

Rapid Evaluations

National Consultative Workshop

Diep-in-die-Berg, Pretoria

05-06 September 2019

Strategic Context for Rapid Evaluations

- 2019 – 2024 MTSF
- combines NDP Five-Year Implementation Plan with revamped Integrated Monitoring System and accountability framework;
 - National Spatial Development Framework and monitored - Implementation Delivery Model at District Municipal level
 - public trust and confidence in local government to increase from 46% to 80% by 2024
- Implementation model (Sukuma Sakhe): national & provincial SPs, APPs, Integrated Planning Framework Bill, to ensure better integration across all levels of Government. Project Monitoring at District Municipalities
- Public- Private- Growth Initiative (PPGI) to promote economic growth and create jobs
- Bridge gap between government and people - Izimbizo Programmes (linked to Performance Agreements for Ministers), etc.

Strategic Context for Rapid Evaluations

- Integrated Monitoring Framework, biannual presidential briefings – incl. Frontline Service Monitoring, Citizen Based Monitoring, Community Based Monitoring & more effective Presidential Hotline, area-based SD mapping
- Reconfiguration of Government

2019-2024 Medium-term 7 APEX Priorities

Framework for implementing POA

1. Economic transformation and job creation
2. Education, skills and health
3. Consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services
4. Spatial integration, human settlements and local government
5. Social cohesion and safe communities
6. A capable, ethical and developmental state
7. A better Africa and World

All programmes & policies across all departments + agencies directed in pursuit of these overarching tasks

Evaluations

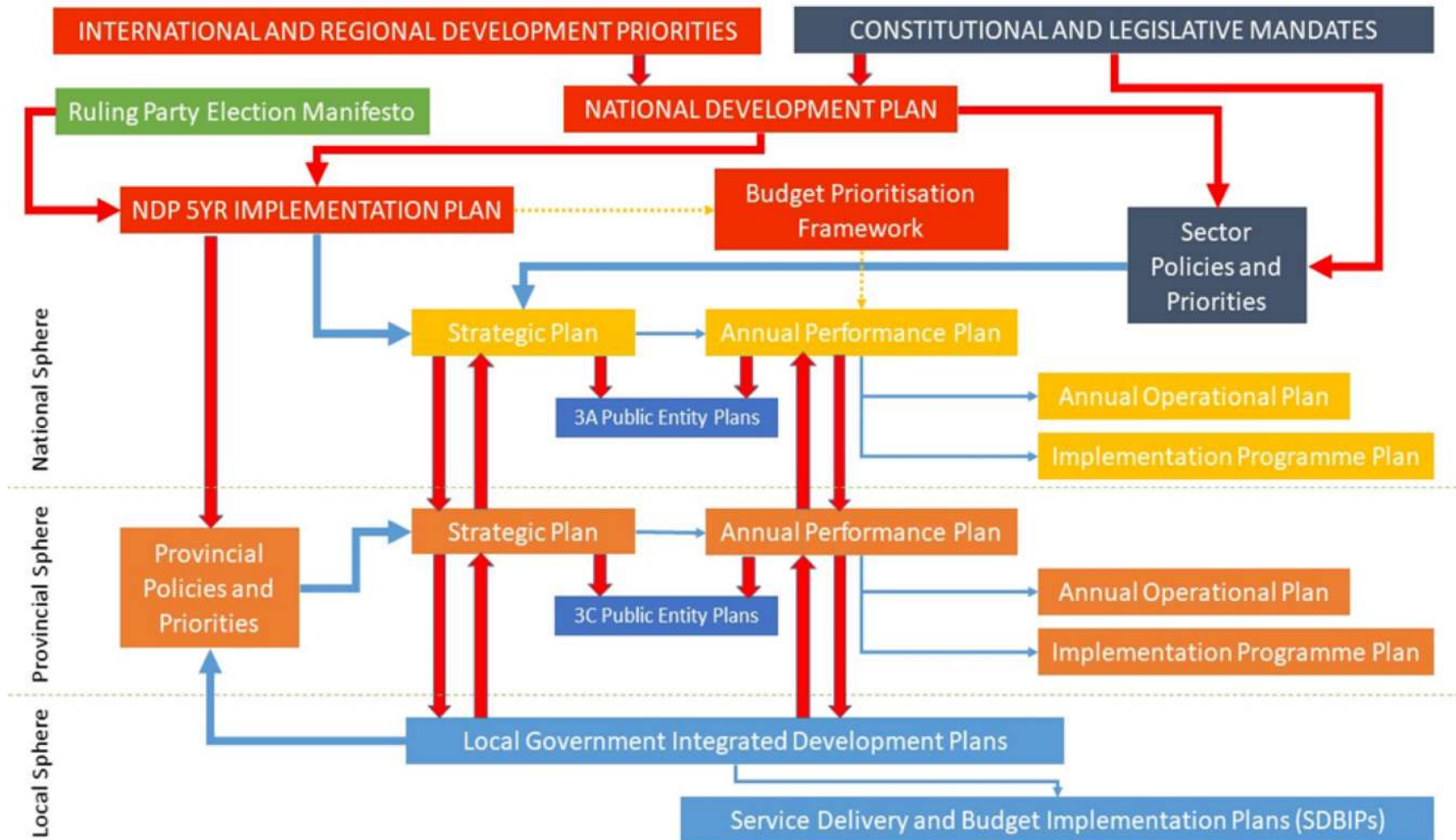
- All poor or non-performing government programmes aligned to priorities set in MTSF 2019/2024 to be evaluated
- NEP for next 3 yrs, will include short-term Rapid Evaluations PLUS bigger 12-18 months' evaluations
- Partner with Ministerial Sectoral Reviews
- Knowledge Repository on evidence generated on 7 priority areas
- Build capacity planning, monitoring and evaluation methodologies – partnerships with tertiary institutions

From Planning to Evaluation



- National Development Plan Vision 2030
 - Incl. *eradicate absolute poverty, reduce unemployment rate to 6%, significantly reducing inequality*
 - dismantle unchanged structural economic elements: spatial injustice and landlessness, underdevelopment of small business sector, to allow greater participation in economy.
- Government planning
 - Strategic Plans
 - Annual Performance Plans
 - Operational Plans
- Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans

Alignment of national, provincial and local government planning



Planning and national development agenda

- National Development Plan
- NDP Five Year Implementation Plan
- Medium-Term Strategic Framework
- Spatial Development Plans
- Budget Prioritisation Framework (DPME, n.d.b)

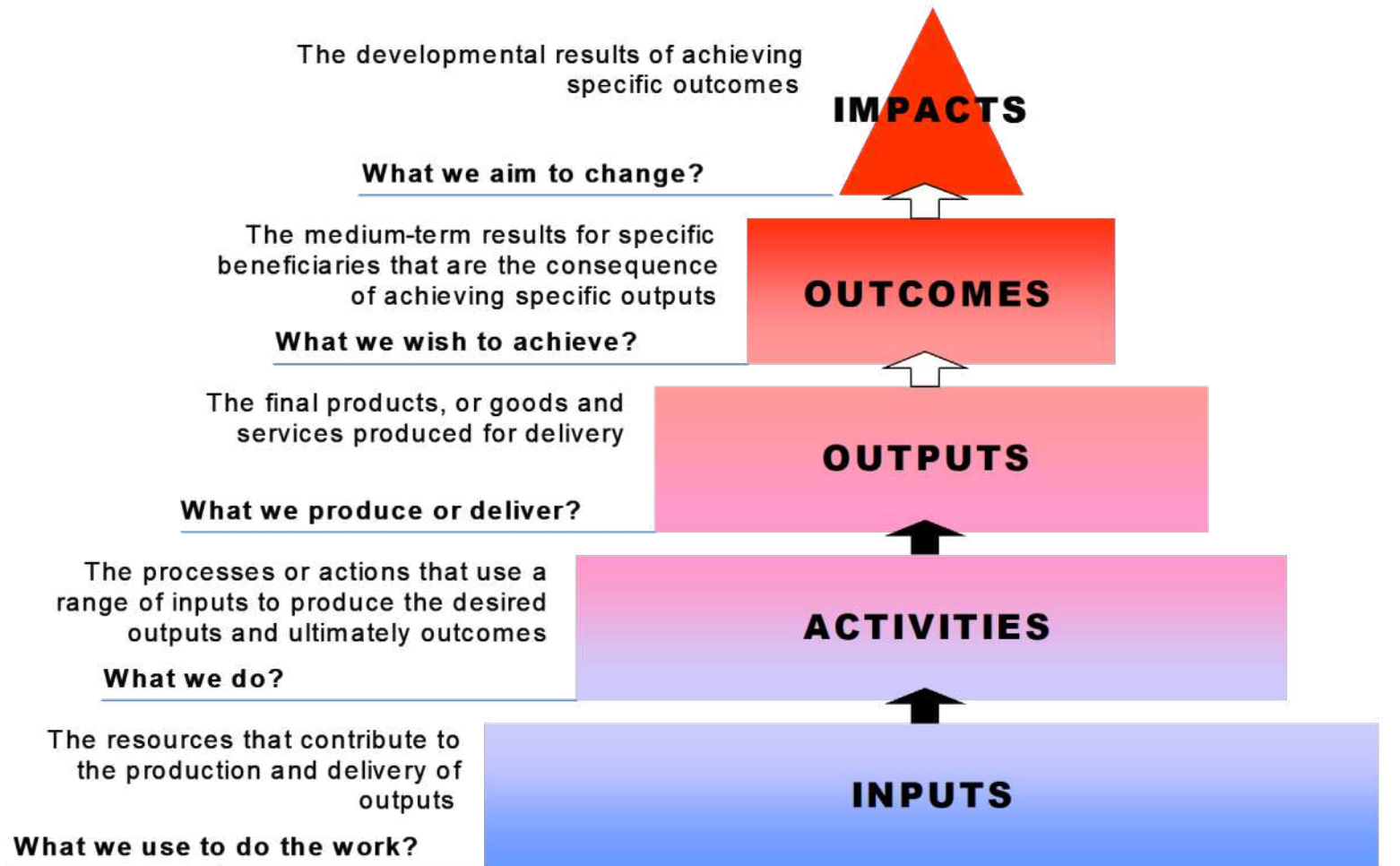
Medium- and Short-term Plans

- Strategic Plan
 - 5-year plan related to the NDP 2030
- Annual Performance Plan
 - Aligned with the Strategic Plan and focus on outputs and targets
- Annual Operational Plan
 - Aligned to the APP and focus on activities and resources
- Integrated Development Plan
 - 5-year Local government plan
- Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan
 - Local government plan

Government's Results Approach

- **Accountability.** Government institutions are accountable to the citizens through Parliament, for delivering on national development priorities.
- **Ownership** of national priorities, programmes and projects reflected in the National Development Plan should be assumed by each government institution, to ensure the achievement of intended results.
- **Inclusiveness** requires engagement of stakeholders such as, government institutions at national, provincial and local levels, civil society organisations and communities, for the achievement of results and to improve performance.

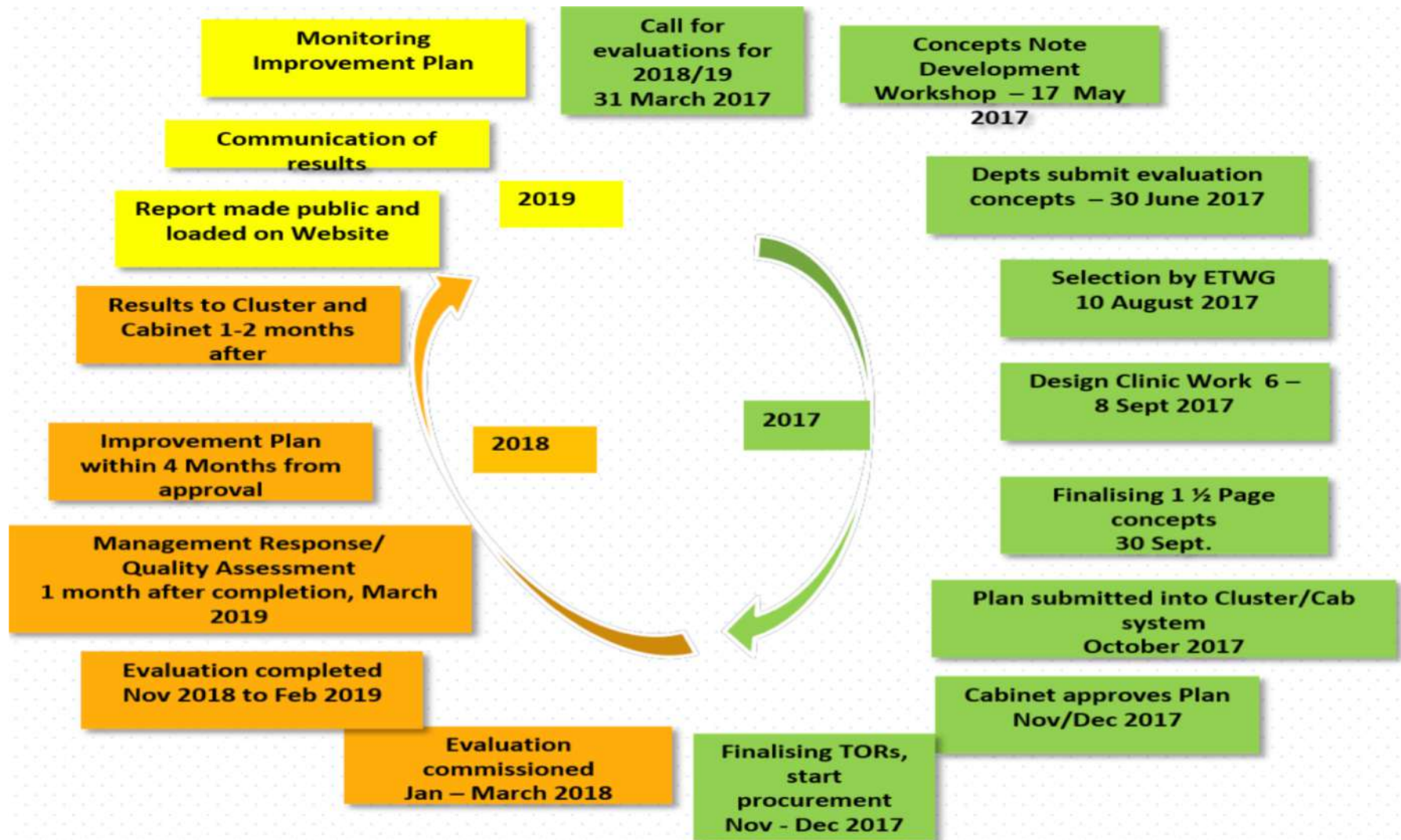
Government's Results Approach



DPME's current National Evaluation System

- GWM&ES (2007)
- NEPF (2011)
- First NEP 2012
- Purpose for evaluations: (1) Improving policy or programme **performance** - providing feedback to managers. (2) Improving **accountability** for where public spending is going, & difference it is making. (3) Improving **decision-making**, eg. what is working or not working. (4) Increasing **knowledge** about what works/what does not, in public policy, plan, programme, or project.

DPME's current evaluation delivery model



Key considerations leading to rapid evaluations

- Current strengths and weaknesses of NES
- Key elements of NEPF, and system performance
- Value for money
- Cost and time
- Credibility of evidence
- Use of evaluations (improvement plans)
- New approach 2019/20-2024/25, priorities

*Why
rapid
evaluation?*

Concept of Rapid Evaluation?

**rapid
assessment**

- “...intensive, team-based qualitative inquiry using triangulation, iterative data analysis, and additional data collection to quickly develop a preliminary understanding of a situation from *the insider's perspective*”
- Beebe J (2012) Chapter Title: "Rapid Assessment Process" In: **The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods**. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks. Sourced from: <http://methods.sagepub.com/reference/sage-encyc-qualitative-research-methods/n365.xml>

**participatory
rural
appraisal**

**rapid
rural
appraisal**

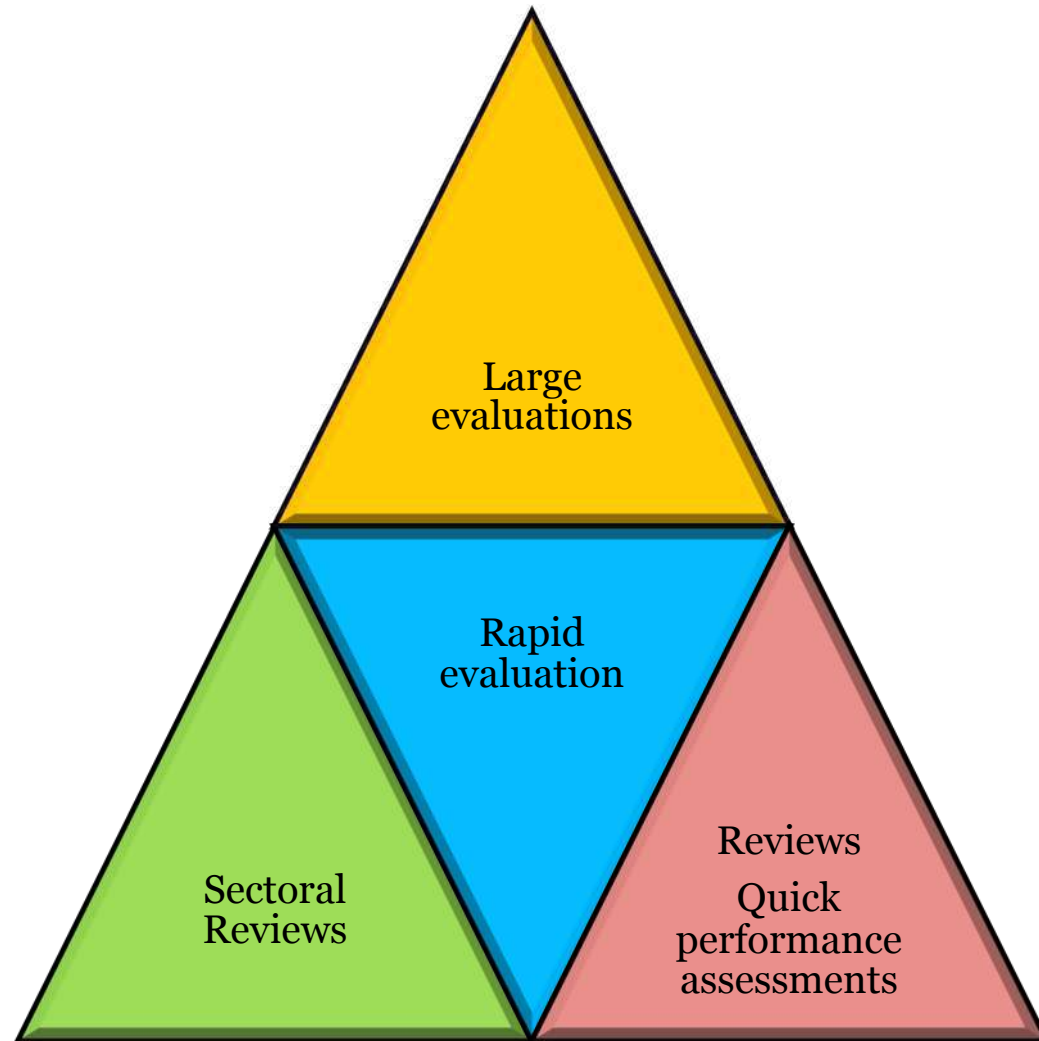
rapid appraisal



Overlap with Internal Evaluation?

- “that done by both what we know as “programme/policy staff”, as well as “special evaluation staff”
- Volkov (2011:26) *Beyond Being an Evaluator: The Multiplicity of Roles of the Internal Evaluator*. Chapter in: Volkov & Baron (Eds) (2011)
- *internal evaluation* exists to support the organizational and programme management decision-making process. *Internal evaluation* is associated with “using qualified experienced staff members “to assess their organization’s policies, programs, or problems...””, “providing information and influencing behaviour” and “a staff function informing operations, management, and/or strategic planning”.
- Duffy (1994), Love (1983b) and (1991), Patton (2008), Sonnichsen (2000), Torres (1991) cited in: Volkov (2011:26)

Location of Rapid Evaluation in NES



Shape & Form: current rapid evaluations

- Several methods: *real-time evaluation (RTE), rapid-feedback evaluation (RFE), rapid assessment (RA), rapid rural appraisal (RRA), participatory rural appraisal (PRA)* >> *rapid evaluation and assessment methods (REAM)*
- *Key issue: speed vs. credibility*
- Rapid evaluation methods involve testing precise, shorter-term questions that focus on various aspects of program functioning and/or performance.



Real-time evaluations (UNHCR)

- Developed 1990s - response to many humanitarian crises
- To evaluate effectiveness, impact of crises interventions, and ensuring that findings were used
- Mixed-methods approach: semi-structured interviews, site visits, limited number of in-depth interviews, focus groups, reviews of secondary documentation
- Questions eg.s: (a) did refugees have access to life-sustaining assistance? (b) Did UNHCR's response mode shift from reactive to proactive planning? (c) Were effective refugee protections in place? (d) Was an effective management structure established?, (e) Had viable implementation arrangements been made?

Rapid-Feedback Evaluation (Joseph Wholey)

- Created to provide program managers with quick answers to support program decisions, recognizing that while longer-term evaluations might yield important information, results might come too late to be of use
- “Rough approximations delivered at right time better than precise results delivered too late for decision makers to act on them”
- Use of existing program data to make a quick, preliminary assessment of program performance

Rapid-Feedback Evaluation (Joseph Wholey)

- “Rough approximations delivered at right time better than precise results delivered too late for decision makers to act on them”
- 1. Collection of existing data on program performance
- 2. Collection of new data on programme performance (typically limited to brief interviews with programme staff)
- 3. Preliminary evaluation
- 4. Development and analysis of alternative designs for full-scale evaluation
- 5. Assisting policy and management decisions.

Rapid Evaluation Method (WHO)

- Developed to assess quality of health care services, identifying operational problems, and assisting managers in taking corrective action
- Selection of mixed methods
- Quantitative: surveys, use of existing data sets
- Qualitative: key informant interviews, focus groups, observations, record reviews, mapping of areas affected by a given problem
- Quick, accurate, economical method of evaluation of facilities, client satisfaction” - concerns about practicality & cost effectiveness of health surveys

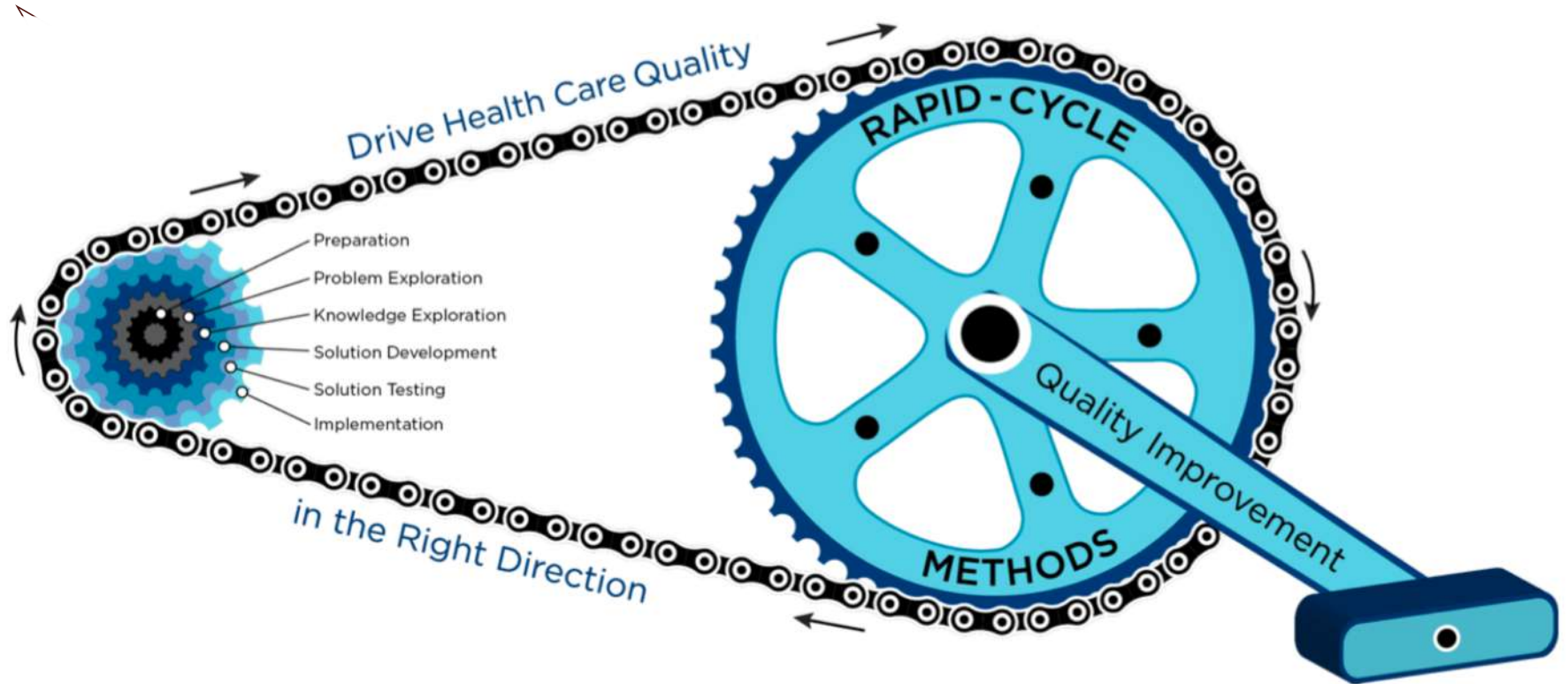
Rapid Evaluation Method (WHO)

- Data collected eg: clinic exit-interviews with patients; health staff interviews; observations of staff task performance; community and staff focus group discussions; review of clinic records; checking of facilities, equipment, and supplies; household interviews.
1. Evaluation, assessment, or appraisal duration - few weeks to a few months
 2. Participation: Representatives of affected stakeholder groups involved in planning, implementation of rapid evaluation
 3. Team based: work collaboratively on all aspects of research process - planning, data collection to interpretation of findings, presentation of results
 4. Iterative: Data analyzed while collected, preliminary findings used to guide decisions about additional data collection. Continues until theoretical *saturation* achieved

Rapid Impact Evaluation

- Peek et al (2014) Five Rs for health service delivery research: Relevance, Rapid and recursive, Rigorous, Reports on resources, Replicable
- Research is initiated early in implementation cycle, used to make early changes raised by early findings. Iteration.
- a process by which practical problems are identified and addressed using analysis methods that are incremental and contextually informed.
- Six phases used: preparation, problem exploration, knowledge exploration, solution development, solution testing, implementation and dissemination

Rapid Impact Evaluation



Literature conclusions

- Rapid evaluation approaches tend to be “internally focused” – “thoughts, behaviours of actors within projects, programs, and systems”, even though policy/programme intervention effectiveness may be a focus. ~ conclusions regarding performance drawn mainly from internal data sources, compared with large scale survey that may be used in a big external evaluation
- Quality of results: “different from those produced by longer-term fieldwork”
- *Methods*: rapid assessment methods, emphasis on qualitative understanding (interpretation)
- Data Collection Check-List, degree of confidence, data triangulation
- Heavy iteration, additional data collection
- Applicability: flexible, real-time, alongside larger evaluations
- No unique *rapid evaluation* methodology: however, a specific use of traditional research and evaluation methods and instruments

DPME draft Guideline: Rapid Evaluation

Rapid evaluations typically have the following main attributes:

- Intensity – focused evaluation within short compressed period of time
- Time – reduced project timelines in comparison with full scale evaluations
- Teamwork – typically two to four team members
- Appropriate skills – evaluation and policy/programme expertise
- Smaller budgets
- Evaluation design flexibility - trade-off between research rigour and usability
- Often *internal* – relying on qualified and experienced officials
- Mixed evaluation research methods – strong use qualitative, quantitative data
- Planning – tightly planned over 4 weeks to 4 months; rapid impact evaluations possible in 12 months
- Evaluation management – evaluation steering committee, supported by TWG

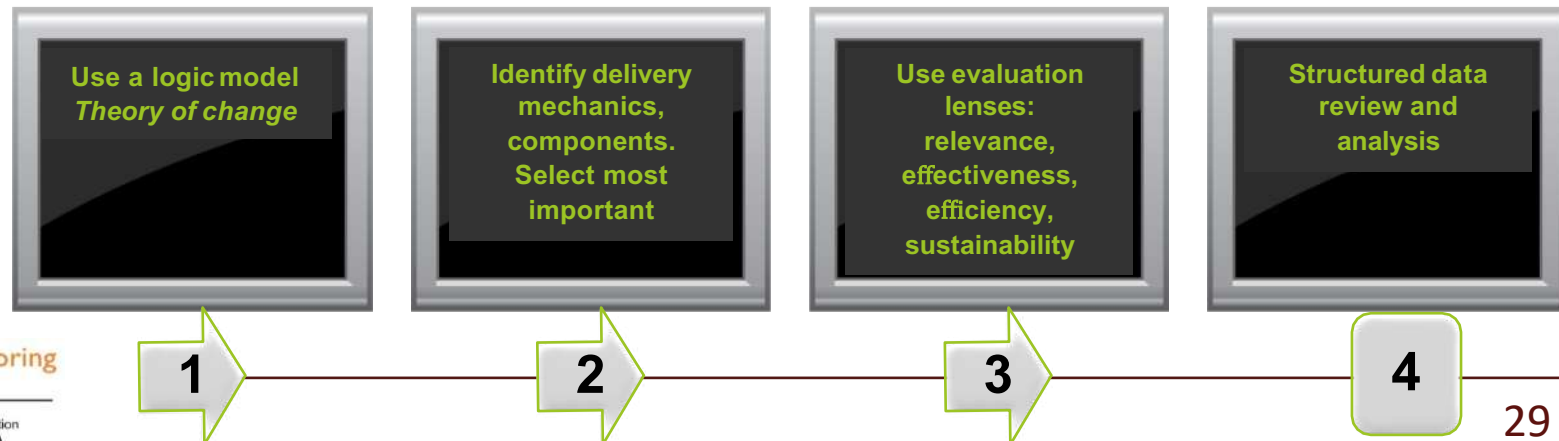
Rapid Evaluation Guideline

➤ 11 key considerations

Purpose quickly assess policy or programme, and establish main performance data, with recommendations for improvement	Sphere national, provincial or municipal	Scope usually smaller, more limited in comparison with full-scale evaluations. Period of review may cover 3 years	Key Evaluation Questions Flexible 1)Main results? 2)Strengths, weaknesses? 3)Gaps, and recommendations	Design trade-off between research rigour and usability. More limited evaluation	Method typical for other evaluations in NES	Data required Good secondary data ready for analysis. Data preparation essential. Build RE into plans	Team Policy, programme, evaluations experts. Select mode: internal, external, hybrid	Stakeholders critical to include policy owner(s)/custodian(s).	Budget Cost significantly less than full-scale evaluations	Rapid Evaluation Management Structures as per larger evaluation. Strong support from TWG
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Rapid Evaluation Guideline

- To make a difference, a rapid evaluation needs to be both strategic and of reasonably high quality
- If many high quality evaluations produced, but arrive too late to be useful/are inaccessible, risk is we are wasting time, energy, funding
- Sound rapid evaluation design should include:

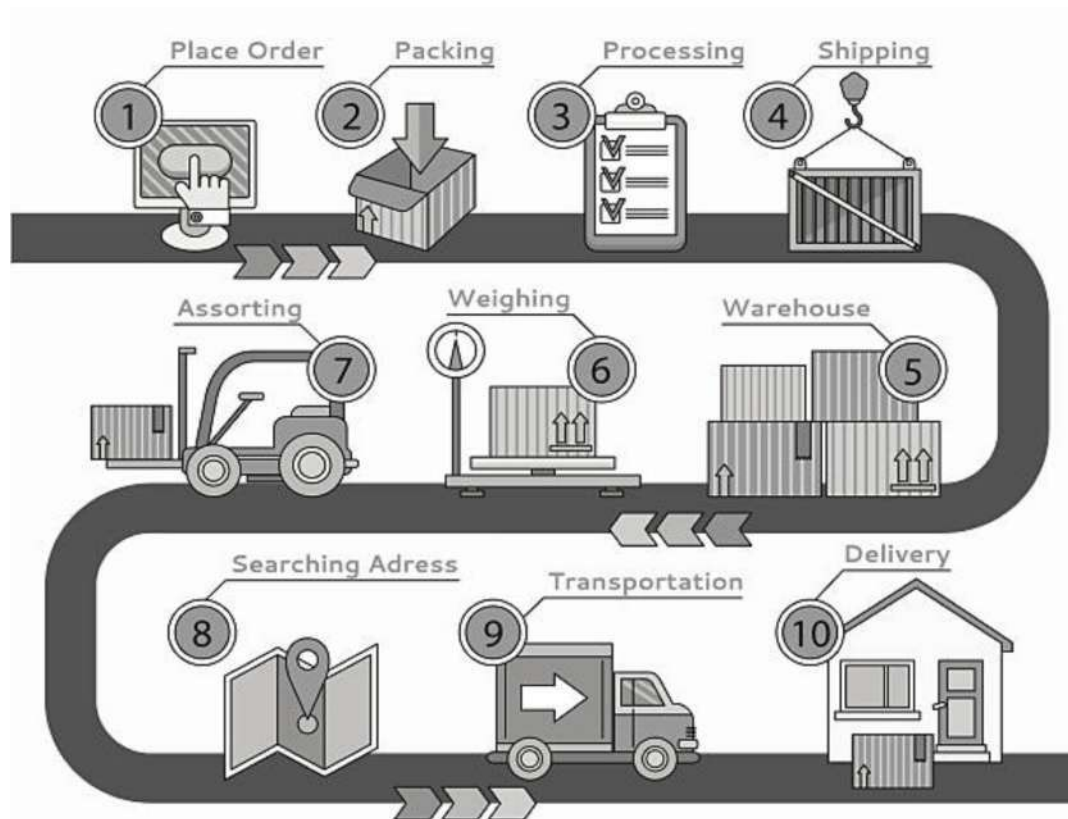


Draft Rapid Evaluation Guideline

- Rapid evaluation - trade-off of research rigour & usefulness
- Once designed & planned, need to ensure systems & processes in place to deliver it. Embedded in NES, but no obligation to present to Cluster & Cabinet
- For rapid turnaround, a compressed evaluation relies on 4 key elements: (1) good logic model, (2) identified delivery mechanics & components, (3) use of standard evaluation lenses, (4) use of logic model & delivery model to analyse performance data.
- Choose from basic questions on implementation: (1) were initial objectives clear? Still relevant? (2) What were the results? (outputs, immediate outcomes) (3) Main strengths and weaknesses? (4) Were right delivery systems and processes in place? (5) Did implementation happen on time, and benefit targets? (6) Was budget used optimally? (7) main implementation lessons?

Draft Rapid Evaluation Guideline

- Develop TOC, to develop framework to assess prog. or policy results
- For delivery: map the policy/programme value chain (not TOC), and assess outputs (performance), and interpret outcomes achieved.



Evaluation Quality (definitions)

Definition:

- “Evaluations are expected to use methods that generate the highest quality and most credible evidence that corresponds to the questions being asked, taking into consideration time, budget and other practical considerations”

USAID Project Starter re: performance evaluations
<http://usaidprojectstarter.org/content/evaluation-quality-standards>

Evaluation Quality (definitions)

“An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making process of organisations and stakeholders”

(UNFPA 2017) <https://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/evaluation-quality-assurance-and-assessment-tools-and-guidance>

Measurement Parameters of Rapid Evaluation Quality

1. Did it deliver value? What actual evidence was produced?
2. How was rapid evaluation actually used?
3. Did rapid evaluation evidence arrive on time?
4. Was rapid evaluation evidence credible?
5. What type of rapid evaluation outputs work for different audiences? And how can we improve future rapid evaluations?