



DEPARTMENT: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

DPME Guideline No 3.1.7

Generic roles and organisational design considerations for M&E components in provincial government departments

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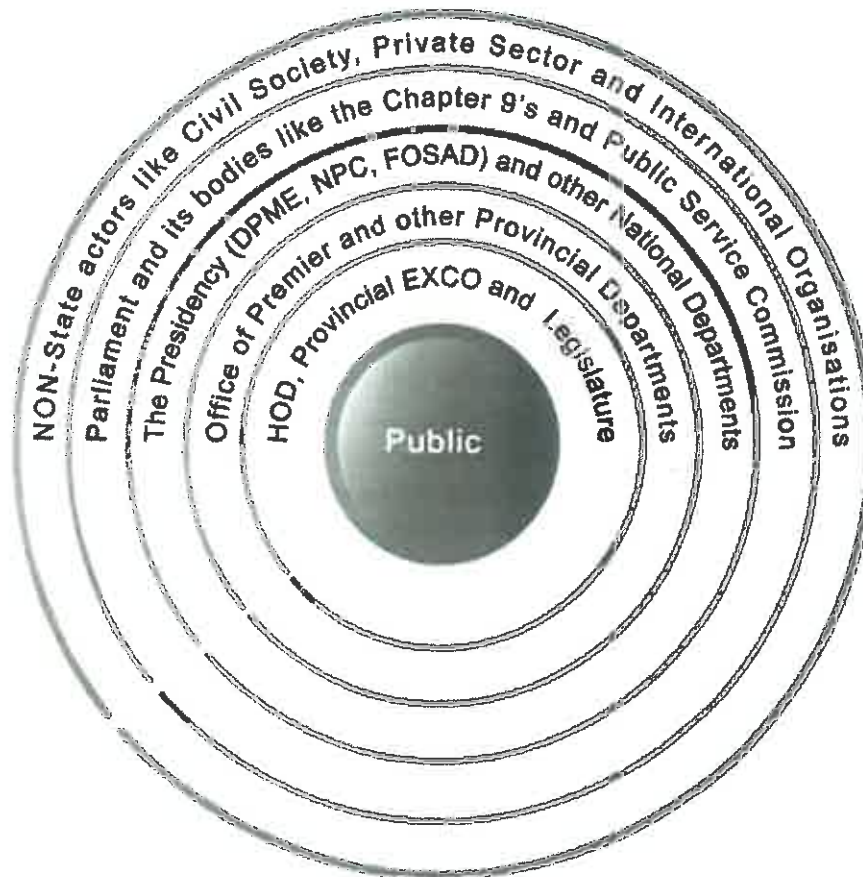
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Addressed to	Provincial Directors-General; Heads of Provincial Departments; and Heads of M&E in the Offices of the Premier
Purpose	This guideline seeks to provide a framework on the generic roles, structural design considerations and key competencies of M&E components in government departments at various provinces of South Africa.
Reference documents	This guideline draws from the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Framework on the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System • DPME Guideline 3.1.5 on "Functions of an M&E component in the National Government Departments" <p>It links to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All DPME guidelines, frameworks and tools applicable to various M&E programmes that are run collaboratively with the Offices of the Premier, as published on the DPME website: www.thepresidency-dpme.gov.za
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1 GENERAL CONTEXT

- 1.1 Provincial departments are primarily accountable to their Heads of Department (HoDs), as their Accounting Officers, and the Members of the Executive Council (MECs), as the Executing Authorities, for their mandates and performance.
- 1.2 The provincial legislatures and Executive Councils (EXCOs/Cabinets) provide legislative and executive oversight, respectively.
- 1.3 The Offices of the Premier play a critical executive oversight, accountability and coordination role in relation to the implementation of provincial programmes and other service delivery initiatives of government.
- 1.4 The Presidency has a critical role to play in ensuring policy coherence and implementation via the coordination of the whole public sector in line with Constitutional imperatives. In the recent period, M&E has been identified as key to driving implementation measures that seek to ensure the achievement of service delivery outcomes and improve the performance of the state.

- 1.5 As the custodian of M&E in government, DPME in the Presidency collaborates with the Offices of the Premier and other national transversal departments that have a role to play in M&E such as the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), National Treasury (NT), the Department of Co-operative Governance (DCOG) and Statistics South Africa (Stats SA).
- 1.6 The independent constitutional bodies that report directly to Parliament like the Auditor General and the Public Service Commission also play a critical oversight and accountability role. As such, provincial departments must report to the above transversal organs of the state and the relevant national sector departments as applicable.
- 1.7 The diagram below sketches the various groups of stakeholders that the provincial departments need to establish M&E relationships with:



- 1.8 The public service exists to serve the interests of the public or citizenry. The ultimate result of service delivery should be to change the lives of the beneficiaries for the better (i.e. long-term outcomes/impacts). As such, any service delivery intervention should be designed to improve the lives of the ordinary people and M&E should measure if such results are achieved.
- 1.9 In the next sections, the roles of the M&E component in the provincial departments are presented, the relationship between M&E and other management functions like planning is discussed, and the competencies required to ensure requisite human capacity of the M&E components are described.

2 UNDERSTANDING M&E IN GOVERNMENT

2.1 Monitoring

- 2.1.1 Monitoring is a management function that should, in principle, be undertaken by all managers. Monitoring involves “collecting, analysing, and reporting data on inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts as well as external factors, in a way that supports effective management” on a continuous basis. Thus, it is important that all managers include monitoring as one of their key managerial functions in their performance agreements.
- 2.1.2 Departmental monitoring data should come from the normal business processes in a department, in other words, through the department’s administrative data systems. Monitoring and reporting is then based on an extraction of key information points (often in the form of indicators) from these sources.
- 2.1.3 Provincial departments should also collect and analyse data related to their sectors from other sources. Departments which are part of a concurrent function such as Health need to collect and analyse data from other spheres of government as well.
- 2.1.4 There are many issues that all managers should monitor on a regular basis. This includes, for example, monitoring of expenditure against the budget for which they are responsible, and monitoring of progress against programme and project plans. Examples of programme plans include plans for the Maternal Health Programme, the Early Childhood Development programme, and the Expanded Public Works Programme. Examples of project plans include plans for individual infrastructure projects such as road construction. Monitoring of programmes and projects should be carried out by the relevant programme and project managers in the department.
- 2.1.5 When monitoring and reporting, managers should not just use ‘tick-box’ and ‘post-box’ approaches. Managers should not be disengaged from the information in the report. Managers should assess and review progress made in line with the initial measurable objectives and associated indicators. Thus, each report should assist managers to identify areas where improvements are required to policies, plans and their implementation. Monitoring is in essence a management tool for improving performance.
- 2.1.6 When establishing an M&E unit in a department, there is a risk of an unintended consequence of managers believing that it is no longer their responsibility to engage in monitoring and reporting work related to their sections. There is a risk that managers will take a view that monitoring and reporting is now the responsibility of the M&E unit, and no longer their responsibility. This does not mean that departments should not establish M&E units. However, Heads of Department need to make it clear to all managers that they are still responsible for monitoring and reporting related to their areas of work, despite the establishment of the departmental M&E unit.
- 2.1.7 There are other corporate units in departments which have monitoring and reporting responsibilities, including, for example, the internal audit, finance and human resource management sections of departments. Again, the creation of an M&E unit in a department should not mean that the other corporate units should stop carrying out their existing monitoring and reporting responsibilities.

2.2 Evaluation

- 2.2.1** Evaluation is defined as a periodic and “systematic collection and objective analysis of evidence on public policies, programmes, projects, functions and organizations to assess issues such as relevance, performance (effectiveness and efficiency) and value for money, and recommend ways forward.” Evaluation is critical for generating in-depth evidence for improving performance and decision-making.
- 2.2.2** The evaluation aspect of M&E is a highly specialised function that requires highly skilled human resources. Evaluation requires the use of sophisticated research methodologies, applying these to policies, plans, programmes, projects or organisations.
- 2.2.3** The Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) assessments for 2011/12 showed that only 13% of national and provincial departments periodically undertake evaluations of major programmes and use the findings to inform programme improvements.
- 2.2.4** On 23 November 2011, Cabinet approved the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) for national and provincial governments. The NEPF provides for the development of annual and three year national and provincial evaluation plans, minimum quality standards for evaluations, and the development of improvement plans to address evaluation findings. It states that evaluations in the National Evaluation Plan should be led by line function departments with technical support to be provided by DPME.
- 2.2.5** A specialist evaluation unit has been built in DPME in order to provide technical support to national and provincial departments to carry out evaluations.

3 GENERIC ROLES OF A CENTRAL M&E UNIT IN A PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT

The above generic context and conceptual background provides a basis for M&E in a provincial department. An M&E unit in a provincial department could generally be expected to perform some or all of the following roles:

3.1 Development of a departmental monitoring framework or plan

It is helpful for a department to have a monitoring framework or plan which sets out what needs to be done by whom and when for the various aspects of M&E that are discussed in this document.

3.2 Monitoring of the sector

Provincial departments should collect and analyse data related to their sectors from various sources. The central M&E unit could coordinate this data collection and ensure that the various branches obtain the data and analyse and use it.

3.3 Reporting against predetermined objectives in annual performance plans

- 3.3.1** As indicated before, provincial departments are first and foremost accountable to their HoDs and MECs, including the provincial Cabinet and Legislature. As such, the APPs and annual reports should be served to these stakeholders as per the statutory requirements.
- 3.3.2** Detailed operational/business plans are critical, but not a formal requirement, for better strategic plans and APPs. Such plans enhance the quality of information that is generated via operational monitoring practices like those linked to specific projects and delivery sites. For example, the Department of Home Affairs used the operations management approach to turnaround its work from a poor performer to a best practice national department.
- 3.3.1** The M&E unit should work with the planning unit (if the planning unit is a separate unit) to ensure that the indicators and targets in the strategic plan and annual performance plan are SMART and in line with the National Treasury's Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information (FMPPi).
- 3.3.2** The M&E unit should check that each branch of the department has adequate plans and business processes in place to collect the required information to report against each of the targets in the annual performance plan, and should provide technical advice to branches in this regard where necessary.
- 3.3.3** The unit should analyse and verify performance data produced by the branches of the department to ensure that it meets the requirements of the FMPPi and where necessary engage with branches to assist them to improve the quality of their performance data.
- 3.3.4** The unit should collect branch quarterly and annual progress reports against measurable objectives in the annual performance plan from the various branches of the department and exercise quality control over these reports. It should engage with the branches of the department to improve the quality of the branch progress reports against the predetermined objectives.
- 3.3.5** Using the branch inputs, the unit should compile whole-of-department quarterly and annual progress reports against predetermined objectives.
- 3.3.6** The unit should arrange for departmental top management or senior management meetings to discuss the draft whole-of-department quarterly and annual progress reports against predetermined objectives before they are finalised, with a focus on areas where there is under-performance and identification of ways of addressing the under-performance.
- ### **3.4 Reporting against government priorities**
- 3.4.1** The Office of the Premier supports the provincial Cabinet/EXCO in developing the provincial priorities that are implemented during the five-year term of the elected administration. It is good and common practice that such priorities are aligned to the national priorities that are coordinated by DPME in order to ensure seamless implementation and M&E.

3.4.2 Provincial departments should implement and monitor the relevant activities and indicators that are contained in the government priorities.

3.4.3 In relation to the current national priority outcomes, for those concurrent functions where MECs are signatories to the Delivery Agreements (for departments which make substantial contributions to the delivery agreements), the provincial departments should:

- a) Provide regular reports to the office of the Premier regarding progress made in implementing the provincial priorities, including work on the commitments made in the Delivery Agreements.
- b) Liaise with the planning unit (if a separate unit) within the department to ensure that the department's commitments to relevant delivery agreements are translated into appropriate indicators and targets in the department's APP.
- c) Liaise with the Office of the Premier to ensure that the commitments made in the delivery agreements are included in the provincial plans and the POA monitoring and reporting system.
- d) Be the liaison point between the department and the M&E unit in the outcome coordinating national department with regard to contributing to the quarterly reports, including participation in the relevant national Implementation Forums.
- e) Provide the M&E unit in the outcome coordinating national department with quarterly progress information on all the relevant indicators and targets timeously.

3.5 General reporting requirements

3.5.1 Provincial departments are frequently requested to provide regular and ad hoc reports to, for example, the Legislature and Chapter 9 organisations. The M&E unit should document these reporting requirements in its M&E strategy or plan and report accordingly.

3.5.2 Another example is to report on the department's contribution to South Africa's international agreement commitments. Where such reports require the integration of inputs from various branches of the department, it is useful for the M&E unit to play such an integrating role.

3.5.3 Where a report only requires an input from one branch, the branch head should be responsible for producing the report. The reason for this is that the people in the branch are the most knowledgeable people about the work of the branch, and because monitoring and reporting are management functions that should be undertaken by all managers.

3.6 Departmental monitoring

3.6.1 Departments may have other monitoring programmes which may need to be managed or coordinated by a central M&E unit.

3.6.2 There may be other indicators which a department may wish to monitor in addition to those required for quarterly reports against the APP or quarterly reports on the outcomes. While individual branches may monitor these for their own purposes, a central M&E unit may need to use some of this data to be able to show top management or senior management what progress is occurring and where problems lie.

3.6.3 Departments may also require their central M&E units to monitor a range of issues related to governance and management in the department (such as those captured in the MPAT assessment process).

3.7 Frontline service delivery monitoring

3.7.1 Departments which deliver services directly to the public such as the provincial health departments should have a frontline service delivery monitoring programme for facilities like hospitals and clinics.

3.7.2 Sector departments should work with the Office of the Premier and the relevant national sector department to ensure the integration of the frontline service delivery monitoring work of the different national and provincial sector departments and the Office of the Premier.

3.7.3 It is imperative that the findings of the monitoring visits are used to inform improvements at site level. Repeat visits should be made regularly to check if there are any improvements that have occurred as the result of the site visits.

3.7.4 The provincial departments play a critical role in mobilizing resources and support for service delivery sites that have capacity constraints like the rural clinics, schools, hospitals, etc.

3.7.5 DPME works with the Offices of the Premier to coordinate the frontline service delivery monitoring programme. There are many guidelines, standards and templates that can be used by departments to design their own FSD monitoring systems (www.thepresidency-dpme.gov.za)

3.8 Citizen-based monitoring

3.8.1 Citizens and government have a shared interest in quality public services. A healthy democratic society requires government and citizens to act as co-producers of information on service delivery. The process of citizens working jointly with government to produce this information fosters active citizenry and contributes to building a capable state.

3.8.2 Departments should establish appropriate mechanisms to strengthen the participation of citizens in monitoring government service delivery.

3.8.2 Tools like citizen-report cards, community monitoring, hotlines, public hearings, civil society engagement, and similar initiatives, are useful for ensuring accountability to the citizens.

3.8.3 DPME is currently designing and consulting widely on the draft framework on citizen-based monitoring, which will provide basic standards and guidance on how government should strengthen this area of M&E.

3.8.4 DPME will provide detailed guidelines on implementing citizen-based monitoring in due course.

3.9 Monitoring of public entities

- 3.9.1 Provincial departments with public entities falling under them have monitoring responsibilities in this regard. This monitoring should be carried out by a central M&E unit, or by a separate public entity management unit or units, or by a branch.
- 3.9.2 Oversight of a public entity is broader than M&E, and can include functions such as negotiating shareholder contracts and processing applications in terms of various clauses of the PFMA.

3.10 Rationalising monitoring and reporting

- 3.10.1 Ideally, departmental monitoring data should be extracted from the department's administrative data systems. The same data should be used to meet various reporting requirements. However, some administrative data systems are under-developed and consequently each new reporting requirement leads to the development of a new and separate data collection and monitoring system. This can lead to overlapping, duplicate and parallel data collection and monitoring systems in a department. One of the key roles of a central M&E unit in a department should be to work with branch managers to ensure that this is avoided. The data should be signed off by the head of department.
- 3.10.2 There is a general problem in government of overlapping and duplicate reporting requirements. Departments are requested to provide reports to a wide range of bodies, some of which request the same information but in different formats. One of the roles of a central M&E unit in a department could be to liaise with the bodies requesting the reports to negotiate rationalisation such that different bodies can use the same reports, to reduce the reporting burden on the department.
- 3.10.3 It is important that the M&E units regularly assess and document their reporting requirements and participate in various national M&E surveys that are conducted by DPME.

3.11 Development of departmental information management systems

- 3.11.1 The central M&E unit should work with branch managers to improve the quality of the information management systems in the department, or to put them in place where they are absent. 'Information management systems' includes data flows, business processes for managing data, and roles and responsibilities for capturing and managing data, in addition to IT systems. As far as possible, information management systems should be integrated with the management systems used to manage work in the department.
- 3.11.2 The central M&E unit should be involved in the procurement of IT systems for monitoring and reporting. This procurement process would normally be led by the branch managers with the support of the IT unit and supply chain management unit of the department. The M&E unit should also be involved to ensure that duplication of effort and lack of integration among various information systems in the department and sector is avoided. DPME is in the process of producing IT guidelines for M&E.

3.11.3 The M&E unit should establish standards and guidelines that seek to simplify and integrate the departmental reporting processes. There should be clear line of reporting and negotiated access to various datasets

3.11.4 Data and data systems governance

In relation to M&E, the implementation of the information management systems should:

- a) Ensure quality of data
- b) Have metadata standards that are aligned to the Stats SA's SASQAF and international best practice.
- c) Establish a unique data basket or repository for the province for use in provincial planning and M&E.
- d) Collaborate with the Offices off the Premier and national departments to ensure quality data for effecting administrative responsibilities and use in decision making.

3.12 Evaluations

The M&E unit is the department should:

3.12.1 Liaise with programme managers to identify the programmes which should be evaluated, and ensure these evaluations are budgeted for

3.12.2 Carry out design evaluations on behalf of the department to check that programme and project designs are robust and likely to succeed

3.12.3 Coordinate the development of a three year departmental evaluation plan, including relevant evaluations in the provincial evaluation plan (if applicable) and other evaluations **3.12.4** Liaise with programme managers to suggest evaluations to be included in the annual and three year provincial evaluation plans based on the NEPF

3.12.5 Work with the OTP on evaluations included in the Provincial Evaluation Plan, as well as for technical support on other evaluations and ensure that this follows guidelines for evaluation plan

3.12.6 Facilitate and coordinate the implementation of evaluations in the department, provide technical support to the programme managers commissioning evaluations, and ensure that evaluations are of good quality

3.12.7 Assist programme managers to ensure that planning and budgeting incorporates evaluation results. For those evaluations in the provincial evaluation plan, reports will be provided to the offices of the premier for management and provincial Exco.

3.10.8 Ensure that suitable communication materials are developed and disseminated to different audiences based on evaluation results.

3.10.9 Maintain a departmental website where all evaluations conducted by the department are accessible (unless there are security concerns), including the data and metadata.

4 ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The above generic roles should inform the design of the structures of both central and specialist M&E units in provincial government departments. Such design considerations should also be based on the Department of Public Service and Administration's organizational design guidelines and principles. Further design considerations are discussed below, including the location of the central M&E unit and the required M&E competencies.

4.1 The relationship between planning and M&E

4.1.1 Planning and monitoring and evaluation are inextricably linked to each other - it is not possible to monitor and evaluate effectively if there are no clear plans to monitor and evaluate against.

4.1.2 When establishing an M&E unit in a department, there is a risk of an unintended consequence that the establishment of the unit will result in an alienation of the M&E function from the planning function. For example, a department may have a planning unit which is responsible for the production of the strategic plan and the annual performance plan, and a separate unit which is responsible for M&E, including the preparation of the parts of the annual report which deal with reporting of performance against the measurable objectives in the annual performance plan. This can result in problems if the two units do not work closely together. There is a risk that the planning unit may formulate the indicators and targets in the annual performance plan in such a way that the M&E unit struggles to measure them, or that the planning unit may include indicators for which the department does not have the necessary information management systems in place.

4.1.3 The ultimate purpose of carrying out M&E is to inform improvements in performance and service delivery. It is therefore imperative that the results of M&E are incorporated into planning processes.

4.1.4 It is recommended that departments consider the links between planning and M&E carefully when designing their organisational structures. For small departments, it may be best to locate the planning and M&E functions together in one unit. For larger departments which require larger planning and M&E staff complements, it may be necessary to have separate planning and M&E units. However, it is recommended that, where the planning and M&E functions are located in separate units, ways be found to reintegrate the work of the two units. For example, this could be done by ensuring that the planning and M&E units report directly to the same person.

4.2 Location of the M&E unit

4.2.1 Given the roles of the M&E unit to integrate the reports of various branches, to provide a quality control function over these reports, and to provide evidence to inform strategic planning and budgeting processes, a central M&E unit will probably function more effectively if it is located in the office of the Head of Department (HoD) and if the HoD is seen to be personally managing the work of the unit.

4.2.2 In addition to the centralised departmental M&E unit, which should be under the HoD, in some instances some departments may need to create specialised monitoring units within individual


branches, especially in cases where the department has a very strong monitoring role to play in the sector or transversally in the province.

- 4.2.3 If there is a research function in the department it would make sense to link evaluations to research.

4.3 Competency requirements

- 4.3.1 Senior officials in a central M&E unit need to be fully informed and up to date on the policy and strategy issues of the department concerned, if the M&E unit is to be effective.
- 4.3.2 In order to carry out the functions described above, an M&E unit should include staff with the following competencies:
- a) M&E leadership – able to develop and communicate the importance of M&E
 - b) Ability formulate SMART indicators
 - c) Have a good knowledge of the theory of results-based management and applying results-based management in organisations
 - d) Knowledge of the theory of monitoring and in a large department, one person at least should have a solid grounding in evaluation and research
 - e) Data analysis and reporting skills (being able to produce good quality reports timeously)
 - f) Information and knowledge management, including ensuring use of M&E findings by disseminating content to various stakeholders via websites, newsletters and other communication platforms.
 - g) Ability to clearly articulate and communicate key messages about the work and the performance of the organisation, at the highest levels
 - h) Coordination, interpersonal and facilitation skills, to work effectively with and through different branches, as well as with external stakeholders
 - i) Familiarity with the whole-of-government planning, budgeting, M&E and reporting cycles and the roles of oversight bodies (e.g. Legislature and Chapter 9 institutions)
 - j) A strong grasp of transversal compliance issues (e.g. PFMA, PSA, Treasury Regulations, PSR, FMPPI, Auditor General Act) and policy environment (FMPPI, National Evaluation Policy Frameworks, GWMES)
 - k) A good understanding of the context of departmental planning, including the PGDS, Programme of Action, etc
- 4.3.3 DPME is currently carrying out an exercise to develop competencies for government staff who commission evaluations (programme staff as well as M&E staff) and for evaluators. Further, the findings of the M&E capacity audit that was conducted on departments that score low on MPAT assessments would help DPME and other key stakeholders like the Offices of the Premier to design appropriate M&E capacity development activities.

Signed



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