



UN Women Strategy for Developing Gender-Responsive National Evaluation Capacity

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Acronyms and abbreviations

APNODE	African Parliamentarian's Network on Development Evaluation
CEDAW	Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CLEAR	Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results
CONEVAL	Mexico National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy
CSO	Civil society organization
Deval	German Evaluation Institute
GEEW	Gender equality and the empowerment of women
IOCE	International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation
MCO	Multi-country Office
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NECD	National evaluation capacity development
REDLACME	Monitoring & Evaluation Network of Latin America and the Caribbean
ReLAC	Latin America and the Caribbean Network for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Systematization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SINERGIA	Colombia National Planning Department
UN	United Nations
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nation's Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VOPE	Voluntary organizations of professional evaluators

1. Introduction

There has been increasing recognition by a diverse array of global and national stakeholders of the importance of evaluation as a tool to better manage policies, programmes and projects and demonstrate progress on national development goals to citizens and stakeholders. Integrating gender equality and human rights in evaluation is essential as a driver of positive change towards gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW). A key principle that guides the gender-responsive evaluation is national ownership and leadership; in other words, evaluations should be country-driven and ensure leadership of evaluation processes by both rights holders and duty bearers. To this end, the development of national capacity to demand and conduct high quality gender-responsive evaluations is a key contributor to achieving more effective development for women, men, boys and girls.

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive framework for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) globally on potential ways of engaging in developing gender-responsive national evaluation capacity. It aims at further guiding and advancing ongoing and new initiatives in the area of national evaluation capacity development (NECD) while helping to ensure a common understanding on key aspects and fundamental pillars of this important area of work.

The Strategy for Gender-Responsive National Evaluation Capacity comes at an opportune time in the context of the recently endorsed United Nations (UN) resolution “Building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level”.¹ It responds to the new 2030 Agenda for sustainable development that calls for effective, inclusive and transparent national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to help countries maximize progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and to promote accountability to citizens². It is also closely linked to the 2016-2020 Global Evaluation Agenda³, which addresses the priorities for evaluation during the first 5 years of the 15-year period addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs.)

The strategy is structured around five sections and begins with outlining the conceptual framework for developing gender-responsive national evaluation capacity. This is followed by a “Mapping” section that describes previous and current UN Women initiatives globally and in various regions. The subsequent section provides an overview of lessons in building national evaluation capacity. Finally, in the section “The way forward”, the strategy proposes potential future approaches and entry points at country, regional and headquarters level for engaging in building gender-responsive national evaluation capacity.

This document has been developed by staff from the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office in close collaboration with colleagues from all Regional Offices, the Morocco Multi-country Office (MCO) and country offices in Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Palestine, Sierra Leone, Colombia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We would like to express our appreciation to all colleagues for the valuable inputs and feedback during the various stages of developing the document.

¹ United Nations. 2014. *Building Capacity for the Evaluation of Development Activities at the Country Level*. A/C.2/69/L.35.

² - [Secretary General Report, 2015. Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level](#). A /70/684

³ EvalPartners. 2016. *Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020*. Available at: <http://mymande.org/sites/default/files/files/Evalagenda2020.pdf>.

2. Conceptual framework for developing gender-responsive national evaluation capacity

Evaluation is an essential aspect of good governance to improve learning and development effectiveness, transparency, accountability and informed decision-making in support of achieving gender-responsive and equitable development results. In order for this to happen, a strong country evaluation system is crucial to provide essential information and analysis.⁴ However, the challenge often faced in many developing country contexts is that national policies and programmes are not always substantiated with findings and evidence gathered through evaluations. As such, **initiatives to strengthen evaluation systems need to be integrated into broader efforts towards developing national systems and improving national policymaking processes.** The development of evaluation capacity is a multidimensional and long-term process that takes place in the context of ongoing donor and partner efforts to strengthen national systems and improve effectiveness. Efforts must be comprehensive and integrate strategies that address both technical and political considerations.⁵

By way of a general definition **“capacity” relates to the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner.** Capacity takes a variety of forms. For example, there is a difference between the capacity of policymakers and advisers to use evaluation evidence as compared to the capacity of evaluation professionals to provide this evidence. A differentiation between these different levels and forms of capacity is crucial for ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of capacity development interventions.⁶

A necessary pre-condition for the effective conduct of evaluations at the national level is a national M&E system that provides reliable data on the performance of national programmes and policies. Therefore, **initiatives for developing national evaluation capacity must be integrated into the context of national M&E frameworks and systems.** As pointed out by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), the concept of NECD has been evolving from a historical pattern of evaluation being carried out primarily in the context of development cooperation, towards a new paradigm where evaluation is nationally owned and an intrinsic part of good governance.⁷

From a gender equality perspective, even in countries that have well-developed national evaluation policies and systems, it has been shown that these often neglect a direct reference to GEEW.⁸ This is in contrast to the close to universal ratification of the key international normative framework on GEEW—Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)—and the presence of GEEW policies and action plans in many countries. Gender-responsive evaluations help in identifying and analysing the inequalities, discriminatory practices and unjust power relations that are central to development problems. By doing so, they can provide the evidence base for more

⁴ UNICEF. 2010. *Evidence for Children—Developing National Capacities for Country-led Evaluation Systems: A Conceptual Framework*. Pg. 2.

⁵ ESTEP. 2007. *Final Report on the Framework to Analyse the Development of Evaluation Capacity in the EU Member States*. Pg. 5.

⁶ Segone, M. and J. Rugh (Eds.) 2013. *Evaluation and Civil Society: Stakeholders’ Perspectives on National Evaluation Capacity Development*. Pg. 30.

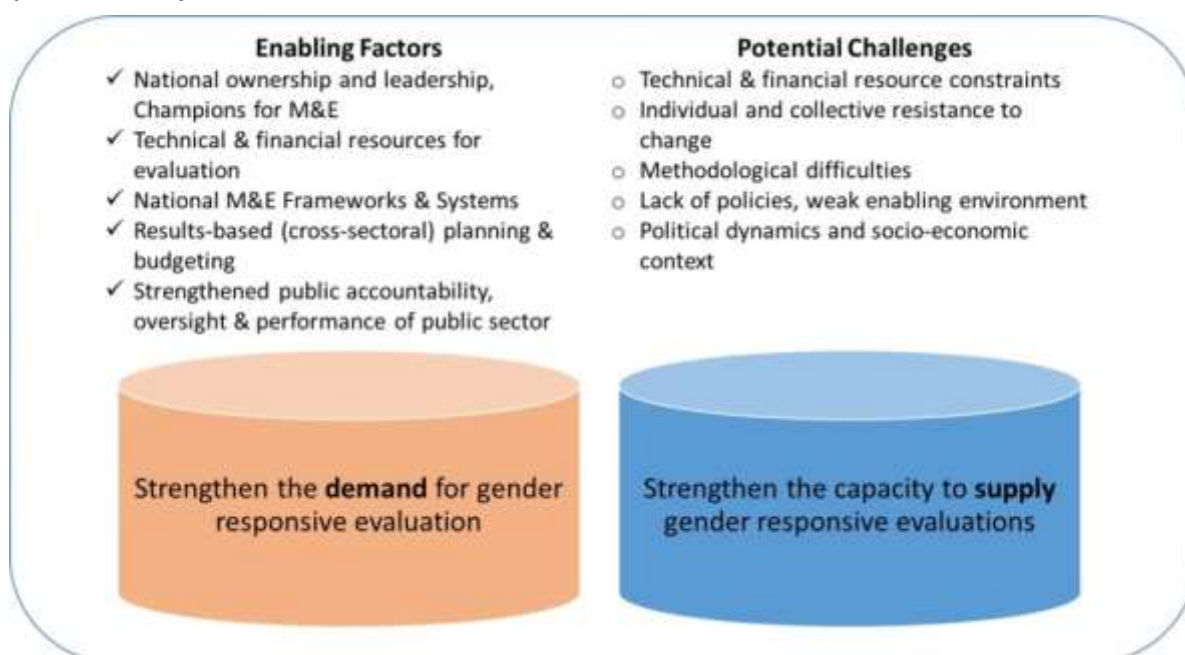
⁷ UNEG. 2012. *National Evaluation Capacity Development: Practical Tips on How to Strengthen National Evaluation Systems*. In partnership with UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP, UN Volunteers & UNAIDS. Pg. 8

⁸ Bamberger, M., Segone, M., and S. Reddy. 2015. *National Evaluation Policies for Sustainable and Equitable Development: How to Integrate Gender Equality and Social Equity in National Evaluation Policies and Systems*. UN Women, EvalPartners, IOCE. Pg. 27.

effective interventions and better, more sustainable results.⁹ **This indicates a particular need for the integration of GEEW issues in NECD initiatives.**

The **two main pillars for building gender-responsive national evaluation capacities** are: (1) strengthening the demand for gender-responsive evaluations within national governments and civil society organizations (CSOs), and (2) strengthening the capability to supply high-quality gender-responsive evaluations within national governments and CSOs. As illustrated by UNEG, the effective development of national evaluation policies and systems further depends on a number of overriding influences such as: (1) political will for change, (2) the rate of development of M&E frameworks and systems, (3) leadership vision on the potential use of M&E for public decision-making, and (4) an enabling environment.¹⁰ Figure 1 illustrates the two pillars, key enabling factors, and potential challenges in developing national evaluation policies and systems.

Figure 1. Main pillars, enabling factors and potential challenges in developing national evaluation policies and systems



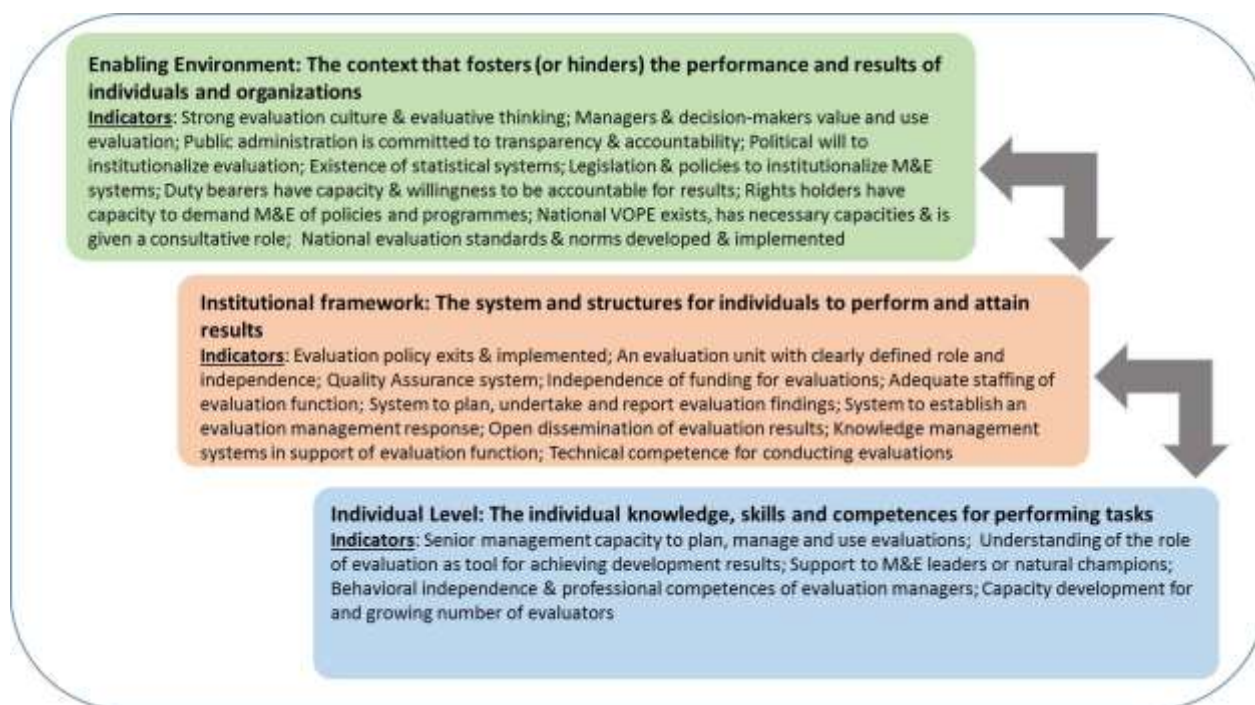
Building on the above, a strategy for developing national evaluation capacities needs to be tailored to the situation and context of a given country. It also needs to create appropriate political and social incentives and mobilize strong political ownership, leadership and commitment. As such, the focus should be on strengthening existing institutional capacities and fostering an enabling environment rather than focusing solely on the training of individuals.¹¹ This type of **systemic approach takes into consideration individuals, the institutional framework and the enabling environment** as illustrated in Figure 2 below. This systemic approach allows for the identification of target groups and potential actors with whom UN Women could engage, such as: central government agencies and ministries and individual parliamentarians, CSOs and voluntary organizations of professional evaluators (VOPEs), training institutions, private sector stakeholders and local-level champions for evaluation.

⁹ UNEG. 2011. *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance*. Available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>. Pg. 14.

¹⁰ UNEG 2012. Pg. 8.

¹¹ Segone and Rugh 2013. Pg. 38

Figure 2. Systemic approach for developing national evaluation capacities¹²



In a similar way, the **Global Evaluation Agenda for 2016-2020**¹³—which was developed in 2015 by a global multi-stakeholder consultative process—builds on the four essential dimensions of enabling environment, institutional capacities, individual capabilities and strong inter-linkages among these three dimensions. The dimensions do not operate in isolation, but they are inter-connected. They need to mutually support each other in order for evaluation to become a tool for effective governance at local, national and global levels. The Global Evaluation Agenda provides further examples of expected outcomes and proposed actions under each of the dimensions.

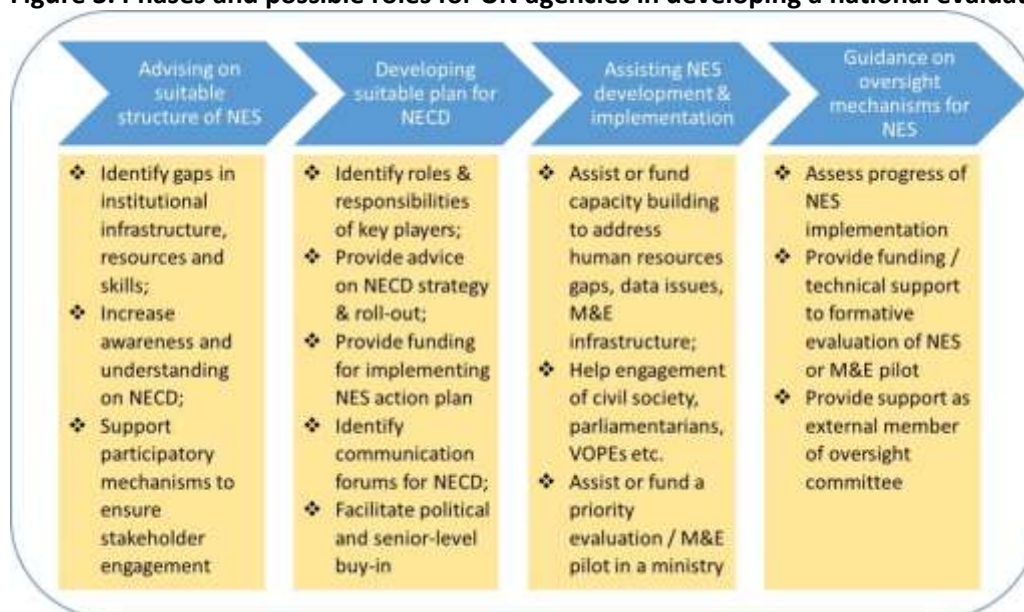
UNEG has identified four phases in the development and implementation of a national evaluation system, as illustrated in Figure 3 below.¹⁴ Each phase includes specific activities that UN agencies, including UN Women, can potentially engage in to support NECD. When identifying possible entry points for UN Women, it is key that these activities be tailored and embedded into broader NECD initiatives supported by the United Nations and other partners. For further details on possible roles for UN agencies in NECD, please refer to Annex 1.

¹² Adapted from Segone and Rugh 2013. Pp. 22-23.

¹³ EvalPartners 2016.

¹⁴ UNEG 2012. Pp. 31-33

Figure 3. Phases and possible roles for UN agencies in developing a national evaluation system



3. UN Women experiences with developing gender-responsive national evaluation capacity

This section provides an overview of UN Women initiatives and experience with supporting the development of gender-responsive national evaluation capacities globally and in Africa, the Arab States, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

This “mapping” of initiatives begins with examples of work that aim at **strengthening the demand for gender-responsive evaluations** at the individual, institutional and enabling environment level. It is followed by examples of initiatives with the purpose of **strengthening the capability to supply gender-responsive evaluations** at the individual, institutional and enabling environment level in national governments and civil society.

3.1 Examples of strengthening demand for gender-responsive evaluation

3.1.1 Enabling environment

Global level initiatives

UN Women has strategically contributed to global discourses on evaluation, including the adoption of the first landmark UN General Assembly Resolution on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level¹⁵ and the declaration of 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation. Both instruments are serving as a catalyst to promote demand and use of evaluation in policymaking around the globe. Since 2013, UN Women has co-chaired EvalPartners, the global partnership for national evaluation capacity, and in 2015, it assumed leadership of the UNEG. These and other strategic engagements are helping UN Women give prominence to gender equality and human rights perspectives within the transformative post 2015 agenda.

Furthermore, UN Women, EvalPartners and the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) launched a new global partnership for gender-responsive evaluation. EvalGender+ is a global multi-stakeholder partnership composed of 37 organizations that aims to leverage existing

¹⁵ United Nations 2014.

initiatives to strengthen the demand, supply and use of gender-responsive evaluations in general and within the framework of the new 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. EvalGender+ works to support countries in their efforts to consolidate an effective, inclusive and transparent M&E framework to evaluate the SDGs with an equity-focused and gender-responsive lens. EvalGender+ has a global online community of practice managed by the Institute of Social Studies that has brought together 1,478 evaluators from all over the world to facilitate collective and individual learning and collaborations on gender-responsive evaluation.

As part of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the project on “Evaluating SDGs with an equity-focused and gender equality lens”, UN Women and EvalGender+ have launched a multi-stakeholder consultative process to develop a guidance to evaluate the SDGs with an equity and gender equality lens. The guidance will be fed by contributions from the “No One Left Behind” online consultation and the High-Level and Technical Events held in New York in March 2016. Training and technical assistance to use the guidance will be provided to 11 countries.

Regional and national level initiatives

The South Asian Parliamentarians Forum on Development Evaluation¹⁶ is working towards the establishment of national evaluation policies in the South Asia region. The Forum is a member of EvalPartners and well established with parliamentarians from seven out of eight South Asian countries. In Africa, the UN Women Eastern Southern Africa Regional Office supported the creation of the African Parliamentarian’s Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE). UN Women support and active participation in this regional network helped to ensure inclusion of gender and equity issues as one specific objective in the APNODE Constitution: “Support parliaments in ensuring that evaluations at country level are responsive to concerns of gender equality, vulnerable groups, and equitable development results”.

UN Women Zimbabwe, with the support of the regional office, provided inputs to the development of the national M&E policy, which was officially launched by the Office of the President and Cabinet in September 2015 with gender equality and equity as one of the guiding principles. In addition, UN Women Zimbabwe, with support from regional office, is currently providing technical and financial support to the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development to develop a national M&E system on GEEW. This is in support of the implementation of the national M&E policy, as it stipulates that every government department should establish an M&E unit and develop, implement and review M&E plans.

In the Arab States, the UN Women Regional Office for Arab States has supported the creation of an informal Google group: Linking Evaluation to Decision Making—Arab States Regional Parliamentarians’ Initiative. The exchange brought together parliamentarians from six countries in the region to exchange experiences on evaluation in their countries and to discuss how they could work together to actively advocate for and advance the institutionalization of evaluation in their countries.

The first Latin American Regional Parliamentarian Forum was held in Panama (17-18 September 2015) with the participation of 14 parliamentarians from 10 countries in the region (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Uruguay) and representatives from UN agencies and the Latin America and Caribbean Network for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Systematization (ReLAC). The objective was to promote the demand and use of

¹⁶ The Parliamentarians Forum on Development Evaluation website is available at: www.pfde.net.

evaluation for good governance, encourage the establishment of national evaluation policies and systems in Latin America, and contribute to the establishment of a Forum of Parliamentarians for the Evaluation of Latin America. This event was organized by the Global Forum of Parliamentarians for Development Evaluation and the Latin American Parliament, in collaboration with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women, UNEG, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR), ReLAC, EvalPartners and IOCE. Further information can be found at <https://foropelac.wordpress.com>.

The UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean and the Ecuador Country Office supported the Ministry of Justice in building the M&E system of the National Plan to Eradicate Violence against Women and Girls. In the framework of this initiative, UN Women prepared training materials and technical assistance guidance documents to replicate this process in other countries in the region.

Capitalizing on the momentum for institutionalizing evaluation at the national level in Morocco and the inclusion of an article on the evaluation of public policies in the constitution, the Morocco MCO worked with the National Observatory of Human Development, and four sister agencies to organize an international conference on the institutionalization of evaluation at the national level in September 2015. UN Women Morocco MCO has successfully advocated for the inclusion of a panel on gender-responsive evaluation with a link to the post-2015 development agenda.

3.1.2 Institutional capacities

Evaluation guidance and publications

With the purpose of providing guidance on how to integrate gender equality issues into national evaluation policies and systems, a new book, *National Evaluation Policies for Sustainable and Equitable Development: How to Integrate Gender Equality and Social Equity in National Evaluation Policies and Systems*, was published by EvalPartners, UN-Women and the IOCE.¹⁷ The book guided the deliberations of the regional consultation on national evaluation policies organized by the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation in South Asia in partnership with EvalPartners and UN Women. Parliamentarians in all eight South Asian countries¹⁸ developed workplans to establish equity-focused and gender-responsive national evaluation policies. For the first time, under the leadership of EvalPartners and UN Women and with the support of UNDP and the African Development Bank, parliamentarians from all over the world met to discuss how to strengthen the demand and use of evaluation in national policymaking.

EvalPartners, UN Women and the IOCE have also published a toolkit¹⁹ of ways in which CSOs, VOPEs, governments, parliaments, academia, evaluation units from development cooperation agencies, and other development partners can effectively advocate for national evaluation policies and systems that are equity-focused and gender-responsive. The toolkit is intended to help stakeholders learn how to strategically advocate for building an enabling environment for evaluation.

Evaluation capacity building

Initiatives and efforts are also being undertaken at regional and national levels. In 2015, UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office developed a training curriculum for policy and decision makers on gender-responsive and transformative national evaluation capacity with support from

¹⁷ Bamberger et al. 2015.

¹⁸ Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, and Maldives.

¹⁹ The toolkit is available at: <http://www.mymande.org/evalpartners/advocacytoolkit>

EvalGender+. The training module²⁰ combines content around transformative leadership, essentials of gender-responsive evaluation, and national evaluation policies and systems. It was developed together with the Africa Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership.²¹ The Africa Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership was established by UN Women in partnership with Kenyatta University (Nairobi, Kenya) to raise transformative leaders and build leadership competencies of upcoming and existing leaders.

In Americas and the Caribbean, UN Women coordinated the “Joint project to engender national M&E systems in LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean)” with EvalPartners, IOCE and ReLAC. In the framework of this initiative, UN Women organized three training courses on gender-responsive evaluation aimed at staff from the Colombia National Planning Department (SINERGIA), Mexico National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) and Peru Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion. UN Women also worked with SINERGIA to develop specific guidelines to integrate gender equality and human rights in their evaluation systems.

3.1.3 Individual capacities

Parliamentarians from several countries in the Arab States, and East and Southern Africa region were supported to attend various regional and global conferences with a focus on gender and evaluation. These include the Middle East and North Africa Evaluators Network conferences, APNODE at the African Evaluation Association Conference, the APNODE Annual Meeting, and the European Evaluation Society Conference. These platforms have provided opportunities for intra- and inter-regional exchange between parliamentarians on their role in supporting an enabling environment for evaluation, as well as discussions and networking between parliamentarians and civil society. Through this participation, the parliamentarians have increased their awareness on evaluation and its importance in ensuring that programmes and policies are gender-responsive and promoting inclusive growth.

3.2 Examples of strengthening capacities to supply gender-responsive evaluation

3.2.1 Enabling environment

Global level initiatives

The Gender Equality Evaluation Portal launched by UN Women is a repository that makes available more than 400 evaluations on what works and what does not work for achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment. The Portal aims to establish a widely accessible database of evaluations that serve as tools to strengthen and promote the exchange of findings, conclusions and recommendations gleaned from evaluations with stakeholders and potential users, in order to have a wider impact on learning and contribute to improved policy design and programming in the area of gender equality.

More recently, UN Women has led—together with UNEG, EvalPartners and EvalGender+—a review of policies, systems and practices promoting gender-responsive evaluation in the United Nations and national evaluation systems. This review takes stock of the current gender-responsiveness of evaluation systems in place within the United Nations and among national governments and stakeholders.

Regional and national level initiatives

²⁰ The training manual is available at: <http://gendereval.ning.com/forum/topics/un-women-training-manual-building-gender-responsive-and>

²¹ The Africa Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership website is: <http://www.ku.ac.ke/actil/>

At the regional level, UN Women in the Asia and Pacific region provided support to the Sri Lankan Evaluation Association, the Evaluation Conclave, the Community of Evaluators in South Asia, and evaluation societies in Malaysia, Viet Nam, Pakistan and Cambodia. UN Women in the Asia and Pacific region has also produced a series of evaluation publications (four in total) based on respective calls for proposals for researchers and practitioners working in the field of gender and evaluation.

In the Eastern Southern Africa region, UN Women provided technical support for the 2014 African Evaluation Association Conference strand “Gender-responsive and equity-focused evaluation”. In West and Central Africa, the UN Women Regional Office provided financial and technical support to the first International Forum of Francophone Evaluation in Dakar, Senegal titled “Evaluation of public policies and governance”. The office also participated in the third Benin Evaluation Days under the theme "Evaluation for accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals" and contributed to the discussion on gender, evaluation and Millennium Development Goals in collaboration with UNICEF.

At the national level, UN Women Zimbabwe provided financial and technical support to the Zimbabwe Evaluation Association during the 2015 International Year of Evaluation celebration under the theme “Evaluation for All” and through facilitating presentations on equity-focused and gender and human rights responsive evaluations.

3.2.2 Institutional capacities

Evaluation guidance and capacity building

At the global level, UNEG has been mainstreaming gender-responsive evaluation in its normative guidance, institutional systems and individual capacities of UN evaluators. For example, under the leadership of UN Women, UNEG developed a handbook on *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation*, which integrates gender-responsive evaluation in training.²² UN Women, in partnership with UNEG and EvalPartners, is also currently developing an e-learning tool to be integrated in the EvalPartners’ massive open online course that has already attracted 20,000 registered participants from 178 countries.

Partnerships with evaluation networks

Strong strategic partnerships have also been established with national and regional evaluation networks. During the period 2011-2013, UN Women established partnerships with the Africa Gender and Development Evaluators Network, ReLAC, and Community of Evaluators in South Asia. The partnership created with the Africa Gender and Development Evaluators Network helped to promote gender equality and human rights evaluations by evaluation practitioners in Africa. Similar efforts have also been exerted by UN Women offices in Uganda and Kenya to help government efforts of developing and integrating gender indicators in government national planning documents (Uganda) and develop a gender and human rights responsive M&E policy, capacity and data in Kenya.

In Asia, UN Women through the UN Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific has played an important role by providing evaluation training to government officials and supporting United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations at the country level. Through programmes at the country level, UN Women in the Asia and Pacific region also provided results-

²² UNEG 2011.

based management and evaluation trainings to government and civil society officials. UN Women also made contributions to global and regional professional events, such as the bi-annual South Asia Evaluation Conclave in Nepal, round table series on gender and evaluation in South Asia organized in partnership with other UN agencies and the World Bank-supported CLEAR centers, the Monitoring & Evaluation Network of Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLACME) international conferences in Peru and Panama, and the third international conference on national evaluation capacity in Brazil. In Africa, UN Women led a session on integration of gender equality and human rights in evaluation during the 2013 Kenya National M&E Week.

In the same vein, the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office commissioned a mapping of national M&E systems in the region to analyse experience on the institutionalization of evaluation and the viability of integrating gender equality and human rights dimensions into these systems. The initiative involved the national M&E systems of Colombia (SINERGIA), Mexico (CONEVAL) and Peru Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, as well as members of ReLAC, CLEAR, Brazilian M&E Network, UNDP, UNFPA and United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Latin America and the Caribbean. UN Women also worked with SINERGIA (Colombia) to develop specific guidelines to integrate gender equality and human rights in their systems. Finally, UN Women coordinates the ReLAC Working Group on Gender and Evaluation, created in 2010, with more than 100 members. Joint with the European Evaluation Society Gender and Evaluation Working Group, the ReLAC Working Group won the EvalPartners' Equity-Focused and Gender-Responsive Evaluation Innovation Challenge with the project "Guidelines for including a gender+ perspective in VOPEs: Innovating to improve institutional capacities".

3.2.3 Individual capacities

The adoption of cost-effective technologies has continued to be a driving force to enhance the technical capacities of a critical mass of individual evaluators. EvalPartners' web portal "My M&E"—developed under the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office leadership—attracted a cumulative total of 800,706 visitors and page downloads of 3,129,298 as of end 2015, since its launch in 2010.

The massive open online course on development evaluation remained a key magnet for high traffic to the portal. The course reached a cumulative total of 27,513 registered participants from 178 countries in 2015, a 24 per cent increase from the previous year. The equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluation course attracted 2,920 registered participants, standing out as most favoured course in the web portal.

Similar to the previous years, a large majority of the participants (69 per cent) were from developing countries, while 31 per cent were from developed regions. In terms of organizational affiliation, 30 per cent were from CSOs, 17 per cent from governments, 19 per cent from UN entities, 14 per cent from the private sector, 10 per cent from universities and the remaining 10 per cent from other institutions.

In the Arab States in 2015, UN Women conducted a pre-conference workshop on designing and managing gender-responsive evaluation during the Middle East and North Africa Evaluators Network General Assembly.

Similarly, in Eastern Southern Africa, UN Women ensured effective inter-agency coordination with UNICEF for the 2014 African Evaluation Association pre-conference evaluation training "How to design, manage and use equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations". Over the past three years, UN Women Zimbabwe has also provided trainings on results-based management and M&E to CSO members.

The Latin America and Caribbean region has done extensive work on capacity development of government staff on gender-responsive evaluation as part of a regional initiative to engender national M&E systems in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. In 2015, workshops on gender-responsive evaluation were delivered during the IV ReLAC Conference, Mexico Evaluation Week, and with Deval (German Evaluation Institute) at Costa Rica University. UN Women is continuing to work in Colombia and Mexico on building capacity at the national level through pilots of public policy evaluation and evaluation of gender policies.

In an effort to develop capacity of government counterparts on gender-responsive evaluation, the Morocco MCO has conducted evaluations jointly with ministries, including an evaluation currently underway to evaluate the extent to which 60 local development plans have integrated gender.

4. Lessons in developing gender-responsive national evaluation capacity

The UN Women experiences with developing gender-responsive national evaluation capacity have generated a number of lessons that are important to take into account in the development of the strategy.

- 1) **In terms of the enabling environment for building gender-responsive evaluation capacity, UN Women has a comparative advantage through its role in global and regional evaluation networks.** For example, UN Women is chairing and co-leading major evaluation networks such as UNEG, EvalPartners and EvalGender+. It also plays a prominent role in ReLAC, APNODE, and the Middle East and North Africa Evaluators Network, among others. Related to this, UN Women has established strong working relationships in the area of evaluation with other UN agencies and partners. This provides good potential for using partnerships to collaboratively drive the global evaluation agenda and should be capitalized upon. UN Women is also spearheading initiatives to support the development of national M&E policies and systems, for example, in Zimbabwe and Colombia.
- 2) **Regarding the strengthening of institutional capacities, the guidance documents and toolkits published by UN Women, EvalPartners and UNEG provide a very comprehensive set of resources** for systematically integrating gender into the evaluation process. However, there is only limited information that shows how these guidance documents are being used and how, for example, whether or not parliamentarians or other individuals who benefited from trainings have applied their knowledge to the national evaluation discourse in their respective country.
- 3) **In terms of building individual evaluation capacity, UN Women possesses a wealth of experience, for example, in evaluation training for government staff in Latin America.** UN Women has also initiated work with engaging parliamentarians in all regions to enhance their understanding of evaluation and promote the demand and use of evaluations at the national level. However, the examples also show that this support has been in many cases *ad hoc* and on an individual basis, for example, when supporting the participation of parliamentarians in evaluation conferences. While parliamentarians have usually been nominated to participate in evaluation events and conferences through UN Women country offices, following up with them after the evaluation event at the country level has often proven a challenge. In Kenya, the Parliamentary Caucus on Evidence-Informed Oversight and Decision-Making was launched in August 2015. This was potentially a result of the representation of Kenya Members of Parliament in APNODE, who had been supported by UN Women to participate in the APNODE launch in 2014. The participation of parliamentarians from Zimbabwe in the 2015 APNODE Annual Meeting resulted in plans to establish an APNODE National Chapter in Zimbabwe.

However, lack of financial resources by the UN Women country office presented a challenge to providing the necessary follow-up support. It is not always clear if—and to what extent—parliamentarians are taking up initiatives to advocate for evaluation at the country level upon return from an evaluation event.

- 4) **Integrating gender equality perspectives into national M&E systems through technical assistance is a complex process.** It requires a long time to establish a trusted relationship with national partners who have their own planning cycles and time frames. There is a high rotation at the technical and political level (elections) as well as budget constraints, and gender equality is often not considered a priority.
- 5) The current examples of UN Women initiatives also demonstrate that the **link between UN Women programming in respective thematic areas at the country level and national evaluation capacity building often remains weak.** For example, there is a huge potential for linking the work on national evaluation capacity building with UN Women programming on governance, for example, in the area of accountability and evidence-based decision-making. However, this vision is not necessarily shared by UN Women managers. The new upcoming initiative on “Evaluating SDGs with an equity-focused and gender equality lens” provides an opportunity to link the flagship initiative on gender statistics for localizing the SDGs with NECD with a gender lens for evaluating SDGs.

5. The way forward

5.1 Underlying principles

Looking forward, UN Women should engage in the area of building gender-responsive national evaluation capacity based on the following principles and considerations:

1. **UN Women should continue to follow a partnership approach** for building gender-responsive national evaluation capacity that takes into account a broad array of potential actors including government and parliamentarians, CSOs and VOPEs, training institutions, private evaluation consulting businesses, and both gender advocates and champions for evaluation at the national level. In order to become sustainable, initiatives for building NECD need to aim at creating political ownership, leadership and commitment. The new upcoming initiative on “Evaluating SDGs with an equity-focused and gender equality lens” will provide an opportunity to strengthen partnerships within the framework of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. More particularly, UN Women has a role to play in supporting the process of adapting the SDGs to national contexts and in strengthening and engendering national M&E systems.
2. **UN Women should avoid isolated initiatives but make sure to coordinate with UN agencies and other partners** (e.g., ReLAC, CLEAR, Deval, EvalPartners, EvalGender+, etc.) to harmonize existing or planned NECD initiatives and establish synergies. The Latin America example demonstrates the added value of a multi-stakeholder strategy that includes academia, research institutions, UN agencies, and government and regional evaluation associations.
3. **Regarding potential joint evaluation initiatives, UN Women through the UN country teams may consider engaging in evaluations of national gender policies, strategies and plans.** Such evaluations could be used not only to enhance accountability on national GEEW commitments but also to provide the opportunity for using the evaluation process to strengthen evaluation capacity amongst national partners. Another potential joint initiative would be research and mappings that analyse the status quo with respect to the integration of GEEW in national evaluation policies and systems. This research could be used for reflection and learning on how to effectively engender the national evaluation environment.

4. **There is a need to better integrate NECD initiatives at the level of the enabling environment, institutional and individual level.** For example, the support to individual parliamentarians should be approached more strategically and complemented with a clearly defined follow-up/support mechanism to help them advocate for evaluation at the country level. Given that members of parliament by themselves are not responsible for implementing government M&E plans and for managing M&E systems, there is a need to look beyond them and identify technical people at the ministerial level who can support evaluation initiatives in the government.
5. **Existing partnerships that UN Women has established with national and regional VOPEs provide a basis for strengthening gender-responsive evaluation at national level but should be expanded and further strengthened.** In particular, in countries where initiatives are under way to develop national M&E systems or national evaluation policies, a close collaboration with the national VOPEs can be strategic for introducing questions of gender equality into the evaluation discussion.
6. **UN Women country offices are the obvious entry point** for working with national partners such as the national women machinery or sectorial ministries. Building institutional evaluation capacity requires working on various elements such as government M&E plans and M&E information systems, data collection, evaluation training, budgets for evaluation and commitment at the government level to take evidence-based policies seriously. **The work on building national evaluation capacity should be more explicitly linked with UN Women programming, in particular in the area of governance, political leadership and accountability.**

5.2 Potential entry points for UN Women

The following section outlines some of the potential entry points in the area of developing gender-responsive national evaluation capacity. They are presented as “menu” of options and are not meant to be comprehensive. UN Women should continue to work at the individual, institutional and enabling environment levels to both strengthen the demand for gender-responsive evaluation, as well as the capacity to supply gender-responsive evaluation. Many initiatives are evolving and will require further detailed planning based on available capacity, financial resources, etc.

5.2.1 Strengthening demand for gender-responsive evaluations

➤ **Promotion of national policies and legislation to institutionalize gender-responsive evaluation**

For example, UN Women Zimbabwe, with the support from the regional office, will continue to provide technical and financial support to the government through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development to develop a national M&E system on GEEW. UN Women Kenya through the UN Joint M&E Working Group will continue to support the Government of Kenya in developing and implementing an integrated M&E policy and system that is gender and human rights responsive.

➤ **Strengthening capacity of policymakers, including parliamentarians, government ministries and rights-holders to demand and use gender-responsive evaluation evidence**

Regional parliamentarians’ forums for development evaluation that have been established over the past two years will provide the main entry point for this work. Trainings and workshops to strengthen gender-responsive evaluation capacity are planned in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The Regional Office for Arab States will also continue to translate and disseminate information and examples from other regions and countries on institutionalizing evaluation, as well as identify a successful case study to showcase a national

level gender-responsive evaluation as an advocacy tool for parliamentarians to promote the conduct and use of gender-responsive evaluation.

5.2.2 Strengthening capacity to supply gender-responsive evaluations

➤ **Institutionalizing policies, systems, and guidelines and tools for planning, management, conduct and use of gender-responsive evaluations**

UN Women will work to support the strengthening and integration of gender into M&E systems, guidelines and tools. These include initiatives from country offices in East and Southern Africa and the Americas and the Caribbean that will support the institutionalization and strengthening of national partners' M&E systems over the next two years. Specifically, in Latin America, UN Women supported the Ministry of Justice in Ecuador to build the M&E system of the National Plan to Eradicate Violence against Women and Girls. In Costa Rica, the Ministry of Planning has asked the UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean to review its Evaluation Handbook Guidelines from a gender perspective.

UN Women Arab States, in partnership with country offices, is also exploring potential entry points for working with government counterparts. The Morocco MCO is entering the final year of its Joint Programme on Evaluation and Public Policy and will be exploring ways in which it can collaborate with the government on embedding the evaluation function into each ministry or creating a transversal national body to conduct evaluation.

➤ **Strengthening capacity of national partners to plan and implement gender-responsive evaluations including through trainings and supporting participation in evaluation conferences**

Regional and country offices in Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean are working to strengthen the capacity of ministries and other national partners to plan and conduct gender-responsive evaluations. Examples include trainings in the Arab States, Africa (Rwanda, Mozambique, Tanzania, South Sudan, Somalia, Uganda), Asia and the Pacific (Cambodia) and in Latin America. Mexico is planning to pilot an evaluation of a public policy from a gender perspective with the national evaluation agency (CONEVAL) and/or the evaluation of an SDG from a gender perspective in partnership with CONEVAL, parliament, the country office, and the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation. UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean will support the Ministry of Planning in Costa Rica to evaluate a public programme, and the Arab States Regional Office is planning to support ministries in Palestine through joint evaluations and a review of strategies. Advocacy work is planned for national gender observatories in Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and Liberia and a national evaluation unit in Morocco. Regarding evaluation conferences, a potential approach is to identify successful gender-responsive evaluation initiatives from the regional level and facilitate their exposure at global level conferences for further dissemination.

➤ **Strengthening capacity of global, regional and national evaluation networks and VOPEs to provide sound evaluation evidence**

UN Women will continue to play a key role in global networks such as EvalPartners and EvalGender+ and will support regional and national evaluation networks such as ReLAC in Latin America, African Evaluation Association in Africa, etc. UN Women will also continue to partner with evaluation professionals and VOPEs to strengthen capacity on gender-responsive evaluation in Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, primarily through conducting trainings during VOPE meetings. In Asia and the Pacific, the UN Women experience with producing evaluation publications based on calls for proposals for researchers and practitioners in the field of

gender and evaluation is considered a good practice and will be continued in 2016. These publications help to collect case studies on gender-responsive evaluation and contribute to creating knowledge and networking among researchers and practitioners in the region.

In moving forward, the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office (through the regional evaluation specialists) is exploring how to integrate the work on NECD into regional and country level programming on governance, including the Women's Caucus in Latin America and the Caribbean, the CEDAW regional programme in Asia, the Spring Forward for Women Programme in Arab States, as well as in Cambodia, Viet Nam, East Timor and Liberia. UN Women will continue to collaborate on many of these initiatives with sister agencies including UNICEF and UNDP as well as explore and expand new partnerships.

Annex 1. Possible roles for UN agencies in NECD²³



Box 9

Possible roles for UN agencies in NECD

Phase 1. Raising awareness and understanding, and advising on a suitable structure for a national evaluation system

- Supporting civil society organizations, including Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs),²³ in enhancing their role to influence national evaluation systems
- Assisting and/or funding in the conduct of a M&E Readiness Assessment
- Providing clarification of the drivers for evaluation, the potential uses and users
- Identifying and working with champions, public sector leaders and areas of M&E strength to increase understanding and commitment, at both political and institutional levels
- Helping identify research and analytical strengths across the system
- Assisting in the determination of gaps in institutional structures, infrastructure, human resource skill sets, disaggregated data, etc.
- Establishing appropriate coordinating and consultative committees to help advance and oversee NECD – harmonization and alignment as goals
- Assisting with participatory mechanisms to help ensure all stakeholders – civil society, the private sector and other social partners – are aware of and engaged in the process
- Increasing awareness and understanding of NES and NECD through promotion and exchange of information and knowledge via funding or the promotion of international conferences, regional/national networks, study missions, country-level workshops, etc.

Phase 2. Advising on the development of a suitable plan for NECD

- Supporting the efforts of key country agencies tasked with putting in place a NES/M&E system (could be a central agency, such as the ministry of finance or planning)
- Assisting or funding development of a medium-term action plan for the establishment of a NES
- Assisting in identifying and establishing necessary communication vehicles and forums for the NECD roll-out
- Helping to identify and group the principal players in the country and their roles, responsibilities in the eventual NES and their accountabilities in the NECD plan
- Helping to identify institutional or organizational changes that may be required, their resource implications, and an appropriate strategy of change
- Providing an advisory role regarding the pace of NECD, for example, a phasing-in strategy versus an immediate whole-of-government approach
- Where M&E is being piloted, assisting in developing an appropriate strategy and plan based on an identification of current strengths in the country
- Facilitating political- and senior-level briefings on NECD efforts towards a NES, i.e. providing a neutral and external expertise and perspective

²³ UNEG 2012. Pp. 31-33.

Phase 3. Assisting the process of NES development and implementation

Assisting and/or funding an exercise to clarify and develop a plan for dealing with known or suspected gaps in the NES, for example, M&E skills; data development (low quality, lacking credibility, not results-oriented, issues of comparability, aggregation, access, etc.); civil society involvement; institutionalization in key ministries; too little or no evaluation being conducted; too little or flagging support at senior government or political levels; lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities of key players; lack of demand or use of M&E information in the system; insufficient incentives identified for use of M&E; capacity within national statistical agency; M&E 'fatigue' across ministries.

- Assisting or funding capacity building efforts to address **human resource gaps**:
 - 1) M&E training, delivered on-site, regionally or on-line;
 - 2) funding support for attendance at international or regional training;
 - 3) 'train the trainer' workshops – including development of M&E training tools and materials;
 - 4) supporting the development of M&E curricula and training materials for local, national or regional training institutes – basic M&E, evaluation methods (basic and intermediate) and approaches (participatory), etc.;
 - 5) orientation 'training' on M&E (role, uses, etc.) to senior government officials, parliamentarians, civil society and private sector organizations;
 - 6) development of training packages on managing evaluation – evaluation planning, budgeting, TOR development, project planning and management skills, evaluation reporting, etc.;
 - 7) training and/or the development of training materials on specific evaluation tools and methods (e.g. logic models, indicator development, surveys, focus groups, interview methods, etc.);
 - 8) workshops aimed at developing evaluation skills through study of real cases from the international community;
 - 9) the establishment of national VOPEs, and linkages with regional, national and international evaluation associations;
 - 10) funding to support the development of a national web site to serve as a central source for evaluation tools, M&E information exchange, etc.
- Assisting or funding capacity building efforts on **data issues**, such as:
 - 1) knowledge exchange and missions between the national statistical agencies and international counterparts;
 - 2) advice and support agencies responsible for national-level performance reporting on results-oriented performance indicators and associated data needs;
 - 3) advice and support to subnational data development;
 - 4) training and the development of skill-building materials for those responsible for surveys, data collection, warehousing and analysis in ministries and other agencies.
- Assisting in the development of **national M&E infrastructure**, such as:
 - 1) policies, standards and guidelines for evaluation and results-oriented performance monitoring and performance reporting;

- 2) advice on evaluation planning, priority-setting, reporting and use;
 - 3) advice on the establishment of M&E units (centrally and within a ministry) – competencies, budgets, mandate, etc.;
 - 4) advice on the establishment of national and sector/ministry-level performance frameworks and cost-effective performance measurement strategies;
 - 5) advice or assist in the development of a national performance report (e.g. MDG progress report) and/or an annual ministry performance report.
- Assisting in or funding the development of an M&E **pilot** in a ministry that is linked to NES development.
 - Assisting or funding the **conduct of a priority evaluation** – to demonstrate to senior officials the role and usefulness of evaluation; a learning exercise in a country where there may have been little or no evaluation as a part of the NES; a mentoring opportunity for local evaluators; an occasion to provide more in-depth information and understanding on a priority subject.
 - Assisting with the **integration of civil society** into the NES, such as:
 - 1) development of participatory and inclusiveness mechanisms to capture and utilize citizen feedback;
 - 2) promotion of the development of public reporting vehicles, accountability and transparency;
 - 3) accessibility to M&E information;
 - 4) engagement of civil society organizations, citizens, parliamentarians, think tanks, the media and others as advocates in the use of M&E information;
 - 5) national and regional VOPEs, as appropriate, to support M&E knowledge and skill development of civil society representatives.

Phase 4. Advising/assisting with the oversight of the NES and its development

- Assisting in the assessment of progress on the country's NECD plan against milestones and advising on any adjustments that may be required to the national M&E plan.
- Assisting in or funding an assessment of any early pilots (for example, establishment of a ministry-level M&E unit and capacity), and advising on lessons learned and implications for roll-out of the national M&E plan.
- Assisting in or funding of a formative evaluation of the NES – the structure, conduct and how well it is performing (use of M&E information, gaps, etc.), and advising on any adjustments that may be needed to make it more effective and sustainable.
- Participating as an external member of a senior-level national evaluation advisory committee that provides oversight and advice regarding the NES and NECD initiatives.

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