



USE OF EVALUATION EVIDENCE IN FIVE AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Prior to this study there was little systematic empirical information on M&E culture within the public sector in Africa. Despite evidence suggesting that M&E within the public sector is gaining political recognition, its ability to influence the efficacy of policies, projects, programmes and interventions remains unclear.

The survey assessed if the Ministries, Departments and Agencies in the four countries, have the required capacity to conduct and manage evaluations; whether Public Sector evaluations are normally conducted by outsiders; whether there are adequate mechanisms for implementing evaluation recommendations (e.g. management improvement plan); and whether managers have the skills set to understand and use evaluation recommendations.

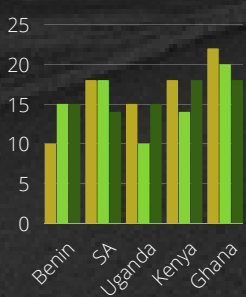
THE USE EVALUATION EVIDENCE

The whole point of generating evidence is so that it is used to support policy-making and implementation. On average 63% of respondents felt that M&E evidence was always/often used. A particularly important use is to inform planning and the budget which is described below.



WHEN IS EVALUATION EVIDENCE USED?

Only rarely is evaluation evidence used through the programme cycle except for in Ghana 82%; in the majority of cases, the evidence is used when evaluations are completed. Nevertheless over 60% of respondents did feel they learnt something during the evaluation process – differentiating process findings (eg understanding the intervention better), from was the recommendation implemented.

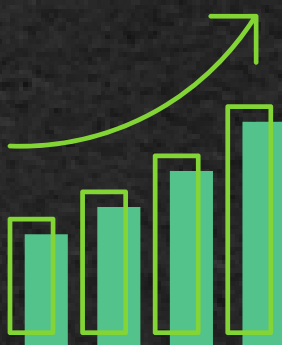


IMPLICATIONS M&E EVIDENCE USE

Overall, the value of M&E to help improve organisational performance is recognised. Around half of managers are open to change, and using problems as opportunities for learning. However, the other half of managers are indicating stringent hierarchies, closed compliance cultures and lack of appreciation of learning from experience by the management, which is a serious impediment to improvement.

To improve implementation and performances, there needs to be an increased use of evaluation results throughout planning, design and implementation stages of projects and programs as part of good practices and improved performances. Both senior management and middle level management teams should use evaluation results. This can also used for learning purposes and for providing accountability for actions at the government level.

Management should have the skills to understand and use evaluation recommendations so as to build consistent demand for evaluation results by senior management, Cabinet, Parliament, Ministers and Development Partners.



M&E systems augment managerial processes and support evidence-based decision-making. The real products of M&E however, are not the reports or facts generated from M&E activities, but the use and learning which facilitates a higher quality decision-making.