



TWENDE MBELE

GUIDELINE

Developing Indicators With an Equity Lens in Ghana

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Guideline on indicator development with an equity lens in Ghana

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Introduction

Many African governments have well developed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and indicators for data collection. The purposes of national M&E systems are three-fold: 1) To generate knowledge in order to assess and improve service delivery and government performance; 2) To enhance accountability, specifically around expenditure and results; and 3) To improve decision-making as a result of improved quality of information (Waller, Kasongo, & Kithatu-Kiwekete, 2019).

Learn from experience, increase transparency and accountability, more informed policies and decisions, Goods and service delivery, build partnership and ownership as the core values of M&E (NDPC, 2016).

Indicators are central to the development and implementation of monitoring systems. Depending on how the indicators themselves are developed and tracked, indicators can provide useful information within a monitoring system. Equally, indicators can be an added layer of cumbersome compliance to already overloaded M&E teams. This, along with top-down approaches to the selection of indicators, using indicators that are not fit-for purpose, the expense associated with indicator tracking, low levels of use, and not accounting for complexity, make indicators a controversial piece of monitoring systems.

Equity indicators can be used to support government policy development, guide the effectiveness of current policies and initiatives, and point to areas where new policies and interventions may be needed. When data on these indicators is published it increases transparency and accountability, allowing citizens an inside view into government results. Numerous sectoral tools have been developed that provide frameworks for tracking equity, including to track the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but these are often onerous and lacking sensitivity to the respective contexts.

The danger of indicator efforts is that they may portray too simplified a picture of a complex reality and policy solutions may suffer the same defects. Efforts to change the lives of vulnerable populations requires nuanced tracking and evaluation. For example, in Ghana, the District Assemblies (local government) track 23 core indicators set by the NDPC. This is often at the expense of tracking indicators that are specific to the challenges at the District level. Additionally, in order to meet country-level equity targets defined in National Development Plans, common indicators need to be created and mainstreamed in ways that can demonstrate real change for people.

Purpose and structure of the guideline

The purpose of this guideline is to serve as a tool for indicator development through an equity lens, that should be used alongside existing policies, plans and guidelines in the public sector. This guideline serves as part of a series of guidelines through the Twende Mbele partnership programme that seek to assist government decision makers to strengthen their M&E systems. This guideline is a foundational document that has been designed for Ghana's national M&E system, but can be adapted to different country contexts and used as a platform for discussion and adoption in the national monitoring systems of other Twende Mbele's country-level partners.

Within the context of Ghana, this guideline is intended for indicator development and to assess the extent to which current monitoring frameworks are equitable, by:

- NDPC staff;
- Policy Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Divisions (PPMEDs) staff and
- District Planning Coordinating Units (DPCUs) at the local government level.

Beyond the government of Ghana, this guideline can be used by development partners who are equity-focused, and by academia as a source of training for students.

This guideline is divided into four parts. The first part (Section 1) provides an overview of Ghana's national M&E system. This section anchors the paper for practical implementation. The second part (Section 2) provides an overview of what indicators are, what role they play in the context of national monitoring and

evaluation systems, and some of the challenges associated with indicators. The third part (Section 3) discusses the concept of equity, its determinants, and types of equity. The fourth part (Section 4) brings together the discussion of indicators and equity and proposes four steps to developing indicators through an equity lens.

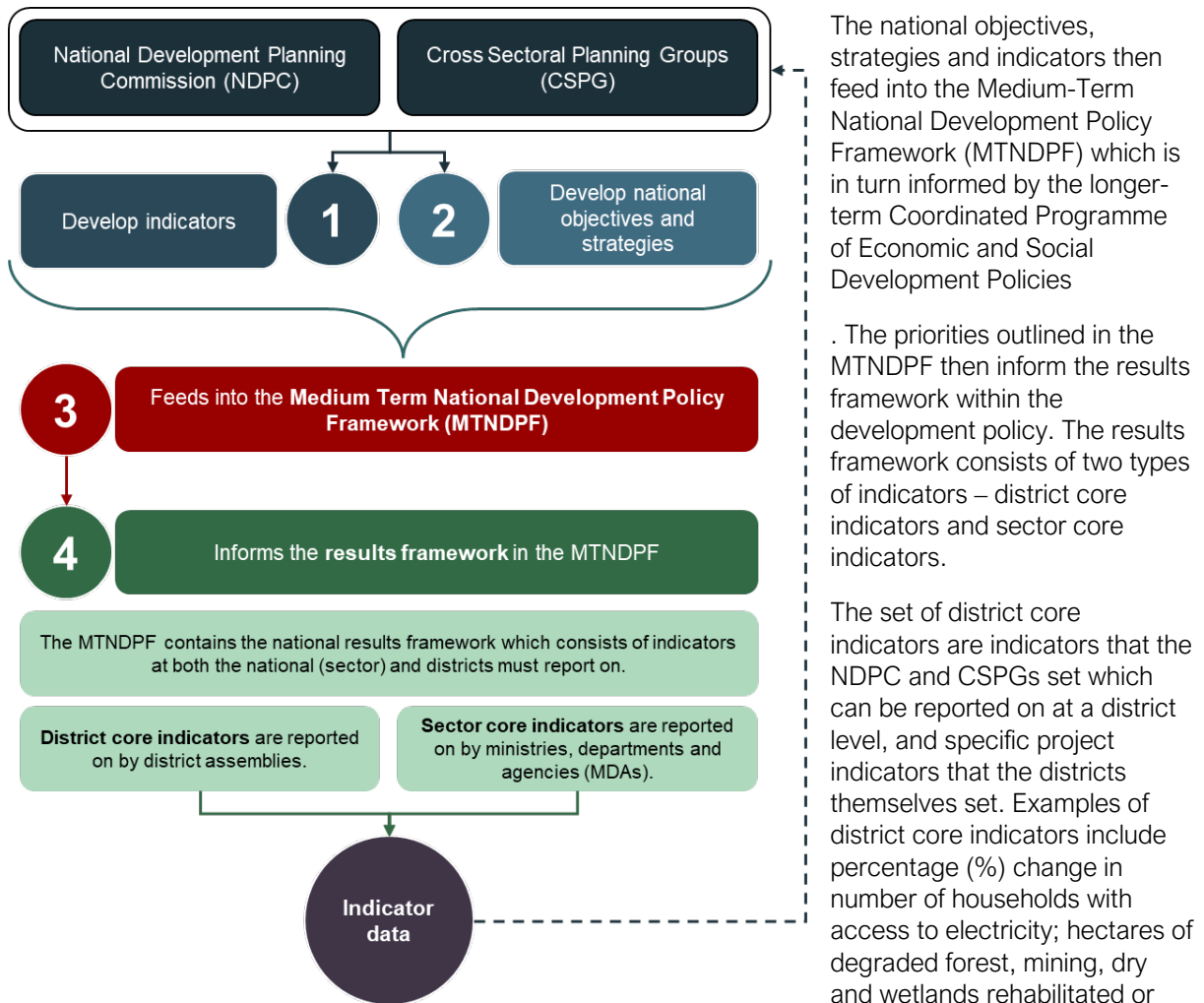
1. Ghana's national M&E system

The National Planning Development Commission (NDPC) and the Cross-Sectoral Planning Groups (CSPG) are central to Ghana development planning and monitoring. The NDPC is the national coordinating body of Ghana's decentralised planning system. The core mandate of the NDPC is "to advise the President of the Republic of Ghana (and Parliament on request) on national development policy and strategy by providing a national development policy framework, preparing and ensuring effective implementation of approved national development plans and to coordinate economic, and social activities country-wide in a manner that will ensure accelerated and sustainable development of the country to promote continuous improvement in the living standards of all Ghanaians" (NDPC, 2021). The NDPC was founded through the NDPC Act (1994) which also provided for the establishment of CSPGs to integrate and coordinate planning and development activities. CSPGs are multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder groups focused on specific areas of development. Members of these groups can include representatives of the NDPC, ministries departments and agencies (MDAs), Parliament, academia, think tanks, expert groups, the private sector, civil society, political parties, media and other development partners. Specifically, the CSPGs:

- Review and make recommendations on policies, strategies, programmes and projects.
- Identify and leverage policy and strategy trade-offs, including synergies and overlaps, and address any conflicts arising.
- Develop indicators, identify baseline data and set targets for monitoring progress in the achievement of national policy objectives.

Figure 1 outlines the structures of Ghana's national M&E system. Within the system, and as outlined above, the NDPC and CSPGs develop the country's national objectives, strategies and indicators.

Figure 1: The structure of Ghana's national M&E system



restored; HIV/AIDS prevalence in the adult population of the district; and gross employment rate in the district (Government of Ghana NDPC).

Sector indicators are national indicators that are reported by the MDAs and are aligned to the country's priority areas, for example, education, health, food and agriculture and economic. For example, education indicators would include literacy rates, teacher-pupil ratios, and national average distance of school from community; health indicators would focus on mortality rates and number of medical facilities; food and agriculture would provide insight into area under crop cultivation and crop productivity rates; and economic on unemployment and poverty rates (Government of Ghana NDPC).

As Figure 1 shows, the data generated from the district assemblies is then fed back into the NDPC and CSPGs for reporting and planning.

2. What are indicators and what role do they play in monitoring systems?

"Indicators are the quantitative and qualitative variables that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of an organisation against the stated outcome" (Kusek & Rist, 2004, p. 65). Based on this definition, indicators:

- Provide a simple and reliable way to measure achievement;
- Reflect the changes connected to an intervention; and

- Help assess performance against an objective.

Indicators therefore provide managers and decision makers, such as the NDPC and CSPGs with key information on the achievements, changes, and performance of their interventions (Kusek & Rist, 2004). When this information is received in a timely manner, it provides the NDPC and CSPGs the opportunity to adapt and course correct where needed. In Ghana, this information, in addition to a series of CSPG engagements and nationwide public consultations, is fed into a situational analysis which is undertaken after the end of a medium-term period and will inform the country next MTNDPF (NDPC, 2016).

In the context of monitoring systems, indicators provide a framework for the monitoring system, and guide the type and frequency of data collected. As outlined above, in Ghana these indicators are aligned to the country's development goals and strategies and policies set out in the MTNDPF, which then informs the results framework in the MTNDPF. Helpfully, the NDPC and CSPG also conduct a midterm evaluation on the utility and feasibility of the existing set of indicators (NDPC, 2016).

Indicator challenges

Indicators are challenging, and become a controversial piece of monitoring systems when they are developed in a way that does not take context and complexity into account, when they are not useful, when they are too complicated or cumbersome for the existing capacity of a team or organisation, when they are seen as a compliance measure, and when they do not sufficiently take different perspectives into account.

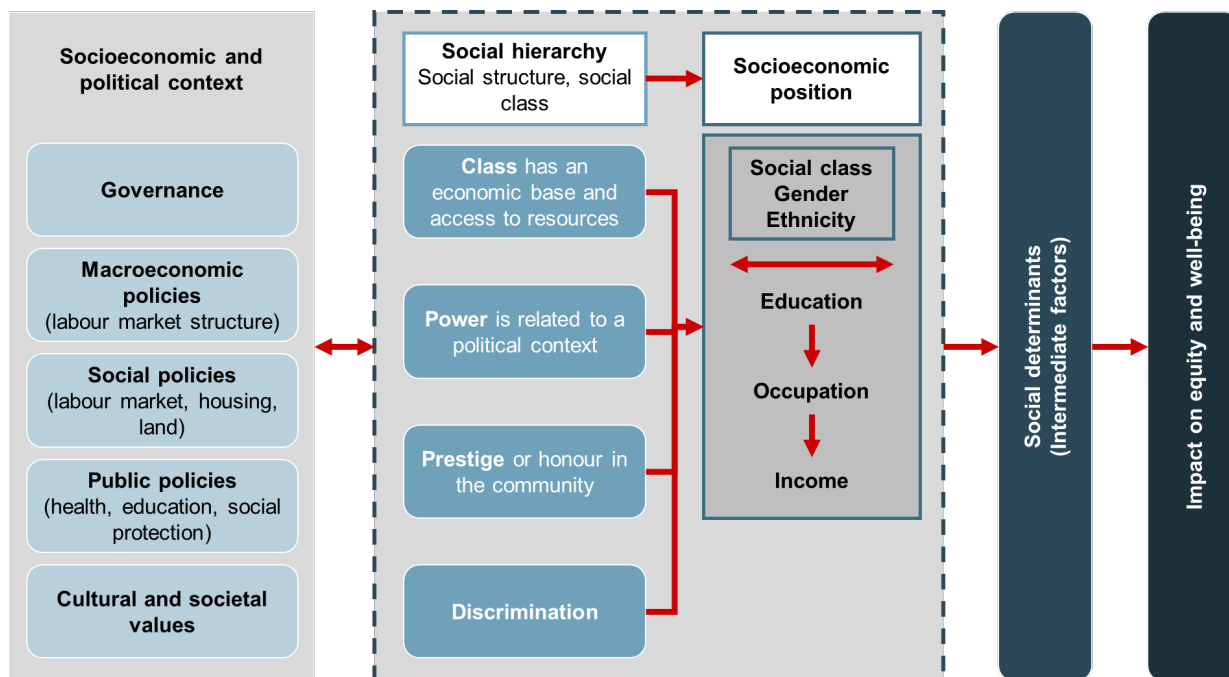
A key criticism of indicators is that they reduce reality to numbers when reality is more complex and nuanced (De Kool & van Buuren, 2004). This is particularly the case in the context of equity which is in itself a complex concept. In some instances, organisations attempt to counter this by adding more indicators which more often than not causes an overload of information and further inhibits usability (De Kool & van Buuren, 2004). This is particularly true in national M&E and planning systems where there are many competing priorities, making prioritisation difficult.

3. What is equity and why should it be reflected in monitoring systems and indicators?

What is equity?

Equity is achieved when there are no “avoidable, unfair or remedial differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically or by other means of stratification” (Zamora, et al., 2018, p. 75). Adding to this definition, and as shown in Figure 2, equity is a factor of socioeconomic and political contexts, social hierarchies, and socioeconomic positions (WHO, 2010). The causes of inequity vary across cultures, countries, and communities. Inequities are often intersectional, and include gender, ethnic, linguistic, minority and religious discrimination; discrimination on the basis of disability status; structural poverty; geographic isolation; and cultural and social norms (Raimondo & Bamberger, 2019).

Figure 2: Structural and social determinants of equity



Source: Adapted from (WHO, 2010)

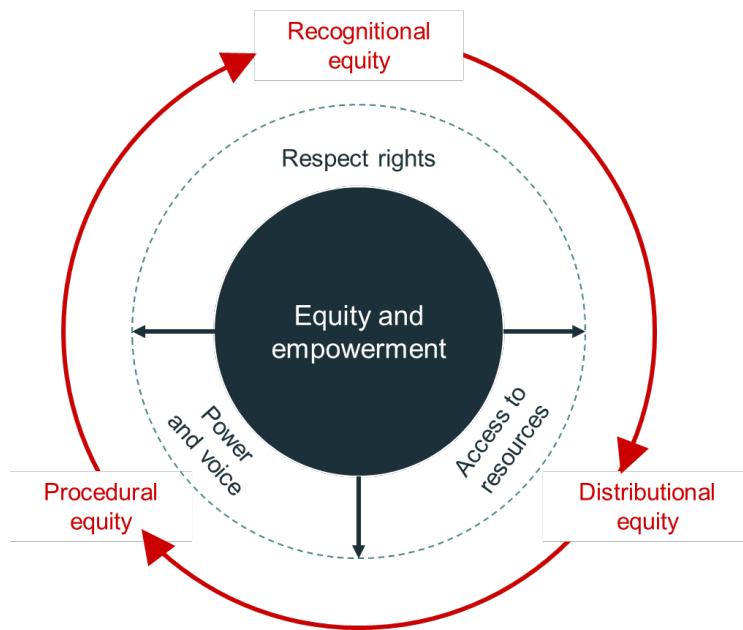
Box 1: Equity in the context of the Government of Ghana

The Government of Ghana recognises the importance which is encapsulated in the 2018 – 2021 MTNDPF which is entitled “An Agenda for Jobs: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All”. Within the MTNDPF there are specific considerations for:

- **The aged** in the context of healthcare, enhancing well-being, and social safety nets;
- **Children** in the context of access to education, social services, and enhancing sports and recreational infrastructure;
- **People with disabilities** in the context of changing construction requirements for access, social protection, and better integration into the economy and the country’s governance;
- **Women** in the context of enhancing equality and empowerment, better integration into the economy, social protection, and better integration into decision-making structures;
- **Youth** in the context of employment, education and skills development, enterprise development, and agriculture and rural development (Government of Ghana NDPC).

In the Human Development Index, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) highlights the relationship between equity and empowerment. Figure 3 shows that equity and empowerment are a function of respecting human rights, access to resources, and power and voice; and that these factors are in turn a function of three types of equity – recognitional, procedural and distributional (UNDP, 2020). Forss and Mara (2017) add contextual equity to the types of equity outlined by UNDP. These types of equities are defined below.

Figure 3: The relationship between equity and empowerment



- **Distributional equity** refers to the “outcomes in the allocation among stakeholders of costs, risks, and benefits resulting from policy or resource management decisions and hence represent primarily (but not exclusively), the economic dimension of equity” (Forss & Marra, 2017, p. 13). A more equitable distribution of resources enhances agency and empowerment (UNDP, 2020).
- **Procedural equity** relates to how decisions are being made (UNDP, 2020). It is the “fairness in the political and managerial processes that allocate resources and resolve disputes. It involves representation, recognition, inclusion, voice, and participation in decision-making” (Forss & Marra, 2017, p. 13).
- **Recognitional equity** is the recognition of the interests of different stakeholders, and respect for their identity, values, and associated rights (UNDP, 2020).
- **Contextual equity** links together distributional and procedural equity by “taking into account the pre-existing conditions under which people engage in in procedures and benefit distributions and which limit or enable their capacity to do both” (Forss & Marra, 2017, p. 13).

“The aim of equity-focused policies is not to eliminate all differences so that everyone has the same level of income, health and education. Rather, the goal is to eliminate the unfair and avoidable circumstances that deprive children [people] of their rights” (Bamberger & Segone, 2011, p. 3). Zamora et al (2018) highlight that equity is a normative concept and can therefore not be accurately measured. Inequality, the observable differences between subgroups within a population, can however be measured and monitored and is therefore an indirect, and more practical way of exploring issues of inequity (Zamora, et al., 2018). It is for this reason that much of literature on equity-informed monitoring systems focuses on measuring equality. Like inequity, inequality can relate to social class, gender, ethnicity, education, occupation and income.

Why is equity important in the context of national M&E systems?

Issues of equity are cross-cutting and increasingly urgent. Economic and environmental shocks exacerbate inequity; intergenerational imbalances are increasing and manifest in the form of youth unemployment and precarious work prospects; and gender differences are persistent in decision-making from the household to institutional level (Forss & Marra, 2017).

As noted in the introduction of this guide, national M&E systems generate knowledge in order to assess or improve service delivery and government performance; enhance accountability; and produce information to improve decision-making (Waller, Kasongo, & Kithatu-Kiwekete, 2019). Multilateral institutions and governments are increasingly focused on issues of equity and simply put, in order to improve equity, governments need knowledge on equity-related issues and the equity status quo; need to hold themselves accountable to equity goals; and need equity data to improve decision making.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2011) outlines five types of equity responses in the context of M&E systems, and the consequences for policies, strategies, and programmes (Table 1). Of these, the least

impactful responses are equity-unequal which perpetuates inequalities, and equity-blind which ignores inequalities. M&E systems that are equity blind do not capture differences in access, and assume neutrality where it does not exist (ILO, 2020).

Monitoring systems should, at least, be equity-sensitive in that they should consider societal norms, roles and relations, and be aware of inequities. More ideally, monitoring systems should be equity specific in that they consider the specific needs of different groups and intentionally target disadvantaged groups; or equity-transformative in that their objective is to promote equality. In light of the work done to promote equity in Ghana's MTNDPF which specifically includes equity considerations for of vulnerable groups which include the aged, children, people with disabilities, women and youth. Within this typology, Ghana falls within the equity-specific to equity-transformative range.

Table 1: Types of equity responses

Equity responsive assessment level	Consequences for policies, strategies, and programmes
Equity-unequal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpetuates inequality by reinforcing unbalanced norms, roles and relations • Privileges one or more groups over others • Often leads to one group enjoying more rights or opportunities than the other
Equity-blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignores societal norms, roles and relations (gender, region, culture etc.) • Very often reinforces identity-based discrimination • Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocation for difference groups / populations • Often constructed based on the principle of being "fair" by treating everyone the same
Equity-sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers societal norms, roles and relations • Does not address inequality generated by unequal norms, roles or relations • Indicates equity awareness, although often no remedial action is developed
Equity-specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers societal norms, roles and relations for different groups and how they affect access to, and control over, resources • Considers the specific needs of different groups • Intentionally targets and benefits a specific group of people to achieve certain policy or programme goals or meet certain needs • Makes it easier for people to fulfil duties that are ascribed to them based on their perceived socio-economic roles
Equity-transformative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers societal norms, roles and relations for different groups and how these affect access to, and control over, resources • Considers the specific needs of different groups • Addresses the causes of inequities • Includes ways to transform harmful social norms, roles and relations • The objective is often to promote equality • Includes strategies to foster progressive changes in power relationships between different groups of people

Source: Adapted from (WHO, 2011)

Mainstreaming equity into M&E systems – the importance of indicators

There are eight steps to mainstreaming equity considerations into M&E systems, as shown in Table 2 (WHO and UNAIDS, 2016). Steps 1 – 4 focus on understanding inequities and potential responses to these inequities. In the context of monitoring systems, indicators are an important element of the toolkit for mainstreaming equity (GIZ, 2014). This is reflected in Steps 5 – 6 of Table 2. Indicators assess equity-related changes, provide evidence of disparities, and monitor the impact of interventions on these disparities (Hochfeld & Bassadien, 2007).

Table 2: Steps to approaching equity-sensitive M&E systems

Question	Step
Understanding inequity dimensions	<p>Step 1: Assess the inequalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do inequities exist in the sector you are focusing on in your country? • Are these inequities consistent across different population subgroups? Are there subgroups that bear a disproportionate burden of the problem?

Question	Step
What is the nature of the inequity underlying the problem?	Step 2: Identify the contributing factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What underlying social norms and/or cultural, economic, and legal factors explain the inequities? • What are the pathways through which these underlying factors shape or influence inequities?
Understanding potential responses What are the right interventions to address inequity as a determinant of the problem in question?	Step 3: Identifying promising interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What interventions have shown to effectively address inequity as an underlying factor to the problem in question? • How should actions or interventions to promote equality be integrated into interventions to address the problem in question?
	Step 4: Determine what is needed to implement interventions effectively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is needed to implement equity interventions? • How can we implement ongoing interventions in a target group in a responsive way?
Monitoring target group-responsive programming Are these interventions being carried out in a way that addresses inequity?	Step 5: Monitor the quality of the target group-responsive programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are programmes taking into account the barriers facing vulnerable groups when accessing the programmes and services? • Are the programmes being delivered in ways that promote equality, rights and choices for beneficiaries?
	Step 6: Monitor the outputs of target group-responsive programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we implementing programmes as planned? • Are they reaching beneficiaries equitably and are they meeting their specific needs?
Evaluating results of target group-responsive programming Are the interventions to address inequity ultimately making a difference in the desired outcomes?	Step 7: Evaluate the outcomes of the target group-responsive programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the interventions improving equality-related outcomes (e.g., power, decision-making, access to and control over resources, support for equitable norms and attitudes)? • Are the interventions improving intended outcomes?
	Step 8: Evaluate the impact of target group-responsive programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have equity-responsive programmes fundamentally improved relevant health outcomes? • Are inequities declining?

Source: Adapted from (WHO and UNAIDS, 2016)

Box 2: Equity indicators in the context of the Government of Ghana

The Government of Ghana has a number of national indicators that are currently in place that monitor various forms of equity, including distributional and procedural equity. Examples of indicators of distributional equity, particularly in terms of economic and distribution of power, include:

- The proportion of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that benefit from some specialised national interventions instituted by the government.
- The proportion of central government transfers to Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs).

Examples of current national indicators of procedural equity specifically related to process fairness, include:

- The percentage of cases settled through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- The proportion of industrial conflicts / disputes settled.

Examples of indicators that relate to inclusion, voice and participation include:

- Share of children with special needs in mainstream education (disaggregated by basic and secondary education levels).
- The proportion of children that have re-entered school after dropping out.
- The proportion of the adolescent population who use designated health corners for reproductive health services and information.

In addition to these, the Government of Ghana also tracks the international voice and accountability, and press freedom indices.

4. How do we develop indicators with an equity lens?

It is important to note that in order for equity considerations to be further prioritised in Ghana's national M&E system, they must be integrated or mainstreamed holistically throughout the system, as highlighted above. Therefore, while Indicators are the focus of this guidance note, and form an important part of the mainstreaming toolkit, they are not the full toolkit which includes understanding inequity and planning for equity through interventions and national M&E systems.

Drawing on the literature and practical experience, this guidance proposes a three-step process to developing indicators with an equity lens (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Steps to developing indicators with an equity lens



STEP 1: Analyse your context

The first step in developing indicators with an equity lens is to understand the context within which you are operating. Equity has many determinants and it is important to have a common understanding of which determinants will add to Ghana's programming, policy-making, and monitoring.

A set of key questions has been developed in order for members of the NDPC, CSPG and broader M&E system to better understand, and analyse their context (Table 3). In Ghana, the CSPG exists as a key guiding authority and is therefore perfectly positioned to facilitate a session on what key inequities and their contexts have currently been identified, and whether there are any additional focus areas that should be included.

Table 3: Exploratory questions to better understand context-specific inequities and their determinants

Exploratory questions
<p>Looking at your MTNDPF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who/which group(s) is being missed? Why is this / are these group(s) being missed? • While answering this question, list the most marginalised, or missing, groups. • What are the needs of these groups? How do these needs differ from the needs of more privileged groups? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is there a focus on procedural equity (representation, inclusion, voice and participation)? Could this be improved? • To what extent is there recognitional equity (interests, identities and values are respected)? Could this be improved? • To what extent is there distributional equity? Could this be improved?
<p>List your key development challenge or priorities which, as outlined in the MTNDPF are economic development; social development; environment; infrastructure and human settlements; and governance, corruption and public accountability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of these challenges? • To what extent do underlying inequities exacerbate these challenges? • To what extent do each of the following inequities exacerbate development challenges? Age, religion, socio-economic status, ethnicity, culture, language, gender and income. • Are there compounding inequities? What are they?

- What are the plans in place to address these inequities? Or what plans need to be put in place for address these inequities?

How does the **national M&E system and its indicators** respond to issues of equity? (Tick the boxes that apply)

Equity-unequal	<input type="checkbox"/> Reinforces unbalanced norms, roles and relations <input type="checkbox"/> Privileges one or more groups over others
Equity-blind	<input type="checkbox"/> Ignores societal norms, roles and relations <input type="checkbox"/> Often reinforces identity-based discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocation for different groups or populations <input type="checkbox"/> Constructed around on the principle of treating everyone in the same way
Equity-sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Considers societal norms, roles and relations <input type="checkbox"/> Does not address inequality, generated by unequal norms, roles or relations <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates equity awareness, but without remedial action
Equity-specific	<input type="checkbox"/> Considers societal norms, roles and relations for different groups and how they affect access to, and control over, resources <input type="checkbox"/> Considers the specific needs of different groups <input type="checkbox"/> Intentionally targets and benefits a specific group of people to achieve certain policy or programme goals or meet certain needs <input type="checkbox"/> Makes it easier for people to fulfil duties that are ascribed to them based on their perceived socio-economic roles
Equity-transformative	<input type="checkbox"/> Considers societal norms, roles and relations for different groups and how these affect access to, and control over, resources <input type="checkbox"/> Considers the specific needs of different groups <input type="checkbox"/> Addresses the causes of inequities <input type="checkbox"/> Includes ways to transform harmful social norms, roles and relations <input type="checkbox"/> The objective is often to promote equality <input type="checkbox"/> Includes strategies to foster progressive changes in power relationships between different groups of people

Sources: (Bamberger & Segone, 2011), (GIZ, 2014), (WHO, 2010), (WHO, 2011), (WHO and UNAIDS, 2016), (Forss & Marra, 2017)

Outcomes of step 1:

Understand context-specific inequities and their determinants. These will be used as the basis for identifying gaps in existing indicators. For example, if the key context-specific inequities are gender related and existing indicators focus on ethnicity related inequities, a clear gap is identified.

Understand the type of national M&E system you have in place. This will sensitise you to gaps in the existing monitoring system and its indicators. For example, if your monitoring system is equity-blind, it is unlikely to provide any insight on inequities in your country's plans, priorities and indicators.

STEP 2: Assess existing indicators through an equity lens and identify equity gaps in existing indicators

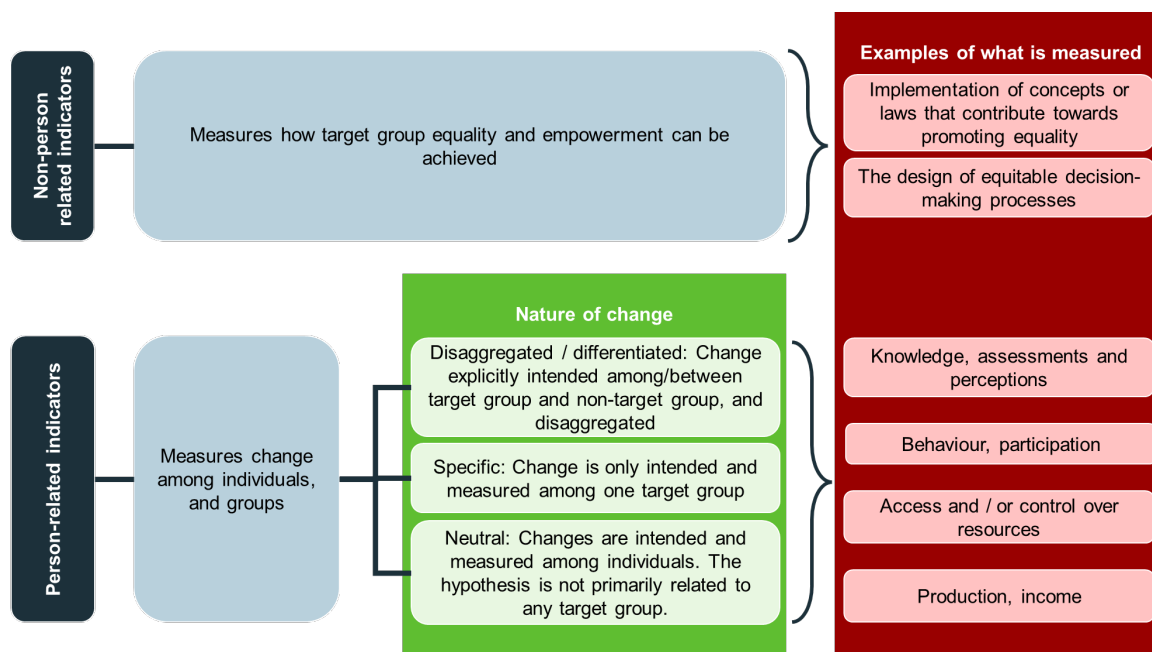
The second step in developing indicators through an equity lens is to assess the indicators in Ghana's current M&E system (GIZ, 2014). The purpose of this step is to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts. Before new indicators are developed, current indicators should be assessed for the extent to which they account for equity, and how easily they can be changed to account for equity.

Table 4 provides a template for assessing indicators. Column 1 lists the indicator. Column 2 asks you to draw on your analysis in Step 1 to establish whether the indicator takes equity into account or not – and furthermore, whether the right components of equity are being considered.

Columns 3 and 4 look at what kind of indicator it is – focusing specifically on a typology developed by GIZ (2014) which looks at equity indicators in the context of whether they are person or non-person-related, and if person-related, the extent to which they are target group-specific, disaggregated, or target group neutral (Figure 4). For example, in the context of gender equity:

- Non-person related indicators would look at the implementation of policies that contribute towards improved gender equality.
- Person related indicators would seek to measure changes in individuals or groups. Within these indicators:
 - Disaggregated indicators would provide information on the performance of all genders, and would allow comparison between groups. *For example: The number of women that are cabinet ministers, as a proportion of the total.*
 - Specific indicators would only measure change amongst women which are, in this example, the target group. *For example: The number of women that have been trained for jobs in the manufacturing sector.*
 - Neutral indicators measure change at an individual level. *For example: Percentage of employees of a national authority confirming that the gender empowerment strategy has improved equality within the national authority.*

Figure 5: Typology of equity indicators



Finally, Column 5 asks if the indicator in question can easily be made more equity-focused. If the answer is yes, the indicator can be amended, and the answer is no, then a new indicator is potentially required.

Based on the analysis conducted in Step 1 and the review of current indicators conducted, you will list the specific identified equity gaps in your current set of indicators.

Table 4: Template for assessing current indicators through an equity lens

<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>	<i>Column 4</i>	<i>Column 5</i>
Indicator	Based on your analysis in Step 1, does the indicator take equity into account?	What kind of indicator is it?	If it is a person-related indicator, which of the following apply?	Can this indicator easily be made more equity-focused?
Insert name of indicator	Yes / No	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-person related indicator <input type="checkbox"/> Person-related indicator	<input type="checkbox"/> The indicator is target-group specific <input type="checkbox"/> The indicator is disaggregated by relevant target groups <input type="checkbox"/> The indicator is target group neutral	Yes / No
Illustrative examples from indicators in Ghana's national M&E system:				
<i>Proportion of adolescent population who use health corners for reproductive health services and promotion – output indicator</i>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-person related indicator <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Person-related indicator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The indicator is target-group specific <input type="checkbox"/> The indicator is disaggregated by relevant target groups <input type="checkbox"/> The indicator is target group neutral	<i>Yes, this indicator could be made more equity focused if it is disaggregated by gender.</i>
<i>Internet penetration rate (Proportion of population using internet expressed as a percentage of total population) – outcome indicator</i>	No	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-person related indicator <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Person-related indicator	<input type="checkbox"/> The indicator is target-group specific <input type="checkbox"/> The indicator is disaggregated by relevant target groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The indicator is target group neutral	<i>Yes, the indicator could be made more equity focused if target group is specific or disaggregated. It could be further disaggregated into the urban and rural population. Or, disaggregated by adult and youth population for richer analysis.</i>

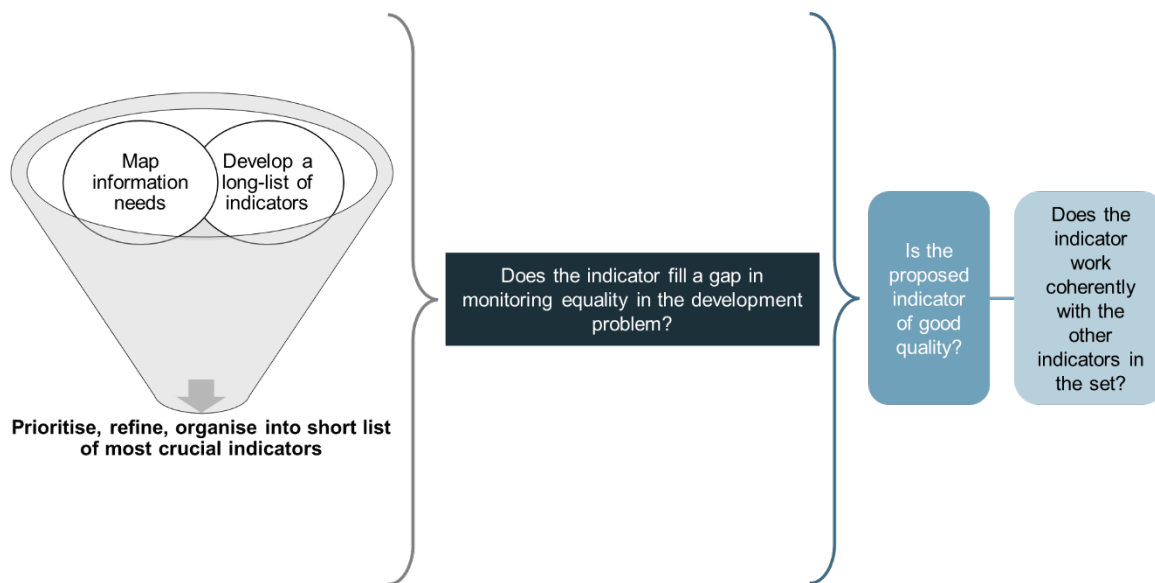
Outcomes of step 2:

A better understanding of the status quo of existing indicators. In the context of scarce resources, it is important to understand what is in place before building something new.

STEP 3: Develop a set of equity-informed indicators

If Step 2 of this process concludes that additional or new equity-informed indicators are required, Figure 6 provides a summary of how to develop this set of equity-informed indicators. This is discussed in more detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Figure 6: Developing equity-informed indicators



Source: Adapted from (WHO and UNAIDS, 2016)

A. *Prioritisation, refinement and organisation*

Once equity-related gaps in indicators have been identified, information needs should be mapped in detail. These will then inform a long-list of new potential indicators, if needed. Through workshopping and discussion which should be facilitated by the NDPC and CSPGs, this long-list should be whittled down to a set of indicators which can be used, will provide an early assessment of the equity of implementation, and will provide a measure of the effectiveness of the intervention for target groups.

B. *Ensure that the indicator(s) adequately fill a gap in monitoring equity*

In assessing the extent to which the short-listed indicators fill a gap in monitoring equity, and drawing on WHO and UNAIDS (2016) the following questions should be answered:

- Which stakeholders need, and would use, the information collected by this indicator?
- How would the information from this indicator be used?
- What effect would this information have on planning and decision-making?
- Is this information available elsewhere, either from other indicators or sources?
- How will you analyse the data? What skills do you have / need?
- What resources are available? Are they sufficient for this indicator?

If these questions can be satisfactorily answered for the proposed indicator, the indicator should be kept in the set. If not, the indicator should either be amended or removed.

C. Enhance the quality of the indicator

Indicator quality should be assessed and enhanced in two ways – first in terms of the quality of the indicator itself, and secondly in terms of ensuring that key equity considerations are addressed.

From an **Indicator quality** perspective, in the field of M&E, indicators are often assessed on the extent to which they are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART); Clear, Relevant, Economic, Adequate, Monitorable (CREAM); or Subjective, Participatory, Interpreted, Cross-checked, Empowering, or Disaggregated (SPICED). While there are other measures, these are the most common (World Bank, 2007). Within these three measures, SMART and CREAM tell us what the indicators should look like, while SPICED gives us additional information on how the indicators should be used and developed (Lennie, Tacchi, Koirala, Willmore, & Skuse, 2011).

From a national government perspective, SMART and CREAM are often more practical to attain than SPICED indicators which require more participation and stakeholder engagement than is necessarily feasible. In the context of Ghana however, the CSPG encourages and ensures stakeholder participation. Broad stakeholder consultation is held when developing the MTNDPF and the subsequent indicators and results framework. The CSPGs takes this a step further by holding consultations to assess the feasibility and usability of existing indicators. Furthermore, at the district level peer review workshops are organised by the district assemblies to provide feedback on district core and sector indicators. The indicator development process, and the indicators developed by the NDPC and the CSPGs are therefore more SPICED in nature because they largely recognise that:

- Informants have unique insights which provide important contextual information about interventions (subjective);
- Indicators should be developed with the people will assess them, these are local staff, beneficiaries and other key stakeholders (participatory);
- When indicators are defined through a process of participation that brings the voice of beneficiaries to the fore, these indicators may not have the same meaning for external stakeholders, and therefore need to be defined and explained (interpreted);
- It is important to compare indicators, and that it is important to use different methods, and different sources (cross-checked);
- Key stakeholders are essential to setting indicators, and their continued involvement provides an opportunity to reflect on changing conditions (empowering); and
- Indicators should be assessed from a range of different groups (disaggregated) (Lennie, Tacchi, Koirala, Willmore, & Skuse, 2011).

Additional practical considerations for developing indicators through an equity lens:

There are a number of **considerations that should be taken into account when developing indicators through an equity lens**. These are:

- **Starting with, but going beyond, representation and participation:** Participation and representation are a step towards equity, but do not necessarily result in it (ILO, 2020). Representation and participation indicators usually look at target group: non-target group ratios and serve as a measure of voice (procedural equity). While this is important, an indicator would be required to measure the influence of the target group in actual decision-making (Jansen van Rensburg & Blaser Mapitsa, 2017).

Using the language of results chains, equity indicators are required at the output / process and outcome level. Process indicators are more easily measured and therefore more commonly used.

These indicators are useful in that they tell us what happened, but they do not tell us anything about the extent to which what has happened has led to any discernible results (Lamhauge, Lanzi, & Agrawala, 2013). For example, a process indicator would tell us how many schools have been built (output level), but not how many girl children are attending the school, or in fact, receiving quality education from the schools (outcomes levels) (Lamhauge, Lanzi, & Agrawala, 2013).

Similar to the argument for using both process and outcome indicators, using quantitative and qualitative indicators give you a fuller picture of an intervention. For example, if the intervention is an employment programme, quantitative indicators can measure how many jobs were created, disaggregated by target group and non-target group. This does not however say anything about the quality of the work experience for the target group, or what worked (or did not) in the programme. Qualitative indicators give a monitoring system explanatory power and can shed light on perceptions of the programme among beneficiaries, unexpected changes and the sustainability of the programme's changes (Sen, Kessler, & Loveridge, 2018).

- **Equity-responsive budgeting:** A good indicator to measure equity is one that looks at whether government spending is disaggregated by target group, and what proportion of spend is on the target group. This is a good measure of real prioritisation (Jansen van Rensburg & Blaser Mapitsa, 2017).

- **Ensure that the indicator works coherently with other indicators in the set**

A set of indicators needs to provide an overall picture of the effectiveness of a policy or programme, and in this context, the equity of the results of the policy or programme. Therefore, an appropriate balance of indicators is needed. There should be no duplication, and the set of indicators should be appropriate to the national context, contain a mix of indicators at different results levels, and contain quantitative and qualitative indicators (UNDP, 2020). Importantly:

“A successful approach to global inequality monitoring must be intuitive enough for widespread adoption, yet maintain technical credibility. Inequality is multidimensional, such that the extent of inequality may vary considerably across different dimensions such as economic status, education, sex, and urban / rural residence ... Hence global monitoring should include complementary dimensions of inequality (such as economic status and urban/rural residence) as well as sex.” (Hosseinoor, et al., 2014, p. 1)

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