Session 8: How reinforcing national systems and capacity contribute to improve evaluation quality: Strengthening national evaluation systems and capacities for evaluation SDGs – a joint UNDP and UNICEF initiative

Participants will understand how UN agencies can support national evaluation systems and more specifically what and how have other Asian countries National Evaluation Systems (NES) and National Evaluation Capacities (NEC) priorities identified to be in a position to evaluate progress in the SSDGs.

They will learn from their peers what roles and responsibilities key national stakeholders and development partners can play to strengthen NES/NEC.

Object to increase coverage and quality of country-led evaluations, RO and COs will contribute to strengthen national governments’ evaluation capacity and systems by carrying out in depth reviews.
Session 8: How reinforcing national systems and capacity contribute to improve evaluation quality: Strengthening national evaluation systems and capacities for evaluation

Riccardo Polastro
Regional Adviser, Evaluation
UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office
1. Participants will understand how UN agencies can support national evaluation systems and more specifically what and how have other Asian countries National Evaluation Systems (NES) and National Evaluation Capacities (NEC) priorities identified to be in a position to evaluate progress in the SSDGs.

2. They will learn from their peers what roles and responsibilities key national stakeholders and development partners can play to strengthen NES/NEC.

3. Object to increase coverage and quality of country-led evaluations, RO and COs will contribute to strengthen national governments’ evaluation capacity and systems by carrying out in depth reviews.
Aligning strategies and plans with 2030 Agenda

Setting up institutional arrangements for horizontal/vertical coordination and policy coherence

Integrating 2030 Agenda into budgets

Assessing data availability and capacities of data systems to monitor and evaluate progress, adapting/establishing M&E Systems

From planning to action: prioritizing and sequencing – identifying SDG ‘accelerator interventions’

Financing for sustainable development
Country Case Studies
– ‘Readiness’ for Evaluating Progress towards SDGs

• What **M&E systems are in place** to monitor, review and **evaluate** implementation of 2030 Agenda?

• How do evaluations **inform adjustments to strategies, resource allocation and policies**? Is this changing in light of 2030 Agenda?

• What evaluation **methods/tools** are government/other stakeholders using to evaluate policy choices to **support integrated approaches**?

• What **equity-based evaluation methods/tools** are being used? Could be scaled up to monitor commitment of ‘**leaving no one behind**’?

• **Recommendations** to strengthen national evaluation capacity for the SDGs.
Three Dimensions of Evaluation Systems

- Enabling Environment
- Institutional Capacity
- Individual Capacity
Key Findings

Enabling Environment

1. All seven countries demonstrate strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda and **growing commitment to evaluation**, both for the SDGs and in general.

2. There is an **increase in demand for evaluation from citizens**, as well as in mechanisms facilitating citizen engagement in evaluation processes; progress on corresponding openness of government is mixed but advancing overall.

3. Evaluative **thinking and learning culture** are weak.

4. Dedicated **financial resources for evaluation** are insufficient to support SDGs evaluation needs.

5. **Feedback loops to ensure the use of evaluation results** in support of the 2030 Agenda are weak.
Institutional Capacity

1. Key national evaluation system (NES) institutional structures and mechanisms supporting the 2030 Agenda are in place.

2. Harmonization and coordination of various NES efforts are limited.

3. Institutional capacity to produce high-quality, complete, reliable, and disaggregated data for evaluation for the 2030 Agenda is weak.

4. Progress on promoting equity-focused and gender-responsive (EFGR) practices and evaluations is variable.
Individual Capacity

1. Overall, individual capacity for evaluation for the SDGs is limited and uneven.

2. Opportunities for professional evaluation capacity development vary across and within the case study countries; overall, they are limited but increasing.
**Table 7. Summary of Country-Level Recommendations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Mongolia</th>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>Sri Lanka</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Central agencies take an oversight and leading role of Indonesia’s NES.</td>
<td>i. Strengthen and align the NES with the SDGs and integrate this approach across government, private sector, academia, CSOs/NGOs, and the general public.</td>
<td>i. Clarify the existing confusion between evaluation and other terminologies, at all levels of the government and amongst the civil society and public.</td>
<td>i. Develop a national policy to evaluate the SDGs; endorse legislation creating a system for the evaluation of the SDGs.</td>
<td>i. Further streamline the SDG process to build a stronger foundation for coordinated action and FUR of SDG implementation.</td>
<td>i. Promote understanding of the alignment between the principles and aspirations of the 2030 Agenda, the role of evaluation, and the SEP.</td>
<td>i. Develop a national M&amp;E framework for the SDGs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Develop overarching policies for evaluation.</td>
<td>ii. Establish evaluative policy feedback loops for the SDGs, as part of the national agenda and ministerial objectives, through the SDGs Council.</td>
<td>ii. Strengthen capacity of evaluation professionals.</td>
<td>ii. Create the Evaluation Task Force to lead and coordinate evaluation of the SDGs; create a dedicated program management unit or secretariat.</td>
<td>ii. Improve coherence of national evaluation policies, systems, roles, responsibilities, and resourcing for evaluation.</td>
<td>ii. Develop a stronger policy and strategic framework for evaluation norms and standards.</td>
<td>ii. Establish an overarching principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Develop short- to long-term capacity development plans.</td>
<td>iii. Establish a national policy evaluation or law based on broad consultation among stakeholders.</td>
<td>iii. Establish a unified government body with the status of a ministry that is responsible for integration of the SDGs and the SDV, providing vertical and horizontal coherence of policy planning and evaluation.</td>
<td>iii. Formulate an evaluation agenda and action plan around the SDGs; make evaluation an integral part of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the SDGs.</td>
<td>iii. Develop and operationalize country-specific standards and guidelines for evaluation.</td>
<td>iii. Facilitate wider stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Thailand and evaluation of progress.</td>
<td>iii. Central agencies should take an oversight role and lead NES.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Strengthen data quality assurance of all data producers at national and sub-national levels through (a) policies/regulations that extend the role of the national statistics agency and (b) improved horizontal and vertical coordination.</td>
<td>iv. Establish an evaluation agenda and action plan around the SDGs; make evaluation an integral part of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the SDGs.</td>
<td>iv. Strengthen the institutional base for evaluation through capacity development and collaboration with state and non-state stakeholders.</td>
<td>iv. Strengthen the institutional base for evaluation through capacity development and collaboration with state and non-state stakeholders.</td>
<td>iv. Develop national evaluation capacities and systems to evaluate the SDGs.</td>
<td>iv. Develop short- and long-term evaluation capacity development plans.</td>
<td>iv. Develop short- and long-term evaluation capacity development plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Strengthen feedback loops through the utilization of tested and available social accountability tools.</td>
<td>v. Operationalize the Malaysian Framework on Evaluation and Policy Standards (MyFEPS) principles and standards.</td>
<td>v. Increase the ownership of the SDGs in Mongolia.</td>
<td>v. Introduce the equity-focused and gender-responsive (EFG) evaluation in NES.</td>
<td>v. Further streamline the SDG process to build a stronger foundation for coordinated action and FUR of SDG implementation.</td>
<td>v. Promote understanding of the alignment between the principles and aspirations of the 2030 Agenda, the role of evaluation, and the SEP.</td>
<td>v. Strengthen data quality for SDGs implementation and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Strengthen feedback loops through the utilization of tested and available social accountability tools.</td>
<td>vi. Reflect voices of vulnerable groups in keeping with the &quot;no one left behind&quot; principle.</td>
<td>vi. Develop capacity development strategy; provide general and specialized trainings.</td>
<td>vi. Ensure open and inclusive stakeholder engagement processes.</td>
<td>vi. Develop feedback mechanisms and integrate these into evaluation processes.</td>
<td>vi. Establish another organization to provide training for both public and non-public personnel.</td>
<td>vi. Strengthen feedback mechanisms and the role of non-state actors in keeping with the &quot;no one left behind&quot; principle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. Strengthen institutional accountability, transparency, and participation with platforms for discussion and exchange of ideas and for tracking progress.</td>
<td>vii. At the individual level, promote opportunities for building awareness and capacity on the SDGs in general and evaluation of the SDGs in particular.</td>
<td>vii. Establish another body to ensure the quality of evaluations, coordinate evaluation programs, and integrate findings across government.</td>
<td>viii. At the individual level, promote opportunities for building awareness and capacity on the SDGs in general and evaluation of the SDGs in particular.</td>
<td>viii. At the individual level, promote opportunities for building awareness and capacity on the SDGs in general and evaluation of the SDGs in particular.</td>
<td>viii. At the individual level, promote opportunities for building awareness and capacity on the SDGs in general and evaluation of the SDGs in particular.</td>
<td>viii. At the individual level, promote opportunities for building awareness and capacity on the SDGs in general and evaluation of the SDGs in particular.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1) Develop and implement overarching policies and guidelines for evaluation.

Regardless of the stage of national evaluation policy (NEP) development in the various case study countries, further development of a policy framework and supporting regulations and guidance has the potential to raise the profile of evaluation and produce a more systematic approach across government, defining accountabilities, roles, financial flows, and guidance for execution and follow-up, including in areas such as evaluation budgets, EFGR, and management responses.
2) Strengthen the alignment between the principles and aspirations of the 2030 Agenda and the role and practices of country-led evaluation.

This involves mainstreaming and promoting the vision of integrated development and inclusion – the ‘no one left behind’ principle. There is a particular need to strengthen equity-focused and gender responsive (EFGR) data, guidelines, and capacities, while explicitly integrating gender equality and equity issues into NEPs and systems. Consideration is also needed of how evaluation can help stimulate stakeholder engagement in SDGs follow-up and review processes, as well as provide feedback on development efforts.
3) **Improve national horizontal and vertical harmonization and coordination of NES efforts.** This includes the development of a national monitoring and evaluation plan with coordination across ministries, and in particular coordinated with national statistics systems. In most cases, NES sub-systems are in place and functional. However, these sub-systems often operate in silos. The various components of the NES should be to communicate with each other and operate harmoniously. Oversight and strong leadership from central agencies are greatly needed in this area.

4) **Strengthen institutional capacity to produce and share high-quality, complete, reliable, and disaggregated data to support evaluation for the 2030 Agenda.**
5) **Strengthen feedback loops to better promote the use and integration of evaluation findings supporting the 2030 Agenda.**

The uptake and use of evaluations can be significantly improved. This can be done in part by facilitating wider stakeholder involvement, including the private sector, civil society, and the media, as well as regional and international organizations. **Improved and increased feedback should also be ensured between evaluation, planning, decision making, policy formulation, project appraisal, program management, budget, and resource allocation functions.** Wider dissemination of evaluation findings, including through formats appropriate for high-level officials and the media, should be undertaken.
6) Develop and implement human resource development and training strategies, taking into account specific requirements of the 2030 Agenda to be equity-focused and gender-responsive, as well as tailoring to national needs.

7) Increase dedicated financial resources for evaluation to support SDGs evaluation needs - at least 1% of national development plan budgets be allocated to evaluation.
Next steps

1) Finalize India and Myanmar case studies.
2) Publish the *synthesis report* with emerging NECD good practices.
3) Launch the initiative together with ADB in the Pacific (Fiji and PNG).