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# Review of monitoring and evaluation capacities in the agriculture sector



**Eval Forward**

Evaluation for Food Security, Agriculture & Rural Development

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Study conducted in collaboration with EvalForward,  
a Community of Practice on Evaluation for Agriculture,  
Food Security and Rural Development

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
RBM	Results-based management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

# Executive summary

Efforts to support countries institutionalize evaluation practices and develop national capacities have often focused on central ministries and institutions. In a few countries, this has led to the implementation of national evaluation systems and to the incipient uptake of a culture of evidence-based decision-making. This is a long and gradual process, which gained renewed attention in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the national commitments to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There remains a gap in knowledge about how these efforts are affecting sectoral areas of administration and what is the place occupied by evaluation in technical ministries.

This report is the final result of six-months of data collection to shed some light on the agriculture sector and specifically on the activities, capacities and dynamics taking place within ministries of agriculture.

The interviews carried out along with the review of available literature (quite scarce) give credit to the need to further understand and clarify a diverse and often fluid environment.

Even though findings are not statistically representative nor conclusive, they do confirm initial assumptions and raise the need to support units working on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) so that they are able to fulfil their mandate by playing a role in measuring results and drawing lessons to improve interventions in the sector, and contributing to monitoring and evaluation of national policies and strategies, including the SDGs.

The study looked at evaluation in the broader context of results-based management and found that:

- i.** Ministries of agriculture are generally overlooked with regard to M&E capacities and activities, and their level of activity in these areas, with few exceptions, tend to be less developed than others.
- ii.** Donors still largely drive evaluation efforts in sectoral projects and programmes, and therefore evaluation is mostly accountability-led. It is rare to find instances where nationally owned initiatives are subject to evaluation in the agriculture sector.
- iii.** Units in charge of monitoring and evaluation focus mostly on monitoring, in some cases limited to financial and activity monitoring, and suffer from limited access to resources, tools and capacities.
- iv.** Positive examples show the important role of leaders and champions at national and sectoral level: these are instrumental when supporting the institutionalization process and introducing a culture of evaluation and results-based management (RBM) into the administration.
- v.** Collaboration among ministries, civil society, academia or the private sector, and among ministries in a south-to-south context can support development of capacities and culture growth.
- vi.** Ministries of agriculture are unevenly involved in SDGs and there is still a disconnect in many countries between project level, national indicators and SDG targets and indicators.

Elements that influence the evaluation function and the uptake of a RBM culture in ministries of agriculture include: i) the general RBM and evaluation culture and institutional environment in the country; ii) the importance attributed to the agriculture sector by the government; iii) availability of financial resources and capacities beyond donor-funded projects; iv) proliferated portfolios of the M&E units; v) influence of fluid policy environment and changes in national leadership; vi) having (or not) a champion as head of M&E unit or the minister himself/herself; and vii) access to skills and training.

# 1. Context and rationale for studying evaluation capacities in ministries of agriculture

The aspect of evaluation capacities within the ministry of agriculture is at the heart of the creation of EvalForward, a Community of Practice on Evaluation for Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development. Following demands expressed by interlocutors of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the ministries of agriculture, EvalForward was developed jointly with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) to facilitate knowledge sharing and support capacities in this field. There is no doubt that the questions of evaluative capacities and institutionalization of evaluation are closely interrelated.

This study paper is the result of six months of data collection and analyses examining the state of institutionalization of evaluation in developing countries' agriculture sector. The aim was to understand the role played by public administrations responsible for agriculture in the evaluation of programmes in this sector. Enhanced understanding on this subject could allow better orienting initiatives to support evaluation functions – or by extension monitoring or results-based management (RBM) - in sectoral public institutions, until now rarely targeted by such capacity development endeavours. Desk research undertaken as part of this study confirmed that the state of knowledge on evaluation in sectoral administrations is slim and was never subject to any published systematic research.

Evaluation, and more broadly results-based management that underpins it, is a necessary tool to respond to an increased and legitimate demand

for accountability and improvement of policies and practices through continuous learning. The importance of evaluation as a means to support good governance was recently underscored by the International Francophone Evaluation Forum (FIFE) in Ouagadougou in November 2019.

The relationship between institutionalization and the emergence of an evaluation culture is two-way: institutionalization needs a culture to have concrete effect on the quality of public policies, and the emergence of a culture and desire to transform governance contributes to developing the institutional framework (Baud-Lavigne Marion, 2020).

In this context, a first observation is that the evaluation has most often been entrusted institutionally to central ministries, such as the ministry of planning, or even placed under the responsibility of the prime ministers. This explains that efforts to build capacity in evaluation have mainly focused on these central ministries. This was in particular the case of initiatives carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in recent decades to build national evaluation capacities; or of the Regional Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR) initiative, which has contributed to strengthening monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacities in countries.

However, in many developing countries, economies still rely largely on the primary sector either due to the share of agriculture in the gross national product (GNP), or the share of jobs that this sector generates. This suggests that there are large programmes and policies to evaluate in agriculture. Central government institutions cannot have an

## 1. Context and rationale for studying evaluation capacities in ministries of agriculture

exclusive role in effectively measuring the results of agriculture policies and programmes, a technical field requiring technical expertise. How central and technical ministries collaborate to produce evaluative knowledge is very dependent on each country situation, and some country situations could offer useful lessons to others.

Moreover, the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) put responsibility on

national governments for measuring national progress against these development goals. By examining the place of evaluation within the ministry of agriculture, and what dynamics govern the competences of the institutional settings and their interactions in this area, the study sought to determine whether SDGs might have changed the prerogatives of ministries of agriculture in terms of monitoring and evaluation.

**Note: This study was conducted before the 2020 COVID-19 global health crisis. In the current context, some of the challenges described might become stronger in the near future and agriculture might hold a more difficult position in many countries.**

## 2. Process and methodology

The study started in September 2019 and was carried out following the steps listed below:

- i. Definition of the research questions (see questions in Annex 1).
- ii. Desk review of relevant existing literature (see references section).
- iii. Identification of key informants: professionals working in units in charge of monitoring and evaluation in ministries of agriculture and related institutions.
- iv. The selection of countries and key informants was carried out through a widespread list of first contacts including through voluntary organizations for professional evaluation (VOPEs), members of EvalForward and FAO Country Representatives. Interviews were based on positive responses received by first contacts, and, then, on the concrete availability of the key informants.
- v. Collection of primary information through phone interviews as preferred option. A few informants preferred to provide written responses. Interviews involved **35 stakeholders responding from 23 countries** from the ministry of agriculture, but also from other institutions such as planning units, or related ministries such as spatial planning. Such interviews were carried out between September 2019 and March 2020.

### Box 1

#### Countries included in the study

Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Palestine, Peru, Senegal, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Uganda and Uzbekistan.

- vi. Organization of a round table at International Francophone Evaluation Forum in Ouagadougou, November 2019: the round table involved key informants from three countries and a discussion on the challenges and achievements of the M&E systems in the national agriculture sector.
- vii. Analysis of responses and drafting of the report.

The document review proved that the stock of literature on national evaluation capacities and particularly in the agriculture sector is very limited. Due to the scattered information available on the topic, phone interviews with relevant stakeholders took a long time to produce tangible results. While the initial scope was on the evaluation activities, **the study has expanded its focus to monitoring and evaluation and related results-based management activities.**

The study was supported by an external M&E consultant, Dr Achim Engelhardt from the Geneva-based Lotus M&E Group.

**Limitations of the study: the methods and scope of this study allow to identify some relevant dynamics and challenges in M&E in the agriculture sector. However, findings cannot be considered statistically representative or generally applicable, as the limited number of interviews has not allowed for triangulation that supports systematic conclusions.**

# 3. Main results

## 3.1 Evaluative practice is unevenly developed amongst countries

To what extent have countries adopted a results-based management-oriented culture?

The development of evaluative practice necessarily relates to the adoption of a results-based management culture, which requires the measurement of results at the basis of management and decision-making, and leads to understanding the differences between monitoring and evaluation.

Considering possible overlaps between the concepts of evaluation, monitoring and results-based management, it is important to recall the difference between them, referring to the definitions proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

The study shows that **the culture and practice related to RBM is unevenly anchored in countries.**

In very few of the countries included in the study, there is an institutional set-up and concrete access to capacities and resources for monitoring and evaluation. So far, the adoption of an RBM culture and practice at institutional level seems limited in the agriculture sector.

In the majority of the countries contacted, discussions with officials in ministries of agriculture demonstrated that their culture of RBM is **at least partially established**. Officials had an understanding of M&E and of the differences between monitoring and evaluation, but this remains mostly at the level of single individuals and is not paralleled by an institutional set-up nor a culture that allows to identify elements of institutionalization of RBM.

In other countries, the culture of evaluation and RBM both individually and institutionally in ministries of agriculture is **very limited and even non-**

### Box 2 Definitions

**Monitoring** is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.

**Evaluation** is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or program. An assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, on-going, or completed development intervention.

**Results-based Management** is a management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Source: OECD DAC Glossary of Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management

## 3. Main result

**existent.** M&E units focus on monitoring activities or monitoring expenditure and do not seem to be aware of the difference between the financial monitoring they conduct, and results-oriented monitoring.

### To what extent do ministries of agriculture practice evaluation?

Evaluation, when present, is still largely a function managed by central ministries such as the ministry of planning. Still, **nearly all countries formally studied have an M&E unit in the ministry of agriculture.** The mere existence of these units suggests that there is a recognized need for such a role to be exercised within the ministry of agriculture, and provides an indication that an RBM culture needs to be developed starting from an institutional basis.

**The role of the ministry of agriculture in assessing results for sectoral public policies or programmes varies greatly between countries and, practically, the M&E units in ministries of agriculture are mostly engaged in monitoring, with evaluation being quite rare.**

Evidence collected indicates that the ministry of agriculture often does not take a real role in assessing the *results* of the programmes or policies of the ministry, i.e. beyond deliverables. Many M&E units focus on monitoring which is often limited to expenditure tracking or field observations rather than systematic results monitoring using standardized tools. There are some exceptions. Some countries established evaluation as a practice in a fairly sustainable manner, as illustrated by the examples presented in Box 3.

### In sum, there are three identifiable stages of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) development in ministries of agriculture:

- i. countries where evaluations are carried out in the agriculture sector;
- ii. countries where the RBM culture is being anchored, and where the units are monitoring but not yet evaluating;
- iii. countries where the sector has not yet acquired basic understanding and capacities.

### Box 3 Examples of countries practicing monitoring and evaluation in agriculture

In **Benin**, one of the few countries with an institutional framework for evaluation, agriculture is considered central to development. Here evaluations are carried out by the responsible unit in the Ministry of Agriculture, in charge of planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring the effects and impacts of interventions in the agriculture sector. The National Institute of Agricultural Research of Benin (INRAB) and the Permanent Secretariat of the National Council for Agricultural Policy and Monitoring (CNOS) also conduct evaluations.

In **Lebanon**, the M&E unit is involved in the preparation of the agriculture strategy, including the development of key performance indicators. This input seems to contribute to enhancing the evaluability of the agriculture strategy. Besides, the use of external evaluation experts further increases the M&E unit's technical evaluation capacity.

In **South Africa**, M&E systems and procedures in the agriculture sector are quite advanced. However, there is little use of evaluation evidence for policymaking purposes, due to its politically sensitive nature.

In **Uzbekistan**, with its important fruit and vegetable sector, accountability-driven M&E gained importance since the Soviet time as part of the planned economy.

### 3.2 Some factors can be isolated as positive or negative incentives for developing an evaluation culture

Interest of policymakers in the agriculture sector influence national investments in M&E functions

In countries where the evaluation culture exists in the ministry of agriculture, an influential factor is the importance given to the agriculture sector by political leaders, as underlined in particular by the extent of funding allocated to the ministry of agriculture. In other words, when agriculture is considered a sector to invest in for national development strategies, it is allocated funding that also allows RBM practices to be implemented.

### 3. Main result

It was possible to make such correlation in the United Republic of Tanzania and Uzbekistan.

In many countries where the interviews took place, and particularly in middle-income countries, agriculture is considered somewhat marginal compared to other sectors and therefore ministries of agriculture tend to receive less budget which subsequently leads to less developments in M&E.

#### The role of leadership and results-based management champions is crucial with continuity

The particular interest in RBM of highly placed decision makers in the ministries of agriculture is revealed in their actual investments into monitoring and evaluation.

**Having evaluation or RBM champions** in strategic positions of the public administration is decisive for the installation of the evaluation. The cases of Benin and Gabon strongly underline the role of “conscious interlocutors” in the institutionalization of evaluation in general.

**Being able to count on champions is an important incentive for building an evaluation culture. As such, frequent leadership changes can jeopardize achievements and undermine the results of past investments. Champions are needed, but this goes along with continuity of leadership and resources in order to achieve sustainable results in institutionalizing evaluation practices.**

#### Box 4 Examples of leadership for results-based management

In **Benin**, having a high-level decision maker advocating for evaluation is recognized as having been decisive in building the excellent M&E system that prevails until today, also thanks to leadership continuity.

In **Burkina Faso**, under the guidance of the director of the M&E unit, a Manual to guide Monitoring, Evaluation and Capitalization in the Ministry of Agriculture was drafted.

In the 1990's, **Gabon** nominated a trained person responsible for M&E in its administration. However, leadership turnover in the Government led to organizational changes, which halted the further development of M&E.

#### Financial and human resources and the importance of capacities

**Financial resources** dedicated to M&E units are most often too limited to allow a real investment in proper evaluation. Budgetary constraints were mentioned by 10 of the 23 countries consulted and many mentioned the lack of systematic approaches to monitoring as well as technologies or software for data collection and monitoring.

Establishing evaluation also requires investing in **human resources**. From this perspective, an investment deficit is shown in staff within the ministries of agriculture.

M&E units teams vary between 2 and 45 people (with an average of 13 people), to cover the whole country. 9 out of 15 countries are understaffed to fulfil their mission, having teams of less than ten staff in the M&E unit of the ministry of agriculture.

The question of capacities is also qualitative and the results of the study suggest a general lack of skills or training opportunities in the teams of M&E units of the ministries of agriculture. As for M&E staff, the heads of evaluation units in the ministry of agriculture tend not to be trained M&E professionals. This study finds that **staff training is more important than the actual numbers of M&E staff**. ministries of agriculture often experience a deficit of trained staff more than the other ministries, with very limited capacity development opportunities.

Among the countries that deem to have reasonable capacities, **some have benefited from external support to build their evaluation capacity**, such as Benin. Five countries consider that they have limited capacities for M&E; the other seven, consider it to be very limited.

#### A multiplicity of missions affect monitoring and evaluation (M&E) units' effectiveness

Overall, M&E units in ministries of agriculture operate in a **fluid political environment**. Fully operational units can become dormant (Egypt); lose and gain status due to political changes (Argentina, Armenia and the Congo); or depend primarily on the interest of a Minister (Peru).

Interviews showed that the **M&E units in ministries of agriculture tend to have broad and at times heterogeneous missions encompassing**

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**several programmatic functions**, well beyond monitoring and evaluation. Other functions comprise planning, policy development, validation of performance indicators, budgeting, routine reporting, research, and extension or performance management.

In this context, and considering the incompressible nature of financial accountability demands, M&E units tend to largely focus on the project or programme monitoring function or even on financial reporting only, rather than engage in actual evaluation. De facto, evaluation is often absent from M&E units in ministries of agriculture, and is merely suggestively reflected in the acronym “M&E” rather than being an effective function.

In some countries, M&E units focus on activity monitoring (Madagascar) or financial reporting only (Timor-Leste).

Here one may see the mutual influences of factors, as the level of investment into the sector and extent to which appropriate resources may be channelled to each function within the M&E unit will likely influence whether a unit can accomplish its original goals, or not.

### The role of external donor funding is still fundamental

**Evaluation tends to take place more systematically in context interventions funded by external donors, owing to accountability frameworks imposed by donors, which come with dedicated provisions to sustain evaluation obligations.**

Interviewed ministry of agriculture officers frequently observed that M&E is strongest and more systematically applied for donor-funded interventions, which tend to include a dedicated M&E budget.

The tendency is for M&E to be largely accountability-driven in the agriculture sector since it is mostly project- or programme-based.

Nationally sustained projects or programmes do not usually have dedicated budgets for evaluation, which therefore cannot be carried out. In the majority of countries, interlocutors report that evaluation of strategies and programmes does not go beyond the project level, hence displaying a

### Box 5 Examples of donors' role in evaluation

In **Côte d'Ivoire** only projects with external funding have a budget dedicated to evaluation, whereas interventions specific to the Ministry only have a budget for supervision missions (programme management/monitoring).

In **Tunisia** the Ministry of Agriculture has many donor-funded projects that are evaluated both mid-term and at the end; often the evaluation is carried out by joint teams made of experts appointed by the donor and staff of the Ministry of Agriculture. Such evaluations follow the guidance and protocols established by donors themselves.

weak institutionalization. Accessing budgets was reported as challenging to evaluate nationally-funded interventions even for upper-middle income countries such as Argentina, Armenia or Lebanon.

Only in some countries, evaluation is reported to take place for sectoral policies or strategies (Benin, Lebanon, Peru, Senegal, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Tunisia and Uzbekistan).

In low-income countries such as Benin and Uganda with significant donor presence, budget limitations for evaluation can be overcome also for government-funded interventions by harnessing donor resources in ways where the agenda is set by government, even if the predominant funding for evaluation comes from donors (Goldman *et al.*, 2018).

The role of external funding in promoting evaluation is also revealed by the fact that evaluation culture and practice tends to be more developed in Ministerial administrations such as Health or Economy, which benefitted from focused investments from international financial institutions such as the World Bank.

Optimistically, the benefits of repeated donor-funded initiatives supporting evaluation could be seen as a slow contribution towards building an evaluation culture, and establishing capacities to sustain it on the longer term. However, evidence also seems to suggest that even large efforts to build evaluative or RBM capacities are vain without sustained investment over time.

## 3. Main result

**Box 6 Donor funding needs to be sustained**

In **Egypt**, there have been several funded projects that have supported the development of staff capacities in monitoring and evaluation within the Ministry of Agriculture. However, when the projects ended the Unit in charge became inactive and well-trained staff moved to other functions.

**Looking back at longstanding challenges**

Comparing the results of the present study with past studies, it seems that the main challenges identified as hampering M&E capacities in the agriculture sector remain largely unchanged over the last decades.

This might be an indication that donor funding has not made a transformational impact. (Table 1)

**3.3 Role and responsibility sharing between the ministry of agriculture and other institutions****Relations with central units in charge of evaluation**

In most countries, **relations between the ministry of agriculture and central units in charge of evaluation** (such as the ministry of planning) are driven by the need for formal regular reporting systems. M&E personnel in the ministry of agriculture are often uninformed as to how the information they share continues further upstream and may be used. In some countries,

there are discrepancies between project level M&E and sectoral M&E, the latter being under the responsibility of Statistics offices, with contributions from ministry of agriculture M&E unit remaining very unclear.

The study finds mostly a **“one-way” reporting relationship from the ministry of agriculture to central evaluation offices**. This relationship does not seem to be built for a dialogue to be established between the ministries, or even a complementarity of perspectives with a view to learning on several levels.

The **dynamism of the central offices charged with evaluation functions** can however act as a **virtuous factor to promote** an evaluation culture within the country, including in sectoral ministries. In Benin, the Office of Public Policy Evaluation based in the Presidency and the Ministry of Planning and Development coordinate evaluations depending on their nature (public policy, impact, project/ programme), and the unit in charge at the Ministry of Agriculture carries out relevant evaluations in collaboration with central units.

**Role of ministries of agriculture in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) reporting**

Since the SDGs' advent, their M&E is also under the supervision of the central ministries such as planning or economy. Of 23 countries questioned, 12 mentioned a contribution by the ministry of agriculture in **measuring results against the SDGs**.

In some of these countries, the role of the ministry of agriculture is quite clear.

**Table 1** Main monitoring and evaluation challenges in the agriculture sector

Main challenges of M&E in the agriculture sector	EvalForward study in 2020	FAO and World Bank, 2010	World Bank, 2005
Staff capacities	✓	✓	✓
Budget	✓		
Institutionalization/operationalization of M&E systems	✓	✓	✓
Data	✓		✓

Source: FAO and World Bank

## 3. Main result

#### Box 7 Examples of ministries of agriculture involvement in SDGs

In **the United Republic of Tanzania**, the role of the units in the Ministry of Agriculture is to collect and report the agricultural SDGs related data to the Ministry of Finance and Planning through the National Bureau of Statistics which is in charge of coordinating SDGs' monitoring.

In **Tunisia**, the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for planning and implementing actions on the related SDGs (in particular SDG 6 on water use).

Where M&E units in the ministry of agriculture are involved in SDG reporting, data serves for monitoring national agricultural strategies and related key performance indicators. However, when national strategies do not align to the SDGs, data gathered for national reporting cannot serve for reporting against SDG indicators.

#### Box 8 Capacity gaps on SDGs monitoring

In **Lebanon**, a country that reported receiving useful support from FAO on SDG reporting, the M&E units of the Ministry of Agriculture work with the country's Central Inspection Board on admin procedures such as setting key performance indicators for the Ministry of Agriculture. This step is required to report back to the Board on those indicators that are linked to the agriculture strategy. These indicators show some contribution to the SDGs, however there is still no full alignment with and understanding and measurement of results against SDG indicators.

In **Peru**, the M&E unit in the Ministry of Agriculture is a rather new institution and performance indicators still require development, while the national agriculture policy is being revised. The Ministry of Agriculture joined the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Helvetas AVANTI Project, which is helping in SDG reporting.

#### Collaboration with non-governmental organizations or professional bodies

Collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and voluntary organizations for professional evaluation to measure the results of agricultural development programmes is very uneven, and generally unsystematic.

Some countries report **commissioning evaluations to NGOs**, often as part of a larger project management mission. In other countries collaboration is absent or very weak, often based on personal rather than institutional cooperation.

#### Box 9 Examples of collaborations between ministries of agriculture and other actors

In **Uzbekistan**, a non-governmental association supports the Ministry of Agriculture in field data collection for monitoring purposes.

In other countries like **Argentina** and **Lebanon**, cooperation with universities seems systematic in the agriculture sector. The Government of Argentina receives M&E support through collaboration with universities and academia, but also through south-south cooperation with its neighbouring country Brazil, specifically for impact evaluations.

**Chad, Côte d'Ivoire** and **the United Republic of Tanzania** reported collaborations with voluntary organizations for professional evaluation in undertaking evaluations.

**South Africa** and **Uganda** reported effective collaborations with VOPES to build the evaluation capacity of public administrations.

## 4. Conclusions and way forward

### Elements that trigger or undermine monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and evaluation in ministries of agriculture

The following factors influence the evaluation function and a culture for results-based management in the ministry of agriculture:

- i. General RBM, evaluation culture and institutional environment in the country.
  - ii. Importance of the agriculture sector at national level.
  - iii. Availability of financial resources beyond donor-funded projects (or capacity to leverage on donors' resources for country-led evaluations like the basket funding in Uganda).
  - iv. Besides budgetary constraints, M&E functions often suffer from proliferated portfolios with often little emphasis on evaluation and lack of human resources capacities.
  - v. Fluid policy environment and changes in national leadership can really influence, especially if M&E in the ministry of agriculture is still incipient and not well rooted.
  - vi. Having (or not) a RBM champion as head of M&E unit or the minister himself/herself.
  - vii. The size of M&E units matters, but probably less than staff skills and access to training.
- ii. Similarly, on SDG reporting the Bureau of Statistics provides data to the central ministry (i.e. Office of the Prime Minister) on agriculture in many countries. The ministry of agriculture's contribution to SDG reporting is either absent, weak or inconclusive.
  - iii. Where M&E units of the ministries of agriculture are involved in SDG reporting, to date, data is used for monitoring national agricultural strategies and related key performance indicators. Those don't fully correspond to the SDG indicators. Capacity gaps emerge on understanding of relevant SDG indicators, their measurement and appropriate methodologies.
  - iv. While in several countries M&E in agriculture suffers from lack of basic tools and software, the sector can really benefit from using geospatial and IT tools for M&E. This surfaced only in few interviews but seems to be transforming the role of M&E in the Peruvian agriculture sector.
  - v. In most countries, agriculture is subject to budget cuts more than other sectors, and the ministry of agriculture is regarded as marginal or less important than others, with less investment in trained human resources and skills development. This may explain why M&E units are understaffed.
  - vi. Integrating the ministry of agriculture into the ministry of economy, as occurred in Armenia, shows the opportunity for the agriculture sector to benefit from stronger M&E systems used in the ministry of economy. However, the danger emerges that the functions of the ministry of agriculture get diluted, including for M&E.
  - vii. Most agriculture projects have (or should have) a food security and nutrition component and therefore should be linked to the health sector (which is often responsible for nutrition).

### Specificities of results-based management (RBM) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in agriculture

Based on primary data collection and the literature review, the study concluded that:

- i. Bureau of Statistics tends to produce agriculture sector results, showing a gap between project level M&E and the reporting of sector results. It seems unclear and inconclusive what the specific contribution of ministry of agriculture's M&E is for agriculture sector results reporting in many countries.

## 4. Conclusions and way forward

However, this does not become evident from primary data collection or literature review.

### Emerging opportunities and way forward

Based on the key findings and the above conclusions, the team suggests the following way:

- i. SDG reporting constitutes a challenge but also an immediate opportunity to support the ministry of agriculture in monitoring and evaluation. Support in aligning sector plans, national surveys and policy evaluation to SDG indicators is a concrete action that would benefit the ministry of agriculture.
- ii. M&E components of agriculture programmes are one option to strengthen M&E systems in the ministry of agriculture. However, long-term engagement and commitment is required to institutionalize those M&E components and to contribute to creating an evaluation culture.
- iii. While in some countries M&E units are still engaged in basic activity monitoring with little methodological standing, opportunities emerge to support impact evaluation or the use of geospatial and IT tools in the agriculture sector in other countries. South-south cooperation could be one avenue to provide the required support, as shown in the example between Argentina and Brazil.
- iv. Countries are encouraged to involve research institutes more strongly in agriculture sector M&E (i.e. in Argentina or Lebanon), as well as civil society organizations (i.e. in Burkina Faso, Senegal or Uzbekistan).

As a way forward to this study, EvalForward will continue efforts to disclose the dynamics of the sector by expanding this type of study to other countries and by opening debates and knowledge sharing on this topic with the community.

EvalForward will also join forces with projects and programmes that are working on developing national evaluation capacities, in order to expand awareness raising and capacity development initiatives to the agriculture sector.

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# Annexes

**Annex 1.** Research questions

**Annex 2.** Role of unit in charge of monitoring and evaluation in ministries of agriculture

**Annex 3.** Responsibility for evaluating public policies in agriculture sector, size of the monitoring and evaluation unit and staff competency and expertise

**Annex 4.** Information flow between units and central office of evaluation

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**Annex 6.** Role of ministries of agriculture in the process of development results measurements and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) monitoring and evaluation

**Annex 7.** Current activities and challenges of monitoring and evaluation

# Annex 1. Research questions

1. In your country, who plays a role in the evaluation of public policies and other national development outcomes in the agriculture sector?
2. If there is a unit in charge of monitoring and evaluation in the ministry of agriculture, can you describe the institutional role and responsibilities of this unit, with regard to both monitoring and evaluation activities?
3. What is the size of this unit in terms of human resources? Is staff in this unit recruited who have M&E expertise?
4. Can you please describe current activities and challenges of M&E?
5. What is the information flow between this unit and the central office of evaluation (if existent) and with other units in the same ministry or in others on data collection, monitoring of indicators and evaluation?
6. Does the ministry of agriculture collaborate with non-governmental actors, such as voluntary organizations for professional evaluation, to measure and report on development results in this particular sector?
7. Would you say that the ministry of agriculture plays a part in the process of development results measurement?
8. Is the unit involved in monitoring or reporting on Sustainable Development Goals?
9. What would you say is the level of development of the evaluation culture and practice in your country? Do you know about how other ministries do their M&E of other sectoral policies?

# Annex 2. Role of unit in charge of monitoring and evaluation in ministries of agriculture

## Key findings

- i. Overall, M&E units in ministries of agriculture operate in a fluid political environment. Fully operational units can become dormant (Egypt) lose and gain status due to political changes (Argentina, Armenia and the Congo), depend primarily on the interest of a minister (Peru).
- ii. M&E units in ministries of agriculture tend to have multiple functions, well beyond monitoring and evaluation, including planning, budgeting, routine reporting or performance management.
- iii. M&E is strongest for donor-funded interventions, while for nationally-funded interventions, access to budgets is challenging in some countries (Argentina, Armenia, Cote d'Ivoire and Lebanon).
- iv. There seems to be a tendency that M&E is largely accountability driven in the agriculture sector.
- v. M&E is mostly project or programme based, only covering policies or sector strategies in few countries (Benin, Lebanon, Senegal, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Uzbekistan).
- vi. In some countries, M&E units focus on activity monitoring (Madagascar) or financial reporting only (Timor-Leste), without any work on evaluation.
- vii. In at least two countries, evaluation is only undertaken for donor-funded projects while for government-funded interventions, the available budgets only allow supervision missions (Cote d'Ivoire, Tunisia).
- viii. Evaluation culture and practice tends to be more developed in other ministries such as ministry of health or ministry of economy. This finding partly coincides with a study of the German Development Institute (2017):

*"Implementing results-based approaches in agriculture is challenging because of the complexity of measuring and achieving results in the sector.*

*First, desired outcomes such as increased yields or incomes are highly variable and influenced by external conditions (e.g. weather and world market prices).*

*Second, agriculture is a productive sector. Market forces and private actors play a much more important role in agriculture than in health or education. Improving agricultural productivity and food security relies on the decisions of millions of farmers and enterprises.*

*Hence, designing results-based incentives and deciding whom to target is much more complex than in sectors dominated by the government".*

**Table 1** Responsibility of M&E units in the agriculture sector

Country	Responsibilities of the M&E Unit
<b>Argentina</b>	More than one unit: a) Research, extension, development and monitoring; b) Impact evaluation with econometric approach.
<b>Armenia</b>	Agriculture extension and monitoring, tracking and validation of projects through surveys and observation as practiced in previous planned economy, no evaluation.
<b>Benin</b>	Planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation, including strategies and sector policy.
<b>Bhutan</b>	Performance management in the context of policy and planning. No mention of evaluation.
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Reporting, monitoring, evaluation and capitalization, project and programme evaluation and evaluation of the ministries' performance.
<b>Cameroun</b>	Mainly monitoring, less evaluation.
<b>Chad</b>	Policy and strategy development, project planning and monitoring. Organization, monitoring and evaluation of agricultural campaigns.
<b>Congo</b>	Project planning, support implementation, project management, results measurement, facilitation to take corrective action
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	Project evaluation of donor-funded interventions, otherwise only monitoring (supervision missions), validation of performance indicators.
<b>Egypt</b>	M&E unit in Ministry of Agriculture since 2012, now dormant. M&E for food loss and waste unit: data dissemination, reporting, systematic reviews and reports.
<b>Gabon</b>	No structure in place to evaluate public policies in the Ministry of Agriculture.
<b>Lebanon</b>	Several actors; Directorate-General of Agriculture with sectoral policy focus: elaborate development plans, monitor and evaluate the programme.
<b>Madagascar</b>	Activity monitoring.
<b>Mali</b>	Project and programme reporting, monitoring and evaluation, project preparation including financing, programme and budget for public investments.
<b>Palestine</b>	Project and programme reporting, monitoring and evaluation.
<b>Peru</b>	Directorate-General of policy M&E: focus on monitoring. Proliferation of public policies; institutionalization still ongoing, focus on monitoring and knowledge management.
<b>Senegal</b>	Project evaluation, monitoring/studies and planning; mentoring and evaluation: impact studies of projects, programmes and policies.
<b>South Africa</b>	Centralized and decentralized levels: monitoring and evaluation.
<b>United Republic of Tanzania</b>	Reporting, monitoring and evaluation, contracting, research and performance management. Monitor and evaluate implementation of the Sector's Annual Plans and Medium-Term Strategic Plan.
<b>Timor-Leste</b>	Reporting, mainly financial.
<b>Tunisia</b>	Unit in charge of evaluation within the Directorate of studies and agriculture development Mid-term and final evaluation of the Five-year National Agriculture development plan.
<b>Uganda</b>	Planning and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of departments and programmes. Project and programme development and reporting.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Control, planning, monitoring and evaluation, also of policies as practiced in previous planned economy.

Source: Study interviews

# Annex 3. Responsibility for evaluating public policies in agriculture sector, size of the monitoring and evaluation unit and staff competency and expertise

## Location and size of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) units

- i. M&E in agriculture tends to be located in ministries of agriculture or related ministries except for one small island state (Timor-Leste) and a small land-locked country (Bhutan). In two countries, currently no active M&E unit exists in the ministry of agriculture following multiple restructurings (Egypt, Gabon); in another country (Tunisia) while the M&E unit exists, competences and responsibilities for M&E are dispersed across different departments and involved in M&E activities on the basis of their availability or competence.
- ii. The size of M&E staff in ministries responsible for agriculture varies and ranges from 2 staff members (Palestine) to 25 staff members (Argentina, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Peru and Senegal).
- iii. In countries with the M&E unit accounting for most of its staff (45, Madagascar), the M&E unit focuses exclusively on monitoring, not evaluation.

## Staff capacities:

- i. In 2 of the 23 sampled countries, staff in M&E units benefit from technical training and the assessment of capacities is positive.
- ii. In 11 of the 23 countries, staff capacities in M&E are mixed.
- iii. M&E staff capacities range from being limited to extremely low in six countries, with two countries not specifying such capacities and one country that does not have a M&E unit in the ministry of agriculture.

## General evaluation practice and culture

- i. In five countries, the evaluation practice in ministries of agriculture coincide with the national evaluation practices (Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Palestine).
- ii. In three countries (South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uzbekistan), the evaluation capacities in the ministry of agriculture seem higher than in other ministries, possibly due to the importance of the agriculture sector for the national economy, being also the sector in which a large portion of the population is employed.
- iii. In five countries, the evaluation practices in the ministry of agriculture are lower than in other ministries (Egypt, Gabon, Senegal, Timor-Leste and Uganda).

## National monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems

- i. In countries with an agriculture sector of high importance for the national economy, such as the United Republic of Tanzania or Uzbekistan, M&E seems higher developed than in other sector ministries. In Uzbekistan, country with an important fruit and vegetable sector, accountability-driven M&E gained importance since the Soviet time as part of the planned economy

*"We would like to evaluate but we don't know yet how."*

Source: Interview partner, Peru

- ii. In Peru, the Government's push for results-based budgeting sets the stage for increasing the importance of M&E in the agriculture sector. While evaluation is prominently included in the political discourse, its institutionalization is still ongoing. As decision makers gain understanding of evaluation, there seems to be political will to use evaluation results for decision-making purposes in the agriculture sector.

**Table 2** Units in charge of M&E in ministries of agriculture, size, competences and expertise

Country	Unit	Size of M&E unit	M&E Competences in M&E unit	General evaluation culture, outside MoA
<b>Argentina</b>	Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria, Gerencia de Monitoreo y Evaluación	10 staff in capital city, 15 more in the regions plus 10 in the research arm of the Institute	Capacities are mixed. Sociologists and economists	Transport, health, and education are more advanced
<b>Armenia</b>	Former M&E unit in MoA (since merger of Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Economy only extension and monitoring unit)	Former unit: 4 staff (2 monitoring, 2 evaluation) and 1 head; New extension and monitoring unit: In capital 10 staff, 3 specialized in statistics/sociology/M&E	Methodologically rather weak in the past; now some M&E expertise	Rather weak M&E culture
<b>Benin</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, livestock and fisheries, Cellule Suivi évaluation et capitalisation (CSE)	8 to 9 staff (includes budgeting and planning)	Different backgrounds	N/A
<b>Bhutan</b>	Gross National Happiness Commission, Policy and Planning Division	20 to 25 staff, including 9 staff from Policy and Planning Division	Limited analytical capacities	N/A
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Economie Verte et de Changement Climatique Directeur du Suivi, de l'Evaluation et de la Capitalisation (DSEC)	16 staff, divided in two units: M&E and capitalization	Benefited from multiple M&E trainings	Insufficient, project and program level only: MoA being an exception
<b>Cameroon</b>	Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural, Cellule du suivi	15 staff	No specific qualifications	M&E is part of the project cycle but staff capacities are insufficient
<b>Chad</b>	Ministère de la Production de l'Irrigation et des Equipements Agricoles, Direction des Etudes, de la Planification et du Suivi et Evaluation	9 technical staff and 10 administrative staff	Less than 2 to 3 with M&E experience	Weak

Country	Unit	Size of M&E unit	M&E Competences in M&E unit	General evaluation culture, outside MoA
<b>Congo</b>	Ministère de l'Agriculture de l'Elevage et de la Pêche (MAEP): Direction des Etudes et de la Planification (DEP) - Cellule de Suivi-Evaluation	8 technical staff	Existing staff with plans to be trained	Unsure about M&E capacities of other ministries
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural. Evaluation des Projets	20 staff	Agronomists being trained on M&E	Importance of M&E for accountability: each ministry will have a M&E unit
<b>Egypt</b>	Ministry of Agriculture M&E Unit: established in 2012, now dormant  M&E for food loss and waste unit	12 staff in different branches, and in each of the 5 ecological zones in the country  5 staff	Staff rotates as ministers change, which was quite frequently lately, leading to brain drain	Ministry of Finance is more advanced
<b>Gabon</b>	The Ministry of Planning is in charge in general terms but the agriculture sector specifically is not well covered	0 staff	Inexistent	Better in education and health sector
<b>Lebanon</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate General of Agriculture	3 staff, not full time on M&E due to wider mandate of unit	Some expertise.	N/A
<b>Madagascar</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, livestock and fisheries, Department for planning, monitoring and evaluation	45 people in capital unit, with about 15 people in charge of data analysis	Mainly agronomists with no evaluation knowledge (no training due to budget constraints)	Almost inexistent
<b>Mali</b>	Ministère de l'Agriculture, Unité Programmation, Suivi-Evaluation	6 staff	5 engineers with +5 years post graduation experience and 1 with +3 years post graduation experience.	Link to planning and statistics
<b>Palestine</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Planning & Policies	2 staff	Limited experience	Weak
<b>Peru</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Direccion General de seguimiento y evaluacion de politicas Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre	9 M&E staff  4 directors and 18 specialists	Expertise available but lot of staff rotation  2-3 staff with M&E expertise	Evaluation is part of the national discourse but is not institutionalized
<b>Senegal</b>	Ministère de l'Agriculture, Direction de l'Analyse, de la Prévision et des Statistiques Agricoles	20 M&E staff, focusing on monitoring (no dedicated staff for evaluation)	Mixed capacities	Part of routine activities of all ministries

Country	Unit	Size of M&E unit	M&E Competences in M&E unit	General evaluation culture, outside MoA
<b>South Africa</b>	Department of Agriculture, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit	N/A	Limited capacity	Better evaluation practice in agriculture sector than other departments
<b>United Republic of Tanzania</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Monitoring and Evaluation Section	The M&E unit has seven staff out of which 2 staff are statisticians and 5 staff are economists	All staff have very limited M&E skills	Moderate, silo culture
<b>Timo-Leste</b>	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Prime Minister Office	8 to 10 people	Capacity is extremely low	Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education are more advanced
<b>Tunisia</b>	Service en charge de l'évaluation auprès de la Direction Générale des études et du développement agricole	N/A	Capacity is very limited	Weak
<b>Uganda</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Planning Unit	At least 4 senior officers	Two are adequately qualified in Monitoring and Evaluation	Generally, more advanced evaluation culture than other countries in Africa
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Ministry of Agriculture	N/A	Staff allocated from other branches, without special analytical background. Capacity building activities in place but skills enhancement is still required, particularly at the local branch level	M&E stronger in agriculture sector than in other sectors due to its importance of GDP

Source: Study interviews

# Annex 4. Information flow between units and central office of evaluation

## Key findings

- i. The analysis of information flow between M&E units and countries' central evaluation offices shows a variety of formal reporting processes and structures, including the use of management information systems.

**Table 3** Information flow between M&E units in ministries of agriculture and central offices of evaluation

Country	Information flow between units and central office of evaluation
<b>Argentina</b>	Ad-hoc and demand-driven with focus on budget execution, mainly quantitative data reported to a committee (political process).
<b>Armenia</b>	Reporting to the Vice Minister and Minister of Economy, the further upstream, including the National Statistical Service.
<b>Benin</b>	Strategic level following the strategic sector framework and operational level (projects, programmes and Ministry).
<b>Bhutan</b>	Online/real-time reporting to the Policy and Planning Division.
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Through the ministries' statistics directorate the M&E Unit cooperates with other departments engaged in the agriculture sector.
<b>Cameroun</b>	One-way information flow to the Ministry of Planning and Economic development.
<b>Chad</b>	Cooperation with the Ministries' of Planning and Finance.
<b>Congo</b>	Information flows through exchange of documents to the central unit (Ministry of Planning), though this process is currently less fluid.
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	Cooperation e.g. with the Institute of National Statistics.
<b>Egypt</b>	Bureau of Statistics provides data on agriculture sector, the M&E unit in the Ministry is dormant.
<b>Gabon</b>	No information flow, as no M&E unit is in place.
<b>Lebanon</b>	Reporting to Director General and Minister of Agriculture; follow-up of the M&E results through a committee consisting of institutions affiliated to Ministry; further upstream reporting to Ministry of Finance: Annual reporting to Central Inspection Board.
<b>Madagascar</b>	Limited information flow.
<b>Mali</b>	Sharing of responsibilities for reporting on national indicators with M&E units of other ministries; central coordination role of the Planning and Statistics Unit for rural development.
<b>Palestine</b>	Link to national policy agenda at institutional level.
<b>Peru</b>	Consolidated information based on indicators to the Minister and Planning Directorate in charge of budgets; fed into political processes
<b>Senegal</b>	Inter-ministerial committees; national and regional structure
<b>South Africa</b>	Quarterly reports of M&E unit of Department to Agriculture delivered to Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and Treasury, considered in performance dialogue.
<b>United Republic of Tanzania</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of 10-years' agriculture sector programme.
<b>Timor-Leste</b>	N/A
<b>Tunisia</b>	N/A
<b>Uganda</b>	Quarterly reporting on performance targets to the Office of the Prime Minister.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Ministry of Agriculture gets data from two sources: its local branches and the Farmers Unit Associations (NGO). Further upstream reporting: N/A.

Source: Study interviews

# Annex 5. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to measure and report development results in the agriculture sector

## Key findings

- i. Mixed level of interaction (9 yes, 12 no, 2 N/A)<sup>1</sup>.
- ii. Engagements on M&E with NGOs are reported in Argentina, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uzbekistan.
- iii. Weaker or no engagements on M&E with NGOs are reported in Armenia, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Gabon, Madagascar, Palestine, Peru, South Africa, Timor-Leste, Tunisia and Uganda.

In Benin and Uganda, civil society organizations, including NGOs, are involved in committees for the selection and oversight of evaluations (African Evaluation Journal, 2018). This enhances accountability on development results beyond the Government. Besides, the involvement of civil society organizations, particularly national evaluation associations seem useful for evaluation capacity development, as shown in South Africa and Uganda. Those findings are valid for national evaluation systems.

In Uganda, engagement with the national evaluation association seems to be less strong in the agriculture sector.

**Table 4** Collaboration of M&E units in ministries of agriculture with non-governmental organizations

Country	Collaboration with NGOs to measure and report development results
<b>Argentina</b>	Collaboration with universities; NGOs contracted for consultancies; engagement with the national evaluation association on a personal level but not institutionalized.
<b>Armenia</b>	Mixed perception of civil society organizations due to history of planned economy where the state was fully in charge; NGOs are less active in this sector: Famers Association (NGO) invited for 2020 budget planning in the sector, but less involvement in M&E.
<b>Benin</b>	Two engagements.
<b>Bhutan</b>	N/A
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Agreement signed with NGOs for technical supervision of projects, including evaluations.
<b>Cameroon</b>	Collaboration between the Ministry of Economy and Planning and NGOs exists but it is weak and not institutionalised.
<b>Chad</b>	Not yet, but facilitation of engagement through national M&E association started.
<b>Congo</b>	Collaboration through donor funded projects, including for joint capacity building on M&E.
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	Collaboration with the national evaluation network.
<b>Egypt</b>	M&E for food loss and waste unit: planned to work with NGOs, progress to be seen.
<b>Gabon</b>	The MoA engages in project management with NGOs, not M&E.
<b>Lebanon</b>	NGOs, private sector and universities are part of agriculture strategy development; M&E: N/A.

<sup>1</sup> Bhutan, Lebanon.

Country	Collaboration with NGOs to measure and report development results
<b>Madagascar</b>	No linkages.
<b>Mali</b>	Affirmative.
<b>Palestine</b>	Most NGO's do not report their activities in the agriculture sector.
<b>Peru</b>	NGOs are more engaged in research, less in M&E.
<b>Senegal</b>	Yes, with information on 200+ NGO projects.
<b>South Africa</b>	Quite a lot of cooperation with producer organizations (lobby organizations), but less with NGOs as Ministry doesn't know how to work with them due to a lack of practice. Engagement with the Agriculture Research Council and universities for training and research.
<b>United Republic of Tanzania</b>	The Ministry of Agriculture occasionally collaborates with non-governmental actors for professional evaluation to measure and report on development results in the Agriculture Sector.
<b>Timor-Leste</b>	No
<b>Tunisia</b>	No
<b>Uganda</b>	Limited collaboration with the national evaluation association.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Cooperation with Farmers Unit Association (NGO) for data collection.

Source: Study interviews

# Annex 6. Role of ministries of agriculture in the process of development results measurements and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) monitoring and evaluation

## Key findings

- i. In 16 out of 23 countries, the ministry of agriculture's M&E units play a role in results measurements. This includes participation in the M&E of sectoral policies or design of a results framework.
- ii. However, ministry of agriculture's M&E units seem less involved in the context of SDG reporting. In 12 out of 23 countries, M&E units are engaged in the SDG reporting process to varying extents. Reporting is done directly, based on specific SDG indicators, in cooperation with other departments or under the leadership of a central planning unit.
- iii. While few insights emerge about the M&E unit's engagement in the SDG process, this study identified useful lessons from Lebanon. Monitoring SDGs can be challenging, as current surveys are tailored to the national agriculture strategy. Technical support would be required to amend the surveys, in order to allow them to capture specific data required for SDG monitoring. FAO organized at least one technical workshop on SDG reporting, but more capacity building would be required to ensure surveys meet the SDG reporting requirements.

**Table 5** Involvement of M&E units in agriculture in SDG M&E

Country	Role of MoA in process of development results measurements	Involvement of M&E unit in agriculture in SDG M&E
<b>Argentina</b>	No involvement. The focus is on projects and programmes.	No involvement. SDG M&E is undertaken through a process under the oversight of the Presidency.
<b>Armenia</b>	Vice Minister or Minister of Economy and National Statistical Service provide data. Extension and Monitoring unit of Ministry of Economy feeds agriculture data in.	Deputy Prime Minister is in charge. Vice Minister or Minister of Economy provide data on agriculture, not the Extension and Monitoring unit.
<b>Benin</b>	Some participation but weaknesses in the process.	N/A
<b>Bhutan</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	M&E of four sectoral policies in Agriculture	Yes, based on SDG indicators.
<b>Cameroun</b>	Monitoring unit of the Ministry of Agriculture.	Not specifically on SDGs.
<b>Chad</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role.	Ministry of Economy and Planning leads the process; use of departmental focal points.
<b>Congo</b>	Each ministry is supposed to evaluate the relevant government (sector) policy but political will of actors is lacking in MoA.	Not yet
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role.	No, is done by Ministry of Planning and Development.

Country	Role of MoA in process of development results measurements	Involvement of M&E unit in agriculture in SDG M&E
<b>Egypt</b>	No involvement, as this is part of the Bureau of Statistics' responsibility.	Ministry of Planning, prepares the report for monitoring SDGs.
<b>Gabon</b>	Ministry of Economy and Planning play that role to some extent.	The Ministry of Economy and Planning leads and coordinates, each ministry is represented in the process to report data. M&E unit in MoA is not involved, as it does not exist.
<b>Lebanon</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role.	Participation as part of the Inter-ministerial committee under the Prime Ministers' office.
<b>Madagascar</b>	None	Yes, but questions about the utility of data.
<b>Mali</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role.	Yes
<b>Palestine</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role.	In cooperation with other departments.
<b>Peru</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role.	In coordination with IFAD and an NGO.
<b>Senegal</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role	Contribution.
<b>South Africa</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role: reporting on national outcome indicators using standard monitoring data, might also use evaluation data.	Department of Planning, monitoring and evaluation foes the report with the Ministry of Agriculture feeding in.
<b>United Republic of Tanzania</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role.	Contribution, coordinated by National Bureau of Statistics.
<b>Timor-Leste</b>	N/A	Central Unit for planning, monitoring and evaluation.
<b>Tunisia</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role.	In cooperation with other departments.
<b>Uganda</b>	Ministry of Agriculture plays a role in indicator development, target setting and reporting.	Coordination and Liaison Office for the Coordination and Monitoring of SDGS in the Office of the Prime Minister.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Central M&E unit in the capital gets branch data from all 12 regions, used for results measurement. Meta data is quarterly combined, always updated and easily accessible.	It seems that to date the UN is mostly dealing with SDG reporting.

Source: Study interviews

# Annex 7. Current activities and challenges of monitoring and evaluation

## Key findings

- i. Four main challenges emerge for M&E units in ministries of agriculture:
  - a. insufficient staff capacities in 17 out of 23 countries;
  - b. lack of institutionalization/operationalization of M&E systems/tools in 14 out of 23 countries;
  - c. budget constraints in 10 out of 23 countries;
  - d. problems in the availability and quality of data in 4 out of 23 countries.
- ii. Main challenges remain largely unchanged in the last one and a half decades (World Bank, 2005).
- iii. Importance of a central unit to drive the evaluation system.
- iv. By addressing suppliers and users of evaluation results, examples on how to overcome weaknesses in national evaluation systems have emerged, including in the agriculture sector (African Evaluation Journal, 2018).

**Table 6** Activities of M&E units in agriculture and challenges encountered

Country	Activities	Challenges
<b>Argentina</b>	Thematically and geographically broad work programme; Activities include baseline and mid-line surveys in 3-year research and extension projects; Now focus is shifting also to impact level, learning from Brazil.	Complex planning due to over 300 field units spread over the whole country; Lack of resources; Lack of qualified staff for evaluation of public policies; Increasing M&E capacities through learning by doing, but absence of a common language among professionals; Evaluation does not support decision-making, which is also a communication challenge.
<b>Armenia</b>	Validation of use of government subsidies in the sector Field visits and surveys.	Former M&E unit in Ministry of Agriculture liquidated, monitoring and evaluation delegated to the extension unit in the Ministry of Economy. Less focus on systematic monitoring or evaluation (e.g. field visits without access to project documentation).
<b>Benin</b>	Project and programme reviews; Application of data collection tools.	Restructuring of the M&E system; Provision of an operational database; Operationalisation of M&E system, including digitalization of data collection tools; Motivation and capacity building of actors involved in M&E.
<b>Bhutan</b>	M&E-based policy briefs and concepts.	Limited capacity for data analysis and interpretation.

Country	Activities	Challenges
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Activity reporting, mid-term and final evaluations of MoA's projects and programmes.	Lack of financial resources for M&E; Still challenges in staff capacities; Challenge to implement a useful M&E tool; The planning and M&E management information system poses challenges for M&E.
<b>Cameroon</b>	Project evaluations.	Limited staff capacities, main focus is on monitoring and distinction with evaluation is insufficient; Ministry of Economy and planning faces challenges in institutionalizing M&E in the agriculture sector.
<b>Chad</b>	Policy and strategy development, project planning and monitoring, organization, monitoring and evaluation of agricultural campaigns.	Weak staff capacities; Enabling environment for M&E is less attractive; Budget constraints; Participation in the evaluations of NGOs.
<b>Congo</b>	Mainly monitoring proper functioning of projects and programmes.	Limited staff capacities; Weak planning of interventions; Lack of budget and logistics; Insufficient use of M&E results.
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	N/A	Set up of M&E function and funding from the government budget.
<b>Egypt</b>	M&E for food loss and waste unit: during project with FAO, did project monitoring, not evaluation.	M&E unit in MoA established in 2012, now dormant; Frequent changes in the Ministry of Agriculture, staff rotation affecting available expertise.
<b>Gabon</b>	No M&E activities ongoing.	Governance issues: without an M&E unit, unable to follow the implementation of interventions; Resulting in accountability challenges for ongoing development interventions in the sector; No evidence-based decision making.
<b>Lebanon</b>	Work with Central Inspection Board on setting KPIs for Ministry of Agriculture; Review agriculture strategy and review M&E, including indicators.	Financial and human resource challenges: no dedicated budget for M&E as the global budget for ministry is not divided by services; Challenges in mobilizing those internal funds for projects implemented by Ministry of Agriculture.
<b>Madagascar</b>	N/A	Lack of funds for M&E training; No national evaluation culture and subsequently no evaluation knowledge; Research done in-house without the benefit of external technical M&E capacities; Activities mainly process focused (rather than results focused).
<b>Mali</b>	N/A	Implementation of a M&E system using SMART indicators; The agreed indicators are fruit of negotiations and consensus but are not SMART; The M&E system should operate digitally.
<b>Palestine</b>	N/A	Technical staff capacities and managerial skills; Coordination of a proliferated portfolio funded by multiple donors.
<b>Peru</b>	Monitoring of national agriculture policy; Monitoring reports for 55 sector plans; Indicator development; Outreach to other ministries; Less engagement on evaluation.	Institution is still in its early development, with staff overstretched to fulfil its functions; Budget limitations hamper more focus on impact evaluation.
<b>Senegal</b>	Monitoring the implementation of 292 projects and programmes.	Functionality of a comprehensive M&E systems covering multiple stakeholders; Lack of monitoring capacities, including budget for field visits; Reliability on internal project M&E data; Minimal budget allocations, disabling e.g. impact evaluations.

Country	Activities	Challenges
<b>South Africa</b>	Systematic monitoring, high-level evaluation, delivery to Treasury and Ministry of Planning, M&E.	Agriculture is quite a politicised sector, affecting transparency and independence of evaluations; Challenges of turnover of leadership in the Ministry.
<b>United Republic of Tanzania</b>	M&E framework for ten-year agriculture sector programme; Revision of agricultural policy; Reporting, monitoring and evaluation, contracting, research and performance management.	Poor agriculture statistical system; Most of the staff in the government M&E section are either lacking M&E skills or are having a very limited knowledge of it, 9 years after M&E structure was introduced into the government institutional setup.
<b>Timor-Leste</b>	Reporting, mainly financial.	No evaluation of agriculture policies; No baseline data in agriculture.
<b>Tunisia</b>	Evaluation of donor-funded projects.	Evaluations of donor-funded projects are done following the donors guidelines. Often these are joint evaluations involving staff of the MoA across different technical divisions depending on availability and competences; Challenges include: lack of professional background in evaluation, staff involved in evaluation often is the same implementing the project (no independence), lack of institutional culture on evaluation and RBM in general.
<b>Uganda</b>	Planning and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of departments and programmes, project and programme development and reporting.	Ministry is unable to collect all the required data to inform the M&E systems; Inadequate data and data quality; Insufficient use of M&E results due to poor understanding of its value; Budget constraints.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Both, monitoring and evaluation at the policy level since the Soviet time, supported by decentralized units.	Skills challenges; Expectation of positive results can affect M&E.

Source: Study interviews

Office of Evaluation  
E-mail: [evaluation@fao.org](mailto:evaluation@fao.org)  
Web address: [www.fao.org/evaluation](http://www.fao.org/evaluation)

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
00153 Rome, Italy