

**POLICY MONITORING AND RESEARCH CENTRE  
(PMRC)**

**SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE ON CABINET AFFAIRS**

**TITLE: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL MONITORING AND  
EVALUATION POLICY IN ZAMBIA**

**2022**

Policy Monitoring and Research Centre (PMRC) was requested to submit a written memorandum on the implementation of the National Monitoring and Evaluation policy in Zambia. The following were salient requests to be addressed in the submission:

- Sufficiency of the National Monitoring and Evaluation policy objectives with regards to strengthening institutional M&E structures, capacity development and accountability among all stakeholders.
- The role of state actors at national, provincial, district and sub-district levels and their effectiveness in the implementation of the National M&E policy
- The role and effectiveness of non-state actors in the implementation of the National M&E policy.
- Challenges if any faced at national, provincial, district and sub-district levels in the implementation of the policy
- Make recommendations to the executive and the way forward.

## **Introduction**

- Annually, the government releases funds through the national budget to implement various developmental projects as well as funding towards government functions. The utilisation of these funds compels Ministries, Provinces and Spending Agencies (MPSAs) to plan and develop annual plans for various projects and programs which is a necessary step for accountability and transparency purposes.
- The need for uniformity in planning and reporting for fund utilizations necessitated the need for a National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy that would help the government track spending by various MPSAs against the planned activities and programmes to drive national development. The policy was implemented in 2019 and is housed under the Ministry of Finance and National Planning as the custodians.
- The focus when developing the policy was to achieve a result-oriented digital government-wide integrated M&E system through the development of an information management monitoring system attached to the national budget and linked to National Development Plans interventions by then the country was implementing the 7<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan (7NDP).

- The M&E policy specifies the government wide-monitoring and evaluation/management information system principles, procedures, structures and responsibilities that should be used to effectively conduct national monitoring and evaluation for all development processes. The policy is anchored on relevant laws which govern performance management, coordination collection, analysis, processing, storage and use of data and information for the measurement of performance and development results in the country.
- In terms of coordination, all government Ministries and spending agencies need to feed into the M&E digital system that was developed to track their performance in line with funds disbursed by the government. To ease the implementation of M&E, a digital system was developed that tracks performance, annual plans, budgets, national development plans and project inventory. This system was rolled out to all Ministries for ease of monitoring, coordination and reporting.

**1. Sufficiency of the National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy objectives concerning strengthening institutional M&E structures, capacity development and accountability among all development stakeholders**

**The vision of the policy: "A results-oriented, evidence-based, well-coordinated, Integrated and robust Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System for improved development results"**

**Specific Objectives**

- To establish a framework that supports improved coordination, implementation and conduct of M&E activities at national, provincial, district as well as sub-district levels;
- To develop M&E guidelines and standards and promote adherence to best practices that are internationally accepted;
- To support the establishment and strengthening of management information systems at all levels of government for effective analysis of data, management of information and measurement of results;
- To develop and strengthen the culture to demand and utilise M&E information, statistics and knowledge for quality decision-making at national and sub-national levels;
- To provide clarity on structures, roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation functions across Government, including at the district level; and

- To strengthen institutional M&E capacities at national, provincial, district and sub-district levels.

The critical role of M&E cannot be overstated as it remains a significant tracking and accountability mechanism. Monitoring and evaluation also act as a tool for good governance. However, the information generated from M&E is only useful when applied in practice as it provides evidence-based information to feed into a critical decision and policy-making processes at different levels. It also helps improve decision-making as well as provide appropriate feedback for the management of intended targets. Thus, there is a need to create demand for M&E information to inform government processes.

Although the objectives of the policy are sufficient to strengthen institutional M&E structures, it was found that M&E procedures are not adequately adhered to and that there is low motivation by staff to undertake the activity across various institutions. This is due to a lack of accountability within the Ministries as well as inadequate support to fully generate M&E data. Furthermore, a study Kanyamuna et al. (2021) found that while M&E outputs may be available, their access and utilisation for management functions remain challenging across government structures and institutions outside of government. Thus, the effective use of M&E outputs at local or decentralised levels scored a dismal 1- point (little M&E action was taken). Similarly, the effective use of M&E outputs by actors outside the government scored 1- point, while the use of M&E at the central level had a 2-point score. Again, these low scores suggest that currently the WoGM&ES did not inspire the demand for and utilisation of M&E information for decision- and policy-making processes by key stakeholders in the country. The findings from this study suggest that there is a need to identify opportunities to strengthen M&E implementation across the government by enforcing stringent measures that demand accountability at individual and institutional levels for implementing as well as reporting officers. Similarly, there is a need to create demand for M&E information and the use of evidence across the public sector.

## **2. The role of state actors at national, provincial, district and sub-district levels and their effectiveness in the implementation of the National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy**

State actors are active participants in the implementation of the policy given that their individual and institutional outputs are tied to the budget and annual plans. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every officer across various levels to generate M&E data that

would account for their roles and responsibilities as staff members. However, few institutions have complied with the need to generate M&E within the system. Although Ministries are expected to report every quarter and facilitate the necessary interventions to achieve the planned outputs. To facilitate for proper utilization of the digital M&E system. The Ministry of Finance and National Planning trained staff from 35 MPSAs but only about 15 of the trained MPSAs have fully been utilizing the system for inputting their annual plans and reporting planned activities. It has been noted that officers do not want to be specific in their plans to avoid being held accountable.

- Effectively implementing M&E has been a challenge due to inadequate structures to support the policy. There is a need for at least 3 staff that should include a statistician, Planner and M&E officer at all levels (sub-district, district, provincial and national levels. However, at the district level, M&E structures do not exist and the Ministry is currently using local authority planners which also is a challenge due to inadequate capacity and training. While at the national level, the M&E department at the Ministry has 5 staff against an establishment of 22 staff.
- Given the inadequate capacity to effectively implement M&E at the local and provincial levels, it makes it difficult to verify reports being submitted at the national level and provide the necessary interventions to be undertaken. In the same regard, spot monitoring to verify if funding for a specific project has been availed but there is slow progress on the projects is a challenge. For instance, there are about 2000 projects that are currently running and some need spot monitoring but due to inadequate staff this is a challenge.

### **3. The role and effectiveness of non-state actors in the implementation of the National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy**

- Non-state actors are critical players in providing oversight of how public resources are utilised, therefore they play a key role in demanding accountability. Although they have been included in Cluster Advisory Groups at the provincial and national level and are co-chairs of the advisory, they have not been incorporated in the national plan so that the private sector is also tracked in terms of their contribution and progress of the projects they are implementing. Therefore, there has been inadequate coordination of outputs being implemented by the private sector that have a direct impact on national

development. This lag in information also makes it challenging to generate the full M&E framework.

- Evidence has shown that when used consistently, information from M&E has transformed development agencies and the well-being of people across the world. For that reason, the use of M&E information by stakeholders such as multilateral and bilateral agencies, governments, civil society, parliaments and donors becomes a necessity. In that regard, there is a need to coordinate M&E outputs with non-state actors for accountability. Currently, their role needs to be strengthened to complement the government's efforts in implementing the policy but also provide oversight in how the government is implementing its projects by demanding M&E data.

#### **4. Challenges, if any, faced at the national, provincial, district and sub-district level in the implementation of the National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy**

The Government-wide M&E system was implemented in order to offer a results-oriented, digital and integrated platform that could generate government-wide evidence-based M&E. The platform is linked to the budget so that Ministries could plan and report on the platform as a means for easy tracking and information generation. However, various challenges have negatively impacted the effective use of the system. These include:

- Lack of M&E units/ Departments and dedicated staff in most MPSAs charged with the responsible for M&E functions.
- Where units/departments have been established they lacked inadequate skills and capacity to undertake M&E and in some cases the staff are inadequate. Austerity measures to recruit staff specifically for this function have been undermining the successful implementation of the policy. The Ministry of Finance and National Planning who are the custodians of the policy indicated that there was a need for Cabinet to consider aligning staff within the establishment to be responsible for M&E functions in order to improve its effectiveness.
- Another challenge impacting the implementation is that of inadequate or lack of statistical units and information systems to collect administrative data. This challenge is heightened due to adequate resources to successful conduct this task as well as monitor progress and implementation of projects across the country. This has resulted in funds being released for work that is not being

undertaken or completed within specified timeframes despite the resources being disbursed.

- Lack of political will and support from the highest office, at conception the policy was premised that the president will champion M&E practice for the successful implementation of the policy but this never happened.

## **5. Recommendations**

- There is a need to increase funding towards the M&E functions in MPSAs to facilitate the creation of units/departments, capacity building and spot monitoring of planned projects.
- There is a need to compel staff to use the M&E platform and enforce consequences for non-adherence across all Ministries and agencies.
- There is a need to create demand for evidence and accountability generated through M&E as well as impose consequences for failure to deliver on outputs.
- The Cabinet Office needs to align M&E targets to Staff Performance Agreements to enhance accountability across all programmes as well as among staff responsible for the implementation and reporting of M&E indicators.
- There is a need to include local authorities in the M&E system, particularly, concerning the management of the Constituency Development Fund.
- There is need for Non-State Actors to enhance their roles in providing capacity building and advocacy on the need for the full utilisation of the M&E framework.
- To resolve some of the challenges highlighted, there is need for the Presidency to create demand for M&E data that would compel Ministerial staff to generate data and use the platform for planning and reporting purposes. This will improve oversight and monitoring of outputs as well as enhance accountability. Furthermore, there is a need to align M&E outputs to Performance Management Contracts as a means to ensure plans are seen through in accordance to the approved and disbursed resources.

## References

- 1 Vincent Kanyamuna, Moonga Hangoma Mumba, Augustine Mkandawire, Mulonda Munalula, Valentine Kalonje. Opportunities and Challenges in Using Information from Zambia's Government Monitoring and Evaluation System. *World Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*. 2021; 7(1):23-33. doi: 10.12691/wjssh-7-1-4  
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