National Evaluation Capacities for evidence-based SDGs reporting in Asia: A multi-stakeholder approach
Take Away Message

Participants will learn how national evaluation capacities can lead to the enhancement of capabilities to assess progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level.
Evidence and the SDGs: Embedding evaluation in national plans and policies to foster transformative development

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Innovation occurs when current abilities are not enough to meet the challenges

The post 2015 era calls upon new ways of doing business / innovation/ revision of evaluation approaches and tools including NECD

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s model of flow as related to challenge and ability
Retrieved from:
Evaluation is challenging and have always been

- Big questions
- Short timeframes
- Limited budgets
- Ethical imperatives
- Diverse users and stakeholders
- Political drivers/decisions
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

AGENDA STRUCTURE

DECLARATION
Vision, Shared Principles and Commitments, A Call for Action to Change Our World

Sustainable Development Goals
17 SDGs and 169 Targets

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW
National, Regional and Global

IMPLEMENTATION
Means of Implementation and Global Partnership
Evidence and the SDGs and Agenda 2063

Several studies point to weak evidence base for accelerating achievement of and reporting on the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

While the use of monitoring data has increased since the era of MDG reporting, evidence on what works and does not work in scaling up policies and programmes towards the achievement of the continental and global goals is often not considered.

The use of monitoring data, while important for understanding past trends, needs to be complemented by forward-looking evidence of what works and does not work.

Evidence from evaluations, reviews, research and strategic studies are important for strengthening the relevance and quality of national programmes and reporting towards the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

Evaluations are important because they give clear indications of what works and does not work, and the factors to consider in scaling up policies and programmes. Evaluations are also guided by international norms and standards, and thereby subject to rigorous scrutiny.

But so far, the use of evaluation findings and recommendations are rarely reflected in reports for national, continental and global audiences.

The 8th IIED/ EVALSDGs Briefing Paper: VNR reporting needs evaluation: a call for global guidance and national Action” published in January 2018, analyzed 43 VNRs presented to the HLPF in 2017. Although were also reviewed by EVALSDGS/IIED. Although some good practices were found in terms of recognition of the value of evaluation and using past evaluation evidence (1 case), overall the lack of evidence from evaluation remain a concern.
Evaluation as a means to foster transformative Development

• - VNRs are important tools, rolled out globally, for demonstrating how far countries are progressing towards realising the SDGs;

• - Assumption: VNRs should be informed by evidence including evidence from country-led and other types of evaluations and evaluative studies.

• - However, VNRs have not yet demonstrated clarity, by countries, on what is evaluation and why it is important in SDG reporting.

• 4 years down the line: only one country has completed an evaluation of the SDGs (Finland) and only one (Nigeria) is kicking off the process.

• Evaluation needs to be embedded in national plans and policies, if countries are to demonstrated progress toward achievement of the SDGs. Goals. This is perhaps the most important message to be conveyed.
Some possible challenges for country-driven focus

- Will SDGs be linked to National Plans?
- Coordination of SDG implementation across country agencies
- Coordination of possible measurement and evaluation efforts
- Is there a data development strategy for the country?
- Addressing sub-national and cross-cutting issues – data and capacity issues
- Will evaluation of SDGs be linked to National Systems? OR, Stand-alone?
Some possible challenges for country-driven focus

- Current readiness of national monitoring and evaluation system (NMES)?
- Is there an ‘E’ in M&E?
- Current capacity and experience with evaluation?
- Is there political support for evaluation; i.e. the ‘demand’ side?
- Is there an awareness, and understanding of how evaluation can be used to support country performance?
Key messages:

1. **Evaluation of the SDGs/Agenda 2063 or evaluation and the SDGs/Agenda 2063?**
   - Evaluation of:
     - National plans/ or National sectoral or CROSS-CUTTING strategies
     - Meta- analyses of previous evaluative studies or evaluations to incorporate evidence in country reports
     - Most feasible types of evaluation for a given purpose
     - Joint evaluations as a step leading to country-led evaluations
     - Plan and budget for evaluations

2. **Evaluation is a political and technical exercise (both):** National Evaluation Policies (NEPs) and Systems derive from political decisions and have technical implications. ENGAGEMENT of policy and decision-makers is key.

4. **VNRs to the HLPF is only one piece of the jigsaw – transformative development should be the ultimate aim.**

5. **Support the role of parliamentarians** to hold Governments accountable for the use of evidence in SDGs. Reporting
How to overcome the challenges?

✓ Challenges are political and technical and not only the latter.

✓ The decision to evaluate the SDGs is a political decision with technical implications and not the other way around.

✓ As stakeholders/agents for change, we need to ensure we contribute to trigger the decision to evaluate the SDGs. **This is the Number 1 challenge.**
  ✓ Role of parliamentarians - GPFE
  ✓ Role of civil society
  ✓ Role of the UN and other development partners

✓ Once the political decision has been taken then we the need to think on the technical implications of such a decision becomes a priority.

✓ There are already two countries that are paving the way and various others about to start. Let’s learn from them.

✓ Let’s make sure that in line with the Agenda 2030, work will be done in partnerships.

✓ There are various organizations/networks ready to support:
  ✓ UNICEF
  ✓ GPFE
  ✓ EVALSDGs
  ✓ UNITAR
  ✓ EVALPARTNERS
  ✓ Others
Countries can take a more strategic and systematic approach by simultaneously embedding evaluation of SDGs into national policies and development plans.

If the plans are (supposedly) not aligned with the SDGs, shall we decide not to evaluate?; or

Should the evaluation also shed light about the level of alignment of national plans?