CAPACITY-BUILDING IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION THROUGH THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RESULTS-BASED M&E SYSTEMS: LESSONS LEARNT FROM AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA[1]

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Summary:

Building capacities in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was found to be more effective and efficient with the design of capacity-building plan over the middle run, responding to the needs of internal monitoring for managing public programs as well as of an objective evaluation of results and performance of the public sector. This plan should articulate various components such as more decentralized, effective, and diverse training, complementary technical assistance, support to information systems, various sensitization and policy discussion and professional exchange platforms, institutional support to sustainable M&E national units, development of an external evaluation capacity and of a culture of accountability. What is needed is a well-articulated roadmap at national, sector, and local levels to make progress in a modular and opportunistic ways on various M&E systems and to contribute to the professionalization of the monitoring and evaluation work. In a mature M&E national system which relies on information-rich and learning organizations, the frontiers of monitoring and evaluation persist, by with complementarily and areas of superposition.

CONTEXT

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is one of the five pillars of Results-Based Management (RBM) implementation in the Public sector in developing countries, an approach also know as Managing for Development Results (MfDR). The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness highlighted the importance of improving monitoring and evaluation of development interventions (High Level Forum, 2005). The 2008 Accra Agenda for Action reinforced the commitment of developing countries and donors to demonstrate results, through increased accountability and transparency towards the public (Third High Level Forum, 2008). Developing countries committed themselves to improve the "quality of policy design, implementation and assessment by improving information systems". Developing countries and donors agreed to work to develop cost-effective results management instruments to assess the impact of development policies and adjust them as necessary.

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[2] The authors thank their colleagues Juan Abreu and Sylvain Lariviere for their suggestions and comments on a draft paper.

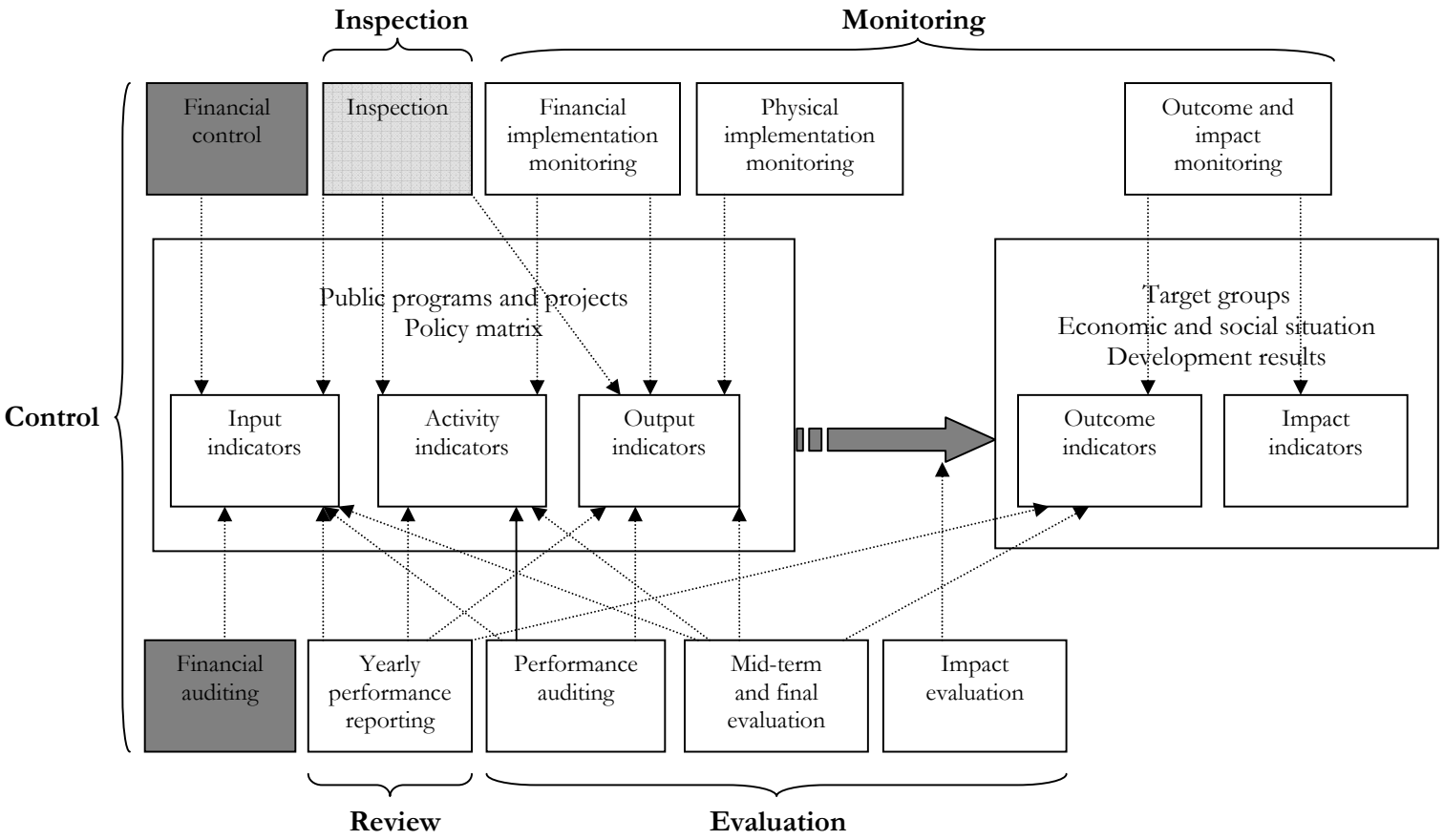
The MfDR team has put together a MfDR Capacity Scan toolkit to help assess progress in national MfDR capacity, including capacity in M&E (OECD/DAC, 2009). Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) has therefore become a priority on the development agenda. In a context of limited public resources amplified by the financial crisis, the importance of improving national capacities in M&E with approaches that are appropriate, economic, and sustainable cannot be overemphasised.

Let us remind two basic considerations. First, the M&E domain covers a variety of sub-areas[3] as clearly indicated by Figure 1. Monitoring informs regularly on progress made in policy, program, and project implementation towards targets set and provide information necessary to adjust those if necessary. It covers financial and physical implementation monitoring and outcome and impact indicators monitoring, the latter without establishing linkages with the rest of the public value chain. Evaluation is "the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program, or policy, and of its design, implementation, and results to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability" (MfDR , 2009). It covers the classical program/project evaluation, including baseline, mid-term review, and final evaluation) as well as impact evaluation. Review through annual performance reports is more and more considered an intermediate area between monitoring and evaluation. Control usually has a financial focus, including financial control and financial audits. Finally, inspection focuses on the completion of standards and rules related to processes and product quality. Second, ECB is much wider than training. ECB involves strengthening or building M&E systems, especially country-based systems, so that M&E is regularly conducted and used by the countries/organizations themselves (OECD, 2004).

Various ECB initiatives have been implemented either as components of development projects or through specialized institutions (e.g. World Bank Institute (WBI), IDEA) or through specific programs (e.g. International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET), Paris 21). Unfortunately, few ECB initiatives have been subjected to thorough evaluation. The few significant evaluations made such as the World Bank Operations Evaluation Department (OED) self evaluation of Evaluation Capacity Development conducted in 2004 (World Bank, 2004) and the evaluation of World Bank's project-based and WBI training conducted by the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) in 2007, have seriously questioned the effectiveness and impact of existing ECB initiatives, especially those based exclusively on training.

[3] There is no unique way of defining those subareas in the literature.

Figure 1: Areas of monitoring and evaluation and their relationship with the public value chain



This paper draws on the experience of a number of experts from the IDEA[4] network in supporting developing countries' institutions, programs and projects in the implementation of RBM in Africa, Asia and Latin America. First, it outlines major challenges in ECB. Second, it draws lessons learnt and identifies some best practices in M&E capacity building. Finally, it makes several recommendations for more effective and sustainable ECB.

1. CHALLENGES IN ECB

The field experience in a number of countries where IDEA experts worked is congruent with the results of the few ECB evaluation studies conducted, i.e. mitigated results of capacity building, especially through training only solutions. Depending on the country, Governments face more or less significant constraints in human, technical, and financial resources for M&E. This area is not yet perceived systematically as a priority in terms of budget allocation. In many countries, M&E units are recent, partly staffed or staffed with young professionals that may possess the technical know-how, but do not have necessarily the experience and political clout to be listened to by technical departments and by the Cabinet.

The lack of properly trained human resources (in number and/or capacity) in national institutions not only affects directly their capacity to monitor and evaluate policies, strategies and programs, but also increases the chances of poor decision-making and wrong resource allocation when letting non experts decide on the kind of M&E system, training, and technical assistance needed by national institutions. In addition, this shortage of qualified manpower can reduce opportunities for the transfer of know-how, i.e., a reduced staff can prevent them from getting involved in the actual design and implementation of the M&E system and lead to a lack of interest or fear of additional workload. This situation, most of the time, will result in the solution being almost entirely developed by external consultants, limiting therefore ownership and the sustainability of the M&E system.

M&E units, along with many public service units, face a major issue of staff turnover. This unfortunate situation comes from a number of factors: political changes resulting in frequent staff rotation and re-affectation, low financial incentives for civil servants, insufficient integrity and professionalism in human resource nomination and evaluation processes discouraging real professionals to stay in this institutional environment, the brain drain by international organizations

[4] IDEA stands for Institute for Development in Economics and Administration. It is a private institute recognized by the Canadian Federal Government. For more information, see www.idea-international.org

and donor agencies, etc. The end result is the destabilization of already weak institutions and the tendency to come back to square one with the renewal of M&E Unit staff.

In fragile states, the situation is further complicated by donors who develop a number of Project Implementation Units (PIUs) outside the public sector. Those institutional arrangements may help deliver results in the short run and help control financial leakage, but actually prevent the development of sustainable national delivery mechanisms and M&E capacity within ministries. In such a donor-driven context, central access to information and coordination of M&E processes by the sector ministries and the Ministry of Planning become major challenges.

The design of ECB may be faulty. In some cases, M&E was not part of program/project design, but was added later on, creating all kinds of gaps, e.g. the lack of a systematic baseline at the start of the program or project. Insufficient attention may have been paid to the organizational context and institutional constraints, leading to unrealistic and overambitious objectives. Kusek and Rist (2004) rightly insist that the starting point for the design and implementation of a results-based M&E system should be a readiness assessment, including among others the validation of the commitment of the organization leaders to the RBM approach.

In many cases, capacity building strategies and plans, including a diagnosis of the situation and a needs assessment were not developed as a component of the M&E system implementation. This results in little knowledge of potential weaknesses and areas of improvement in M&E capacity, an inadequate design of capacity building activities which often look like a long list of uncoordinated short-term capacity building activities.

The selection process of participants to training can also be a problem. In some cases, participants do not have to make much effort to mobilize funds for their participation and can be chosen more for their personal relationships with high-level officials than in relation with the organization's needs, the specific mandate that the participant has to fulfil in his/her organization (e.g. at strategic level or at operational level), and his/her skills level. Such a person may be more interested by institutional tourism rather than in training contents.

Capacity building activities through training programs often tend to have a short term perspective (1 to 4 weeks at most) with very limited follow up to ensure the application of new knowledge and techniques in participants' day-to-day work. In many cases, some participants come back enthusiastic about what they learnt during the training, but do not know how to apply their newly acquired knowledge once in the workplace. Without proper follow up, adequate incentives and resources for implementation of learning, the daily grind and old habits quickly win over the desire for change and the temporary capacity gains just disappear over time.

Unfortunately, even when capacity building plans are developed, they often are not the result of a thorough needs analysis and do not factor in the institutional environment, human and material resources in which it will be implemented. In the case of capacity building through the implementation of Results-Based M&E systems, it is of utmost importance to put the institutional environment at the center of the process if sustainable M&E system is to be implemented.

There is often a limited supply of quality in-country training. In many countries, the availability of institutions and/or experts with adequate training capacity coupled with regional or international experience is insufficient to enable relevant and practical transfer of know-how to participants. National and regional experts may not have sufficient analytical and technical evaluation skills or may not be familiar with lessons learnt and best practices from other parts of the world, not to mention pedagogical skills. International experts brought from the outside usually have the technical know-how, but may lack a sufficient understanding of institutional and cultural realities to propose appropriate and realistic solutions and workplan. Both categories may be hampered by a narrow disciplinary approach while M&E issues often require a multi-prong approach better brought along by a multi-disciplinary teamwork. The lack of field experience also translates in limited relevance and practical nature of training material. The lack of in-country training capacity also translates in higher training costs for governments with already limited resources.

The situation is often worse in non Anglophone countries. Non-English speaking professionals enjoy a very limited access to quality M&E trainings and information sources. There is a wealth of resources available in English which, unfortunately, are not accessible due to language barriers. The offer of M&E trainings is also very limited for non-English speaking individuals. This is often true in Latin America and even more in Francophone Africa.

Little knowledge of the institutional environment and the incapacity of identifying champions in the organization can also lead to resistance to change due to fear of the "unknown". For instance, in the process of implementing Results-Based M&E systems, there can be resistance due to fear of traditional evaluation schemes where "results" were used to blame rather than as a feedback mechanism to enhance performance.

Finally, training results are rarely monitored and evaluated. In an RBM perspective, capacity building plans should include an M&E component to monitor and evaluate not only outputs (number of trainees, number of trainings), but also outcomes, i.e., how did the training change the behaviour and performance at individual and institutional level. This is seldom done. It is easier and less time-consuming to report on outputs (i.e., number of trainees) and on direct outcome indicators such as the level of satisfaction of the participants at the end of the training rather than on actual outcomes

and impacts which require facing the methodological challenge to link increased capacity with capacity building interventions such as behavioural changes, changes in organizational culture, increased know-how, etc.

2. ECB STRATEGIES BUILDING ON LESSONS LEARNT AND BEST PRACTICES

ECB strategies proposed below follow four basic objectives for greater results:

1. Increasing the relevance of M&E for policy-makers to stimulate their demand for M&E products;
2. Improving the quantity and quality of the supply of M&E products;
3. Ensuring cost-effectiveness of M&E products;
4. Promoting the sustainability of M&E systems and institutional arrangements.

The strategies presented below should not be considered as substitutes, but rather as complementary building blocks.

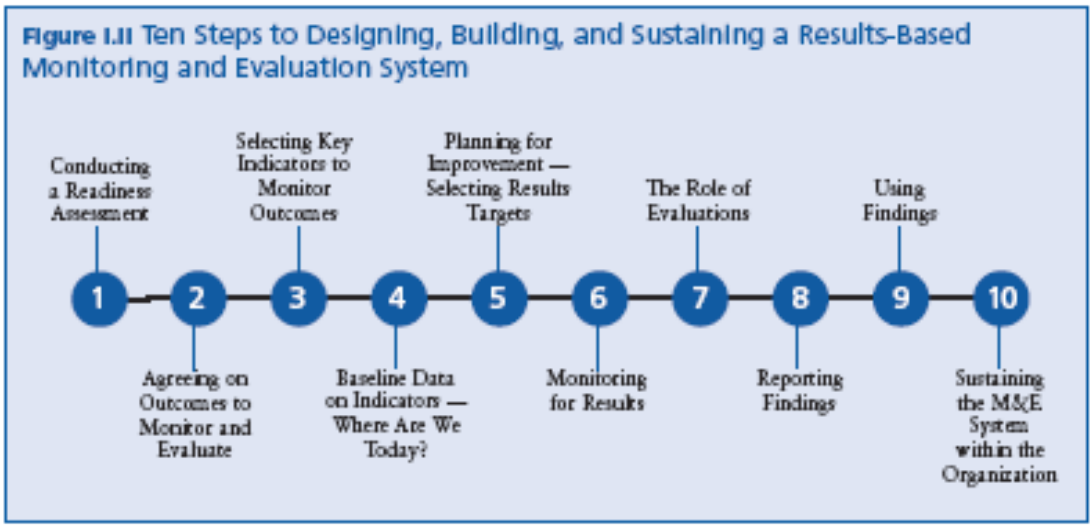
Integrating ECB as par of M&E system implementation

Training in M&E should not be conducted for the sake of training, but rather considered as a catalyst for the implementation of a Results-Based M&E system. Anchoring ECB in the actual implementation and improvement of a RBM M&E system enables to keep a sense of the ultimate purpose of ECB, i.e., contributing to better public policies and programs. Conversely, making progress in the implementation of the RBM M&E system provides an opportunity of learning by doing, thereby reinforcing and building capacities within a given organization.

The process of designing and implementing an M&E system should be progressive as different components of the M&E system are implemented gradually. There is no ready-made, off-the-shelf solution and the approach must be adapted to the needs and the situation regarding the existing M&E systems. However, the roadmap is provided by the now standard reference in the field, i.e. the "10 steps to designing, building and sustaining a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation system by Kusek and Rist (2004) (see Figure 2).

Tailor-made to the institutional and political context, the needs assessment, the existing M&E system, and available resources, this roadmap has been used in several mandates conducted by IDEA Institute experts and proven to provide a relevant and effective framework for ECB. A good illustration is the design and implementation of a so-called Results-Based Monitoring System (SMBR

Figure 2: Ten (10) steps to designing, building and sustaining a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation system



Source: Kusek and Rist (2004)

in Spanish) at the Ministry of Social Affairs of Mexico (SEDESOL). Best practices from this experience included:

- Close implication of the organization's personal in the M&E system's implementation to reinforce the know-how within the organization and ensuring the system's sustainability. Staff involved in the process of implementing the RBM system at SEDESOL not only served as a pool of resources for other programmes within the Ministry, but also for the development of the nation-wide M&E system which is currently being designed and implemented by the Ministry of Public Service (SFP) with the support of the National Social Policy Evaluation Council (CONEVAL) and the Ministry of Finance (SHCP).
- Involvement of all stakeholders at all stages of the process of designing and implementing the M&E system to guarantee their support and ensure the success of the project, resulting in greater sustainability.
- The process of designing and implementing an M&E system through a pilot on 4 out of 27 programs to learn from the experience while building the organization's capacities for the expansion of the system, resulting in a reduced reliance on external resources later on.
- An ECB approach itself being based on RBM principles, including a focus on results and a process involving a needs assessment, the formulation of M&E capacity building strategies, the design and implementation of M&E capacity building action plans, and the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of M&E capacity building strategies and action plans as well as training effectiveness.

Lessons learnt include the following:

- It is important to understand clearly the needs of all stakeholders in terms of data, information systems, reports, etc. Many times the clients themselves do not know exactly what their specific needs are. Either they consider information as a free good and have infinite needs. Or they have a narrow perspective based on their specific short term needs linked to their role in the organization with little concern for end results. It is the consultant's responsibility to help clients identify their specific needs and suggest if necessary different options as a starting point.
- Getting a good grasp of the existing M&E system can be challenging, especially in middle-income countries, where ministries have developed over the years a variety of M&E mechanisms and information systems that are scattered in various parts of the organization without necessarily much coordination, harmonization or even simply information dissemination. For example, the diagnostic made at SEDESOL in 2004 identified 33 information systems running in the organization.
- The diagnostic should try to evaluate M&E capacity within the organization and build an M&E training plan as a central component of the M&E system implementation project in order to ensure the involvement of personnel throughout the process and maximize the number of "champions", while limiting the number of potential "opponents".
- Programme personnel involved in the design and implementation of the M&E system can sometimes see the new system as a source of additional responsibilities and work, which can cause some frustrations or lack of interest. Therefore, incentives should be planned to guarantee full participation of stakeholders and personnel all the way through the process.
- Enhancing capacity in M&E requires looking at capacity in the other pillars of RBM[5]. Problems encountered at M&E level often result from faulty design and implementation in other RBM pillars. In SEDESOL, program logical frameworks had to be revised for logic, choice of performance indicators meeting the CREAM+[6] criteria, and choice of targets meeting the SMART[7] criteria. In many countries, M&E is not considered seriously by many stakeholders until results bear consequences on future budget allocations, which implies linking the M&E process with the budget preparation process.
- M&E goes way beyond technical skills. To act as change agents, M&E officers must have leadership and communication skills to help convince their colleagues in technical departments as well as the ministry Cabinet of their self-interest in implementing RBM and push for further reform implementation.

[5] IDB/PRODEV considers the following 5 pillars for RBM/MfDR : Strategic planning, budgeting for results, public finance management, program and project management, and M&E (Garcia Lopez, 2008). OECD/DAC/MfDR considers the following 5 pillars of MfDR : Leadership; Evaluation and Monitoring; Accountability and Partnerships; Planning and Budgeting; and Statistics (MfDR, 2009).

[6] C: Clear, R: Relevant, E: Economic, A: Adequate, M: Monitorable, +: has an added value compared to the others.

[7] S: Specific; M: Measurable; A: Achievable, R: Relevant, T: Time-bound.

Based on this and other experiences, a check-list of key factors to consider in RBM M&E system design and implementation has been developed (Table 1).

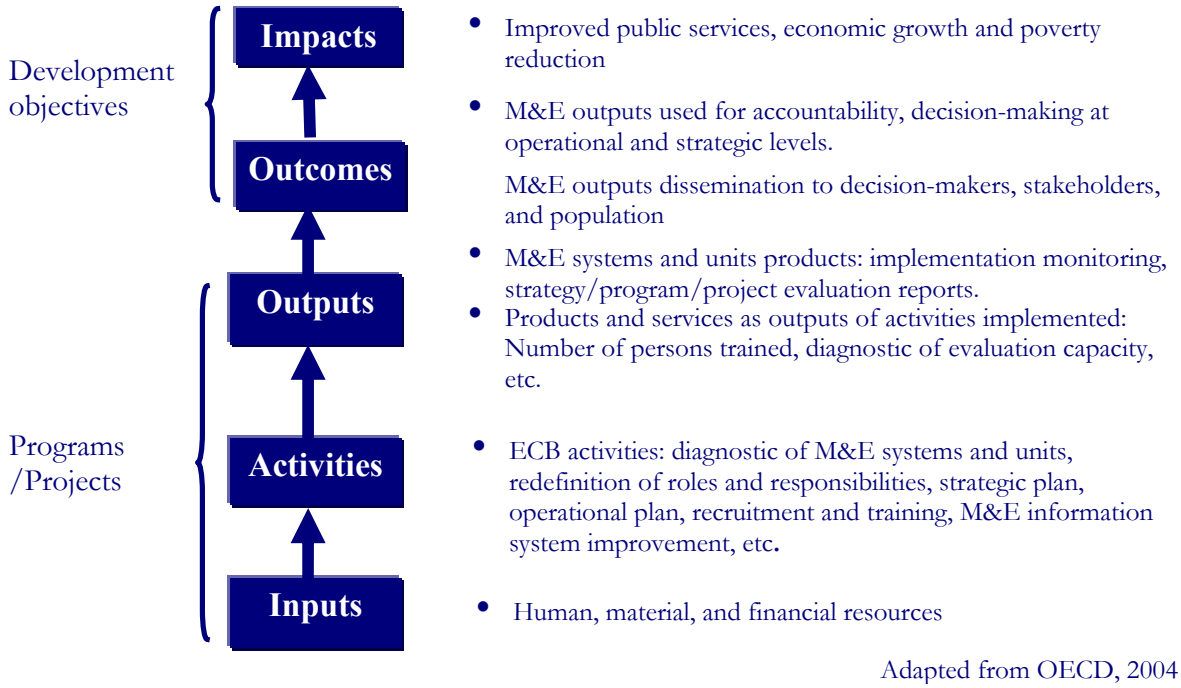
Table 1: Check-list of key questions to consider in RBM M&E system design and implementation

Phase	Key questions
Diagnostic – Readiness assessment	1. Has it been conducted? Does it need to be updated? 2. If yes, did it follow the 10 steps methodology (Step 1)? 3. Was it participatory? - internally has it involved: o strategic level, operational level; o technical departments along with M&E unit; o regional level as well as central level; - externally: other ministries (especially Planning, Economy and Finance, Public Service), Parliament, civil society, international organizations and major donors 4. Have all actors involved in M&E in the organization and other relevant public organizations been identified and their activities and results characterized? 5. Have all major M&E tools and information systems used for M&E by the organization and other relevant public organizations been identified and characterised? 6. If not, what kind of training is needed to conduct a participatory readiness assessment based on the organization's internal resources skills?
Design of the M&E system	1. To what extent the existing system can be capitalized upon to design an RBM M&E system? 2. If the system has been designed, did it follow the 10 steps methodology (Steps 2-7)? 3. To what extent the design of the M&E system has been participatory? 4. Have the major users of the M&E system been clearly identified and their demand in terms of M&E results narrowed down? 5. To what extent the proposed M&E system will respond over time to the needs of the target groups? 6. To what extent the proposed M&E system various components are coordinated technically and institutionally? 7. To what extent the proposed M&E system can be handled with existing human resources? Have the training and technical assistance needs for M&E implementation been assessed? 8. Are there minimum workable institutional set up and incentives for the proposed M&E system to be sustainable? 9. What are the financial requirements of the proposed M&E system over the next 3-5 years and can those resources be reasonably secured? 10. If the system is not yet designed, what kind of training and technical assistance is needed to design the M&E system in a participatory way based on the organization's internal resources?
Implementation of the M&E system	1. Is there a clear workplan or at least a roadmap for M&E implementation? 2. If the RBM M&E system is being implemented, where are we in the process? 3. Does it follow the 10 steps methodology (Steps 8-10)? 4. To what extent the implementation of the M&E system is participatory? 5. To what extent does the M&E system respond to the needs of the target groups? 6. To what extent are the M&E system various components coordinated technically and institutionally? 7. To what extent can the M&E system be implemented with existing human resources and current training and technical assistance provided? 8. Is the institutional set up functional? Are incentives reasonable? 9. Is the M&E system properly financed? 10. If the system is not yet implemented, what kind of training and technical assistance is needed to implement the M&E system in a participatory way based on the organization's internal resources?

Identifying clearly the desired ECB results

The expected results from ECB should be clearly identified and a consensus built among stakeholders. The standard analytical tool is the result chain presented in Figure 3. Performance indicators need clearly to go beyond outputs to cover outcomes and, whenever measurable, impacts. What matters in the end is that M&E reports and control panels be accessible to decision makers at strategic (Cabinet) level and operational (program and project) level and be used for policy-making, program management, and the determination of future budget allocations. Decision-makers are often confused about what are their results. In Senegal, there was a lot of talking about results, but various training workshops helped clarify what they meant concretely at various levels. For example, the Director of Primary and Secondary Education realized that classrooms built and teachers trained were outputs of respectively construction projects and teachers training school, but were inputs for his more strategic level. He also had to be concerned with more than graduation, dropout, and doubling rates which were his output indicators, but also with success of his previous students in the next education level, placement rate or development of self-employment for graduates on the labor market.

Figure 3: ECB Public Value Chain



Adapted from OECD, 2004

Key results should also be accessible to other stakeholders for accountability. To follow up on the case of Senegal, a lot of M&E data were available here and there with little coordination and validation by the Direction of Statistics and frustration on the part of civil servants and civil society with the limited access to those results and reports. Since then, a new National Agency for Statistics and Demography has been established with greater autonomy and power along with a national statistical web-based information system.

Using the results chain as analytical framework helps identify four (4) levels of training evaluation with corresponding means of verification (Table 2).

Table 2: Levels of training evaluation

Level	Measures	Common Means of Verification
Level 1	Participant satisfaction	End-of-course participant questionnaires
Level 2	Learning outputs	Post-tests, sometimes as compared with pre-tests
Level 3	Performance change outcomes	Multiple, including observation, interviews and surveys of participants, colleagues, and supervisors
Level 4	Organizational impact/results	Multiple, including comparisons with baseline organizational performance measures, surveys, and interviews with key informants

Source: IEG (2007)

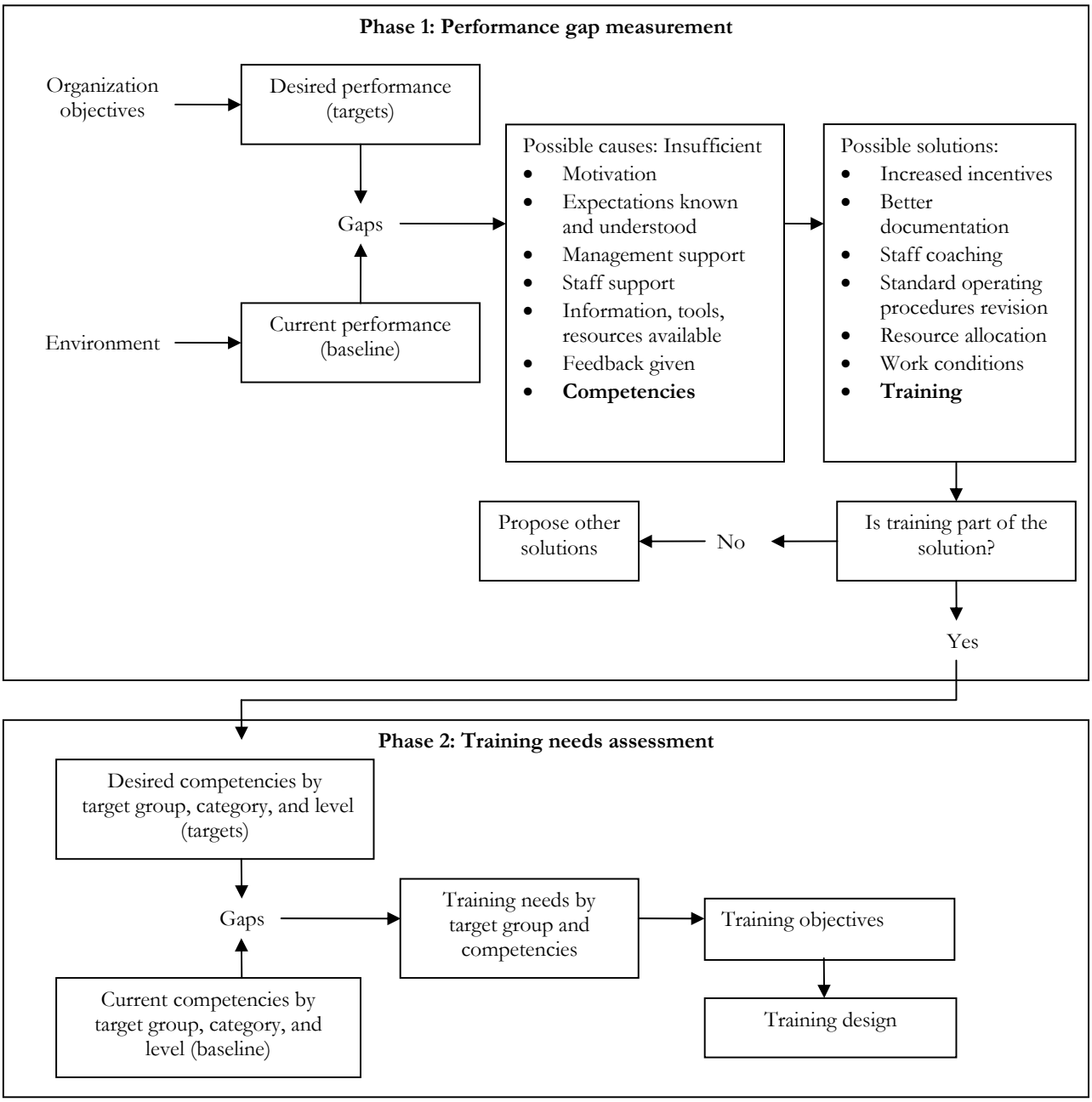
Key factors for effective training

Training is an important component of an ECB strategy and, as such, attention should be paid on key factors for effective training. Based on the IDEA Institute experience, we certainly concur with IEG that "One of the strongest determinants of training success is the organizational context in which training is done. For training to be successful, participants must have the resources and incentives to implement acquired skills and knowledge. Where these resources and incentives are not in place prior to training, training must be accompanied by properly sequenced interventions in order to address organizational and institutional constraints" (IEG, 2008).

Experience shows that demand-driven capacity building activities are usually more sustainable and effective. They tend to respond to more specific felt needs and participants to such training activities tend to be more motivated to learn and then to apply what they learnt. A demand-driven approach implies of course designing the training program on the basis of the training needs identified in a participatory way during the diagnostic/readiness assessment. Figure 4 suggests a structured approach for performance gap measurement and training needs assessment that has been used successfully several times by the IDEA Institute.

It also means a careful selection of participants for each kind of training activity. An ECB plan should consider various kinds of training activities that fit with various categories of participants, objectives and constraints. Strategic level participants want to focus on the big picture and have little time. M&E professionals want a much deeper understanding of concepts and mastering of tools and techniques and have more time. As a result, the IDEA Institute has helped organize high level sensitization and discussion seminars of one to two days with a reduced number of Cabinet members, MPs, and donor heads of cooperation. For professionals who want official recognition of their skills through a North-American university diploma and have more time and the required financial resources, it has organized with University Laval a Masters Certificate in Results-Based Management, including a certificate in M&E. To facilitate access, this is offered in various locations (Dakar for francophone Africa, Dar es Salaam for Anglophone Africa and Asia, and Panama for Latin America and the Caribbean) and in the three UN languages (English, French, and Spanish). For professionals who have limited time and money, the Institute has organized various tailor-made technical workshops either in its regional centers or in-country on specific M&E topics based on demand expressed. What is striking is that most participants to those workshops secure their own funding and the demand is growing, demonstrating that a market-driven approach can work.

Figure 4: A structured approach to training needs assessment



Source: Adapted from Bureau (2004)

Training a critical mass of civil servants in M&E offers a number of advantages for a Government. It helps deal with staff turnover and over attrition phenomena to maintain a minimum ECB in M&E units. It creates a common approach among participants who share the same vision, language, tools and can better communicate among themselves in community of practices. In several countries, the Government asked each Ministry to put aside a budget line on capacity-building in Results-Based Management, and more specifically M&E, and send their executives to the same training to create this critical mass, thereby also creating a momentum in terms of moving ahead with RBM related reforms.

One key factor for effective training is to select pedagogical strategy adapted to the context, the participants and intended objectives. The experience of the Institute is that participants appreciate when a variety of pedagogical methods are used, including a minimum of lectures and a maximum of participatory methods Training in M&E requires not only to have trainers skilled in M&E and with field work experience, but also skills in pedagogy. The Institute in association with University Laval uses a competency approach in which a set of competencies is identified for each training target group along with current and desired level of mastery for each competency. Then a training plan is designed to establish the linkages between the various training modules and their contribution to competency enhancement.

In terms of training methods, executive training requires moving away from theoretical training and concentrating on hands-on training. This does not mean that training becomes a collection of anecdotes. A solid analytical framework such as the 10 steps and learning how to use professionally evaluation tools is a must for relevance and credibility. However, practical training means using a lot of examples, presenting and discussing success stories through debates with experienced professionals in working group sessions, helping trainees develop their own M&E systems and tools during the training (Cape Verde and Bolivia), conducting study tours (e.g. delegation of Vietnam coming to Canada to learn more about municipal performance measurement; a delegation of Benin going to Panama to learn more about large project monitoring and evaluation). Complementary training strategies include participating in Community of Practices and international association meetings such as the IDEAS Global conference.

The choice of trainers is another key factor for effective training. In the end, any training process is based on the capacity of the trainer to raise interest in the head of the trainees to motivate them to open their ears and mental frame to accept new concepts, tools, approaches and that will effectively transfer his/her know-how to the trainees. This requires a rare species combining a high level of education to possess an analytical framework and related concepts and master evaluation tools, a large field experience in a variety of institutional and cultural contexts to know what they are talking about, pedagogical skills, and in the end, just human skills to handle high level participants from a

variety of backgrounds. Academics tend to be …well, academics, researchers tend to focus on advanced technical subtleties of interest to them and their few peers which are far too advanced to be relevant for most M&E professionals working in a developing country context. Long term consultants and practitioners tend to talk lively about their own valuable experiences, but may be outdated on methodologies and IT. Civil servants and national and regional consultants may (i) have trouble distancing themselves from the specificities of the environment and the tools they know, (ii) are not necessarily experts in a variety of modern M&E tools and approaches (iii) do not necessarily have the pedagogical skills required from professional trainers. Thus, the second best is often to use a team of complementary trainers and make sure that they work together so that the training is not a piecemeal collection of individual contributions without leading thread.

One key challenge for the M&E community is how to increase accessibility to quality training in M&E. For illustration purposes, IPDET trains in Canada around 275 participants per year in English. This Cadillac of training is doing a great job at training top notch M&E professionals that will act as champions of change in their organization upon their return. However, most M&E officers cannot go to IPDET in Canada. A first solution is to replicate IPDET in various locations and languages. Already two such initiatives have taken place with SHIPDET in Shanghai offered twice a year and CzechDET offered in Prague on an occasional basis, both in English. IDEAS and the IDEA Institute are discussing the possibility of organizing a DIPDET in Dakar in French for Francophone Africa and a PIPDET in Panama in Spanish for Latin America. A second solution is to build the training program around a "Training of Trainers" formula. The Institute recently used such a formula in DRC. For the first phase of two weeks, IDEA experts trained 50 participants. The best were selected for a second phase of Training of Trainers, deepening their understanding and developing their pedagogical skills. Then the newly trained trainers gave the training with the technical backup and advice of the IDEA experts. The end result was that, in six weeks, 100 participants were trained and 5 trainers as well who can now replicate the training at central and decentralized level. A third solution is to develop partnerships with regional and national training institutions to develop executive training professional programs leading to certifications. The IDEA Institute has developed such partnerships on procurement systems with the "Ecole Nationale des Régies Financières" (ENAREF), a school based in Ouagadougou with a mandate to train public finance offices for all eight UEMOA countries, and on project management with the Tanzania Public Service College (TPSC) in Dar es Salaam.

Another factor for effective training is the follow up given to the training. In the IDEA experience, the most effective and sustainable strategy is to design and implement an ECB project over the medium run (2-3 years) in which the Institute accompanies a national team with a combination of training, technical assistance and support to data quality and information systems. Activities are organized according to a flexible roadmap including the production of intermediate outputs that are

required from the national team, e.g. progress on policy matrix targets to prepare for World Bank semesterly review missions, NDP or PRSP evaluation, major program impact evaluation study, yearly performance review in line with the next budget preparation and MTEF updating processes, etc. Usually, the program starts with training, then technical support missions, then training on the job.

Based on those experiences, a check-list of quality criteria for effective training has been developed (Table 3).

Table 3: Check-list of quality criteria for effective training

Evaluation topic	Quality criteria
Training needs assessment and training design	1. Has a training needs assessment been conducted? 2. Has the training design been based on the needs assessment? 3. Has the training design clearly identified target groups, training objectives and expected results in terms of progress on specific competencies? 4. Are the training targets SMART?
Participant selection	1. Have selection criteria been established? 2. Are they professional? 3. Are they congruent with the training objectives? 4. Have participants been selected according to the selection criteria? 5. Have they been involved in securing their funding for the training?
Trainers selection	1. Do the selected trainers possess the required educational background? 2. Do they possess the required field experience in a variety of institutional and cultural contexts? 3. Do they possess the pedagogical skills for the training?
Pedagogical strategy	4. Has a pedagogical strategy been clearly outlined? 5. If yes, does it use a competency-based approach? 6. Does it combine a variety of training methods? 7. Does it emphasize practical applications and active participation of the participants? 8. Is it adapted to the target group interest, current skills, and time constraint?
Evaluation and follow up	1. Is progress made by the trainees assessed during or at the end of the training? How? 2. What levels of evaluation are being conducted out of the four levels indicated in Table 2? 3. Is the training part of a more comprehensive ECB project? 4. What kind of follow up is given to the training? When? For how long? 5. Can some participants act as trainers in the future? Has the training included explicit ToT activities?

As mentioned above, training is an important component of ECB, but clearly ECB involves an array of other mechanisms, including (i) improving M&E information systems and knowledge management; and (ii) sensitization and policy dialogue forums.

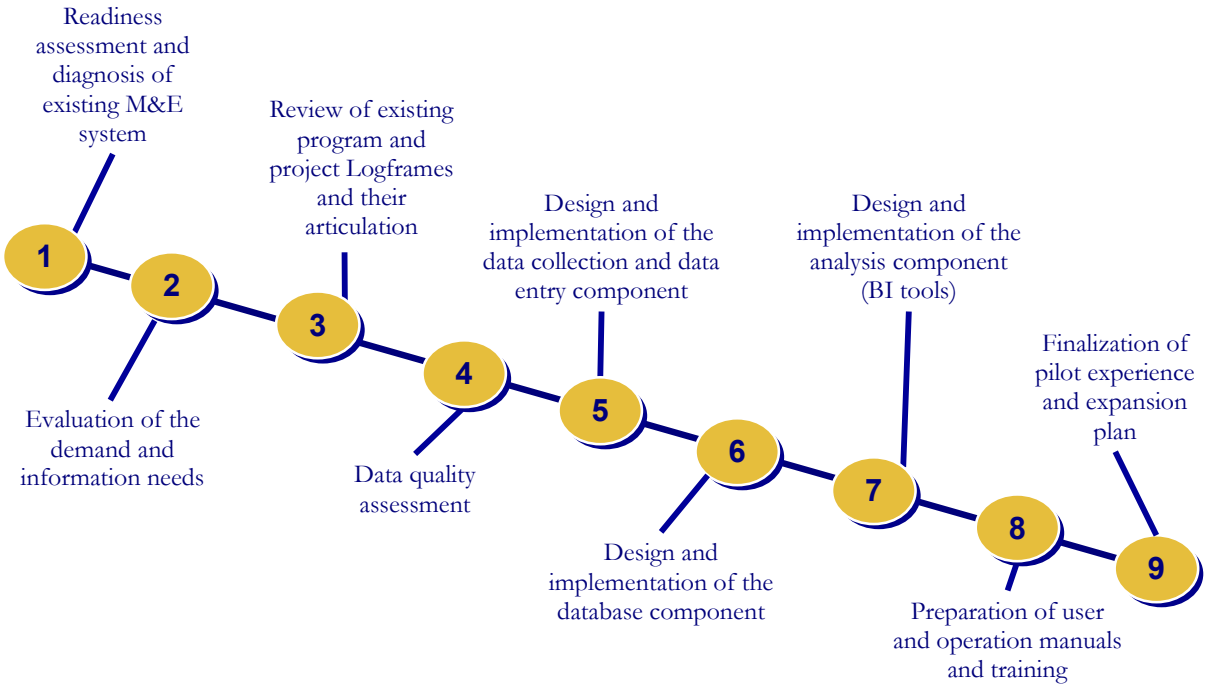
Improving M&E information systems and knowledge management

Information systems can be a very good entry point for ECB. They focus on data collection, data processing and analysis, and information dissemination and use as well as on data quality, all

elements which have major implications for the possibility of conducting a comprehensive evaluation and for its credibility. Beyond those obvious elements, working on the implementation of a RBM M&E information system can enable to make progress on several key elements of a Results-Based M&E system.

Figure 5 presents a best practice 9 step methodology to implement a RBM M&E information system based on various IDEA Institute experiences and it can easily be seen that such steps fit nicely within the overall 10 steps methodology.

Figure 5: Nine (9) steps to the implementation of a RBM M&E information system



A second best practice is a series of new applications that are being developed by a variety of organizations and firms such as automatized control panels. The IDEA Institute has developed such control panels at sector level (e.g. Ministry of Social Affairs in Mexico) and at program level (e.g. National Land Registration Program in Panama). It has also developed an attractive information solution called *e@satisfaction* which offers a cost-effective way to measure, process, and analyze on an on-going basis data on quality in service delivery and feed it back rapidly via the web in a user-friendly way to decision-makers for better piloting of their program or project.

A third best practice is the establishment of knowledge management and learning units in many organizations. Many national and international organizations have realized that a lot of experiences, lessons learnt, and best practices were not shared among the members of the same organization and were lost when those members departed the organization for retirement, transfer or quitting. These units can play a key role in keeping and expanding an institutional memory by collecting the available information on M&E, document it properly with metadata, store it securely and safely, and provide selective access to authorized users. They can also facilitate sharing experiences from internal and external experts, participate in impact evaluation studies of major programs to learn from failures as well as successes, help orient future policies and programs, and … train the organization staff on M&E methods and results. In their new mandate, those units can take advantage of progress in IT, i.e. Electronic Documentation Management Systems (EDMS). The IDEA Institute has helped implement such systems in various institutions to keep safely and securely a huge amount of administrative and technical documentation with user-friendly retrieval.

Lessons learnt from a variety of experiences of the IDEA Institute in many countries are the following:

- In many large public bureaucracies, the information is scattered in a way that it is not always easy to know where the information lies, who has it, and what is its use. It is important to try to identify all information sources, whether it is a sophisticated information system, an Excel datasheet or a handwritten report. This information can be gathered through interviews, but can also appear as the M&E system design and implementation process progresses.
- Not only should one try to find where the information is but also how this information was gathered or calculated. It is of utmost importance to make sure that the information that will be incorporated into the system is of quality and ensure its integrity. If not, one could end up with a wealth of useless, ore even worse, wrong information. The MCA sponsored Data Quality Assessments that are being conducted in a number of countries are a welcome initiative. Similarly, the efforts to revitalize and upgrade national statistical systems under the Paris 21 initiative bring value-added.
- The design of the RBM M&E information system should be done by computer specialists, but under the supervision of M&E specialists. The latter should listen to the computer specialists who follow the rapidly expanding technological possibilities, in particular in terms of data base management and business intelligence tools to design user-friendly MIS for easier feed-back. However, the M&E specialists should keep the focus on the objective, which is a functioning, robust, cost-effective system that delivers on a regular basis the minimum information required by decision-makers. There are too many horror stories and the world is filled with non operational costly white elephants and data base cemeteries. It is useless to have a complex information system using the latest technology if it is not used in day-to-day programme activities and, ultimately, for decision-making. Computerizing a bad information system only

means faster GIGO (Garbage In – Garbage Out). It is better to start small, but surely and progressively upgrade and improve the M&E information system.

Sensitization and policy dialogue forums and professional associations

The IDEA Institute has also been associated with the establishment, participation, or reinforcement of various kinds of experience-sharing platforms and mechanisms than contribute to ECB. At country level, there is an increased use of "Joint Progress Review (JPR) between government and supporting donors, sector thematic groups and forums to foster a common vision and strategy (SWAP), etc. In Vietnam, the JPR mechanism set up to discuss Program 135, a major poverty reduction program, has contributed to a better policy dialogue between the Government and development partners and a more effective and efficient program in the end. In Cambodia, the Poverty Forum proposed by the Institute helped share a lot of scattered information on poverty and foster a policy dialogue between public institutions and a vibrant NGO community. Advocacy initiatives such as short seminars of Cabinet retreats can help develop buy-in at high level and create a momentum for RBM M&E under national leadership. The existence of a unit within the public sector dedicated to the promotion, the training and the supply of evaluation expertise can facilitate the dissemination of a culture and good practices of evaluation as is the case for the Center of Excellence in Evaluation (CEE) of the Treasury Board in Canada and the National Council for Social Policy Evaluation (CONEVAL) in Mexico. Organizing high level conferences at national or regional level, involving a combination of ministers, Cabinet members and technical high level staff and advisers, can also help compare national experiences, conduct some benchmarking, and help move toward a common understanding and strategy. Various Communities of Practices on M&E at national, regional, and international levels have sprung up with varying degrees of success and sustainability but, if well managed, can definitely contribute in a cost-effective way to share lessons learnt and best practices. Last, but not least, the professional evaluation associations have a significant role to play in ECB and IDEAS, as the only international association in development evaluation, has a unique niche and contribution to make in sharing knowledge across geographic regions, linguistic and cultural zones.

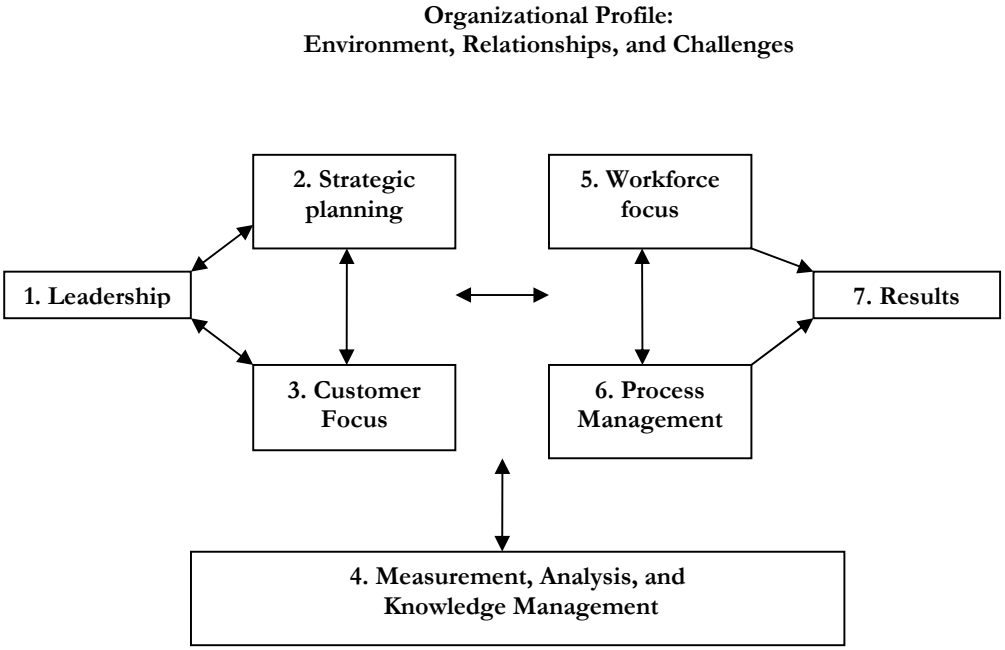
Building sustainable M&E units

Beyond more effective training, information system improvements, sensitization and policy dialogue forums and professional associations, ECB is about building sustainable M&E units. Unit is used here in a generic sense and can encompass a variety of institutional setups depending on the country and the organization.

To improve the performance and the sustainability of the M&E Unit, the IDEA Institute has tapped into management approaches that have in common improving institutional performance and results such as National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Baldrige National Quality Program (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2009; Balridge National Quality Program, 2009), its Quebec equivalent called Qualimetre (Mouvement Québécois de la Qualité, 2009), and the Balanced Scorecard approach initially developed for the private sector and then adapted to the public sector (Kaplan, 1999).

Figure 6 presents the Balridge criteria for Performance Excellence Framework while Figure 7 presents the main concepts underlined in this approach when applied to a public organization such as an M&E unit. Its focus on the mission and the target groups of the M&E unit, and its balanced consideration of human resources, financial resources and processes of this unit and their linkages has proven to be quite useful if the objective is developing the institutional sustainability of this unit.

Figure 6: Balridge criteria for Performance Excellence Framework



Source: Balridge National Quality Program (2009)

Figure 7: Key components of the Balanced Scorecard approach

Source: Adapted from Kaplan (1999)

In fragile states, one important consideration for institutional sustainability is whether the M&E unit should be within or outside the public sector. Setting the unit within ministries might not be functional if incentives and morale are low. Setting up M&E units within external Project Implementation Units (PIUs) is obviously not a sustainable approach and might actually contribute to the undermining of national sustainable institutions by attracting the few competent human resources available in the public sector by higher pay and better working conditions. An approach used by the Institute in Cambodia was to help support a Poverty Monitoring Technical Unit (PMATU) at the Ministry of Planning, made up of around 20 young national professionals, each acting as a focal point with a sector ministry. This arrangement proved a reasonable compromise between the need to produce short term M&E products and the desire to boost up capacity.

External evaluation and accountability

Apart from the central role of M&E units within line ministries, the institutional setup should include also other institutions as well as private sector and civil society organizations. In addition to organizations for *ex ante* and *ex post* internal control, a public body for external control with judiciary independence, the legal power to obtain information, and the human and financial resources for

quality work. The experience of various industrialized countries such as Canada has demonstrated its significant contribution to the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending. Beyond a strong audit organization, the culture of results develops itself on the demand side as well as on the supply side with the implementation of a Results-Based Management system in the public sector with performance contracts, public accountability on results by each actor with reference to his targets and commitments, the dissemination of information on results to the population by communication media and the actors of social society, the follow up given by the judiciary whenever necessary, the development of an evaluation capacity by the private sector and universities, etc. The demand from the private sector and the civil society for accountability for public money and the demonstration of public value created go hand in hand with the improvement in the quantity and the quality of accountability.

In a mature M&E system the limits of the two main pillars evolve, i.e. internal monitoring for program management and external evaluation for accountability. As the culture of results pervades within public institutions, internal evaluation develops as a self-improvement tool to develop an information rich and learning organization. Apart from the classical physical and financial implementation reports and baselines, mid-term and final evaluations, there is a growing development and use of other tools such as results monitoring[8], control panels and early warning systems, annual performance reports, performance audits, combined qualitative and quantitative evaluations (Q2 approach), etc. The national framework to include progressively all those components, modules and tools is the national M&E system which is built as a result of an articulated mid-term M&E plan.

CONCLUSION

Evaluation Capacity-Building involves a number of challenges. However, experience based on lessons learnt and best practices shows that significant progress is possible using a variety of ECB mechanisms in a complementary way. More decentralized, effective, and diverse training is a must. Investing in complementary technical assistance, support to information systems and various sensitization and policy discussion and professional exchange platforms as part of an overall ECB strategy and roadmap defined at national, sector and local level can help the M&E system make a lot of progress toward effectiveness and sustainability and help professionalize the evaluator's job. This continuous improvement process needs to be perceived as a key element in the more global reform of the public sector towards Managing for Development Results. It requires strong leadership and an increased commitment for ECB on the part of governments and development partners to a culture of results.

[8] El Instituto IDEA ha desarrollado una aplicación de monitoreo en línea de nivel de satisfacción de usuarios que se llama e@satisfaction y la esta implementando en varios países y organismos públicos.

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