



**NATIONAL
EVALUATION
POLICY
FRAMEWORK
2025**

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the dpme

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	IV
EVALUATION PROCESSES AND PRINCIPLES (INFOGRAPHICS)	V
FOREWORD	VI
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES.....	1
1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	1
1.3 APPLICABILITY, INTENDED USERS AND STAKEHOLDERS.....	2
1.4 APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND POLICIES	2
SECTION 2: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS	4
2.1 NEPF IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS.....	4
2.2 PRIORITIES OF THE 7TH ADMINISTRATION.....	4
2.3 STRATEGIC CHANGES IN THE NEPF 2025	6
2.3.1 SUPPORTING THE USE OF DIVERSE EVALUATIVE APPROACHES	6
2.3.2 ENHANCING THE PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS.....	6
2.3.3 EMBRACING DIGITAL AND DATA INNOVATIONS	6
2.3.4 FOSTERING COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS	7
2.3.5 SUPPORTING ADAPTIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE GOVERNANCE	7
SECTION 3: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	8
3.1 DEFINING EVALUATIONS.....	8
3.2 TYPES OF EVALUATIONS.....	9
3.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS.....	10
3.4 EVALUATIVE PRACTICES AND APPROACHES.....	12
3.1.1 EVALUATIVE THINKING IN MONITORING.....	12
3.1.2 EVALUATIVE WORKSHOPS	12
3.1.3 RAPID EVALUATIONS AND FULL-SCALE EVALUATIONS	13
3.1.4 EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS	13
3.1.5 PERFORMANCE AND EXPENDITURE REVIEW	15
3.1.6 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS	15
3.1.7 SYSTEMS THINKING IN EVALUATION.....	16
3.1.8 APPLICATION OF FORESIGHT TOOLS.....	16
3.1.9 INTEGRATING EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS INTO EVALUATION	16
SECTION 4: UNDERTAKING EVALUATIONS IN GOVERNMENT	17
4.1 DEVELOPMENT OF EVALUATION PLANS	17
4.2 PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING PRIORITY EVALUATIONS FOR THE NEP	18
4.3 CONDUCTING EVALUATIONS.....	19
4.3.1 INITIATING, PLANNING AND DESIGNING AN EVALUATION.....	19
4.3.2 EVALUATION ETHICS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	20
4.3.3 PROMOTING USE OF EVALUATION EVIDENCE.....	20
4.3.4 COMMUNICATING FINDINGS, MANAGEMENT RESPONSES AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS.....	22
SECTION 5: INSTITUTIONALISATION, GOVERNANCE AND CAPACITY	23
5.1 THE DPME WITHIN THE NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEM.....	23
5.2 COMPLEMENTARITY WITH OTHER ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING MECHANISMS.....	24

5.2.1	CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND CHAPTER 9 INSTITUTIONS.....	24
5.2.2	SECTOR DEPARTMENTS AND ENTITIES.....	25
5.2.3	PARLIAMENT AND LEGISLATURE.....	25
5.2.4	ACADEMIA.....	25
5.2.5	CIVIL SOCIETY.....	25
5.3	NATIONAL EVALUATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE.....	25
5.4	EVALUATION CAPACITY, PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCING.....	25
SECTION 6: NEPF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW.....		26
6.1	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE NEPF.....	26
6.2	MONITORING AND REPORTING.....	26
6.3	EFFECTIVE PERIOD AND REVIEW.....	26
7	REFERENCES.....	27
ANNEXURE 1: THEORY OF CHANGE NEPF 2025.....		28
ANNEXURE 2: MEDIUM TERM STRATEGIC PLAN (MTDP) STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.....		29
ANNEXURE 3: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE NEPF 2025.....		30

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Spectrum of results-based management activities.....	8
Table 2:	Linking evaluation types with the policy or programme life cycle.....	9
Table 3:	Evaluation criteria and questions.....	11
Table 4:	Evaluative practices and approaches and relevant guidelines.....	12
Table 5:	Complementary roles of key departments and institutions.....	24

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Guiding principles and values for evaluation.....	2
Figure 2:	Evaluation types in the policy or programme life cycle.....	9
Figure 3:	Suitability of Rapid Evaluation and Full-Scale Evaluation approaches.....	13
Figure 4:	Seven-step evidence synthesis methodology.....	14
Figure 5:	Applying evidence synthesis in evaluations.....	14
Figure 6:	Process for selection of evaluations for the NEP.....	18
Figure 7:	Examples of use of evaluative evidence.....	21
Figure 8:	Components of the National Evaluation System.....	23

LIST OF TEXT BOXES

Text Box 1:	National priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals.....	5
Text Box 2:	Examples of recent institutional reviews.....	25

ABBREVIATIONS

AGSA	Auditor-General of South Africa
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CEH	Climate and Ecosystems Health
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DCOG	Department of Cooperative Governance
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EAC	Evaluation Advisory Committee
EQAF	Evaluation Quality Assurance Framework
FMPPI	Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information
FOSAD	Forum of South African Directors-General
FSAPP	Framework for Strategic and Annual Performance Plans
GRPBMEA	Gender-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing
GSCID	Governance and Security Cluster
GWM&E	Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MTDP	Medium-Term Development Plan
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NEP	National Evaluation Plan
NEPF	National Evaluation Policy Framework
NES	National Evaluation System
NSG	National School of Government
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PER	Performance and Expenditure Review
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PSC	Public Service Commission
SAMEA	South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association
SASQAF	South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework
SEIAS	Socio-Economic Impact Assessment System
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TE	Transformative Equity
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

Evaluation Phases

1. Scoping of evaluation	2. Designing the evaluation	3. Conducting/ implementing of the evaluation	4. Reporting and disseminating evaluation results	5. Use of evaluation results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with programme owner and relevant stakeholders to ensure buy-in and support Review programme context context, gather materials and review previous evaluations Review/refine/develop theory of change for the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of reference and evaluation matrix Type of evaluation Evaluation questions Identity data sources Purpose and objectives Methodology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal outsourced evaluation Evaluation team and steering committee Inception report Peer reviewing and approval of avaluation deliverables 1st and 2nd draft evaluation report Validation workshop Final evaluation report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary evaluation report; 1/5/25 Policy briefs Workshops and dialogues Infographics, posters and social media Present the report to EXCO Present the report to oversight structures/bodies (FOSAD, relevant cluster technical working group, cabinet) Publish evaluation report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management response Improvement plan Improvement plan progress reports Reference the use of evaluation to strategic plans, annual performance plans and annual reports

FOREWORD

The National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) 2025 sets out the standards and expectations for how evaluations should be commissioned, conducted and used across the public sector. It is anchored in South Africa's constitutional and legislative framework, including the Constitution of the Republic, the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), the Municipal Systems Act and related policy instruments that affirm citizens' rights to responsive, effective and accountable government.

This policy framework builds on the institutional foundations laid by the 2011 and 2019 iterations of the NEPF, by consolidating the gains made while introducing new measures to modernise the national evaluation system and respond to evolving development priorities. There is urgency to accelerate implementation and results given the development backlog and the period remaining towards the 2030 targets of the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Good governance demands greater transparency among partners and towards citizens. The current coalition arrangements require trust among diverse political and institutional actors. Evaluation must reinforce this by supporting evidence-informed decision-making in setting priorities, allocating resources, and in managing and reporting performance across all spheres of government.

Implementation of the NEPF 2025 seeks to achieve the following aims

- To improve development outcomes through institutionalisation of evaluative practices across government;
- To ensure evaluation evidence actively informs planning, budgeting and oversight;
- To promote inclusive, equitable and climate-sensitive policy making;
- To strengthen the national evaluation capacity and professionalisation; and
- To support adaptive governance and policy innovation across the government and wider society.

The NEPF 2025 will achieve this through its focus on supporting the use of diverse evaluative approaches across the policy and programme cycle; enhancing the performance and impact of public interventions; embracing digital and data innovations; fostering collaborative arrangements and partnerships; and supporting adaptive and transformative governance.

The obligation to implement the NEPF rests with accounting officers, programme managers, commissioners of evaluations and M&E professionals across all spheres of government. The NEPF aligns

closely with government's planning, budgeting and performance management systems and interfaces with strategic institutions at the Centre of Government, including The Presidency, National Treasury, DPISA and COGTA, Offices of the Premier, as well as oversight bodies such as Parliament, the Auditor-General and the Public Service Commission.

The NEPF mandates the development of a five-year National Evaluation Plan (NEP), which defines the national evaluation agenda. Evaluations will be selected based on transparent criteria to ensure that strategic programmes are selected for evaluation. The NEPF facilitates innovation in evaluation methods and practices. It reinforces the implementation of established evaluation standards, such as the OECD-DAC criteria, UNEG norms, while integrating nationally developed principles. South Africa introduced Transformative Equity (TE), to address structural inequities and Climate and Ecosystems Health (CEH), to embed environmental systems thinking into evaluation practice.

Government institutions are encouraged to apply modern digital tools and platforms, including big data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), real-time monitoring and interoperable data systems, to improve the efficiency, accessibility and timeliness of evaluations. These innovations must be deployed ethically and responsibly, with due attention to data privacy, equity and inclusion.

The evaluation system capacity plan will be implemented to sustain evaluation capabilities across the government, including partnerships with academia, professional associations, civil society and international agencies.

The NEPF adopts a utilisation-focused approach that mandates engagement with stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. All evaluations must have a clearly defined purpose and intended use at the outset. Evaluation findings are to be disseminated promptly to reach all affected stakeholders, and a transparent mechanism will be used to track the implementation of Improvement Plans arising from evaluations.

The DPME will produce an Annual Report on NEPF implementation to provide updates, among other things, on the use and influence of NEP evaluations on primary purposes of evaluations, namely policy decisions, institutional learning and programme performance improvements.



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the National Evaluation Policy Framework is to build a national evaluation system that delivers timely, credible and usable evidence for learning, to strengthen policy, budgeting, service delivery and development outcomes.

The objectives of the NEPF are to:

1. Institutionalise evaluative practices across national, provincial and local government and public entities to improve development outcomes;
2. Ensure evaluation evidence actively informs planning, budgeting and oversight;
3. Promote inclusive, equitable and climate-sensitive policy making through application of transformative equity (TE) and climate and ecosystem health (CEH) lenses;
4. Strengthen the national evaluation capacity and professionalisation; and
5. Support adaptive governance and policy innovation across the government and wider society.

In this way, and in line with its Theory of Change (Annexure 1), the framework positions evaluation as a strategic tool for building a Capable, Ethical and Developmental State by contributing to the ecosystem of evidence-informed decision-making, oversight and accountability.

1.2 Guiding principles

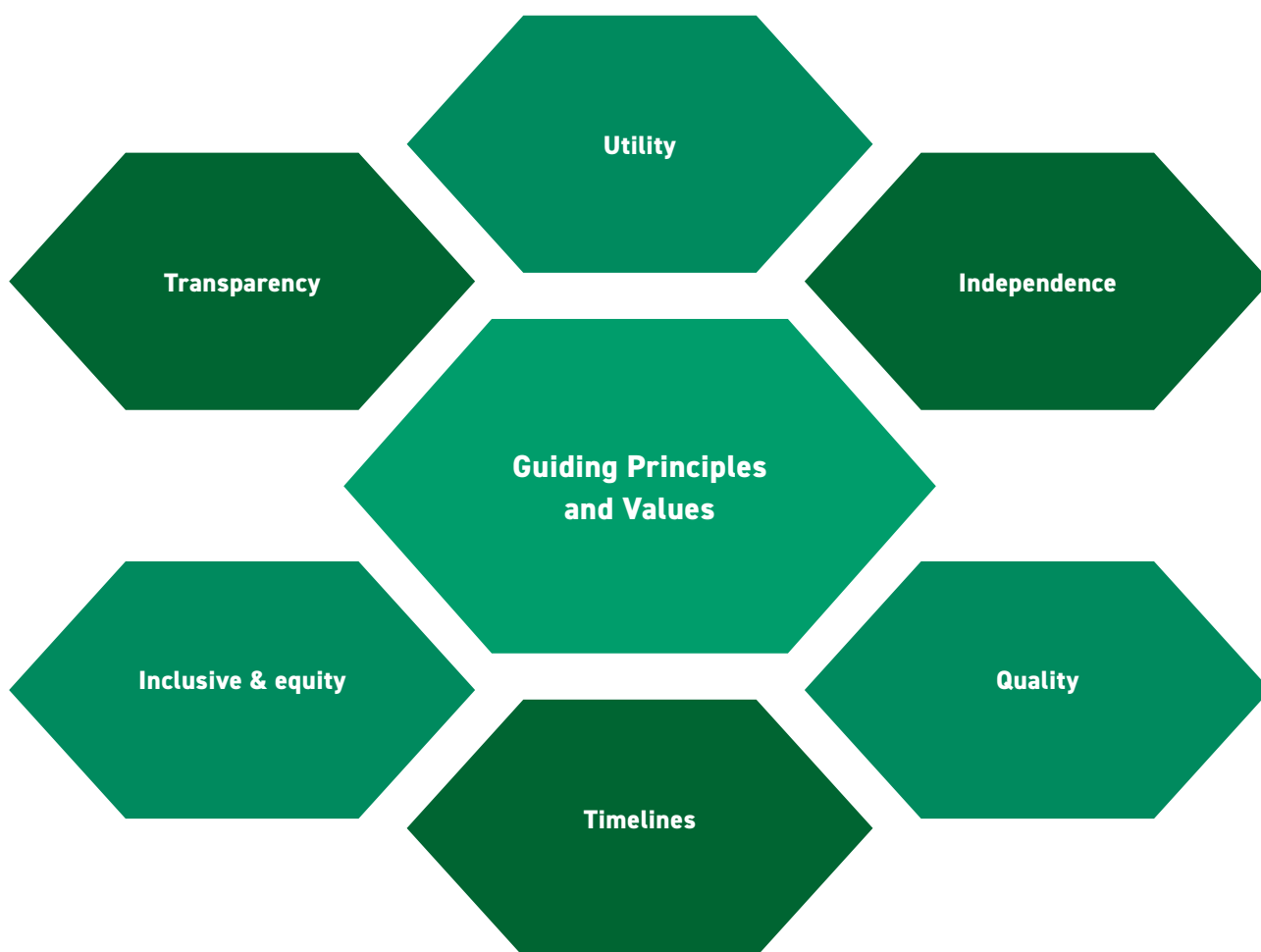
Evaluations commissioned under this framework must adhere to the following core values and principles:

- Utility (i.e. useful for accountability, decision-making, learning and improvement);
- Independent (objective, impartial and free from undue influence);
- Quality (based of rigorous methods and appropriate scientific approaches);
- Inclusive and equity (involve participation of relevant stakeholders, demonstrate understanding of culture and context and promotes equity by being gender-responsive and considerate of vulnerable groups and social justice);
- Transparency (processes, findings and results must be documented and publicly accessible),
- Timeliness (appropriately timed to influence important decision and actions).

These principles should guide the selection of methods, stakeholder engagement and dissemination.



Figure 1: Guiding principles and values for evaluation



1.3 Applicability, intended users and stakeholders

The NEPF applies across all spheres of government (national, provincial, local) and to government components as listed in Schedules 1, 2 and 3A of the Public Service Act (1994), Chapter 9 institutions and entities under in Parts A and C of Schedule 3 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (1999) and the Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) (MFMA), the Municipal Structures Act (1998) and the Municipal Systems Act (2000).

The NEPF guides accounting officers, programme managers, evaluators and development partners. It promotes strong links between evaluation and other governance functions: planning, budgeting, performance management, auditing and oversight. This requires structured interfaces among the Centre of Government institutions, i.e., the Presidency and Offices

of the Premier, National and Provincial Treasuries, Public Service and Administration (DPSA), Cooperative Governance, Parliament, the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) and the Public Service Commission (PSC). The framework fosters collaboration among government, civil society, academia, private sector and international partners to sustain a credible national evaluation system.

1.4 Applicable legislation and policies

The NEPF derives its mandate from a set of foundational laws and policies:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
- Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 1999
- Public Service Act, 1994 (as amended)
- Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), 2003

Section 1 of the Constitution outlines core values that enshrine equity:

Human dignity, equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms;

Non-racialism and non-sexism;

Supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law;

Universal adult suffrage and democratic accountability.

Section 195 of the Constitution stipulates principles of public administration, which include:

- Efficient, economic and effective use of resources;
- A development-oriented public service;
- Accountability and responsiveness; and
- Transparency, through timely and accurate information to the public.

In support of these constitutional principles, the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework (GWM&E), adopted in 2007, provided the initial guidance for institutionalising monitoring and evaluation across government. The GWM&E is structured around three interrelated data terrains: Performance information, managed through the Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information (FMPPi) (National Treasury); Official statistics, guided by the South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF) (Stats SA); and Evaluations, coordinated through the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME)).

Proclamation No. 43 of 8 July 2014, issued in terms of Section 97 of the Constitution, established the DPME in the Presidency. The DPME integrates planning, monitoring and evaluation functions across the government to support the President in overseeing government performance.

The PFMA mandates accounting officers to ensure the effective, efficient, economical and transparent use of resources (Section 38(1)(a)(i)); to produce measurable objectives for each budget programme (Section 27(4)); and to establish systems for evaluating major capital projects. Section 5 empowers the National Treasury to issue regulations and instructions to guide financial and performance management across public institutions. These Treasury regulations reinforce the institutionalisation of evaluation as part of the budget and accountability cycle – supporting practices such as performance and expenditure reviews and public value optimisation.

The MFMA (2003) makes similar supportive provisions for the local government sphere. In 2019, Cabinet adopted the Gender-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing (GRPBMEA) Framework, which reinforces the NEPF's mandate to promote gender equality, youth development and

inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Other relevant frameworks include:

- Socio-Economic Impact Assessment System (SEIAS), 2015 – a theory-based, ex-ante policy tool to assess regulatory impacts;
- Revised Framework for Strategic and Annual Performance Plans (FSAPP), 2019 – which mandates planning for mid-term and end-term evaluations and links evaluation with budgeting, performance and reporting;
- National Policy Development Framework 2020 – promotes institutionalised evaluation and evidence-informed policymaking.

The NEPF 2025 also aligns with international and regional frameworks. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution A/RES/77/283 (2023) encourages countries to strengthen national evaluation systems to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and use evaluation for knowledge sharing and accountability.

In the African context, the African Evaluation Association and African Union Partnership and the Addis Ababa Declaration on "Promoting an Africa-led Evaluation Agenda" are particularly relevant. The Declaration calls for:

- Institutionalisation of evaluation at all levels;
- Strengthening of evaluation capacity;
- Use of innovation and digital tools;
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration;
- Focus on equity, inclusion and sustainable financing.



SECTION 2: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 NEPF implementation lessons

The NEPF 2025 builds on the foundations of its 2011 and 2019 iterations. It continues with what has been proven to work and incorporates lessons from past implementation while integrating advances in evaluation practice to respond to emerging development priorities and shifting institutional mandates. Lessons from the NEPF Review Study, the National Evaluation Capacities Index (INCE) benchmarking process and stakeholder consultations highlight key achievements and gaps.

The following are some of the key successes to build upon:

- Growing evaluation culture: Several evaluations are conducted through national, provincial and departmental evaluation plans. For instance, over 76 evaluations have been completed under the DPME-led National Evaluation Plan series between 2012-2025. There is a well-established institutional architecture and growing culture for evaluation and evidence use, particularly in national departments and some provinces, to support planning and budgeting.
- Standardised practices have been developed: To promote coherence and the use of common language. Over twenty-eight (28) guidelines and nine templates have been implemented, along with departmental and provincial evaluation plans.
- Capacity building platforms: There is an optimal mix of institutions providing evaluation training and capacity building. This includes postgraduate, master's and doctoral programmes through universities, evaluation short courses through the National School of Government and peer learning spaces such as seminars, brown-bag sessions and communities of practice – all these integrating a youth focus.
- Global influence: South Africa is recognised regionally and globally for advancing evaluation practice through contributions to continental platforms such as CLEAR-AA, Twende Mbele, AfrEA, etc. and global platforms such as the United Nations, BRICS, etc. and active contribution in international evaluation debates.

However, there are critical limitations to overcome. The NEPF remains non-binding, resulting in weak enforcement and limited accountability. The uptake

of evaluation evidence is weak in some instances, as recommended improvement actions often compete with other priorities in annual plans, budgets, or policy decisions due to inadequate resources and limitations of follow-up and accountability mechanisms. There are capacity gaps in the system, with evaluation expertise concentrated at the centre, while there is reliance on consultants elsewhere. Repeated budget cuts and declining resources in recent years have hindered the planning and execution of evaluations and Improvement Plans. The inconsistent functioning of the online evaluation portal limits the dissemination and accessibility of evaluation evidence. A compliance-driven mindset is another drawback, as some institutions continue to view evaluation as punitive rather than as a tool for learning, adaptation and improvement.

2.2 Priorities of the 7th Administration

In February 2025, Cabinet approved the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024–2029 as the strategic plan for the 7th Administration. The MTDP has three Strategic Priorities, namely:

- Driving inclusive economic growth and job creation.
- Reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living.
- Building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Annexure 2 lists the Outcomes targeted under each of the MTDP Strategic Priorities. Furthermore, the Government has set the following five goals to be achieved through the above-mentioned priorities:

- A dynamic, growing economy;
- A more equal society, where no person lives in poverty;
- A capable state delivering basic services to all citizens;
- A safe and secure environment; and
- A cohesive and united nation.

Implementation of the NEPF 2025 must advance the principles underpinning the Statement of Intent of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and coalitions in other spheres of government. The context demands, among others, greater levels of transparency among key actors, evidence-based policy and decision-making and community participation in governance.

The MTDP represents the final push towards meeting the 2030 targets of the National Development Plan (NDP) - the country's long-term strategy - and the commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As 2030 approaches, assessing progress on the NDP and various national priorities will also need to be understood in their international and continental contexts.

The Development Indicators 2024 Report shows that developmental progress remains uneven, economic growth is sluggish and systemic inequities are persistent. None of the high-level NDP targets for reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality are

currently on track to be achieved by 2030. Of the 85 Development Indicators reviewed, only 13 (15%) are on track, while 31 (36%) show promising progress. Globally, only 17% of SDG targets are on track, with a third either stalled or regressing.^{1,2}

Text Box 1: National priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals

MTDP Strategic Priorities	Selected key performance areas	Aligned Sustainable Development Goals (Abbreviated)
Strategic Priority 1: Inclusive Growth and Job Creation	Dynamic, growing economy	SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
	Employment	SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
	Transforming the economy	SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth; SDG 5: Gender equality
	Infrastructure development and industrialisation	SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure; SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy
	Positioning South Africa in the world	SDG 10: Reduced inequalities; SDG 13: Climate action; SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals
	Technology innovation	SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
	Environmental sustainability	SDG 13: Climate action; SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production; SDG 14: Life below water; SDG 15: Life on land; SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation; SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
Strategic Priority 2: Reduce Poverty and Tackle the High Cost of Living	A more equal society where no one is left behind	SDG 1: No poverty; SDG 2: Zero hunger; SDG 5: Gender equality
	Education and training	SDG 4: Quality education
	Health	SDG 3: Good health and well-being
	Social cohesion and nation-building	SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
	Good governance	SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals
Strategic Priority 3: Build a Capable, Ethical and Developmental State	A capable state delivering basic services to all citizens	SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy; SDG 10: Reduced inequalities; SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
	A safe and secure environment	SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions

¹ DPME. Development Indicators 2024

² UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025

2.3 Strategic changes in the NEPF 2025

The NEPF 2025 incorporates the recent developments in the evaluation field. It reflects advances in evaluation practice and strengthens South Africa's national evaluation system through five thrust areas:

2.3.1 Supporting the use of diverse evaluative approaches

The NEPF 2025 introduces Transformative Equity (TE) and Climate & Ecosystems Health (CEH) as additional lenses to expand evaluation beyond traditional measures. It broadens evaluative practice through a flexible menu of approaches – including rapid evaluations, quantitative approaches, evidence synthesis, performance and expenditure reviews (PERs), evaluative workshops, institutional reviews systems thinking and foresight tools - ensuring fit-for-purpose evaluations responsive to policy priorities.

2.3.2 Enhancing the performance and impact of public policies and interventions

The NEPF 2025 reinforces a utilisation-focused approach to derive maximum value from evaluations. Building on lessons learned, the following measures will be prioritised:

- Engaging custodian departments and relevant clusters at the conceptualisation and initiation stages to ensure ownership and demand-driven processes.
- Greater stakeholder inclusion/ participation in evaluation steering committees, validation processes and improvement planning – to incorporate voices of programme participants and affected communities as co-creators of evaluative knowledge.
- Timely dissemination of evaluation findings and briefing of relevant decision-making structures early enough to influence decisions on time (e.g., within two months of evaluation report approval). Clusters and Parliamentary Committees will be notified in advance to include evaluation briefings in their work programmes. Communication tools such as policy briefs, infographics and dialogue platforms will ensure accessibility and uptake.
- Transparent tracking of evaluation use, with stakeholders able to access management responses, improvement plans and progress updates on the Evaluation Portal.
- Positioning evaluations strategically within the National Treasury-led budget reform process, particularly in the Budget Technical Committee and in formulating Targeted and Responsible Savings (TARS) recommendations for the national budget.

To support these measures, NEPF implementation will be embedded in the work programmes of the Governance, State Capabilities and Institutional Development (GSCID) Cluster and the Forum of South African Directors-General (FOSAD).

2.3.3 Embracing digital and data innovations

The NEPF 2025 prioritises digital innovation to improve the timeliness, accessibility and usability of evaluative evidence. Tools such as Evaluation Evidence Maps, real-time monitoring systems, artificial intelligence, big data analytics and interactive dashboards will enhance evidence synthesis and application.



2.3.4 Fostering collaborative arrangements and partnerships

To support effective implementation of the NEPF 2025, the DPME will seek to strengthen collaborative arrangements and partnerships. This will comprise structured engagements with other Centre of Government institutions to foster complementarity between evaluation practices with other policy evidence, accountability and learning mechanisms. Such institutions include The Presidency, National Treasury, Statistics South Africa, departments of Public Service and Administration, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, and provincial Offices of the Premier; as well as Chapter 9 institutions such as Parliament, the Auditor-General of South Africa and the Public Service Commission. Such engagements will include bilateral meetings, roundtables, evidence syntheses, joint planning and briefings, etc.

The DPME will also re-establish the National Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) to provide advice on various aspects of NEPF implementation by drawing from expertise that exists within government, non-government actors and oversight institutions.

Existing partnerships that support evaluation capacity development will be maintained to support implementation of a National Evaluation Capacity Plan. South Africa will continue to foster knowledge exchange networks and peer learning across the African continent and the global south. This will include engaging experts and decision-makers in African governments, universities, the private sector, NGOs, multilateral organisations and the wider international community. Collaboration will be encouraged through joint evaluations, peer reviews and shared evidence platforms.

2.3.5 Supporting adaptive and transformative governance

The NEPF 2025 positions evaluation as a catalyst for adaptive governance and transformative policy implementation.

It responds to three interrelated contexts: (1) The remaining period towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and South Africa's National Development Plan targets, which require accelerated action that balances domestic priorities with global dynamics (2) The need for greater transparency and accountability among coalitions partners and the citizens across the spheres of government (3) The high levels of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA) environment, which demands heightened responsiveness and integrated approaches.

The implementation approach builds on progress made through Evaluation Evidence Maps and integrated data systems. It will strengthen capacity for Rapid Evidence Synthesis Services that will be introduced to provide decision support on critical policy questions as they arise. This will enhance efficiency, reduce duplication and enable more effective use of existing knowledge.

By integrating systems thinking and foresight tools into evaluation, the framework should support the generation of holistic, adaptive and forward-looking insights to improve governance and development practice.



SECTION 3: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This section establishes the conceptual and methodological foundation for South Africa's evaluation practice. It defines evaluation and the types of evaluations, provides clarity on the approaches, criteria and tools that guide how evaluations are designed, conducted and used.

3.1 Defining evaluations

In this Policy Framework, **evaluation** is defined as³; ⁴:

The systematic collection and objective analysis of evidence on public policies, programmes, projects, functions and organizations to assess issues such as relevance, performance (effectiveness and efficiency), value for money, impact and sustainability, climate ecosystem health, transformative equity and recommend ways forward.

Monitoring is different from evaluation but complementary: Monitoring involves the continuous data collection, analysis and regular (or real-time) reporting in a way that supports effective management and implementation.

While monitoring asks whether planned interventions are being undertaken efficiently, evaluation asks whether the intervention is the appropriate response to the development problem, whether it is effective, efficient, sustainable and cost-effective (providing value for taxpayer money) and how it can be improved. Evaluation has the element of judgement and is conducted against set evaluation objectives or criteria. To be able to attribute an outcome or impact to the intervention, evaluations should ideally include comparison with a counterfactual (where the intervention did not happen, or where different intervention logics were applied).

Different types of evaluation can be undertaken at different phases of the policy or programme cycle, from before an intervention being implemented (ex-ante evaluation), during an intervention (process evaluation to check whether the activities are leading to outputs and outputs to outcomes) and after the intervention has been completed (ex-post evaluation). This is addressed in Paragraph 3.2 below.

The spectrum of results-based management activities illustrates that the conceptualisation of monitoring, evaluation and performance auditing overlaps. Table 1 below illustrates the core elements of each in terms of the activity involved and the objective.

Table 1: Spectrum of results-based management activities

MTDP Strategic Priorities	Selected key performance areas	Aligned Sustainable Development Goals (Abbreviated)
Inspection/investigation	Detects wrongdoing and verifies information	Control and compliance
Performance audit	Checks the validity of performance information produced by departments	Accountability, control, compliance
Monitoring	Ongoing tracking of progress against plans and initiating corrective action	Management, accountability, corrective action
Evaluation	Systematic process to provide an objective view regarding performance, reasons for good/ poor performance and suggest recommendations for improvement.	Learning, accountability, improving performance, inform policy, planning and budgeting
Research	Testing hypotheses/propositions and developing new evidence-based theory, practice and knowledge application through observation of reality	Learning, knowledge and valid data should inform evidence-based policymaking

3.2 Types of evaluations

While different countries and organisations may use different terminology to describe evaluations, the underlying principles remain the same.

This policy framework categorises the types of evaluations in two practical ways. Firstly, by their appropriateness to the policy or programme cycle

phases (i.e., problem or opportunity identification, policy formulation and programme planning, implementation and policy or programme review). Secondly, by dominant focus within the results chain (i.e., cause-effect) based on the underlying logic model (i.e., inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts), as outlined in the Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information published by the National Treasury.

Figure 2: Evaluation types in the policy or programme life cycle

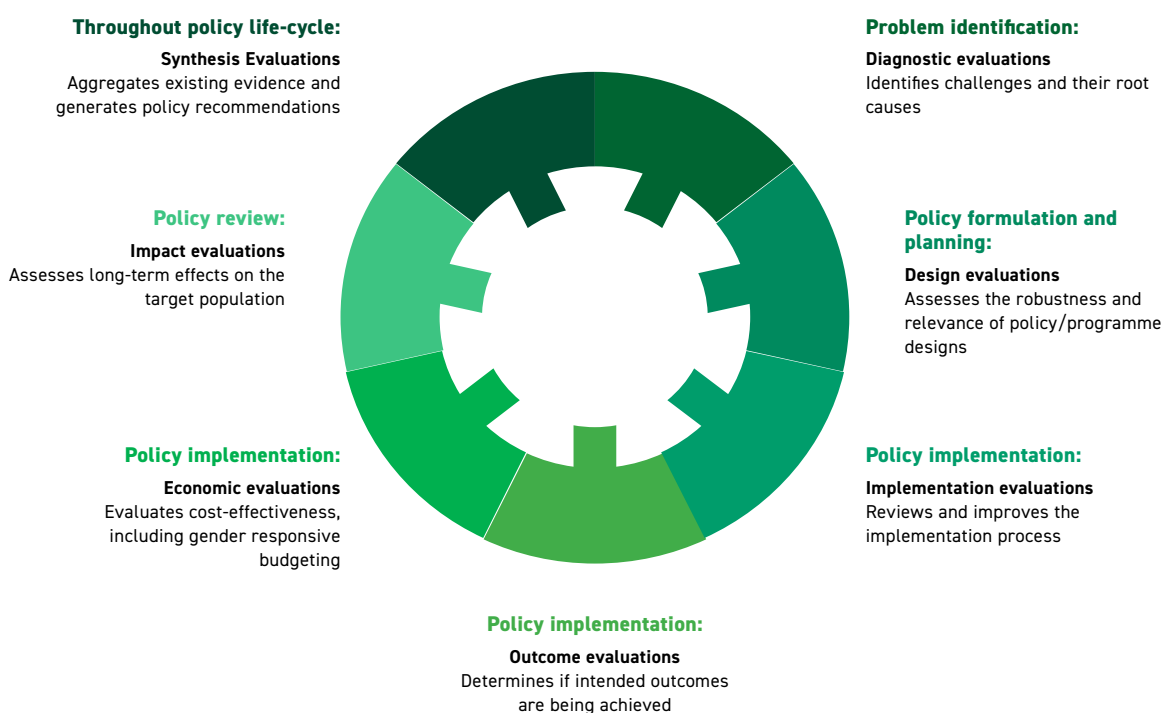


Table 2: Linking evaluation types with the policy or programme life cycle

Type of evaluation	Applicability and value-add of evaluation
Diagnostic evaluation	Diagnostic evaluations are undertaken to understand the root causes and potential options for addressing a particular policy or programme problem. The diagnostics should include equity-related lines of inquiry, such as gender analysis to determine if and where specific inequities exist that require a policy and/or programmatic intervention.
Design evaluation	Design evaluations are undertaken to assess the strength of the theory of change, the log frame, the indicators and the implementation plan – and how they provide relevance and coherence.
Implementation/process evaluation	Implementation evaluations are conducted to understand the implementation of plans, programmes and policies with an aim of reviewing and improving them. These evaluations should determine whether any specific targeted group is being under-served or receiving services that are fundamentally inequitable.

Type of evaluation	Applicability and value-add of evaluation
Outcome evaluation	Outcome evaluations seek to find out if the intended outcomes of the intervention are being achieved, any unintended outcomes and why. These include short-term outcomes of changes in capacity or systems and medium-term outcomes of changes in behaviour or performance. An outcome evaluation can be used to see whether the intervention is working and should be continued or not, or if any potential modification is needed.
Economic evaluations	Economic evaluations are undertaken to assess whether the costs of a policy or programme are commensurate with the benefits (value add). Types of economic evaluation include: Cost-effectiveness analysis, which values the costs of implementing and delivering the policy and relates this amount to the total quantity of outcome generated, to produce a “cost per unit of outcome” estimate (e.g. cost per additional individual placed in employment); and Cost-benefit analysis (CBA), which goes further in placing a monetary value on the changes in outcomes as well (e.g. the value of placing an additional individual in employment).
Impact evaluations	Impact evaluations are conducted to assess whether desired changes have been achieved and the impact they are having on the target population or system, for whom, where, etc.
Synthesis Evaluations	Synthesis Evaluations are undertaken after several evaluations of related policies, programmes, or interventions have already been completed in a given sector or thematic area. A synthesis evaluation draws together and analyses the evidence, lessons and findings from existing evaluations.

3.3 Evaluation criteria and questions

Evaluation criteria serve as a benchmark, standard, or yardstick against which to evaluate the merit or worth of various interventions and guides how evaluations are planned, conducted and assessed.

Previous iterations of the NEPF already adopted the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria, which comprises six dimensions, namely: effectiveness, relevance, coherence, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

The NEPF 2025 introduces two additional evaluation criteria, namely Climate and Ecosystems Health (CEH) and Transformative Equity (TE), developed by South Africa in 2023. The CEH and TE criteria add to the evaluation lenses and have been introduced to address the dual crises of environmental degradation and systemic social inequality that threaten the sustainability of public interventions. Recognising the interdependence of human and ecological systems, these criteria ensure evaluations account for both environmental impact and the equity implications of programmes. They align with South Africa's commitment to just transitions, inclusive development and restorative justice. Embedding these lenses in evaluations helps the required transformative change toward these important commitments.

These criteria offer a flexible menu of options that evaluators can apply where required, in possible combinations, by an evaluation at hand. They shape the design of an evaluation so that it can be used as a basis for developing evaluative questions through the full range of evaluation topics, i.e., from the evaluation of single interventions through to thematic or sector-wide evaluations. Table 3 provides examples of how evaluation criteria can be applied.

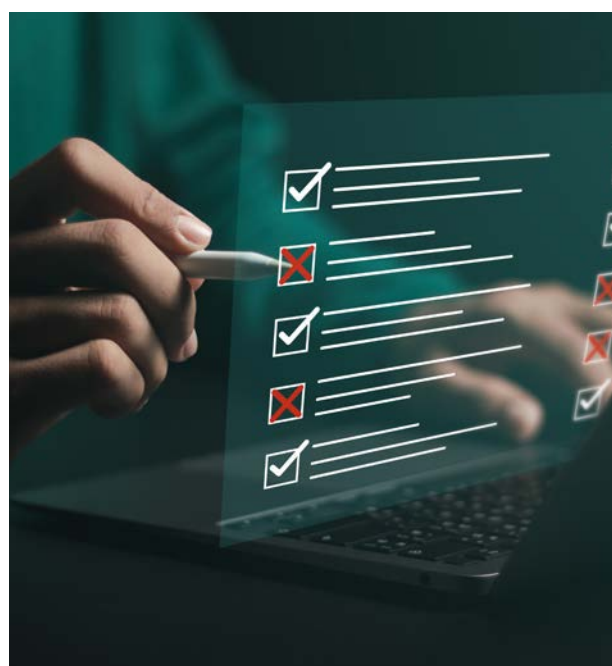


Table 3: Evaluation criteria and questions

Criterion	Typical questions	Definition
Relevance	Is the intervention doing the right thing?	The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to the needs of beneficiaries, global, country and partner/institution needs, policies and priorities and continue to do so if circumstances change.
Coherence	How well does the intervention fit?	The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention and vice versa.
Effectiveness	Is the intervention achieving its objectives?	The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups. Analysis of effectiveness involves taking account of the relative importance of the objectives or results.
Efficiency	How well are resources being used?	The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. "Economic" is understood as the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context.
Impact	What difference does the intervention make?	The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. Impact addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. It seeks to identify social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope. Therefore, evaluating impact may be less crucial immediately after an intervention, as socio-economic and political changes require time to become evident.
Sustainability	Will the benefits last?	The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue. This includes an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. Involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs. Depending on the timing of the evaluation, this may involve analysing the actual flow of net benefits or estimating the likelihood of net benefits continuing over the medium and long term.
Climate Ecosystem Health (CEH)	How does the intervention degrade or regenerate CEH and how will it be affected by changes in CEH?	The extent to which a programme or intervention contributes to or minimises environmental sustainability, ecosystem balance and public health resilience.
Transformative Equity (TE)	How does the intervention address systematic inequities?	The extent to which an intervention's objectives, design, implementation and impact contribute to, or do not contribute to, addressing systemic inequities and promoting a more inclusive society.

3.4 Evaluative practices and approaches

There is a range of evaluative practices and approaches that are available to suit different contexts and capacities. Some of these are well established, such as evidence synthesis and performance and expenditure reviews (PER), while others, such as the application of foresight tools in evaluation, are still developing.

Table 4: Evaluative practices and approaches and relevant guidelines

Evaluative practice or approach	Link to guidelines
Evaluative thinking in monitoring	Several guidelines on evaluative thinking exists.
Evaluative Workshops	Guideline on Rapid Evaluation Process: Evaluative Workshops (EW), 2021
Rapid evaluations	How to undertake Rapid Evaluation (RE) 2020.
Full-scale (rigorous/longer) evaluations	7 types of evaluation guidelines exist
Evidence synthesis	Expanding evidence synthesis capability through coproduction: https://www.dpme.gov.za/publications/research/Documents/Expanding_evidence_synthesis_through_coproduction.pdf Guideline on Evaluation Synthesis, 2014.
Performance and expenditure review	Guideline on Economic Evaluation, 2014. Guidelines on spending reviews: https://www.gtac.gov.za/pepa/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/20200525_NT_COMPANION-GUIDE.pdf
Institutional reviews	Guidelines still to be developed.
Systems thinking in evaluation	Several guidelines on systems thinking in evaluative exists.
Application of foresight tools	Several guidelines on evaluative thinking exists.

3.1.1 Evaluative thinking in monitoring

Evaluative thinking involves the analysis, interpretation and judgment of information to guide decision-making. It involves posing critical questions, weighing evidence and reflecting on experiences to gather insights into a project or program's successes or challenges of a project or programme. Evaluative thinking is critical to all evaluative practice and can be applied during monitoring processes. In this way, the value of monitoring is considerably enhanced (Coles, 2018). This approach is most relevant for organisations with limited resources for evaluation or research, for example, asking evaluative questions regarding what is working well or not and why, etc., and in strategy review sessions.

3.1.2 Evaluative workshops

An evaluative workshop is a quick-to-run exercise that requires good preparation and facilitation. Its scope is varied and can range from a 2-hour meeting to a 3-day workshop. It can be a small-scale exercise led by programme managers working closely with the M&E practitioners within an organisation.

This approach can be used in varying circumstances as part of a diagnosis process in designing an intervention, as part of an annual review of a programme, reflecting after the peak of a crisis or emergency, etc.

3.1.3 Rapid evaluations and full-scale evaluations

Rapid evaluations are defined in South Africa as those that take between 6 -12 weeks for production of the report. They can be any of the different types of evaluation (diagnostic, implementation, etc) but are necessarily limited in scope and data collection.

Rapid evaluation is a flexible and responsive tool within the evaluation system, enabling government to respond quickly to urgent policy or programme needs, or where a rapid response is needed to inform decision-making. Key features of rapid evaluations include:

- **Timeliness:** Focused processes across pre-evaluation, implementation and reporting stages ensure delivery within weeks rather than months.
- **Capacity building:** Government staff can participate without extended absences, supporting internal skills development.

- **Leadership:** An experienced evaluation professional should lead the process, with outsourcing considered if such expertise is unavailable internally.

Rapid evaluations are not suitable for all contexts. They should be avoided where highly precise quantitative analysis is required, or issues are politically sensitive and at risk of manipulation. Rapid evaluations add agility to the National Evaluation System, complementing full-scale evaluations. Used appropriately, they help decision-makers act on reliable evidence quickly while building internal government capacity. Full-scale evaluations are appropriate where policies or programmes require an in-depth review across all stages of the policy cycle – from design, through implementation, to assessment of impacts.

Figure 3: Suitability of Rapid Evaluation and Full-Scale Evaluation approaches

Rapid evaluation

- Where real-time feedback is needed, e.g. disaster interventions
- Where you need results in 2-3 months
- Where the primary purpose is formative, e.g. mid-term review of an intervention
- For organisational learning and problem solving
- Where focussing on narrower topics and/or specific geographic area.
- When the evaluation budget is limited.

Full scale evaluation

- In large programmes to get a clear picture of workings and benefits
- Where much is at stake
- When impact is contested
- Where policy/ programme implications are significant

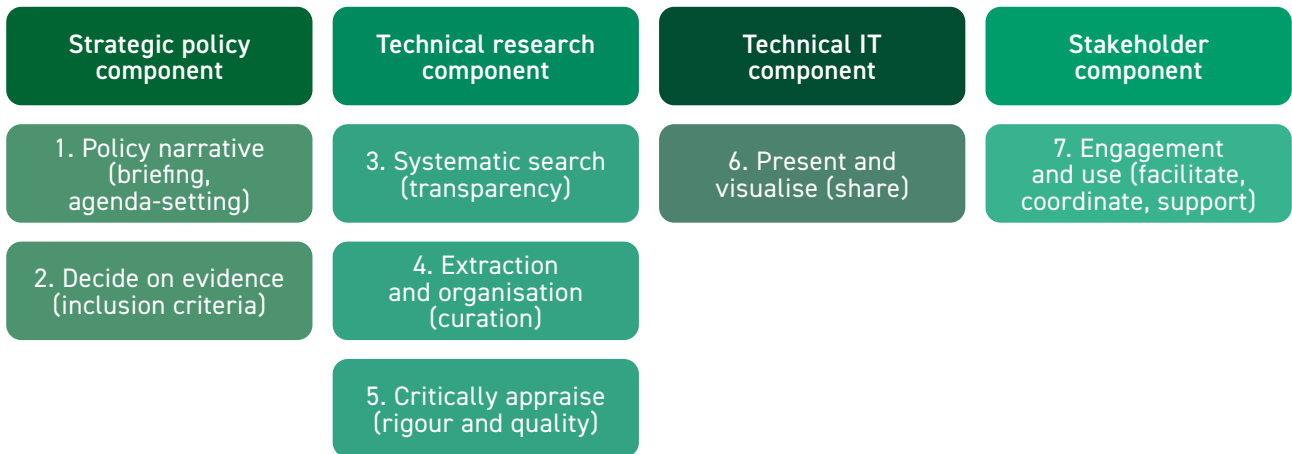
3.1.4 Evidence synthesis

Evidence synthesis involves a review of what is known from existing research using systematic and explicit methods to clarify the evidence base (Gough et al, 2020). Evidence synthesis consolidates findings from multiple studies, evaluations and data sources

to provide decision-makers with timely, credible and accessible evidence. It is particularly valuable when policymakers require answers quickly, when a body of existing evidence already exists, or when full-scale evaluations are not feasible. Synthesis enhances efficiency, reduces duplication and ensures that lessons from past evaluations are not lost.

Evidence synthesis involves the following steps:

Figure 4: Seven-step evidence synthesis methodology



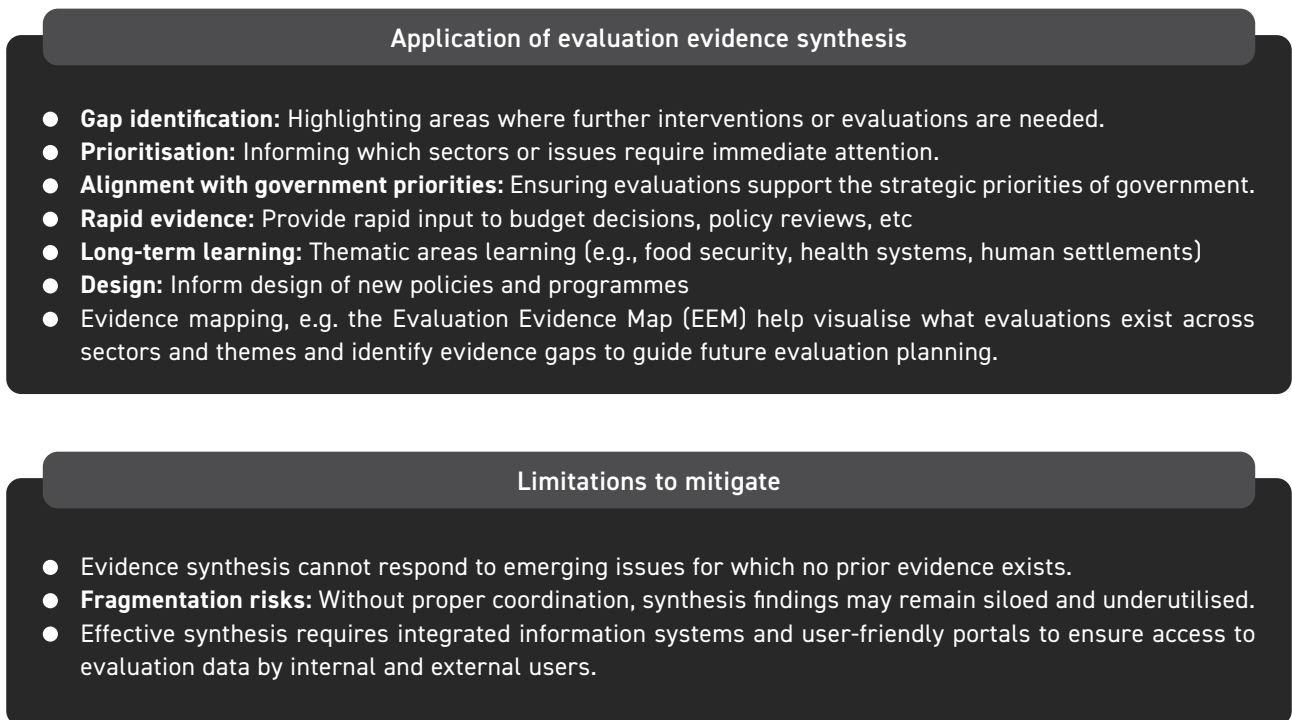
Examples include DPME Evidence Synthesis on human settlement, on early grade education, where evidence maps have been produced, and on building capacity of the state and on trust in government.

Added value of evidence synthesis includes:

- Enhances timeliness: answers can be produced within weeks to months.

- Improves efficiency: leverages existing work rather than commissioning new evaluations.
- Strengthens comparability: synthesises across programmes and provinces to identify system-wide lessons.
- Promotes equity and inclusivity: by highlighting gaps in evidence affecting vulnerable groups.

Figure 5: Applying evidence synthesis in evaluations



Transparency in documenting search strategies and inclusion/exclusion rules is non-negotiable. Biases should be disclosed; limitations and strength of evidence explicitly stated.

AI-powered tools are increasingly used in evidence synthesis to analyse vast datasets through machine learning, natural language processing, automation and generative functions. They can accelerate and enhance insights from big data, but their effectiveness depends on well-framed evaluation or policy questions and requires a government lens to contextualise findings and recommendations. Findings must be communicated in plain language to encourage uptake and avoid misinterpretation.

3.1.5 Performance and expenditure review

Performance and Expenditure Reviews (PERs) involve the systematic analysis of expenditure and programme performance to assess value for money across government. They are a key tool for informing decisions on financial efficiency and cost-effectiveness, including whether to scale up, redesign, or discontinue programmes based on both outcomes and financial performance.

Since 2013, the National Treasury's Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC) has completed about 91 spending reviews across a wide range of sectors and policy areas. This work has developed a structured method for targeted analysis to identify savings and inform decisions that improve the efficiency of public spending. Synthesising findings and recommendations from these reviews, alongside other forms of evaluative evidence should be used to inform the TARS recommendations to support broader budget reform objectives.

Key principles are that:

- Elements of PER should be considered at the planning and design stage of any evaluation. Where PER is required, the evaluation Terms of Reference must specify how it will be conducted.
- In such instance, the GTAC should be engaged in the evaluation process, from inception to implementation and use of results.
- The Terms of Reference should specify the methodology to be applied, drawing on the established PER approach and aligning with the type of evaluation being conducted.
- Collaboration between DPME and National Treasury is essential for capacity building, including skills development, analytical tools, data sharing, evidence synthesis and utilisation.

3.1.6 Institutional reviews

Institutional reviews are evaluative assessments that focus on whether government departments, agencies and entities are fit-for-purpose in fulfilling their mandates. Unlike programme or policy evaluations, institutional reviews examine the organisation itself, its mandate, strategic focus, performance, structures, systems, staffing and resource utilisation.

The MTDP 2024–2029 calls for institutional reviews of underperforming departments and entities to generate evidence to inform reforms in service delivery models, strengthen institutional capabilities and remove inefficiencies. They may also extend to transversal or sector-wide systems to analyse the “rules of the game” that shape institutional behaviour and influence development outcomes. A well-established example of institutional review practice exists in the Science and Innovation sector (See Text Box 1).

Text Box 1: Examples of recent institutional reviews

The 2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation and its predecessor, the 1996 White Paper on Science and Technology, require formal five-yearly reviews of Science Councils.

The 2024 Institutional Review of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), conducted by an independent panel, assessed the Council's fitness for purpose, strategic relevance, performance, use of resources, financial sustainability and responsiveness to contextual shifts. Similar reviews of the CSIR were conducted in 1997, 2003, 2009, 2013 and 2018, mostly timed to coincide with the end of the Board's term of office.

An example of transversal systems or sector-wide review is the 2010 review of the science, technology and innovation (STI) landscape. Commissioned by the Minister of Science and Technology, in which a Ministerial Committee of Experts conducted a review to assess:

- The STI system's responsiveness to national development needs;
- The institutional architecture supporting STI policy implementation;
- The system's strategic positioning and readiness to meet future national and global challenges.

This review informed the development of the 2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation and a Decadal Plan to guide its implementation.

The DPME will develop a guideline to outline how institutional reviews should be undertaken as part of an evaluation practice.

3.1.7 Systems thinking in evaluation

Systems thinking in evaluation is an approach that views policies, programmes and institutions as interconnected parts of a wider system rather than as isolated interventions. It focuses on relationships, interdependencies and feedback loops that shape performance and outcomes.

An example assessment of South Africa's National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) where evaluators applied systems thinking to examine not only food delivery and nutritional outcomes, but also the interconnected roles of schools, provincial departments, suppliers, local communities and policy frameworks.

By embracing complexity, it helps evaluators uncover root causes of problems, anticipate unintended consequences and identify leverage points for sustainable change. Systems thinking enables evaluation to generate more holistic, adaptive and forward-looking insights that strengthen governance and development practice.

Systems thinking can be applied:

- At the design stage, to frame evaluations within the broader system and ensure questions capture complexity and interconnections.
- During implementation reviews, to trace feedback loops and identify emerging issues, unintended outcomes, or systemic blockages.
- In mid-term and formative evaluations, to adapt programmes or institutions to shifting environments and stakeholder dynamics.
- In summative or impact evaluations, to explain outcomes within the context of wider system behaviour and interactions.

Practical steps for applying systems thinking in evaluation through the 3Cs (Connections, Change, Consequences) :

- **Connections** – start by mapping key stakeholders, institutions and processes. Use system maps or causal loop diagrams to visualise relationships and identify interdependencies.
- **Change** – analyse how the system has evolved over time reference to historical trends, adaptation to reforms and how feedback loops influence behaviours and outcomes.
- **Consequences** – examine both expected and unintended effects of interventions. Use scenario testing or ripple effect mapping to understand how changes in one area impact others.

This structured application enables evaluators to generate insights that can inform adaptive strategies and transformational policy shifts.

3.1.8 Application of foresight tools

Foresight is a systematic, participatory and forward-looking process that can be used to explore, anticipate and prepare for possible, probable and preferred futures. It does not forecast the future with certainty. However, it helps to anticipate change, imagine multiple futures, shape strategies and decisions that are more resilient and adaptable.

For example, in evaluating youth employment programmes, foresight could be used to test how automation or climate transitions might impact job opportunities and whether the programme is resilient to these shifts.

Various foresight tools can be applied in evaluations to strengthen their relevance, adaptability and forward-looking value. These tools include scenario planning, horizon scanning, trend analysis and risk mapping. These tools can help evaluators and decision-makers to:

- Anticipate future risks, opportunities and shocks that may affect programme or institutional performance.
- Explore alternative scenarios to test the resilience of policies, institutions, or programmes under different conditions.
- Integrate long-term perspectives into evaluation findings, ensuring recommendations remain relevant in a changing context.
- Enhance adaptive learning by linking current evidence to future possibilities, supporting more agile policy and programme design.
- Build a culture of proactive governance, ensuring evaluations not only assess past and present performance but also prepare institutions for emerging challenges.

3.1.9 Integrating equity considerations into evaluation

To integrate equity considerations, evaluations must apply the lenses of women, youth and persons with disabilities in the development of evaluation plans and in the design, conduct, and improvement plans of specific evaluation projects. Equity lenses should not be treated in isolation. An intersectional approach recognises how gender, age and disability interact with other factors such as geography and socio-economic status. This is anchored in South Africa's Constitution and reinforced by the country's international commitments.

Gender-responsive evaluations require attention to gender across all stages of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This includes developing gender-sensitive terms of reference, applying a gender lens throughout the evaluation process and collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data.

Youth-responsive evaluations ensure that policies and programmes reflect the realities and aspirations of South Africa's youthful population. They involve incorporating youth perspectives, promoting participatory approaches, collecting age-disaggregated data and identifying barriers to youth access, participation and empowerment.

Disability-responsive evaluations must mainstream inclusion by engaging the disability sector, generating disability-disaggregated and qualitative data, building staff capacity, ensuring accessible communications and embedding universal design and reasonable accommodation into all stages of the evaluation process.



SECTION 4: UNDERTAKING EVALUATIONS IN GOVERNMENT

Undertaking evaluations in government entails at least four interdependent actions: (1) Developing evaluation plans; (2) Selecting and identifying priority evaluations; (3) Conducting evaluations in line with established procedures; and (4) Facilitating the use of evaluation evidence to drive improvements.

4.1 Development of evaluation plans

At the national level, a rolling, multiyear National Evaluation Plan (NEP) will provide a five-year perspective of the government's evaluation agenda. The NEP will feature two key aspects. First, it will identify priority national evaluations to be led centrally by the DPME; Second, it will consolidate evaluations planned across national departments, provinces, local government and other institutions. To ensure proper planning and coordination of evaluations across government, national departments, provinces and local government must identify and implement priority evaluation areas within their mandates. Guidelines on the processes for developing evaluation plans are available on the DPME Evaluation Portal.

The rollout of evaluations in each sphere of government should be articulated in the same order – it begins with planning and ends with the use of evaluation evidence.

The development and adoption of evaluation plans must involve meaningful consultation to ensure that three key considerations are met: (1) Adequate coverage of the most critical areas requiring evaluation; (2) Complementarity of evaluation plans across the system to avoid duplication; and (3) Promotion of collaboration, including joint evaluations, to leverage mandates and optimise resources.

The different types of evaluation plans are as follows:

- National Evaluation Plan (NEP): The NEP constitutes the national evaluation agenda, consisting of priority evaluations identified by the DPME in consultation with Evaluation Advisory Committee, Centre of Government and oversight institutions such as National Treasury, the Public Service Commission (PSC), the Auditor-General (AG), the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, custodian departments (intervention owners) and

other government oversight structures. The NEP will be consulted with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

- Provincial Evaluation Plans (PEPs): PEPs are developed by the Offices of the Premier (OTPs) in consultation with provincial oversight structures and relevant sectors. The PEP consists of evaluations identified within the province's mandate and the State-Owned Enterprises that they oversee.
- Departmental Evaluation Plans (DEPs): DEPs are developed by individual departments and consist of evaluations identified within the department's mandate and the State-Owned Enterprises that they oversee.
- Local Government Evaluation Plans (LGEPs): LGEPs must be developed in the form of DEPs by the National and Provincial Departments of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA).

4.2 Process and criteria for identifying priority evaluations for the NEP

Priority evaluations for the NEP will be selected based on the criteria outlined in this policy framework. These criteria ensure alignment with the strategic priorities of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024–2029.

The DPME will lead a process for identifying and selecting priority evaluations for the NEP. The process will involve needs analysis; soliciting advice and recommendations of the National Evaluation Advisory Committee; consultations with the relevant governance and oversight structures; and then a process of formal approval, which will be routed through the Governance State Capabilities and Institutional Development (GSCID) Cluster.

Figure 6: Process for selection of evaluations for the NEP

Needs analysis	DPME desktop analysis to identify evaluation evidence needs based on, among other things, Cabinet deliberations, cluster priorities, monitoring reports, concerns of citizens, etc. and initial screening for feasibility and necessity in consultation with the affected national departments.
Consideration by Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC):	The Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) will apply the selection criteria and make recommendations on the prioritisation of evaluations for the NEP.
Consultations with governance & oversight structures:	DPME consultation with the Governance State Capabilities and Institutional Development (GSCID) Cluster, the Forum of South African Directors-General, the affected national departments and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation..
Approval:	DPME submits the Draft NEP for approval by Cabinet through the GSCID Cluster and the FOSAD.

Evaluations included in the NEP will be selected and prioritised using the criteria outlined below. Other spheres of government are encouraged to apply the same criteria, with adaptations to suit their specific contexts:

Strategic alignment:

- Evaluation must directly support the MTDP 2024–2029.

Public expenditure significance:

- Focus on programmes or policies with substantial fiscal implications (e.g., >R500 million annual spend).

Evidence gaps and policy innovation:

- Addresses critical knowledge gaps where no recent evaluations exist
- Support policy reforms where new evidence is required.
- Offer scope for innovation and learning potential, especially where a programme is testing a new approach or influencing large-scale reforms that require scalability assessment.

Risk and complexity:

- Focus on high-risk and politically sensitive or high-profile programmes affecting public trust and service delivery.
- Include multi-sector or inter-departmental programmes requiring coordinated interventions across government clusters and/or multiple departments.

Transformative change and inclusion:

- Focus on systems-level transformational change and address cross-cutting issues such as climate change, societal and global shifts and SDG commitments, including significant impact on women, youth and persons with disabilities.

4.3 Conducting evaluations

To support the conduct of evaluations, the DPME has issued standard-setting guidelines to serve as reference tools for evaluators and stakeholders. The guidelines are accessible on the DPME Evaluation Portal, and cover various aspects of the evaluation process, such as the following: Initiating, planning and designing an evaluation; Quality assurance and ethical conduct; Promoting use of evaluation evidence, including handling of Management Response and Improvement Plan, etc.

This section only outlines the selected key areas. The Evaluation Guidelines provide comprehensive details on each of the key stages of evaluation.

4.3.1 Initiating, planning and designing an evaluation

The initiation of an evaluation must be formally documented through an Evaluation Concept Note, Terms of Reference (ToR) and Inception Document. This provides discipline in defining the rationale, context and expectations for the evaluation and to establish a shared understanding among key stakeholders on these key aspects. At a minimum, the following factors should be considered when initiating, planning and designing an evaluation:

- **Purpose and objectives:** Stakeholders must agree on the primary purpose, which should inform scope, timelines, resources and methods.
- **Object of evaluation/unit of analysis:** Within the NEPF, a unit of analysis can be policies, programmes, sectors, projects, or institutions.
- **Scope:** The scope must be clearly defined, including the interventions or priorities to be assessed, and linked to broader development and equity outcomes.
- **Primary intended users:** Evaluations must be utilisation-focused from the outset. Stakeholders should be identified, and their expectations clarified through stakeholder mapping tools. The intended use of the evaluation must be defined upfront, in collaboration with programme managers, senior leadership and oversight structures, to ensure that findings effectively support the intended uses.
- **Evaluation design:** The evaluation design must specify what type of evaluation, or combinations, will be appropriate, as well as the key evaluation questions to be addressed that must be aligned to the purpose and objective of the evaluation.
- **Methodology:** The evaluation methodology must outline specific methods and techniques for collection and analysis of data.
- **Implementation arrangements and deliverables:** Considerations include whether the evaluation will be conducted internally or outsourced, what collaborations/ partnerships are required, contracting arrangements, budgeting and payment processes; technical meetings to resolve challenges; what briefings are required for senior managers and political principals; communication of results and relevant communication tools to be used; handling of findings, management response and Improvement Plan.
- **Evaluation team and governance:** Decision must be made on the establishment and composition of the Evaluation Technical Working Group and the Evaluation Steering Committee. The Evaluation Technical Working Group must be led by an Evaluation Project Manager who possesses the necessary evaluation competencies to conduct or lead the evaluation at hand; the Evaluation Technical Working Group members must have the competencies to execute their assigned roles. The role

of the Evaluation Steering Committee is to provide oversight role and technical support in an evaluation, drawing from members expertise to ensure that the evaluation is strategically relevant, methodologically sound, credible and useful for decision-making. The steering committee achieves this by making key decisions, providing feedback, approving key project deliverables, reviewing and approving the project plan, inception report, evaluation criteria and questions, data collection methodology and tools and the draft/final report. Furthermore, members of the Steering Committee are expected to play a major role in the evaluation report validation and the crafting of the Improvement Plan. The Steering Committee should be chaired by the senior manager of the custodian department or the institution. The composition of the Steering Committee should include the DPME, the custodian institution, relevant stakeholders, e.g., other government departments, civil society organisations, beneficiary representatives, donors, as well as international organisations or agencies and academics may form part of the steering Committee.

4.3.2 Evaluation ethics and quality assurance

Evaluation quality assurance

The Evaluation Quality Assurance Framework (EQAF) provides for systematic quality checks across the entire evaluation cycle. Key mechanisms include standardised guidelines and templates, operations of the Steering Committees, peer reviews, quality assessment tools, stakeholder validation processes and mechanisms for management responses.

Quality assurance is applied from the outset, beginning with the Terms of Reference and inception phase, where the evaluation design, team composition and resources are reviewed. Independent peer review at critical stages strengthens methodological and ethical rigor, while final quality assessments provide an overall judgment on both process and outputs.

All evaluations must undergo a peer review process to safeguard credibility. Peer reviewers may be selected from government officials from relevant departments, academics and thematic experts, such as gender specialists. Their role is to provide an independent perspective on both process and product based on the peer review checklist.

A stakeholder validation process must be conducted for all evaluations. This is an important step to enable stakeholders to engage with draft findings and ensure results are acceptable, legitimate and ready for use.

Post-evaluation, quality control extends to the responsible use, storage and dissemination of findings and their accessibility to users. Refer to Section 4.3.3, which addresses relevant aspects.

Ethics in evaluation

The Ethical Conduct Evaluation Guideline (2023) provides a framework for addressing ethical issues and guiding leaders, committees and evaluators in applying ethical principles throughout the evaluation process. Embedding ethics into evaluation reinforces public trust and a socially responsible evaluation system.

Ethical conduct is fundamental to ensuring evaluations are carried out with integrity. The rights and dignity of all participants must be upheld. From the evaluation design phase through to execution and delivery of evaluation results, steps must be taken to mitigate potential negative influence of power dynamics between evaluators, government and programme participants.

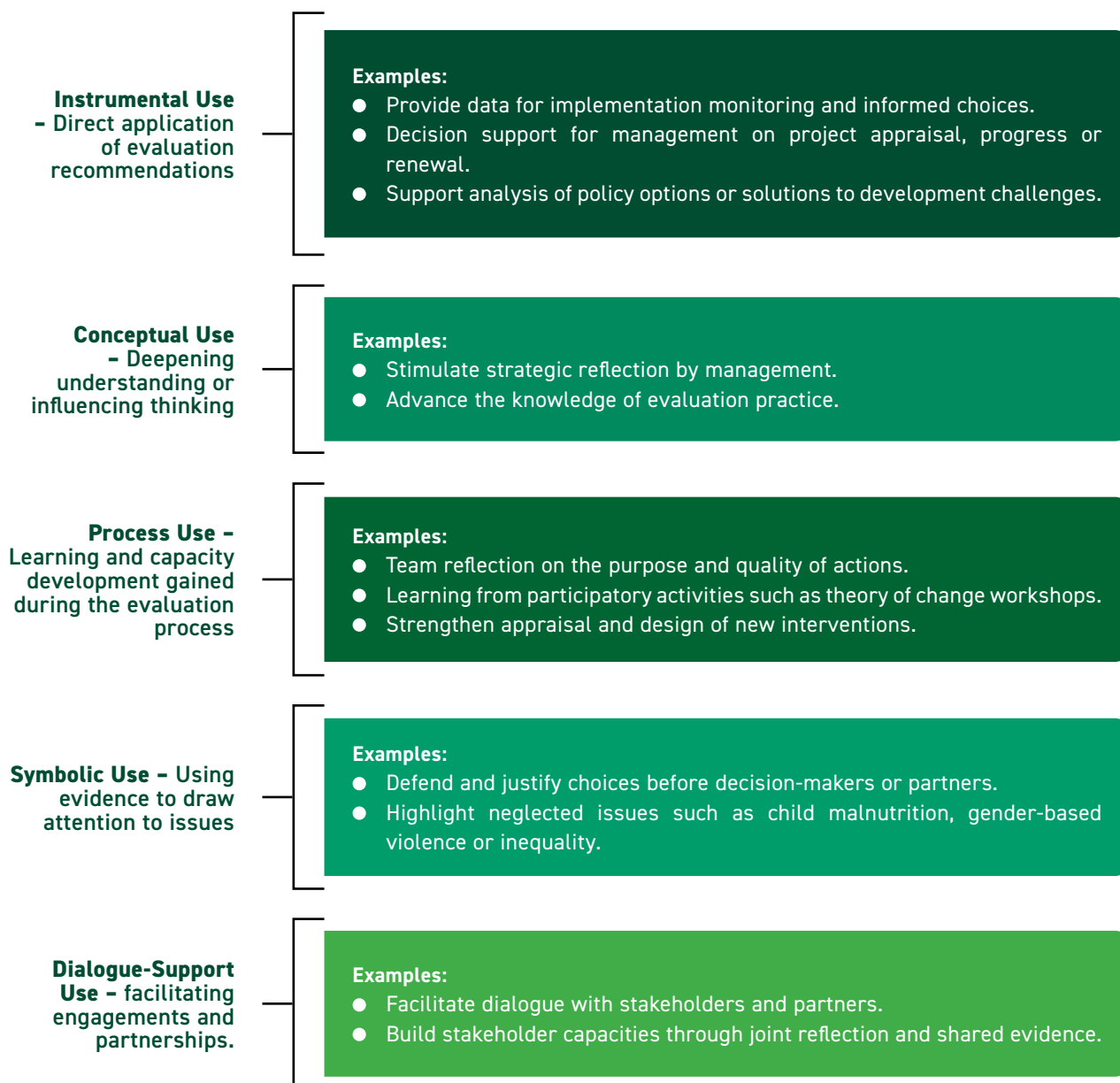
Key ethical requirements include: managing conflicts of interest, protecting confidentiality and anonymity, securing of informed consent, respect for human rights and avoidance of harm. Evaluations that involve sensitive topics or vulnerable groups must undergo appropriate ethical review. Evaluators are required to consider the ethical implications of emerging methods, including the use of AI and digital tools. Ethical practice extends to how findings are communicated - ensuring transparency, recognition of participant contributions and responsiveness to relevant contexts.

4.3.3 Promoting use of evaluation evidence

The primary purpose of conducting evaluations is to ensure that the evidence generated is used. Evaluation evidence supports decision-making at multiple levels and across the entire policy and programme cycle. While it is often assumed that “use” simply means implementing recommendations, in practice, evidence use takes several distinct forms. These include:

- **Instrumental use** - direct implementation of evaluation recommendations to improve policies, plans, or programmes.
- **Conceptual use** - deepening understanding or influencing thinking among stakeholders,
- **Process use** - learning and capacity development gained during the evaluation process itself,
- **Symbolic use** - drawing attention to a particular issue.
- **Dialogue-support use** - facilitating engagements to build trust and collaborations.

Figure 7: Examples of use of evaluative evidence



The utilisation-focused approach of this NEPF requires (1) clearly identifying the primary users and intended uses of the evaluation at the outset, i.e., who the primary users are (e.g., policymakers, senior managers, programme managers, stakeholders, beneficiaries) and how they intend to use the evidence; and (2) active interface between evaluators and users – to ensure that evaluations are demand-driven, participatory, timely, relevant and then accessible.

Evaluations should not only inform decisions but also drive transformative change by producing actionable insights that help address systemic inequities, in line with the national commitment towards “a more equal society where no one is left behind”.

To improve the likelihood of utilisation, deliberate steps must be taken to ensure ownership and demand-driven processes, systematic follow-up and effective communication. Ownership is strengthened when:

- An evaluation is identified as a strategic priority.
- The custodian department requests the evaluation and chairs its steering committee.
- Stakeholders participate in key processes (e.g., theory of change development).
- Recommendations are collaboratively developed.
- Programme beneficiaries are meaningfully involved at relevant stages, including conceptualisation, data collection, validation of findings and development of recommendations or improvement plans.
- There are consequences associated with the implementation of recommendations and improvement plans.

On the latter, accounting officers and programme managers must ensure that approved Management Responses and Improvement Plans are implemented and integrated into planning, budgeting and performance reporting. The Minister responsible for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation will institute an accountability system with incentives and corrective measures to ensure implementation. In this regard, the Minister will require any national department, provincial government, municipality or organ of state to formally respond to findings and recommendations arising from evaluations of their programmes.

4.3.4 Communicating findings, Management Responses and Improvement Plans

Communication must occur throughout the evaluation cycle – from prioritisation and scoping to stakeholder engagement and dissemination of findings.

Findings must be communicated immediately after the approval of the evaluation report. Communication strategies should be informed by user needs identified at the outset, to ensure that the findings are accessible to the targeted audiences. The DPME guideline on communicating evaluation findings recommends a mix of tools, including:

- **For managers and wider society** - policy briefs, 1/5/25 page summary reports
- **For users** - Workshops and dialogues around the findings.
- **For the general public** – short summaries including infographics or posters and where appropriate, use relevant languages to reach targeted audiences, radio slots and use of social media dissemination.

The DPME Evaluation Portal will serve as the central platform for transparent tracking of evaluation reports, Management Responses (MRs), Improvement Plans (IPs) and progress on IP implementation.

The custodian department is responsible for acting on evaluation recommendations, among others, as follows:

- **Management Response (MR):** Within 30 days of report approval, the custodian department must provide a Management Response (MR) to indicate whether each recommendation is accepted, partially accepted, or rejected (with reasons for rejection).
- **Improvement Plan (IP) and its implementation:** Within four months of report approval, the custodian department must produce an Improvement Plan (IP) to convert the accepted recommendations into specific actions, assigning responsible officials, setting out implementation timelines and resources, indicators and reporting requirements.

- **Progress Updates:** Custodian departments must submit progress reports in line with the timeframes stipulated in the Improvement Plan (IP). In addition, departments are encouraged to reference the evaluation in their strategic plans, annual performance plans and annual reports, indicating how key actions from the Improvement Plan have been integrated into institutional planning or execution processes.

The DPME will maintain a structured system of follow-up, including progress review meetings with custodian departments and an escalation mechanism where necessary. Knowledge brokering approaches will be promoted to ensure wide dissemination and learning, including roundtables, seminars, Communities of Practice and post-evaluation learning forums. These engagements will bring together senior leaders, policy experts and stakeholders to reflect on what worked, what did not and how findings will shape future interventions.

The DPME will update the Evaluation Portal quarterly. In addition to direct implementation of evaluation recommendations, the Portal will record other forms of use of evaluation findings. The DPME will use this information when preparing the Annual Report on NEPF implementation.



SECTION 5: INSTITUTIONALISATION, GOVERNANCE AND CAPACITY

This section outlines the institutional platforms and capacity, as well as roles and responsibilities for various actors involved in the implementation of the NEPF:

5.1 The DPME within the National Evaluation System

The DPME is the custodian of the NEPF. It is responsible for leading its implementation and overseeing the functioning of the National Evaluation System (NES) to ensure that all key components are in place and effectively operational.

The NES provides a framework for coordinating institutional arrangements, roles and responsibilities, systems and processes, as well as the people and partnerships required to implement the NEPF and strengthen evaluation practice.

The DPME's role is to promote system-wide ownership of the NEPF by profiling and demonstrating its value and contribution to national development. This includes engaging diverse stakeholders such as evaluation practitioners, policymakers, senior administrators, political leaders, development partners, civil society and communities affected by evaluation activities.

In addition, the DPME is responsible for:

- Overseeing the development and strengthening of national evaluation capacity.
- Providing technical support and guidance to departments and stakeholders.
- Facilitating knowledge management, evidence sharing and learning.
- Fostering collaborative arrangements and partnerships that sustain evaluation as a core instrument of the national development agenda.

Figure 8: Components of the National Evaluation System

Institutional Arrangements

- **DPME and coordinating structures** – sets policy framework, leads and oversees the system.
- **Centre of Government departments** – provide strategic alignment.
- **Offices of the Premier and Mayor** – drive evaluation in provinces and local government.
- **Implementing departments** – generates programme performance data, conduct and use evaluations.
- **Chapter 9 oversight institutions** – leverage oversight and follow-through within the accountability ecosystem
- **Partnerships and collaborations** – strengthen capacity and share lessons.

Approaches

- **Policy framework** – sets standards.
- **Utilisation-focus** – prioritise actionable evidence.
- **Unit of analysis** – programmes, plans, policies and systems.

Systems and resources

- **Evaluation Plans** – national, sectoral and departmental.
- **Standards, Guidelines and Templates** – ensure consistency and quality.
- **Evaluation capacity and training** – National School of Government, universities and other training institutions.
- **Stakeholder engagement platforms** – National Evaluation Seminar, Brown Bag Sessions, Communities of Practice.
- **Evaluation portal/repository** – Knowledge management and dissemination.
- **Funding and resourcing**

People and partnerships

- **DPME Evaluation Unit** – policy and system coordination.
- **Provincial Offices of the Premier** – lead provincial evaluation efforts.
- **Departmental Senior managers and M&E units** – commission evaluation; and use evaluation evidence.
- **Communities and programme beneficiaries** - affected by policy and programme decisions
- **Partnerships and organisations** – professional bodies, development agencies, universities and research institutions.

5.2 Complementarity with other accountability and learning mechanisms

5.2.1 Centre of government departments and Chapter 9 institutions

The implementation of the NEPF is closely aligned with the mandates of centre of government institutions, including the Presidency, National Treasury, DPSA, DCOG and Offices of the Premier in provinces, as well as Chapter 9 oversight institutions such as Parliament, the Auditor-General of South Africa and the Public Service Commission.

To maximise impact, evaluation practice must leverage these mandates and partnerships by focusing on collective results and addressing system-wide issues that cannot be effectively resolved in isolation. This will be advanced through structured engagements, including bilateral meetings, roundtables, joint planning and briefings, synthesis evidence summaries/reports and participation in relevant governance structures.

The table below outlines the roles and responsibilities of the centre of government departments and key Chapter 9 oversight institutions.

Table 5: Complementary roles of key departments and institutions

INSTITUTION	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes a professional, accountable and performance-oriented public service aligned to results-based management. ● Supports integration of evaluation norms and standards into human resource practices (e.g., standards and competencies for Monitoring and Evaluation practitioners) and public service delivery frameworks and improvement plans.
Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborates with DPME in institutionalising evaluation practices in local government.
National Treasury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitates the integration of evaluation findings into budgeting processes. ● Supports joint evaluations and expenditure reviews to inform design and cost-effectiveness (including the TARS reforms)
Public Service Commission (PSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses evaluation as a tool to assess and promote ethical, efficient and development-oriented public administration. ● Undertakes investigations into governance failures, maladministration, or poor service delivery.
Auditor General South Africa (AGSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducts performance audits to provide independent assurance on the reliability of performance information. ● Enforces corrective actions on areas of adverse findings and material irregularities.
Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes inclusive, equity-focused evaluation, including mainstreaming the Transformative Equity criterion and address gender, youth and disability outcomes. ● Collaborates with DPME to ensure evaluations advance social justice and equity commitments in public policy.
National School of Government (NSG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supports evaluation capacity development across the public sector by providing training in monitoring, evaluation, research and evidence use.

5.2.2 Sector departments and entities

Accountability obligations: develop and publish departmental evaluation plans, budget for evaluations, chair steering committees, respond to recommendations and publish evaluation reports and improvement plans.

5.2.3 Parliament and legislature

Use evaluation evidence in oversight hearings; request evaluations where needed; require reporting on improvement plan progress; and maintain public access to evidence.

5.2.4 Academia

Contribute to evaluation by building technical capacity through teaching & learning, conducting independent evaluations, producing new knowledge/research and supporting critical reflection, learning, community service/engagement.

5.2.5 Civil society

Contribute to evaluation by promoting participatory approaches, advocacy, use, transparency, etc.

5.3 National Evaluation Advisory Committee

The Director General (DG) of the DPME will establish the National Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) to provide the DPME with advice on matters relating to implementation of the NEPF, such as the following:

- Development and implementation of evaluation plans.
- Execution, quality assurance, dissemination and use of evaluations.
- Evaluation capacity development and stakeholder engagement.
- NEPF implementation gaps and mitigation steps.

The EAC will comprise a mix of institutional affiliations and relevant expertise, drawn from government and non-government institutions – including national, provincial and local government and the centre of government departments, as well as the academic sector, civil society, professional organisations, international development organisations and business sector, inclusive of state-owned companies.

The Terms of Reference (TORs) of the EAC will set out its purpose, composition, responsibilities and operational arrangements.

5.4 Evaluation capacity, partnerships and resourcing

The DPME will coordinate the development and implementation of a National Evaluation System Capacity Plan to support the implementation of the NEPF. This will be a multi-year, rolling plan informed by an assessment of evaluation roles, capacity requirements and gaps across the spheres of government.

The NES Capacity Plan may adopt an Evaluation Competency Framework, drawing on local and international practice, to define pathways for professionalisation and certification of evaluation competencies.

Capacity-building interventions will address both the demand side and supply side of evaluation, to strengthen public-sector capability across the evaluation lifecycle. This includes initiating and scoping evaluations; design; data collection and analysis; writing of evaluation reports and policy briefs; dissemination and advocacy; use of modern digital tools, including artificial intelligence; and the application of evaluative evidence in decision-making.

Collaborative efforts with local, regional and international institutions - including academia, civil society and global partners - will be essential for strengthening evaluation capacity and resourcing.

The approach must build on existing platforms that have proven effective. South Africa already benefits from a mix of institutions offering technical evaluation training programmes, including postgraduate and doctoral programmes at universities, short courses through the National School of Government (NSG) and programmes developed by international partners. The DPME will support the updating of these programmes to reflect the new developments introduced by the NEPF 2025.

The approach will continue to integrate the contribution of international collaborations. Regional initiatives such as Clear evaluation Anglophone Africa, Twende Mbele, which facilitate peer learning across African countries, will continue to be an integral part of this approach. The Executive Course for Evaluation Leaders (EXCEL), jointly implemented by the DPME, NSG, UNICEF and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (National University of Singapore), must be sustained. This course strengthens the demand side of evaluation by equipping senior leaders in government to appreciate evaluation, initiate evaluations and use evidence effectively.

Professional development will also be promoted through peer-learning opportunities, including seminars, brown-bag sessions and Communities of Practice, with a deliberate youth focus.

The NES Capacity Plan will have a deliberate focus on building the pipeline by advancing emerging evaluators, with particular attention to women, youth and persons with disabilities. This transformative step will require collaboration with the Public Sector Education and Training Authorities (P-SETA) and professional organisations such as SAMEA and South African Association of Public Administration (SAAPAM).



SECTION 6: NEPF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

6.1 Implementation plan for the NEPF

The DPME has developed an NEPF Implementation Plan to provide a multiyear roadmap that translates the policy's strategic intentions into concrete actions, timelines, responsibilities and performance measures (Annexure 3).

6.2 Monitoring and reporting

The DPME will produce an Annual Report on the NEPF Implementation. This report will track, among other aspects, the use and influence of NEP evaluations on the primary purposes of evaluation: policy decisions, institutional learning, budgeting and programme performance.

The preparation of the annual report will draw on inputs from national departments, offices of the premier and local government. It will cover the development and implementation of evaluation plans, key findings and recommendations, the execution of Improvement Plans and the results or value derived. The report will also provide updates on interventions of the National Evaluation System Capacity Plan.

6.3 Effective period and review

The NEPF 2025 became effective from 25 February 2026 after adoption by cabinet.

The series of NEPF annual reports will support learning and continuous improvement across the system. They will also indicate when the NEPF requires reviews and updating, or when significant changes are needed.

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ANNEXURE 1: THEORY OF CHANGE NEPF 2025

Impact statement: Evaluative evidence generated and utilised to improve policy, budgeting and service-delivery outcomes on government priorities.

Outcomes	Outputs	Key activities	Dependencies and assumptions
<p>1. Evaluation institutionalised across national, provincial and local government</p> <p>(NEPF Objective 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet-approved NEPF 2025 • Updated national, departmental and provincial evaluation plans • Functional governance arrangements • High-quality, relevant and timely evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure Cabinet approval of NEPF 2025 through GSCID Cluster and FOSAD • Develop and update evaluation plans (NEP, DEPs, PEPs) • Reconstitute the Evaluation Advisory Committee • Roll out the Evaluation Quality Assurance Framework (EQAF) and Ethical Guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and institutional buy-in • Evaluation plans cover key development priorities • Accounting officers commit resources to evidence generation and use • Minimal disruptive institutional reforms during roll-out
<p>2. Evaluation evidence routinely informs planning, budgeting and oversight</p> <p>(NEPF Objective 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Evaluation Portal with approved evaluation reports • Dissemination of evaluation results within two months of approval • Formal linkages between evaluation and National Treasury budget processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Evaluation Portal quarterly • Produce policy briefs and presentations for decision-making forums (EXCOs, Clusters, IMCs, Treasury, Parliament) • Strengthen communication channels for rapid and standardised dissemination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations are credible, relevant and timely • Decision-makers demand and use evidence • Evaluation findings include actionable, budget-relevant recommendations
<p>3. Policies and programmes become more inclusive, equitable and climate-sensitive</p> <p>(NEPF Objective 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations generate recommendations that reduce inequities and protect ecosystems • Inclusion of sex, age, disability and CEH-disaggregated indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update TORs and templates to embed Transformative Equity (TE) and Climate & Ecosystem Health (CEH) principles • Build capacity and awareness among evaluators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of disaggregated and environmental data • Stakeholder commitment to inclusive, co-production approaches
<p>4. Professionalised and sustainable national evaluation capacity</p> <p>(NEPF Objective 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately staffed evaluation units across government • Competent officials producing and using evaluation evidence • Diverse pipeline of emerging evaluators • Active capacity-building partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the National Evaluation Capacity Plan • Adopt the Evaluation Competency Framework with accredited pathways and certification • Partner with NSG, universities, PSETA and SAMEA • Implement mentorships, internships and scholarships to build a diverse pipeline of emerging evaluators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house evaluation capacity is created within government • Hiring and retention policies enable absorption of newly trained staff • Adequate resources (human and financial) are mobilised to support NEPF implementation • Institutional collaboration sustained and promote innovation and inclusion

Outcomes	Outputs	Key activities	Dependencies and assumptions
5. Adaptive and innovative policy implementation (NEPF Objective 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menu of fit-for-purpose evaluative approaches applied • Rapid evidence synthesis service and evidence map operationalised to support adaptive policy implementation • Digital tools (AI, dashboards, real-time monitoring) adopted • Co-production protocols in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and publish evaluation approach menu and rapid-response SOPs • Pilot rapid syntheses and foresight methods in priority clusters • Configure dashboards and train users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to timely, tailored evidence products • ICT infrastructure supports interoperability and analytics • Ethical and legal frameworks for data and AI upheld

ANNEXURE 2: MEDIUM TERM STRATEGIC PLAN (MTDP) STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic Priority 1: Drive inclusive growth and job creation	Strategic Priority 2: Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living	Strategic Priority 3: Build a capable, ethical and developmental state
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased employment and work opportunities; • Accelerated growth of strategic industrial and labour-intensive sectors; • Enabling environment for investment and improved competitiveness through structural reforms; • Increased infrastructure investment, access and efficiency; • Improved energy security and a just energy transition; • Increased trade and investment; • A dynamic science, technology and innovation ecosystem for growth; • Supportive and sustainable economic policy environment; and • Economic transformation and equitable inclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities for a just society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced poverty and improved livelihoods; • Improved coverage of social protection; • Improved access to affordable and quality healthcare; • Improved education outcomes and skills; • Skills for the economy; and • Social cohesion and nation-building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved service delivery in the local government sphere; • Improved governance and performance of public entities; • An ethical, capable and professional public service; • Digital transformation across the state; • Mainstreaming of gender, empowerment of youth and persons with disabilities; • A reformed, integrated and modernised Criminal Justice System; • Effective border security; • Secured cyber space; • Increased feelings of safety of women and children in communities; • Combat priority offences (economic, organised crime and corruption); • Advance South African foreign policy for a better world; and • Enhanced peace and security in Africa.

ANNEXURE 3: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE NEPF 2025

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	LEADING INSTITUTION	SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS
PRIORITY 1: STRENGTHENING LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS			
1.1 Publish the NEPF 2025 and create awareness	2026	DPME	SAMEA
1.2 Integrate NEPF principles into the process of the White Paper on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	2026	DPME	
1.3 Develop and/or update evaluation plans to align with NEPF 2025:			
• National Evaluation Plan (NEP)	2026	DPME	EAC, GSCID Cluster and FOSAD
• Evaluation plans in provinces, sector departments, municipalities	2026	Sector departments, offices of the premier, SOEs, municipalities	DPME
PRIORITY 2: EVALUATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT			
2.1 Develop a National Evaluation Capacity Building Plan to guide implementation of the following, among others:	Q1 2026	DPME	SAMEA, NSG
• Replenishment of capacity for evaluation across government	Ongoing	DPME, line departments, provinces, SOEs	
• Updating of curriculum for evaluation training courses	2026–2028	NSG and academic institutions	DPME
• Implementation of learning forums (e.g., Communities of practice (CoPs), brown bag lunch sessions, national evaluation seminar)	Quarterly and biannually	DPME	SAMEA, NSG, Universities
• Implementation of a competency framework and certification pathways	2026	SAMEA,	DPME, DPSA, NSG
PRIORITY 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNED EVALUATIONS			
3.1 Secure budgets to support execution of planned evaluation projects	Annually	Line Departments, DPME,	National Treasury
3.2 Implement planned evaluations	2026 ongoing	DPME, line Departments, provinces, SOEs	Government in all spheres, development partners
3.3 Establish/Maintain partnerships to support NEPF implementation	2026 ongoing	DPME	NSG, government in all spheres, development partners
3.4 Implementation of Improvement Plans	2026 onward	Line departments and DPME	Parliament, PSC
3.5 Monitoring the implementation of Improvement Plans	2026 onward	DPME	All departments

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	LEADING INSTITUTION	SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS
PRIORITY 4: STRENGTHENING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND USE OF EVALUATION			
4.1 Update evaluation guidelines to align with NEPF 2025 (e.g. Outcome evaluation, Institutional Reviews, etc.)	2025 onwards	DPME	DPME, Partners, Departments and EAC
4.2 Maintain quality assurance mechanisms (steering committees, peer reviews, stakeholder validation, etc.)	2026 onward	DPME, Departments, Evaluators	
4.3 Maintain a DPME Evaluation Portal to share evaluation reports and other tools	2026 onwards	DPME	
4.4 Develop interactive knowledge-sharing products (policy briefs, infographics and summaries) for public dissemination	2026 onwards	DPME	Custodian departments
PRIORITY 5: MONITORING AND REPORTING ON NEPF IMPLEMENTATION			
5.1 Produce an annual report on NEPF implementation and publish	2026 onwards	DPME, Departments	

