

THE NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

ANNUAL REPORT

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the dpme

Department:
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this annual report is to provide information on the status of the National Evaluation System (NES) as per its various components. The update will include: progress made with the implementation of the National Evaluation Plan (NEP) 2020-2025; an update on provincial evaluation plans; institutionalisation of evaluations at local government level; and evaluations at state owned entities (SOEs). Furthermore, is an update on a range of activities to strengthen the NES, which include evaluation guidelines, capacity development initiatives, quality assessments, evaluation technical support, as well as management of the NES and partnerships including

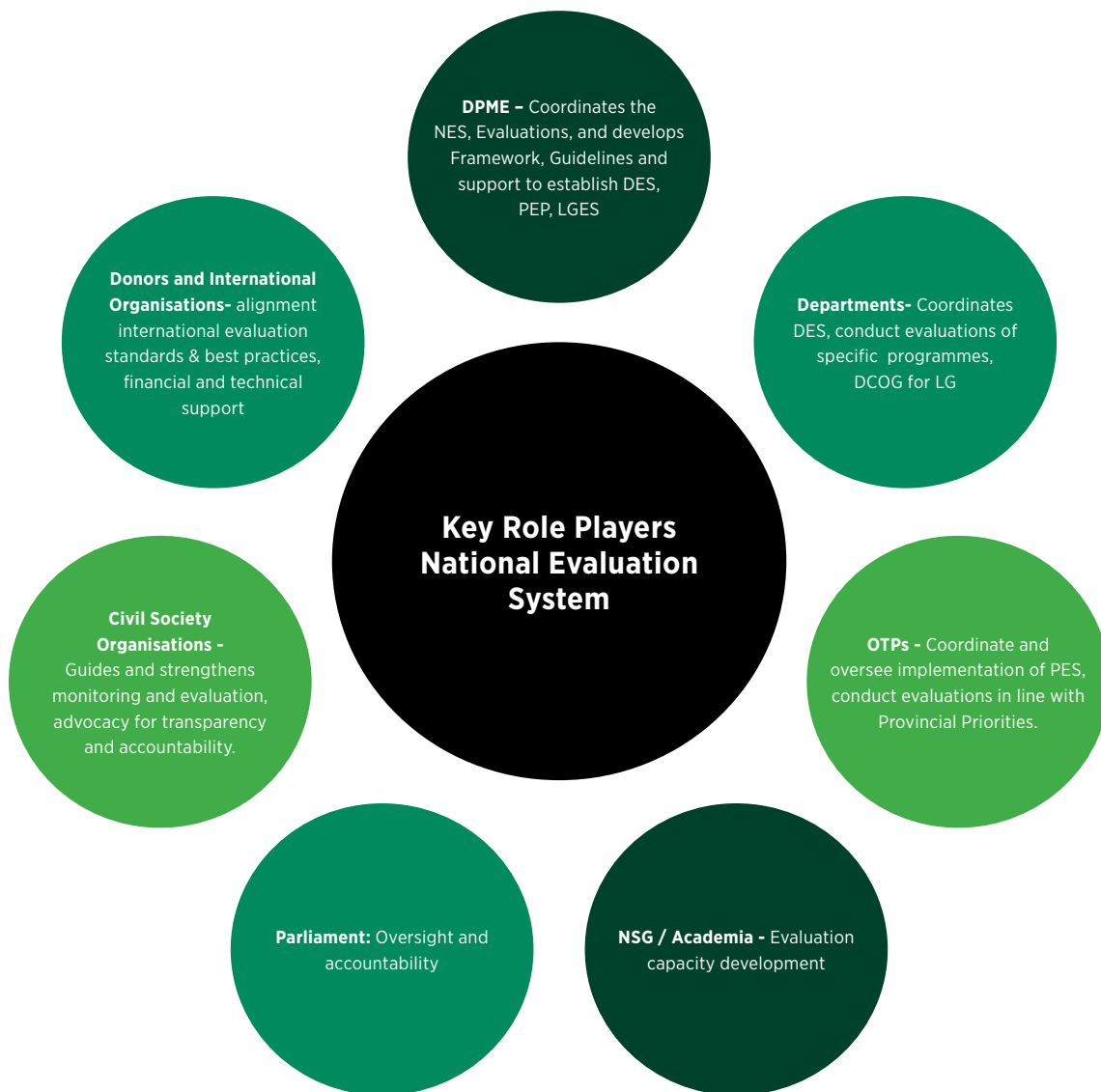
a range of stakeholder mobilisation and knowledge brokering activities. The report also covers evaluations evidence map (EEM) project that the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) is currently implementing .

The DPME started to develop the concept for the NES in 2011, and the first National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) was approved by Cabinet on 23 November 2011 with a revised version approved by Cabinet on 3 March 2020. The rationale behind the NEPF was that the government must evaluate whether it is doing the right things in the right manner. Figure 1 depicts the components of the NES and Figure 2 outlines the key stakeholders in the NES and their roles and responsibilities.

Figure 1: Components of the NES



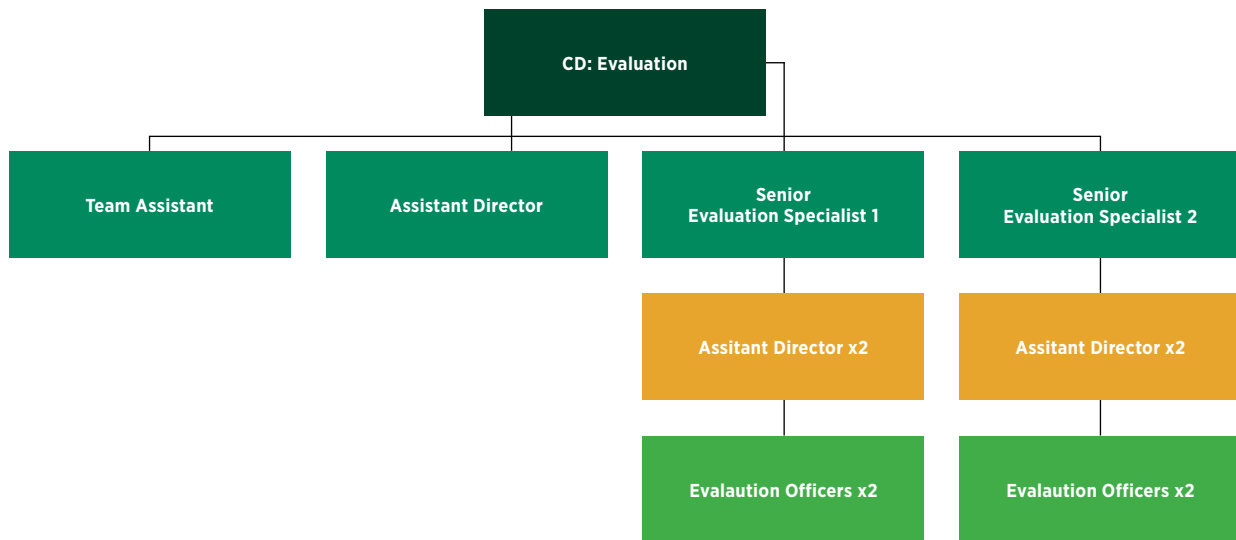
Figure 2: NES stakeholders and roles



Resources to coordinate the National Evaluation System

The figure 3 depicts the human resources for DPME evaluation unit, which coordinate the NES.

Figure 3: Human resources to coordinate the NES



The Evaluation unit has a total staff complement of 13 consisting of 1 Chief Director, 2 Senior Evaluation Specialists, 5 Assistant Directors (ASDs), 4 Senior Evaluation Officers, and 1 Team Secretary. Successive budget cuts across government have had a negative impact on the capacitation of evaluation functions, not only within the DPME but across government. The DPME Evaluation Unit had two posts of Senior Evaluation Specialists abolished from the staff establishment. Furthermore, the circular No 49 of 2023 issued by the Department of Public Service and Administration has made it difficult to fill staff vacancies. The combined impact of this was that some of the planned evaluations had to be cancelled, scaled down or deferred to be in line with available resources. Besides this, the NEP had been revised in 2020 following the changed context induced by the Covid-19 phenomenon.



2. NATIONAL EVALUATIONS

2.1 STATUS OF THE NATIONAL EVALUATION PLAN

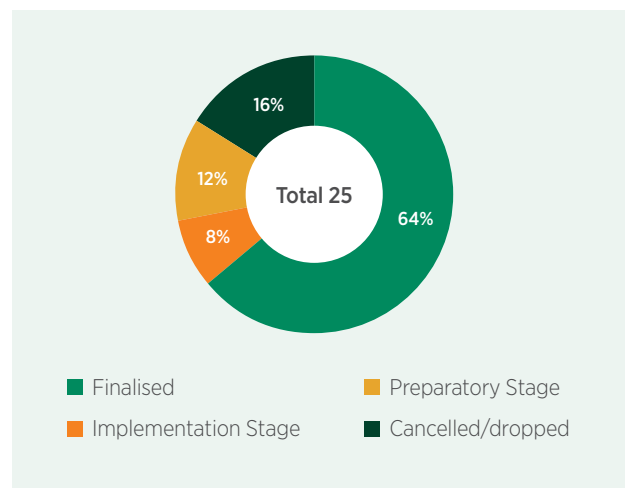
At a national level, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) is responsible for the National Evaluation Plan (NEP), which focuses on evaluations that are strategic, innovative, of significant public interest, and aimed at addressing the key priority areas of government. This is part of the DPME’s responsibility on the development and coordination of

the National Evaluation System (NES). This section will present a revised version of the NEP 2020-2025, which sets an updated evaluation agenda for the remainder of the current cycle of the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). The revision of the NEP became necessary following the changed context induced by the Covid-19 phenomenon.

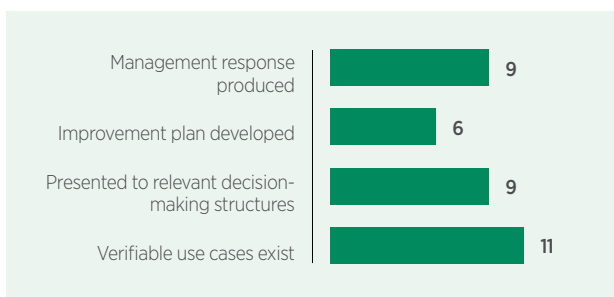
Summary on Evaluations since 2020/2021

Indicator	2020 - 25
NEP Evaluations Concepts	25
Finalised Evaluations	16
Improvements Plans Developed	6
Implementation (work-in-progress)	2
Preparatory/procurement	3
Discontinued/dropped	4

NEP 2020 - 2025 implementation progress



Use of results of recent evaluations



- The NEP comprised of 25 evaluation concepts, all informed by the current and previous MTSF priorities
- 16 of the evaluations have been completed and reports finalised, 4 discontinued/dropped, 2 still underway and 3 at a preparatory stage
- Of the finalised evaluations, 9 have been presented to relevant decision-making structures, e.g cabinet, clusters, parliamentary committees, programme steering committees, etc. in order to facilitate uptake and implementation of evaluation evidence.

Implementation work in progress

- Evaluation on 16 days campaign
- Evaluation on the Priority Human Settlements and Housing Development Areas Programme

Preparatory/procurement stage

- Evaluation on National Road Safety Strategy
- Evaluation on the National Youth Policy 2030
- Evaluation on the Department of Correctional Services Parole System (**Delayed**)

Discontinued/dropped/stopped

- Evaluation on the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on GBV
- Evaluation on spatial transformation policy in the metropolitan municipal spaces
- Evaluation on the implementation capacity within the criminal justice system value chain
- Evaluation on the support provided to small businesses in KZN and EC during flood disaster

Table 1: Update on the implementation of the NEP and non-NEP projects

Evaluation Concept	Lead/Custodian department	Status	Usage/value derived
EVALUATIONS COMPLETED			
1. Implementation Evaluation of the Service Delivery Improvement Programme (SDIP).	Public Administration.	Finalised August 2020 No Management Response or Improvement Plan.	
2. Defining and Costing of Core Package of Services for Survivors of Gender Based Violence.	Social Development.	Finalised August 2020.	DSD developed costing models of Minimum Service Funding Standards for care and service.
3. Implementation Evaluation of the environment and culture sector of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).	Environment, Forestry and Fisheries.	Finalised December 2020. Management response approved. Improvement Plan (2 October 2023).	Sector-wide engagements on IP, involving all provinces and custodian departments, DFFE (EPIP, NRM, Fisheries, Forestry), DMRE, Tourism – Working for Tourism.
4. Design/Implementation Evaluation of the National e-Governance Strategy and Institutional Architecture.	The Presidency.	Finalised May 2021. No Management Response or Improvement Plan.	Informed the development of Digital Transformation in the Public Sector (led by The Presidency, DPME, DCDT and DPSA).
5. Implementation Evaluation of the Accommodation Provision Programme under GIAMA	Public Works and Infrastructure.	Finalised July 2021. Approved Management Response and no Improvement Plan	Highlighted widespread implementation challenges, inefficiencies and high levels of dissatisfaction across government (i.e. client departments). The evaluation recommended an overhaul of the government immovable property programme.
6. Rapid Design Evaluation of the Fusion Centre Joint Programme.	Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster.	Finalised December 2021. No Management Response or Improvement Plan	Informed strategic review and recommendations on the current multi-institutional approach for fighting corruption.
7. Evaluation of State Capacity with Special Focus on Directors General (DGs) and Heads of Departments (HODs).	The Presidency.	Finalised September 2022. Work on extended scope to include Ministers is on-going. Data collection stage - interviews are still being conducted with Political Heads.	Informed GSCID decision to extend scope to include views of Ministers.
8. Implementation Evaluation of the Operation Phakisa.	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.	Finalised September 2022. Approved Management Response and Improvement Plan.	

Evaluation Concept	Lead/Custodian department	Status	Usage/value derived
9. Land Restitution Evaluation Study.	Commission on Restitution of Land Rights.	Finalised March 2023. No Management Response or Improvement Plan.	Recommended measures to accelerate restitution and prioritisation of land development, settlement support and ways to improve how government institutions engage with affected communities
10. Rapid assessment of the implementation of flood disaster interventions in KZN, EC and NW.	The Presidency; Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.	Finalised March 2023.	Generated lessons instrumental to recommend a review of disaster management system in South Africa. Enabled benchmarking of practices internationally to enrich policy discourse of responding to future pandemics and disasters
11. Rapid evaluations on the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP).	Department of Trade, Industry and Competition.	Finalised March 2023. Feedback from Cabinet and ESIEID Cluster considered as Management Response and no Improvement Plan.	Highlighted what worked and what didn't work. Prompted a deep-dive analysis on implementation of the industrial masterplans to inform target setting for the next planning cycle, i.e. Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024-2029.
12. Midterm Implementation evaluation of National Food and Nutrition Security Plan.	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.	Finalised 24 October 2023. Approved Management Response and Improvement Plan process commenced.	Recommended the development of the next phase of the is NFNSP for the period 2024-2029. This is critical given its relevance and the major gaps that South Africa faces on nutrition security
13. Impact and implementation evaluation of the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities outcomes (2015 to 2020).	Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.	Finalised 15 September 2023. Post Evaluation stage. Approved Management Response and Improvement Plan.	Generated important insights to enrich policy and programme design and implementation. This evaluation records the gains thus far and how certain initiatives that benefit persons with disabilities can be sustained, as well as critical gaps that needs to be addressed on monitoring and enforcement
14. Implementation evaluation on Operational Capital Programme (OPSCAP).	Human Settlements.	Finalised in September 2023. Post Evaluation stage. No Management Response or Improvement Plan.	Highlighted the relevance and contribution of OPSCAP to human settlement programmes in the provinces and metros, especially on improving spending and achieving targets. Measures must be introduced to address the isolated administrative and governance challenges
15. Rapid Implementation Evaluation on the DPME Frontline Monitoring and Support's (FM&S) Project Management Approach.	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.	Finalised in November 2023. Draft Management Response.	Informed the strengthening of Frontline Monitoring and Support's (FM&S) Project Management Approach.

Evaluation Concept	Lead/Custodian department	Status	Usage/value derived
16. Implementation evaluation of Youth Employment Creation Programmes.	Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.	Finalised Report approved 18 March 2024.	N/A
EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION (WORK-IN-PROGRESS)			
1. Implementation evaluation of the 16 Days Campaign.	Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.	Implementation stage. Targeted timeframe to finalise is estimated for September 2024.	N/A
2. Design and Implementation evaluation of the Priority Human Settlements and Housing Development Areas Programme (PHSHDA).	Human Settlements.	Implementation stage. Targeted timeframe to finalise is estimated for March 2025.	N/A
EVALUATIONS AT PROCUREMENT / PREPARATORY STAGE			
1. Implementation and outcome evaluation of the Department of Correctional Services Parole System.	Correctional Services.	Procurement stage. To be re-advertised before end March. Targeted timeframe to finalise is March 2025.	N/A
2. Implementation evaluation of the National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS).	Transport.	Procurement stage. No suitable service provider found, to be re-advertised. Targeted timeframe to finalise is estimated for March 2025.	N/A
3. Implementation evaluation of the National Youth Policy, 2030.	Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.	Planned. Targeted timeframe to commence with procurement: September 2024.	N/A
EVALUATIONS DISCONTINUED/ DROPPED/ STALLING			
1. Rapid evaluation of the support provided to small businesses in KwaZulu-Natal following the flood disaster.	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.	Evaluation put on hold by Province due to other commitments.	N/A
2. Diagnostic Evaluation on the implementation capacity within the criminal justice system value chain.	Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster.	Discontinued/dropped.	N/A
3. Implementation evaluation of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide programme (GBVF).	Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.	Cancelled due to the non-availability of funds by the DWYPD to undertake the evaluation.	N/A
4. Design and implementation evaluation of spatial transformation policy in South Africa, especially in the metropolitan municipal spaces.	National Treasury	Evaluation was proposed by National Treasury, on hold while buy-in is sought from custodian departments on the evaluation.	N/A

2.2 SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS COMPLETED IN 2023/2024

2.2.1 IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY PLAN (NFNSP)

The DPME commissioned an implementation evaluation of the National Food and Nutrition Security Plan 2018-2023 (NFNSP). South Africa developed the National Food and Nutrition Security Plan 2018-2023, based on the Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) Plan for South Africa. The NFNSP highlights the importance of food security as key to ensuring that South Africa has a reliable and sufficient supply of food to meet the dietary needs of its population. It also highlights the importance of integrating social protection into the FNS ecosystem to address immediate food and nutrition needs.

The National Food and Nutrition Security Plan (NFNSP) is designed to tackle challenges related to food and nutrition security by aligning with global best practices, international commitments, and local policies. It integrates national policies to offer a comprehensive strategy for achieving food and nutrition security. The plan's implementation is overseen by councils at national, provincial, and district levels, guided by seven strategic objectives. The evaluation was conducted to assess the plan's progress, adherence to targets, factors influencing implementation, institutional arrangements, and to offer recommendations for improvement.

Key messages:

- **Limited tracking and reporting capacity:** Only a fraction of the outlined indicators can effectively track progress due to data availability issues.
- **Modest progress and marginal deterioration:** While some indicators show improvement since the baseline, others have worsened – indicating challenges in implementation.
- **Varied progress across strategic objectives and limited achievement of 2023 targets:** Progress varies across different objectives, reflecting nuanced effectiveness in implementation. Only a small percentage of targets have been met, with a significant portion unlikely to be achieved by the end of 2023.

- **Incomplete information for some indicators:** A substantial number of indicators lack updated information, hampering thorough assessment.
- **Role of National Task Team and departments:** The National Task Team plays a vital role in providing institutional memory for effective implementation. Departments display resourcefulness, contributing positively to the implementation process.
- **Provincial variances:** Provinces show differing levels of progress, with some demonstrating early adoption and collaborative approaches. Provincial coordination mechanisms vary, affecting progress at the provincial level.
- **Limited awareness and visibility:** Lack of awareness among stakeholders hinders effective implementation, emphasising the need for enhanced leadership visibility.
- **Financial constraints, unclear funding sources and impact of COVID-19:** Financial limitations and unclear funding sources as well as the pandemic disrupted planned activities, impacting implementation efforts.
- **Monitoring and evaluation challenges:** Absence of effective Monitoring and Evaluation systems undermines decision-making and coordination.
- **Lack of annual review mechanisms:** Absence of annual review mechanisms affects cost assessment and tracking of non-state actors' spending.

Key lessons learned:

- **Siloed implementation challenge:** The departmentalised approach of the NFNSP inadvertently encourages siloed implementation, hindering its effectiveness.
- **Call for a bottom-up perspective:** The NFNSP, considered a top-down approach, would benefit from a more bottom-up perspective to address contextual factors and foster an adaptive response.
- **Crucial success factors:** Political will, collaboration with various stakeholders, and timely and localised Food and Nutrition Security data collection are identified as crucial learnings for successful implementation.

2.2.2 IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF THE WHITE PAPER ON RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disability (DWYPD) in collaboration with the DPME commissioned the Implementation Evaluation of the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD). This evaluation was undertaken as part of the 2023/24 NEP.

The evaluation had four main purposes:

- Assess whether the goals and objectives of the WPRPD are being achieved.
- Identify the emerging impact resulting from the implementation of the WPRPD.
- Determine whether value for money is being achieved.
- Provide recommendations for improvement.

The final evaluation report was approved by the Steering Committee on 15 September 2023. Following the approval, the DWYPD provided a management response and an improvement plan.

Key messages:

Below are the key messages:

- **Relevance:** Overall, the evaluation found the White Paper to be relevant and responsive to South Africa's development priorities and societal context. Its nine pillars were found to offer a holistic solution to needs of persons with disabilities.
- **Coherence:** The White Paper was also found to be compatible with other interventions in the country and enables the country to align with relevant international and continental conventions on the rights of persons with disabilities
- **Effectiveness:** The evaluation found that the current delivery mechanism is not reaching all persons with disabilities. To be more effective, all stakeholders involved must take responsibility for their respective roles in the WPRPD implementation. Thus, a coordinated and cooperative approach is paramount. The evaluation also noted concerns of sector stakeholders regarding the widening gap between programmes implemented by non-government organisations and those implemented

by government; It also noted arguments that rights of persons with disabilities stand a better chance of being addressed when programmes are implemented in isolation than when they are combined with women and youth.

- **Efficiency:** Challenges exist due to discretionary budget allocation and lack of specific disability legislation for compliance. Data insufficiency hinders determining value for money, though there's a perceived positive impact.
- **Impact:** There is consensus among all sector partners regarding the practical effects of the WPRPD in terms of employment and rehabilitation of infrastructure and adaptation of public service in line with reasonable accommodation principles. The WPRPD therefore considered to have had a positive and meaningful impact on the lives of persons with disabilities.
- **Sustainability:** Mixed opinions exist regarding the sustainability of initiatives under the WPRPD. While some see potential for sustainability, many view current initiatives as unsustainable without intentional implementation efforts.

Overall, the evaluation concludes that while the WPRPD has made positive strides in various aspects, there are areas where improvement is needed - particularly in ensuring accountability, efficiency, and sustainability of initiatives.



Key recommendations from the evaluation report are as follows:

- Develop specific disability legislation and a terminology framework to support enforcement measures.
- Workshop the implementation matrix with stakeholders in the disability sector and ensure full implementation, focusing on results-based approaches aligned with the Theory of Change.
- Strengthen and capacitate the DWYPD to provide guidance and support beyond just coordinating sectors.
- Reinforce the role of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) as an independent monitoring body for the WRPD implementation.
- Explore co-funding protocols to access additional funding streams for the WRPD sustainability.
- Establish a Persons with Disabilities Engagement Plan to involve government officials, non-state actors, and sector stakeholders in prioritization, planning, implementation, and monitoring.
- Improve data collection methods, mechanisms, and storage systems for accurate and consistent monitoring data analysis.

2.2.3. IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF THE OPERATIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME (OPSCAP)

The National Department of Human Settlements (DHS) partnered with the DPME to undertake the Implementation Evaluation of the Operational Capital Programme (OPSCAP). The OPSCAP was introduced in 2010 with the intention of providing operating capital for the implementation of human settlements programmes and projects, using the Human Settlements Development Grant (HSDG) and Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG) which are allocated to Provincial

Departments and Metropolitan Municipalities respectively (The Housing Code, 2009). The OPSCAP prescribes a percentage of up to 5% and 3% respectively of the Grant's funding towards human settlements projects to be used to build capacity for the implementation of the projects.

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the implementation of the OPSCAP in both Provincial Human Settlements Departments and Metropolitan Municipalities to ascertain how it is functioning and what the necessary mechanisms to strengthen it are. In order to achieve this, the evaluation embarked on the following which aimed to provide an understanding as to what the immediate effects, the overall impacts, as well as the outcomes of this intervention have been:

- a. An analysis of the environment within which the OPSCAP is being implemented.
- b. An analysis of the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the OPSCAP interventions.
- c. Measurement of the degree to which the OPSCAP has had an effect on the human settlements sector.

Key messages:

- The OPSCAP plays a significant role in supporting human settlements programs in provincial departments and metros by providing operational capital for procuring professional expertise.
- Respondents agreed that the OPSCAP support has been instrumental in achieving annual targets and increasing expenditure on human settlements programs.
- There's a consensus that the OPSCAP offers exceptional value for money, enabling institutions to develop project business plans and implement projects aligned with grant outcomes. However, there's concern about over-reliance on external expertise and the lack of monitoring for sustainable program implementation without external assistance.

- Respondents emphasized the need for clearer guidelines and communication from NDHS, and customisation to accommodate individual department- and metro conditions.

Key recommendations:

- Establish specific parameters defining allowable and non-allowable expenditures by the OPSCAP.
- Prioritize the enforcement of the OPSCAP policy and guidelines by the National Department of Health (NDHS) to enhance alignment among fund recipients.
- Introduce an OPSCAP champion/office within NDHS to coordinate communication and advisory engagements among stakeholders.
- Formalise the skills transfer process to enable departments to build and retain capacity obtained through OPSCAP sustainably.
- Ensure that OPSCAP motivations by departments and metros are linked to specific projects in the project pipeline with supporting documentation.
- Encourage provincial departments and metros to establish internal Monitoring and Evaluation committees linked to the Chief Financial Officer's office for control measures.
- Develop mandatory OPSCAP customised indicators for evaluation and monitoring of provincial departments and metros.

2.2.4 RAPID IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF FRONTLINE MONITORING AND SUPPORT (FM&S) PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The DPME commissioned an evaluation of the Frontline Monitoring and Support (FM&S) Project Management Approach (PMA) with the primary objective of assessing its effectiveness and contribution to the overarching goals of the FM&S. The aim of the evaluation was to determine how well the intervention

aligns with its objectives and impacts service delivery. It provides an in-depth understanding of the progress made in achieving FM&S PMA objectives, supporting accountability and evaluating the program's relevance to the NDP 2030 imperatives.

The rapid evaluation approach allows for real-time data collection on the PMA's implementation, offering insights crucial for immediate adjustments and improvements. As the department plans to continue employing this approach, the evaluation's findings, conclusions, and recommendations are expected to play a pivotal role in enhancing the overall implementation of the FM&S.

Key Messages:

The evaluation findings indicated that the PMA underwent a strategic shift in implementation in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift marked a departure from traditional methods towards a more focused and results-oriented monitoring strategy. The PMA's concentrated use of monitoring resources on a single main project, as opposed to widespread deployment across sectors nationwide. This emerged as a key strategy.

The PMA's focus on optimising resource distribution and project management complements the FM&S's aim of efficient monitoring and support for frontline services. Different themes emerged, which depicts the integration of PMA into FM&S, emphasizing themes like standardization, efficient resource utilization, improved monitoring, and synchronization across provinces.

Internal stakeholders from the DPME indicated a transformative shift in monitoring service delivery sites, transitioning from a facility-based approach to a more project-based system under the PMA.

Internal respondents acknowledged the positive influence of the PMA on efficiency, factual reporting, and strategic positioning in service delivery monitoring. However, challenges such as planning issues, overlapping projects, and limitations in coverage were recognized, indicating areas for refinement.

Key recommendations:

- **Adapt and adopt the Theory of Change (ToC):** Within the next three months convene an inter-agency workshop to collectively review the theory of change prepared by the evaluators.
- **Development of programme documentation:** The DPME to develop comprehensive documentation that incorporates the programme theory.
- **Comprehensive Plan:** To mitigate project overlap and ensure the prioritization of key initiatives within districts or provinces, it is advisable to develop and communicate a comprehensive plan as part of the approach.
- **The DPME to strengthen communication channels:** The DPME already adopts a collaborative approach in its interactions with the Offices of the Premier (OTPs) and Departments of the Premier (DoTPs).
- **The DPME should continuously train staff and arrange recurrent training sessions:** Offering refresher courses allows stakeholders to update and deepen their understanding of various concepts of the PMA.
- **Increase PMA resources:** While the DPME were commended for supplying human resources to resource-scarce provinces, the department should consider innovative approaches that avoid overextending provincial resources.
- **Revision of DPME reporting templates:** To guarantee that the reports derived from the data collected through this approach are both specific and timely, it might be necessary to amend the reporting template.

2.2.5 DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF GOVERNMENT'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CREATION PROGRAMMES

Youth Employment Creation Programmes (YECP) are government's public employment programmes (PEP) specifically aimed at addressing youth unemployment. They do so by primarily providing one of four workstream services, namely: (1) knowledge services; (2) skills development services; (3) employment services; and

(4) SMME development services. These YECP are typically focused on the supply side of the youth labour market and concerned with the employability of youths. In 2023, the DPME in collaboration with the DWYPD commissioned a design and implementation evaluation, covering the period 2016 to 2022. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the design, effectiveness and efficiency of government youth employment creation programmes (YECP) in South Africa. The evaluation report was approved by the evaluation steering committee on 15 March 2024.

Key Messages:

- There are approximately 280 different YECP in South Africa across the various levels of government. These programmes are government's PEPs aimed at addressing youth unemployment through knowledge services, skills development services, employment services and SMME development services. These programmes differ in terms of their focus, geographical spread, ownership and service offerings.
- The evaluation found that the YECP do contribute to employment creation. However, it is not apparent that this is sustainable or long-term employment.
- At programme level, most of the programmes were found not to be consistently effective. This can be attributed to inability to source relevant information on set programmes targets or provision of said targets.
- The current focus of youth programmes needs reconsideration, both in terms of their design and type. Many programs primarily aim to enhance the employability of youth, which may not be effective due to a fundamental issue: a scarcity of new job opportunities each year. Thus, regardless of how skilled and employable youth are, there simply aren't enough jobs available. Most programmes also emphasise skills development, which – while important –, may not address the core issue of job scarcity.
- There is a need within the YECP ecosystem to evolve and change in some of the aspects. The focus on supply side must be counterbalanced with a more formidable push on the demand – in this context this means addressing blockages to employment and deregulation as well as expansion of private business interests.
- The South African YECP ecosystem is characterised by extensive policy instruments with at least eight separate policy items over two decades.

Key recommendations:

- There is a need to resolve issues at the local government level and, by so doing, create the environment within which YECP can be locally administered.
- YECP must be reoriented from supply side mechanics to demand side – if not entirely, then at least partially.
- YECP should be pushed to engage in more public-private partnerships and align more with industry and the market.
- Prioritise the creation of exit opportunities for programme participants, as the majority of programmes provides skills development and training, but they do not provide a clear pathway for participants to gain permanent employment going forward.
- An aggregation of funding through the closure of certain YECP and reallocation of said funding can certainly be put forward.
- Develop an overarching theory of change to guide redesign, alignment and coherence of YECPs. This will also guide streamlining of goals/objectives, target groups, and so on.
- Regular updates to information available online, as programmes which no longer exist or are no longer being implemented appear as though they are still running.
- Encourage programme documentation (programme aims/mandate/SOP should be created and approved prior to implementation).

2.2.6 RAPID EVALUATIONS ON THE ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY PLAN (ERRP)

In 2020, during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) induced hard lockdown, the South African economy contracted by -6.3%; about 2 million jobs were lost; and many South Africans lost their income. As a policy response, the President announced the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) on 15 October 2020 as an intervention to arrest further decline, stabilise the economy and create conditions for recovery.

The Economic Sectors, Investment, Employment and Infrastructure Development (ESIEID) Cluster commissioned this Rapid Evaluation to assess the design and implementation aspects of the ERRP – in order to inform policy decision regarding the continuation and/or enhancements of the ERRP.

Key messages

- Justification and appropriateness: The economic problems during 2020 and the pre-Covid period justified the introduction of the ERRP. Key ERRP interventions were also found to be relevant and appropriate. Fast-forward to 2023, the context has changed, which requires that the ERRP be adapted to embrace the new problems and opportunities.
- Design aspects: Several flaws have been identified with respect to the design, implementation arrangements, reporting and M&E. Specific enhancements must be introduced on the ERRP in order to address the identified flaws and improve efficacy.
- Implementation arrangements: The current ESIEID Cluster institutional architecture needs to be more inclusive of provincial governments, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), metros, and private sector firms, in terms of commitments, implementation coordination and reporting.
- Monitoring and evaluation: Current M&E lacks Theory of Change and measurable outcomes and targets in some of the key areas such as industrial masterplans, infrastructure, green economy, agriculture and food security, etc. This creates reporting inconsistencies and hampers objective assessment of progress.
- Implementation progress: Phase 1 (Engage and preserve) – health response to save lives and curb the COVID-19 pandemic, has been effectively implemented with the country managing to preserve lives. Phase 2 (Recover and reform) – which focused on interventions to restore the economy was partially achieved, given that several economic interventions are still ongoing and yet to deliver enduring results. Phase 3 (Reconstruct and transform) – which focused on building a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy is also yet to deliver enduring results. Successes include the Presidential Employment Stimulus having delivered 1,1 million jobs and livelihood opportunities; completion of 11

out of the 35 priority structural reforms; a discernible pipeline of shovel-ready infrastructure projects; and at least R360 billion of fixed investment materialising in a form of factories, production lines, mining operations, retail outlets arising from the Investment Conference series; and others.

Key recommendations

Immediate enhancements to ERRP design and implementation

The ERRP should be continued. In doing so, specific enhancements must be introduced immediately in order to address the identified design weaknesses:

- Prioritise activities that will address the current pressing challenges in line with Ministers' agreed priorities with the President: Energy Action Plan; efficiency of freight logistics; fighting economic crimes; public infrastructure delivery and maintenance; governance and functioning of SOEs, etc.
- Target new growth opportunities, namely oil and gas, green hydrogen, beneficiation of strategic minerals, and digital economy.
- Establish measurable targets in all areas where identified to be lacking.
- Review assignment of ERRP implementation responsibility for departments and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs).
- Allocate resources for ERRP programme management, including information system to support regular monitoring and quarterly dashboard updates for the general public

Enhance Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Implement the proposed Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework. This should assist government and its social partners with common understanding of envisaged outputs and monitoring of results. Effective implementation of MEL will require allocation of resources/ capacity support for ERRP Programme Management and coordination. This should include appropriate information system and data management capacity to support quarterly monitoring and reporting, and a public-facing dashboard to provide quarterly updates to citizens about the ERRP implementation progress and results achieved.

Strengthen coordination to resolve the most critical issues

Facilitate inter-cluster engagements in order to establish a coordinated approach on matters that hamper economic recovery and business confidence. Immediate priority in this regard are the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) and the International Cooperation, Trade and Security (ICTS). Key issues are crime and violence on construction and other economic sites; vandalism of infrastructure; illicit mining; counterfeit goods, amongst others.

Prioritise specific in-depth evaluation

Conduct in-depth studies for specific prioritised areas in order to enhance policy learning and iterative, adaptive policy management. Specific proposed areas for immediate attention are to conduct an expenditure review in order to assess budget allocations and spending on all the ERRP interventions and the results; an evaluation of the Industrial Policy Masterplans to assess implementation progress and how they support the recovery process; and an evaluation of the impact of structural reforms and their implications for growth and competitiveness.

Integration of economic recovery interventions into the government's next planning cycle

Ensuring integrations of the ongoing Phase 2 and Phase 3 ERRP interventions into the government's Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF 2024-2029). Immediate priority in this regard is to establish relevant outcome indicators for Industrialisation Masterplans and Infrastructure development for the 3-5 years with a view to inform the MTSF 2024-2029.



3. STATUS OF PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEMS

The Offices of the Premier coordinate provincial evaluation systems and oversee implementation of evaluations at the provincial level. The NEPF mandates the Offices of the Premier (OTPs) to develop Provincial Evaluation Plans (PEPs) which outline the evaluations to

be conducted in support of provincial priorities during a certain period to ensure proper planning for evaluations at provincial level. The Provincial Evaluation Plan provides details of priority evaluations to be undertaken linked to the MTSF and the Provincial Growth and Development Strategies (PGDS).

For the period 2023/24 OTPs were requested to report on the status of provincial evaluation systems covering evaluations, capacity development, quality assessment, communications and dissemination of evaluations.

The table 2 below summarises the status of PEPs, number of evaluations as well as status across provinces.

Table 2: Summary of PEP and status of evaluations OTP

Province	Existence of PEP	Period of Implementation	No. of Evaluations	Status of evaluations 2023/24
Eastern Cape OTP	Yes	The EC OTP PEP covers the period 2021-2025.	PEP consists of twenty (20) evaluation projects.	One (1) Rapid Evaluation completed, 2 Implementation phase and 2 inception phase.
Free State OTP	Yes	The FS OTP PEP covers the periods 2022/23 and 2026/27.	PEP consists of three (3) evaluation projects.	One (1) evaluation completed and improvement plan developed.
KwaZulu-Natal OTP	No	The KZN OTP PEP covers the period 2022/23-2023/2024.	The province has a total of thirty-eight (38) evaluations with six in the PEP, twenty-two (22) in DEPs and ten (10) Metro evaluations	19 evaluations completed, 17 in progress and two dropped.
Gauteng OTP	No	The GP OTP PEP covers the period 2020-2025.	PEP consists of twenty-five (25) evaluation projects.	6 evaluations completed.
Western Cape	Yes	The WC OTP does not have a PEP (Focus on undertaking rapid/responsive evaluations).	Four (4) REs and Seven evaluations planned through DEPs for 2023/24.	2 completed, 8 in implementation phase and 1 delayed.
Limpopo OTP	Yes	The Limpopo OTP has no PEP.	None.	The process of developing an Improvement Plan delayed.
Mpumalanga OTP	No	The MP OTP PEP covers the period 2020/21-2024/25.	PEP consists of nineteen (19) evaluation projects.	Of the 19 evaluations, only 9 (nine) were implemented, of which 5 evaluations were completed and 4 are still under-way..
North West OTP	Yes	The NW OTP PEP covers the period 2020/21-2022/23.	PEP consists of four (4) research projects and six (6) evaluation projects.	Progress on evaluations not provided by the North West OTP.
Northern Cape OTP	No	The NC OTP does not have a PEP in place.	PEP is pending and the concept is not yet developed.	No evaluations taking place.

3.1 EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Office of the Premier through the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC) has been responsible for driving the Provincial Evaluation System (PES) in the institutionalisation and management of provincial evaluations across the Eastern Cape in line with their role to enable, direct and guide the implementation of quality evaluations.

3.1.1 Status of the PES

For the period 2023/24, the Office of the Premier planned 5 Rapid Evaluations (REs). One (1) evaluation was completed in October 2023 (the RE of the provincial Disaster Management System in the EC). The RE of the Wild Coast Initiative was on final stages of report writing and consultations. While the RE of the performance of the government during the 6th Administration was at the Implementation phase. The last two (2) evaluations were at inception phase and targeted to be completed at the end of the 4th quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

Table 3: Progress on REs conducted in 2023/24

Evaluations conducted in 2023/24		
	Evaluation Name	Status (completed, in progress, inception)
1.	The Diagnostic Responsive Evaluation of the Provincial Disaster Management System.	Completed.
2.	Wild Coast Development Initiatives.	In progress - implementation stage, draft report.
3.	The Implementation Responsive Evaluation of the Government Performance in the 6th Administration.	In progress - implementation stage, data analysis.
4.	The Responsive Evaluation of the Provincial Small-Town Revitalisation Programme.	Inception phase.
5.	The Responsive Evaluation of Public Participation and Consultation Processes.	Inception phase.

3.2 FREE STATE PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

From the current Provincial Evaluation Plan, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) has finalised the implementation of the evaluation, in order to assess the extent of the contribution made to the Free State economy on the appointment of local based contractors by supply chain management. Further, an improvement plan based on the findings of the evaluation study was also produced.

3.2.1 Engagements and activities with DPME

In May 2023, a virtual evaluation technical support meeting was held involving the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure (DPW&I), the Free State Office of the Premier (PSM & E), and the DPME Evaluation Unit. The OTP reported on the status of evaluation

implementation in the province, citing challenges such as slow progress due to capacity and budget constraints. Progress was noted in the implementation of DPW&I evaluation.

Subsequently, in November 2023, the DPME Evaluation Chief Directorate presented to the Forum of Heads of Departments (FOHOD) to discuss the institutionalisation and importance of evaluations. Efforts to enhance evaluation capacity included seminars, brown bag learning sessions, and workshops organised by DPME. Provincial departments were encouraged to participate. Additionally, officials from OTP: M&E attended the National Evaluation Seminar hosted by DPME in November 2023.

A call for proposals to update the Provincial Evaluation Plan (PEP) was developed by the province and routed for approval in December 2023. Once proposals are received and assessed from departments, a draft PEP will be prepared for presentation to relevant structures in the province.

3.2.2 Challenges experienced

The function of evaluations in the province still requires a considerable effort towards strengthening its institutionalisation. The persistent poor appetite in conducting evaluations has been influenced by the limited budgets and lack of technical skills for this function. It therefore becomes necessary that a tailor-made programme to revive and support the function be considered. This should entail an intense drive to upskill and capacitate officials within the Evaluations Directorate to equip them with the necessary skills. Furthermore, a much more focused and intense workshop or training may be necessary for the top leadership of the provincial departments to ensure buy-in and appetite for the function.

3.3 KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

The KZN Office of the Premier, as the center of governance, has a coordination and leadership role in the province. This includes the coordination of the

Provincial Evaluation System, including the coordination and development of the Provincial Evaluation Plan, supporting departmental evaluation plans; municipal evaluations; and capacity building initiatives. The following provides a summary of activities or work undertaken in the province during the 2023/2024 financial year.

3.3.1 Evaluations in the Evaluation Plan

The province has recorded 36 evaluations included in the PEP, Departmental Evaluation Plans (DEPs) and the eThekweni Municipality during the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 financial year. A total of 19 completed evaluations and another 19 in progress, with some of these evaluations were carried over from the 2022/2023 financial year and finalised in the 2023/2024 financial year. Of the reported evaluations that were carried out in the province, most were implementation evaluations. The following table shows the status of implementation of the evaluation plan, with a total of Eleven (11) completed evaluations in the 2023/2024 financial year, of which seven (7) were evaluations in planned in the 2023/2024 financial year, and Four (4) were evaluation carried from the previous years.

Table 4: Status of implementation of the evaluation plan 2023/2024 in the province

Name of custodian Department	Title of the Evaluation	Completed (2022/2023-2023/2024)	In progress/Not completed
Department of Education	Implementation Evaluation - Early Childhood Development (ECD) Grade R	Implementation evaluation	Completed
Office of the Premier	Implementation Evaluation of the KZN Department of Human Settlements' interventions to the April 2022 flood disaster	Implementation	Completed
	Medium-Term Strategic Framework Mid-Term Review Report June 2019 to 31 March 2022	Mid-term evaluation	Completed
	Rapid Evaluation on the Institutionalisation of Evaluations in KZN through National Evaluation Policy Framework for evidence-based decision making	Rapid Evaluation	Completed
Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA)	Impact Evaluation on LED Initiatives	Impact evaluation	Completed

Name of custodian Department	Title of the Evaluation	Completed (2022/2023-2023/2024)	In progress/Not completed
KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Treasury	Assessment of the implementation of departmental employee performance management and development system is implemented and how can it be strengthened	Implementation Evaluation	Completed. Final report presented Manco and Exco
	Assessment of the support provided in the implementation of Preferential Procurement Regulations (PPR) in enhancing economic participation of previously disadvantaged individuals	Implementation Evaluation	Completed
Evaluations carried over to 2023/2024 FY due to covid and unforeseen circumstances			
Department of Sports and Recreation	An Implementation Evaluation of Federation Transfer Payment Utilisation	Implementation Evaluation	Completed
Department of Transport	An Implementation Evaluation of Public Transport Operations Grant	Implementation Evaluation	Completed (Final draft awaiting approval)
Office of The Premier	A Rapid Evaluation of the COVID-19 Provincial Implementation Plan	Rapid Evaluation	Completed
Department of Health	An Evaluation of the implementation of Community Based Model in KZN	Implementation Evaluation	Completed

3.3.2 Capacity Building

In the reporting period, the OTP in partnership with SAMEA hosted a mini evaluation conference on 20 September 2023. The conference provided an adequate platform to gain insight into Monitoring and Evaluation as well as keeping abreast of the current developments in Monitoring and Evaluation. The topics covered during the conference were: M&E for Just Transition; M&E in crisis and for continuous adaptive management, reflection and learning; Made in Africa Evaluation; and MERL Tech. These topics covered a range of interests within the field of M&E.

An Integrated Indicator Framework Workshop was hosted and attended by 120 KZN M&E practitioners, planners, programme managers from all provincial departments, entities and metro. This exercise is expected to continue in the 2024/25 financial year as the Integrated Indicator Framework for the province is still being developed.

3.3.3 Challenges experienced

- Conducting an evaluation depends on the availability of capacity and budget. Some evaluations are planned and dropped before they are undertaken due to issues of resources.
- Units proposing evaluations that are not linked to SOPA-, LEGKOTLA-, or SONA resolutions, lead to evaluations that are not provincial priorities.
- Fear of intimidation – practitioners fear publishing findings with their names on them.
- Lack of considerations for evaluation findings to influence evidence-based decision making.
- Limited undertaking of impact evaluations due to its financial, skills and experience requirements.

3.4 GAUTENG PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

3.4.1 Evaluations in the Evaluation Plan

The multi-year 2020-2025 Provincial Evaluation Plan (PEP) for Gauteng Province was approved around May 2021 by the Acting Director General of the Gauteng OTP. The 2020-25 PEP covers a total of 25 evaluations that were planned to be undertaken for the five (5) year period. To date Gauteng Province managed to undertake only four (4) evaluations, namely:

- Implementation Evaluation of Community Development Workers Programme.
- Evaluation of Disciplinary Management Case Management Process in the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG).
- Gauteng Safety Strategy.

- Mid-Term Evaluation/Review of the GGT 2030 Plan of Action.

The province further completed two (2) non-PEP evaluations for the period under review. These evaluations were requested and commissioned by the Head of Policy Research and Advisory Services. The evaluations were the Design Evaluation of Expanded Public Works Programme, and the Implementation Evaluation of the Open Tender System in GPG.

Two evaluations of Tshepo One Million and Employee Health and Wellness Programme were deferred to the 2023/24 financial year due to circulars issued by the National and Provincial Treasury in relation to the Constitutional Court Judgment on the validity of the preferential procurement regulations of 2017.

Table 5: Status of current projects

Evaluation	Lead Department	Status
End-Term Review	Office of the Premier	Preliminary Draft Report Completed.
30-Year Review	Office of the Premier	Preliminary Report Completed. Consultation with all key stakeholders underway.
Tshepo One-Million	Education	Procurement Stage: Bids received and assessed; however, no recommendations were made.

3.4.2 Improvement Plan and use of evaluation results

The province has two evaluation projects that are at the post evaluation phase, namely:

- Implementation Evaluation of Community Development Workers programme, led by COGTA. An approved Management Response received from COGTA and Improvement Plan development commenced. Standard Operating Procedures currently being developed in response to the evaluation's recommendations.
- Evaluation of Disciplinary Management Case Management Process in the GPG led by the Office of the Premier. The OTP is working collaboratively with all key stakeholders to develop the Improvement Plan covering all recommendations.

3.4.3 Challenges

The implementation of the Provincial Evaluation Plan has been hindered by a persistent issue of poor response from potential service providers and the inability to secure a suitable provider. Despite efforts, the province has not succeeded in procuring and appointing a suitable service provider for two evaluation studies outlined in the plan. This ongoing challenge has impeded progress in executing the intended evaluations.

3.5 WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Office of the Premier (OTP) has been responsible for driving the Provincial Evaluation System (PES) in the institutionalisation and management of provincial evaluations across the Western Cape in line with their role to enable, direct, and guide the implementation of quality evaluations as it relates to the NEPF.

3.5.1 Status of the PES

For the period 2023/24, the Department of the Premier planned 4 Responsive Evaluations (REs). To date, one evaluation has been completed, and one evaluation has a first draft report compiled and is currently out for review and commentary. The other two evaluations are both in progress and in data collection phase and should be completed by the end of the financial year.

Table 6 below depicts more detail around these REs by the end of the financial year, listing the respective names of the REs, its purpose, and status.

Table 6: Progress on Transversal REs conducted in 2023/24

Responsive Evaluations conducted in 2023/24		
	Evaluation Name	Status as at 30 November 2023 (complete, in progress, not started, delayed, postponed)
1.	Responsive evaluation on the utilisation of evaluative evidence.	Completed.
2.	Responsive evaluation on the Utilisation of the Western Cape Data Portal.	First draft report compiled, out for review and commentary produced.
3.	Responsive evaluation of the Policy, Planning and Budgeting Process in the Western Cape Government.	In progress.
4.	Responsive Evaluation on Municipal Performance Data.	In progress.

For the financial year 2023/24, a total of seven departmental evaluations were planned. At the end of November, one evaluation was completed, five evaluations were in progress and one evaluation was

delayed. Table 7 below outlines the detail around these evaluations, listing the respective department, names of the REs, as well as their purpose and status.

Table 7: WCG departmental evaluations embarked on for 2023/24

	Name of WCG Department	Evaluation Name	Status as at 30 November 2023 (completed, in progress, delayed)
1.	Department of Agriculture	Service needs of farmers: A diagnostic and design evaluation.	In progress.
2.	Department of Agriculture	The Witzenburg Partners in Agri Land Solution (PALS: A design, implementation and impact evaluation).	In progress.
3.	Department of Agriculture	Land Reform project: Performance evaluation of Agricultural Land reform projects supported by the Department.	Completed.
4.	Department of Agriculture	Market Access Programme: Performance evaluation of the Market Access Programme.	In progress.
5.	Department of Agriculture	Rural Safety Interventions: Implementation and impact evaluation of Rural Safety Interventions.	Delayed.
6.	Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport	Assessing the outcomes of sport people trained with specific reference to women.	In Progress (In report writing phase).
7.	The Department of Local Government	To Conduct an Assessment on The State of Public Participation in Twenty-Five (25) Municipalities in The Western Cape.	In progress. Service provider appointed.

The Department of the Premier (DotP) conducted an evaluation to reflect on the utilisation of evaluation recommendations conducted over the period 2011-2023. An artefact from this evaluation was a consolidated evidence base of all completed evaluations since 2011.

As at 30 November 2023, the WCG have generated 89 evaluations and 887 recommendations across WCG priority areas and departmental mandates and interventions. This product is intended to help facilitate evidence-informed decision-making for policy, planning and budgeting by making the identified reports available in a central repository.

A qualitative thematic analysis of lessons learned from the Western Cape Government's evaluative evidence base has identified nine strong themes relevant across policy priorities and programmes:

- 1. Citizen-Centric Approach:** Emphasizes the importance of closer relationships between government and citizens, viewing citizens as co-owners and co-designers rather than just beneficiaries of programmes.
- 2. Importance of Evidence Use:** Highlights the need for improved data management practices to increase access and use of data and evidence for decision and policy making.
- 3. Data Sharing and Data Culture:** Advocates for institutionalizing a data and evidence-led culture within government to strengthen programmes and initiatives, and ensure seamless data sharing and collaboration.



- 4. Collaboration Across Spheres of Government:** Stresses the importance of strengthening institutional and governance arrangements across departments and spheres of government to promote a single service-delivery model and eliminate departmental silos.
- 5. Adaptive Programme Management:** Acknowledges the need for course correction and learning from implementation, emphasizing beneficiary-centered approaches and adaptive, agile programme management.
- 6. Innovation for Impact:** Highlights the necessity of introducing innovation to ensure progress in dynamic environments, as well as emphasizing the use of innovative tools and methods for faster response and decision-making.
- 7. Resource Constraints:** Recognises the increasing need for innovative approaches and closer coordination across departments and spheres of government to address resource constraints and maximize efficiency.
- 8. Skills Development and Training:** Emphasises the importance of skills development and training not only for programme effectiveness but also for long-term job creation and community upliftment.
- 9. Strengthening the Design Phase:** Advocates for strengthening the design phase of programmes and interventions, as well as emphasising the need for explicit documentation and understanding of intervention design, including approaches like theory of change (ToC).

These themes underscore the importance of citizen engagement, evidence-based decision making, collaboration, adaptability, innovation, efficient resource utilization, skills development, and robust programme design in achieving effective policy implementation and programme outcomes.

3.5.2 Knowledge sharing platforms held in 2023/2024

In line with strengthening the PES and engaging evaluation stakeholders, the WCG utilises the Evaluation Research Technical Working Group (ERTWG) platform as part of building a community of practice for evaluations and research to improve advocacy, uptake, and use of knowledge.

To date, three quarterly ERTWG engagements were held. During the first quarter the engagement focused on the uptake and use of evaluations. This platform was utilised to engage departmental Monitoring and Evaluation practitioners on the utilisation of evaluative evidence and to deepen the understanding of the use of evaluations. In the second quarter, the engagement focused on the WCG Service Delivery Index, and the insights generated from the Citizen Perception Survey. During the third quarter, the agenda focused on the advocacy of the Census 2022 operations and the Census 2022 official results for the Western Cape.

Over this period, M&E practitioners from WCG departments participated in DPME Brown Bag sessions, the Local Government M and E COP sessions and the National Evaluation Seminar hosted in November 2023. The WCG participated at Evidence 2023 and What Works Global Summit stakeholder platforms by sharing their work in responsive evidence methods and evidence-informed decision- and policymaking. Additional capacity building opportunities shared with and attended by WCG departments included the Africa Evidence Network's (AEN) Evidence Capacities webinar series, gLOCAL's Evaluation Week and the South Africa Monitoring and Evaluation Association's (SAMEA) Capacity Building Workshops.

Regular stakeholder communication was shared with departments informing them of these opportunities and how they could register to participate. A calendar of engagements is compiled annually and the quarterly ERTWG engagements have a standard agenda item to further promote and share any new opportunities that arise.

3.6 LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Limpopo Office of the Premier does not have a Provincial Evaluation Plan. Post evaluation processes for the Rapid Implementation Evaluation of the Khaedu Senior Management Service (SMS) Deployment Programme were initiated. However, a formal Improvement Plan is yet to be concluded.

3.7 NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Northern Cape OTP indicated that they are not undertaking evaluations given capacity and budget constraints.

3.8 MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government (MPG) developed and approved a Multi-Year Provincial Evaluation Plan (PEP) 2020-2025. The plan was implemented, and 19 evaluations were planned to be undertaken under the term in question. During the Implementation of the plan, out of 19 (nineteen) evaluations only 9 (nine) were implemented, of which 5 (five) evaluations were completed and 4 are still under-way.

Considering all the evaluations that were completed, the evaluation reports were produced, not only that but they were approved by the Evaluation Steering Committee.

Furthermore, subsequent to the approval by the Steering Committee two evaluation reports were presented to the Executive Management of the responsible Provincial Department. The three reports were also handed over to their respective provincial departments with the expectation that improvement plans would be developed and monitored.

The PEP progress update provided by the Mpumalanga Office of the Premier indicates that all 5 completed evaluation projects do not have Improvement Plans (IPs). This entails that the province has not yet initiated both Management Response (MR) and Improvement Plan (IP) processes, in order to either agree / disagree on recommendations and also to determine how recommendations will be implemented and monitored. The DPME evaluation team is working closely with the Mpumalanga Office of the Premier by providing technical support on evaluation projects, attend Provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Forums and assist during Management Response and Improvement Plan processes.

3.8.1 The Mpumalanga Province completed the following Evaluations:

- Implementation Evaluation of the Dignity Sanitary Towel project
- Implementation and Outcome Evaluation of the Mpumalanga Young Farmers Incubation Programme
- Implementation and outcome Evaluation of the Household Initiatives for Sustainable Livelihoods
- Implementation and outcome Evaluation of the Rural Boarding School in Mpumalanga
- Rapid Evaluation of the Integrated Municipal Support Programme

3.8.2 The following Evaluations are currently under-way:

- Rapid Evaluation of the Tourism Development Programme.
- Rapid Evaluation of the Government Structures in Health Facilities.
- Rapid Evaluation of the Transversal Term Contract.
- Rapid Evaluation of the Sakh'abakhi Women Development Programme.

3.9 NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

No update provided by the North West Province on the PES.

4. PROGRESS ON INSTITUTIONALISATION OF EVALUATIONS AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

4.1 Municipal evaluation capacity needs assessment

The revision of the NEPF in 2019 extended the scope to include Local Government and State-Owned Entities (SOEs). It mandates the DPME to institutionalise evaluations at local government level through a partnership with the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG), and encourage use of evaluations as a key management tool.

The DPME conducted a study to assess evaluation capacity needs in Local Government and to identify existing evaluation capacity initiatives provided by stakeholders such as SALGA, independent evaluators, and higher education institutions. The study yielded several key findings:

- Approximately 34.6% of municipalities with dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation units have all their unit staff focused solely on evaluation functions or cannot distinguish between monitoring and evaluation.
- Out of 257 municipalities surveyed, only 26 (10.1%) have Monitoring and Evaluation units within their organograms, while 229 (89.9%) do not.
- There are 66 dysfunctional municipalities and 32 municipalities under Section 139 administration, suggesting potential challenges in maintaining service quality and handling evaluation as an additional function.

- Only 30 out of 257 municipalities were classified as stable and capable of efficiently delivering existing functions while taking on evaluation as an additional function.
- The majority of municipalities (107 out of 257) are classified as medium risk, with 54 considered low risk, and only 30 identified as stable for taking on evaluation functions.
- The financial position of 70 out of 257 municipalities audited is in a dire state, casting doubt on their ability to continue operating and undertake evaluation as an additional function.
- Out of 71 municipalities surveyed, 17 indicated vacancies in the municipal manager position, posing challenges in accountability for expenditure and municipal functions.

These findings highlight the varying levels of readiness and capacity among municipalities to integrate evaluation functions effectively and underscore the importance of targeted support and capacity-building initiatives to address existing challenges.

The following recommendations were proposed:

- **Phased approach:** Municipalities will be classified based on their readiness to undertake evaluation functions. This classification considers factors such as their capacity, existing M&E units, and staff skills.
- **Coordination with COGTA:** The DPME will collaborate closely with national and provincial COGTAs to advocate for and promote the use of evaluations in local government through M&E Forums.
- **Technical support and training:** DPME will provide technical evaluation support to municipalities and conduct training sessions to enhance their capacity in evaluation.
- **Integration with key criteria:** DPME will work with COGTA to ensure that evaluation criteria are integrated into key aspects of municipal operations, including community involvement, IDP programs, projects, and service delivery agreements.

- **Pilot with DDM:** DPME will consider piloting municipalities within the district hubs of the District Development Model (DDM) to test the feasibility of locating evaluation functions within these hubs.

4.2 Community of Practice for M&E at the Local Government

The DPME continued to partner with SAMEA to manage the Community of Practice (COP) to create awareness on M&E at the Local Government sphere. The objectives of the COP are to create a regular space for discussion of local government M&E related issues; to complement intergovernmental M&E forums and committees, by facilitating interaction between not only government officials, but also researchers, think tanks, consultants and students who have an interest in this field; and to build reciprocal interpersonal relationships within which relevant events/news, critical discussion, resource sharing, and mutual learning can take place.

The M&E Local Government Community of Practice (COP) was successfully launched on 14 April 2023. Following the launch, four CoP meetings were held on 26 May, 25 August, 27 October 2023 and 26 January 2024. Topics covered in the meetings included: Institutionalising Monitoring and Evaluation at municipality level: the case of Mbombela Municipality; Municipal evaluation capacity needs assessment study; Monitoring and Evaluation courses offered by the National School of Government (NSG); Overview of Legislation Applicable to M&E in Local Government; and Basics of Evaluation. It was initially envisioned that meetings take place on a monthly basis, however, the M&E CoP survey results indicated that members preferred meetings to be held on a quarterly basis. Convenors resolved to have meetings bi-monthly to keep the momentum as the COP was fairly new.

5. PROGRESS ON THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF EVALUATIONS AT STATE OWNED ENTITIES (SOEs)

The National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) 2019 has expanded its scope to require State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and State-Owned Companies (SOCs) to institutionalise evaluations. The DPME's request for evaluation reports from SOEs for the implementation of the Evaluation Evidence Map project indicates approximately 149 evaluations completed in the SOEs environment over the period 1994 to 2022. Although

some SOEs are already conducting evaluations, minimal progress has been made in institutionalising evaluations due to capacity constraints.

In the 2023/24 financial year, the DPME has continued to provide technical support to SOEs and SOCs that have requested assistance in institutionalising evaluations. During this period, the DPME collaborated with organisations such as: the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC); the Water Research Commission (WRC); the Cross-Border Road Transport Agency (C-BRTA); the Agricultural Research Council (ARC); the Rand Water Foundation; Media, Information and Communication Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority (MICT SETA); and the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) to support either institutionalising evaluations or specific evaluation projects.

Table 8: SOE projects

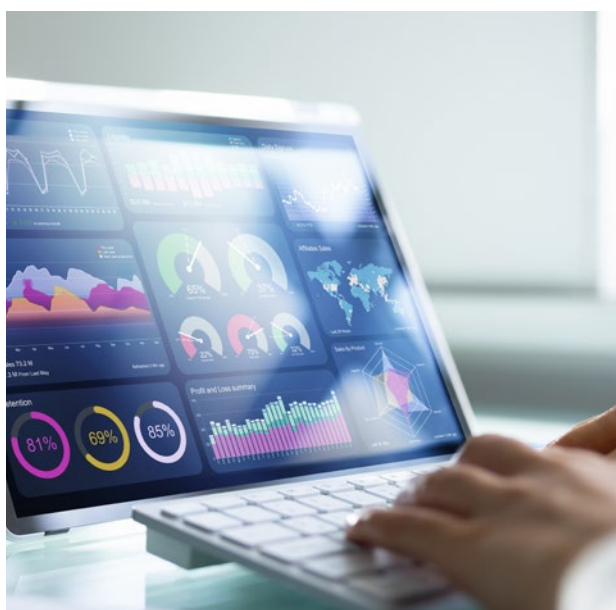
State Owned Entity	Project name	Status as at 31 March 2024
ECSECC	The Diagnostic Responsive Evaluation of the Provincial Disaster Management System.	Completed.
	Wild Coast Development Initiatives.	Implementation phase.
	The Implementation Responsive Evaluation of the Government Performance in the 6th Administration.	Implementation phase.
	The Responsive Evaluation of the Provincial Small-Town Revitalisation Programme.	Inception phase.
	The Responsive Evaluation of Public Participation and consultation Processes.	Inception phase.
Water Research Commission	Evaluation of the impact of gender transformation interventions to improve access to Water for women in the water sector.	Implementation phase.
Cross- Border Road Transport Agency (C-BRTA)	Mid-term review of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and institutionalisation of evaluations at the C-BRTA.	Process to institutionalise evaluations continued.
Agricultural Research Council (ARC)	Institutionalisation of Evaluations at the ARC.	Process to institutionalise evaluations continued.
MICTSETA	Institutionalisation of Evaluations at the MICTSETA.	
Rand Water Foundation	Institutionalisation of Evaluations at the Rand Water Foundation.	Process to institutionalise evaluations to continue in the new year.
Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (Misa)	Institutionalisation of Evaluations at the MISA.	Process to institutionalise evaluations to continue in the new year.

The DPME will continue to work with these SOEs to institutionalise and draw lessons from the process to guide the shareholder departments to customise the National Evaluation System tools and guidelines for the broader SOE sector.

6. SOUTH AFRICAN EVALUATION EVIDENCE MAP (SAEEM)

The process of developing the SAEEM is currently underway. A comprehensive South African evaluation Evidence Map (EEM) aims to scope the evaluations knowledge base to inform the work of government in overall planning, monitoring and reviewing national policies and programmatic interventions. The EM will further become a public resource for wider use by evaluation practitioners, research institutes and wider society to assess Government performance. Over 11 000 academic and grey literature pieces have been sourced through a call to different government and non-government institutions and by conducting strategic searches on different databases.

Two approaches to supplement capacity were adopted. The DPME has continued with the Evaluations Evidence Map Project in-house in 2023/24. Officials and interns from the Evaluations and Research Units continued to extract data using the tool that was piloted and finalised in 2022/23 and SAMEA contracted 3 Emerging Evaluators (EEs) who received initial training from DPME in December 2022 for a period of 3 months from September to November 2023.



Extraction of data from 892 grey literature and quality assurance has been completed. The next step in the process is visualization and engagement which will include population of the EM via the EM capture platform in DPME, testing and finalization, stakeholder engagements, and sharing.

7. GUIDELINES

Guidelines are critical in supporting various steps in undertaking evaluations and utilising evaluation evidence in improving programmes/projects/policies/plans. Currently 27 guidelines and 9 templates have been developed/reviewed. All guidelines and templates may be accessed on the DPME website.

During the period under review, two new guidelines and one guidance note were produced, namely: The virtual evaluation guideline; The quality assurance framework; and the technical support guidance note. One guideline on impact evaluation and one template on appointment of steering committee members were also reviewed.

7.1 Virtual evaluation guideline

The Virtual Evaluation Guideline, using monitoring & evaluation evidence for learning and adaptive management activities. The purpose of the guideline is to give practical guidance on how to undertake virtual evaluations. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation developed this guideline in partnership with the South African Monitoring & Evaluation Association (SAMEA).

7.2 Evaluation Quality Assurance Framework

The DPME developed the Evaluation Quality Assurance Framework. The framework sets out steps for applying systematic quality assurance throughout the evaluation process considering relevant evaluation guidelines and templates. It seeks to ensure that the evaluation processes are of the highest standard of quality and integrity, and that the findings are credible and actionable.

7.3 Technical Support Guidance Note

The importance of supporting state institutions to effectively implement evaluations as mandated by the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) has become increasingly critical in light of limited resources, demand for evidence-based decision-making, and accountability from citizens and policymakers.

To address this, the DPME and partners have sought to enhance technical support within the National Evaluation System (NES). This includes exploring innovative approaches and improving coordination and alignment across government spheres. A Technical Support Guidance Note was proposed during a strategic planning session to provide a framework for requesting and coordinating technical support from DPME.

The Guidance Note aims to assist coordinators of evaluations at various government levels in planning, coordinating, and overseeing the identification of technical support for evaluations. It also encourages consensus-building among government spheres and partners for harmonised technical support provision. Additionally, it promotes the sourcing of technical support from other capable institutions or service providers due to limited capacity within the DPME.

7.4 Impact Evaluation Guideline

The revised Impact Evaluation Guideline provides a guide on deciding whether or not an impact evaluation is required, what the key elements of designing an impact evaluation are, typical impact evaluation questions, methodological approaches to answering policy relevant questions, as well as analytical methods for use in impact evaluations.

7.5 Terms of Reference Template for steering committees

The Appointment of the Steering Committee Template was revised with the aim of strengthening a coordination mechanism needed to oversee the evaluation and to clarify the role of the DPME where a custodian department is procuring a service provider to undertake an evaluation.

7.6 Report on Usefulness and Awareness of Evaluation Guidelines and Templates

The DPME undertook a survey on the awareness, utilisation and usefulness of DPME evaluation guidelines amongst government officials. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Explore the relevance of evaluation guidelines and templates across all spheres of government;
- Assess the usefulness of evaluation guidelines and templates;
- Determine which evaluation guidelines and templates are mostly used and how user-friendly these are;
- Identify barriers and concerns in accessing evaluation guidelines and templates; and
- Explore how evaluation guidelines and templates can be strengthened.

A need to undertake a survey in order to determine the awareness, utilisation and usefulness of evaluation guidelines and templates was identified at the strategic planning session of the unit held in March 2023.

Almost all respondents indicated that both evaluation guidelines and templates are useful and relevant, and they enable them to conduct their work effectively. In general, both the evaluation guidelines and templates are easily accessible and utilised. Respondents further made suggestions on how to improve the usefulness and accessibility of guidelines.

Respondents made recommendations on guidelines needed but not catered for; improving accessibility of evaluation guidelines and templates; and also indicated that templates should be flexible to ensure that evaluation practitioners and managers can contextualise and adapt according to their departmental structure.

Some of the recommendations included:

- Developing a guideline designed for Local Government departments and SOE's to guide evaluation processes as the current ones do not have complete steps to help achieve desired results.
- DPME Evaluation Unit to conduct regular workshops, training and capacity building sessions after developing evaluation guidelines and templates.
- Developing a guideline on how to develop standard operating procedures for evaluations.
- Developing a template on the logic model.

An Improvement Plan will be developed and actioned by DPME during the 2024/25 financial year.

8. STAKEHOLDER MOBILAZATION AND KNOWLEGDE BROKERING

The NEPF mandates DPME to provide technical support to the different national departments as well as to provinces, working through Offices of the Premier. The DPME Evaluation Unit has over the 2016/17 to 2020/21 financial years provided various types of technical support initiatives to different spheres of government which included: presentations at various workshops

and meetings; training provided through the National School of Government (NSG); facilitating knowledge sharing platforms such as brown bag sessions and the National Evaluation Seminar; the development and sharing of guidelines; as well as participation in the Technical Task Teams and Steering Committees (SC) whereby staff members of the unit guide the conceptualisation and implementation of evaluation projects at different spheres of government. Furthermore, by partnering with each other, the DPME and NSG managed to update course material – specifically the introduction to M&E Course.

8.1 Brown Bag Lunch Sessions

Brown Bag Lunch (BBL) sessions are an initiative that DPME and its partners utilise to foster a culture of continuous learning. Having these sessions hosted virtually has helped in tapping into international expertise and has facilitated a wider stakeholder attendance. As depicted by the following table 9, a total of Five (5) BBL sessions were hosted in the year 2023/24:



Table 9: Brown Bag Lunch sessions

Topic(s) covered	Date	Total number of attendees	Summary of the session
Municipal financial health index	24 May 2023	40	The session was presented by Prof Daniel Meyer and facilitated by DDG Godfrey Mashamba. The focus was on applying the Financial Health Index (FHI) to local government, focusing on four sub-indexes of financial health namely: income and expenditure; liquidity ratios; solvency ratios and profitability ratios.
Institutionalisation of M&E in the subnational level of government (lessons from the KZN province and eThekweni Municipality)	8 June 2023	144	This session was held in partnership with Twende Mbele and was co-presented by Ms. Futhi Mazibuko and Ms. Khululiwe Faya. The session covered the issues of M&E institutionalisation at the sub national government level, whether there are M&E frameworks available, who the key drivers are, what challenges are being experienced and what activities were put in place to overcome challenges.
The importance of assessing the impact of interventions: highlights from the study on “the impact of mining investment on education outcome in South Africa”	29 June 2023	109	This session was facilitated by Ms. Ahn-Lynn Poniappen and the presentation was made by Dr Neissan Besharati from PAIRS. This was a study that looked at the impact of the Anglo-American Platinum education programme implemented in the Limpopo and Northwest provinces to improve learning outcomes in public schools – particularly in the critical subjects of Math and Science.
Community based M&E forums: Ugandan Barazas and South African Imbizos	7 September 2023	80	This session was done in partnership with Twende Mbele. It focused on Ugandan Barazas and South African Imbizos and was presented by Mr. Joseph Muserero and Mr. Thabo Makhosane.
Understanding Virtual Evaluation Guidelines	28 February 2024	104	This session was facilitated by Mrs. Kgaugelo Moshia-Molebatsi and co-presented by Ms. Eleanor Hazell from JET Education and Mr Lesedi Matlala from Real Go Getters.

8.2 Webinar on Decolonising Evaluation and Journal Paper

A webinar was hosted by the International Evaluation Academy (IEAc) on 1 November 2023 on “A conversation: Decolonising national evaluation systems”. Ms Thokozile Molaiwa was one of the speakers and presented on how South Africa’s National Evaluation System (NES) apply elements of a decolonised social-ecological model, and how this could be strengthened. Other speakers included Professor Ian Goldman – President of IEAc, Dr Candice Morkel – Director Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results – Anglophone Africa CLEAR AA; Dr. Edoe Dimitrij Agbodjan – Director CLEAR Francophone Africa, and Beverly Parsons – IEAc Board, Executive Director of InSites, former President of American Evaluation Association as a panelist.

A paper on decolonising national evaluation systems was accepted for publication in the African Evaluation Journal. The objective of the paper is to explore how far cases of African national evaluation systems (NESs) apply elements of a decolonised social-ecological model, and how this could be strengthened.

Furthermore, a blog was written and published on 10 December 2023 on the American Evaluation Association (AEA) 365 a Tip-a-Day: Transformational Eval Week: Decolonising National Evaluation Systems by Ian Goldman, Candice Morkel, Edoé Dimitrij Agbodjan, and Thokozile Molaiwa. The authors used a new institutionalism lens to understand isomorphism and identify levers to provide new ways of thinking about building strong and effective state-led evaluation systems. This thinking was applied to the South and Benin’s national evaluation systems – two of the three countries in Africa with NESs (the other being Uganda).

8.3 National Evaluation Seminar

The 2023 National Evaluation Seminar was held on 21 and 22 November 2023, under the theme “Rising to challenges of limited resources, inequality, and climate crises.” It adopted a hybrid model, with 111 attendees gathering at the Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference in Johannesburg, while 195 participants joined virtually. This approach allowed for nationwide participation, especially for those who were unable to attend physically due to resource constraints. Moreover, it facilitated the inclusion of international expertise, with Mr. Ashwani Muthoo, Director General of the Independent Evaluation Office of the BRICS New Development Bank, delivering an address. Additionally, Ms. Eleanor Hazell and Mr. Lesedi Matlala presented on virtual evaluations, showcasing the advantages of the hybrid model.

The seminar was honoured by the virtual presence of Ms. Maropene Ramokgopa, Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, who delivered opening remarks. She emphasised several key points:

1. **Elevating Local Government:** Ms. Ramokgopa stressed the importance of prioritising the experiences of local government, as they are the frontline of service delivery. Evaluating programmes at this level is vital for accountability, service improvement, and responsiveness to local needs.
2. **Flagship Initiative:** The National Evaluation Seminar, initiated in 2014, has been instrumental in strengthening the country’s evaluation machinery. Continuous engagement with diverse national and international stakeholders has been pivotal in this endeavour.
3. **Enhancing Participation:** The Minister highlighted the value of diverse perspectives in enriching discussions and advancing Monitoring and Evaluation practices, both locally and globally.
4. **Addressing Challenges:** Resource constraints, the use of rapid evaluations, and maximising the impact of evaluation evidence were identified as key provocations. Participants were urged to focus on innovative solutions to address inequality and climate change.

5. **Tackling Inequality and Climate Change:** Ms. Ramokgopa underscored the need for creative strategies to accelerate inclusive results of government initiatives and integrate environmental sustainability principles into planning and development processes.
6. **Role of Evaluation Practitioners:** Evaluation professionals play a crucial role in addressing underdevelopment by ensuring that evaluation outputs directly impact citizens’ livelihoods and the environment, with a focus on the inclusion of vulnerable groups in society.

Key outcomes of the seminar:

The seminar received positive feedback from participants, who appreciated its diversity in presentations and presenters. Many participants recommended continuing the hybrid method of conducting the seminar, emphasizing the good quality of the virtual platform and its sound system, which was highlighted by the majority of virtual attendees.

The seminar was evaluated at the end and recommendations by participants to improve planning included:

- The participants emphasised utilising the National Evaluation Seminar (NES) as a platform for government evaluation professionals to offer solutions grounded in experience.
- Suggestions include pre-seminar surveys to measure implementation progress from previous seminars, holding networking sessions for emerging evaluators, and prioritising in-person presentations by local speakers.
- Actioning commitments from previous seminars and providing progress updates are recommended, alongside offering facilitation opportunities for young evaluators.
- It’s advised to extend seminar duration to accommodate diverse participant groups.
- Additionally, involving potential evaluation users and prioritising RSVPs for evaluation champions are proposed strategies for enhancing seminar effectiveness.

8.4 Training

8.4.1 Executive Course for Evaluation Leaders (ExCEL)

The National School of Government (NSG) has entered into a partnership with UNICEF to host and co-facilitate the Executive Course for Evaluation Leaders from 9 to 20 October 2023 in South Africa. The course targeted African countries with the view to roll out the programme in future to more local participants.



Eleven countries were represented at the course, including South Africa.



The South African delegation included representatives from the DPME (Ms Thokozile Molaiwa), NSG (Dr Dennise Miller and Mr Edmund Mudau), Department of Social Development (Mr Sicky Makunyane) and UNICEF Southern African Regional Office (Mr Bikul Tulachan).

The course was offered by Academics from the National University of Singapore (Lee Kuan Yew School of Public

Policy). The reasons for the course were firstly to build evaluation capacity in governments where UNICEF is involved, and secondly the NSG's intention was to learn and improve on the programmes currently being rolled out with a targeted approach towards senior managers in government not directly involved in evaluations.

Learning objectives of the ExCEL course include culture building, capacity building, confidence building and network building.



Prof Ian Goldman and Ms Thokozile Molaiwa were invited to facilitate a session on Fostering a Culture of Evaluation: The case of South Africa on 17 October, 2023. This session covered the following aspects: The establishment of the Evaluation System in South Africa, and how it linked to the Government-Wide M&E System; What was done to support a culture and system of evaluation including a report on the evaluation of the National Evaluation System (NES); as well as efforts to rebuild the NES and future directions of the NES.

Participation in the course resulted in an action plan to establish an online community of practice for evaluators in South Africa and Africa at large, which will be jointly hosted by the DPME, NSG and UNICEF.

In 2024, the course was rolled out from 26 February to 8 March 2024 and three officials from the DPME attended the course, namely: Mr Godfrey Mashamba, Mrs Kgaugelo Moshia-Molebatsi and Ms Thilivhali Tshivhase

8.4.2 Training on Jobs Measurement and Employment Impact Assessment

Mrs Kgaugelo Moshia-Molebatsi and Ms Khanyisa Mkhabele attended a training course on Jobs Measurement and Employment Impact Assessment that was held at the International Training Centre: International Labour Organisation (ITCILO), in Turin, Italy, from 16 to 20 October 2023. The training targeted government officials involved in the designing and implementation of policies impacting employment. The training focused on competencies needed to make informed decisions about how to measure and evaluate the results of interventions to promote decent jobs for women and men, with a focus on vulnerable groups, such as youth, rural populations, and informal workers.



The 5 days training built on the methodologies, tools and approaches developed by the ILO and its partners to forecast jobs creation and evaluate outcomes, such as:

- The ILO approach to employment impact assessment;
- Employment indicators and their use according to the theory of change;
- Ex-ante and ex-post impact analysis: a wide array of methods; and
- Evidence uptake in policy formulation.

The training remains relevant to the Evaluation Unit in championing the National Evaluation System. Moreover, participation in the training course has led the team to discuss a possible partnership with the training organisation. There is a concept document to formalise the relationship between ILO and DPME.

8.4.3 Evaluation courses offered by the National School of Government

The DPME has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the National School of Government (NSG). This initiative is part of capacity development aimed at supporting the National Evaluation System. As such, the DPME is required to provide the NSG with the latest guidelines and any other policy frameworks from the DPME, whether they are from planning, monitoring or evaluation. The DPME is also expected to provide inputs during the review of courses to ensure that the courses are aligned to recent government policies.

Below are some of the courses provided by the NSG, which can be accessed by any government official at a fee:

- Managing, commissioning and deepening evaluations in government;
- Selecting appropriate methodologies for evaluation in government;
- Theory of change for planning in the public sector; and
- Technical evidence-based policy making and implementation course.

9. NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEM (NES) MANAGEMENT

9.1 Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) review of performance

In the 2023/24 financial year the DPME reviewed the performance of the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) in line with the terms of reference for the EAC. The recommendations from the review will be used to improve the composition and functioning of the EAC going forward.

9.2 Evaluation Strategic Plan implementation progress and future direction

The Evaluation Unit held its Strategic Planning Session from 8 to 10 March 2023, under the theme “Re-aligning the mandate of the unit to the current resources and priorities to optimise the National Evaluation Systems (NES)’s impact”.

The main objectives of the strategic planning session included the following:

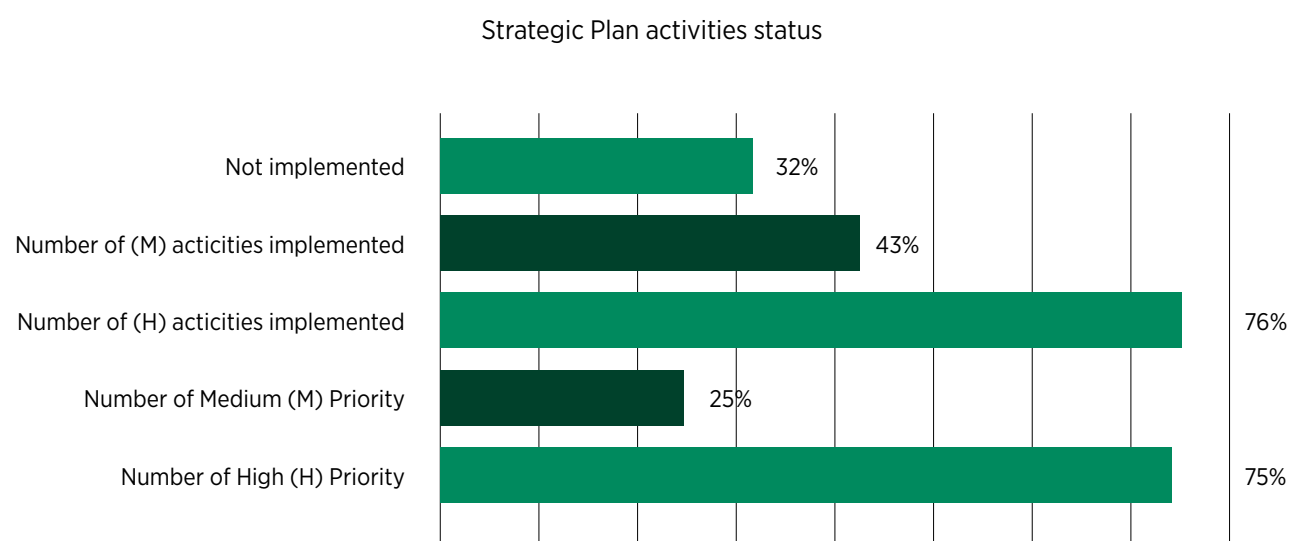
- To undertake a situational analysis of the current context within which the unit is operating.
- To review the mandate, strategic objectives and key functions of the unit.

- To develop an action plan to achieve the set strategic objectives for 2023/24 which will be used to develop the 2023-24 Operational Plan for the Evaluation Unit.

Following the development of the strategic plan, an annual performance plan was compiled for the 2023/24 financial year and high priority activities were identified for implementation with medium priority activities targeted for implementation in the upcoming 2024/25 financial year.

As shown on the following figure 4, 76% of high priority activities were implemented and only 43% medium priority activities were implemented with a total of 68% of activities implemented irrespective of priority and 32% not implemented due to capacity and budget constraints.

Figure 4: Status of implementation of strategic plan activities



Activities not implemented include:

- Budget allocated for evaluations have not been increased – instead it has been cut further.
- A database of officials with specialised skills working within government has not been created (these include those with statistical skills, data visualisation skills, data analysis skills, report writing skills, voluntary peer reviewers, amongst others).
- A plan for the establishment of a Community of Practice (CoP) for SOEs was not developed due to capacity constraints, however a CoP for M&E in Local Government was established.
- The Evaluations Unit did not issue a new call for evaluations. The Unit instead focused on implementing the 2020-2025 National Evaluation Plan. Selection criteria for the expanded call for evaluations to all sectors was therefore not developed and rolled out.

10. PARTNERSHIPS

10.1. TWENDE MBELE

The Government of the Republic of South Africa is a founding member of the Twende Mbele multi-lateral peer-learning partnership among six African countries, namely the Republic of South Africa, Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Niger and Uganda as well as the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results – Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA). The DPME represents South Africa in this Pan-African peer-learning partnership. Twende Mbele has a mission of strengthening the public sector Monitoring and Evaluation systems of partner countries, with an ultimate aim of inducing evidence-based governance (which includes planning, decision-making, policymaking, budgeting and implementation). Such a paradigm shift towards evidence-based governance is a key pathway towards improving government developmental and service delivery performance.

Mr Godfrey Mashamba was appointed as the Chairperson of the Twende Mbele Management Committee (ManCom) and Ms Thokozile Molaiwa and Mrs Kgaugelo Moshia-Molebatsi as members of the Twende Mbele Technical Committee. Over the past financial year, the DPME has collaborated with Twende Mbele on the following projects:

Co-hosting the National Evaluation Seminar 2023 and Brown Bag Lunch sessions

The DPME and Twende Mbele successfully co-hosted the National Evaluation Seminar 2023 on 21 and 22 November 2023. Brown Bag Lunch sessions were co-hosted in a bid to share knowledge on relevant evaluation topics.

Capacity Building and Strategy Formulation Workshop

Twende Mbele convened a strategy formulation workshop in Johannesburg (7 to 9 November 2023), which led to the development of a draft strategy on how M&E coordinating institutions can collaborate and cooperative to establish and promote M&E systems and culture in sectors and subnational government.

The aim of the workshop was building or refreshing of basic performance Monitoring and Evaluation capacities among the delegates from the Republics of Benin, Niger, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya and South Africa to discuss and develop a common strategy on how departments/ministries that coordinate the government-wide M&E system can work with sector departments/ministries and subnational governments to institutionalise M&E practices such that it informs public policymaking, development planning and budgeting.



Research study on the current use of performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) evidence

An improvement plan for the applied research study on the current use of performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) evidence in public sector planning and budgeting processes of the government of South Africa was developed.

The Rapid Implementation Evaluation of the Frontline Monitoring and Support (FM&S) Project Management Approach

The evaluation was undertaken by the DPME during the 2023/2024 financial year. The DPME partnered with Twende Mbele to appoint a service provider to undertake the evaluation and work closely with the evaluation steering committee on all evaluation deliverables. The report was approved by the Steering Committee on 30 November 2023.

Ghana Study Tour to South Africa

South Africa hosted the Monitoring and Evaluation Secretariat (MES) of the Government of Ghana from 19 to 23 February 2024. While in South Africa, the MES team was accompanied by Twende Mbele. Institutions that were visited included the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa, the Offices of the Premier in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape, as well as the eThekweni Municipality. The focus of the sessions included:

- Building an inclusive national Monitoring and Evaluation system that champions the building of M&E capacity in national and provincial departments, local government and state-owned enterprises.
- Sharing best practices and challenges when establishing a provincial Monitoring and Evaluation system, municipal M&E systems and M&E communities of practice/associations.



The purpose of the study tour was for the MES to establish partnerships with peer M&E institutions in South Africa, by facilitating peer-to-peer learning on M&E systems. This endeavour aimed to bridge the results-based management gap and enhance M&E practices in governance and public sector institutions.



The specific objectives of the tour included:

- Sharing knowledge and experiences on building and implementing national M&E systems, as well as emphasizing M&E culture, performance assessment tools, citizen-based monitoring, and capacity-building programs.
- To promote accountability and transparency through M&E practices.
- Foster a network of M&E practitioners for collaboration.
- Acquire knowledge to develop impactful M&E programs in the public service.



The tour agenda encompassed peer learning sessions focusing on building M&E capacity, establishing M&E systems, and utilising M&E for accountability and change in the public sector.



The study tour is expected to result in several key outcomes:

- Enhanced knowledge, skills, and competencies of the MES and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC).
- Improved strategies and approaches for M&E data collection, analysis, and reporting, supporting performance reviews, audits, and knowledge activities.
- Development of an M&E capacity plan for the PPMEDs (Presidential Priority Ministries, Departments, and Agencies) across the public service.
- Development of sensitization programs to cultivate an M&E culture among top management in public sector institutions.

- Devising a network and collaboration strategy between MES and participating institutions in South Africa.

The key take-aways from the Ghanaian delegation included: The independence of M&E at various levels of government; The separation of the evaluation function from the monitoring function and not lumping the two together; Having a central coordinator for the National Evaluation System; The provision of frameworks and guidelines with entities customising the guidelines to their needs; Setting up a Presidential Hotline for citizens to raise concerns; and Conducting frontline service delivery monitoring to improve service delivery.

It is envisioned that the collaboration between Twende Mbele and the DPME will continue in the new financial year with various other evaluation projects and Brown Bag Sessions planned.

10.2 SOUTH AFRICAN MONITORING AND EVALUATION ASSOCIATION (SAMEA)

The Partnership between the DPME and SAMEA seeks to cooperate and collaborate to promote M&E in South Africa, and in so doing building the National Evaluation System. SAMEA continued to partner with the DPME as per the signed MOA. Some of the projects partnered on included:

- The National Evaluation Seminar 2023.
- South Africa Evaluation Evidence Map (SAEEM).
- Local Government M&E Community of Practice (CoP).
- Training on Transformative Equity and Climate and Ecosystems Health.
- Guideline on virtual evaluations.
- SAMEA 9th biennial conference.

10.3 CENTRE FOR LEARNING ON EVALUATION AND RESULTS – ANGLOPHONE AFRICA

During the period under review, the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results – Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) continued to partner with the DPME and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been put in place and was approved by both organisations to remain effective for a period of three years effective 24 January 2024. The Director of CLEAR-AA, Dr. Candice Morkel, forms part of the Evaluation Advisory Committee and continues to play an advisory role. CLEAR-AA partnered with DPME to revise the Impact Evaluation Guideline.

CLEAR-AA also contributed to the National Evaluation Seminar 2023 and shared lessons on the status of national evaluation systems across the continent. She also delivered a session on conducting evaluations on a shoestring budget.

10.4 INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE OF BRICS NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

The DPME met with the Independent Evaluation Office of the BRICS New Development Bank on 2 May 2023 at the DPME Grosvenor Office. The DPME delegation was led by Mr. Godfrey Mashamba and included the following: Ms. Thokozile Molaiwa and Mrs. Kgaugelo Moshia-Molebatsi from the Evaluation Unit, Ms. Futhi Umlaw from the Capacity Development Unit, while DPME's Director General, Dr. Robert Nkuna, came in briefly to meet and greet the NDB IEO delegation.

The NDB (IEO) delegation comprised of Mr. Chao Sun (Senior Professional Officer IEO), Mr. Mohammad Nurul Alam (Senior Independent Advisor IEO), and Ms. Lungile Mashele (Energy Sector Specialist).



The meeting aimed to discuss a planned evaluation by the NDB on the South African Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction and Energy Sector Development Project, funded by the NDB through the DBSA. Key topics included introducing the NDB, NDB IEO, and DBSA project under evaluation, as well as the proposed evaluation approach. The DPME shared insights on South Africa's National Evaluation System, including the National Evaluation Plan 2020-2025 and evaluation practices.

Discussions also touched on evaluating South Africa's economic recovery post-COVID-19 pandemic, with the NDB expressing interest in using new evaluation guidelines introduced by the DPME in 2022, focusing on climate and ecosystems health, and transformative equity criteria.

Opportunities arising from the meeting include potential collaborations such as IEO experts presenting at the 2023 National Evaluation Seminar and exchanging knowledge on assessing economic recovery post-COVID-19 among NDB member countries. The Director General of the IEO, Mr. Ashwani Muthoo, presented at the National Evaluation Seminar on 21 November 2023 while Mr. Chao Sun physically attended the seminar and presented on 22 November 2023.

The DPME and NDB IEO have also started formalising the relationship through a draft MOU.

Evaluation of the Renewable Energy Sector Development Project in South Africa

The Renewable Energy Sector Development Project in South Africa (implemented from 2020 to 2024) has been selected for a project evaluation to be undertaken by IEO in February 2024. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation was requested to peer review all the deliverables for this evaluation.

EvalFest 2024
The Shifting Sands in Evaluation: Need for Responsive, Adaptive and Future-proof Approaches

OPENING CEREMONY
 21st February, 2024 | Time: 09:30 - 11:00 | Venue: Silver Oak I & II

Keynote Speakers

- Ashwani K. Muthoo**
 Director General, Independent Evaluation Office, BRICS New Development Bank
- Marc Segone**
 Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNFPA
- Suneetha Krishnan**
 Deputy Country Director, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, India
- Elisabeth Faure**
 Country Director, World Food Programme, India

Chief Guest
Prof. Ramesh Chand
 Member, NITI Aayog, Government of India

Special Guests

- Abul Kashem Md Mokhammad**
 Secretary, Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Department, Ministry of Planning, Bangladesh
- Godfrey Mashamba**
 Deputy Director General, Department (Ministry) of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, South Africa

Conference Partners

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Logos of partners include: New Development Bank, UNFPA, IEO, WFP, PORTICUS, OUTL, NE, Social Impact Through Data, IDEAL, BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation, SAMBODHI, USAID, Agency for all, unicef, IEO, Independent Evaluation Office, 20, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, Social Innovation and Impact of Public, Make it work better, Campbell South Asia, SOCIAL NORMS & AGENCY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE, pci, IWAGE, IIAA UNIVERSITY, GEH, ISSI, dce, Breakthrough.

The EvalFest 2024

The Evaluation Community of India (ECOI) organised a conference, the EvalFest 2024, on Monitoring and Evaluation in Delhi from 21 to 23 February 2024 and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the NDB was one of the core partners and sponsors of this conference. Mr. Godfrey Mashamba attended the conference and participated in a high-level panel discussion on 21 February on Evaluation Approaches and Lessons on Sustainable Infrastructure Development by the BRICS New Development Bank and other Key Development Partners.



Annexure 1: Evaluation Team

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DDG: Evaluation, Evidence and Knowledge Systems (EEKS)

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