



THE PRESIDENCY  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## DPME Guideline No 3.1.3

### Content Focus of Offices of the Premier in M&E

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<b>Addressed to</b>	Head of M&E, Office of the Premier
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of this practice note is to give practical guidance to Offices of the Premier (OTP) on the content focus for OTPs in the national M&E system (the what).
<b>Reference documents</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This practice note draws from the following document: <i>The Role of Offices of the Premier in Government-wide M&amp;E: A good Practice Guide</i>.</li> <li>2. Links to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice note 3.1.4: <i>Improving the Operation of M&amp;E in Offices of the Premier</i></li> <li>• Practice note 2.1.2: <i>Terms of Reference for the Implementation Forums</i></li> <li>• <i>Management Performance Assessment Tool Framework Document (2011)</i></li> <li>• <i>National Evaluation Policy Framework (2011)</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This practice note summarises some of the roles the Office of the Premier should play in relation to monitoring and evaluation, and actions it needs to take forward.

## 2 Current roles of the M&E units

- 2.1 While Provincial Treasury is largely responsible for assessing budget performance, the M&E unit assists in **consolidating non-financial data** such as service delivery outputs and impacts, **processing, analysing and re-packaging** into consolidated reporting for political and administrative principals to inform decision-making and policy. The M&E unit acts as a single reference point for monitoring and evaluation data and reports for the province that inform 'state of the province' addresses, Executive Committee and Cabinet meetings, Provincial legislative oversight functions, *Makgotla*; and other reports for example the African Peer Review Mechanism reports. M&E units essentially validate reports against plans and intent.
- 2.2 The M&E unit **processes and consolidates M&E reports** from departments, sectors, local government and clusters relating to:
- Budget performance (planned against actual expenditure);
  - Human resource utilisation;
  - Planned against actual outputs and outcomes in terms of programmes and projects, provincial (PGDS) and national imperatives (the priority outcomes, etc).
- 2.3 Effective M&E reporting depends to a large extent on **verification processes** to ensure data integrity and accuracy. Verification is an energy intensive task requiring human resources in the field to visit service delivery sites to confirm if delivery has been effected (e.g. if houses have been built); and according to minimum quality standards – as indicated in the reports by departments.

### Action Points:

2.3.1 M&E Units must ensure that in-the-field checking and confirmation (verification) is happening otherwise reports can still be considered as incomplete or untruthful.

2.4 An emerging role relates to **reporting from local government** implying that the M&E unit should facilitate the interface between local and provincial level reporting. This area is a big concern.

### Action Points:

2.4.1 Consideration needs to be given to the deployment of staff to local government to assist with reporting and the interface between local and provincial level reporting. Eastern Cape Office of the Premier has deployed staff in this way. An alternative approach would be to have staff on the M&E unit establishment with a local government focus but as a roving team supporting Councils when and where needed.

2.5 Finally, the M&E unit is expected put in place and manage a **provincial M&E framework**, supported by an M&E IT solution.

2.6 At present **monitoring** takes up a large proportion of time and is the biggest functional area within the M&E unit.

2.7 **Evaluation** is generally considered a smaller functional area and is largely outsourced to consultants. M&E units largely coordinate evaluations; calling for competencies such as project management skills and the management of consulting resources. Planning is singled out as a priority support need as M&E depends on effective planning. The expanded evaluation role now envisaged is discussed in section 6.

2.8 Monitoring and evaluation depend directly on **effective planning** and clear definition of indicators and targets. If strategic plans are not results-orientated, do not use credible baseline data against which targets will be measured; or where indicators are inappropriate or ill-defined, then monitoring and evaluation outcomes are seriously compromised. A challenge for the M&E unit is to assist departments to improve their planning and strategic plans that in turn will improve the integrity of the M&E reports.

## 3 Monitoring of national priority outcomes

3.1 The 12 outcomes are coordinated nationally by DPME. At the same time however, there is a role for provincial coordination to underpin provincial departments and entities' membership of Implementation Forums, to supplement DPME monitoring and follow-up, and to monitor implementation of the outcomes at provincial level. Offices of the Premier are ideally placed to fulfil this role in view of their centralized function. The role has two aspects, monitoring provincial and relevant local government institutions' fulfilment of their obligations, and ensuring improvements in the quality of data going into the national Programme of Action database and Implementation Forum reports.

3.2 It is particularly important that the alignment of provincial departments' strategic plans with their obligations in respect of the national priority outcomes is ensured. Similarly, provincial Premiers' Office can play a key role in ensuring that relevant local government IDPs and Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plans are aligned with the Delivery Agreements.



### **Action Points:**

- 3.2.1 Offices of the Premier should liaise with DPME to identify provincial and relevant municipal obligations under the outcomes and incorporate these into their province-wide M&E framework.
- 3.2.2 Offices of the Premier should – with the facilitation of DPME – ensure that relevant provincial and local data and reports are routinely shared by national departments with provinces to enable province-wide monitoring without duplication of reporting lines.
- 3.2.3 Offices of the Premier should prioritise for review and support departments and data systems delivering data for the outcomes.
- 3.2.4 DPME has nominated specific outcome facilitators to liaise with each province. These provide key contact points for provinces, both on outcomes and other issues.

## **4 Monitoring of front-line service delivery (FLSD)**

- 4.1 The differentiating characteristic of FLSD monitoring is that it focuses on **monitoring the experiences of citizens** when obtaining services. It therefore allows for a bottom-up analysis of service delivery, from the point of view of citizens. There are links between the levels of M&E work. For example the results of front-line service delivery monitoring will feed into departmental performance monitoring and M&E of the outcomes, and initiatives to improve service delivery.
- 4.2 The overall purposes of FSD monitoring are to:
  - Enable DPME and the Premiers' Offices and/or other relevant line function departments to facilitate or put in place interventions to address identified weaknesses;
  - Enable the members of the Executive and DPME and Premiers Office officials to keep in touch with ground-level issues;
  - Assist DPME and the Premiers' Offices to collect data on service delivery at local level;
  - To identify and give recognition to good FSD practice, through the President and the Premiers.
- 4.3 DPME will support the following three types of FSD monitoring: Executive visits; collection, use and analysis of frontline service delivery data; citizen-based M&E. Offices of the Premier will play a key role in this within the province.
- 4.4 **Service delivery standards and service delivery improvement plans** are critical for FSD monitoring – so that citizens can know what level of service to expect, so that public servants can know what they will be measured against, and so that actual service levels can be measured against the standards.

### **Action Points:**

- 4.4.1 Premier's Offices should ensure that each Department has service delivery standards and service delivery improvement plans in place.
- 4.4.2 Premier's Offices should cooperate and collaborate with DPME in undertaking front line service delivery monitoring.

## **5 Extending provincial monitoring to local government level**

- 5.1 Many of the Offices of the Premier have focused virtually exclusively on provincial departments' contribution to the realization of provincial growth and development plans and other provincial and national priorities. In order to ensure that IDPs feed into provincial planning processes and that the PGDS also influences IDPs, it should be considered that district municipalities participate in provincial M&E forums.
- 5.2 The contribution of municipalities in the achievement of the national outcomes, and the need to integrate their activities with provincial and national departments' actions, provide further motivation to extend provincial monitoring to local government level.
- 5.3 Representation of local and district municipalities in provincial M&E Forums will facilitate a clear picture of local government progress and service delivery. These forums can also serve as an early



warning system for potential challenges. Input from these forums must feed into discussions within provincial cluster structures to ensure that monitoring information.

- 5.4 Capacitating and utilizing Community Development Workers for physical verification of data is an innovative approach which could help address some of the capacity constraints of M&E Units.
- 5.5 Resources permitting, the posting of M&E personnel at district level could function as a valuable resource for municipalities in fulfilling their monitoring and reporting obligations and enable the Office of the Premier to monitor municipal progress. Alternatively, officials of district municipalities can be capacitated to fulfil this function at district level.
- 5.6 As noted below, it is not necessary that municipal M&E be located within the Office of the Premier itself, but rather than there is close coordination with other departments involved in local government oversight.
- 5.7 Close cooperation between the Provincial Treasury, provincial Departments Local Government and the Office of the Premier is essential in order to ensure a coordinated, efficient and effective monitoring system and process for municipalities. In this manner, reporting processes for municipalities can be streamlined and duplication prevented by ensuring that information needs are covered in existing reporting requirements of the provincial Departments of Local Government and provincial Treasuries. These reports can then be used by the Office of the Premier for monitoring purposes. Close cooperation would furthermore address possible role confusion between the departments.

#### **Action points:**

- 5.7.1 Premiers' Offices should review the indicators reported to monitor progress with the outcome 9 delivery agreement and incorporate these in their oversight of municipal basic service delivery and financial condition.
- 5.7.2 Representation of local government on provincial M&E forums should be reviewed with a view to assessing whether representation is adequate.
- 5.7.3 Mechanisms for extending M&E to local government level should be put in place by provincial governments.
- 5.7.4 Premiers' Offices, provincial Treasuries and provincial Departments of Local Government should define clear roles and responsibilities for rolling out the province-wide M&E system in a manner which integrates non-financial and financial analysis of provincial department and municipal performance.

## **6 Evaluation of programmes, services and organisations**

- 6.1 Provincial Governments need to understand how their departments and entities are performing, and how to improve their performance. This requires not just ongoing monitoring but regular evaluation and review of impacts and the way systems are working. The focus of the Premier's Office would be on assessing the provincial impact of policies, the spatial impacts of budgets and service delivery, and understanding why things are operating the way they are (how activities are leading to outputs, outputs to outcomes, and the cost effectiveness of these programmes).
- 6.2 One specific type of evaluation is the Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT), where Offices of the Premier will coordinate and facilitate the implementation of this for provincial departments. There is a separate guideline for undertaking the MPAT.
- 6.3 Undertaking evaluations requires Offices of the Premier to have a greater understanding of potentially useful data source (kind of data, level of aggregation, periodicity of release etc.)

#### **Action points:**

- 6.3.1 Conduct an audit of all evaluations done in the province.
- 6.3.2 Develop a 5 year and annual provincial evaluation plan and schedule.
- 6.3.3 Ensure that all programmes have a budget allocated for evaluation. Offices of the Premier may wish to have an evaluation budget to be able to share funding with departments, in such a way helping to ensure these happen, as well as retaining a stake;



- 6.3.4 Support and oversee departments on taking forward evaluations including: the development of quality terms of reference (TORs); ensuring that credible independent evaluators are appointed; reviewing the methodology proposed by evaluators in their inception reports; reviewing evaluation reports, and ensuring that a credible peer review process is undertaken of the product;
- 6.3.5 Ensure that recommendations of evaluations are interrogated for viability and affordability, and a follow-up plan developed, and that that is in itself monitored to ensure recommendations are implemented. DPME will provide technical support in this regard;
- 6.3.6 Create an area of the OTPs website where all evaluations are made available, and send DPME a copy of the evaluation reports.
- 6.3.7 Report to DPME on an annual basis on progress made in implementing the recommendations of evaluations conducted.
- 6.3.8 Should coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the MPAT according to the MPAT framework document and tools

## 7 Development indicators at provincial level

- 7.1 In monitoring outputs, direct/immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes and impact, Premier's offices could replicate the development indicators published by the Presidency for their specific jurisdictions. Some of the provinces which publish development indicators make them public – this is a practice which should be encouraged.

### Action points:

- 7.1.1 Offices of the Premier, if not doing so already, should consider the generation, analysis and publication of development indicators relating specifically to their province. This information should be broken down to district municipality level.

## 8 Putting in place province-wide M&E Frameworks

- 8.1 Existing provincial M&E frameworks should be reviewed in order to improve alignment with DPME's guide on *The Role of Offices of the Premier in Government-wide M&E* and the National Treasury's *Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information*. Electronic M&E systems may also need to be updated and revised. This would also entail that systems need to move from the focus on monitoring outputs to the inclusion of outcome and impact monitoring and evaluation.


## 9 Preparation for audits of non-financial information

- 9.1 While financial and regularity audits have long been a feature of public sector governance, auditing of non-financial information by the Auditor-General is still very new. Many provincial line departments are still currently ill-prepared for audits of non-financial information. Offices of the Premier, in cooperation with the provincial Treasury, can play an important role in helping to prepare departments adequately for audits of non-financial information. There should be a clear link between monitoring of non-financial information and the audit of non-financial information, based on the performance information frameworks proposed by provincial departments in terms of the Treasury Regulations.

**Action points:**

9.1.1 The Premier's Office and the Provincial Treasury should offer guidance to line departments in preparing for audits of non-financial information.

Signed



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