

Assessment of M&E systems : findings from a study of 20 aid-dependent SSA countries

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OUTLINE

- 1. Background - Rationale**
- 2. Methodology**
- 3. Selected Findings**
- 4. NES: potential way forward?**
- 5. References**

Annex 1: checklist

1. Background – Rationale

- changes in aid paradigm → M&E reform agenda
- progress: slow & difficult
 - 16/76 satisfactory on indicator 11 (2011 PD survey)

←chicken & egg dilemma

- solution? two-track approach
 - **building & strengthening of recipient's M&E system**
 - **first step: diagnosis of what exists already → research objective**
 - satisfaction of short-term M&E accountability & learning needs

2. Methodology (1)

- no M&E diagnostic tool (↔ PEFA)
- elaboration of own instrument
 - checklist (6 areas, 23 subtopics – see annex)
 - policy
 - indicators, data collection and methodology
 - organisation
 - capacity
 - participation of actors outside government
 - use
 - combination of quantitative & qualitative assessment
 - 4-point scoring system + analysis
 - also slightly adapted sector version + field studies
 - for Rwanda health//Uganda health & education sectors (Holvoet & Inberg, 2011; 2012)

2. Methodology (2)

➤ sample

- 20 SSA countries (2nd PRSP by May 2010)

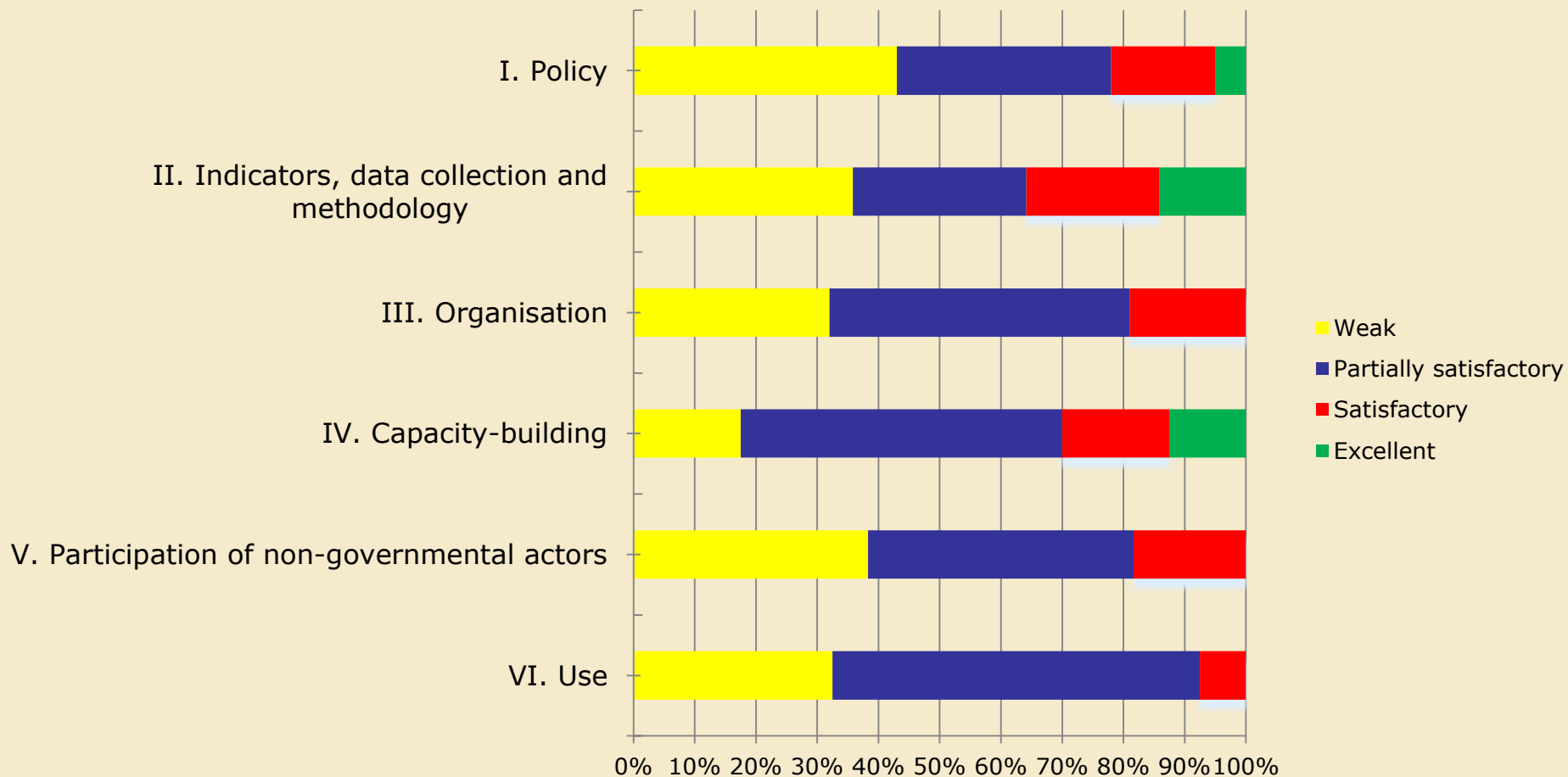
➤ data source

- official PRSP documents

➤ procedure

- grading by 2 independent researchers → ↓ subjectivity
- compiled + check on inter-rater reliability
- calibration meeting to discuss points of disagreement
- analysis of findings + discussion + where possible comparison with 2005 research (Holvoet & Renard, 2007)

3. Findings (1)



3. Findings (2)

➤ Policy

- lack of M&E plan & policy (70%)
- quality M&E plan: proxy for overall quality

- monitoring > evaluation
 - sequencing ?
 - E: methodologically & politically challenging (Holvoet & Rombouts, 2008)
 - E: public goods characteristics
 - narrowly conceived 'results-based management'
 - low analytical quality of M&E outputs

- basic M&E principle of autonomy/impartiality neglected (4/5)
 - ↓ accountability
 - but also issue in donor agencies themselves

3. Findings (3)

➤ indicators, data collection and methodology

- indicators & data collection: best developed + progress over time
 - donor support (Paris 21)

but:

- focus on two extremes (PFM&MDG) → missing middle (sector MIS)
- no causal chain (← coordination/competition among ministries/statistics office)
- move towards the aggregate
 - ↓ 'evaluability' → ↓ learning & accountability
- silent on methodology
 - ↓ validity, analytical quality → ↓ learning & accountability

3. Findings (4)

➤ organisational & systemic issues

- coordination and oversight
 - importance recognised (↓ fragmentation) (at least on paper)
 - no progress over time ('reformitis', see Uganda, Mozambique)
- horizontal integration
 - institutionally difficult (competition sector-central)
 - limits cross-reading among data sources → evaluative deficit
- vertical integration
 - local-level M&E: outpost for central-level (central target setting)
 - M&E not useful/used at local level → ↓ quality of data collection
- coordination between donor M&E & national M&E: most problematic
 - (joint) donor (investment) in M&E
 - ✓ reality checks + cross-reading among aid modalities among/within donors
 - ✓ ↓ public goods problem
 - ✓ feedback beyond project & donor agency to national M&E system → ↑ use

3. Findings (5)

➤ capacity (development)

- individual CD in technics (statistics + data collection) > institutional strengthening
- exclusive focus on government supply side
- no reference to formative meta-evaluation, twinning, national evaluation societies (NES), ...

➤ participation of non-governmental actors

- independent M&E supply & demand side: considered key to PD (*domestic accountability*)
- generally low:
 - demand < supply, but little use ('anecdotal') → ↓ supply
 - CSO > audit office, research institutes, parliament
 - potential of networking underexplored (NES!)

3. Findings (6)

➤ use (accountability & learning)

- input for APR (upward accountability)
 - evolutions in indicators, achievements of targets > analysis (← M>E)
 - use for domestic accountability & learning: limited
 - particularly at local level
 - ← low analytical quality
 - ← lack of effective feedback mechanisms to planning and budgeting (↑ performance-based budgeting)
 - ← absence of M&E demand side & incentives (politics of M&E)
- ↓ sustainability of M&E

! Limitation of desk study: only instrumental use, not conceptual use/influence

4. NES: potential for moving forward? (1)

➤ NES?

- network of actors involved in M&E
- member-oriented & policy-oriented activities
- upsurge, also in low-Y countries (117 NES in 2011, 67 in low/middle Y countries)

but thus far largely neglected

- absent from national M&E policies
- not mentioned in donor's CD initiatives

➤ contribution to national M&E system & use?

- evidence from survey (40 NES in low & middle Y countries) ([Holvoet & Dewachter & Gildemyn, 2011](#))

4. NES: potential for moving forward? (2)

➤ key asset: pluriform membership

- different sectors, different arena (inside/outside government)
- diversity in methodological backgrounds (triangulation)
- access to different types of information & resources

- bridging/brokerage potential among M&E supply and demand side
→ sustainable M&E systems

➤ led by national M&E stakeholders

- input in M&E capacity development : country-led ↔ blueprints from the outside
- domestic M&E demand > aid-generated M&E demand
- domestic learning & accountability > donor upward accountability

5. References

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- Holvoet, N. & Dewachter, S. (*forthcoming*)



Thank you!



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Policy

	Topic	Question
1	M&E plan	Is there a comprehensive M&E plan, indicating what to evaluate, why, how, for whom?
2	M versus E	Is the difference and the relationship between M and E clearly spelled out?
3	Autonomy & impartiality (accountability)	Is the need for autonomy and impartiality explicitly mentioned? Does the M&E plan allow for tough issues to be analysed? Is there an independent budget?
4	Feedback	Is there an explicit and consistent approach to reporting, dissemination, integration?
5	Alignment planning & budgeting	Is there integration of M&E results in planning and budgeting?

Indicators, data collection and methodology

	Topic	Question
6	Selection of indicators	Is it clear what to monitor and evaluate? Is there a list of indicators? Are sector indicators harmonised with the PRSP indicators?
7	Selection criteria	Are the criteria for the selection of indicators clear? Is it clear who is involved in the selection?
8	Priority setting	Is the need acknowledged to set priorities and limit the number of indicators to be monitored?
9	Causality chain	Are different levels of indicators (input-output-outcome-impact) explicitly linked (program theory)? (vertical logic)
10	Methodologies used	Is it clear how to monitor and evaluate? Are methodologies well identified and mutually integrated?
11	Data collection	Are sources of data collection clearly identified? Are indicators linked to sources of data collection? (horizontal logic)

Organisation

	Topic	Question
12	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?
13	Linkage with Statistical office	Are surveys and censuses, etc. streamlined with M&E needs? Is the role of the statistical office in M&E clear?
14	Line ministries	Are there M&E units in line ministries and semi-governmental institutions (parastatals) and are these properly relayed to a central unit?
15	Decentralised levels	Are there M&E units at decentralised levels and are these properly linked to a central unit?
16	Link with projects	Is there any effort to coordinate with donor M&E mechanism for projects?

Capacity

	Topic	Question
17	Capacity diagnosis	Are current capacity strenghts and weaknesses identified?
18	Capacity building plan	Are there plans/activities for remediation? Do these include training, appropriate salaries, etc.?

Participation of actors outside government

	Topic	Question
19	Parliament	Is the role of Parliament properly recognised, and is there alignment with Parliamentary control and oversight procedures?
20	Civil Society	Is the role of civil society recognised? Are there clear procedures for the participation of civil society? Is the participation institutionally arranged or rather ad-hoc?
21	Donors	Is the role of donors recognised? Are there clear procedures for participation of donors?

Use

	Topic	Question
22	In annual progress reports	Is there a presentation of relevant M&E results? Are results compared to targets? Is there an analysis of discrepancies?
23	Within country	Are M&E outputs (eg APR) also used for internal purposes? E.g. within national policy-making and/or policy-influencing and advocacy?