **Increasing the use of evidence will improve the quality of policy and decision-making and implementation of programmes and services.**
This is a foundational principle for M&E, while recognising that a diversity of inputs inform eventual policy decisions.

b) The primary users of M&E information are managers themselves, to learn and improve performance.

This means emphasising the use of M&E systems internally, and promoting the capacity of managers to use M&E evidence. This should lead to the development of a performance-oriented management culture and improvements in performance and productivity as well as better implementation of government programmes and improved quality of service delivery.

c) Plans and targets should promote outcomes and impacts on citizens, and not just focus on activities and outputs.

This means promoting outcome-based planning, and ensuring that targets are set for outcomes and impacts on citizens.

d) Keep time spent on M&E to the minimum necessary.

Keeping M&E and reporting demands to the minimum necessary to improve performance and accountability. There is no point in producing information or reports which are not used, and managers should not feel that the time spent reporting is severely limiting the time they need to focus on their work.

e) M&E systems and processes should be as simple as possible to achieve their purpose.

Information should be handled once:

- External monitoring bodies should not request reports from departments or municipalities where information is already available or can be obtained from another body which has already collected the information;
- Unnecessary duplication of data collection and reporting within departments should be minimised by standardisation of business processes and optimal use of ICT to automate routine administrative data processing and quality assurance.

f) Reports should contain an appropriate level of detail - for example, reports to Cabinet should contain a limited number of indicators and should concentrate on the upper end of the value chain (outputs, outcomes and impacts).

g) Performance information should come from the normal business processes in a government institution, i.e. their internal administrative data systems. This avoids duplication of information management systems and processes, reduces the reporting workload, and increases the likelihood that performance information will be used by managers.

h) M&E systems should take account of the diversity of government.

Government services range from routine functions such as providing identity documents which involve repetitive standard processes, to highly context-specific work such as health care, where situations evolve, and each client is different. Further, institutions of government vary in size, scope and capacity – hence the need to allow for differentiated approaches to implementing various M&E practices like the establishment of central M&E units e.g. small municipalities and new departments might require use of existing skills to coordinate M&E internally in their organisations, whereas large metropolitan municipalities and some national departments might have both central M&E units and dedicated M&E capacity in branches or line functions.

i) Promote innovation.

It is important to change the predominant culture in the public service of a fear of doing things differently. Managers should be encouraged to try new ways of doing things in the interests of improving performance, and should not be punished if the new ways fail (as long as there was due diligence and unless the failure was due to gross negligence or repeating avoidable mistakes). A culture of learning from mistakes should be encouraged. Changing this mind-set is important for M&E evidence to be welcomed as an opportunity to resolve problems and to improve performance, rather than to punish.

j) Make M&E information public, to promote accountability.

A fear of being seen to have made mistakes or being seen to have performed poorly sometimes inhibits departments from making M&E evidence public. This fear can also

be addressed by viewing M&E evidence as an opportunity to resolve problems and to improve performance, rather than to punish.

k) Promote the demand for M&E evidence, so as to strengthen supply.

Examples of sources of demand are:

- Managers in departments themselves;
- Government agencies such as National Treasury;
- Members of the Executive;
- Chapter 9 institutions;
- Parliamentary portfolio committees;
- The public.

5 Mitigation measures to avoid unintended consequences

- 47 M&E can have severe unintended consequences, which have been well documented internationally (e.g. de Bruijn, 2007). For example, Caulkin^{xix} describes a report by the United Kingdom Health Commission which found that pursuing targets may have unintentionally resulted in the deaths of 400 people at Stafford Hospital between 2005 and 2008. This was as a result of managers neglecting areas of work for which targets were not set. M&E systems therefore need to be designed and implemented carefully and cautiously, and should include measures to manage unintended consequences as they arise.
- 48 The table below proposes a number of mitigation measures to be taken in South Africa to reduce the risks of the unintended consequences commonly associated with M&E systems.

Table 1: Mitigation measures needed to manage possible unintended negative consequences of M&E systems

Possible unintended consequence (de Bruijn, 2007)	Our proposed mitigation measures
a) Decreasing Effectiveness – if the impact of monitoring information is very high (e.g. results in large bonus/humiliation) then there may be strong incentives for gaming rather than learning	Ensure that the direct impacts from performance information are not too large, and that a nuanced approach is taken. Ensure that organisations are not judged on M&E results, but on whether they address the findings of M&E. This will minimize gaming. Set targets in consultation with, and preferably by reaching consensus with, those whose job it is to meet the targets. Encourage professionalism wherever possible. Encourage self-monitoring or internal monitoring for the purpose of performance improvement as much as possible.
b) Mushrooming – M&E systems become bloated and lose their simplicity in the process	Continuously review M&E systems to ensure that they remain as simple as possible and continue to add value. Do not attempt to set measurable targets for everything. Set targets for a few key indicators with realistic targets based on available funding. Where appropriate, involve the beneficiaries of the services during the design of M&E systems to ensure relevance.
c) Collective Blindness – the targets do not give a full picture	Train managers and officials on development of good plans, indicators and targets. Choose targets carefully. Present results against targets in the context of the bigger picture. Warn of the limitations of focusing only on the targets and do not encourage departments to only focus on issues for which targets have been set. Emphasise the importance of analysis of the reasons for good or poor performance against targets, and the need to address the underlying systemic problems.

Possible unintended consequence (de Bruijn, 2007)	Our proposed mitigation measures
<p>d) Preservation of Bloated Systems – perverse systems are often resistant to change, either because they become a ritual or because a system of external stakeholders grows to maintain the system</p>	<p>Continuously review M&E systems to ensure that they continue to add value. Promoting the use of evidence by citizens would assist in ensuring that such systems respond to the needs of the users.</p>
<p>e) Decreasing Political Attention - there is often little political benefit in abolishing systems, and so political interest can wane, meaning that systems continue by default</p>	<p>Continuously review M&E systems with those involved in implementation to ensure that they are still adding value. Evaluate the impact of the components of the M&E system itself on a regular basis, to check if they are still adding value.</p>

Part C: Implementing M&E

6 Monitoring

6.1 External monitoring

- 49 The general principles described above should be followed by all bodies engaged in external monitoring, including independent external bodies reporting to Parliament.
- 50 As far as possible, external monitoring should be carried out in such a way that it builds capacity within departments for internal monitoring. This can be achieved if:
- a) The emphasis of the external monitoring is on improvement of performance, rather than punishment or reward;
 - b) The information which the external monitoring produces is useful for the managers of the body being monitored, and assists them to manage their organisations better;
 - c) The managers of the body being monitored are involved in the monitoring process, and are provided with the results of the external monitoring;
 - d) The managers of the body being monitored are encouraged to start monitoring themselves, and are supported with monitoring tools and capacity building.
- 51 It is also important that external monitoring is undertaken by clients of the department's processes. For front-line services this means direct feedback by clients as to how services are being delivered (issues such as accessibility, facilities are open at times that citizens need them, responsiveness, friendliness of staff, whether facilities are comfortable and clean, queues are managed well) as well as whether the right services are being delivered. Citizens should monitor the work of government officials and institutions without fear or favour by using mechanisms such as hotlines, complaints boxes, public participation forums (e.g. presidential monitoring visits), constitutional bodies, public representatives, civil society organisations, media and so forth. If there are quick feedback loops to management about this information it can result in fast improvement cycles.
- 52 For support processes, clients may be internal to departments (e.g. for supply chain services), or between government departments. Feedback is needed by the direct clients of the services. For example DPME is involving departments in reviewing the operation of the evaluation system and how it can be strengthened.
- 53 External monitoring is needed to ensure there is accountability and discipline in the internal monitoring process. This takes several forms:
- a) **Verification of internal monitoring processes** – for example doing random field visits to check that management reports give a true picture. The Front-Line Service

Delivery Monitoring^{xx} conducted by Offices of the Premier and DPME is an example of this. (Service delivery departments are encouraged to do this type of monitoring themselves as well, both to check that management information about service delivery is accurate and to triangulate management information with the views of the citizens receiving the services.) Evaluations also sometimes reveal that internal reports are not correct.

b) **Dialogue regarding the results of monitoring** – for example when quarterly APP results are presented there needs to be a dialogue around the implications of these. This needs to be internal to departments, where senior managers discuss the implications of sub-programme results, but also there needs to be a regular dialogue around performance between the external monitors and the departments concerned, so that reports are interrogated, and the implications of the report drawn out. This is an important step to ensure that action is taken.

54 External monitoring (as well as evaluation) is a key part of the oversight role of Parliamentary portfolio committees. They are therefore a key source of demand for M&E data, analysis and reports which can help them to understand how departments are performing, and use evidence to understand whether policy proposals are appropriate.

6.2 Internal monitoring is core to the management process

55 Heads of department and municipal managers should allocate responsibility to an individual or to a central M&E unit¹ for ensuring that M&E policies and guidelines are implemented. The central M&E unit should act as a coordinator and integrator of M&E information and as the champion of sound M&E practices, norms and standards in the department or municipality.

56 However, monitoring is a generic management function that should be undertaken by all line function managers in an organisation. In this regard, monitoring is similar to financial management or human resource management. While departments have central units responsible for financial management and human resource management, this does not mean that line function managers are not responsible for managing their own budgets and for managing the staff under them. Similarly, while a department may have a central M&E unit, it remains the responsibility of all managers to monitor their own programmes, projects and operations. Heads of department and municipal managers need to make it clear to all managers and other employees that they are responsible for monitoring and reporting related to their areas of work, even if there is a departmental or municipal central M&E unit.

57 Managers should use monitoring information to assess and review progress against their objectives and associated indicators. Thus, each monitoring report should assist managers to identify areas where improvements are required in policies, plans and their implementation.

58 It is important that all managers include monitoring of their work as one of their key managerial functions in their performance agreements or performance contracts. This responsibility is already required by both the PFMA and the MFMA.

59 Managers of departments and municipalities should analyse monitoring information received from citizens and other clients with a view to improving service delivery. Managers should give feed-back to citizens and other clients regarding the actions which have been taken to address the issues which have been raised.

6.3 What should be monitored internally

60 There are many issues that all managers should monitor on a regular basis. This includes, for example, monitoring of expenditure against the budget for which they are responsible, and monitoring of progress against programme and project plans.

¹DPME has developed three guidelines on the functions and structural arrangements of M&E units in national and provincial departments and Offices of the Premier. The three guidelines are appended to this document as Annexures 2-4.

- 61 Monitoring and reporting against the key outcomes of government should be prioritised. In this regard, heads of government institutions should ensure that indicators and targets related to wider government priorities (such as the NDP) are covered in the strategic plans, integrated development plans and annual performance plans of their institutions, where relevant.
- 62 Management should analyse their departmental quarterly progress reports against the performance targets in their annual performance plans in order to inform improvements.
- 63 All government institutions should monitor the quality of their internal management practices against the requirements of the regulatory frameworks.
- 64 Government institutions involved in frontline service delivery should regularly monitor adherence to their service delivery standards. This includes setting and monitoring targets for indicators such as time spent in queues, turnaround times for issuing documents, availability of medicines, and cleanliness. This monitoring should include inspections of frontline service delivery sites. It should also involve getting feedback from the users of the services (the citizens).
- 65 Where relevant, government institutions should also collect and analyse data related to their sectors from other sources. National departments which are responsible for concurrent functions also need to collect, analyse and verify data from provincial and district level and/or from municipalities.
- 66 Indicator selection and design should involve programme managers to enhance ownership of the data generated by M&E systems.

6.4 Using indicators and targets appropriately

- 67 Indicators and targets are used to track performance. It is important that there is standardisation of the use of indicators, targets, and baselines. At present these are interpreted slightly differently by different organisations. It is not automatic that all indicators should have targets against which departments are held accountable. Some indicators can be used to set a direction which can be monitored, so that the trajectory is known, but not that departments are held accountable for keeping them at a certain level. This is particularly important where targets are very difficult to achieve or where there are obvious perverse incentives related to setting a target. Others can be used to provide a benchmark against which progress is measured.

6.5 Alignment of monitoring and reporting

- 68 There should be alignment between the indicators and targets in cross-cutting or whole-of-government plans and the indicators and targets in departmental plans. Such alignment is necessary in order to prevent the establishment of parallel or duplicate performance information systems².

7 Evaluation

7.1 What should be evaluated

- 69 As mentioned above, evaluation is the periodic and systematic collection and objective analysis of evidence on public policies, programmes, projects, functions and organizations to assess issues such as relevance, performance (effectiveness and efficiency) and value for money, and recommend ways forward.
- 70 Evaluations should be used to improve performance, accountability, learning and decision making.
- 71 All major policies, plans and programmes should be evaluated periodically. Evaluations can occur at different stages of a programme or project – prior to the planning stage, during implementation, and after implementation. All new major programmes should be

²In other words, so that departments do not have to set up two performance information systems to monitor and report on two sets of indicators and targets for the same issue.

preceded by a diagnostic evaluation which identifies root causes of problems or opportunities and consider options. All major programmes should have their impact assessed every 3-5 years, and many programmes need implementation evaluation during the implementation phase to see how they can be strengthened.

- 72 A set of evaluation standards^{xxi} has been developed by DPME (DPME, 2012) which are being used to ensure that evaluations are of a minimum standard. A Quality Assessment System is being applied to all government evaluations. All evaluations which are not of security concerns should be submitted to DPME, and these will be quality assessed and made available on an evaluation repository on the DPME website.

7.2 Implementing evaluations

- 73 Evaluation requires the application of appropriate research methodologies to understand how policies, plans, programmes, projects or organisations are working and their impacts. Evaluation therefore requires more specialist skills than monitoring.
- 74 Evaluations should be carried out according to the National Evaluation Policy Framework and supporting guidelines and tools.
- 75 The results of evaluations should inform plans and budgets including the design of new policies and programmes.
- 76 Evaluations should be undertaken in a way which is demand-driven. This is to ensure that the managers of the programme being evaluated take ownership of the evaluation and implement an improvement plan to address the issues raised in the evaluation report. This is the most important lesson from the literature on the international experience of evaluation in the public sector.
- 77 There are tensions between the degree of ownership (highest if the evaluation is conducted internally) and the degree of independence and external credibility (highest if the evaluation is undertaken by a body external to the organisation, and external to government). In implementing the National Evaluation Policy Framework, DPME has aimed to achieve a balance between these tensions, with most of the evaluations being carried out by external evaluators, but with a high level of involvement of managers of the programme being evaluated.
- 78 Government institutions must identify and prioritise their programmes which should be evaluated, and ensure that the evaluations are budgeted for. This also promotes ownership of the evaluation. National government develops a National Evaluation Plan to indicate the priority evaluations and provinces and departments should develop provincial and departmental evaluation plans, scheduling their evaluations during the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) cycle.

8 Performance information systems and data management

- 79 Quality performance information and appropriate infrastructure for managing data are prerequisites for effective M&E systems.
- 80 The FMPPI and Performance Information Handbook^{xxii} (2011) produced by National Treasury provide detailed direction to improve the appropriateness, availability and quality of programme performance information.

8.1 Performance information systems

- 81 Performance information systems include business processes for collecting and managing data, roles and responsibilities for collecting and managing data, as well as information technology (IT) systems. The FMPPI specifies requirements that accounting officers or heads of institutions should implement to ensure integration of performance information systems with existing management processes and systems.
- 82 Departments and municipalities should ensure there is a strong case supported by evidence to motivate for the purchasing of special software and hardware to be used for M&E purposes. Otherwise, use of existing systems and manual methods is encouraged

before embarking on the procurement of highly sophisticated and expensive IT tools that might not be used optimally to support M&E work.

- 83 The M&E unit in a department or municipality should play an advisory role in ensuring that duplication of effort and lack of integration among various performance information systems in the department or municipality is avoided.
- 84 Performance information systems should have sufficient security standards in line with relevant government statutes, norms and standards. It is important that the Auditor General's requirements are taken into consideration when designing performance information systems (e.g. proper storage of supporting records).
- 85 DPME draws on the administrative information systems of other departments in order to provide the President and Cabinet with up-to-date information on the performance of government. It is putting in place the necessary IT systems to do this.

8.2 Data management

- 86 Managers need reliable data on an on-going basis that can be used for measuring performance. The key criteria for data used for M&E purposes are validity, reliability, timeliness, access and integrity.
- 87 Data should be regularly available and should be at a level of disaggregation sufficient to allow effective decision making. Evaluations also require credible data from monitoring and other sources. An appropriate balance should be maintained between sustaining reliability of data and improving data collection, data management and data analysis.
- 88 Data should be quality assured regularly using the SASQAF which includes standards on relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, interpretability, coherence, methodological soundness and integrity of data. Other international best practices such as the SABS and ISO standards can be employed as applicable.
- 89 Data should be managed ethically in line with accepted professional standards adopted by professional associations and government (e.g. the National Evaluation Standards).
- 90 There should be clear business processes and rules in place to ensure sound data management practices.
- 91 As far as possible, data should be triangulated³ when analysed for producing M&E reports, using both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources.

9 Developing M&E capacity

- 92 M&E capacity development should be approached in a holistic manner that recognises M&E as part of broader public sector management reforms towards ensuring a capable and developmental state. In this regard, capacity development efforts should address three levels^{xxiii}, i.e. enabling environment, institutional capacity and individual skills.
- 93 At the enabling environment level, the key principle is to remove barriers to efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of M&E practices through promoting the generation of performance information and evaluative evidence (supply side) as well as use of such information (demand side) to contribute to the achievement of the various purposes of M&E, especially continuous learning and performance improvement.
- 94 At an institutional level, M&E capacity development involves providing technical support in the form of guidelines, advice, tools, and frameworks related to improving M&E processes, structures, resources and infrastructure.
- 95 At an individual level, skills development programmes should include training, mentorship and coaching on various M&E competencies. In collaboration with the South African M&E Association (SAMEA) and DPSA, DPME has developed a list of competencies required for evaluation. This guides the development of training courses, as well as the recruitment of staff to manage evaluations and the appointment of service

³Triangulation goes beyond the use of different types of data to include use of different methods of research or evaluation. For example, quantitative research methods are subjected to criticism for lack of complementing their findings with qualitative information to enhance contextual understanding such as in the case of Random Control Trials used for impact evaluation.

providers to carry out evaluations. M&E training is also available from training providers like higher education institutions, government agencies, private sector and development agencies. DPME is working with higher education institutions, including the National School of Government, to ensure that adequate training programmes are in place for M&E.

- 96 M&E capacity development should take into consideration the diversity of needs and different levels of existing capabilities informed by capacity diagnosis and skills audits. Large and mature organisations could have a fully-fledged M&E unit (sometimes both centrally and in line functions) which has capability to design and implement an M&E capacity development programme for its institution and sector. Smaller and under-resourced public sector institutions could use support from DPME, Offices of the Premier and training providers to improve their own M&E capacity.
- 97 DPME is in the process of developing a comprehensive M&E capacity development programme.

Part D: Acting on M&E findings

10 Using M&E findings to inform improvements

- 98 Government institutions should use monitoring information to respond to problems as they arise, before issues become crises. Management should regularly review and analyse monitoring reports as a means of identifying areas of weak performance, and should put in place plans to improve performance in those areas.
- 99 Many of the improvements in service delivery which have been achieved in the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the Department of Home Affairs were the result of improving monitoring of operational service delivery processes.
- 100 Evaluations should result in improvement plans. Implementation of the improvement plans must be monitored by the top management of the government institution (and if in the National Evaluation Plan, also by DPME). The findings of evaluations must also be incorporated in subsequent planning and budgeting processes.

11 Linking M&E to policy making, planning and budgeting

- 101 M&E evidence should be used to inform decision makers about various policy options.
- 102 The alignment of plans, budgets, implementation and M&E is a crucial factor in being able to manage effectively and to achieve the outcomes that are planned for.
- 103 An effective budgeting system is dependent on a good quality planning system, which in turn should be informed by the availability of resources. Both budgeting and planning processes should be informed by the results of monitoring and evaluation, which in turn is reliant on plans with clear outcomes, outputs, logic models and theories of change, measurable indicators, and targets.
- 104 In order to ensure that the links between planning, budgeting and M&E in place, DPME is involved in the budgeting process with National Treasury. DPME participates in the medium term expenditure committee at administrative level and in MINCOMBUD at political level. Similarly, DPME involves National Treasury in its planning work, such as the development of the MTSF.
- 105 Where possible budget structures should be aligned with the structures of plans so that it is possible to track expenditure data for key elements of budget programmes and implementation programmes.
- 106 The budget process should be informed by M&E evidence. The ultimate aim should be to enable the linking of expenditure to results, so that the cost of producing results can be determined. Information on expenditure against results can be used for benchmarking purposes and to identify poorly performing programmes. Information on expenditure

- against results can also be used to increase budget allocations to programmes which achieve better results, which provide better value for money by achieving results more efficiently, or which need greater resources to be able to have more impact.
- 107 Policies are generally implemented through programmes and projects. Budget programmes refer to the top level structures of government department's budgets, and reflect major mandates of the departments. Implementation programmes refer to lower level programmes with a coherent implementation logic (eg the National School Nutrition Programme) and where implementation is planned in some detail. They may well group a number of projects and other activities.
- 108 The plans for implementation programmes and projects should contain measurable goals/objectives, indicators and targets to enable effective M&E of performance. In many government programmes and plans the theory of change underlying the plan is weak, which means that activities are unlikely to result in outputs and outcomes being achieved. Programme plans should have a clearly defined theory of change, as well as an explanation of the causal mechanisms of how activities and outputs will result in the intended outcomes. A good quality plan should also include a diagnostic analysis of the current situation and the forces at play, and which are likely to be the main strategic drivers of change. DPME with National Treasury has issued a Guideline on Planning of Implementation Programmes^{xxiv}.
- 109 It is very difficult to monitor and evaluate implementation programmes which do not have good quality plans. In some cases the targets are unclear, and so what actual performance is being measured against. Plans should identify good quality measurable indicators which will be monitored during implementation. Failure to collect baseline information on these indicators and to monitor and record changes to the indicators during implementation makes it difficult to evaluate the impact of the programme.
- 110 As the custodian of the national planning function in government, DPME will put measures in place to address this problem.

12 Accountability and consequences for poor performance

- 111 While much information about poor performance is available, such information is often not acted upon. Addressing the problem of a lack of consistency in the management of poor performance is an important step towards improving the performance of government at individual and organisational levels.
- 112 The Public Service Act and the Public Finance Management Act provide a system for managing poor performance and the Misconduct and Incapacity Code and Procedures in the Senior Management Service Handbook^{xxv} (Chapter 7), issued as a Directive by the Minister for Public Service and Administration, is sufficiently clear on the processes to be undertaken. In summary, the legal framework states that Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that there are consequences for poor performance by officials in their departments, and that Executive Authorities in turn are responsible for ensuring that there are consequences for poor performance by Heads of Department. Poor performance of a Head of Department includes failure by the Head of Department to institute disciplinary action where required. The problem is that, in some instances, Heads of Department and Executive Authorities are failing to carry out their responsibility to institute consequences for poor performance.
- 113 Giving external monitors the power to take disciplinary action for poor performance on the basis of their monitoring findings would undermine the existing legal framework for managing poor performance. It would cloud responsibility and accountability for taking disciplinary action. It could also have the unintended effect of worsening the situation by giving the impression that it is the responsibility of external monitors to institute disciplinary action for poor performance, rather than the responsibility of Heads of Department and Executive Authorities. An external monitoring body with such powers could be flooded with requests to take action against officials, from sources ranging from aggrieved citizens to the media. Providing a monitoring body with such powers would also

- raise Constitutional questions. For example, would it be Constitutional for a monitoring body reporting to the national executive to institute disciplinary action for poor performance against an official at provincial or local government level?
- 114 The key challenge is therefore to make the existing frameworks for accountability and consequences for poor performance work better. In this regard, , DPME will monitor whether or not the required disciplinary action is taken to address instances of gross poor performance and lack of improvement identified through its monitoring programmes, and will raise the need for such disciplinary action to be taken with the DPSA, the relevant authorities and the President where necessary.
- 115 Another measure which can be taken to increase accountability for poor performance is to strengthen the role of Parliamentary Committees in holding departments publicly accountable for poor performance. In this regard, M&E has a critical role to play in supporting accountability mechanisms, and the role of the Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 institutions and DPME in providing Parliamentary Committees with M&E information could be strengthened. M&E information can assist Parliament and the public to have a more accurate picture of government performance as well as a better understanding of the reasons for good or poor performance.

Part E: Conclusions

13 Conclusions

- 116 Performance M&E is a powerful tool to enhance public sector reform by helping improve performance and accountability. Quality performance information can enhance the involvement of citizens, and active citizens can also contribute to monitoring government services.
- 117 Fundamental principles of M&E include: the use of evidence is essential for good decision-making; primary users of M&E information are managers themselves; plans and targets should promote results for citizens, not just internal activities; keeping time spent on M&E to the minimum necessary; and avoidance of one-size-fits-all approaches that do not take into consideration the diversity of government.
- 118 Both internal and external monitoring are critical. External monitoring bodies should carry out their work in such a way that it builds internal monitoring capacity within government institutions. Internal monitoring involves managers setting performance targets for their programmes and operations, measuring performance regularly, analysing reasons for poor performance and introducing changes to enhance performance.
- 119 Evaluations should be carried out during different stages of the life cycle of all major programmes and projects, with the aim of assessing relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, value for money, and recommending ways forward. They should be conducted in a demand-driven manner that promotes ownership and use of evidence for improving performance, accountability, learning and decision-making.
- 120 Performance information systems and data should be managed appropriately to ensure quality evidence. There should be alignment between monitoring and reporting processes. Quality norms and standards should be applied in all cases.
- 121 M&E should be carried out in a wise manner that takes into consideration both the benefits and potential unintended consequences (risks), especially in relation to over-use of targets, and the consequences of this having too high an impact, which promotes gaming.
- 122 Potential benefits from using M&E for evidence-based planning, budgeting and management of implementation include improvements in transparency, accountability, learning, feedback, productivity, quality, value for money and impact. However there is a danger of ignoring professional judgement and not seeking a nuanced understanding of the underlying reasons for good or poor performance. Potential unintended consequences that could occur are gaming and manipulation of results, ignoring of non-targeted areas,

- alienation of professional staff, focus on inappropriate targets leading to a punishment of good performance, increase in bureaucracy, and blocking of innovation and learning.
- 123 The system has to be developed in such a way as to increase the likelihood of the benefits, while minimising the risks, above all promoting a problem-solving approach. M&E findings should be used to inform policy-making, planning, budgeting and continuous improvement based on experience.
- 124 A learning and problem-solving approach requires consequences not if people make mistakes (innovating requires being prepared to make mistakes), but if people do not learn and improve based on these mistakes. Both political and administrative leadership are responsible to ensure that M&E findings result in consequences where there is poor performance and no serious attempt at improvement.
- 125 As the custodian of M&E, DPME will facilitate the promotion of the principles and practices contained in this document to enhance service delivery and accountability. This institutionalisation process will be done in partnership with all government institutions, oversight bodies, civil society, academia, private sector, development community, and most importantly, the citizens who are the main clients of public sector policies.

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Guideline 2.2.1 Guideline for Evaluation Terms of Reference

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FSD Process Map

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Monthly scores aggregation sheet

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