

# **A Roadmap, Similarities and Lessons Learnt from National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in Africa**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The traditional public administration and public management discourses give an indication of the value of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in public administration. M&E is widely accepted as a key management-for-efficiency and accountability tool. The shift from performance management to performance governance adds to already identified and accepted public administration needs for M&E. M&E facilitates better management of a complex public service environment consisting of multiple stakeholders within and outside the public service. Beginning in the 1980s, Africa started to acknowledge the paramount importance of M&E systems. After almost three decades of introducing M&E as an organised management tool, Africa still lags behind on establishing robust and comprehensive National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (NMES) that inform policy processes and facilitate decision-making. The article shares experiences, challenges and lessons learnt from adoption and institutionalisation of NMES in the region. Learning from the NMES roadmap facilitates future improvements. The article has been prepared using a qualitative methodology and with reference to the findings it is found that the evolution of M&E in Africa resulted from both internal and external forces for results, accountability and proper use of resources.

## INTRODUCTION

Practitioners and scholars define M&E as different concepts that complement each other in a practical sense. M&E is applied in the public and private spheres as a management tool for guidance and control in a defined strategic direction. M&E is linked to performance management in the sense that it measures performance, informs decision-making, determines resource allocation, facilitates human resources performance management, and recognises performance (Mngomezulu & Reddy 2013:96, cited in Kimaro & Fourie 2017:2). M&E forms a powerful tool for analysing and judging government actions. Gorgens & Kusek (2009:1) suggest that M&E can be used to facilitate responses to a ‘*so what?*’ question on each government action to stakeholders within and outside the public service. Monitoring establishes the progress of government actions through the 3Ws (what, when, and where questions). On the other hand, evaluation records answers to questions related to why and to which extent. Evaluations can take the form of feasibility studies, project or programme evaluations, thematic evaluations, performance audits, and outcome or impact evaluations (Kimaro 2017). Monitoring results inform evaluation, and when combined, they provide evidence for results through what is referred to as ‘*Performance Information*’ (PI).

NMES carries an underlying philosophy, defined from the traditional Public Administration era, through to New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG). The underlying philosophy of NMES forms the foundation of NMES, defining its design, growth and robustness. African public service appreciates M&E as a key management tool and this is supported and linked to the regulatory frameworks and/or national strategies. Literature suggests the existence of well-established and coordinated NMES in selected countries. Most African countries carry sporadic energies, fragmented across various public service institutions/programmes/ projects, and lack the required vitality.

## PLACING M&E IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

M&E has existed since time immemorial. On a periodic basis, people, a group, society or countries establish a mechanism to monitor and evaluate progress of a pre-established course. Ancient societies stated in the holy books mention Joseph, the then Prime Minister of Egypt, where one can appreciate his M&E skills applied in the seven years of famine. In the public administration discipline, ideas centring on M&E trace back from ideas of the two philosophers – Plato and Aristotle. Plato introduces two concepts: the interest of the strongest in society (which varies from time to time), and justice (Scruton 2007:525). The underlying concept behind the ‘interest of the strongest in society’ is a course of action, direction or strategy.

The concept of justice facilitates judging of merits of the strongest in the society (Scruton 2007:525), meaning that it provides an opportunity for the citizen to determine the validity and relevance of the strongest course of action. Aristotle presents man as a political animal who will always participate in the political processes. This assertion by Aristotle introduces an important governance principle, which links to what Morgan & Cook (2014:5) describe as NPG, with an emphasis on stakeholders' participation in M&E and performance management. Aristotle argues that a few can hold power on behalf of many (Scruton 2007:38), which builds on Plato's ideas of a course of action.

At the centre of M&E lies the citizens' quest and demand for public goods. The relationship between administrators and individuals or society stems from the social contract and provision of public goods. A government provides public goods to its citizens, in exchange for loyalty and legitimacy, where public goods become a developed form of '*interest of the strongest*' of Plato or the '*just*' of Aristotle. Schacter (2000:1) presents the modern type of public goods as law and order, street lighting, defence, health services, and property rights, to mention but a few. Public goods are seldom provided by market forces or given at a required level compared to the requirements of government. Worth noting is the fact that the social contract marks the beginning of a formalised system in relation to formal or informal agreements between individuals/society and the state.

M&E evolves from individuals monitoring and evaluating expectations from the state/government. Schacter (2000:4) provides a basis for citizens' demand for government accountability, that is, a return for the powers granted to the executive to raise and spend revenue. Expectations originate from the social contract, changing with time in terms of scope and complexities. NPM mentions increasing complexities of service delivery demands placed upon public administration. On the other hand, NPG adds complexities through strongly proposing non-state actors' inclusion in the already complex web of the '*social contract*' in the name of public interest (Lopez-Acevedo, Krause & Mackay 2012:88). Kimaro & Fourie (2017:2) and Morgan & Cook (2014:8) provide a summarised roadmap for the evolution of M&E in public administration through performance measurement and management in the following sequence: legitimacy and social contract (pre-classic nation building); outputs and transactions (classic public administration); outcomes and accountability for results (NPM); and stakeholder engagement, consensus building, trust, and legitimacy (NPG and value-based performance governance).

## **EVOLUTION OF M&E IN AFRICA**

The analysis and presentation of the public administration system is mostly Western-based, and there is a tendency to ignore the pre-colonial African

administration systems. Basheka (2012:28) argues that the pre-colonial African administration systems existed from 1491 BC and can be used in academics, and as such, address existing administrative challenges (Basheka, 2012:25). Public Administration (discipline) and public administration (practice) surrounds individuals and society, affecting them positively and negatively. Shafritz & Russell (1996), cited in Basheka (2012:30), state that "... [in] the African pre-colonial period, public administration was constructed as the king's largesse which comprised the goods, services and/or honours that the king, chief or clan head bestowed on those under his or her jurisdiction from time to time. The responsibility of ensuring that every member of the community had access to communally-owned factors of production, such as arable land, rivers and lakes, rested in the hands of these authorities". Evolution, growth and the importance of M&E in the public service grow with the Public Administration discipline and challenges that exist in the practice of public administration.

The introduction of M&E as a well conceptualised phenomenon started in the 1990s in the quest for results from the governments around the globe. During the late 1970s and 1980s, African countries faced a sharp decline in their economies and vehement questioning arose regarding the role of government and the status of service delivery by their public administrations (Kimaro 2017). The onset and growth of M&E comes from four interlinked and interdependent sources: internal pressure for results from governments; external pressures for major public service reforms; the adoption of poverty reduction strategies; and the introduction of global, regional or sectoral programmes/projects that came with attached systems for M&E. The growing impetus for increased evaluations within Africa has been triggered by: growing demand for accountability by citizens who are dissatisfied with service delivery by the state; an increase in the range and diversity of democratic institutions which have constitutional mandates to demand accountability and use evaluations for this purpose; and increasing acceptance of evaluation as good practice, both nationally and continentally (CLEAR 2013:6).

The public service reforms and poverty reduction strategies contributed substantially to the introduction and growth of M&E systems on the continent. They brought the conceptualisation of M&E to national levels as opposed to the smaller sectoral initiatives such as health (based on health epidemic-based HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis) or agriculture. This article highlights the public service reforms and poverty reduction strategies in Africa as major contributors to the growth of M&E on the continent. It is worthwhile noting that the reform agenda and poverty reduction strategies acted as catalysts for M&E growth but were not the sole genesis of it in the African public administration.

Pollitt & Bouckaert (2004:8; 2011:16) present public service reform as deliberate changes of the structure or processes of public-sector institutions with the objective of getting them to perform better. The public service reforms are

aimed at shaping public service to become transparent, efficient, and accountable in the use of public resources (Holvoet & Renard, 2007:66; Kimaro & Fourie, 2017:3). Reforms of public service in Africa have emphasised results and accountability (Morgan, Baser & Morin 2010:31), which are impossible to achieve without robust M&E systems. Citing the example of Tanzania, the objectives of the Tanzanian public service reforms are stated as follows: “...instituting performance management systems...enhancing performance and accountability” (POPSM, 2008:v). The reforms introduced in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and other countries are also centred on the above-mentioned purpose and scope. The philosophy and principles of reforms centre on the NPM, applied internationally under global institutions such as the World Bank and DFID (Department for International Development (UK)) (Clarke & Wood 2001, cited in Morgan *et al.* 2010:3). The public service reforms in Africa introduced M&E in two ways. The first formed initiatives to introduce M&E in public service institutions. The second interesting avenue related to setting up of M&E systems to monitor reform programmes, particularly by the national reform coordinating agency, in order to meet the donors’ demands (Morgan *et al.* 2010:34).

Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) formed yet another major contribution to growth of M&E systems in Africa. PRS focused on four core principles: national long-term and holistic vision; country ownership; results orientation; and country-led partnership (Holvoet & Renard 2007:66). A study of PRS implementation in 11 African countries revealed that: “[t]he PRS rationale requires M&E systems that are multi-stakeholder, multi-purpose, multi-dimensional, multi-method, and finally multi-layered...” (Holvoet & Renard 2007:69). The PRS required African countries to establish national contact points for M&E. PRS also demanded sectoral, ministerial or local government systems for tracking progress through established performance indicators. In some countries, such as Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi or Ghana, M&E systems corresponding to the PRS requirements were implemented in silos separate from those introduced for public service reform or sectoral programmes/projects.

Agenda 2063 also harnesses the M&E agenda in Africa. Some of the critical success factors for successful execution of the Agenda 2063 include, among others, developing a results-based approach that measures achievements of planned goals. Correctly put, the Agenda 2063 proposes continental and national M&E systems that encompass the Agenda 2063 aspirations, creating synergies in the region, across and within countries. The Agenda 2063 framework therefore provides an opportunity for adopting an appropriate national M&E system (NMES) that could adopt continental objectives at the national level and below. The Agenda 2063 goals, priorities and targets act as a foundation for collecting baseline data, and M&E of progress across aspirations, regions, and sectors, and within countries. The other avenue contributing to growth of NMES comes from the global

development framework–Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Frameworks mentioned above provide an opportunity to generate and utilise NMES information across countries on the continent.

## **AFRICA'S NATIONAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS**

For the purpose of this article, NMES refers to collective and coordinated efforts and actions towards the building of a national M&E system. The analysis of NMES centres around variables such as: efforts to establish M&E regulatory frameworks; creation of linkages between M&E with national vision/development plans/strategies; appointment of national M&E coordinating institutions; existence of one or more M&E systems with national level characteristics; and relationship and linkages between central and local government levels. This section will therefore analyse mature NMES such as one for South Africa and other countries whose commitment towards NMES is clear through efforts to achieve the above-mentioned variables.

Basheka & Byamugisha (2015:80) argue that coordinated efforts to establish NMES in Africa started towards the end of the 1990s, when leaders from 12 countries and 21 international organisations met and had discussions on M&E. The meeting recorded acknowledgement of the importance of M&E for governance, and also an agreement to establish the African Evaluation Association (AfREA). This association was established in 1999 for the purpose of advocacy, capacity building, and information sharing on evaluation<sup>1</sup>. The establishment of AfREA escalated the NMES movement in various African countries. Non-state actors played a key role in creating the demand for M&E information, as well as building the capacity of the supply and demand sides of M&E systems. Professionals on the continent established the AfREA as an institution for spearheading evaluation on the continent. African countries (government, professionals, or collaborative efforts) established institutions dealing with evaluation rather than monitoring, as presented in Table 1.

The approach to introduce M&E systems varies considerably across African countries. CLEAR (2013:5) presents two scenarios related to adoption of M&E systems, relating to the incremental and cross-government approaches. In an ideal situation, governments' ultimate goal is to have NMES as opposed to fragmented efforts of it. Governments claim to have NMES; however, they are yet to claim victory when using it. Lopez-Acevedo *et al.* (2012:27–30) provide a benchmark of a mature and ideal NMES which possesses the following qualities:

- Creates adequate demand for M&E performance information by the government;

**Table 1: Status of Africa Evaluation Associations**

| S/n | Country      | Name of evaluation association   |
|-----|--------------|--|
| 1   | Kenya        | Evaluation Society of Kenya (ESK)  |
| 2   | South Africa | South Africa Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA)   |
| 3   | Malawi       | Malawi Monitoring and Evaluation Association (MMEA)  |
| 4   | Ghana        | Ghana Monitoring and Evaluation Forum (GMEF)   |
| 5   | Senegal      | Senegalese Evaluation Association (SenEval)  |
| 6   | Morocco      | Moroccan Evaluation Association (MEA)  |
| 7   | Tanzania     | Tanzania Evaluation Association (Tanzania mainland)<br>Zanzibar Monitoring and Evaluation Association (Zanzibar) |

**Source:** (Consolidated from various internet sources<sup>2</sup>)

- Offers incentives on the demand side and to users of M&E information;
- Conducts diagnoses of existing M&E functions and patterns in the country;
- Appoints a champion who pushes for institutionalisation of M&E; and
- Appoints a national institution/agency for coordinating M&E activities.

The level of commitment of a country evidenced by the introduction of key decisions determines a path towards building of the NMES. In other words, not all countries making reference to and implementing sporadic M&E activities claim victory in establishing NMES. The NMES is guaranteed by a commitment of the government to develop regulatory frameworks and capacity development of institutions and human resources on M&E. CLEAR (2013:5) claims the absence of a single model of success for the NMES. However, in an ideal state, government can claim victory on NMES in cases where: regulatory frameworks (laws, policies governing performance management systems and M&E) exist; which links M&E to all key national planning and local government frameworks; is demand-driven M&E; and has evidence of the use of M&E information. This article refers to governments that have shown commitment to establishing NMES; that is, they have at least three out of five of the features described by Lopez-Acevedo *et al.* (2012) in the text above.

As stated above, NMES entered the African countries through various internal and external forces, and started to take shape through, for example, the national coordinated M&E efforts concerning poverty-reduction strategies. Holvoet & Renard (2007) conducted an analysis of M&E systems for PRS for recipient African countries. Because of their nature, the NMES established by the PRS carry

**Table 2: Scoring on National M&E Systems of 11 African Countries**

| S/n                 | Variable of analysis                             | Weak(1) | Partially satisfactory (2) | Satisfactory (3) | Excellent (4) | Index (1-4) | Index rank |
|---------------------|--|---------|----------------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Policy</b>       |  |         |                            |                  |               |             |            |
| 1                   | Evaluation plan                                  | 3       | 6                          | 2                | 0             | 1.91        | 13         |
|                     | Monitoring vs evaluation                         | 4       | 3                          | 4                | 0             | 2.00        | 10         |
|                     | Autonomy and impartiality                        | 6       | 4                          | 1                | 0             | 1.55        | 19         |
|                     | Alignment to planning and budgeting              | 7       | 3                          | 1                | 0             | 1.45        | 22         |
| <b>Methodology</b>  |  |         |                            |                  |               |             |            |
| 2                   | Selection of indicators                          | 0       | 3                          | 7                | 1             | 2.82        | 3          |
|                     | Methodologies used                               | 1       | 4                          | 4                | 2             | 2.64        | 5          |
|                     | Data collection                                  | 3       | 3                          | 4                | 1             | 2.27        | 6          |
| <b>Organisation</b> |  |         |                            |                  |               |             |            |
| 3                   | Coordination and oversight                       | 5       | 3                          | 2                | 1             | 1.91        | 13         |
|                     | Decentralised levels                             | 5       | 6                          | 0                | 0             | 1.55        | 19         |
|                     | Link with projects                               | 7       | 4                          | 0                | 0             | 1.36        | 23         |
| <b>Quality</b>      |  |         |                            |                  |               |             |            |
| 4                   | Effective use of M&E in Annual Plan Report (APR) | 5       | 5                          | 1                | 0             | 1.64        | 17         |
|                     | Internal usage of APR information                | 4       | 5                          | 2                | 0             | 1.82        | 15         |

Source: (Extracted from Halvoet & Renard 2007:70)



the national level scope and may portray the status at this level. Table 2 presents the status and growth of NMES in Africa. The countries whose NMES were analysed are Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The analysis shows significant weaknesses in autonomy and impartiality; alignment with planning and budgeting; coordination of M&E efforts; and use of M&E information. Furthermore, this study and other recorded monitoring conducted, overrode evaluation where levels of impact measurements were hardly mentioned (Holvoet & Renard 2007:70; Porter & Goldman 2013:1; Kimaro 2017).

## NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EXISTING NMES

### ‘Philosophy’ behind African NMES

This section describes the similarities and characteristics of NMES at the adoption, growth and institutionalisation of it in various countries across the continent. The first and important analytical factor for NMES in both developed and developing countries is the ‘philosophy’ behind its adoption. The philosophy defines its design, scope, purpose and the ultimate goal it wants to achieve. Literature suggests that M&E systems establish a system for accountability or effective use of resources or develop a culture for evidence-based results and decision-making (Gorgens & Kusek 2009:3). The fundamental question remains: *accountability*

**Table 3: Analysis of context of the NMES philosophy**

| S/n | NMES growth phase                 | Scope                        | Type of performance indicators                        | Stakeholders engagement   |
|-----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|
| 1   | Traditional public administration | Internal                     | Processes, activity, inputs                           | Internal stakeholders only  |
| 2   | New public management             | Internal and partly external | Inputs, outputs, outcome, impact                      | Inward looking, partial involvement of external stakeholders                                |
| 3   | New public governance             | Fully internal and external  | Outputs, outcome, impact (focus on trust, legitimacy) | Promote external consultations/ dialogue, conflict resolution, establish interactive forums |

Source: (Developed by authors 2017)

*to whom, why, and in respect of what?* This triggers the design of the NMES that produces the type of performance information ideal for the targeted audience and purpose. In Canada, for instance, transparency forms a critical dimension underlying its NMES (Lopez-Acevedo et al. 2012:221).

The philosophy of NMES determines type and level of inclusiveness of stakeholders in the M&E processes. It further determines type of indicators (outputs, outcome, and impact) that may produce PI that is relevant for a particular audience and purpose. NMES are built over some values: are they for the public, donors or both? Which interests do they serve: is it accountability, responsibility, transparency, resource control? Table 3 relates the philosophical orientation of the NMES and resulting context in relation to scope, type of adopted indicators and stakeholders' inclusiveness. While the traditional public administration (in its totality) carried inward focus, the NPM and NPG paradigms opened up the connection between the public administration institutions with the citizens and non-state actors. The philosophical orientation of NMES therefore determines expectations from NMES, design and outputs. For example, NMES developed through donor demands focuses on meeting their expectations, while those influenced by internal demands for results may have a spill-over effect to the citizens (NPG).

Basheka & Byamugisha (2015), as cited in Kimaro (2017); Clarcke & Wood (2001) as cited in Morgan *et al.* (2010:30), connect M&E adoption and growth in Africa with the NPM paradigm. The World Bank assessed the M&E readiness in Ghana in preparation for supporting the public-sector reforms (World Bank 2000:ii), where reforms are also aligned with NPM. Most of the African countries' NMES leapfrogged from bureaucratic inward-looking to the donor-driven NPM philosophies, which created resistance, inadequate ownership, and lack of political support (Kiggundu & Mukandala 2005 as cited in Morgan et al. 2010:27), as well as a slow pace of adoption and growth. In summary, Lahey (2015:4) proposes NMES link to the national vision, accountability, and good governance.

The analysis of the NMES philosophy starts at the vision for M&E as presented in the corresponding regulatory documents, development or reform strategies, and sometimes constitutions. In Namibia, the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4) (NPC 2014) forms part of a series of the country's rolling development plans that started in 1995. The NDPs link and are developed to realise the country's Vision 2030. The NDP4 carries the country to the general NMES vision for the country. It is the first NDP to spell out the foundation for the national M&E system that is aligned to NDPs. NDP4 provides a philosophical orientation of the national M&E system that relates to accountability for results. The NMES vision for Namibia is presented as a desired outcome within NDP4, stated as being "*driven by improved M&E mechanisms as well as improved accountability, supported by*

*appropriate reward/sanction schemes and an entrenched culture of performance management in the public sector, the execution rate of the NDP IV both in terms of timeliness and quality has improved significantly”* (NPC 2014:114). The underlying philosophy of Namibia’s NMES is accountability. The NDP4 connects NMES to the realisation of the country’s developmental vision. It spells out the foundation for the NMES that is aligned to NDPs. Furthermore, the NDP commits the National Planning Commission (NPC) as M&E coordinating institution, therefore giving clarity on national roles and responsibilities for M&E. The roadmap to development by the country through NDPs took 17 years to begin appreciating and acknowledging the importance of having NMES.

South Africa’s NMES seeks to facilitate internal management systems (DPME 2007:4). The NMES design promotes values of accountability, responsiveness, responsibility, with an ultimate goal of pursuit of service excellence (Kimaro 2017). In Rwanda, the NMES is inward and outward looking. Rwanda’s NMES moved from NPM forward looking and partial engagement with stakeholders, to the NPG’s deeper conflict resolution, dialogue and engagement of the same. This is evidenced by the establishment of community forums with the executive and political arm of government in what is called the ‘*imihigo*’ system (Scher 2010 cited in CLEAR 2013:14). The ‘*imihigo*’ system facilitates collective planning, assessment of implementation, reporting and use of performance information (Murray-Zmijewski & Gasana 2010:29).

### ***Inadequate use of performance information***

M&E becomes worthwhile where there is demand for M&E performance information (Lopez-Acevedo *et al.* 2012:27). Literature acknowledges the importance of the use of PI for creating demand for NMES and vice versa (Kusek & Rist 2004:32). Inadequacies on the use of NMES performance information are two-fold, coming from the public service operating environment. The first relates to an enabling environment to generate useful and timely PI. The second factor elevates the government’s willingness to share and use PI. The type of government determines the level of details provided by the M&E systems (Kimaro 2017). African Evaluation Guidelines caution this through guidelines on ‘Political Viability’ and ‘Disclosure of Findings’ that relate to the existence of bottlenecks and limitations in sharing and use of PI in some African countries (Patel 2013:2). Patel adds that the above-mentioned guidelines are worded as a compromise between countries with relatively open government, freedom of press, and generally participative political processes and those which are relatively autocratic or military dictatorships. The political will and commitment towards NMES stands as the first trigger for use of PI.

The second landmark towards use of NMES performance information comes from linkages with countries’ development plans/strategies and budgets. The

World Bank suggested linkages for NMES with public finances and development management through provision of a more evidence-based foundation for policy, budgeting and operational management (World Bank 2004:2). Countries such as Namibia created direct links between NMES and the NDPs (NPC 2014:114). Rwanda's M&E design supports political priorities and national strategies in order to ensure that relevant information is produced and used, as well as to strengthen ownership and sustainability (Hwang 2014:23). Shaffer (2012:39) observes that in Tanzania, initial poverty-reduction monitoring processes were not linked with plans and budgets but rather acted as parallel systems. According to Shaffer, above, when strategies became national documents, the absence of links with plans and budgets jeopardised the validity of the information, thereby leading to a lack of demand for M&E information.

The above paragraph described the relationship between plans and budgets with NMES. It occurs that considerable factors limit use of M&E performance information on the continent. Purpose, design and output of NMES determines the use of PI. On the design of NMES, for example, Olsen (2015:104) states the contribution of allegiance to numerical performance information *vis-à-vis* non-numerical information (the quantitative and qualitative debate). Scholars such as Hebert Simon (1937 & 1938), cited in Olsen (2015:100), stress the importance of numbers in describing PI. As such, the government concentrated on measuring numerical information of service delivery trends such as the number of people receiving services, or the reduction in mortality rates. The above ignored the quality of services delivered to the citizens. Analysis of adoption and growth of NMES shows a skewed allegiance towards quantitative. However, Holvoet & Renard (2007:68) mention growing attention to qualitative performance measurements. Emphasis given by NPGs to attention towards citizens and non-state actors, also measuring performance indicators related to citizen's trust and legitimacy (Morgan & Cook, 2014:5; Lopez-Acevedo *et al.* 2012:88); ties in with the growing demand for and appreciation of qualitative PI. Arguments exist on balancing NMES qualitative and quantitative PI, where Olsen (2015:104) argues for relevance of quantitative PI for politicians and qualitative PI for citizens. The balancing act of quantitative and qualitative promotes the demand and supply of NMES performance information. Use of both types of PI depends on: the level of interaction between government and external stakeholders; organisational culture; human resource and financial capacity; willingness to interpret performance results; and the level of influence of pressure groups, to mention but a few.

The analysis of African NMES concludes that there is scant and intermittent use of PI. In South Africa, the PI of 25 out of 35 national departments lacked compliance with regulatory requirements, and had shortfalls on usefulness, reliability, and sufficiency (PSC, 2011 as cited in Kimaro 2017). Furthermore, Phillips, Goldman, Gasa Akhalwaya & Leon (2014:402) reveal that in 2012, only 35

out of 156 national and provincial departments were using monitoring reports to inform improvements. Another challenge related to use of M&E information by the departments is the fact that they implement, monitor and report on activities other than results, which makes it difficult to translate M&E information into concrete policy and programme actions.

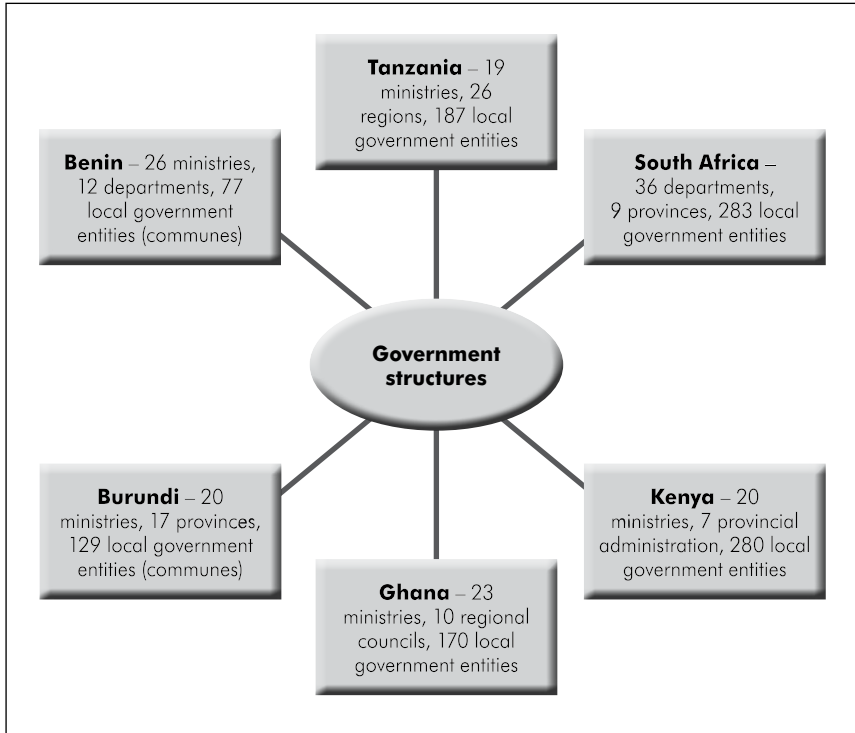
Kimaro (2017) records the existence of an adequate number of regulatory frameworks for stimulating use of PI. The study establishes the existence of: the Tanzanian Public Service Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of 2014; the Medium Term Strategic Planning and Budgeting Manual of 2007; Budget Guidelines of 2015/16 and 2016/17; Local Government Management Checklist of 2012; and sectoral frameworks with planning and reporting requirements, to mention but a few. Local government is instructed to disseminate PI to management for taking necessary actions such as adjusting direction, improving performance, and communicating progress to clients, politicians, regulators, interested parties, and the general public (POPSM 2007:5). The study records scant use of PI, where local government executive and political forums acknowledge good performance and recommend sparingly the sanctioning of poor performance. The findings further revealed skewed orientation towards revenue collection and expenditure as key factors for accountability and generated PI rather than other service delivery factors.

### ***Centralised, top-down M&E adoption and institutionalisation approach***

Ideally, NMES covers both central and local government institutions. Figure 1 indicates the existence of more local than central government institutions. Adoption and growth of NMES takes a top-down centralised approach, that is, building of central government followed by a gradual, slow-paced local government level M&E system. This suggests that more emphasis should be placed on local government M&E capacity to facilitate service delivery improvements and evidence-based policy-making processes at the national level. Despite the existing structures, African countries struggle to align and/or cascade the central government and local government systems for M&E. The NMES adoption strategy has failed to establish a clear wholesale strategy for introducing M&E systems across the government. This includes failing to give clarity on an incremental step-by-step approach to reaching the whole government. The African countries have assumed the same level playing field. As such, NMES has been introduced through a one-size-fits-all system and requirements in both levels of government.

An analysis of the Tanzanian local government M&E system found that the blueprint for the M&E systems in Tanzania's public service originates in the Medium Term Strategic Plan and Budgeting Manual (Kimaro 2017). The manual gives clarity on planning and performance reporting directly linked to their M&E systems. The manual (POPSM 2007:68–69) further describes the types of reports

**Figure 1: Comparison of key institutions in the central and local government**



Source: (CLEAR 2013:8 and internet search)

required from local government which are: *Quarterly Reports* on cumulative targets and expenditures, against the annual plan and budget; *Annual Performance Reports* on targets and outcome monitoring, against the annual plan and budget; and a *3-Year Outcome Evaluation Report* against the Medium Term Strategic Plan objectives and outcomes. All of the above-mentioned reports should be prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Finance, the Prime Minister’s Office, and the parent ministry in charge of local government. The centralised top-down approach affects the sense of obligation of local government to relate, engage and connect with citizens and other stakeholders as they are always pressed by and engrossed with bottom-up accountability.

**Over-engineered and overburdened NMES**

Lopez-Acevedo *et al.* (2012:27–30) describe essentials for NMES which include avoidance of over-engineering of the systems. Programmatic and project-supply-driven M&E defined the onset and development trends of the systems in African

countries (CLEAR 2013:6). In some countries, such as Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia and Uganda, the roadmap towards adoption of NMES trapped the governments into having more than one national level M&E system. Donors' influence and requirements form part of the multiple NMES in Africa. In Uganda, the government coordinated more than 16 separate sector- and subsector-M&E systems (Lopez-Acevedo et al. 2012:30). In 2002, Uganda had 42 donors with 524 active projects and 825 separate agreements with the government, which caused an M&E problem (World Bank 2004:2).

Tanzania created movement towards NMES through parallel nationally coordinated initiatives of the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The study by Kimaro (2017) reveals that the Tanzanian government M&E system carries a large number of indicators and databases. Holvoet & Renard (2007:69) mention that the multi-requirement nature of M&E systems in Africa creates a challenge and a burden to the primary stages of NMES. Too much demand for collecting M&E data shifts attention and focus from service-delivery work (World Bank 2004:2). The multiple M&E systems in African countries pose a threat to growth and the purpose of NMES. Kimaro (2017) and Holvoet & Renard (2007:74) also add challenges related to complexities on data management, coordination, and use of PI.

## **High level office(s) coordination NMES**

Analysis of institutional arrangements of NMES is based between and within structures of public service institutions. This article focuses on NMES coordinating institutions at national level. However, the national level coordinating institution needs support and links with functional institutions' units (in ministries, departments, and sectoral and local government). Lopez-Acevedo *et al.* (2012:27–30), Holvoet & Renard (2007:73), and the World Bank (2000:11; 2004:1) advocate for a well-defined institutional arrangement within the government system that coordinates NMES, preferably at the country's highest-level office. The proposal aims at getting political commitment and high-level national M&E champions, and facilitating public-service institution interlinkages and coordination.

In Africa, most countries with NMES have opted to place the coordinating role with a high-level office. The offices hosting NMES efforts are, for example: the Office of the President (South Africa), and the Office of the Prime Minister (Kenya and Namibia). In extreme cases, African countries have various institutions performing the M&E coordinating role. In Tanzania, institutions with M&E roles include the President's Office-Public Service Management and Good Governance (POPSMGG); formerly known as the President's Office-Public Service Management (POPSM); the President's Office-Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG); the Vice President's Office (VPO); the Prime

Minister's Office (PMO); the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP); and sectoral ministries with their respective M&E frameworks. Differences exist between overseeing government performance and carrying out of a specific M&E function(s). The latter, when carried out by several actors at national or sectoral level, create overlaps and confusion, and cause wastage of resources. Holvoet & Renard (2012:74) argue that multiple M&E systems such as those of Tanzania contribute to complexities in data management and coordination. If African governments continue having parallel M&E systems, challenges of management and utilisation of generated performance information will persist, thereby plaguing the ongoing efforts to strengthen NMES.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The African continent appreciates and acknowledges the importance of NMES. This is evidenced by development evidenced by the existence of efforts to build comprehensive NMES and creation of links with national vision, plans/strategies. However, the levels of adoption and growth across the continent differ between countries. The analysis in this article concludes the existence of a philosophy behind the establishment of NMES. The philosophy determines the purpose, design and results of NMES. The purpose of some NMES in Africa is donor-based and suits particularly the monitoring needs of the same. The vision stated in selected countries mentions accountability as the main purpose of establishing NMES. The system dwells more on quantitative than qualitative information. NMES causes and/or faces the challenge of scant or inadequate use of performance information. Some African countries have highly demanding NMES. The coordination of the systems has been placed under the government's high offices, which shows commitment by some governments in Africa.

The continent's need is to clarify the philosophical inclination of the NMES. A prerequisite for stimulating demand for M&E information centres around capacity building of the supply and demand sides, as well as the inclusion of non-state actors (NSAs) in M&E processes. Africa needs to invest in the M&E associations and academic institution capacities. The governments need to promote performance governance, with interventions spilling over into the public space that engage citizens and non-state actors. The approach for building NMES can be flipped around towards incremental building of NMES from the local government level upward to the national level. This argument is supported by the fact that the LG level institutions outnumber those at central government level, and it is therefore logical to give more emphasis to the lower levels. African governments need to provide incentives for use of NMES performance information as an enforcing and compliance environment by itself cannot support creation of a culture for M&E.



## NOTE

- \* The article is partly based on a doctoral thesis under the supervision of Prof Dawid Fourie. Kimaro, J.R. 2017. *Analysis of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: A Case Study of Tanzania's Local Government*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Accessed from: <http://www.afrea.org/about-us/> on 31 August 2017.
- 2 Information collected from: <http://www.tanes.or.tz>; <http://www.afrea.org>; <http://www.evalmean.org> on 31 August 2017.

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