

# Monitoring and evaluation at the national level (II)

## • A welcome proposition

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### Role of M&E in National Development

**M**&E are integral part of the planning process. As noted earlier, M&E provides information on the deviations from set goals/targets and corrective measures to programmes/projects, strategies, activities, policies implemented for national development. Without it, national development programmes would suffer from the culture of "business as usual" as opposed to the culture of continuous improvement. There are other challenges: there is often too much focus on activities without assessing the results; monitoring and reporting is done merely for compliance; as well as insufficient measurement, collection and analysis of data to inform improvements in project outcomes. An established M&E systems will produce detailed information on the effects and impacts of the projects, programmes and activities, based on which development authorities can make the necessary changes to the programmes for improved results.

**Evaluation of Programme**

Again, M&E can increase government accountability, effective utilisation of resources and transparency. The information that M&E programmes and systems generate is critical for raising awareness and promoting a debate about the efficiency of public programmes and policies. It can empower citizen to hold their government accountable - as long as there are also the mechanisms in place for the government to use this feedback to make changes

in budgeting, planning or efficiency of programmes.

Monitoring and evaluation is necessary to achieve evidence-based policy making. Policy making, especially budget decision-making and national planning, focuses on government priorities among competing demands from citizens and groups in society. The information provided by monitoring and evaluation systems can support government's deliberations by providing evidence about the most cost-effective types of policy options. It also enables an objective assessment of the relevance and efficiency of the policy. These benefits will be realised in full if M&E systems are driven by participatory methods which allow citizen involvement in the review process.

### A welcome proposition of the current government

Following the establishment of a full Ministry for M&E, many people criticised it as wasteful and

unnecessary political gimmick intended to create "job-for-the-boys". The concern was that since M&E is done at the various ministries and departments, a full ministry was extraneous, especially when a Ministry for Planning has also been established.

Agreeing substantially with the views of the Alliance for Development Industrialisation (ADI), I contend that the government's move is not only welcome and essential, but it must be maintained by successive governments for a number of reasons. First, it will help to establish a holistic national M&E framework. Most projects and programmes require collaborative efforts between various public institutions and a broad base M&E system can enhance the desired

collaboration. M&E results could inform actual policy design as well, with a view to ensuring that policy implementation can be effectively done and also accurately tracked, monitored and evaluated.

Second, the M&Es undertaken at various institutional levels require coordinated information gathering and analysis, framework for information sharing and structured feedback systems and standardised capacity building programmes. This is necessary because the internally executed

Presidency which eventually could not function effectively and was thus scrapped perhaps because it did not have the requisite institutional and political power and resources to carry out that function.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, many political commentators and technocrats in Africa criticise the introduction of new institutions and policies in developing countries simply because they do not find them existent in the advanced countries. They should note that developing countries like Ghana cannot mimic images in these

developed economies, if they are to transform their countries.

In some cases, developing countries require peculiar institutional structures different from that of advanced economies to enable them address peculiar challenges confronting their development journey. The establishment of the Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation will enable the government to institute a

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comprehensive tracking system that will assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of all projects as well as their impact from a national perspective rather than the current piecemeal and disjointed approach carried out by the MDAs. We as a country must welcome this innovation and explore together how best we can provide necessary suggestions that will make this national level surveillance system work in accelerating national development.

A couple of weeks ago, the minister for the new M&E ministry published a seminal article in the *Daily Graphic* with the title, "Business not as usual" in which he outlined his vision and perspectives for this task. He demonstrated his

understanding of the M&E concept and how he intended to operationalise his vision in setting up a working and results-oriented national monitoring and evaluation framework. There is no doubt he is bracing himself to deliver on this mandate. We in the Christian Service University College wish him well and promise to make our expertise in our new masters programme in monitoring and evaluation available to him and the staff of his ministry.

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**Monitoring Plan**

**Monitoring & Evaluation**

**Tools and Techniques**

**Observers/ Monitors**

M&E projects from within government institutions sometimes lack the required rigour and expected standards. A full ministry will have the power and resources to effectively coordinate and supervise monitoring and evaluation of implementation of policies, programmes and activities within national institutions. Again, a Ministry for M&E would ensure the sustainability of this function. It will be recalled that in the previous administration, an M&E Office was set up within the