



planning, monitoring
& evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



USING EVALUATION AND OTHER EVIDENCE TO STRENGTHEN SOUTH AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

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TOGETHER WE MOVE SOUTH AFRICA FORWARD

CONTENTS

1	Background	3
2	What is the problem?	3
2	Global experience and best practice in addressing evidence	7
3	Approach applied in South Africa	8
4	Emerging lessons and evidence	11
4.1	Around use	11
4.4	Around data	13
5	Proposed way forward	14
5.1	Approach	14
5.2	System elements	15
5.3	Services.....	16
5.4	Enabling elements	17
5.5	Relationship to external stakeholders	18
6	Changes proposed	18
6.1	Broader evidence role in government.....	18
6.2	Knowledge hub	19
6.3	Data	20
5.3	Research	21
5.2	National evaluation system	21
7	Areas to include in PM&E legislation	22
Annexes		25
Annex 1:	References	25
Annex 2:	Summary of lessons emerging from study visits, reviews and what has been implemented.....	27
Annex 3:	Results of a significant systematic review looking at evidence informed decision-making	32
Annex 4:	Possible options for creating an independent centre to support evidence	34

1 Background

In 2009, the incoming administration decided that planning and M&E were key to improving government performance. At the heart of this reform was the need to ensure that government departments focused on the outcomes and impacts of their work, rather than the traditional approach of merely concentrating on activities and inputs. The policy frameworks on monitoring, entitled 'Improving Government Performance: Our Approach' and 'Green Paper on National Planning' were released by Cabinet in September 2009 to provide a basis for Outcome Monitoring and building a capacity for national planning in government. Two Ministries were created in the Presidency, one for Performance M&E and the other for the National Planning Commission (NPC), with to serve as institutional mechanisms to take forward these two critical functions. The Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation was established in 2010, which was located in the Presidency as the centre of government. In 2014, the two Ministries in the Presidency were merged and the NPC Secretariat was merged with DPME to form the renamed Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in 2014.

Phillips et al (2014) described the purpose for the establishment of the DPME as "initially to introduce the outcomes approach to planning, and M&E of government's top priority outcomes" and outline the evolution of the M&E and planning roles of DPME, prior to its merger with the National Planning Commission (NPC) in 2014. One of the key functions that developed was of evaluation, where a National Evaluation Policy Framework was adopted by Cabinet in 2011, as well as a data function, initially serving the outcomes. Subsequently a research function was adopted. In addition, an evidence-based policy-making project operated in the Presidency from 2007, and subsequently in DPME, supporting the development of DPME and notably the evaluation, research and knowledge management functions. Hence from an initial start in evaluation, the work has widened to promote an increasing diversity of evidence tools. However, role differ - in the evaluation role DPME is the custodian of the national evaluation system, whereas in research this role is played by DST and DPME has a more limited role of promoting effective use of research for policy.

The evaluation system is now spreading across government, with evaluations underway at national and provincial levels, implemented through national, provincial and departmental evaluation plans. DPME has the responsibility to ensure the effectiveness of this system.

2 What is the problem?

South Africa, through the National Development Plan (NDP) and Medium Term Strategic Framework has undertaken valiant efforts to use planning, monitoring and evaluation to strengthen its development outcomes., However these are not yet having the level of effects we would have hoped for. While the latest GDP figures release by StatsSA shows a return to growth at 2,5%, unemployment recorded increase of 27.7% for Q1 and Q2 2017 and recent Stats SA surveys indicate poverty levels remain high at 55% among the South African population. The challenges of poverty and unemployment if not improved can only mean that inequality becomes worse.

DPME's mission in its Strategic Plan of 2016 is *'To facilitate, influence and support effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of government programmes aimed at improving service delivery, outcomes and impact on society'*.

A key element for improving the impacts of government's work is through improving quality of decision- and policy-making, planning and implementation. *'Evidence-based policy making (EBPM) is a process that assists policy makers to make better decisions and achieve better outcomes. It is concerned with using existing evidence more effectively, commissioning new*

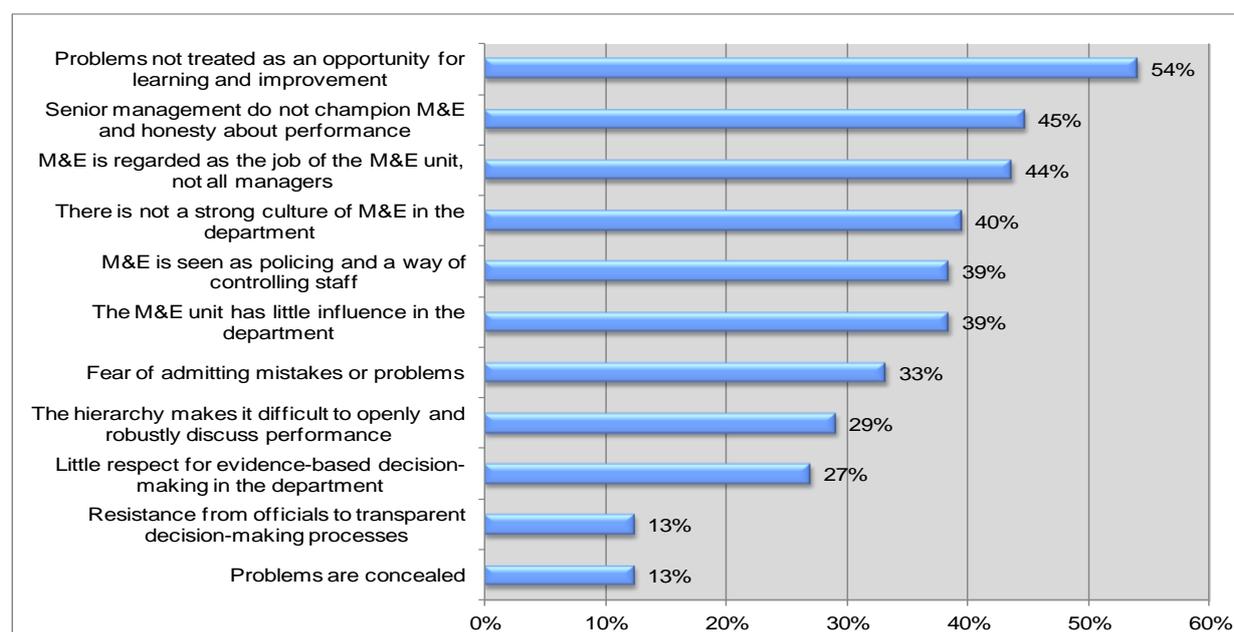
research and evaluation to fill gaps in the evidence base, and assisting the integration of sound evidence with decision makers' knowledge, skills, experience, expertise and judgement' PSPPD (2011, p1).

Evaluations, research, data are all sources of evidence and knowledge, which have to be generated and used appropriately to inform decision-making. Underlying the problem above is a challenge of how we are using evidence to inform our decision- and policy-making.

While research is one of the best known sources of evidence, in South Africa the research system has not been focused on supporting the national development plan, and in general researchers are unaware of governments' priorities. By contrast evaluations focus on specific policies, programmes, plans or systems, and are prioritized for their importance and relevance to the national development plan.

South Africa's evaluation system was developed from 2011, where systematic research was conducted into countries (particularly middle income countries) with relevant evaluation systems. Study tours were undertaken to Mexico, Colombia, the US, Canada and Australia all of which have strong evaluation systems. This work was undertaken in the context of a dominant culture in the public service which is not conducive to the learning focus of evaluations. Figure 1 refers to research conducted on the state of M&E for DPME in 2011 amongst national and provincial departments in South Africa (Umlaw et al, 2015). This shows that in 2011/12 there was a strong compliance culture in the public service, with 54% reporting that problems were not treated as an opportunity for learning and 27% reporting that there was little respect for evidence-based policy-making.

Figure 1: Distribution of responses on culture or values-related barriers.

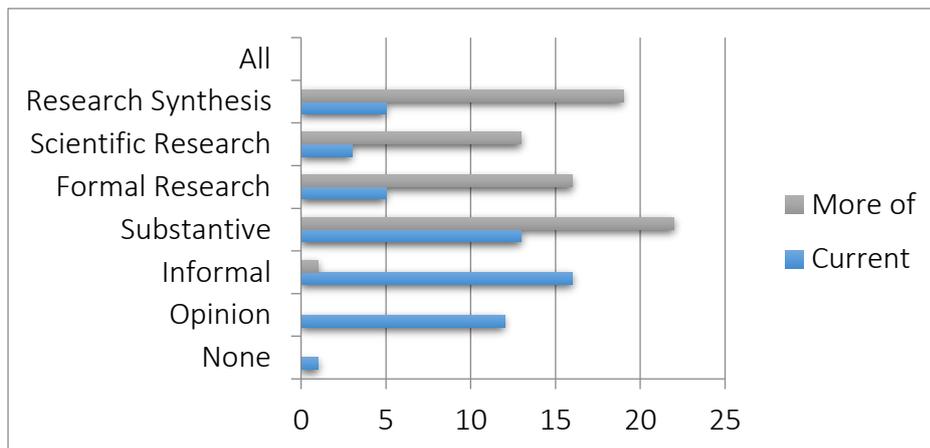


Source: Umlaw et al, 2015.

Figure 2 shows the results of an exploratory study undertaken amongst 54 senior managers in South Africa in 2011 (Paine and Sadan, 2015). Informal sources (anecdotal, stories, uncritical use of information to hand) and opinion were being used predominantly as sources of evidence, with some use of more substantive sources (careful truth seeking, data mining of survey and use of administrative data). However, there was much less use of more rigorous formal scientific evidence, formal/scientific research including evaluation, and research synthesis. This means that the levels of use of rigorous evidence informing policy and decision

making are much lower than optimal. Managers did identify however the need to increase the use of formal research and synthesis. There has been an increasing awareness around the concept of EBPM over the past 8 years and some departments are beginning to engage with evidence in a more deliberate way. However, in general rigorous evidence is not being used sufficiently to inform government's planning, policies and decision-making.

Figure 2: Type of evidence most often used for policy decision-making (54 senior managers)



Source: Paine and Sadan (2015).

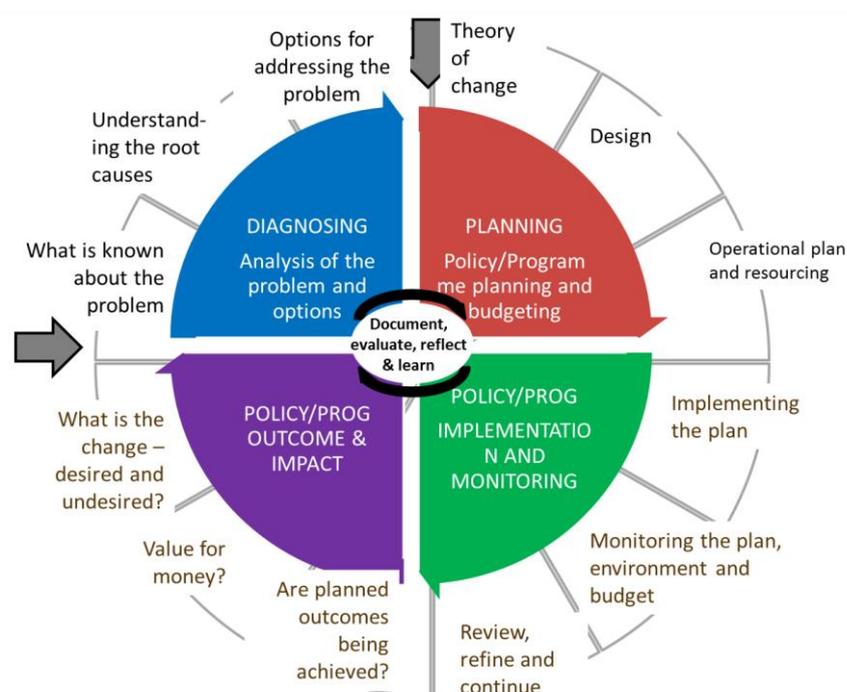
To try and stimulate demand for evidence, and notably for evaluations, since 2013 DPME with the University of Cape Town have been running courses for the top three levels of the public service in South Africa. As at September 2017 over 250 senior managers have been trained including 11 Director Generals¹. A core concept used in this training is evidence use in the policy and programme cycle (see Figure 3), which suggests the stages needed for effective planning and implementation. The possible use of evidence in the different phases is explored in the course.

A common challenge appears to be that the diagnosis stage is often missing. In all these courses when asked what is the next stage after an agenda is introduced, participants say it moves straight to design or implementation and the diagnostic stage is lost, meaning that root causes are not identified, options not compared, and so symptoms are often addressed rather than root causes.

This means a critical stage when evidence is needed to inform effective planning and implementation is being missed. Analysis undertaken by DPME from the first evaluations undertaken in 2012- 2013 indicated also that in many of the programmes being evaluated, the evaluations are suggesting major changes are needed to the design of the programme. This reflects inadequate designs based on inadequate diagnosis.

¹ Surveys have been undertaken during these courses which show similar results in terms of use of rigorous evidence, although there is more awareness of evaluation and research.

Figure 3: Policy/programme cycle



So a core problem that underlies DPME's work is that poor diagnosis and use of evidence by departments is contributing to poor design and implementation of policies and programmes, which therefore do not deliver the required outcomes and impacts on South Africa's citizens.

The core problem in relation to evaluation is that prior to 2011 **evaluation (and other rigorous evidence) was applied sporadically in government, not adequately informing planning, policy-making and budgeting, so we have been missing the opportunity to improve the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of government's interventions** (DPME, 2011).

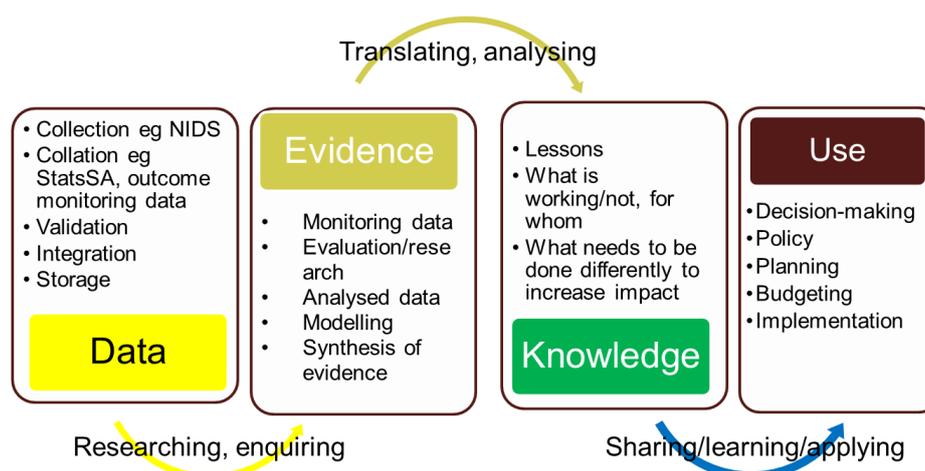
A related problem arising from less than effective policies and programmes is that funds are not used effectively by these departments. This means that effective evidence-informed design and implementation means they could achieve far more with the same budget.

The reality is that evidence is only one factor in what are essentially political decisions where a range of factors are taken into consideration. A reflection undertaken by DPME on using evidence during the Twenty Year Review, pointed to system-wide challenges in sourcing, generating, engaging and using evidence to inform decision and policy making processes (Dayal, 2016). This affirmed that the policy-science (evidence) interface remains a highly contested political space because of contextual complexities and demands from policy makers that are more than for just credible evidence. However, experience would suggest that if evidence was used more effectively it could improve development outcomes, which could have a positive feedback in political benefits. This is the essence of why DPME's Evidence branch exists.

2 Global experience and best practice in addressing evidence

Figure 3 provides a type of theory of change for evidence based policy and practice, where data is converted into evidence, translated into knowledge, shared and hopefully applied. This model will be used to structure the components later in this paper. Evaluation and research are key parts of the evidence tools needed, which require data to be effective.

Figure 3: Simplified theory of change for generation/use of evidence for decision-making



After DPME was established in 2010 DPME undertook systematic study visits to understand the lessons from countries which have used M&E as a tool for evidence-based policy- and decision-making. Countries visited include Mexico, Colombia, US, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, Canada, Kenya, Uganda. These were structured study visits with substantive reports after each visit. In some cases, these visits were with the Deputy Minister, in some cases with the Standing Committee on Appropriations (DPME 2011a, DPME 2011b, DPME 2011c, Parliament/DPME 2012 and 2013). In addition, through the Twende Mbele African M&E Programme (which DPME is a founder member of) recent scoping trips have been undertaken to Ghana and Kenya (Twende Mbele, 2017a and b). Some of the study tours had particular focuses (eg Mexico/Colombia focused on evaluation), while others were more open on M&E more broadly.

While the study tours looked more broadly at planning, budget and M&E roles, Annex 2 shows the lessons from the different countries particularly in relation to the role of the central unit (equivalent to DPME); evaluation; data; follow-up; legislation. These study tours did not focus on the wider evidence agenda including data and research, but on DPME's initial priority to establish **evaluation** as one of its core evidence functions. In terms of evaluation they came up with issues such as developing a strategic agenda, promoting ownership and credibility of evaluations, a standard suite of evaluations and use of improvement plans.

They also raised issues around **data** quality and verification, having key datasets for monitoring (such as priority projects), having a data centre. Some key issues that need to be considered specifically around data include:

- Need for common standards and protocols to allow interoperability of data
- Ensuring key data sets are available to inform policy
- Central access to data
- Conducting of data analysis to support DPME and government more widely

- Development of capacity to analyse data and policy-makers to interpret data
- Communication of key data sets

In terms of broader work on **research** and **evidence-based policy**, from 2008 the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD) supported work on the broader evidence-based policy agenda using support from the EU. PSPPD funded a suite of work around the use of evidence (eg the work underlying the Paine Cronin and Sadan paper, op cit), a number of research projects/evaluations, training around evidence, research and research synthesis, knowledge management work including development of research repositories, DPME policy briefs, seminars and conferences to build awareness and capacity. In addition, several of the study tours quoted above were funded by the PSPPD. Some of the key areas that emerged as needed are:

- Building commitment and capacity of policy-makers to use evidence
- Funding of policy-relevant research
- Building capacity of emerging researchers, particularly in quantitative skills
- Building capacity for research synthesis
- Developing models for rapid research synthesis
- Building links between researchers and policy-makers
- Enabling access to key research
- Communicating key research evidence

Recently the Alliance for Useful Evidence supported two important systematic reviews² of evidence use (scientific report is in Langer et al, 2016, and a version for the wider public in Alliance for Useful Evidence, 2016). These are important reviews in that they synthesise evidence of what is likely to promote evidence use. Annex 3 shows the key messages emerging from these which need to be born in mind when promoting evaluations and other evidence to inform policy- and decision-making.

The table in Annex 2 draws on the lessons from the study tours and from the EBPM/EIDM research to provide a framework to see what has worked or not in South Africa.

3 Approach applied in South Africa

The emergence and development of DPME and an overview of the M&E systems is discussed in Phillips et al, 2014. A whole edition of the African Evaluation Journal focuses on the development of South Africa's National Evaluation System³ including the background papers on evidence cited above (Umlaw et al, and Paine Cronin and Sadan), the emergence of the national evaluation system (Goldman et al, 2015), lessons from some of the first evaluations (eg Davids et al, Samuels et al, Mashalaba et al), lessons from the development and application of evaluation standards (Leslie et al), , and the partnership with SAMEA (Beney et al).

Annex 2 shows in the left column the key lessons identified from international experience and key research focusing on evaluation, research, data as well some broader lessons for the evidence system. These are shown in the left hand column. The middle column shows how these have been implemented in practice.

² Systematic reviews apply a systematic process for searching, screening and synthesizing literature. They provide a picture of the balance of evidence, rather than a single study, and they are intended to be transparent in the selection process, to minimize bias.

³ <http://www.aejonline.org/index.php/aej/issue/view/6>

In terms of **evidence generation**, DPME has a number of sources:

- The internal monitoring data, whether from MPAT, outcomes, front-line service delivery monitoring.
- Using the data for analysis, modelling, forecasting.
- Accessing research and other data from external sources.
- Undertaking of evaluations and research.
- Undertaking evidence synthesis - synthesizing existing research and evaluation.

DPME has a key role for government in being the custodian of the **evaluation** system, based on the National Evaluation Policy Framework approved by Cabinet in November 2011. A utilisation-focused system has been implemented with DPME supporting national departments in carrying out evaluations in Cabinet-approved national evaluation plans and institutionalisation of evaluation practice across government. The system focuses on ownership, credibility and learning, with 6 types of evaluations. A wide range of support systems have been developed to support the evaluation ecosystem including (Goldman et al, 2015):

- A core role for DPME at national level, offices of the premier at provincial level, and M&E units in departments to drive the evaluation system
- A system of national, provincial and departmental evaluation plans, which identify strategically identified priority evaluations, in the National Evaluation Plan context the Plan approved by Cabinet, and all the evaluations taken to Cabinet
- Standards, competencies, and a quality assessment system
- 26 guidelines and templates to support implementation of the system and provide standard processes
- A set of 4 core evaluation courses, with over 1500 government staff trained
- An evaluation MIS to track evaluations
- A system of improvement plans to encourage use, which are monitored for two years
- A number of communication tools including an accessible summary report format of 1 page policy summary, 5 page executive summary and 25 page report; policy briefs; use of social media to highlight findings; submitting evaluation reports to Parliamentary portfolio committees (who often request presentations); annual national evaluation seminars for all national departments and offices of the premier; all evaluations being accessible on a public repository including the improvement plans and progress reports; annual reports summarizing emerging findings from evaluations.

Overall 59 national evaluation plan (NEP) evaluations are completed or underway covering R143 bn of government expenditure with 36 complete, in sectors from housing, rural development, education, safety etc. Institutionalisation of evaluation work is important for widening impact and sustainability of evaluations. 7 provincial evaluation plans (PEPs) have been developed with 102 provincial evaluations planned. 68 departments have achieved level 3 on MPAT, including having a departmental evaluation plan (DEP) and emerging system. 22 improvement plans are being implemented. Therefore, the evaluation system has widened substantially across the state. Goldman et al highlight the learnings as at early 2015. An evaluation of the national evaluation system is now completing which is at draft report stage which allows us to move to the lessons from our experience.

DPME has an emerging role in using **research** to inform its work. Unlike evaluation it is DST rather than DPME which is the custodian of the research system. Strategic research assignments have been undertaken, including the management of the 20 Year Review, a large process to review outcomes and lessons across the state. A significant innovation has been the move into research synthesis, building on the large amount of literature that already exists, developing some pioneering methodologies including on evidence maps, and beginning to develop models of rapid response service to DPME, notably in synthesizing existing evidence.

DPME is also seeking to share experience of the use of evidence maps and research synthesis.

The first terrain in Figure 3 is around **data**, and data is core to the evidence system. Approaches applied in DPME include:

- Working with relevant departments on data quality and relevance, and the indicators required for DPME's primary role, planning and monitoring the National Development Plan and Medium Term Strategic Framework.
- Identifying data sources for these, including from StatsSA and National Income Dynamic Study⁴ data.
- Consolidating quarterly reporting against these indicators.
- Reporting on annual progress against impact indicators, through the Development Indicators publication.
- Hosting data repositories, including of DPME data sources.
- Developing the skeleton of a data centre/knowledge which can hold data for DPME and potentially for government more widely, and link to government sources.

In some instances, there is a lack of relevant data needed for planning, monitoring purposes, but in other cases available quality data from official statistics, evaluations and research is not utilised adequately by decision-makers to inform policy-making. This reduces incentives for the supply of more data by those who are already able to produce quality data, and results in the use of anecdotal evidence.

DPME has a data unit to support the use of data in DPME, and with some cross-government functions. In terms of data DPME's key partner is Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), which has legislation, the Statistics Act, to ensure that all policy decisions including the allocation and sharing of the national fiscus is based on official statistics. The Act also ensures rigorous censuses and that any other national survey done outside of the Stats Act needs to be vetted the South African Statistical Quality Assurance Framework. In general South Africa does not suffer from lack of data overall, but on the state or accessibility of such data especially its reliability and granularity.

In terms of using the evidence to build **knowledge**, a body of evidence is developing around most of the outcomes and using this to inform development of policy and programming. Examples include:

- Seven evaluations on human settlements, evidence synthesis methodology piloted and rolled out using evidence maps to scope and bring together a body of evidence, and a synthesis report in Human Settlements being used to advocate around a new Human Settlements White Paper.
- ECD evaluation, followed by component evaluations on Grade R and Nutrition Interventions for Children under 5.
- Five evaluations in the rural sector and a synthesis evaluation drawing up the learnings for smallholder farming.

The only outcomes which DPME has not generated a substantive body of work are those on Economic Infrastructure (outcome 6), Local Government (9), and International (11). New synthesis evaluations for 2018 will draw out lessons from all the evaluations around strengthening implementation, and another on how to make NPO-government collaboration effective, notably in service delivery.

⁴ A 2 yearly panel survey of around 28 000 individuals to look at dynamics around the livelihoods of households

One ongoing challenge is that within DPME knowledge management has been poor, and this has perpetuated the silo approach internally. DPME has an abundance of information which is not systematically captured, packaged, stored, and sufficiently shared and optimally used for purposes of directing improvements in government. This is partly due to little or no awareness of existing knowledge management supporting technologies, the absence of accessible management and information flow processes which stems from the lack of information sharing culture within DPME; and the absence of a data gathering systems. Effective communication and dissemination of information has been a major challenge throughout the department.

In terms of broader interventions to promote **evidence** use, a wide range of actions have been taken ranging from training of the top three levels of the public service in evidence, to starting a brown bag lunch sharing of evidence in DPME.

In terms of actual **use** particularly of evaluation findings and recommendations, thirty-six evaluations are completed, 20 of these have been to Cabinet and 22 of these are in the improvement plan implementation stage with some such as Early Childhood Development (ECD) now exiting the two year monitoring of the improvement plans. We see examples of symbolic, conceptual, instrumental use, although also examples where departments are resisting reporting on use. Some examples include:

- **Symbolic** use: Nutrition - importance of nutrition reinforced, 25% of children under 5 stunted and target in 5 year plan to reduce to 10%
- **Conceptual**: Urban Settlements Development Grant – role of grant clarified. In many evaluations the development of a theory of change in the evaluation has helped programmes to better conceptualise what they are trying to achieve, and how, which has a benefit independent of the rest of the evaluation process. We are starting to see the concept of Theory of Change used in other programmes outside of the evaluation context, and to enter the discourse.
- **Instrumental**: ECD - Policy developed as per improvement plan and a conditional grant approved for ECD; SPII - Revised guidelines developed for business incentives schemes and relaunched. The Nutrition evaluation was used to develop the National Food and Nutrition Security Strategy. The CDA is using the evaluation of the National Drug Master plan to develop a new plan for 2018-2022. And use can happen before the evaluation completes. For example the evaluation on the Older Persons Act is being used by DSD to inform the review of the Act even though the evaluation report is not finalised.

4 Emerging lessons and evidence

4.1 Around use

Again using Figure 3, but now starting at the outcome level of evidence use, issues emerging are:

1. It is important that use of evidence is internalised and DPME does not become a policeman. We must make sure that evaluation/research even if done by independent service providers, involves practitioners and beneficiaries and so is owned and seen as co-production, and so the evaluation/research and any improvement plan is owned.
2. Some departments are taking evaluation and research evidence forward, internalizing the findings and recommendations and transforming their programmes (eg a new Early

Box 1: Guidelines from the ODI Collaboration with DEA (ODI/DEA 2016)

1. Use a broad definition of 'robust evidence'
2. Link evidence needs to policy priorities
3. Link an evidence-informed approach with business planning, budgeting and reporting 12
4. Ensure evidence processes are inclusive and participatory 13
5. Work towards co-design and co-production of evidence and policy

Childhood Development Policy with DSD). However, others are reluctant to report on their implementation of the Improvement Plan. This is not to say the evidence is not being used, but departments have questioned the credibility/value of reporting to DPME on implementation of recommendations, and feel it should be their process.

3. SOEs have not been part of the evaluation system to date. It is proposed that SOEs should also apply the NES, undertake evaluations, share their research, models/forecasts and data as part of the Knowledge Hub, and implement improvement plans for improving their performance (reporting on them to shareholder departments).
4. It is important that political and technical leadership buys into the use of evidence such as EXCOs/MANCOs/MinMECs. The more leadership can demonstrate this commitment the more likely the culture of using evidence is to develop.
5. Stronger incentives are needed to ensure that **improvement plans are implemented**. These should not undermine promoting a learning culture.
6. A key user for M&E evidence is **Parliament**. The relationship is already established with portfolio committees, who value the evidence, and the Parliamentary Budget Office. The first evaluation is starting requested by a committee (SCOA, on scholar transport), and this type of collaboration is very important going forward. Much more work is needed with Parliament going forward to ensure departments are accountable and improvements are implemented.
7. There is a large demand for the DG/DDG course and as the systematic review suggests building policy-maker skills is important (Langer et al, 2016). We need to roll out as a compulsory course for all managers a **technical course in evidence**, notably including critical appraisal skills to assist them to understand and use evidence. This course is being developed with NSG.

4.2 Around turning evidence into knowledge

8. DPME needs to get better at drawing from our own evidence, synthesising evidence from different units to develop policy statements so there is **coherence** in what DPME is saying about different policies and programmes.
9. The lessons being generated from the different evidence sources are being captured. They need to be **linked more systematically to the business processes** eg in the plans described above, or budget processes. The process needs to be such that policy-makers are part of the process so they learn the lessons (points 4 and 5 in Box 1). This is happening to some extent. However at times the evidence production takes up too much time and not enough time is spent on this phase. More work needs to be done to share the results of related studies with stakeholders in policy forums which help to generate shared learning, in different languages, with beneficiaries etc. This will help to ensure robust knowledge is generated.
10. Evaluations and research need to be linked to **specific phases** of policy development so that they are integrated into the policy and programme cycle.
11. In some cases eg for the budget process, it is important to find ways to be able to **capture the learnings in a more useful way** to facilitate use.
12. Much more effort is needed on **communication**, to share lessons, in accessible formats, different languages etc. This needs to happen with the sectors. Key knowledge brokers such as think tanks need to be brought closer and become part of an extended circle of dissemination and debate.

4.3 Around evidence production

13. The questions that evaluations, research or data analysis are intended to address should be mapped into an **evidence and knowledge agenda** per department/sector.
14. The **diagnosis stage** is missing or inadequate in many programmes or policies, and evaluations are indicating the need for major changes.
15. A key challenge is in the **budgets** for evaluation and research. Research synthesis skills should be built in departments, as well as the skills to do quicker evaluative/research processes such as annual reviews, or rapid research synthesis, and these can be done internally. This will also help to develop internal evaluative and research capacity.
16. **National/provincial linkages** are needed within sectors. This means working out mechanisms to coordinate national and provincial evaluations or research, e.g. in a sector, perhaps sharing costs.
17. Efforts must be made to **speed evaluations up**. NEP evaluations take on average 361 days to complete. This is the maximum for an implementation evaluation (impact evaluations may need to cover 3 years) and efforts should be taken to reduce this. However the time it takes is dependent on departmental cooperation⁵, having satisfactory service providers so there are not too many versions of reports etc.
18. There needs to be some opportunity for rapid evaluative and research exercises which can be more responsive. DPME is testing out some **rapid evaluative methodologies** as well as **responsive research synthesis** and these need to be tested and guidelines written, so these can be undertaken internally by departments.
19. Evaluations of major programmes where an independent view is critical should still be done externally so they are seen as credible (there are many examples of internal evaluations being suppressed when the findings were not convenient).
20. DPME needs to have additional resources to **support** evidence generation in government, notably as it also potentially takes on this role for SOEs in addition. This is important to help maintain quality in the system (DPME, 2017).
21. **Transformation** of the knowledge production space is important and an area which we have not done well enough. Need to explore other measures to increase participation of black researchers/evaluators in the policy work that DPME is supporting. A major capacity development drive is **needed** to build a more diversified set of research and evaluation providers.
22. Government-funded research is not necessarily addressing key policy questions and it is difficult to access government-funded research. Collaboration is needed with DST/NRF and the Science Councils to ensure that **research** is being undertaken which addresses key policy questions, and that all publically funded research is accessible.

4.4 Around data

23. State departments like DPME requires credible and reliable data and sources to properly carry out their mandates. Without these, they may give misinformed advice but their credibility as institutions would be at risk. At present data is fragmented
24. Some key principles are needed to apply an organisational framework for data collection and data usage. This framework would help to ensure that credible data is collected and reduce the number of data gaps in the planning and monitoring, this in future assists the policy makers in developing timely responses to any challenge.
25. Government data is currently of variable **quality**, and often inaccessible. Standard protocols are needed so that data can communicate and be integrated.
26. Insufficient analytical work is being undertaken, and preferably undertaken internally.

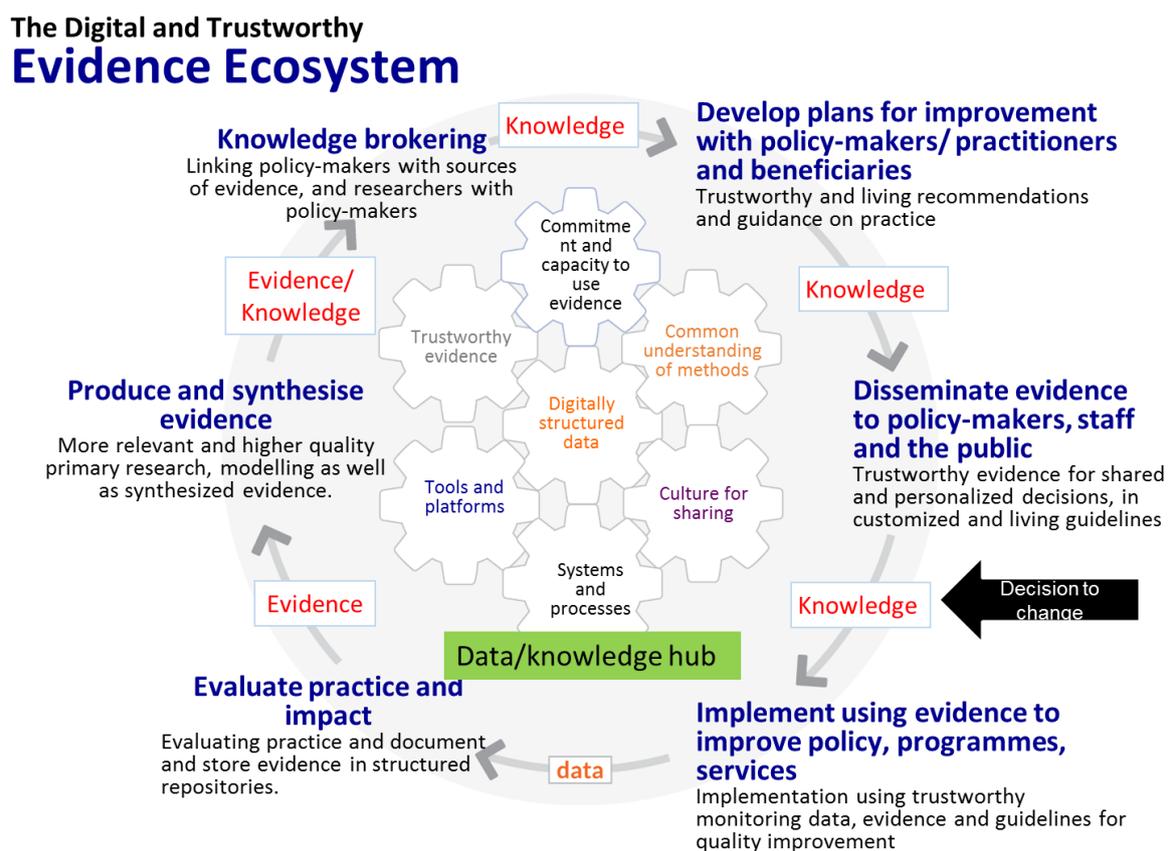
⁵ For example it took one department 4 months to agree the chair of an evaluation steering committee, as this was seen to be a position of power where there was much contestation happening in management.

27. A critical role is ensuring access to government and other data and knowledge products. DPME needs to develop a **Knowledge Hub** for government, accessing departmental data and evidence,

5 Proposed way forward

Based on the lessons above an evidence ecosystem is needed as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Proposed evidence ecosystem



5.1 Approach

The lessons above can help to develop a much stronger evaluation and evidence system, which is systematically feeding evaluation and other evidence into decision-making, programming and policy. Figure 4 shows a potential evidence ecosystem going forward, building on the Cochrane Collaboration model (adapted from Sharples, 2017). This envisages the evidence moving from how to improve a programme, to how to improve practice (e.g. in schools, or conducting hand labour maintenance of roads). DPME's role is primarily the former. For sector departments it must move to getting detailed guidance of how to implement better. At this level we need to be looking to sectoral evidence hubs, like the What Works Centres in the UK⁶, or Canada.

⁶ Link to the What Works Network. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network>. DPME has already made links with the educational What Works Centre, with DBE and DST and this will be explored at a meeting in October.

5.2 System elements

Key steps in the system would include:

Evaluate and improve practice

- Departments and SOEs developing evaluation and evidence agendas related to the NDP/MTSF, supported by DPME, with phased activities and linked budgets.

Produce and synthesise evidence

- A wider suite of evidence tools being used to deliver this, ranging from expensive outsourced impact evaluations at one end, to rapid synthesis activities being undertaken internally. DPME needs to work on developing guidelines for this suite.
- An internal M&E/research capacity in departments that is closely linked to the strategic agenda of the department, rather than just undertaking bureaucratic compliance monitoring. This will need research expertise and evaluation expertise, the appropriate structures need to be agreed with DPSA, funded as part of the 0,5-5% top-slicing of budgets.
- SOEs undertaking evaluations, modelling etc. with their own evidence agendas, and key data available to the DPME Knowledge Hub.
- Evidence synthesis being conducted for rapid evidence generation, as well as systematically to build the evidence agenda including evidence maps, identification of specific synthesis questions and conducting rapid and systematic reviews.
- Partner with Science Councils/Universities.

Knowledge broking

- Linking policy-makers with a range of evidence sources, as well as researchers
- Linking researchers with relevant policy-makers, and helping them to understand policy agendas

Recommendations developed with policy-makers, practitioners and beneficiaries

- Recommendations, e.g. for changes to programmes or services, would be developed in the evaluation stage and in evidence production.
- This stage enables development of new practice guidelines, e.g. how to deal with bullying in school, managing neighbourhood watches, developing a housing project etc. They require inputs from practitioners and from beneficiaries to identify relevant guidelines and toolkits.

Dissemination

- Dissemination would happen at different stages, of evaluations, primary research, research synthesis and eventually at potential toolkit stages

Implement recommendations

- New practices could be modifications to programme design (e.g. new eligibility for incentives programmes), or detailed practice guidance, e.g. how DMR should close mines.

Data and knowledge hub

- Data underlies all stages of this work. A Knowledge Hub is being established and managed by DPME (possibly becoming independent at some point), which accesses all government data, evaluations and research. There needs to be some synthesised data and dashboards provided by the Hub (e.g. tracking priority projects), but also access to data by government and research organisations for further analysis.
- DPME is building a very close link with StatsSA which will be critical in maximizing the value and contribution of data in the evidence ecosystem.

- The vision going forward is to be a knowledge-integration hub that enhances performance monitoring and evaluation in government. This vision calls for a knowledge-centric culture where mutual trust and respect facilitates knowledge sharing and organizational learning within the department and with partners and stakeholders.

Note the cycle in the evidence ecosystem can start at different points:

- With an evaluation (evaluate practice).
- Having data which prompts rethinking (produce evidence).
- With some synthesis work which prompts rethinking of recommendations (synthesise evidence).

In addition, it can skip stages – e.g. evaluate practice, moving to making recommendations. However, with time we need to move beyond a single study to the body of evidence so synthesis work needs to take a stronger role. In this respect the emerging bodies leading internationally on evidence synthesis outside the health field are 3ie (of which DPME is a member) and the Campbell Collaboration. DPME needs to strengthen its link to these bodies and see how they can support emerging work on synthesis in South Africa.

5.3 Services

Some of the key evaluation and evidence generation services covered include:

- Management of major **evaluations** for the National Evaluation Plan and DPME's DEP.
- Undertaking **rapid evaluative exercises** such as annual reviews, evaluative workshops.
- **Research synthesis** – advocacy/support for creation of evidence maps and responsive synthesis methods, and commission or supporting some longer-term systematic reviews.
- Management of major **primary research** and synthesis exercises.
- Access to **publically funded research**, in liaison with DST/DHET and universities.
- Supporting key **data collection** exercises, e.g. the NIDS study and collection of **verified data** from government departments.
- Data analysis **modelling and forecasting** which help to identify possible quantitative paths to medium and long term goals, such as the NDP vision 2030 targets.
- **Data capture** and validation, e.g. for the POA, and potentially a project database.
- **Knowledge broking** across government.

To support this requires:

- Development of policy, **regulations and guidelines** for government and public entities/SOEs.
- Development of **standards, protocols and competences**, including liaison with DPSA (linking to the Capacity Development Section of DPME).
- Design and support for appropriate evaluation and evidence **courses** and capacity development measures, including liaison with NSG and other training organisations (linking to the Capacity Development Section of DPME).
- **Communication** activities, seminars, social media, policy briefs, supported by the Communications Unit
- Development of **platforms** for data capture, repositories of evaluations and research
- Building consensus with key government role players around **governance** of the evaluation and wider government evidence ecosystem.
- Supporting development of **specialist centres** for evaluations and research on specific sectors, possibly developing into the What Works-type centres in the UK

5.4 Enabling elements

The centre of the cycle shows the key cogs which need to work for the ecosystem to operate effectively:

Commitment to use evidence

It is critical to build ownership and commitment to improve performance, so that the system does not just rely on negative incentives/sanctions. Improving performance and the analysis and use of evaluation and other evidence needs to be part of managers' core competences, and must be linked to their performance agreements. In addition, DPME must continue with the evidence course for DGs/DDGs which helps to build a receptive audience around evidence.

Trustworthy evidence

The evidence system depends on credibility, hence many of the systems that have been established for the evaluation system. These must be reinforced, strengthening the timeliness of evaluations, and the quality assurance process (recommendations in DPME, 2017). This is closely linked to common understanding of methods. Similarly, other methods including rapid methods must be seen to be trustworthy, setting up solid mechanisms for peer reviews etc.

Common understanding of methods

The ecosystem depends on a common understanding of what different types of evidence are, types of evaluation, research and research synthesis and the methodologies for data collection and analysis. Guidelines are needed for these methods (many of which exist already for evaluations). A major part of the capacity development process must be to build this understanding, on which trustworthy evidence depends.

Culture for sharing

The effectiveness of the use of evidence depends on different stakeholders having access to the information, being able to give feedback but also hold departments to account. Sharing must be widened to include non-government stakeholders, and a key partner for sharing – think tanks. Protocols are needed for knowledge sharing.

Tools and platforms

The Knowledge Hub will be one platform, but there may well end up sector platforms as well. These are important to share knowledge, and specific tools may be developed to assist, eg for developing evidence maps. An integrated information system is needed for all evaluations across government, building on the current MIS. This would mean all evaluation data will be accessible but there will need to be incentives and sanctions for keeping this updated (DPME, 2017).

Digitally structured data

Being able to access and analyse data depends on it being standardized so that it is accessible. It must be structured appropriately to use digitally, and protocols will need to be developed. This should potentially access all government data including SOEs.

Systems and processes

Some key systems still need to be developed. These include:

- Building from an evaluation plan to a wider evidence agenda
- The undertaking of evaluations and their improvement plans being systematized in departmental/SOE APPs, and performance agreements of senior managers.
- The broader governance group across government to support this broader evidence role (to include a minimum of DST, StatsSA, COGTA, DPSA, Offices of the Premier,

DPE). There have been tensions amongst these stakeholders which need to be overcome.

- What the implications are for structures such as the current national Evaluation Technical Working Group (and provincial equivalents).
- Strengthening research systems in departments/provinces.

5.5 Relationship to external stakeholders

There are key external stakeholders who need to be considered in the system. These include:

- Local government – as data generators, in the case of metros they should be considered as departments. For secondary cities and other municipalities, the rapid evaluative processes and monitoring should be emphasized.
- SAMEA as the M&E association.
- Data platforms such as Data First (linked to UCT).
- Universities – as research and analysis generators and users, as well as trainers.
- Science Councils as research and analysis generators and users
- Think tanks as research and analysis generators and users as well as knowledge brokers.
- Researchers/consultants – who may have specialist research or sector skills.
- Private sector, e.g. in economic programmes.
- Large advocacy CSOs – who may play roles in the sector
- Smaller CBOs – who may provide services

At present DPME has established a national Evaluation Technical Working Group to support the national evaluation system, but primarily composed of government departments. It may be appropriate to widen this to include the stakeholders above, as part of a subgroup of a wider planning. M&E forum, with a statutory role to support the evaluation system.

In addition, DPME has a role in helping to convene departments to support a wider evidence system, to inform implementation of the NDP.

6 Changes proposed

To support this the following are proposed.

6.1 Broader evidence role in government

28. DPME takes on an explicit role as a **champion** for the use of evidence in government, and notably to support the NDP, working closely with centre of government departments and DST. DPME continues with its course in evidence for top managers and the development of a course for all SMS in evidence. DPME collaborates with DPSA to get the analysis and use of evidence as a core management competence.

29. The questions that evaluations, research or data analysis are intended to address should be mapped into an **evidence and knowledge agenda** per department/sector (which would incorporate departmental evaluation plans and research agendas). This evidence work should build on evidence maps to show evidence gaps where new generation is needed, and also needs costing. DPME should develop guidelines in this regard (e.g. point 2 in Box 1). DEA has piloted this and DPME needs to also test this out.

30. **Budgets** should be top-sliced to liberate 0,5-5% of funds for M&E, either held in programme budgets or with the CFO. The possibility of an evaluation and research pot to

co-fund expensive evaluations or research, should be explored, either held in Treasury or DPME.

31. **National/provincial linkages** need to be facilitated. This means working out mechanisms to coordinate national and provincial evaluations or research, e.g. in a sector, perhaps sharing costs. National departments with concurrent functions should play a role in facilitating sectoral evaluation programming in the different DEPs, as well as research agendas across the sector.
32. Potentially sectoral **specialist centres** should be developed that focus on developing, consolidating and communicating the evidence and toolkits around good practice in sectors, such as the What Works Centres in the UK. DPME is currently discussing this with DBE and these should be piloted.
33. Ensuring a **diagnosis stage** is undertaken prior to planning new policies and programmes. Approval of these plans and budgets should be subject to a satisfactory diagnostic being undertaken.
34. DPME continues to promote the **culture of learning** with EXCOs/MANCOs/MinMECs as key users of M&E and research evidence to make adjustments to departmental programmes.
35. DPME supports Parliament to use M&E and other evidence as part of their oversight function and to ensure departments are accountable and improvements are implemented.
36. DPME develops links with key **knowledge brokers** such as think tanks to be intermediaries in knowledge production and sharing.

6.2 Knowledge hub

37. DPME develops a **Knowledge Hub** for government, accessing departmental data and evidence, Statistics SA data, non-government data, providing a one stop shop for access to this knowledge. This will focus on the knowledge around the NDP. This will require a legislative mandate, working with StatsSA on development of suitable data protocols, and development of the hardware and software to run such a Hub. This would need a data layer, an evidence layer, and a knowledge layer, with dashboards to draw out key datasets and facilitate access. All these layers would involve collaboration across government, and access to publically-funded data and evidence.
38. The knowledge hub integrates all data and knowledge from different sources using an Integrated Data Collation and Integration Systems (IDCIS) concept to integrate systems. This knowledge hub should have the capabilities of easy retrieval of information, ease of use, allow information to be retrieved at the click of a button and most importantly the capabilities of analysing across different sources of information. The technology should allow for continuous update of data and knowledge as new data is generated.
39. The approach will be:
 - Identifying key knowledge needs by users.
 - Scanning DPME information and how it is stored (all DPME data and evidence sources). This includes business units, records and information management, GIS.
 - Working with StatsSA to ensure there are standard data protocols and standards for data across government so that there is interoperability of systems and standardisation of data.
 - Working with relevant governments departments and SOEs to identify important data sources for the Hub, including from StatsSA, Home Affairs' National Population Register, sector data sources etc.
 - Stakeholder engagements and data forums with providers of data to ensure that the content in the knowledge hub is of quality that can be relied upon.
 - Ability to look at the data to check it makes sense.
 - Engaging other institutions with research and other information relevant to government priorities e.g. research institutions, universities and International partners, and accessing all publically funded research and evaluations.

- Facilitating systematic searching for and synthesising of evidence of different types.
 - Data analysis and modelling.
 - Developing dashboards etc. to combine, analyse and visualize data in ways of interest to key users.
 - Supporting the sharing and dissemination of knowledge relevant to the NDP.
40. It may be seen as more legitimate if this is seen as one step removed from government, e.g. the independence mentioned in Mexico. Ideally this would permit coproduction of knowledge across government, e.g. using a wiki-type model. Hence this role could eventually extend into a Centre for Research and Analysis, commissioned to undertake evidence generation or synthesis for government. Annex 4 discussed the options for this centre.

6.3 Data integration and analysis

41. Quality data underlies the evidence system. DPME works with Statistics South Africa to develop a **comprehensive data collection system** that would not only support planning, monitoring and evaluation, but able to ensure they can stand both political and statistical scrutiny. This system needs to be “robust” and must have a framework of collection and distribution consistent with the constitutional requirements. State departments like the DPME requires credible and reliable data and sources to properly carry out their mandates. Without these, they may give misinformed advice but their credibility as institutions would be at risk.
42. Key principles are proposed for data collection and data usage:
- Data must meet the needs of DPME as the regulatory or supervisory department with timely, precise and comprehensive data.
 - Data collation and collection must be user-driven. To be effective, this must mean that statistics collection and systems oversight must fall under the same governance structure. This will ensure a strong two-way dialogue between users and producers where costs and benefits are evaluated under the same roof.
 - There must be greater standardisation of data. Again, this must be driven through an intense dialogue between the users who understand conceptually what they are trying to measure and the producers.
 - The data collected and the associated reporting standards and protocols should enable better risk management by the institutions themselves and foster greater market discipline by investors.
 - Data collection must be nimble, flexible, and statistically coherent so as to adapt to the rapid pace of innovation.
 - There must be a framework and powers to transmit the data to other supervisory agencies. This is not trivial: it involves inter-agency co-ordination and legislation defining what can (and cannot) be transmitted, in what form and to whom
 - Any data collection and analysis effort must consider its international dimensions.
43. DPME works with StatsSA on standard data protocols so that data can communicate and be integrated.
44. Strengthen **analytical capacity** in departments, including DPME, to analyse and integrate data sources. This must include the capacity for modelling and forecasting, as a key service needed by planning units, and in DPME’s case the planning branch. Recruitment and capacity development activities going forward must bear this in mind.
45. DPME promotes the development of **key data sets**. For example, the presence of the ANA data and grade R data enabled a rapid and cheap impact evaluation of Grade R. In addition, for key programmes where impact evaluations will be required, DPME must play a role in ensuring that relevant data is being collected.

5.3 Research

DPME's research role is primarily internal to support implementation of the NDP but also to ensure that research evidence is available to support the NDP. DST and DHET are the key owners of the research system. Key areas of work for DPME include:

- Developing appropriate methodologies to support research use including use of research synthesis such as evidence maps, use of rapid synthesis methods, rapid evidence assessments;
- Developing guidelines to support these;
- Ensuring publically funded research is available through the knowledge hub;
- Working with DST and the NRF to ensure research in critical areas for the NDP is funded.
- Ensuring research and evaluation is linked to **specific phases** of policy development and this should be cross referenced, e.g. in the SEIAS process, Framework for Strategic Planning, Auditor General processes etc.

5.2 National evaluation system

An evaluation is underway of the NES and the report is not yet finalized, and an improvement plan is likely to be developed in early 2018. Bearing that in mind, the changes which are proposed at this stage include:

- **Legislation** to strengthen role of evaluation and implementation of evaluation findings;
- Extending the NES to metros and **SOEs**;
- More **strategic selection** (note six of the eight evaluations for 2018/19 were proposed by DPME/National Treasury);
- Evaluations being required before new phases of programmes are funded;
- Work with national and provincial Treasuries to champion evaluation so **funds** are available for evaluations (note Western Cape Treasury allocated R10m for 2018/19 for evaluations);
- Strengthening **national/provincial links** on evaluation, in terms of selection and undertaking of evaluations;
- Developing **rapid evaluative processes** to complement longer rigorous evaluations:
 - Having rapid process which can be conducted by M&E units. This will include an evaluative workshop model; one-month model;
 - Having some more rapid evaluations taking 3-6 months;
- Undertaking more **synthesis and sector evaluations and reviews** drawing from the range of national/provincial evaluations (one has already been done on Support to Smallholder Farmers, one on Human Settlements is underway, and for 2018 proposing two on Lessons on Implementation, and NGO-Government Relationships);
- Undertaking more **impact evaluations** but work is still needed to convince departments to plan for this at the outset of programmes and policies;
- A major **capacity development drive** is needed on evaluation and research synthesis to build a more diversified set of providers, in different universities, science councils and consultancies. This should involve specific support for **emerging evaluators/researchers** and more pressure on current set of companies to use and build black evaluators, or joint venture with black companies. This should tap into HR budgets, involve collaborations with SAMEA, DST etc, but some funding will be needed. The potential of evaluation, research and data internships should be explored to help generate this cadre of evidence producers.

- More work on **capacity development** in collaboration with the National School of Government;
- **Improvement plans** being strengthened, and the accountability for implementing them,
 - DPME to have a legislative mandate to compel departments to develop and report on improvement plans for NEP evaluations, and OTPs for PEP evaluations, and internally for DEP evaluations. Improvement Plans, where developed, should be part of DDG, DG's and potentially MEC or Minister's performance agreements⁷ and part of other requirements e.g. reporting on APPs, annual reports).
 - The results of evaluations being required in Strategic Planning, APP and budget processes (e.g. an evaluation having to be completed before a new tranche of funding is agreed) (see point 3 in Box 1).
 - Portfolio committees requesting improvement plans and monitor these, holding departments to account for implementation.
 - Strengthening the tracking of improvement plans, and extending the MIS so that potentially it covers all evaluations across government. Also for NEP/PEP evaluations we should have review meetings with departments to discuss progress with improvement plans and where blockages can be unblocked (DPME, 2017)
- Strengthening the link of evaluations to **inform the budget** (note it has been linked last two years). This may mean developing some standard questions to use for evaluations (e.g. should this intervention continue, how could this be done more efficiently, how could the transformative impact be enhanced);
- Strengthening links with **non-government actors** including Parliament, think tanks.

7 Areas to include in PM&E legislation

Approach

- The legislation should contribute to outcomes rather than be confined to compliance
- We should avoid further entrenching the compliance culture and see the legislation as a foundation upon which we build a more developmental approach towards improved learning and performance towards development goals
- The legislation should specify enforcement measures and not leave it in the hands of the AG
- The advocacy approach should continue alongside the legislation

Broader evidence role

- DPME has a custodial role for government in relation to evaluations. This applies to all spheres of government and SOEs/public entities. Provincial Offices of the Premier have a custodial role at provincial level.
- DPME is a champion for the use of evidence in government. It will undertake a range of activities to support the generation and use of evidence across government. This could include convening meetings to bring together departments around evidence issues, supporting training for government officials in evidence etc.
- Departments should produce evidence plans, which includes regular undertaking of evaluations, research and data analysis to inform policy- and decision-making. DPME will issue regulations and guidelines to inform this.
- DPME may partner with suitable voluntary associations in the planning and M&E fields, to promote the development of these functions in South Africa.

⁷ This has been done in the E Cape

- DPME will work with DPSA to ensure that suitable structures, competencies etc. relating to evidence are embedded in government systems, such as the Performance Management and Development System.
- DPME has the right to establish specific consequences to be defined in regulations or guidelines for departments that do not conform to the obligations relating to evaluation, research, data and the knowledge hub outlined below.
- There should be consultation with different spheres of government and SOEs on the development of suitable regulations and guidelines, as well as transversal indicators.

Evaluations:

- DPME as the custodian of the National Evaluation System, has the responsibility to set evaluation policy and standards, staff competencies for evaluation with DPSA, issue guidelines and templates for evaluations within government, design and promote suitable courses in evaluation and to undertake other processes to support effective institutionalization of evaluation across government. DPME should provide strategic direction and oversight over the NES, which includes monitoring the system and departments are required to report on the status of evaluations.
- Offices of the Premier are the custodians of the evaluation system at provincial level.
- All departments must undertake evaluations and evaluative processes of policy, implementation programmes, plans and systems as part of their management process, in line with the national evaluation system
- All major programmes (e.g. national programmes of over R500m in the MTEF, or provincial evaluations of over R50 million) should undertake evaluations at least every 5 years, to ensure they are performing optimally. The results of these must be incorporated in their planning and budget processes. Renewals of funding for major programmes should be predicated on a rigorous evaluation being conducted.
- Where programmes, policies or systems are seen to be performing poorly, this should trigger evaluations to understand how to improve performance or see whether the intervention is not providing value for money. These may be initiated by national, provincial or departmental budget processes.
- Departments must allocate 0.5 to 5% of programme budgets for evaluation and evaluative activities (0,5% if the programme is very large, 5% if small) (Exact % to be defined in regulations).
- Departments must allocate human resources to support evaluations and evaluation processes.
- DPME has overall responsibility to support development of an evaluation cadre and to widen the pool of evaluators in the country. It should establish a national forum to support the evaluation system, and undertake regular events to build capacity across the system and promote peer learning.
- Evaluations must be made public on DPME's evaluation repository, provincial and departmental websites unless there are security or commercial concerns.
- Departments must indicate in their strategic plans and APPs how they are using the results of evaluations to improve their performance
- The implementation of the improvement plans of evaluations should be in DGs' and managers' performance agreements, including reporting on progress to DPME
- National and Provincial Treasuries and organizational CFOs must take into account the results of evaluations to inform the budget process.

Data:

- DPME will work with Statistics South Africa to ensure that suitable data protocols and standards are established for government so that there is interoperability of data systems and data across government;
- DPME has the right to access anonymised government and SOE administrative and performance information and to verify this with departments, provinces local

governments and SOEs. This includes access to publically funded data warehouses e.g. from the IEC, Statistics South Africa etc.

- DPME in consultation with StatsSA may suggest improvements to data and to indicators, and government institutions need to consider those improvements.
- DPME may convene data forums to strengthen data systems and sharing of information

Research and knowledge management:

- Knowledge management needs to be strengthened across government, and DPME has a responsibility around ensuring that this happens to support the NDP.
- While DPME is the custodian of evaluation, the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Higher Education have key roles to play in supporting research in universities and Science Councils, as well as sector departments for their specific sectors.
- DPME will work with these departments, provinces, local government and SOEs to ensure that all publically funded research is accessible to government, through repositories of public research, and to encourage the undertaking of research which is relevant to DPME's mandate and specifically the National Development Plan.
- DPME will liaise with government structures to suggest sectoral research that needs to be undertaken to support the NDP.
- DPME will work with DPSA to ensure appropriate research and knowledge management structures are established to coordinate and promote knowledge/research and the use of research evidence in government departments.

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Annex 2: Summary of lessons emerging from study visits, reviews and what has been implemented

Lessons from study visits, reviews	What has been implemented with respect to evidence	Areas planned going forward
Role of central unit		
Essential for central champion (All) as well as internal diagnostic on research and evidence use in DPME	DPME as central unit with Evaluation Unit, Data Unit and Research/Knowledge Management Unit (now Evidence Branch). DST as research champion.	
Unit must have degree of independence to ensure credibility eg Pemandu or CONEVAL	Not independent but systems established for credibility, quality assurance. Fair degree of trust.	Possibility of independent board, independent structure or international advisory panel.
Important that unit plays a strong facilitator role, with technical skills, so that departments respect and trust it, and use the results to improve performance, not just for compliance.	Evaluation Unit with 4 teams headed by experienced director, led by DDG, supporting national evaluation system Research Unit small and internally focused but pioneering and building trust relationships internally and with government Data Unit providing internal data services and some data coordination for government.	
Central unit has budget to help influence (eg could be a budget for evaluations to co-fund with departments) (Mexico, Colombia).	Budget in DPME to co-fund national evaluations. Accessed 3ie support for large/complex impact evaluations. Small research budget.	Potential for budget for large evaluations held in NT or DPME.
Strengthen coordination between centre of government departments around M&E (Canada)	Stronger links established with NT, less so with DPSA. Evaluation Technical Working Group (ETWG) to support the evaluation system.	Develop high level evidence working group across government.
Intergovernmental agreement or Forum and potentially with non-state actors in building a consensus and in driving PM&E as a mechanism for improving delivery eg Director General (DG) Forum, through which DG DPME meets with the DGs of Provinces (Australia, Kenya, Uganda)	PM&E Forum established with national departments, separate with provincial, later combined. ETWG includes key government stakeholders	Reconstitute Forum Involve wider actors in ETWG (eg training providers, SAMEA)
Strengthening evidence-based policy-making/decision-making		
Build awareness, commitment and capacity of policy-makers to use evidence (PSPPD, DPME)	With support of PSPPD developed course with UCT on evidence for top 3 levels of public service. Run 7 courses training >250 senior managers including 11 DGs. Collaboration with DEA through Vaka Yiko project Providing evidence support to policy-makers	Continue Provide backstopping support on evidence questions

Lessons from study visits, reviews	What has been implemented with respect to evidence	Areas planned going forward
Building mutual understanding and agreement on policy-relevant questions and the kind of evidence needed to answer them	DEA developed evidence agenda supported by ODI. Starting process of developing a DPME evidence agenda linked to MTSF. Course in poverty and inequality (PSPPD)	Take forward
Supporting decision-makers to develop skills accessing and making sense of evidence	Developing technical course for deputy directors, directors and chief directors to be run by NSG, supported by PSPPD, including critical appraisal. Potentially compulsory course for SMS. Support development of internal capacity to undertake basic research and synthesis.	Implement Discuss with DPSA including competences for analysis and use of evidence in core management competences (as in the UK)
Facilitating interactions between decision-makers and researchers	Thematic and more general research/evaluation seminars and conferences, some facilitated by PSPPD	Widen, especially building on body of evaluation and research evidence
Providing communication of, and access to, evidence	POA on website Publication of Development Indicators Creation of public knowledge repository on poverty and inequality (PSPPD) and evaluation repository. Creation of internal research repository. Policy briefs, supported by PSPPD. Social media Evaluation Update newsletter and Annual Report Initiation of Data Centre	Expand DPME communications work on evidence Discuss with DST access to policy-relevant research. Creation of Knowledge Hub for government and other data and evidence. Access SOE data and evidence
Influencing decision-making structures and processes (Use)	Training of top 3 levels of public service (directly led to 3 departments having important evaluations). National and provincial evaluation plans approved by Cabinet/Exco. Tabling evaluations at dept management and Cabinet	Incorporate requirement for diagnostics/evaluations in budget process, in APPs and in performance agreements Introduce rapid evidence processes to inform key decisions
Evaluation		
To ensure credibility of evaluation, need to show independence of evaluation (All)	Independence maximized by role of DPME, outsourcing, peer reviews, Steering Committee as management structure independent of department being evaluated.	No change
Important that key stakeholders own the results and take them on board so the findings and recommendations are likely to be implemented (Mexico, Colombia, Uganda, Benin)	Cornerstone of National Evaluation Policy Framework. Encourage departments to submit proposals for evaluations which are appraised for their importance and link to NDP, As DEPs being developed for smaller departmental	NEP becomes more strategic with evaluations selected by DPME/NT, but including some

Lessons from study visits, reviews	What has been implemented with respect to evidence	Areas planned going forward
	evaluations NEP and PEP evaluations becoming more strategic.	important interventions proposed by depts.
Suite of types of evaluation (Mexico/Colombia) with some degree of standardization (Mexico)	6 types of evaluation. Standard approaches for each type but methodologies can vary. 26 guidelines and templates developed. MPAT requires adoption of guidelines.	Consider whether to introduce standard elements, eg for budget. Allow for additional types.
Development of Public Expenditure Tracking as an evaluation model (Kenya)	NT developed Performance and Expenditure Review (PERs), with DPME input	Support PERs, and PETs if relevant.
Requirement that all major or important programmes evaluated regularly (eg 3-5 years), which can be used to develop an annual or rolling multi-year evaluation plan (Canada, Australia, Mexico, Colombia) Schedule of evaluations (Mexico, Colombia, Australia)	Evaluation plans at national, provincial and departmental levels. Requirement building through MPAT system. Deliberately not instituted yet that all programmes should be evaluated at a specific frequency, for lack of capacity in the country.	Define when evaluations required/trigger, eg when renewing grants. Define regularity of rapid evaluative processes.
Expanding evaluation requires greatly increased capacity, both within government, and for independent evaluators. DPME needs dedicated staff, and a budget to support capacity development around M&E in government (Colombia)	Donor budget allocated for capacity development and part-time for one director. Developed 4 courses with CLEAR AA.. Working with SAMEA on capacity development of evaluators. Trained over 1500 government staff. Working with NSG to take on courses but pace slowed.	Need to reinvigorate capacity development, and include SOEs Develop programme to support emerging evaluators. Undertake diagnostic with Twende Mbele support on how to strengthen supply of evaluators.
Need principle of a budget allocation for evaluation – probably in the range of 2-5% of programme budgets (Colombia)	Submitted memo on 0.5-5% of programme budgets for M&E to Cabinet. Approved principle not %.	Follow up in legislation
Evaluations implemented by depts. with support from central unit (All)	NEP evaluations implemented with DPME, PEP evaluations with the Office of the Premier, DEPs with M&E unit.	Continue. Dept evaluations run internally but have to follow NES (legislation)
Reports quality assessed/audited for validity (Malaysia) Need for verification of data (Indonesia, Malaysia)	Quality assurance and quality assessment system developed. Reports quality assessed and moderated.	Strengthen system. Ensure all evaluations across gov assessed.
Need for evaluation system to link with Parliament (US).	Links to Parliament with presentations to Chairs of Committees, training, study tours, sending evaluations once approved by Cabinet. Made links with Parliamentary Budget Office.	Strengthen.
Research		

Lessons from study visits, reviews	What has been implemented with respect to evidence	Areas planned going forward
Fund policy relevant research	PSPPD has funded over 30 research projects. DPME undertaken some research projects, including support to DPME and other departments on research components, eg literature reviews, rapid syntheses, evidence maps.	Strengthen link with DST on link to national evidence agenda
Build capacity of emerging researchers	Emerging researchers involved in research above. Courses run in methodology.	Developing emerging evaluator concept. Play limited role in research space.
Support access to key research	Creation of repositories of research and access facilitated to scientific data bases Collaborative partnership with universities, science councils, think tanks and other generators of evidence nationally and internationally	
Develop models and build capacity for research synthesis	PSPPD ran training in rapid evidence assessments and systematic reviews. Government not ready. DPME working with government departments on models such as evidence maps.	Capacity to support research synthesis limited to health sector, and UJ. Need to widen
Developing models for responsive research synthesis and knowledge brokering	Testing models of 3 day and 10 day responsive synthesis as part of rapid response models	Continue. Institutionalise as part of literature reviews in evaluations.
Data		Data
Need for common standards and protocols to allow interoperability of data	Currently fragmented, poorly coordinated "siloes" data collection without following similar standards. Result of lack in consistent and enforceable standards about data quality management. South African Statistical Assurance Framework limited to quantitative data which can be certified as official statistics.	Planned as part of Data Centre/Knowledge Hub Work with StatsSA to develop
Ensuring key data sets are available to inform policy e.g. tracking of key projects including physical verification (Indonesia, Malaysia)	NIDS undertaken to provide longitudinal panel data on livelihoods and their dynamics Concept developed with NPC	Ensure access via StatsSA or Knowledge Hub Decide whether to take forward as part of Knowledge hub
Central access to data, e.g. presence of data centre where results can be viewed (Indonesia)	Overwhelming amount of data available without an understanding of how it can be synthesized, analyzed and used to inform programme planning, performance management, addressing bottlenecks, forecasting etc. Under development	Take forward as part of Knowledge Hub
Conducting of data analysis to support DPME and government more widely	Undertaken, e.g. for hotline. Trained in using NIDS and modelling.	Expand

Lessons from study visits, reviews	What has been implemented with respect to evidence	Areas planned going forward
Development of capacity to analyse data and policy-makers to interpret data	Include in technical course above	
Compilation and communication of key data sets	Capturing of POA reports Publication of annual Development Indicators	Quicker turnaround Continue
A strong Information Management System empowers people – enabling inputting of data at decentralized points (Malaysia, Ghana)	MIS developed for evaluation. Development of Knowledge Hub includes access to field data.	Key part of Knowledge Hub
Support to data in government including capacity to use data in government	Skills for managing data are very few in government across the value-chain of data collection, collation, analysis, presentation, storage, curation and dissemination.	
Follow-up		
Improvement plans developed and followed up (Mexico). Also visited World Bank and consulted with Inter-American Development Bank to see their system	Established system of improvement plans which are monitored 6 monthly. Developed MIS learning from IADB system.	
Important that results are communicated to different audiences so decision-makers participate and the results are used (Colombia, Malaysia, Singapore).	Developed comm systems including 1/5/25 reports, repository, submission to Parliament, social media, policy briefs, annual reports. Writing up of experience in journals, especially a new African Evaluation Journal to document experience, and help build the local academic disciplines around evaluation and evidence.	The unblocking/ debottlenecking role is not well developed.
Legislation		
Context is key on whether legislation is needed and if so when. A more formalized, systematic and predictable system in South Africa would be helpful and legislation would assist with this. The advantage of legislation is institutions have to execute the law and the context doesn't matter. If legislation is broad enough, then it can be enabling and not restrictive. (Mexico, Colombia)	Not implemented previously as system developing. However getting wider, e.g. supported by MPAT evaluation standard.	Need clout from legislation to ensure evaluations happen and are followed up.
If the system is not legislated it can easily be dropped (as in Australia in 1997).		Need legislation to ensure sustainability.

Annex 3: Results of a significant systematic review looking at evidence informed decision-making

The first review particularly focuses on the **evidence for the efficacy of interventions** used to increase the use of research evidence by decision makers. The second focuses on **interventions suggested in the social science literature** that might be relevant to the evidence use mechanisms mapped in Review 1 and the evidence for the efficacy of these broader social science interventions.

Review 1 results: what works to increase research use by decision-makers?

The systematic review of reviews (Review 1) identified 36 existing reviews assessing what interventions work to increase use of rigorous evidence. These interventions are in different boxes in Figure 3. The team found (Langer et al, 2016):

Where there is evidence of effects

- **Interventions facilitating access to research evidence**, for example through communication strategies and evidence repositories, conditional on the intervention design simultaneously trying to enhance decision-makers' opportunity and motivation to use evidence (reliable evidence).⁸
- Interventions **building decision-makers' skills to access and make sense of evidence** (such as critical appraisal training programmes), conditional on the intervention design simultaneously trying to enhance both capability and motivation to use research evidence (reliable evidence).
- Interventions that **foster changes to decision-making structures and processes** by formalising and embedding one or more of the other mechanisms of change within existing structures and processes (such as evidence-on-demand services integrating push, user-pull and exchange approaches) (**cautious evidence**).⁹

Where there is evidence of no effects

- Interventions that take a passive approach to communicating evidence that only provide opportunities to use evidence (such as simple dissemination tools) (**reliable evidence**).
- Multi-component interventions that take a passive approach to building evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) skills (such as seminars and 'communities of practice' without active educational components) (**cautious evidence**).
- Skill-building interventions applied at a low intensity (such as a once-off, half a day capacity-building programme) (**cautious evidence**).
- Overall, unstructured interaction and collaboration between decision-makers and researchers tended to have a lower likelihood of success. However, clearly defined, light-touch approaches to facilitating interaction between researchers and decision-makers, engagement in particular, were effective to increase intermediate CMO outcomes (**cautious evidence**).

Review 2 results: insights from social science knowledge to support research use

The scoping review of the broader social science literature (Review 2) identified 67 interventions of potential relevance to support EIDM interventions and mechanisms.

⁸ 'Reliable' refers to evidence based on reviews rated high trustworthiness and relevance in the weight of evidence assessment. For details of the weight of evidence assessment, see Section 2.1 below and Chapters 2, 3 and Appendix I in the Technical Report.

⁹ 'Cautious' refers to evidence based on reviews rated moderate trustworthiness and relevance. As above.

- Promoting and marketing behavioural norms e.g. social marketing, social incentives, and identity cues, for example.
- Engaging in advocacy and awareness raising for the concept of EIDM as well as the risks of not doing so.
- Effectively framing and formulating tailored messages.
- Designing appealing and user-friendly access platforms and resources.
- Building a professional identity with common practices and standards of conduct e.g. through, for example, communities of practice, mentoring, and inter-professional education).
- Fostering adult learning.
- Building organisational capacities and support organisational change.
- Using behavioural techniques, including nudges.
- Exploiting the potential of online and mobile technologies to increase the reach, convenience, and appeal of interventions.

These interventions represent areas that DPME should be thinking of in trying to use evidence to influence policy and practice, and so improve government performance.

Annex 4: Possible options for creating an independent centre to support evidence

Element	Scenario 1: DPME	Scenario 2: Independent centre for Research and Analysis	Scenario 3: Independent centre for Evaluation, Research and Analysis (as CONEVAL in Mexico)
Research and data analysis	Conducted internally in DPME and other government depts. DPME provides methodological innovation	All departments. Centre provides service for government	
Role of StatsSA	Key partner on data, feeding into Knowledge Hub		
Data standards, protocols, guidelines	DPME provides for non-official statistics, including for SOEs. StatsSA provides for official statistics	Centre provides for non-official statistics, including for SOEs. StatsSA provides for official statistics	
Evaluation standards, protocols, guidelines	DPME custodian		Centre custodian for DPME
Evaluation competences	DPME primary role, working with DPISA		Centre primary role, working with DPISA
Policy-relevant research	DST custodian. DPME collaborates to ensure policy-relevant research undertaken and accessible		
Data/knowledge hub for government	DPME provides	Centre provides	
Advantages	No need to create new institution	Seen to be independent from Presidency and so possibly more credible More sustainable as wider role across government Possibly more willingness to provide data More flexibility and less bureaucracy in terms of operations Easier to get buy-in from non-government stakeholders and establish partnerships More freedom to undertake capacity development	
Disadvantages	Not perceived by some to be sufficiently independent Possible reluctance to provide data	Need to create and sustain a new organisation	Need to create and sustain a new organisation