



Event Summary: Initiatives in measuring national evaluative capacity

02 June 2021



Overview

The purpose of this session was to discuss recent initiatives in measuring national evaluative capacity. Speakers presented the National Evaluation Capacity Index piloted in the Latin American region, the National Evaluation Systems and Capacities assessment carried out in Asia and the Pacific, as well as other measurement approaches to strengthen national systems being considered by the Global Evaluation Initiative. Participants were then invited to discuss potential opportunities and challenges of applying such approaches in other country and regional contexts.

Recording: Zoom link [here](#) (passcode: HYxS6u+M)

Agenda

<i>Welcome</i>	Michael Craft	Regional Evaluation Specialist, UN Women
<i>Presentations</i>	Michala Assankpon	Evaluation Officer, WFP
	<i>Topic: National Evaluation Capacity Index (INEC)</i>	
	Riccardo Polastro	Regional Evaluation Advisor, Unicef
	<i>Topic: Review of National Evaluation Systems and Capacities for Evaluating Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific</i>	
	Heather Bryant	Evaluation Advisor, UNDP
	<i>Topic: Global Evaluation Initiative's approach to measuring capacity, including M&E systems analysis tool</i>	
<i>Discussion</i>	Participants were then divided in groups to discuss about possible application in other country and regional context	
<i>Wrap-up</i>	Michael Craft	Regional Evaluation Specialist, UN Women

Presentations

1. National Evaluation Capacity Index (INEC)

Michala Assankpon, Evaluation Officer, WFP

Key Messages:

- What is INEC and how has it been created?
 - The purpose of INEC is to provide periodic assessment of the capacities and practices of evaluation in the field of public policies, programs and projects of different countries. Secondly, it aims to stir discussion around evaluation and bring it higher on the agenda of relevant stakeholders.

- INEC is conceived as a numerical index but is visualized through a tree that symbolizes the idea of growth of its different dimensions and the national evaluation system as a whole.
- How did the pilot measurement in 2020 go?
 - The pilot applied the index to five different countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico y Dominican Republic).
 - A subsequent workshop took place to unpack the results for Costa Rica
- What are the plans for 2021?
 - Continue with interpretation and use workshops for the pilot countries, as well as second cohort of countries for the measurement.
 - A web platform to present the results and methodology is being prepared.

Resources:

Please reach out to Michala Assankpon (michala.assankpon@wfp.org) and Juan Carlos Sanz (juan.sanz@deval.org) for more information.

2. Review of National Evaluation Systems and Capacities for Evaluating Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific

Riccardo Polastro, Regional Evaluation Advisor, Unicef

Key Messages:

- Why did you carry out the review and what was its methodology?
 - The objective was to generate a body of knowledge to guide national evaluation capacity development for the SDGs
 - 2030 in the Asia Pacific
 - The review had a collaborative approach with a number of UN Agencies (including UNDP and UNICEF) and fostered exchanges between different partners
 - Overlap evaluations with national sectoral plans
 - Methodology: 1) set up systems to measure progress, 2) identify emerging practices 3) develop national valuation guidelines 4) case study in 9 countries leading to readiness assessment 5) regional synthesis 6) create guidelines
 - Identify key players to mainstream and localize evaluation for SDGs
- What did you learn from this exercise that could be useful for similar initiatives?
 - The importance of understanding the local context and engage with the national leadership, that's critical for ownership
 - Need to shift from supply level evaluations to processes that are country led
 - Understanding the process as a shared responsibility that is endemic by the national government
 - Guarantee the services to support implementation
 - Coordination of different UN agencies which focus on different SDGs
 - Long-term outlook to capacity building
 - Have vertical and horizontal linkages to stakeholders
 - Encourage peer-learning

Resources:

Case study of Indonesia: [link](#)

Global Evaluation Initiative's approach to measuring capacity, including M&E systems analysis tool

Heather Bryant, Evaluation Advisor, UNDP

Key Messages

- Please could you briefly present GEI?
 - GEI is the Global Evaluation Initiative launched in 2020
 - As a global partnership it brings together government, citizens, and experts to support countries in strengthening evaluation and monitoring systems and capacities.
 - The mission is to provide meaningful contributions to Evaluation Capacity Development.
- What would be the use of INEC or similar NEC measurement initiatives within the framework of the GEI?
 - GEI is working on a methodology o qualitative assessment of NES and the existent initiatives are a great source of inspiration on how to take this forward.
 - Have a baseline to track progress of national evaluation capacity
- What modalities could be employed to facilitate cross-regional learning in the future?
 - Sharing M&E knowledge and act as a catalyzer
 - Exchanges and discussions on different indexes

Resources:

<https://www.globalevaluationinitiative.org/>

Discussion:

Group 1

Discussion Question: Do you think the INEC, or the Methodology used in Asia and the Pacific would be feasible, applicable and/or useful for other country contexts? What would be the drivers and the barriers for doing so?

- Drivers would have a momentum around development of Country Frameworks at country level and the need to align with national development plan.
- Maybe the own internal politics are the barriers for implementations of new development strategies in other countries. We need to start to change those politics for us to increase methodology participation.
- Another driver in Africa is emerging M&E courses at universities so involving academia with the interest in evaluation would be easy to do.
- Barrier is perception of 'comparing' countries. This may be very sensitive topic that would have to be managed.

Group 2

Discussion Question I: What are some potential approaches that could allow for cross-country comparability of evaluation capacity?

- Developing an Evaluation Capacity framework which identifies the key components which can be compared across countries irrespective of the context.
- Context as a major challenge.
- Organizational, HR processes related capacities can be compared to each other.
- Comparisons can include history, administrative systems, maturity of audit function, type of government, etc.
- Broader categories will remain similar, having some contextual information about countries will allow to compare similar countries with each other. This can also include history.

Discussion Question II: What possible limitations can you see?

- Governments are often more interested in monitoring than in evaluation which is a challenge.
- Politicians' short-term interests, possibly at the output level, but not longer-term, outcome level.
- Could look at the maturity of a national M&E system, with categories, rather than numerical ranking.
- Ranking can be "embarrassing" for countries, reject an initiative because of the ranking.

Group 3

Discussion Question I: What methods, approaches and initiatives would you consider useful for measuring national evaluation capacity, including those not discussed by the panel today?

- Understand stakeholders' needs
- Participatory assessments
- Assess whether there been stakeholder partnerships? (Across the entire process)
- Do variables that include access to individuals with disabilities?
- What are the selection criteria for the countries used in the Index?

Discussion Question II: What would you prioritize and why?

- Assessments are priorities because of measurability
- Gaining ownership over the government, make state stakeholders understand the results and the recommendations as their own

See the Miro board for more information: https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_lBvu99Q=

QUESTIONS FROM THE CHAT

Q: Is it possible to get a link to read about methodology?

A: Yes, we can share you the methodology by e-mail. Don't hesitate to contact michala.assankpon@wfp.org or juansanz@deval.org.

Q: Namaste from India. This is interesting work, something we want to try in India at subnational level and at regional level in Asia through NEPS group in APEA. I would be grateful to receive your concurrence on this proposal.

A: We can share more details about the INEC by e-mail and will be happy to discuss with you about possible application of the index in your country and region.

Q: Where can I check to learn when the platform (on the INEC) is launched?

A: We expect to be launching the platform towards the end of the year and will communicate widely about this launch. Also, you have received this note with contact details.

Q: My question is about Cali/ Colombia, in this moment have a situation very complicated, we need the different events of the evaluation. Does Colombia have an international cooperation in this event?

A: Bringing the index to the methodology to sub-national level is one of the possible further uses of the index. This has been also of interest in Mexico. In addition, Colombia took part in the pilot measurement in 2020 at the national level. We will be happy to invite you to the interpretation workshop when it's organized in Colombia in the next few months.

Q: How is regional/global level collective stakeholder's support to different countries in NECD initiatives? Please share challenges and lessons.

A: A number of initiatives have taken place all around the world in the past years. The United Nations Evaluation Group is currently working on a report to take stock of these experiences and a comprehensive report should be available in the second half of 2021.