

Session Summary

PARALLEL SESSION 15: LEVERAGING ECD FOR STRENGTHENING TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE 4 September 2024, 3:30 – 5:00 PM

SESSION TAKE AWAY

Participants will learn about different evaluation capacity development (ECD) initiatives from Asian Development Bank (ADB) and German Institute for Development evaluation (DEval). While both institutions support national evaluation capacities, their approaches are quite different and complement each other well. In sum, the session combines sharing knowledge and experience with the aim to start a conversation with participants about potential future collaboration to strengthen ECD in countries across the region.

SUBTHEME

Driving Change: Leveraging Evaluation for Organizational Transformation

CASE STUDY PRESENTER: SONIA CHAND SANDHU, PRINCIPAL EVALUATION SPECIALIST, ADB

1. Harmonization and Application (?). One major challenge is aligning the evaluation criteria between ADB and the government. Although the same criteria are used, their interpretation varies across different situations and sectors. The goal is to harmonize these criteria while adhering to specific principles outlined in the guidelines.
2. Efforts are focused on institutionalizing ECD-related curriculum with governments and academia, developing sector-oriented capacity building programs, and creating effective metrics for assessing ECD programs. In addition, fostering partnerships, enhancing self-paced learning tools, and creating ECD networks are crucial for sustainable development.

LEAD PRESENTER: SVEN HARTEN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEVAL

1. DEval focuses on strengthening national evaluation systems through inclusive and participatory methods. Their approach involves creating an enabling environment, building networks of evaluators, and applying systems thinking to enhance evaluation capacities. Collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders provide diverse perspectives and improve the overall evaluation ecosystem.
2. Developing national evaluation capacity is a gradual process that requires time for systems to adapt and stabilize after reforms. DEval's approach emphasizes the importance of context-sensitive, participatory methods, and the need for flexibility. However, challenges include the resource-intensive nature of these methods and the difficulty in scaling them. Transferring experiences across different regions poses challenges, yet it is essential for supporting country-led evaluations and strengthening national evaluation systems.

PANELIST/DISCUSSANT #1: ERDENECHIMEG (CHIMGEE) ULZIISUREN, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT, MONGOLIAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION (MEA)

Session Flow

1. In Mongolia, there is very low public understanding about evaluation. The professional system, which includes having a professional association, formal and non-formal education in evaluation, and a code of ethics, is the strongest emerging aspect. The MEA is working hard to improve governance, create foundational documents, and develop evaluation capacity through short-term courses and other initiatives. It aims to professionalize evaluation and strengthen national evaluation systems, with a diverse membership and various programs to support learning and capacity building.
2. A key factor in MEA's success includes having former high-ranking government officials on our board, which facilitated government engagement and advocacy for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). This includes the establishment of a dedicated advocacy group to promote the value of evaluation to policymakers. However, challenges remain, such as the lack of a comprehensive national evaluation system and systematic training, which hopefully can be addressed through collaboration with development partners. MDBs and international organizations have the opportunity to provide support at the national level, especially with the growing interest in evaluation among young professionals, despite limited resources.

PANELIST/DISCUSSANT #2: SAGARIKA BOGAHAWATTA, ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

1. The Sri Lanka national policy on evaluation was approved in 2018, but the implementation framework was launched only in September 2023. The Department of Project Management and Monitoring took on the responsibility of rolling out the first Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) program. Strong political support and collaboration with development partners have been instrumental in the success from planning to implementation.
2. There is significant demand for evaluation in the public sector, but gaps in knowledge and practice remain. The environment is conducive to advancing evaluation, supported by various stakeholders, including the Sri Lanka Evaluation Association and universities.

PANELIST/DISCUSSANT #3: SARAH KLIER, TEAM LEADER, DEVAL

1. One major instrument to strengthen national evaluation systems and foster ownership is to conduct evaluation. In Ecuador and Costa Rica, participatory evaluations were implemented, where the national government and beneficiaries collaboratively designed, collected data, analyzed, and reported on the evaluation results. This approach fosters ownership and engagement, despite being challenging and time-consuming.
2. Successful evaluations require trust and cultural sensitivity. This process requires time, open communication, and patience. It involves creating relationships that can handle unexpected challenges and ensuring participation from all stakeholders, including civil society actors, which can be difficult to engage.

MODERATOR: SVEN HARTEN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEVAL

1. ADB and DEval have two different but complementary approaches. ADB's operational approach integrates evaluation capacity development with their projects and operations. Meanwhile, DEval's systemic approach focuses on building long-term relationships and platforms for stakeholder discussions.
2. There are encouraging developments in ECD. Sri Lanka and Mongolia showcased significant successes in evaluation capacity development. They demonstrate the effectiveness of diverse approaches from both the government and civil society.

Q&A SUMMARY

Session Flow

Utilization of Trained Manpower in the Evaluation System. In Sri Lanka, most public sector officials are interested in the diploma course and are expected to participate in evaluations in the future. These trained officials are distributed from the national to the grassroots level. The Secretary to the Treasury has issued a circular to ensure their involvement in evaluation activities at both institutional and national levels. Proposals for evaluations will be called annually, with 13 evaluations planned for next year, and this number will increase annually. Refresher training sessions will also be provided for both current and new officers.

ECD Beyond Project Operations. In the Pacific region, ADB collaborated with the regional Pacific Department and local entities to understand indigenous evaluation needs. A comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and learning system was developed, now a 14-month diploma program at the University of South Pacific. This process took over five years and highlighted the importance of partnering with the right government and academic agencies to institutionalize such initiatives.

Metrics of Evaluation Use for Decision-Making. For DEval, evaluating the success of ECD initiatives, in terms of their use for decision-making, have not yet been fully explored. The influence of the ECD project has been evaluated multiple times, but a definitive answer on its impact will be for further research.

SESSION COORDINATOR

CHERIE ANNE R. QUIRANTE