



Analysis Of Structural And Organisational Arrangements Of Monitoring And Evaluation Status For The Public Sector In Zambia

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ABSTRACT

This study was an exploratory investigation of the prevailing status of Zambia's public sector monitoring and evaluation (M&E) structural and organisational arrangements. As a good governance and accountability instrument, a country's whole-of-government monitoring and evaluation system (WoGM&ES) is supposed to be functionally operated if it was to offer desired benefits. But how do you properly fix a government's M&E system? Conducting a rigorous diagnostic exercise on the existing system gives a chance to know what works, what does not work and reasons why. It was the objective of this research to critically bring out elements that required attention and those that needed scaling up as well as sustaining. Using the diagnostic checklist

comprised of ten (10) components and the LEADS scoring system, different statuses about M&E structural and organisational arrangements for Zambia's government M&E system were assessed and analysed. The elements assessed include coordination and oversight; joint sector reviews; working groups; ownership; incentives; and linkage with statistical office; horizontal integration; vertical upward integration; vertical downward integration; and link with projects. The findings have shown that overall, the structural and organisational arrangements (that is, structure & linkages) are weak with a LEADS score of point 2—meaning only elements existed. Further in-depth analysis of intra-component status showed that while other elements were less developed, others were fairly well implemented. The diagnosis results are critical to the Zambian government and its stakeholders in knowing which aspects to improve in the effort to build, strengthen and sustain a stronger WoGM&ES going forward.

Keywords: Monitoring; Evaluation; whole-of-government monitoring and evaluation system; development results; diagnostic checklist; LEADS scoring system; accountability; good governance.

INTRODUCTION

There is evidently increasing pressure for governments and other development organisations to show results of their work. Mostly, the demand to demonstrate changes in the communities where development interventions are being implemented has become common debate among stakeholders within and outside various efforts. Incredibly, beneficiaries are becoming less and less interested in knowing how much money or materials have been expended on programmes and projects, most keenly, they press to know what outcomes and impact (actual improvements) those interventions have caused to the people [1,20,32,34,39]. Thus, they demand for such results as infant mortality rates, life expectancy, household resilience, access to quality employment opportunities, and generally reduction in poverty levels. These concerns can ably be addressed by functional institutional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems [5,8,11]. It is for that reason that governments, donors, civil society organisations and other development agencies have embarked on building and strengthening their systems for M&E. For governments, they have created 'government-wide monitoring and evaluation systems (G-Wide M&E Systems) or what we term in this study as whole-of-government monitoring and evaluation systems (WoGM&ESs) [59]. [6,37 & 38] defines a WoGM&ES as a robust system that not only provides an integrated and all-encompassing framework of M&E practices, principles and standards to be used throughout government institutional structures, but also functions as an apex-level system for information and draws from the component systems in a framework meant to deliver essential M&E products tailored to satisfy information needs of users.

Further, [24,42 & 48] considers an M&E system as an institutional or organisational set-up comprising management plans, processes, strategies, information systems, indicators, reporting lines, standards and accountability relationships, which allow development structures at national and provincial or regional levels such as departments, municipalities and other institutions to effectively perform their M&E functions. As can be deduced from the definitions, a WoGM&ES is complex and takes a comprehensive understanding of its different components if workable

improvements had to be made and sustained. To the M&E practitioners and indeed those seeking further research in evaluation studies particularly in public sector management, efforts to unpack the elements that form a functional country system for M&E becomes crucial for learning and improvement [8,45,50].

In both theory and practice regarding building, strengthening and sustaining stronger WoGM&ESs, stakeholders have come to appreciate that rather than approaching the undertaking from a holistic perspective, it is pragmatic to segment aspects of M&E and analytically scrutinize what works, what does not work and appreciate reasons why. Government and non-state actors together have come to some consensus that WoGM&ESs are structurally and organisationally complex and differ from one country to another, and from one generation across to another [3,17]. Thus, to strengthen these systems, a proper understanding and deeper insights about what different structural and organisational components there are becomes inevitable to undertake by those who seek to provide remedial policy and managerial alternatives. When the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and possible threats (SWOT analysis) are known regarding the functionality of a country's WoGM&ES, developing supportive policies, practices as well as aligning public sector skills and financing are made more feasible and realistic. Currently, many governments, both in the developed and developing worlds are investing insurmountable resources to understand their WoGM&ESs so that they demonstrate their accountability, transparency and promotion of use of evidence to keen stakeholders that include critical political opponents, donors, civil society and citizens [5,10,15,28 & 57].

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This research study was about investigating the structural and organisational arrangements of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for the public sector in Zambia. The scope was broad, covering the entire levels of the public sector operations ranging from national, line ministry, provincial to district and sub-district levels. Although it is a crucial first step to put in place a favourable policy environment as prerequisite for successful implementation of a thriving M&E regime for any country or organisation, it is important that the WoGM&ES' structural and organisational set-up is fully known in great detail.

The study design and methodology adopted to undertake this research was broadly qualitative and investigatory. It meant developing and using methods, tools and techniques appropriate to collect data and information suitable for the descriptive study objectives and questions formulated. Questionnaires and interview guides were sufficiently administered to respondents within Zambia's public sector as well as practitioners of M&E outside government institutions. In that regard, key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were used. Further, observations on the operations of public sector institutions and agencies were also made to collect information regarding how M&E functioned across Zambia's WoGM&ES. Therefore, both primary and secondary data sources were used in the study. A wealth of secondary data sources including various Government of Zambia reports and policy documents were consulted (national development plans, annual progress reports, Vision 2030, sector reports, economic reports & other expert reports). Furthermore, scholarly books, articles, discussion papers, working papers and research papers from experts and practitioners of M&E were used. More information was collected from primary sources, who comprised of government and non-state officials involved in M&E activities and institutional operations. Predominantly, the respondents were drawn from

government line ministries, parliament, cabinet office, office of the auditor general, provinces, districts, academia, civil society, and development partners and donors.

The analytical tool called LEADS which consists of a 5-point scoring scale was adopted in this study to guide data collection, collation and analysis (see Table 2 for LEADS details). Other analysis techniques used for synthesising and enriching the research discussion include the Nvivo software and thematic text analysis.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In this research study, the main objective was to assess the functionality of Zambia's WoGM&ES by investigating its structural and organisational arrangements. The aim was to assess and track what worked, what did not work well, and why. Doing so was to produce evidence-based suggestions for further learning and improvement. We adopted two analytical frameworks, which are; (i) the use of an assessment/diagnostic checklist comprised of ten (10) components for assessing the status of a WoGM&ES' structural and organisational arrangements. The components are from two categories of 'structure' and 'linkages' as follows: a) Structure—coordination and oversight; Joint sector reviews; Sector working groups; Ownership; and Incentives. b) Linkages—Linkage with statistical office; 'Horizontal' integration; 'Vertical' upward integration; 'Vertical' downward integration; and Link with projects. (ii) the use of the LEADS system, a five-point scoring system for each component in (i). The categories for the 5-point LEADS scoring system include: L (Little action: 1), E (Elements exist: 2), A (Action taken: 3), D (largely Developed: 4), and S (Sustainable: 5).

The assessment checklist in (i) was used together with the LEADS system, which is a matrix with components that correspond to the elements in the checklist. Therefore, the diagnostic checklist firstly was administered to all study respondents as well as used to review study documentation. Essentially, responses for each component in the diagnostic checklist were compiled in readiness for analysis. Secondly, the LEADS system was employed to assess the findings by way of scoring. The scoring was done following all responses obtained under each component in the checklist. Triangulation of methods and tools assisted to reduce the subjectivity of the information collected and discussed and analysis was enriched a great deal.

Under each of the 10 components, detailed questions were asked to generate evidence of the status of M&E implementation. This diagnostic checklist was used to conduct a comprehensive review using primary and secondary data sources from government documents and other expert sources. The LEADS scoring system was thereafter used to score each component (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Diagnostic checklist for country level M&E structural and organisational arrangements

No.	Component	Question
Organisation: Structure		
1	Coordination and oversight	Is there an appropriate institutional structure for coordination, support, oversight, analyses of data and feedback at the sector level? With different stakeholders? What is its location?
2	Joint Sector Review	Does the JSR cover accountability and learning needs for both substance and systemic issues? What is the place/linkage of the JSR within the sector M&E system? Does the JSR promote the reform agenda of the Paris Declaration?
3	Sector Working groups	Are sector working groups active in monitoring? Is their composition stable? Are various stakeholders represented?
4	Ownership	Does the demand for (strengthening of the) M&E system come from the sector ministry, a central ministry (e.g. ministry of planning or finance) or from external actors (e.g. donors)? Is there a highly placed 'champion' within the sector ministry who advocates for the (strengthening of the) M&E system?
5	Incentives	Are incentives (at central and local level) used to stimulate data collection and data use?
Organisation: Linkages		
6	Linkage with Statistical office	Is there a linkage between sector M&E and the statistical office? Is the role of the statistical office in sector M&E clear?
7	Horizontal integration	Are there M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions? Are these properly relayed to central sector M&E unit?
8	Vertical upward integration	Is the sector M&E unit properly relayed to the central M&E unit (PRS monitoring system)?
9	Vertical downward integration	Are there M&E units at decentralised levels and are these properly relayed to the sector M&E unit?
10	Link with projects	Is there any effort to relay with/ coordinate with donor M&E mechanism for projects and vertical funds in the sector?

Adapted from Holvoet & Renard, 2005

The second analytical tool used was the LEADS Scoring system which as earlier indicated corresponds with the diagnostic checklist above. Table 2 below shows the detailed LEADS scoring system showing its five-point scores (1-5).

Table 2: LEADS scoring method for assessing country M&E structural and organisational arrangements

N o	Topics	Question	Scores				
			1	2	3	4	5
Key area/ Component: Organisation - Structure							
1	Coordinat ion and oversight	Is there an appropriate institutional structure for coordination, support, oversight, analyses of data and feedback at the sector level? With different stakeholders? What is its location?	There is no institutional structure for coordination, support, oversight, analyses of data and feedback at sector level.	There is an institutional structure for coordination, support, oversight, analyses of data and feedback at the sector level, but not yet appropriate.	There is an appropriate institutional structure for coordination, support, oversight, analyses of data and feedback at the sector level. Different important stakeholders have been left out Its location is not high enough in the ministry's hierarchy	There is an appropriate institutional structure for coordination, support, oversight, analyses of data and feedback at the sector level. The most important stakeholders are involved Its location is not high enough in the ministry's hierarchy.	There is an appropriate institutional structure for coordination, support, oversight, analyses of data and feedback at the sector level. The most important stakeholders are involved. Its location is high enough in the ministry's hierarchy.
2	Joint Sector Review	Does the JSR cover accountability and learning needs for both substance and systemic issues? What is the place/linkage of the JSR within the sector M&E system? Does the JSR promote the reform agenda of the Paris Declaration?	JSRs are not taking place. or JSRs take place, but they do not cover accountability and learning needs for both substance and systemic issues. They are not linked with other M&E tools within the sector M&E system. They do not promote the Paris Declaration M&E reform agenda.	JSRs cover both accountability and learning needs for both substance and systemic issues. JSRs are not linked with other M&E tools within the sector M&E system. JSRs do not promote the Paris Declaration reform agenda. or JSRs do not cover accountability and learning needs for both substance and systemic issues. JSRs are linked with other M&E tools within the sector M&E system <i>and/or</i>	JSRs cover accountability and learning needs for both substance and systemic issues, but focus primarily on substance. JSRs are not yet well linked with other M&E tools within the sector M&E system. JSRs promote the Paris Declaration M&E reform agenda.	JSRs cover accountabilit y and learning needs for both substance and systemic issues, but focus primarily on substance. JSRs are linked with other M&E tools within the sector M&E system. JSRs promote the Paris Declaration M&E reform agenda.	JSRs cover accountability and learning needs for both substance and systemic issues. JSRs are linked with other M&E tools within the sector M&E system. JSRs promote the Paris Declaration M&E reform agenda

No	Topics	Question	Scores				
			1	2	3	4	5
				JSRs promote the Paris Declaration M&E reform agenda.			
3	Sector Working groups	Are sector working groups active in monitoring? Is their composition stable? Are various stakeholders represented?	There are no sector working groups. or There are sector working groups, but They are not active in monitoring. Their composition is unstable. Various relevant stakeholders are not represented.	Sector working groups are not very active in monitoring. Their composition is stable. Various stakeholders are represented.	Sector working groups are active in monitoring. Their composition is not stable. Various stakeholders are represented. or Sector working groups are active in monitoring. Their composition is stable. Various relevant stakeholders are not represented.	Sector working groups are active in monitoring. Their composition is not stable, but people who left are quickly replaced. Various stakeholders are represented.	Sector working groups are active in monitoring. Their composition is stable. Various stakeholders are represented.
4	Ownership	Does the demand for (strengthening of the) M&E system come from the sector ministry, a central ministry (e.g. ministry of planning or finance) or from external actors (e.g. donors)? Is there a highly placed 'champion' within the sector ministry who advocates for the (strengthening of the) M&E system?	The demand for (strengthening of the) M&E system does not come from the sector ministry or a central ministry. There is no highly placed 'champion' within the sector ministry who advocates for the (strengthening of the) M&E system.	The demand for (strengthening of the) M&E system does not come from the sector ministry, but from a central ministry. There is no highly placed 'champion' within the sector ministry who advocates for the (strengthening of the) M&E system.	The demand for (strengthening of the) M&E system comes from the sector ministry. There is no 'champion' within the sector ministry who advocates for the (strengthening of the) M&E system.	The demand for (strengthening of the) M&E system comes from the sector ministry and the central ministry. There is a 'champion' within the sector ministry who advocates for the (strengthening of the) M&E system, but not highly placed.	The demand for (strengthening of the) M&E system comes from the sector ministry and the central ministry. There is a highly placed 'champion' within the sector ministry who advocates for the (strengthening of the) M&E system.
5	Incentives	Are incentives (at central and local level) used to stimulate data collection and data use?	No incentives are used (at central and local level) to stimulate data collection and data use.	Incentives are used, but not at all levels and not yet effectively to really stimulate data	Incentives are used (at central and local level), but not yet effectively to really stimulate	Incentives are effectively used to stimulate data collection	Incentives are effectively used (at central and local level) to stimulate data collection and data use.

No	Topics	Question	Scores				
			1	2	3	4	5
				collection and data use.	data collection and data use.	and data use, but not at all levels.	
Key area/ Component: Organisation - Linkages							
6	Linkage with Statistical office	Is there a linkage between sector M&E and the statistical office? Is the role of the statistical office in sector M&E clear?	A linkage between the sector M&E unit and the statistical office does not exist. The role of the statistical office in sector M&E is not clear.	The role of the statistical office in sector M&E is clear on paper. In practice a linkage between the sector M&E unit and the statistical office does not exist (only ad hoc contacts).	There is a linkage between the sector M&E unit and the statistical office. The role of the statistical office in sector M&E is not entirely clear.	A linkage between the sector M&E unit and the statistical office exists, but could be stronger. The role of the statistical office in sector M&E is clear.	A linkage between the sector M&E unit and the statistical office exists. The role of the statistical office in sector M&E is clear.
7	Horizontal integration	Are there M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions? Are these properly relayed to central sector M&E unit?	No linkages between M&E units of sub-sectors with the sector M&E unit	M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions are hardly linked with the sector M&E unit.	M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions are linked with the sector M&E unit, but not properly.	M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions are linked with the sector M&E unit, but this link could be stronger.	M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions are properly linked with the sector M&E unit.
8	Vertical upward integration	Is the sector M&E unit properly relayed to the central M&E unit (PRS monitoring system)?	No linkages between the central M&E unit and sector M&E unit	The sector M&E unit is hardly linked with the central M&E unit.	The sector M&E unit is linked with the central M&E unit, but not properly.	The sector M&E unit is linked with the central M&E unit, but this link could be stronger.	The sector M&E unit is properly linked with the central M&E unit.
9	Vertical downward integration	Are there M&E units at decentralised levels and are these properly relayed to the sector M&E unit?	No linkages between M&E units at decentralised levels and the sector M&E unit	M&E units at decentralised levels are hardly linked with the sector M&E unit.	M&E units at decentralised levels are linked with the sector M&E unit, but not properly.	M&E units at decentralised levels are linked with the sector M&E unit, but this link could be stronger.	M&E units at decentralised levels are properly linked with the sector M&E unit.
10	Link with projects' M&E	Is there any effort to relay with/ coordinate with donor M&E mechanism for projects and vertical funds in the sector?	No efforts for coordination between development partner project M&E mechanisms and sector M&E unit.	There is limited coordination between sector M&E unit and development partner M&E mechanisms for projects and vertical	Coordination between sector M&E unit and development partner M&E mechanisms for projects and vertical funds in the sector exists, but it does not	Coordination between sector M&E unit and development partner M&E mechanism for projects and vertical funds in the sector exists	An institutionalised and properly functioning coordination exists between the sector M&E unit and development partner M&E mechanisms for

No	Topics	Question	Scores				
			1	2	3	4	5
				funds in the sector exist.	function properly.	and functions but it is not yet	sector projects and vertical funds.

Source: Adapted from Holvoet, Inberg and Sekirime, 2013

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Summary presentation of diagnostic results

The diagnostic findings for the status of Zambia's WoGM&ES on the structural and organisational arrangements are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary presentation of diagnostic results

Component	Topic	Leads Scores
Organisation		Overall 2 (Elements exists)
Structure		2 (elements exists)
	Coordination & oversight	2 (elements exists)
	Joint sector reviews	1 (Little action)
	Sector working groups	2 (elements exists)
	Ownership	2 (elements exists)
	Incentives	1 (Little action)
Linkages		2 (elements exists)
	Linkage with statistical office	3 (action taken)
	'Horizontal' integration	2 (elements exists)
	'Vertical' upward integration	2 (elements exists)
	'Vertical' downward integration	1 (Little action)
	Link with projects	3 (action taken)

Source: Diagnostic study score results compiled by authors (2020)

The organisation dimension (structure and linkages combined) had an overall score of 1.9, (rounded to a score of 2) entailing that only elements of M&E existed. Further, organisational linkages scored better, with an average 2-point score, than the organisational structure, with an average score of 1.6 (though rounded to a score of 2). Holistically, the M&E structural and organisational arrangements of Zambia's WoGM&ES seems to be positive given the status of 'elements exist'. But this status was weak compared to the desired LEADS score of point 5 (sustainable). Interestingly however, intra-component status of progress varies across different topics. The linkage with statistical office and link with projects components scored higher (point 3 each) while joint sector reviews, incentives and vertical-downward integration scored lowest (point 1 each). This is crucial to note because details of what was working, not working and reasons why could lead to actions that may help build and strengthen the country's WoGM&ES.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

A fuller discussion and analysis of the results follows below to appreciate the details of the findings. The ten (10) components are used as headings to maintain consistency and conformity with the study analytical frameworks of the diagnostic checklist and LEADS scoring system.

Organisation

The dimension of 'organisation' is categorised into 'structure' and 'linkages'. The review focused on the institutional flow of information structurally and checked the existence of functional M&E linkages.

Structure

The average score of 1.6 (rounded to 2) was given to all the components contained under the organisation dimension. The importance of putting in place a well-institutionalised structure for M&E is based on providing credibility of information with a view to satisfying the needs of accountability, feedback loops and learning [3,4,13]. To assess the M&E structural arrangements, five topics were used, namely coordination and oversight, joint sector reviews, working groups, ownership, and incentives.

Coordination and oversight

A score of 2.0 was given for the coordination and oversight sub-dimension, signifying that elements exist. Coordination and oversight make up one of the important functions assessed under the organisational structure sub-component of the checklist. Critical questions that guided the review were: Is there an appropriate institutional structure for coordination, support, oversight, analyses of data and feedback at different levels? With which stakeholders? What is its location?

As a coordination and oversight arrangement for the implementation of NDPs, Zambia had three major aspects: oversight structures (Parliament, Office of the Auditor General and House of Chiefs); policy, coordination and implementation agencies (Cabinet, Cabinet Office, MNDP, MOF, sectors, provinces & districts); and advisory or decision-making structures (National Development Coordinating Committee (NDCC), Committee of Permanent Secretaries, Cluster Advisory Groups (CAGs), Provincial Development Coordinating Committees (PDCCs), District Development Coordinating Committees (DDCCs), and Ward Development Committees (WDCs) [18]. MNDP provided the coordination oversight role for M&E. This entailed encouraging compliance within the holistic government administration. To that extent, it was ascertained that the ministry was active and had a division that was responsible for the coordination of the M&E function and provided guidelines and M&E training and backstopping to MPSAs. MNDP was a suitable choice in terms of location and leadership because it held the mandate to provide MPSAs with incentives to participate in the M&E system. It was in charge of national development planning and worked closely with MOF. MNDP played a pivotal role in the coordination of national development planning and implementation, which entailed tracking progress and government performance to ensure achievement of planned outcomes. In fact, the MNDP comprised two divisions: Development Planning Division, and Monitoring and Evaluation Division, each headed by a permanent secretary [18,23]. In addition, Cabinet Office had a custodian role for the national M&E system and was working in collaboration with MNDP. However, the role of Cabinet Office in the M&E function was reportedly not distinct as there were no apparent frameworks to guide MPSAs in undertaking policy reviews and evaluations. For instance, the National Performance Framework (NPF) was still in draft form, yet it was supposed to be the guideline for measuring general government performance by function and in line with the national objectives or goals articulated in the national vision [29].

However, at line ministry level, M&E coordination arrangements were not clarified. The diagnosis found that only ad hoc arrangements on undertaking M&E functions existed. Although M&E

exercises were implied in the line ministerial mandates and structures, much was to be desired on the practical side. This scenario existed at decentralised levels at provincial, district and sub-district. In most sectors, provinces and districts, there were weak or no M&E structures at all. Thus, M&E activities were neglected or downplayed at those levels of public service delivery points. Strategic plans for line ministries also indicated that M&E activities were merely ad hoc and poorly embedded in the planning structures of many sectors – independent structures were never in place. Consequently, even when there was a fairly strong apex structure (that is, MNDP) to support the M&E function, a country-wide transformation of M&E remained far-fetched in Zambia with the current organisational gaps. This is because the WoGM&ES needed to be operational at all levels—vertically and horizontally. Currently, it was acknowledged that weak M&E structures and culture characterised line ministries, provinces and districts across Zambia's WoGM&ES [18,25,43,46 & 51]. Furthermore, as a coordination and oversight institution, MNDP did not have full staff establishment to effectively play the role of leadership and coordination of planning and M&E functions across the public sector. For the ministry to play its role of design, coordination and implementation of the WoGM&ES, it was reported that it used mostly technical and financial assistance from DPs. This was done by facilitating the engagement of experts to undertake assignments and mobilising stakeholders to provide input into the process. In addition, MNDP mobilised financial resources necessary for the functioning of the M&E mechanism at national level. Weak M&E culture and structures characterised line ministries, provinces and districts institutionally.

It was acknowledged that there was political commitment to the national M&E system from government. For instance, Cabinet Office initiated the proposal to develop a government-wide performance management system as a platform for the whole of government M&E system (WoGM&ES). The type of high level political support involved a policy statement from the presidency on commitment to establish robust M&E systems across MPSAs. Political commitment to the WoGM&ES in line ministries, provinces and districts was reported to be mixed. Some sectors merely acknowledged having political commitment towards M&E without giving details, while others did not indicate whether such commitment existed. Others gave some explanation for their political level institutional commitments to M&E. Some MPSAs were reported to have planned and provided budget allocations to establish their institutional M&E systems, which were meant to help interface with the WoGM&ES. Demand for M&E in MPSAs was reported to have improved in the last few years after government increased the focus on M&E through the planning, budgeting and reporting processes, especially by the coordinating MNDP and the presidential quarterly reporting. In some MPSAs, one rarely heard top political leadership referring to WoGM&ES and even M&E issues pertaining to the possible benefits. Equally, there was lack of appreciation by political leaders of M&E information as they pushed for development programmes in their institutions. If they did, one would expect the 'results' language and emphasis be made by top leaderships. This negative situation was found at all levels—national, line ministry, provincial and district.

Another aspect was to assess whether champions were making the case for a common M&E system across government. It was reported that these champions were present, though to a limited extent. Officials from the MNDP, the apex institution coordinating the WoGM&ES, have been advocating for a robust and integrated system for M&E at all levels of government operation. Further, officials from Cabinet Office and MOF have reinforced the call for a stronger WoGM&ES for the public sector. These champions were currently advocating for the approval by cabinet of the draft national M&E policy, draft national performance framework, and the M&E G-wide MIS. They also support or

provide backstopping to MPSAs in the development of M&E frameworks and systems to facilitate improved M&E functionality. Further, the champions were pushing for evidence-based decision and policy making and reporting on performance to the presidency. However, the M&E department at MNDP was under staffed, leading to reduced capacities to oversee M&E functions for the public sector.

Further, despite the relatively positive feedback, another aspect revealed that while explicit support at high political levels in MPSAs existed, political leadership and champions kept on changing, making the case for M&E weaker in most MPSAs. Owing to low or, worse, non-political appreciation of M&E information, political leaderships continued to pursue development initiatives that served only 'political interests', even when evidence showed otherwise. Either political leaders did not understand the importance of M&E or they simply did not have support for evidence-based policy and decision making in their governance pursuits – possibly for their own political reasons. Therefore, many gaps in M&E technical know-how and utilisation of evidence-based data and information were reported across the WoGM&ES with weaker political championship and support for a strengthened system for M&E in the public sector, despite other leaders wanting to lead their institutions towards results-based management (RBM) and poverty reduction through functional arrangements.

Joint sector reviews

A score of 1.0 was given for the sub-dimension of joint sector reviews (JSRs), denoting little action taken. The assessment checked whether the JSRs covered accountability and learning needs for substance and systemic issues. In Zambia, JSRs also known as joint annual reviews (JARs) were reported to take place predominantly in the health and education sectors. In other sectors, JARs were rare or there were none at all. However, these JARs did not cover accountability and learning needs for substance and systemic issues. JSRs involved activities that were held collaboratively by key stakeholders in a sector or development cluster. The presence and functionality of these reviews were key to determining a successful M&E system and the diagnostic checklist attaches great emphasis to them. There was no evidence of linkages with other M&E tools in sector M&E systems. In that regard, the existing JSRs would not promote the 2005 Paris Declaration M&E reform agenda [13,15,21,28,30 & 33].

Sector working groups

The sub-dimension of sector working groups scored 2.0, meaning that elements existed. Committees and working groups to facilitate coordination among stakeholders across the WoGM&ES were in existence. The 7NDP had clearly defined coordination mechanisms to support the implementation of the plan. Cluster advisory groups (CAGs) were in place on the result areas of the 7NDP, which played the role of coordinating national planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (at least as defined). These working groups had been established to facilitate coordination among stakeholders across the WoGM&ES. CAGs were said to be management structures embedded in sectors, provinces and districts to monitor and report on the plan performance. Also, the FNDP, SNDP and R-SNDP had referred to the presence and the role of sector advisory groups (SAGs). In the 7NDP, the SAGs were reformulated as CAGs. Although reformulated and restructured in composition and extended mandate, CAGs were meant to play a structured management function in overseeing the implementation of the NDPs. Other working groups included technical working groups (TWGs), National Development Coordinating Committee

(NDCC), provincial development coordinating committees (PDCCs), district development coordinating committees (DDCCs) and ward development committees (WDCs). All these worked to support NDP coordination and implementation.

The composition of stakeholders in these working groups was currently said to be stable, although there could be issues around their commitment and active participation. However, there was an important challenge concerning lack of appropriate political party representation and participation in the CAGs and other bodies. No clear mention of interests and stakeholder relationships was given in the reviews. This caused a problem in implementing what was suggested and recommended in these groups, given that political power took centre stage in decision and policy making in Zambia. Thus, when political champions are outside these groups, it becomes an issue of great concern to the strengthening of M&E practice in the country. In addition, there was a requirement for further strengthening in terms of capacities (financial, human, technical, etc.). Currently, the CAGs were reporting progress to the president quarterly, while the other bodies did not have fixed meetings and reporting schedules. In terms of stakeholder representation at appropriate levels to reflect and ensure commitment to having a functional WoGM&ES, it was found that various stakeholders were represented at appropriate levels. For example, membership of the CAGs was at director and permanent secretary level and other technical staff from MPSAs and partner organisations. However, there was a lack of clearly defined functioning secretariats for the M&E function in the CAGs. The only secretariat in place played the role of 7NDP planning, implementation and to some extent monitoring. The role of secretariat in the CAGs was weak when it came to M&E function. Hard issues about M&E were unlikely to be even discussed (e.g. negative results about an ongoing or ended project). If any, they may have been treated as secondary to the business of CAGs – leading to a total lack of desired accountability, feedback and learning functions in the implementation of the NDPs.

Further, in the APRs, it was reported that only a few SAGs had been meeting consistently. In some cases, SAGs had not met since they were created [16,18,19,23,25,26,27 & 56]. For those SAGs that did meet, little was mentioned about M&E issues/arrangements in the meetings. The CAGs were still being re-organised and nothing could be said as yet in terms of their operation and effectiveness vis-à-vis their monitoring activities. A further weakness was that currently; meetings were not organised in a way that supported coordination. The meetings were not supported by a fixed schedule for a quarter or a given year. There was an element of ad hoc management of the process. It was not predictable when the next meeting would take place and what issues would be discussed in the next set of CAG meetings. Similarly, no substantive and adequate information went to support elements of coordination in the WoGM&ES. There was no evidence of cluster coordination mechanisms in the form of clear information flow systems among stakeholders. In any case, CAG members reported that the central agency (MNDP) was doing some work that was supposed to have been undertaken by CAG members in an attempt to promote broader participation and horizontal coordination and integration.

Ownership

The ownership sub-dimension was scored 2.0 to imply that elements existed. This structural organisation sub-component checks whether the demand for strengthening the WoGM&ES came from the entire public sector, sector ministries, a central ministry or from external actors. This aspect is concerned with 'ownership' issues of M&E functions and processes [1,46,53]. Thus, the

review established that the demand for strengthening the M&E system did not come from sector ministries (except in a few cases, such as the health and education sectors, where donor influence was predominant), but from a central ministry (MNDP and to some extent MOF). Some uncoordinated demands for M&E from cabinet, Cabinet Office and the presidency also existed. In the period of implementing the FNDP, SNDP and R-SNDP, the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation under the MOF was the apex institution that promoted M&E across government.

As for the line ministries, although some sectors had internal demands for strengthened M&E functions, the majority depended on the 'push' from the MNDP. Activities initiated by the MNDP to propel strengthened M&E function at national, sector, provincial and district level included the nomination of M&E focal point persons from across MPSAs, spearheading the development of a national M&E policy, articulation of the national and sector performance frameworks (NPF and SPFs), and the development of a web-based management monitoring system (MMS) [4,7,26,28 & 56].

However, most of these efforts were donor supported and created a risk in sustainability of a culture and practice of M&E. In addition, the creation of the new ministry (MNDP) with a division mandated to coordinate M&E functions was another important effort at national level. However, these efforts are yet to manifest in positive M&E practices and growing culture in government and beyond. Thus, ownership of M&E systems remains a challenge in decentralised structures and across Zambia's public sector.

Incentives

The score given to the incentives sub-dimension was 1.0 (that is, little action taken). Incentives form a fundamental success element in an M&E system, particularly in an organisational structure. According to [53], it is crucial to review whether incentives existed (e.g. at central and local/decentralised level), and if they were used to stimulate data collection and data use.

The review of Zambia's WoGM&ES showed that no incentives were available or used at central and decentralised levels to stimulate data collection and data use. The NDPs and sector strategic plans (SSPs) that were reviewed did not mention incentivising data collection and data utilisation at any level. The only reference was that data collection and utilisation would be done at all levels of government with no mention of possible incentives [2,12,18,19,23 & 29].

Linkages

An average score of 2.2 was given for all the sub-dimensions under the linkages component. Thus, in terms of M&E organisational linkages, five key sub-dimensions of assessment included checking the linkages of M&E with the national statistical office; and whether there were linkages between separate M&E functions at national, sector, provincial and district level. This entailed diagnosing the 'horizontal' integration, 'vertical' upward integration and the 'vertical' downward integration, and linkages with projects.

Linkage with statistical office

A score of 3.0 was given to the sub-dimension on linkage with statistical office, representing action taken. Zambia has a functioning national statistics institution, called the Central Statistical Office (CSO), which was formed to provide official statistics in the country. CSO had a mandate to produce

official statistics for the country's socio-economic development. Further, CSO is a structure or a department under the MNDP, which houses the Monitoring and Evaluation Division and Department of M&E. CSO was currently the platform where data producers coordinated their activities, common standards and principles and data-related issues. The location of the M&E function and the statistical function under the same apex ministry (MNDP) was crucial because linkages of the two would be expected to be stronger. However, there was no national statistical master plan in place to provide overall statistical architecture in Zambia. CSO currently had a draft strategy, namely the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) 2014–2018. However, with regard to the consistence of the WoGM&ES with other plans and processes for the development of the statistical system, this was done only partially. This weakness was attributed to the NSDS, which was not fully implemented to provide holistic statistical support function to all stakeholders. Therefore, it was stressed that when the WoGM&ES and NSDS were developed and fully implemented, consistence with other plans and processes would be possible.

Whether there were linkages between the WoGM&ES and the CSO, the assessment gathered that there were notable linkages between M&E units in government and the statistical office. However, the role of CSO in the entire public sector M&E was not entirely clear. Partly, the diagnostic exercise found that the role of CSO in the WoGM&ES was that of standard setting. It was currently weak, but had to be done because CSO was mandated to produce official statistics. It was also reported that CSO played a technical role in the WoGM&ES. Further, in some line ministries, the role of CSO in supporting M&E activities was reportedly clear. For example, in the agriculture, health, education, labour and finance sectors, CSO undertook surveys and studies to support development programmes. However, in some sectors, the role of CSO in supporting M&E functions remained unclear. This also applied to other decentralised structures such as provinces and districts. At provincial and districts level, CSO had a presence in terms of offices but there was weak evidence of using CSO information in development-related decision making and processes at those levels. No clear evidence was found, particularly for planning, budgeting and implementation [12,19,35,29,36,40,44,47,50 & 52]. There were overlaps between the WoGM&ES and CSO. The WoGM&ES collected data and administered it within the system without following the fundamental standards of providing official statistics and information. Further, there was no holistic understanding of the way in which the two needed to complement each other. No harmonisation and collaboration strategy was in place to guide how the work by CSO would systematically inform the WoGM&ES.

In addition, it was acknowledged that there were potential rivalries and conflicts between the WoGM&ES and CSO. As stated, the M&E system generated and consumed statistics solely from administrative processes without statistical standards. Integration of the WoGM&ES and the national statistical system (NSS) it was reported that it was weak or non-existent. This was mostly alluded to the newness of the WoGM&ES. There was also mention that CSO faced financial, technical and skills challenges and hence unable to supply all the required statistics to the WoGM&ES. Thus, the integration between the two systems could be described as partial. Further, modern technologies of handling massive statistics remained a challenge for CSO. As a result of capacity problems, government funded most of the statistical activities with considerable support from DPs on selected statistical activities [54,56].

It was also reported that government had a legal and operational framework for its statistical activities. The 1964 Census and Statistics Act, Chapter 127 of the Laws of Zambia was in place despite being acknowledged as weak and outdated. This legislation gave powers to the creation and functionality of CSO. Mention was also made of a number of suggested frameworks to strengthen legal provisions for statistics. Among these were proposals to revise the act and to implement a statistics strategy, namely the NSDS. However, there were no technical standards and guidelines with methodologies for all entities and units in charge of producing statistics within the statistical agency (CSO). No such standards existed; instead, there were varying and uncoordinated practices depending on the unit (within CSO) and experience. With regard to the statistical data being broad enough to measure all indicators related to the goals of NDPs, it was reported to be limited. Although such data was broadly available, administrative data was always needed to supplement it. There was cautionary acknowledgement however, that most of the administrative data was usually being collected without following agreed standards and procedures.

Further, it was reported that CSO was not mandated to undertake statistical analysis and that instead, its role was restricted to providing official statistics. As for the analysis function, the study gathered that statistical users were responsible to do it. However, there was capacity for data analysis within CSO to some extent, but marketing and education strategies on the importance of such information were lacking. In addition, there was acknowledgement and some evidence that government agencies took into account performance indicators from CSO for decision making. Nonetheless, the utilisation of statistical data from CSO was seen mainly during the formulation of NDPs and less for informing decision and policy making, except by MOF, though also in uncoordinated instances.

In addition, the data collection activities of CSO, its technical platform, its standards, and its definitions were reported to be poorly coordinated with the other activities of the WoGM&ES. Support from CSO was given only to selected government line ministries and departments (MPSAs). Essentially, it was reviewed that the coordination was not structured though it was in place. Thus, it was suggested that the need to structure and strengthen the coordination function was urgently required to implement a robust and stronger WoGM&ES for Zambia's public sector. CSO was reported not to have an M&E unit, hence no formalised linkage with the WoGM&ES existed. Where such elements of linkage existed, it was on ad hoc basis with mainly only M&E focal point persons available. Currently, the linkages were reported to be very weak and in some cases almost non-existent across MPSAs. At the moment, there were units for statistics/focal point persons in the provinces while planners undertook M&E tasks in an ad hoc manner. Thus, it was gathered that some line ministries had M&E units/sections/departments whereby provinces and districts had planning units (provincial planning units (PPUs) and district planning offices (DPOs), respectively). Only plans were reported to be in place to strengthen most of these linkages. It was reported that when the WoGM&ES will be fully developed, data from M&E units across MPSAs will be automatically accessed from the WoGM&ES which will act as central depository. Therefore, it was gathered that no well-established linkages between the WoGM&ES with other M&E units were currently in place. This was also true of linkages between statistics and M&E functions across the public sector. Further, these expectations were only envisaged to be realised once the National M&E Policy and other proposed reforms were in effect.

However, it was acknowledged that issues of incompatibility such as differing definitions, systems, geographic coverage, and so on did exist in the current M&E arrangements. Most of the M&E terminologies and processes were understood differently by different stakeholders – leading to some confusion over interpretation in implementation. For instance, under the MOH, catchment areas and population varied with those reported under CSO. Plans to harmonise them in the WoGM&ES were reported to be in place.

Horizontal integration

For the horizontal integration sub-dimension, a score of 2.0 was given, meaning that elements exist. The assessment checklist also places an emphasis on M&E integration (horizontal and vertical). Under horizontal integration, the diagnostic questions of focus are: Are there M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions? Are these properly relayed to central sector M&E unit? [1,53]. The diagnosis has revealed that M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions were hardly linked with sector M&E units (in most MPSAs), thereby undermining the promotion or strengthening of the 'horizontal' M&E integration. In the review of NDPs and sector strategic plans, provincial and district plans (interviews done as well), there was mention of only few and weak presence of functional M&E in most line ministries, provinces and districts. This was not at variance with other study findings which concluded that in most countries, there were sector M&E systems at line ministry and other decentralised levels. However, these were mostly of very doubtful quality and problematic everywhere. Linking up such sector units to the central unit was mostly only partially satisfactory and should be one of the major issues on the reform agenda almost everywhere (Holvoet & Renard, 2005). What had come out clearly, though, in many of these structures were the current efforts to establish units/sections to fully take up M&E responsibilities. At present, only ad hoc M&E arrangements existed, undertaken mainly by planning units as added responsibility. No incentives accompanied these extra M&E duties accrued to the responsible planning staff. Where the M&E functions have been developed a great deal (for example in the health and education sectors), the efforts were driven by donors [2,12,13,18,19,23 & 29]. These challenges have led to weakened horizontal M&E integration in Zambia's WoGM&ES. To that extent, M&E units in different sub-sectors and semi-governmental institutions were reported as not taking the liaison function seriously. This, nevertheless, was despite other MPSAs being moderately active stakeholders in the WoGM&ES.

It was reported that the requirement to monitor and evaluate was inscribed in the budgets of some MPSAs and in the job descriptions, but only for planning staff, who were expected to undertake M&E activities on top of their core planning responsibilities. However, it was established that the requirement to monitor and evaluate was never inscribed in the institutional structures. More so, the institutional design of the M&E was found to lack explanation of the capacities of MPSAs. Furthermore, only weak evidence was acknowledged with regard to whether line ministries utilised M&E information as a basis for their own planning and management. In any case, such information was reported not to be well structured to inform decision-making. However, there was limited evidence concerning the use of data to inform poverty-related policy at sectoral level. Thus, it becomes a matter of concern that some line ministries that were considered to be doing well in M&E functions were lagging in the utilisation of information in their custody. Again, these kinds of discrepancies prove the assertion that a lack of results-based management (RBM) orientation still affects Zambia's WoGM&ES [8,22,25,31,42,49,53 & 55].

Concerns regarding data quality and relevance were acknowledged to be very significant elements across line ministries and for the entire WoGM&ES. This view was strongly stressed to say that, since the M&E processes were ad hoc, unstructured and not guided by strict data quality assurance protocols, the data quality and relevance issues could be compromised. It was reported that the low funding and implementation of the NSDS was one example of weak statistical base towards supporting a functional WoGM&ES with credible data and information. Also, there was mention that line ministries lacked trained staff in data methodological issues, hence, weakened institutional capacity to raise, know and demand for certain data quality. A data or statistical regime change was called upon in Zambia that would produce and assure users of data quality, reliability and relevance. In that regard, the approval and realisation of the NSDS under CSO remains an anchor to the evolution of national and subnational statistics in Zambia. Only when statistical data were credible, would the WoGM&ES make an essential contribution to the development process of the country through feeding information into decision- and policy-making processes [11,17,22,37 & 41]. Further, since the WoGM&ES was reported to be in its infancy, it was gathered that line ministries did not rely on it for various reasons and weaknesses.

Vertical upward integration

A score of 2.0 was given for vertical upward integration – representing elements exist. The assessment checklist separates vertical upward integration and vertical downward integration. For vertical upward integration, the guiding question is: Are the decentralised M&E units of Zambia's WoGM&ES properly relayed to the central M&E unit or agency? The diagnostic review found that most decentralised M&E units were hardly linked with the central M&E agency. The WoGM&ES for Zambia had a fragmented structure. In a few line ministries and provinces, there were fragmented and ad hoc M&E arrangements. These arrangements took different forms and sizes. In some instances, there were M&E units, while in others only M&E focal point persons existed. In many of these structures, officers from the planning units were the ones who mainly carried out M&E activities as mere added responsibilities. Further, several line ministries, and almost all provinces and districts had absolutely no established M&E units or structures [19,45].

As a result, the mix in the presence or availability of M&E functions across structures in Zambia's public sector created a weak and in some cases complete absence of M&E vertical upward integration. Thus information flows from district to province and to line ministry – all the way to national or central M&E agency had become weakened. For instance, there was mention of effort to implement a web-based management monitoring system (MMS) spearheaded by MNDP to link up government business through online and real-time updates by all MPSAs. This effort was commendable, but the commitment by stakeholders had been reported to be weak, giving a practical challenge to success [18,19,23 & 29]. Furthermore, the assessment found isolated, fragmented and uncoordinated efforts all contributing to a weak M&E functions across MPSAs. Some individual line ministries, such as health, education, agriculture, and labour, had made progress in developing their own stand-alone M&E arrangements. In such cases, these efforts were not linked to the central M&E unit/agency in the MNDP [6,9,14,24,25 & 26].

Vertical downward integration

Little action taken, with a score of 1.0 was given to the sub-dimension on vertical downward integration. The vertical downward integration was reported that the M&E units at decentralised levels were hardly linked with central or sector level M&E units. As expressed above, weak

arrangements and operationalisation of M&E functions at various levels of the WoGM&ES had led to poor vertical downward integration as well. The M&E linkages and information flows from central to line ministry to provincial and all the way to district level were reported to be weak and uncoordinated. It was established that coordination in form of liaison with local government structures was in place and embedded in the WoGM&ES. Both provinces and districts were part of the WoGM&ES. The liaison was reported to be in existence mainly through and within the PDCCs and DDCCs and to a lesser extent WDCs, in which the function of M&E was said to be embedded. However, it was reported that the coordination of the M&E function across all PDCCs, DDCCs and WDCs was not adequately performed.

In particular, local governments were reported not to be participating actively in the WoGM&ES, despite the existing linkages through DDCCs and WDCs. Local authorities were currently not engaged in the government M&E system, while provinces were engaged remotely or participating through PDCCs. This undesirable situation was attributed to the central agency (MNDP) not having sufficient staff capacity to mentor, backstop and offer support to lower structures such as local governments. Equally, the lack of decentralised M&E function across the public sector hampered the strengthening of the WoGM&ES at those lower but critical levels (that is, district and sub-district levels). The role of incentives in M&E is significant, especially in the early stages of building and strengthening a WoGM&ES. With correct selection and targeted implementation, incentives work as a motivational factor for stakeholders to supply M&E information and at the same time demand M&E results to inform various decision- and policy-making processes.

To worsen the situation, no form of incentive was reported to be placed in the coordination framework at local government and provincial level to support the strengthening of the M&E function. Suffice to say, there was no institutional design for the WoGM&ES to elaborate the capacities of local governments. The liaisons with line ministries and other agencies in terms of their functionality within the WoGM&ES were reported to be weak and ad hoc. The MNDP was reported to be currently trying to push for a common framework for M&E at sector/line ministry level. This effort was being piloted in the ministries of labour and agriculture. Liaison between MNDP and line ministries had mostly been limited and restricted to reporting requirements. Only when there were activities such as the production of APRs, presidential quarterly reports, and CAG reports – did the MNDP M&E department provide some liaison and backstopping to line ministries. Coordinated liaison was lacking between the two levels and this created a huge gap in terms of capacity to build and strengthen M&E across the WoGM&ES. This signified a lower priority attached to M&E within the WoGM&ES. This then posed a huge challenge to building and sustaining a stronger system for M&E across the public sector in Zambia. Something different had to be done if such gloomy M&E functionality outlooks were to be transformed into positive effects in future.

Further, a number of data types were described that they were often requested or would be relevant to local agencies and governments. These included district indicators on socio-economic and governance sectors, project funding and implementation data and project inventories for various sectors. In addition, they needed information on beneficiaries of government interventions at provincial and district level. Information relating generally to poverty, water and sanitation, and the prevalence of disease was frequently sought by stakeholders. Much of such data were demanded through the living conditions monitoring surveys (LCMSs) conducted by CSO (for example revenue generation, land titling, and access to assets by women and youth). Currently, no indicators in the

NDPs were defined at provincial and district level. This gap had been acknowledged for a long time, but little practical effort had been put in place to resolve it. No provincial and district-specific indicators existed in the 7NDP. In addition, no feedback and information flows to local government and service providers from the WoGM&ES were in place. However, CSO was reported to have been sharing its statistical data with the local government agencies through its monthly statistical bulletin (though only to limited audience). The MNDP expressed some plans to extend the functionality of the WoGM&ES to local governments. Although conceptually, there were indications in the institutional arrangements for NDP implementation on how information flows were expected to move horizontally and vertically, there were currently no practical steps to actualise the intentions.

As a result, there was no evidence concerning the use of such M&E information at local level as an incentive system to improve the performance of service providers. Currently there was apparently no comprehensive performance management system that promoted the use of M&E information at local government level. In terms of whether there was some adaptation to the needs, timing and form of outputs provided to local governments and agencies, it was found that none existed. There was no direct interface between local government and line ministries or central agencies in sharing information on programme/project outputs.

Link with projects

In the sub-dimension of link with projects, a score of 3.0 was given denoting action taken. The last aspect considered under the organisational linkages sub-component looks at the M&E linkages with development projects implemented at various levels of the public sector. Precisely, the checklist asks: Is there any effort to relay/coordinate with donor M&E mechanisms for projects and vertical funds in the public sector M&E arrangements? The assessment results have shown that coordination between sector M&E units and development partners' M&E mechanisms for projects and vertical funds in the sectors did exist, but did not function properly. More concretely, sectors such as the education and health had a huge presence of donors whose M&E arrangements were unified with those of the donors (though evidence was weak). Nevertheless, these linkages were specific and limited to donor-funded interventions [13,25].

CONCLUSION

To assess the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) status of structural and organisational arrangements of Zambia's public sector was the goal of this research study. Country systems for monitoring and evaluation the world over have become more emphasised and prioritised as tools that assist to demonstrate development results to stakeholders. Use of evidence in development processes and spaces has become a norm among donors, parliaments, civil society and the general public. Increasingly, citizens are no longer pressing for hard evidence on how the actual resources have been used, instead, they demand for a demonstration of what improvements in their lives had occurred resulting from various development interventions. This means pressure is not only for accountability and transparency of resources utilisation, but to further show the consequences (positive or negative) of such interventions. M&E systems are designed to bridge this empirical gap by providing the needed evidence concerning implemented projects, programmes and policies.

A comprehensive diagnostic analysis was conducted on Zambia's whole-of-government monitoring and evaluation system (WoGM&ES) and the status of M&E structural and organisational

arrangements were found to be weak in general and specific perspectives. Only elements existed for M&E in government's system for M&E structurally and organisationally. More efforts are needed to strengthen elements such as coordination and oversight; working groups; ownership; incentives; and linkage with statistical office; horizontal integration; and vertical downward integration. To address most of the weaknesses identified in the WoGM&ES, all public sector institutions may need to speed up the implementation of the 2018 National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Stakeholders will require to work collaboratively and strengthen the country's accountability framework and practice. The culture of results across government and the general citizenry will also go a long way in supplying and demanding for evidence, thereby helping to create a stronger WoGM&ES for Zambia. At best, Zambia requires M&E champions at all levels of structural and organisational arrangements who will advocate and demand for the generation and utilisation of evidence in development policy- and decision-making processes.

Additionally, the study challenges further research to be undertaken on the subject matter of government-wide M&E system functionality. Political and technical aspects for M&E can hinder or help to build and sustain a thriving WoGM&ES. Other non- state actors like the Zambia Monitoring and Evaluation Association (Zambia's community of practice in M&E), donors, civil society and the academia will need to play a collaborative and networking role and assist the public sector to enhance the function of M&E. That way, the Zambia shall pursue a results-based management (RBM) approach through a robust and functional WoGM&ES.

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