



OPERATIONALIZING AN EFFECTIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: CONSIDERATIONS FOR BEST PRACTICE

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CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- ▶ **Research** – Presentation based on a doctoral study aimed at assessing monitoring and evaluation human resource capacity of municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal;
- ▶ **Mixed method participatory study** – combination of survey questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions;
- ▶ **Sample selection** - municipalities were purposively selected in order to obtain a representative sample of urban, peri-urban and rural municipalities;
- ▶ **Target group** – M&E practitioners in municipalities & heads of departments relevant to the study as well as selected representatives from COGTA and DPME ;
- ▶ **Coverage** – one category A metropolitan municipality (eThekweni);
10 category B local municipalities and
5 category C district municipalities;

REALITIES ON THE GROUND

- ▶ **A shortage of qualified monitoring and evaluation personnel in most local and district municipalities;**
- ▶ **A lack of monitoring and evaluation human resource capacity building budgets across municipalities sampled for the study;**
- ▶ **Monitoring and evaluation practices in local government seem to operate on the margins of political corridors;**
- ▶ **Limited knowledge among monitoring and evaluation practitioners of the importance of institutionalizing M&E in local government;**

WHAT'S THE CHALLENGE?

- ▶ In many municipalities, council leadership does not seem to appreciate that M&E is a critical management tool;
- ▶ Significant lack of competent technical personnel skilled in monitoring and evaluation is a impediment to institutionalizing M&E in Local Govt;
- ▶ A general lack of understanding of municipal processes and systems among employees, pauses serious challenges to municipalities in so far as performance management is concerned as the quality of services provided may be compromised;
- ▶ Most municipalities from the study reported significant capacity limitations in generating useful, evidence-based decision making due to a lack of accurate data;

HOW CAN THESE CHALLENGES BE ADDRESSED?

- ▶ Address the systemic factors that beleaguer municipalities and impede their efficiency;
- ▶ Depoliticise municipalities and entrench the culture of evaluation
- ▶ Enhance staff monitoring and evaluation capacity in terms of knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis;
- ▶ Enhance inter-governmental and inter-departmental relations for support and oversight;
- ▶ Enforce accountability in local municipalities;

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Council leadership should embrace monitoring and evaluation as a necessary management tool to drive and promote a culture of evaluation within their municipalities.
- ▶ Establish an M&E champion in each municipality in an effort to create an environment in which a monitoring and evaluation system can thrive;
- ▶ The benefits of a monitoring and evaluation system should be effectively communicated across all municipal departments.
- ▶ Skill municipal staff in monitoring and evaluation.
- ▶ Create a strong performance culture with effective rewards and corrective action for under-performance;
- ▶ Develop and establish credible systems to address information and data constraints.

CONCLUSION

- ▶ **Monitoring and evaluation in local government is a non-negotiable imperative if the sector is to be responsive to citizens' needs.**
- ▶ **Invest in M&E human resource in municipalities – ongoing capacity enhancement (skills and knowledge);**
- ▶ **Harness the necessary political will to champion M&E in municipalities;**



THANK YOU