



## 2019 Asian Evaluation Week

Quality Evaluation for Better Results: Local,  
National, Regional Perspectives

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2-6 September 2019 | Kunming, People's Republic of China

# National Evaluation Capacities for evidence-based SDGs reporting in Asia: A multi-stakeholder approach

# Take Away Message

Participants will learn how national evaluation capacities can lead to the enhancement of capabilities to assess progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level.





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# Evidence and the SDGs: Embedding evaluation in national plans and policies to foster transformative development

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# Innovation occurs when current abilities are not enough to meet the challenges

**The post 2015 era calls upon new ways of doing business / innovation/ revision of evaluation approaches and tools including NECD**

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's model of flow as related to challenge and ability

Retrieved from:

<https://irinaatanasova.com/2017/02/15/the-flow-the-happiness-the-flow-of-happiness-prof-mihaly-csikszentmihalyi/>

# Evaluation is challenging and have always been

- Big questions
- Short timeframes
- Limited budgets
- Ethical imperatives
- Diverse users and stakeholders
- Political drivers/decisions



# 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

## AGENDA STRUCTURE



# Evidence and the SDGs and Agenda 2063

Several studies point to weak evidence base for accelerating achievement of and reporting on the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

While the use of monitoring data has increased since the era of MDG reporting, evidence on what works and does not work in scaling up policies and programmes towards the achievement of the continental and global goals is often not considered.

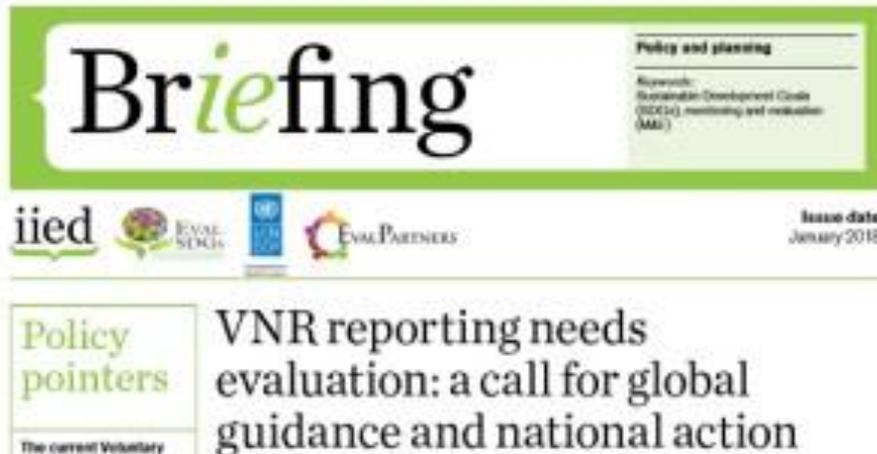
The use of monitoring data, while important for understanding past trends, needs to be complemented by forward-looking evidence of what works and does not work.

Evidence from evaluations, reviews, research and strategic studies are important for strengthening the relevance and quality of national programmes and reporting towards the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

Evaluations are important because they give clear indications of what works and does not work, and the factors to consider in scaling up policies and programmes. Evaluations are also guided by international norms and standards, and thereby subject to rigorous scrutiny.

**But so far, the use of evaluation findings and recommendations are rarely reflected in reports for national, continental and global audiences.**

The 6<sup>th</sup> IIED/EVALSDGS Briefing Paper : “**Evaluation a missed opportunity in the SDGs first set of Voluntary National Reviews**” analyzed all 22 Reviews submitted to the HLPF in 2016. Findings revealed overall absence of evaluation evidence, and limited understanding of evaluation.



The 8<sup>th</sup> IIED/ EVALSDGS Briefing Paper: **VNR reporting needs evaluation: a call for global guidance and national Action**” published in January 2018, analyzed 43 VNRs presented to the HLPF in 2017. Although were also reviewed by EVALSDGS/IIED. Although some good practices were found in terms of recognition of the value of evaluation and using past evaluation evidence (1 case), overall the lack of evidence from evaluation remain a concern.

# Evaluation as a means to foster transformative Development

- - VNRs are **important tools**, rolled out globally, for demonstrating how far countries are progressing towards realising the SDGs;
- - **Assumption**: VNRs should be informed by evidence including evidence from country- led and other types of evaluations and evaluative studies.
- - **However**, VNRs have not yet demonstrated clarity, by countries, on what is evaluation and why it is important in SDG reporting.
- **4 years down the line: only one country has completed an evaluation of the SDGs** (Finland) and only one (Nigeria) is kicking off the process.-
- **Evaluation needs to be** embedded in national plans and policies, if countries are to demonstrated progress toward achievement of the SDGs. Goals. *This is perhaps the most important message to be conveyed.*

# Some possible challenges for country-driven focus

Will SDGs be linked to National Plans?

Coordination of SDG implementation across country agencies

Coordination of possible measurement and evaluation efforts

Is there a data development strategy for the country?

Addressing sub-national and cross-cutting issues – data and capacity issues

Will evaluation of SDGs be linked to National Systems? OR, Stand-alone?

# Some possible challenges for country-driven focus

Current readiness of national monitoring and evaluation system (NMES)?

Is there an 'E' in M&E?

Current capacity and experience with evaluation?

Is there political support for evaluation; i.e. the '*demand*' side?

Is there an awareness, and understanding of how evaluation can be used to support country performance?

## Key messages:

### 1. **Evaluation of the SDGs/Agenda 2063 or evaluation and the SDGs/Agenda 2063?**

Evaluation of:

- National plans/ or National sectoral or CROSS-CUTTING strategies
- Meta- analyses of previous evaluative studies or evaluations to incorporate evidence in country reports
- Most feasible types of evaluation for a given purpose
- Joint evaluations as a step leading to country-led evaluations
- Plan and budget for evaluations

### 2. **Evaluation is a political and technical exercise (both):** National Evaluation Policies (NEPs) and Systems derive from political decisions and have technical implications. ENGAGEMENT of policy and decision-makers is key

### 4. **VNRs to the HLPF is only one piece of the jigsaw – transformative development should be the ultimate aim.**

### 5. **Support the role of parliamentarians** to hold Governments accountable for the use of evidence in SDGs. Reporting

# How to overcome the challenges?

- ✓ Challenges are political and technical and not only the latter.
- ✓ The decision to evaluate the SDGs is a political decision with technical implications and not the other way around.
- ✓ As stakeholders/agents for change, we need to ensure we contribute to trigger the decision to evaluate the SDGs. ***This is the Number 1 challenge.***
  - ✓ ***Role of parliamentarians - GPFE***
  - ✓ ***Role of civil society***
  - ✓ ***Role of the UN and other development partners***
- ✓ *Once* the political decision has been taken then we the need to think on the technical implications of such a decision becomes a priority.
- ✓ There are already two countries that are paving the way and various others about to start. Let's learn from them.
- ✓ Let's make sure that in line with the Agenda 2030, work will be done in partnerships.
- ✓ There are various organizations/networks ready to support:
  - ✓ UNICEF
  - ✓ GPFE
  - ✓ EVALSDGs
  - ✓ UNITAR
  - ✓ EVALPARTNERS
  - ✓ Others

# FINAL MESSAGES

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Countries can take a more strategic and systematic approach by simultaneously **embedding evaluation of SDGs into national policies and development plans.**

If the plans are (supposedly) not aligned with the SDGs, shall we decide not to evaluate?; or

Should the evaluation also shed light about the level of alignment of national plans?

The screenshot displays the homepage of the National Development Plan 2030 website. At the top left, the title "THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN" is followed by a colorful bar and the year "2030". Below this, the text "demystifying the plan and tracking progress made" is visible. A central message states: "An ambitious vision to reduce inequality and poverty by 2030. Let's understand our progress." A blue dot icon indicates that clicking on an icon will lead to more information about objectives and activities. The main content area features a grid of 12 circular icons, each representing a different sector: Health (green cross), Government (orange building), Rural Economy (green grapes), Education (blue book), International (purple globe), Social Protection (pink hands), Economy & Employment (red bar chart), Social Cohesion (orange starburst), Communities (yellow group of people), Environment (green hand holding leaf), Infrastructure (grey bridge), and Corruption (red hand holding coin). At the bottom right, there is a link to "READ MORE" and "DOWNLOAD THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: A PDF".



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# PANEL DISCUSSIONS