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Collaborative Curriculum Development Project

**COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR
AN AFRICA-WIDE EVALUATION
PRACTICE**

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1. Introduction

Evaluation capacity development remains a critical feature on the African continent, as the strengthening of M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) systems and practice hinges on the capacity of both the demand and supply side to meet the dynamic needs in international development for monitoring systems as well as evaluations. The Collaborative Curriculum Development Project is intended to facilitate the harmonisation of evaluation education offerings by institutions, including particularly institutions of higher learning, in order to support the strengthening of M&E post-graduate training on the continent.

There have been growing calls to professionalise the field to address the challenge of poor quality evaluations and evaluators. The rationale for professionalization is borrowed from professions such as auditing, accounting and the medical field. However, one of the distinct challenges is that evaluation continues to grow and emerge, with new approaches, theories and methods added and implemented by professionals in practice. In addition, indigenous methods and approaches are increasingly being explored, and therefore gaining consensus on a set of general competencies and curriculum in building the necessary skills and capabilities for quality evaluation practice in Africa is an exercise in complexity. Attempts towards developing generally accepted benchmarks and standards to follow in developing M&E ECB programmes are therefore increasingly difficult. However, action needs to be taken to strengthen the practice of M&E and to ensure greater levels of professionalisation, and the challenges therefore need to be overcome. To this effect, this Collaborative Curriculum development project aims to be a contribution to this effort, towards ensuring that the necessary skills and expertise is built towards developing appropriate M&E systems to aid African and international development.

2. Rationale for the Development of the Competency Framework

Internationally, there are a number of competency frameworks developed by a variety of institutions for a diverse range of evaluation professionals. Although these exist, there is a general lack of harmonisation of these competencies, which obscures any certainty of the skills and capabilities that are needed for quality evaluation practice. It hampers the progression of the profession, as institutions involved in evaluation capacity building (ECB) have no generally accepted benchmarks or standards to follow in developing ECB programmes. The curriculum development process is therefore dependent on the personal knowledge and experience of the individuals involved. A harmonised competency framework thus becomes very important not only in informing curriculum development processes, but also in responding to emerging calls for the professionalization of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practice.

3. The development of the Competency Framework

A comprehensive desk-top review of literature around the subject matter was conducted by Task Team members, and lessons were drawn from this literature and combined with members' experience in the field. The ten competency frameworks used as a basis for comparison and discussion (amongst other literature) were as follows:

- American Evaluation Association
- South African Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Competency Framework
- The Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association
- The Australasia Evaluation Society
- The Canadian Evaluation Society
- The European Evaluation Society
- The International Development Evaluation Association

- The Swiss Evaluation Society
- United Kingdom Evaluation Society
- Research on a proposed South African Competency Framework

Engagement involved scrutinising a number of concepts, including, for example, whether “working with ethics” as opposed to “acting ethically” was a competency required, if “leadership” was in itself a competency or was it something implicit in the other six suggested competencies. Another area of contention was whether it was “evaluation” competencies or “monitoring and evaluation” competencies that needed defining.

Professionalism was named as one of the seven core competencies that a monitoring and evaluation ‘competent individual’ should possess, which could be linked to ‘professionalisation’ of the field. However, it was concluded that even though the establishment of these competencies could potentially lead to some sort of credentialing of monitoring and evaluation, although due to the emerging nature of the field (in Africa in particular) this would not be immediately feasible. These issues have clearly not been resolved broadly in the field of M&E, and continues to require broader consultation and action.

4. Purpose and targeted utilisation of the competency framework

a. Main Purpose of the Competency Framework

The harmonised competency framework is primarily aimed at addressing the challenge of coherence and coordination in evaluation education on the African continent. The competency framework presents a basis or point of departure for the development of a competency-based curriculum for the African continent, towards harmonising evaluation education offerings by institutions of higher learning.

The Competencies Task Team resolved that the domain descriptors would be organized according to two qualification levels namely: Postgraduate Diploma and Masters. The competency framework consists of seven domains with descriptors for each qualification level.

b. Targeted utilisation of the Competency Framework

It was resolved that the competency framework is not intended to be used for purposes of credentialing. This harmonised competency framework can be used for:

- Curriculum development and training
- Self-assessment and personal development
- Learning
- Staff development
- Strengthening the evaluation practice
- Mutual recognition of national and regional programmes (e.g. credit transfers, student and staff exchange, and joint programmes)
- Facilitating collaborations and partnerships

The competency framework was crafted to attract a diverse range of M&E and non-M&E professionals in ensuring that the framework is useful to a range of professionals. The target audience was defined to incorporate the following: Consultants, Programme Directors, Projects Coordinators and Managers in Corporates and NGOs, Middle Level Managers across all disciplines in public and private entities.

5. Competency Framework for Africa-wide Evaluation Practice

The competency framework is presented below with domain descriptors for a Postgraduate Diploma and Master’s Degree Programme in M&E. The framework is as follows:

COMPETENCIES		
Competency Domains	Post-Graduate Diploma Level	Master’s Degree Level
1.0 Professional practice: Set of skills and attitudes relating to ethical practice and M&E standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 1.1- Applies M&E standards. • P 1.2 - Acts ethically with honesty and integrity. • P 1.3 - Acts independently and impartial. • P1.4 - Respects all stakeholders. • P 1.5 - Upholds fundamental human rights. • P 1.6 - Considers the general and public welfare. • P 1.7 - Pursues professional networks and self-development to enhance evaluation practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 1.1 - Applies M&E standards. • M 1.2 - Acts ethically with honesty and integrity. • M 1.3 - Acts independently and impartial. • M 1.4 - Respects all stakeholders. • M 1.5 - Upholds fundamental human rights. • M 1.6 - Contributes to the knowledge base. • M 1.7 - Considers the general and public welfare.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 1.8 - Demonstrates self-awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 1.8 - Pursues professional networks and self-development to enhance evaluation practice • M 1.9 - Demonstrates self-awareness
<p>2.0 Systematic inquiry : Knowledge and skills in methods that are essential for collecting valid and reliable data, analysis and reporting for M&E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 2.1 - Understands basic terms of M&E (concepts, theories, assumptions) • P 2.2 - Creates sound and appropriate evaluation questions • P 2.3 - Conducts literature reviews • P 2.4 - Specifies program theory (e.g. theory of change) • P 2.5 - Demonstrates knowledge of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods • P 2.6 - Recognizes basic statistics challenges in M&E • P 2.7 - Assesses and selects an appropriate M&E methods for a defined programme and resource context • P 2.8 - Reports procedures and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 2.1 - Understands basic terms of M&E (concepts, theories, assumptions) • M 2.2 - Creates sound and appropriate evaluation questions • M 2.3 - Specifies program theory (e.g. theory of change) • M 2.4 - Conducts literature reviews • M 2.5 - Demonstrates knowledge of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods • M 2.6 - Demonstrates knowledge of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods • M 2.7 - Applies basic statistical methods and recognize challenges such as confounding bias, selection, statistical power

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 2.9 - Draws conclusions, makes judgment and give recommendations • P 2.10 - Notes M&E strengths and limitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 2.8 - Assesses and selects an appropriate M&E methods for a defined programme and resource context • M 2.9 - Designs and applies basic M&E methods for appropriate contexts • M 2.10 - Critiques M&E designs and their implementation • M 2.11 - Manages data using appropriate technology • M 2.12 - Critically reviews M&E results • M 2.13 - Conducts meta-evaluations • M 2.14 - Reports procedures and results • M 2.15 - Draws conclusions, makes judgment and give recommendations
<p>3.0 Context analysis: Skills exploring factors surrounding an M&E exercise such as unique interests, issues and the programme operating environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 3.1 - Describes programme • P 3.2 - Determines programme evaluability • P 3.3 - Conducts stakeholders' analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 3.1 - Describes programme • M 3.2 - Determines programme evaluability

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 3.4 - Identifies users' informational needs • P 3.5 - Identifies potential barriers to the M&E process • P 3.6 - Identifies possible conflicts and resolutions • P 3.7 - Maps out potential use of M&E results • P 3.8 - Conducts organizational and overall developmental context (social, political, economic, cultural, religious etc.) analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 3.3 - Conducts stakeholders' analysis and manages stakeholders' interests in the M&E process • M 3.4 - Identifies and resolves potential barriers to the M&E process • M 3.5 - Identifies users' informational needs • M 3.6 - Identifies facilitators, possible conflicts and resolutions of the M&E process • M 3.7 - Maps out potential use of M&E results • M 3.8 - Conducts organizational and overall developmental context (social, political, economic, cultural, religious etc.) analysis • M 3.9 - Respects site and client uniqueness • M 3.10 - Remains open to input
<p>4.0 Project management: These competencies focus on the project management skills the evaluator needs to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 4.1 - Demonstrates knowledge of basic concepts of programme management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 4.1 - Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of programme management

<p>effectively negotiate, plan, scope, execute, manage and complete M&E.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● P 4.2 - Writes and/or responds to Request for Proposals (RfPs), Grants, Terms of Reference (ToRs), Scope of Works (SoWs), Aide Memoire, contracts etc. ● P 4.3 - Communicates and negotiates the scope of M&E contract with clients ● P 4.4 - Identifies and manages required resources (such as human, financial, physical and expertise). ● P 4.5 - Demonstrates capacity to use technology as appropriate for M&E ● P 4.6 - Selects and effectively utilises M&E tools that are appropriate and fit for purpose. ● P 4.7 - Coordinates and supervises M&E team members. ● P 4.8 - Identifies risks. ● P 4.9 - Develops budgets and manages costs ● P 4.10 - Uses time effectively for process management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M 4.2 - Writes and/or responds to Request for Proposals (RfPs), Grants, Terms of Reference (ToRs), Scope of Works (SoWs), Aide Memoire, contracts, etc. ● M 4.3 - Communicates and negotiates the scope of M&E contract with clients. ● M 4.4 - Identifies and manages required resources (such as human, financial, physical and expertise). ● M 4.5 - Demonstrates capacity to innovatively use technology as appropriate for M&E. ● M 4.6 - Develops, selects and effectively utilises M&E tools that are appropriate and fit for purpose. ● M 4.7 - Coordinates, trains and supervises M&E team members. ● M 4.8 - Identifies and mitigates risks. ● M 4.9 - Develops budgets and manages costs ● M 4.10 - Uses time effectively
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 4.11 - Employs sound facilitation skills • P 4.12 - Reports on progress, results and closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 4.11 - Employs sound facilitation skills • M 4.12 - Reports on progress, results and closure
<p>5.0 Reflective practice: Refers to M&E practitioner’s consciousness of his or her own professional developmental needs, thereby contributing to the profession and practice of M&E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 5.1 - Develops self-awareness and promotes personal development • P 5.2 - Reflects on practice, including seeking formative feedback from clients, stakeholders and colleagues. • P 5.3 - Seeks opportunity to build competence in M&E by pursuing continuous professional development • P 5.4 - Builds professional relationships by engaging with professional M&E bodies and communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 5.1 - Develops self-awareness and promotes personal development • M 5.2 - Reflects on practice, including seeking formative feedback from clients, stakeholders and colleagues. • M 5.3 - Seeks opportunity to build competence in M&E by pursuing continuous professional development • M 5.4 - Builds professional relationships by engaging with professional M&E bodies/communities.
<p>6.0 Interpersonal competence: This focuses on how evaluators can relate and communicate effectively with clients, consumers and other stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 6.1 - Demonstrates basic use of written, verbal/listening communication skills to diverse audiences , negotiation and conflict resolution skills • P 6.2 - Demonstrates community entry and engagement skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 6.1 - Demonstrates effective use of the following skills , - written and verbal/listening communication to diverse audiences , negotiation skills, conflict resolution • M 6.2 - Demonstrates community entry and engagement skills

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 6.3 - Uses basic ICT tools for M&E process • P 6.4 - Uses basic appropriate facilitation skills • P 6.5 - Addresses issues of Gender and social inclusion • P 6.6 - Demonstrates cross-cultural, diverse and multiple stakeholder engagement skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 6.3 - Uses advanced information, communication and technology tools for M&E process • M 6.4 - Applies advanced facilitation and communication skills including ability to develop M&E and communication framework • M 6.5 - Contributes to profession of M&E theory and practice • M 6.5 - Addresses issues of Gender and social inclusion • M 6.6 - Demonstrates cross-cultural, diverse and multiple stakeholder engagement skills
<p>7.0 Leadership competence: Knowledge, skills and disposition required to guide M&E processes and teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 7.1 - Manages implementation of M&E processes within the organizational eco-system • P 7.2 - Demonstrates sound decision-making skills • P 7.3 - Negotiates for resources allocation to M&E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 7.1 - Integrates the evaluation team and individual's various tasks and activities to collaboratively conduct the evaluation • M 7.2 - Determines the strengths for each individual on the team and maximize them for the success of the evaluation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P 7.4 - Provide guidance and mentorship to others within and external to the organization • P 7.5 - Provide guidance and mentorship to others within and external to the organization • P 7.6 - Motivates stakeholders to commit resources and time • P 7.7 - Promotes partnership and collaborations, team building, team work , capacity development • P 7.8 - Demonstrates understanding of organization and related internal dynamics • P 7.9 - Demonstrates good governance skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M 7.3 - Oversees the work of the evaluation team and individuals on the team • M 7.4 - Provides constructive feedback • M 7.5 - Trains and mentors junior evaluators • M 7.6 - Identifies conflict situations, causes, and problem solving strategies by the people involved • M 7.7 - Identifies potential problem areas, informing the stakeholders of the problem and provide remedial suggestions • M 7.8 - Identifies and decreases the probability and impact of negative events on the evaluation • M 7.9 - Identifies issues dealing with contracts and vendors as soon possible to resolve these issues • M 7.10 - Analyzes and articulates lessons learned and apply them to other projects
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