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« Support to Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and Action Plan»

For the
National Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (NaMED) Office of
the President, Sierra Leone

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Forward

In Sierra Leone, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of government policies, programmes, and projects lack a systematic and coherent architecture to account for results across the public sector. While national development plans have been produced almost every five years, little attention had been focused on the critical issue of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to achieve development results. Evidence abound that these national development plans were not designed with performance tracking in mind. Consequently, routine monitoring had been uneven in scope and quality, evaluation was sparse in coverage and use, and budgetary provisions for M&E in the national budget have been absent in most cases, and grossly inadequate, where they do exist. This has, in the past, limited the outcomes and impacts of our development efforts. Additionally, the Executive, Parliament, and the general public have been left insufficiently informed on the value for money of public investments, the successes and failures of public policy, programmes and projects, and the lessons which provide the foundation for informed Policy decision-making, reform, and development.

In response to achieve a harmonized and coordinate national M&E system that provides independent M&E of government and donor funded policies, programmes and projects, the Government of Sierra Leone in 2018 made a commitment to establish and operationalise a national M&E system that will enhance the understanding of what we do well and where we should aspire to do better in achieving our development aspirations. This commitment was actualised by the establishment of the National Monitoring and Evaluation Department (NaMED) which ultimately became a Directorate and placed under the direct supervision of the Office of the President in June 2020. By doing so, the Government manifested significant thrust in ensuring the availability of accurate data and information at all times, to help us plan our interventions, measure our development progress, as well as guide our decision-making.

A critical and urgent responsibility of NaMED was to develop various institutional documents including a National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, Standard Operating Procedures/Manual, an M&E Operational Results Framework for the Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP_2019-2023), National M&E Communication Strategy, and a National Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy. NaMED, with support from Government and development partners like the EU, UNDP and UNICEF is pleased to have accomplished these tasks.

It is also intended that the implementation of this strategy and action plan shall lead to the institutionalization of M&E, the establishment of a robust M&E governance framework, implementation and reporting structures. This Strategy applies specifically to how NaMED intends to operationalise what it was created for, how it does it, and how it is different from others. It therefore gives me a great pleasure to introduce this National M&E Strategy as a major step towards the enhancement of our new approach to M&E, accounting for development results, and using credible data for informed decision making.

Dr. James Edwin
Director General, NaMED

Acknowledgement

The Sierra Leone National Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared by the National Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (NaMED) of the Office of the President, with the support of two senior experts, Mr. Zakaria Muhammed Zakari and Dr. Patrick Kormawa. The European Union (EU) provided funding for the preparation of this document through the State Building Contract Phase III, implemented by Business and Strategies in Europe S.A. (B&S Europe) B&S Europe. We acknowledge Ana Relinque Lopez, Martial Laurent, Agnese Pantaleoni and Michelle Delgado all of B&S Europe for providing project management support at various stages of this work.

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Mr. Zakaria M. Zakari
Lead, Senior Expert

Dr. Patrick M. Kormawa
Senior Expert

Acronyms

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee
LCs	Local Councils
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic Education and Senior Secondary Education
MDA	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MECAT	Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Toolkit
MOHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MoPED	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
MTNDP	Medium Term National Development Plan
NaMED	National Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate
NaMES	National Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy Sierra Leone
NPPA	National Public Procurement Authority
NRS	National Recovery Strategy
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
PFM	Public finance Management
PFMRS	Public Finance Management Reform Strategy
PMSDS	Performance Management and Service Delivery System
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
TIC	Technical Implementation Committee
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
TWG	Technical Working Group

Introduction

Sierra Leone emerged from the ravages of a brutal civil conflict in 2002 and has since embarked on a number of post-conflict recovery and development initiatives through the implementation of poverty reduction strategies, programmes and projects. These, among others, include three key strategies – the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP)¹ 2001, the National Recovery Strategy (NRS)² 2002, and “Vision 2025”³ finalized in 2003, guided government and donor programmes that supported the transition from peacekeeping to peace-building, and to equitable growth and sustainable development. The Interim PRSP (I-PRSP 2002-2003) sought to address immediate post-conflict recovery and poverty reduction, targeting mainly displaced populations while the National Recovery Strategy (2003-2004) built on the gains from the I-PRSP. The country articulated “Vision 2025” as an overall vision of its longer-term development agenda with four strategic objectives as follows: (a) a competitive, private sector-led economy with effective indigenous participation; (b) a high quality of life for all; (c) a well-educated, science and technology-literate, secure and democratic society; and (d) sustainable exploitation of natural resources.

The Agenda for Change (2008-2012)⁴ was the second generation of Sierra Leone’s Poverty Reduction Strategy. It focused on addressing the post-war problems of poor infrastructure, youth unemployment, high maternal and infant mortality, widespread rural impoverishment, global economic downturn, and lapses in public financial management and governance. The Agenda for Change had three growth drivers: (a) agriculture; (b) energy; and (c) infrastructure. These are underpinned by support for good governance, capacity development, private sector growth, and management of natural resources.

The country embarked on a third generation of poverty reduction strategy - the Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2018)⁵, which focused on social and economic development. This was premised on a rapid expected growth in mineral production and export, together with the potential for petroleum exploitation to provide resources to help transform the country and make the Agenda for Prosperity feasible.

Following another peaceful election in 2018, the new government prepared a new Medium-term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2019–2023⁶ that promises to deliver development results that would improve the welfare of Sierra Leone’s citizens. The plan charted a clear path up to 2023 towards the goal of achieving middle-income status by 2039 through inclusive growth that is sustainable and leaves no one behind. The MTNDP has four key national goals as follows: - (a). Goal 1: A diversified, resilient green economy; (b) Goal 2: A nation with educated, empowered, and healthy citizens capable of realizing their fullest potential; (c) Goal 3: A society that is peaceful, cohesive, secure, and just, and (d) Goal 4: A competitive economy with a well-developed infrastructure. Providing Free Quality School Education is the Government’s flagship Programme.

Lessons learned from previous development interventions indicate that the gains have been marginal for the vast majority of the population due to several impediments. In a large part, there has been the ineffective management of development resources characterized by the non-achievement of planned outcomes within specified timeframes, and compounded by the ever changing and occasionally competing priorities of successive regimes. The complexities and impediments to the country’s development management efforts have been exacerbated by the

¹ Interim Strategy Paper prepared by the authorities of Sierra Leone, June 30, 2001

² National Recovery strategy Sierra Leone 2002-2003

³ National Development Plan of Sierra Leone Vision 2025, August 2003

⁴ An Agenda for Change: 2nd Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP 2): 2008-2012

⁵ The Agenda for Prosperity: Road to Middle Income status, Sierra Leones 3rd Generation Strategy paper 2013-2018

⁶ The Government of Sierra Leones New Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2019-2023

lack of an established and well-coordinated M&E system. These realities, to a large extent, informed and guided the preparation of the current MTNDP (2019-2023), through extensive nationwide consultations with various segments of the population. Overall, the consultations enriched national dialogue and consensus building on policies, strategies and programmes. More importantly, the consultations and dialogue guaranteed national ownership on the pathway to achieving the long-term vision for Sierra Leone becoming “...an inclusive, green, middle-income country by 2035”.⁷

The government of Sierra Leone is determined to maintain a more stable macroeconomic environment and is pursuing key macroeconomic targets which includes:

- Maintaining single-digit inflation
- Reducing the budget deficit (including grants) to not more than 3 percent of GDP, with domestic revenue collection of at least 20 percent, while public expenditures are kept within budgetary limits of around 24 percent of GDP
- Maintaining the wage bill so as not to exceed 6 percent
- Reducing the current account deficit (including official grants) to an average of around 11.5 percent
- Ensuring foreign exchange reserves are built to a minimum of three months of import cover
- Maintaining public debt at a sustainable threshold of not more than 70 percent in nominal terms and 55 percent in present value terms with an external debt not exceeding 40 percent of GDP in present-value terms.

To achieve the above, the government has come up with a Public Financial Management Reform Strategy (PFMRS) 2018-2021 with the aim of improving PFM cycle that will contribute to macroeconomic stability, enhanced delivery of public services, and improved accountability across revenue collection and expenditure management. The strategy sets out an ambitious agenda that will form an important foundation for the transformation of Sierra Leone to a middle-income country of the 21st century.⁸ In 2019, a Finance Act was also enacted to provide the imposition and alteration of taxes to give effect to the financial proposals of the government and to provide other matters for the financial year.⁹

In 2018, the government established the National Monitoring and Evaluation Department (NaMED) in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED). Furthermore, on June 11TH 2020 the President transformed the Department into a Directorate under the direct oversight of His Excellency the President of GoSL. It is to this effect that a monitoring and evaluation strategy is essential to achieve the government’s objective of transparency and accountability.

This National Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy for Sierra Leone (NaMES) was developed using participatory methods, with consideration of cost-effective and yet efficient methodologies in accessing inputs. Stakeholders particularly the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Ministry of Basic Education and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS), local councils, civil society, and development partners such as UNICEF were engaged in a national workshop, which identified M&E gaps and developed a clear understanding of the goals and the objectives of the strategy and understood how the objectives translate to measurable outcomes and outputs.

⁷ Government of Sierra Leone Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Operationalizing the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023)

⁸ Public Financial Management Reform Strategy 2018-2021 Government of Sierra Leone Ministry of Finance

⁹ The Finance Act was passed into Law in 2019, as a supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette on the 31st day of October 2018

- A review of documents from Sierra Leone and other countries relevant to monitoring and evaluation strategy was conducted. The desk review provided country context about the M&E system and good practices in the development and implementation of national M&E strategy. Information from the desk review guided the design of the strategy and aided in framing questions for assessing M&E capacity of the country through the group assessment approach of Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Tool (MECAT). Annex 1 presents details of the capacity areas and elements that are assessed by the tool while the results of the assessment are presented in Annex 2.
- Results from the MECAT provided information on additional M&E-related documents for further desk review. Information and data gathered from the desk review and MECAT were complemented by additional data and information gathered through consultation with relevant stakeholders. These provided valuable information for the review of the tools and instruments for the strategy.
- The (NaMED) senior management worked very closely with the consultants in the preparation of this strategy and action plan. In this respect, a Technical Working Group (TWG) comprising of all NaMED Directors, the Deputy Director General and the Director-General was set up to provide input and to review and revise the draft strategy. The TWG also worked with the consultants in adapting the MECAT to the national M&E context. In particular the TWG provided useful input to adapting the MECAT to be consistent with M&E at the Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government (MDAs) at the national level and Local Council (LC) levels. With the support of the TWG, the consultants conducted a series of consultations, discussions and meetings with different stakeholders during the development phase of the NaMES.
- The feedback received guided the organization of a workshop on 10 and 11 March 2021 in Bo City. The feedback from the workshop and consultations were incorporated in the process of drafting the strategy and action plan. Selection of participants in the consultations and group assessments were purposeful, paying attention to cost-effectiveness, efficiency and relevance to the expected result of the assignment. The design process required building consensus, commitment and maintaining effective relationships with the National Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (NaMED) of the Office of the President as well as other intended users of the strategy. Stakeholders particularly the M&E Officers of various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Local Council (LCs) M&E Officers participated in selecting appropriate outcomes, outputs and indicators of the strategy.

The final draft of the capacity assessment was shared to MDAs and LCs for comments prior to the formal presentation at a national workshop.

1.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Country Context

Monitoring and Evaluation of the government strategies and programmes at the national level in Sierra Leone started with monitoring of poverty indicators under the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2002 and subsequent programmes -like the National Recovery Strategy (2003-2004); National Strategy for Food Security, Job Creation, and Good Governance (2005-2007); Agenda for Change (2008-2012); and Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2018). These programmes introduced and formed the basis and foundation for assessing the impact of public policy and service delivery on poverty and welfare. However, the programmes lacked the architecture for accountability for results. While periodic data and analysis of poverty trends were carried out, routine monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of government policies and programmes were not institutionalized.

The lack of an established and well-coordinated M&E system has not provided the needed feedback, data and information for effectively and efficiently addressing the complexities and impediments to the country's development efforts. Consequently, the public service continued to face challenges such as mismanagement of expenditures, ineffective accountability, lack of human capacity, and centralized management of policy and programmes. In addition, the public service has been constrained to effectively measure, analyze and use performance data to improve and control service delivery of MDAs and the LC and to inform decision-making.

Evidence from the recently conducted capacity assessment shows that M&E system in the country lacks coordination, a unified MIS, adequate resources, sufficient culture and coordinated reporting structures.

- a) ***Lack of a national M&E Coordination:*** Although almost all MDAs and the LCs have a Unit or Department responsible for M&E function, M&E activities conducted by MDAs and LCs are ad hoc in nature. In addition, the status of M&E across government is at different stages of development. Some MDAs such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation have relatively well-established M&E frameworks, and carry out data collection and studies, largely as part of donor funded activities. The key constraints at the national level includes:- (a) the lack of a properly established national M&E system and coordination mechanism for the MDAs and LCs to conduct effective M&E of key policies undertaken at the central and local levels; (b) lack of a harmonized system including tools for data collection, processing, archiving, retrieval and reporting making it difficult to link the different sectorial M&E to national system for planning, budgeting, procurement and reporting on development outcomes; (c) conducting national M&E of sectorial policies and programmes mostly dependent on donor request or funding, thus there is no regular and consistent sectorial data.
- b) ***Lack of a unified national data Management Information System:*** The collection of credible and accurate data by both the MDAs and the LCs nationwide to inform planning and policy decisions is inconsistent. There are no standard procedures for data collection, analysis and reporting in several MDAs to support informed planning. Where such exists, data collection and reporting are paper based, and does not lead to in-depth analysis, querying and production of standardized reports. The absence of a national standard procedure for data collection, analysis and reporting has led to data fragmentation and proliferation of separate activities by MDAs and LCs.
- c) ***Inadequate resources for M&E activities:*** The M&E units/Departments at the MDAs and LCs have inadequate human and financial resources for M&E activities. Most programmes and budgets are designed without cognizance to the importance of M&E activities, leading to limited allocation of funds, especially the GoSL funded projects.
- d) ***Insufficient culture of M&E:*** MDAs in Sierra Leone do not have values for M&E, they have not adopted the culture of M&E in their programmes and projects implementation.

Uncoordinated reporting structures: There aren't any Standard Operating Procedures and systems to facilitate harmonized M&E reporting on a regular basis.

2.0 National Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (NaMED)

The GoSL established the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (NaMED).¹⁰ The overall objective of NaMED is to create an effective national institutional framework to monitor and evaluate Government and donor funded projects as well as the National Development Plan. The specific mandate of NaMED as contained in the statutory documents is as follows: -

- a) Lead the monitoring and evaluation of all public sector and donor funded policies, programmes and projects;
- b) Design and implement a National Monitoring System that links the monitoring units in MDAs, Local Councils and donor funded project units on one hand with NaMED, the Ministry of Finance, Parliament and the Office of the President, on the other;
- c) Develop monitoring guidelines and manuals for use by all MDAs and Local Councils and support their capacity building needs to effectively undertake monitoring;
- d) Track and record progress of implementation of all projects as well as the National Development Plan using modern and appropriate technology;
- e) Undertake periodic development expenditure tracking and reviews to assess correlation of public capital spending with planned outputs/outcomes;
- f) Institutionalize the culture of M&E by developing and implementing a GIS-enabled web-based internet portal onto which institutions will post and report on their development interventions and also access data and knowledge products;
- g) Lead the conduct of independent baseline studies, mid-term and final evaluation of all policies, programmes and projects, assessing their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability;
- h) Conduct special studies on various aspects of public sector policies, programmes and projects;
- i) Contribute to the preparation of public investment projects and national development plan to be results focused with a plan for M&E;
- j) Establish and maintain a database and repository on all completed and on-going projects.
- k) Link NaMED Management Information System (MIS) to other key MIS for monitoring activities of contractors in NGOs, donor-funded projects, MDAs, and Local Councils,

Since its establishment, NaMED has taken concrete steps towards strengthening the capacity of the institution and focusing on the formulation of required policy and legal environment in support of M&E including the preparation of the following documents:

- i. The M&E Policy
- ii. A National M&E Framework
- iii. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for M&E
- iv. M&E Communication Strategy, and
- v. M&E strategy

It is envisaged that NaMED will in the future promote a new M&E system, which will build on rectifying the weaknesses of past systems. This also includes putting in place an effective and efficient National M&E structure while streamlining implementation of development

¹⁰ Document No. 2 Finance Act 2019 Item 30: Establishment of a National Monitoring and Evaluation Department; Pages 25 – 26; and the Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette Extraordinary Vol. CXLX, No. 3 dated 11th January 2019.

interventions from the onset to completion of activities and strengthening existing M&E structures.

2.1 Other Accountability systems linked to the operations of NaMED

The GoSL has also established a Performance Management and Service Delivery System (PMSDS) coordinated by The Chief Minister. The objective of the PMSDS, is to utilize a Performance Tracking Tool (PTT) that requires MDAs to indicate results to be achieved on an annual basis (spread over quarters). This formed the basis of developing Performance contracts signed by the Office of the President (OTP) and the Political heads of the respective MDAs and later extended to other public servants. NaMED's operation is a key component of the PMSDS.¹¹

The Parliamentary Oversight Committees have become more active in holding public sector institutions to account for their stewardships by conducting nationwide oversight activities including holding public hearings.

Accountability institutions such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) and the National Public Procurement Authority (NPPA) were established and supported to effectively perform their statutory functions. The ACC was strengthened through the revision of the Act that established it, to give it prosecutorial powers and make assets declaration by public officials and verification more effective and results-oriented.¹²

The Freedom of Information Act was enacted and the Access to Information Secretariat was established to ease the process of the public accessing information from public sector institutions. The Act guarantees access to government information and also imposes a penalty for failure to make information available.¹³

3.0 National Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

The national M&E Strategic Plan will give NaMED its relevance and direction for effectiveness and efficiency. The strategy specifies that NaMED should results-based to manage the full cycle of programmes from planning, monitoring and reporting, to evaluation, as well as use evaluative evidence to improve programme design and implementation. In this respect, the strategy will guide and foster evidence-based learning and programme development. This strategy underpins and provides direction to conduct high-quality evaluations to inform management actions. It therefore calls on the NaMED to address its challenges through innovative approaches and by reinforcing its risk management and control practices as well as strengthening its results-based monitoring and evaluation systems.

The overarching goal is to enhance the generation of good quality national monitoring and evaluation system, which will be integrated into the National and LCs decision-making, and to deliver this within a robust governance framework. This is to provide greater accountability and a strong evidence base for future decision-making guiding the GoSL.

¹¹ Performance Management in Sierra Leones Public Sector Organizations

¹² Sierra Leone Anti-corruption (Amendment) Act 2019

¹³ The Right to Access Information Act 2013

The strategy is based on the theory that monitoring and evaluation system can only be effective, efficient and institutionalized if a national framework for implementation and coordination of M&E at MDAs and LCs with clear structure is established and a pathway developed for professionalization of Monitoring and Evaluation in Sierra Leone

Monitoring and evaluation underscores the need to enhance the effectiveness of investments by linking outputs and outcomes with inputs and activities. Results Based Management (RBM) strategy puts particular emphasis on aligning programming with M&E results; managing for and not by results; keeping measurement and reporting simple; and using result-based information for learning and decision making.

3.1 Goal and Objectives of the M&E Strategy

The M&E Strategy should be consistent with the national M&E policy and the MTNDP (2019-2023), it is therefore necessary to develop a functional and robust M&E system to document progress towards results of government financed and donor funded sector programmes.

The goal of this strategy to establish a sustainable national M&E system in Sierra Leone for tracking progress, demonstration and reporting results of sector projects, policies and programmes and improve evidence-based decision-making. In effect, the national M&E system should be efficient, effective and coordinated to track the progress of implementation of sector programmes, projects and policies. In this respect, this strategy translates the M&E policy into actionable and results-based objectives and activities.

3.2 Aim of the Strategy

The National Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy aims to *establish a sustainable National M&E system for tracking progress and demonstrating results and to ensure evidence-based decision-making*. The strategy will ensure a “Monitoring and evaluation culture” within Sierra Leone that strengthens results-based planning and management at all levels of government and entrenches a culture of learning, transparency and accountability at all levels of governance. The strategy also aims to ensure that M&E becomes an integrated government mechanism for monitoring and evaluation planned activities. Stakeholders will be able to answer the following questions in relation to efforts:

- What is implemented?
- What has changed?
- For whom?
- How significant was it?
- Will it last (in cases where it should last)?
- In what ways did we contribute to these changes?

3.2.1 Vision

“ A Sierra Leone where all public sector policies, programmes and projects at national and sub national levels produce value for money and are subject to an independent, integrated, institutionalized and well-coordinated M&E system that ensures improved development results, accountability, transparency and learning.”

3.2.2 Mission Statement

The mission is to facilitate, influence and support effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of government programmes and projects aimed at improving service delivery, outcomes and impact on society.

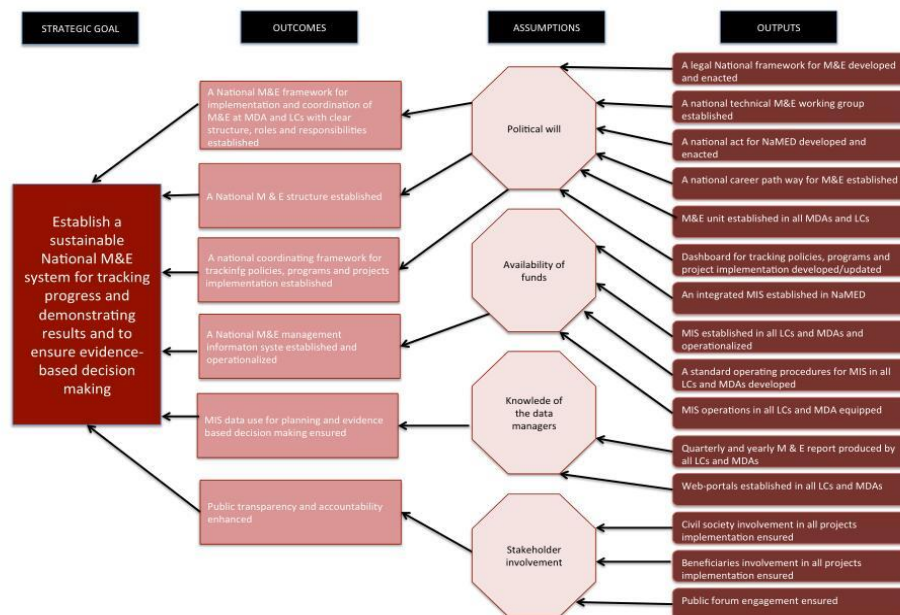
3.2.3 Values

Monitoring and Evaluation shall at all times be exemplary in all respects. This includes being responsive, transparent, dedicated and meticulous. It also includes focusing on learning and not doing the same thing over again when it is clearly not working. It will strive to have progressive management practices as well as to be compliant with all prescripts of good M&E practices. It shall pursue quality management practices in order to achieve value for money, efficiency and effectiveness.

3.2.4 Theory of Change for the M&E Strategy

The M&E embedding process in NaMED follows a Theory of Change (ToC) that represents, as far as possible, the intent and vision. The ToC presented in Figure 1 links fifteen key areas of outputs, six outcomes and one strategic goal.

Figure 1 Theory of change



Whilst monitoring and evaluation will focus on measurement and assessment of outcomes and impacts/goal following the implementation of desirable development initiatives, the approach will be part of the overall national planning and will generate timely information to assist financial/budgetary decisions, driving socio-economic development and the business of successful governance. NaMED will consider monitoring and evaluation to be the key mechanism for generating evidence to assess and realize benefits.

The following factors will be critical to the success of the National M&E strategy:

- a) Adopting a needs-driven approach to establishing monitoring and evaluation priorities, which is applied systematically across the National and Sub-National portfolio.
- b) Being outward facing and recognising that delivering the required outcomes will often entail successful collaboration with other organisations. An initial step will be to implement a clear and transparent process for articulating the national priorities for monitoring and evaluation.
- c) Embedding an M&E culture within NaMED, MDAs and LCs which incentivises the delivery of good quality monitoring and evaluation.

3.3 Scope of the National M&E Strategy

This M&E strategy is developed to provide an effective M&E framework, which is designed to measure progress towards achievement of the overall goal and objectives of the NaMED. Thus, this M&E strategy has been prepared as an adaptable and living document and will be reviewed periodically. Every effort has been made to make it more specific which will help to improve achievement of results and progress mapping for NaMED.

To achieve all these, effective mechanisms will be put in place for data collection and information or progress flow mechanisms to ensure good quality, validity, and accuracy of data for improved implementation. Existing data collection mechanisms are planned to be effectively enabled and new systems will be developed and put in place to respond to the data and service delivery needs demanded by the action plan.

The logic behind this integration is based on the following key assumptions:

- a) M&E helps develop an understanding for programme managers and other stakeholders (including donors) who need to know the extent to which their projects or programmes are meeting their objectives and leading them to their desired effects
- b) M&E helps build greater systems of transparency and accountability in terms of use of national resources – financial, human and others.
- c) M&E information generated provides staff a clearer picture of the state of affairs of the Nation in general and programmes in particular
- d) M&E will help to identify good practices and derive lessons from operational experiences and can improve overall national performance.
- e) M&E system will support NaMED and other stakeholders to improve their capabilities for future planning and development by integrating lessons learned from experiences.

This strategy is concerned with NaMED and how they conduct the business of monitoring and evaluation in ensuring transparency and accountability of GoSL.

The process starts with the Ministry of Finance carrying out a Micro-economic forecasting. This involves the estimation of the total financial resource available for the coming year. Following the publication of the forecast, the Ministry of Finance issues out to all MDAs a Budget Call Circular. This circular is issued in April and May annually. In most cases, the Budget Call Circular indicates ceilings of the amount of funds MDAs could request. The MDAs are required to indicate the strategic policy direction of government for which funds are requested.

A National public hearing is conducted following the issuance of the Budget Call Circular and receipt of requests from the MDAs. The national hearing focuses on the policy direction of the government and economic development policy framework with participants from MDAs, LCs,

and Civil Society Organizations. Input from the national policy hearing is taken into account by the Ministry of Finance to finalize the Budget. Thereafter, the Ministry of Finance takes the final budget to cabinet for approval. The approved Budget by Cabinet is presented by the Minister of Finance to Parliament and debated for five consecutive days and the final debated budget is finally passed into law. The approved budget is disbursed on a quarterly basis to MDAs and LCs. Monitoring and evaluation is key to planning, reviewing previous level activities and guiding future directions and country values.

3.4 Objectives of the strategy

The specific objectives of this strategy are as follows: -

- a. To Establish a National M&E framework for implementation and coordination of M&E at MDA and LCs levels with clear structures, roles and responsibilities.
- b. To Establish a national M&E management information system for planning, programming, reporting and evidence-based decision making
- c. To ensure the coordination, transparency and accountability in the implementation of policies, programmes and projects in conformity with the tenets of good governance
- d. To Strengthen the capacities of MDAs, the LCs and key stakeholders involved in the M&E policies, programmes and projects,
- e. To develop and implement a communication strategy for monitoring and evaluation.

3.5 Strategic Impact, Outcomes, Outputs and Indicators

The national M&E strategy is expected to result in the following outcomes:-

- a) National M&E framework for implementation and coordination of M & E at MDA and LCs with clear structure, roles and responsibilities established
- b) National M&E management information system for planning, programming, reporting and evidence-based decision making established and operationalized
- c) Coordination, transparency and accountability in the implementation of policies, programmes and projects in conformity with the tenets of good governance ensured
- d) Timely reporting on GoSL funded and donor financed projects ensured.

Table 3.5.1 Strategic impact, outcomes, outputs, and indicators

Impact Statement: Establish a sustainable National M&E system for tracking progress and demonstrating results and to ensure evidence-based decision-making.	
Outcome 1: A National M&E framework for implementation and coordination of M&E at MDAs and LCs with clear structure, roles and responsibilities established	
<u>Indicators</u>	
Stages in the implementation of the Annual Monitoring and Evaluation operational Plan	
% of MDAs compliance with the Monitoring and Evaluation operational plan	
Output 1.1 A legal National framework for M&E developed and enacted.	
<u>Indicators</u>	
1.Stages in the development of the National M&E Framework	
Output 1.2: A national technical M&E working group established	
<u>Indicators</u>	
1. Number of meetings conducted by the M&E Technical working group	
2. No. of M&E meetings held	

Output 1.3: A national act for NaMED developed and enacted <u>Indicators</u>
Stages in the implementation of NaMED Act
Outcome 2: National M&E structure established <u>Indicators</u>
% of MDAs and LCs with M&E Unit staff according to national standard % of MDAs AND LCs with an organogram reflecting Monitoring and Evaluation
Output .2.1: A national career pathway for M & E established <u>Indicators</u>
Number of Monitoring and Evaluation Officers employed in MDAs and LCs with a scheme of service for M&E career path
Output 2.2: M&E unit established in all MDAs and LCs <u>Indicators</u>
Number of MDAs and LCs with M&E Unit Number of MDAs and LCs with dedicated M&E Officers
Outcome 3: A national M&E management information system established and operationalized 1. Output 2.2: M&E unit established in all MDAs and LCs <u>Indicators</u>
1. % of MDAs/LCs submitting complete and timely monthly/quarterly report to NaMED
Output 3.1: An integrated MIS established in NaMED <u>Indicators</u>
Stages in the establishment of a national MIS Number of MDAs/LCs reporting using the MIS Number of MDAs/LCs that submit monthly/quarterly report to NaMED
Output 3.2: MIS established in all LCs and MDAs and operationalized <u>Indicators</u>
Number of MDAs and LCs with a functional MIS Number of MDAs and LCs with reporting tools Number of reporting units that submit monthly report to MDAs/LCs
Output 3.3: A standard operating procedures for MIS in all LCs and MDAs developed <u>Indicators</u>
No. of MDAs/LCs with SOPs and Protocols for Data collection, reporting, analysis and dissemination

Output 3.4: MIS operations in all LCs and MDA equipped <u>Indicators</u> Number of reporting units with no stock out in reporting tools in each MDAs/LCs No. of MDAs/LCs using digitalized reporting at all levels
Outcome 4: MIS data use for planning and evidence-based decision making ensured <u>Indicators</u> 1. % of policy briefs that are informed by MIS data
Output 4.1: Quarterly and yearly M & E report produced by all LCs and MDAs <u>Indicators</u> No. of MDAs/LCs that produce quarterly report No. of MDAs/LCs that produce yearly report
Output 4.2: Web-portals established in all LCs and MDAs <u>Indicators</u> No. of MDAs/LCs with Updated web- portals Existence of a functioning national M & E web-portal
Outcome 5: A national coordinating framework for tracking policies, programmes and projects implementation established <u>Indicators</u> 1. % of policies, programmes and projects tracked using a national coordinating framework
Output 5.1: Dashboard for tracking policies, programmes and project implementation developed and regularly updated <u>Indicator:</u> Number of Dashboard produced for tracking policies, programmes and project implementation
Outcome 6: Public transparency and accountability enhanced <u>Indicator</u> 1. Public perception on Transparency and accountability Index
Output 6.1 Civil society involvement in the implementation of all projects ensured <u>Indicator:</u> 1. Number of Civil societies involved in project implementation
Output 6.2 Beneficiaries involvement in the implementation of all projects ensured <u>Indicator</u> Number of beneficiaries involved in project implementations with sex disaggregation

Output 6.3 Public forum engagement ensured
<u>Indicators</u>
Number of Public forum engagement held
Number of stakeholders involved in public forum engagement

4.0 Action plan, budget, and implementation arrangements

The objective of this action plan is to outline the critical actions that have to be taken to strengthen the M&E system in Sierra Leone in both the short and long-term. A costed action plan for the national M&E strategy with key activities envisaged to be implemented within the five-year period (2021- 2026) is provided in the Budget (Table 4.2.1). The actions as well as specific activities are described in the following paragraphs.

4.1 Action Plan of the Strategy

The assessment of the current national M&E system has identified 5 strategic interventions for strengthening the M&E system in the country. These includes (a) coordination and harmonization of the M&E system; (b) provide incentives for contribution to results; (c) putting in place standardized and efficient data collection and reporting system; (d) building capacity of staff, MDAs and LCs; and (e) increasing resource allocation for financing M&E activities. These are elaborated in the following paragraphs.

4.1.1 Coordination and Harmonization of M&E System

There is a need for the MIS to function among different units for better coordination and harmonization. Substantial savings can be achieved from streamlining and rationalizing M&E requirements and activities that currently differ in terms of criteria, format and periodicity between the MDAs and LCs. In particular, it will be important to have congruence and synergy in the data collection guidelines that are currently being used by the MDAs and LCs. The development of a common terminology, reporting period and MIS platform for both MIS's would be a good point of departure for better coordination and harmonization.

- a) Approve the M&E Strategy and Action Plan and institutionalize in NaMED;
- b) Promulgate an M&E Act that will institutionalize M&E and build M&E culture in all MDAs and LCs;
- c) Revise of the Human Resources needs for all MDAs and LCs;
- d) Establish and promote a national career pathway for M & E in the Civil Service;
- e) Establish/Strengthen the Departments/Units responsible for M&E in MDA's/LC;
- f) Develop Multi-year, comprehensive training plans for M&E activities;
- g) Establish and operationalize a national technical M&E working group linked to NaMED;
- h) Establish and operationalize national and sub national M&E structures;
- i) Periodic engagement with stakeholders (e.g., Quarterly or half yearly).
- j) Prepare and operationalize a uniform M&E plan, Log frame and reporting template for all MDA's and LC's for a unified reporting system.

4.1.2 Providing Incentives for contribution to results

Lessons from countries that are implementing successful national M&E systems requires a policy that provides incentives to management level officials to demand for data and information for use in decision making. It is also noted that M&E can only succeed under the following circumstances, where:

- a) The practice of M&E is a consequence of incentives embedded in public service systems

- b) Rewards and sanctions are guided by achievements of results; and
- c) Managers and implementers collectively perceive self-interest in adopting tools for continuous assessment and learning.¹⁴

Alignment of incentives to results is the best way to ensure that managers are motivated to achieve results. A system of motivation and incentives should be put in place for line members in MDAs and LC to achieve results. In all cases, the results to be achieved should be aligned to the incentives. This requires a shift from the present measurement of performance that is determined by the money spent or spending capacity to achievement of indicators, tangible progress, or contribution to improving national socio-economic development indicators. In this respect, emphasis should not be placed on processes and outputs, but on achievements in contributing to outcomes. With respect to budget and performance, a performance-based financing of activities should be linked to results to strengthen the monitoring process.

4.1.3 Using Standardized data collection and reporting formats

Strengthening and harmonizing M&E activities at the MDAs and LCs will require an alignment and coherence in data collection, analysis, and reporting formats. This would require development of data collection, analysis and reporting guidelines, standard operation manuals. This will also require the implementation of periodic data quality and reliability management such as periodic Data Quality Audits (DQA), regular training of staff in the MDAs and LCs. NaMED should develop protocols for periodic DQA and train MDAs and LCs in the use and implementation of the periodic DQA.

- a) Support establishment and operationalization of MIS in all LCs & MDAs
- b) Provide support equip MIS operations in all LCs and MDA
- c) Align National M&E SOPs with International Frameworks
- d) Develop and Implement a Communications Strategy for Development Results
- e) Establish a national coordinating framework for tracking policies, programmes & projects implementation
- f) Establish and operationalize a national M&E management information system
- g) Support MDA & LCs senior management to use MIS data for planning and evidence-based decision making
- h) Establish Web-portals and operationalize in all LCs and MDAs
- i) Enforce Data Quality Assurance mechanisms.

4.1.4 Capacity Building for M&E

Under this M&E Strategy, an approach to capacity building will be adopted that focuses on managing results based monitoring systems and providing M&E training. Substantive demand from the government is a prerequisite to successful institutionalization, i.e., the M&E system must produce monitoring information and evaluation findings that are judged valuable by key stakeholders, which are then used to improve performance, and which respond to sufficient demand for the M&E function to ensure its sustainability for the foreseeable future. For this reason, the M&E Strategy will also focus on increasing awareness of M&E and its

¹⁴ See Australian M&E System, South African M&E System, Malawi M&E System

potential uses including M&E tools, methods, and techniques. The M&E capacity building activity will primarily focus on two levels where capacity is required to ensure overall performance of the M&E system under NaMED.

The individual level refers to the individual job performance and actions of staff with M&E responsibilities under NaMED, and the capacity building elements for this level include job requirements, skill levels and needs, performance reviews, access to information, and training/re-training. The focus of individual capacity building is the development of a cadre of skilled M&E trainers through the Tran-Of-Trainer (TOT) approach.

The organizational level refers to the infrastructure and operations that need to be in place within each organization to support the collection, verification and use of data for programme monitoring and management. Capacity building elements for this level include management process, HR system and personnel structure, financial resources, information infrastructure and organizational motivation.

4.1.5 Resource mobilization and funding for M&E

The National M&E Strategic identified strengthening of the Monitoring and Evaluation system as one of the priority areas for focus and funding. Resource mobilization is necessary for effective national monitoring and evaluation. The coordination of monitoring and evaluation generally rests with Named and with line ministries and CSOs at various levels and sectors. M&E units have already been established in most of these levels and sectors of implementation and coordination. While it is recognized that many countries have limited funding for tracking national goals and inputs, maintaining an overarching picture of the inputs required to run the M&E system effectively is crucial. To be sustainable, this clear picture must be in place as part of an effective and coherent national M&E system. Named will advocate for increased resources for the M&E and efficient use of resources from both within and outside the national agency.

A key function of planning for M&E is to estimate the costs, staff, and other resources that are needed to properly carry out M&E activities. It is hence important to weigh in on the requirement of M&E budget needs at the programme design stage so that funds are allocated specifically to M&E and are available to implement key M&E tasks through the relevant Operational Plans.

A well-funded M&E process will leave little to chance in their effort to collect quality data that would help improve utilization. Besides this, scholars have argued that there is need to create ownership of M&E process so that clients and stakeholders do not feel that evaluation has been designed by funding agencies and so it is addressing their interests rather than the concerns and priorities of the client (Guijt, 1999; Segone. 2008).¹⁵

4.2 Budget and Financing Implementation

The cost to successfully implement the national M&E Strategy and Action Plan is Le 55.43 billion (Fifty-Five Billion, Forty-Three Million Leones), which is equivalent to US\$5,543,000 (Five Million, Five-Hundred and Forty-Three Thousand Leones). Out of this total, Le 18 billion (equivalent to US\$1.8 million) representing 32 percent is required in year 1. In year 2 the sum of Le13.9 billion (equivalent of US\$1.39 million) representing 25 percent of the budget will be required. A sum of Le 8.94 billion (about US\$0.894 million) would be

¹⁵ Resource Allocation, Evaluational Capacity Building M&E Results Utilization Among Community Based Organizations in Meru County in Kenya Dr. Cavens Kithinji

required, while in the fourth and fifth years Le 7.58 billion and Le 7.01 billion respectively will be required.

4.2.1 Arrangements for Financing the Strategy

The successful implementation of the activities in this plan is contingent upon the allocation of adequate finance and human resources to NaMED as well as the MDAs and LCs, and the timeliness of budget allocation. Equally important is the allocation of resources for M&E coordination, management and oversight and capacity building. In this respect, the GoSL, through the Ministry of Finance shall provide adequate resources to NaMED, MDAs and LCs for the implementation of this strategy.

The following arrangement is therefore required for the timely and successful implementation of this strategy and action plan. The core annual budget for NaMED is provided by the GoSL, which is inadequate for the expected deliverables of the Directorate, thus evaluation of most public investment projects are presently financed by development partners, and not by the GoSL. It is therefore necessary that a more sustainable means of financing NaMED and thus this strategy and action plan. In this respect, the MOF shall facilitate an arrangement to ensure that 2.5 percent of any Public Investment Project (PIP) over Le 10 billion (equivalent to US\$1 Million) in value is transferred to a special account for NaMED to conduct evaluation of such PIPs and fund related activities listed in the budget of this strategy and action plan.

As regards financing the MDAs/LCs, a minimum percentage (at least 3 percent) of all donors funded project budgets shall be allocated to the Division/Unit responsible for M&E to finance project monitoring and related activities listed in this strategy at the MDA/LC level. In addition, the MOF shall determine and allocate a minimum percentage of non-wage budgets for MDAs/LCs specifically for monitoring and related activities listed in this strategy and action plan.

Staffing of MDAs/LCs with trained and qualified M&E personnel is a major problem that this strategy and action plan will address. Additionally, the positions related to M&E functions do not exist in the public service establishment, which poses a problem for implementation.

Table 4.2.1. Activity-based Budget to Implement the Strategy

	Activities	BUDGET (in Million Leones)						Responsible
		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL	
1	Prepare a national policy and legal (enacted) framework for a national M&E system	500	400	100	100	100	1,200	NaMED
2	Develop a national M&E Policy Citizen's feedback or engagement on popularization of M&E and communication	200					200	NaMED
3	Prepare and validate a National M & E Strategy and Action Plan	800	0	150	0	150	1100	NaMED
4	Establish and operationalize a national technical M&E working group linked to NaMED	200	200	100	100		600	NaMED
5	Establish and operationalize national and sub national M&E structures	500	300				800	NaMED
6	Establish and promote a national career pathway for M&E in the Civil Service and LCs	50	100	100	50	50	350	NaMED
7	Facilitate the establishment of M&E Departments/units in all MDAs and LCs	250	200	200	200	50	900	NaMED
8	Conduct assessment on the roles and functions of LCs and MDAs	700	400				1100	NaMED
9	Conduct assessment and define the structures, roles and functions of LCs and MDAs defined	400	200				600	NaMED
10	Organize annual experience sharing meeting/retreat on implementation of the strategy	200	200	100	100	100	700	NaMED
11	Establish and operationalize a national M&E management information system	1,500	1,500	500	500	500	4500	NaMED
12	Support establishment and operationalization of MIS in all LCs	2,000	1,000	500	200		3700	NaMED
13	Provide support equip MIS operations in all LCs and MDA	1,500	800	700	400	400	3800	NaMED
14	Carry out performance reviews (finance and progress) at regular intervals	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10000	NaMED
15	Enforce Data Quality Assurance mechanisms	500	500	500	500	500	2500	NaMED
16	Support MDA & LCs senior management to use MIS data for planning and evidence-based decision making	500	500	300	200	200	1700	NaMED
17	Establish Web-portals and operationalize in all LCs and MDAs	400	400	300	300	200	1600	MDAs/LCs
18	Establish a national coordinating framework for tracking policies, programmes & projects	1500	1300	800	600	500	4700	NaMED

	Activities	BUDGET (in Million Leones)						Responsible
		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL	
19	Develop multi-year, comprehensive plans for M&E activities	500	500	250	250	250	1750	NaMED
20	Assess needs and develop multi-year M&E training plan for managers and field-staff.	600	600	300	300	300	2100	NaMED
21	Prepare a comprehensive M&E training plan for NaMED, MDAs and LCs	600	600	300	300	300	2100	NaMED
22	Provide support for international Short Courses, Study Tours etc.	600	700	700	700	500	3200	NaMED
23	Conduct annual orientation of core M&E staff in Planning, Monitoring & Coordination of MDAs & LCs.	200	200	200	200	150	950	NaMED
24	Conduct regular training in M&E for government staff, including the fieldworkers.	500	500	400	300	300	2000	NaMED
25	Provide scholarship for both Local and International advanced M&E related courses	300	300	300	300	300	1500	MDAs/LCs
26	Institutionalize M&E in the Educational System and Develop M&E training curriculum in partnership with a University in Sierra Leone & MTHE	450	300			200	950	NaMED
27	Align National M&E SOPs with International Frameworks	50	50	40	30	30	200	NaMED
28	Develop and Implement a Communications Strategy for Development Results	150	150	150	100	80	630	NaMED
	TOTAL	17,650	13,900	8,990	7,730	7,160	55,430	

4.3 Implementation arrangements

NaMED has the mandate to lead the implementation of this strategy. It also has the obligations to mobilize the needed resources for the successful implementation of this strategy and action plan. However, NaMED has to work closely with the MDAs and LCs during the implementation of this strategy and action plan.

This strategy and action plan should be implemented in consonance with related strategies being developed by NaMED, namely – the communication strategy and NaMED Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. NaMED shall popularize this strategy, not only amongst the MDAs and LCs, but the also the civil society.

This strategy and action plan has been developed with the understanding that this is the first national M&E strategy and action plan for Sierra Leone. In this respect, NaMED shall undertake annual review meetings focussing on this strategy and action plan with the purpose of updating the strategy and action plan.

4.4 Roles, responsibilities of Stakeholders of M&E System

The roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders are listed in the Table below.

Institution	Roles and Responsibilities
Office of the President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide policy oversight for the implementation of M&E • User of M&E results to improve welfare of citizens
Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enactment of the Act to establishment of the National M&E Agency • Appropriation of resources needed for national M&E • Establishment of a Parliamentary M&E Committee • Oversight for approved budgets • Oversight for government projects & services
Ministerial Oversight Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures programmes and projects aligned to MTNDP • Ensure programmes and projects coordination • Addresses challenges to MTNDP implementation and resource Mobilization • Review new programmes and projects prior to submission for funding
Ministry of Planning, Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and planning for national developments • Ensure strategic partnership for implementation of the MTNDP
Ministry of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilise resources for the implementation of development projects • Leading preparation of budgets • Provision of budgetary allocations, timely release of funds and monitoring the utilization of funds
National Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, Office of the President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the M&E of all public-sector programmes and projects, including donor-funded projects. • Design and implement a national M&E system, including manuals and guidelines • Ensure effective monitoring of all public-sector programmes and projects. • Establish and maintain a database on projects & prepare periodic reports on all MTNDP projects • Conduct evaluation studies, baseline and mid-term review reports on all projects & programmes.

Ministries, Departments and Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively and efficiently facilitate and implement projects/activities in the MTNDP • Ensure programmes and/activities are aligned to national development priorities. • Ensure coordination at the sectoral level and collaboration with other actors. • Monitor, evaluate, & report on related activities implemented by other actors • Independent evaluation and monitoring of public service commission projects, programmes, and interventions
Local Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M&E Units/Departments responsible for all M&E of government projects at council and district levels • Monitor, evaluate and report on related activities implemented by partners & MDAs • Facilitate the work of all players at local and district levels, • Support partnerships with sectoral and national oversight institutions and actors, as well as community institutions and actors. • Ensure all activities at district level are aligned with the National Development Plan. • Constantly liaise with MoPED and the line MDAs on the operations, reporting, and implementation of programmes at the district level.
Development Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of technical and financial support • Ensure efficient utilization of financial and other resources
Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for transparency and accountability
Auditor General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Monitoring for compliance • Auditing of performance information
Public Service Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate recruitment and promotion of M&E Staff

4.5 Monitoring and reporting on results

The indicators in the results framework comprising 3 impact level indicators, 14 outcome level indicators, 22 indicators are aligned to 15 number of outputs along the Theory of Change, which moves from National country-level outputs representing MDAs and the Local Councils. The results they reflect contribute to the outcome and impact at the top of the ToC: Effective governance system that is anchored on result-based management, learning, transparency, and accountability culture that guarantees sustainable socio-economic development.

The results framework serves as a monitoring tool for the national M&E Strategy 2021-2025. Connecting these outputs, outcomes and impacts with indicators will help NaMED assess the extent to which the results along the logical chain are being achieved and whether its assumptions are valid. Each indicator in the results framework should:

- Include values for baseline, targets, and milestones (year-on-year targets).
- Be disaggregated by gender and by fragility and conflict, where feasible and applicable.
- Is accompanied by a methodological note that captures details about its measurement methodology and sources of data and standard operating procedures pertaining to their data-collection chains. These measures ensure that all data is auditable and replicable.

- Data collected under the results framework is stored in a designated database, which will be developed further and made publicly available.

4.6 Evaluation Framework

The purpose of the Evaluation framework is to develop and maintain an evaluative culture that seeks out information on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coverage, coherence, coordination and impact of development programmes/projects in order to use that information to learn how to better manage and deliver programmes and services, and thereby improve its performance. This is key to building more effective results management and evaluation approaches. The Evaluation framework is also committed to enhance a climate where evidence resulting from independent evaluations is valued, sought out and seen as essential to good management; and key stakeholders (national and state governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental partners; use learning and knowledge generated from independent evaluation findings to improve national and sub-national activities.

The final outcome should be a strong evaluative culture which:

4.6.1 Engages in self-reflection and self-examination

- Deliberately seeks evidence on what it is achieving such as through independent evaluation
- Uses results information to challenge and support what it is doing, and Values candor, challenge and genuine dialogue.

4.6.2 Engages in evidence-based learning

- Makes time to learn in a structure fashion
- Learns from mistakes and weak performance
- Encourages knowledge sharing.

The National Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy will ensure the conduct of evaluations to track process and measure outcomes to determine how well the programme achieves its goals. The following Framework will be used to evaluate government programmes and projects:

Process Evaluation

Assesses whether the programme/project is being implemented as originally intended, what services are being delivered, who is receiving those services, and perceptions of the programme among stakeholders.

Outcome Evaluation.

Assesses the extent to which a programme/project achieved its stated outcome goals and provides recommendations for future programme improvements.

Impact Evaluation.

Assesses a programmes/projects effect on participants and stakeholders, including outcomes and the changes that resulted from those outcomes.

Performance Monitoring.

Assesses baseline metrics compared to other data points at key points in time on a continuous basis throughout programme implementation.

Cost-benefit Evaluation.

Assesses the relationship between the project costs and the outcomes (or benefits). Policy makers, funding organizations, and other stakeholders can use evaluation findings to determine whether an investment in programme development and implementation yields significant outcomes of interest.

Well-planned and managed evaluations can improve the quality of programme/project interventions. Evaluations can also challenge accepted thinking to improve the overall development effectiveness.

Joint evaluation will be encouraged between GoSL and international development partners where partners are committed to the same joint strategy and are prepared to minimize their distinct institutional evaluation requirements. The main challenge is how to involve all the different partners appropriately at the key stages from evaluation design to reporting.

Whilst evaluating outcomes and processes remains important, results-based management in the context of the SDGs puts a greater emphasis on measuring impact. As the technical understanding of monitoring and evaluation processes grows and spreads, there is more widespread public interest, internationally, in the impact of development interventions and the efficient use of funding.

Evaluation strengthens accountability by documenting the allocation, use and results of its development assistance and by calling those responsible for policy and implementation to account for performance. Evaluation can help to clarify where accountability rests and to confirm achievement. The National evaluation will be committed to strengthen accountability not only to the Parliament, but also to the government and public in general. The table below illustrates proposed evaluations with activities and budget for the period of the strategy.

TABLE 4.6.3: Proposed evaluations and studies for 2021/24

Activities	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total estimated Budget	Responsible	Users Beneficiaries
Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
HIV-AIDS HH Surveys	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
GoSL HH Living Standard Survey	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
GoSL Multiple Indicators Survey (MICS)	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
GoSL Micro Nutrient Survey	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
Agriculture Survey	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
General Household Survey (GHS)	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
Social Statistics Report	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
National Nutrition and Health Survey (NNHS)	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
Human Development Index Report	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
National Agriculture Sample Survey (NASS)	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
Integrated Household Survey Panel							
1. National Health Information Annual Statistical Report	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
2. National Education Census Information Annual Statistical Report	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
3. National WASH Information Annual Statistical Report	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
4. National Bulletin of Situation of Social Welfare	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
5. National Statistical Year Book (CBS)	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
6. Quarterly Statistical Conjecture (NBS)	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
7. Monthly Inflation Rate (NBS)	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
8. Statistical Report on Women & Men	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
9. Education Statistics	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
10. Health Statistics	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
11. Digest of Education Statistics	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
Strategic Development Goals							
1. Independent Evaluation of Effectiveness and Impact of SDG4-Education (Education Strategic Plan in Sierra Leone	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
2. Independent Evaluation of Effectiveness and Impact of SDG3-Health in Sierra Leone	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
3. Independent Impact Evaluation of WASH Programme funded by Government, EU, and UNICEF in Sierra Leone	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
4. Independent Evaluation of Effectiveness and Impact of SDG1-Ending Poverty in Sierra Leone	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX			
Child Survival							
1. Socio-Anthropologic Research on Social Norms and family practices affecting Child Malnutrition in Sierra Leone							

2. Socio-Anthropologic Research on Social Norms and family practices affecting Vaccination and Use of health services for child survival in Sierra Leone									
3. Quantitative determinants factors of under-five mortality in Sierra Leone using NDHS or MICS Raw Data									

4.7 Data Collection Plan

Data for the strategic indicators will be obtained from two main sources: Routine and Non-Routine data sources.

4.7.1 Routine Data Sources

Routine data sources provide data that are collected on a continuous basis, such as information that are collected on service utilization. Although these data are collected continuously processing, aggregation and reporting on the data usually takes place on a monthly or quarterly basis.

- Data collection from routine sources is useful because it provides information on a timely basis compared to non-routine sources. Since it is available more frequently, routine data can be used effectively to detect and correct problems in service delivery.
- However, it can be difficult to obtain accurate estimates of catchment areas or target populations through this method, and the quality of the data may be poor because of inaccurate record keeping or incomplete reporting.

4.7.2 Non-routine Data Sources

Non-routine data sources provide data that are collected on a periodic basis, usually annually or biennially.

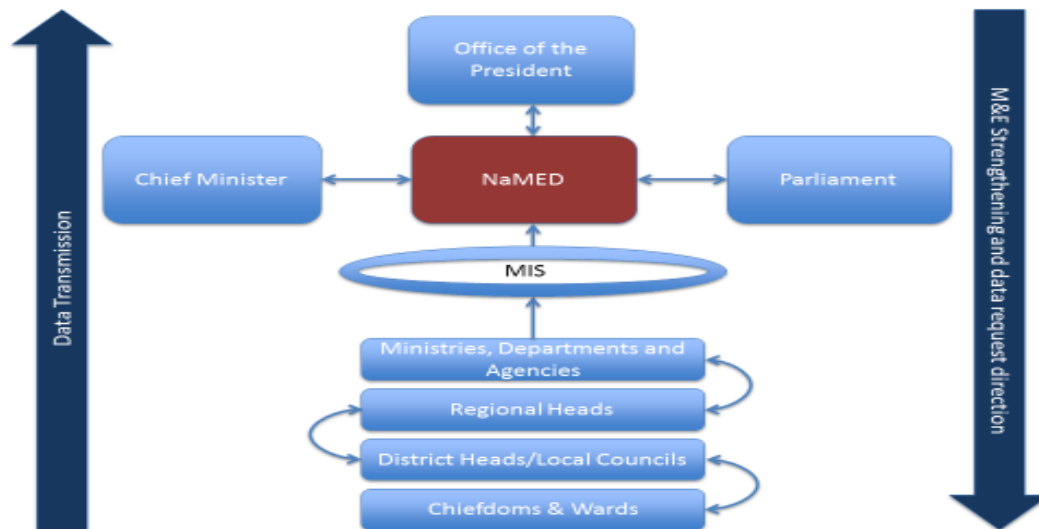
- Using non-routine data avoids the problem of incorrectly estimating the target population when calculating coverage indicators
- Non-routine data have two main limitations: collecting them is often expensive, and this collection is done on an irregular basis. In order to make informed programme decisions, programme managers usually need to receive data at more frequent intervals than no routine data can accommodate.

4.7.3 Other Data Sources

There are other routine data sources that are at various stages of development. Many of these data sources are managed outside NaMED but provide valuable information for the overall M&E system. Such data sources include routine data tools for programmes such as behaviour Change Communication, Bureau and statistics data, and Health and education statistics.

4.8 Data Flow Chart

The figure below shows the flow of data from National Line Ministries, Local Councils to the National executive council and the parliament. This is eventually made available to the Minister through NaMED for decision-making. Similarly, there is a feedback from NaMED to the Line Ministries.



4.9 Data Quality Issues

Data are most useful when they are of high quality. Therefore, data quality needs to be monitored and maintained throughout the data collection process. However, obtaining data of the highest quality has cost implications and often may not be feasible in which case decisions have to be made to determine what level of quality is adequate. To ensure high quality data the following strategies will be utilized:

- Data cleaning at all levels of data entry
- Regular supportive supervision and data verification using standardized checklists
- Periodic update and capacity building of data managers and personnel with data management roles
- Establishment of an information feedback mechanism
- Periodic review of data quality issues by all stakeholders

For each data set, the following data quality issues should be considered:

- Completeness: Are data complete? If not, what is missing? Could missing data be easily obtained? What changes could be made to the system to solve this problem?
- Accuracy: Do the data collection instruments that are being used result in valid and reliable data?
- Duplication: Is there a threat of duplication or double counting when services, beneficiaries, etc. are counted? What mechanism is in place to control for this?
- Frequency: Is the frequency of data collection appropriate?? For example, while the national programme may only need data annually, how often do state and LGA programme need data?
- Reporting Schedule: Do the available data reflect the time periods of interest? How are data needs for different reporting schedules reconciled (for example, data needs for the Sierra Leone Government Calendar Year, US Federal Fiscal Year etc.)
- Accessibility: Are data easily accessible and retrievable? If not, what are the barriers?
- Is the sample size large enough to provide a reasonable estimate or detect change?

Data quality assessment is useful because:

- ♣ The data assessment processes help improve the credibility of the M&E data by improving stakeholders' confidence that the data presented to them presents a true picture of the Services delivered.
- ♣ These processes help builds capacity in routine data collection and capture, and the way in which they can use data to improve their own programme.
- ♣ These processes help to improve the use of information for decision making, as more programmes collect and capture better quality data, and learn how to use this data.

Annexure

Annex 1: Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Tool (MECAT)-Capacity areas and elements

Capacity area	Elements (main focus of questions)
1 Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership: Effective leadership for M&E in the organization Human resources: Job descriptions for M&E staff, adequate number of skilled M&E staff, defined career path in M&E Organizational culture: Organizational commitment to ensure M&E system performance Organizational roles and functions: Well-defined organizational structure, including organization M&E unit; M&E units or M&E focal points in other public, private, and civil society organizations; written mandates for planning, coordinating, and managing the M&E system; well-defined M&E roles and responsibilities for key individuals and organizations at all levels Organizational mechanisms: Routine mechanisms for M&E planning and management, for stakeholder coordination and consensus building, and for monitoring the performance of the M&E system; incentives for M&E system performance Organizational performance: Key organizations achieve their annual work plan objectives for M&E
2 Human capacity for M&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined skill set for individuals and organizations at subnational and service-delivery levels Work force development plan, including career paths for M&E Costed human capacity-building plan Standard curricula for organizational and technical capacity building Local or regional training capacity, including links to training institutions Supervision, in-service training, and mentoring
3 Partnership and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M&E TWG Mechanism to coordinate all stakeholders Local leadership and capacity for stakeholder coordination Routine communication channel to facilitate exchange of information among stakeholders
4 Organizational M&E plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad-based participation in developing the organizational M&E plan Explicitly linked to the health sector or multisector strategic plan at the subnational and national levels, if applicable M&E plan adheres to national technical standards An M&E system assessment has been completed and recommendations for system strengthening have been addressed in a revised M&E plan
5 Annual costed health sector M&E work plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M&E work plan contains activities, responsible implementers, timeframe, activity costs, and identified funding M&E work plan explicitly links to the annual work plans and government budgeting framework (Medium-Term Expenditure Framework) Resources (human, physical, financial) committed to implement the M&E work plan All relevant stakeholders endorsed the M&E work plan M&E work plan updated annually based on performance monitoring
6 Advocacy, communication, and cultural behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication strategy includes a specific M&E communication and advocacy plan M&E explicitly referenced in the integrated development plans or multisector development plans M&E champions among the organization's officials identified and

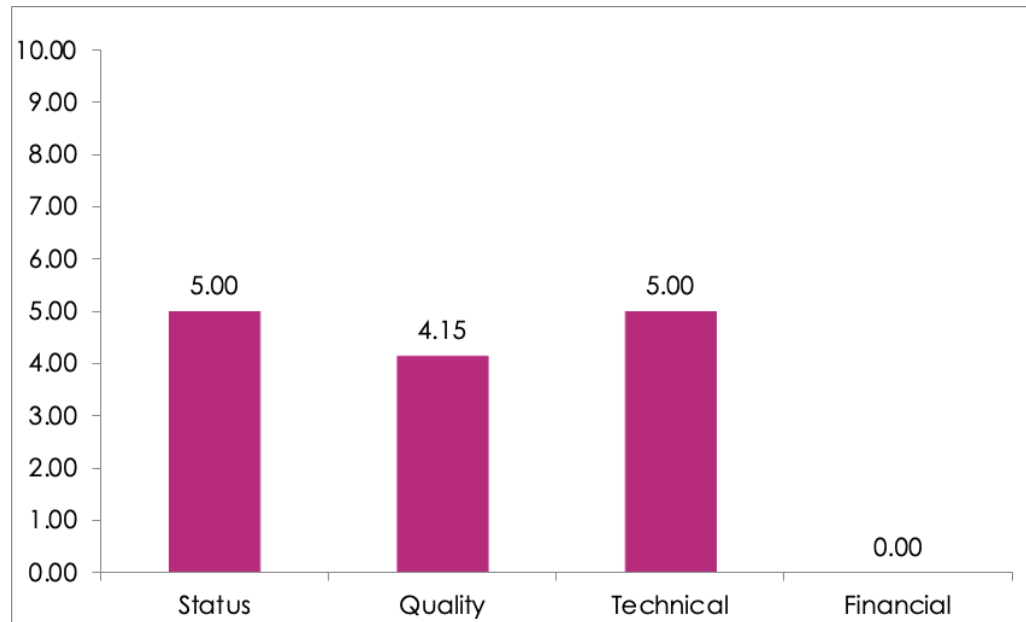
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actively endorse M&E actions M&E advocacy activities implemented according to the M&E advocacy plan
7	Routine monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection strategy explicitly linked to data use Clearly defined data collection, transfer, and reporting mechanisms, including collaboration and coordination among stakeholders Essential tools and equipment for data management (e.g., collection, transfer, storage, analysis) Routine procedures for data transfer from different reporting levels
8	Surveys and surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protocols for all surveys and surveillance based on international standards Specified schedule for data collection linked to stakeholders' needs, Including identification of resources for implementation Inventory of surveys conducted Well-functioning surveillance system
9	National and subnational databases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Databases designed to respond to the decision making and reporting needs of different stakeholders Linkages between different relevant databases to ensure data consistency and avoid duplication of effort Well-defined and managed database to capture, verify, analyze, and present data from all levels and sectors
10	Supervision and auditing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for supervising routine data collection at facility- and community-based levels Routine supervision visits, including data assessments and feedback to local staff Periodic DQAs Supervision reports and audit reports
11	Evaluation and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory of completed and ongoing organization-specific evaluation and research studies Inventory of local evaluation and research capacity, including major research institutions and their focus of work Evaluation and research agenda Guidance on evaluation and research standards and appropriate methods Forums for dissemination and discussion of research and evaluation findings
12	Data demand and information use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization's strategic plan and M&E plan include a data use plan Analysis of organizational data needs and data users A data use plan to guide evidence-based decision-making processes Evidence of information use (e.g., data referenced in funding proposals and planning documents) Interventions increase local demand for information and facilitate its use M&E materials available that address different audiences and support data sharing and use

Annex 2: MECAT Results Overall Dashboard

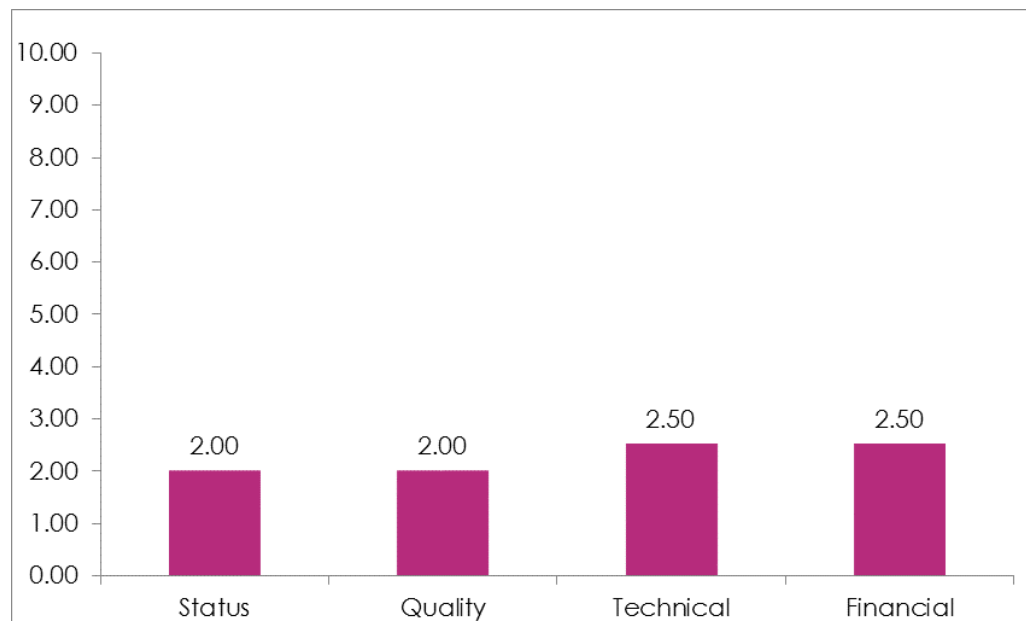
	Status		Quality		Technical		Financial	
	Baseline	End line	Baseline	End line	Baseline	End line	Baseline	End line
1.0 Organizational	5.00	0.00	4.15	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2.0 Human Capacity for M&E	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.50	0.00	2.50	0.00
3.0 Partnerships and Governance	2.14	0.00	1.98	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
4.0 Organization M&E Plan	2.00	0.00	1.10	0.00	3.33	3.33	1.67	0.00
5.0 Annual Costed MDAs/LCs M&E Work Plan	6.67	0.00	2.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6.0 Advocacy, Communication, and Cultural Behavior	1.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7.0 Routine Monitoring	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8.0 Studies and Surveys	5.00	0.00	5.42	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00
9.0 National and Subnational Databases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10.0 Supervision and Auditing	5.00	0.00	3.75	0.00	2.50	0.00	2.50	0.00
11.0 Evaluation and Research	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
12.0 Data Demand and Use	3.33	0.00	4.17	0.00	5.00	0.00	2.50	0.00

MECAT Results Specific Dashboard

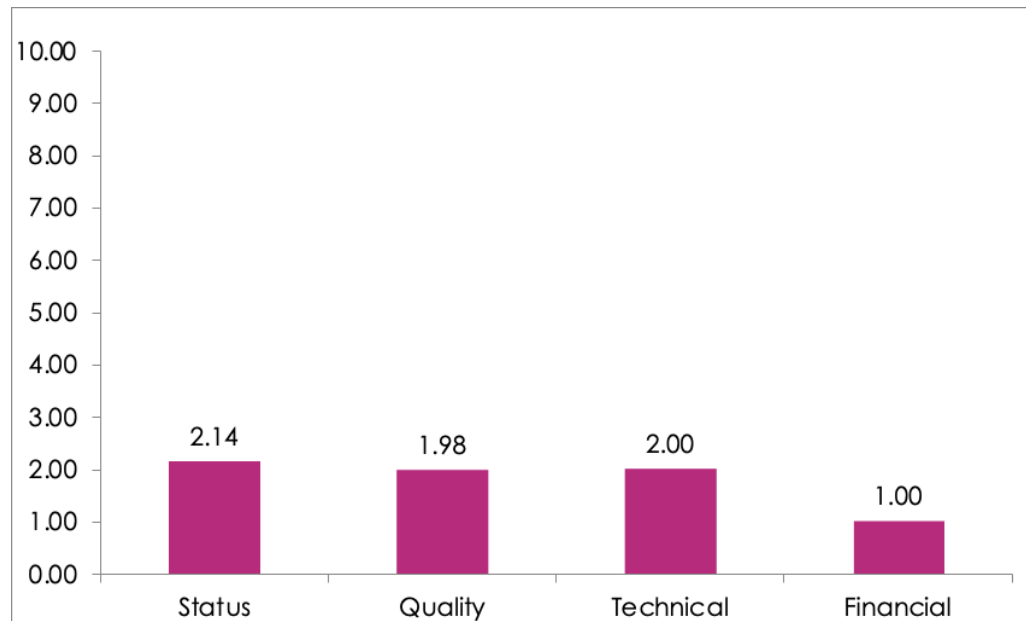
1.0 General



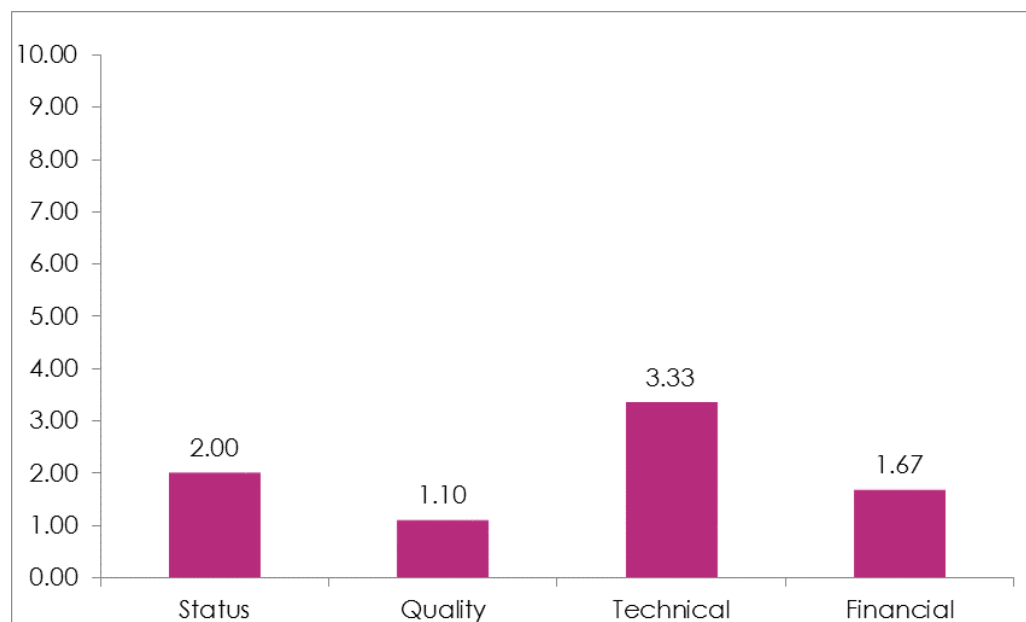
2.0 Human Capacity



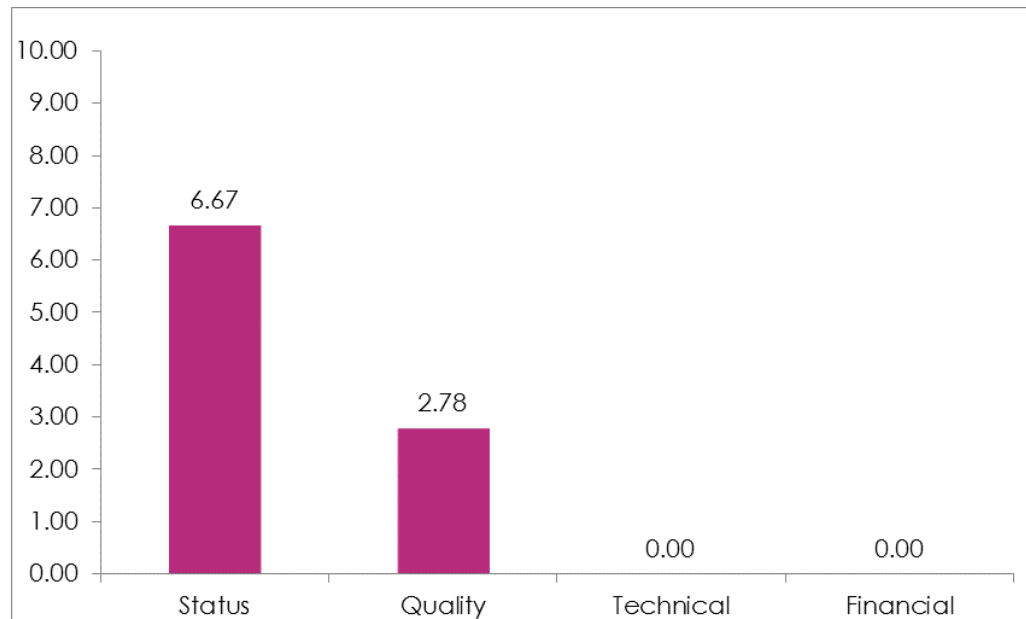
3.0 Partnership and Governance



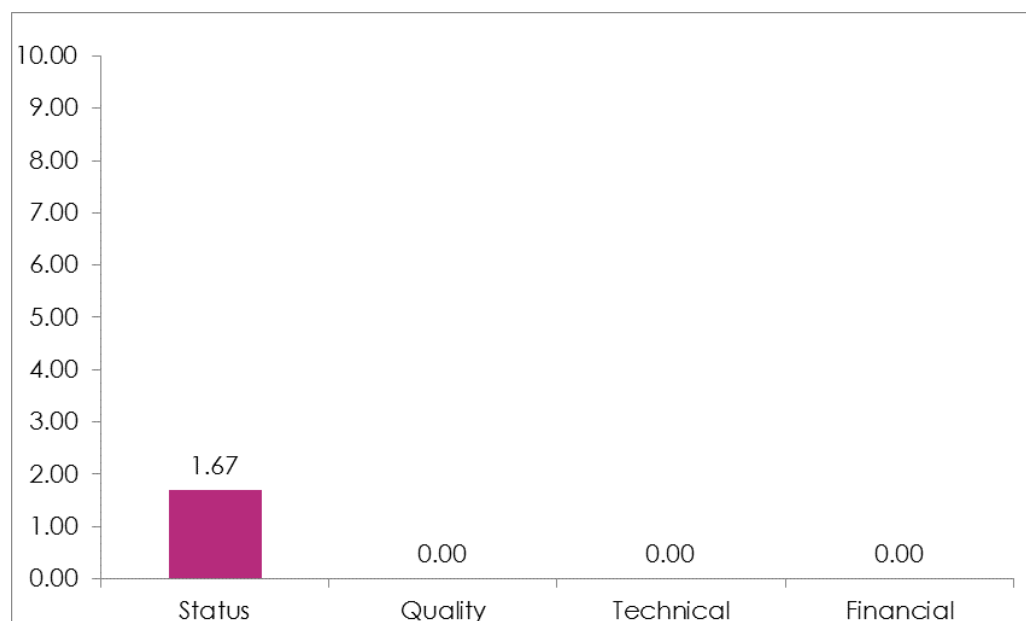
4.0 Organization Monitoring and Evaluation Plan



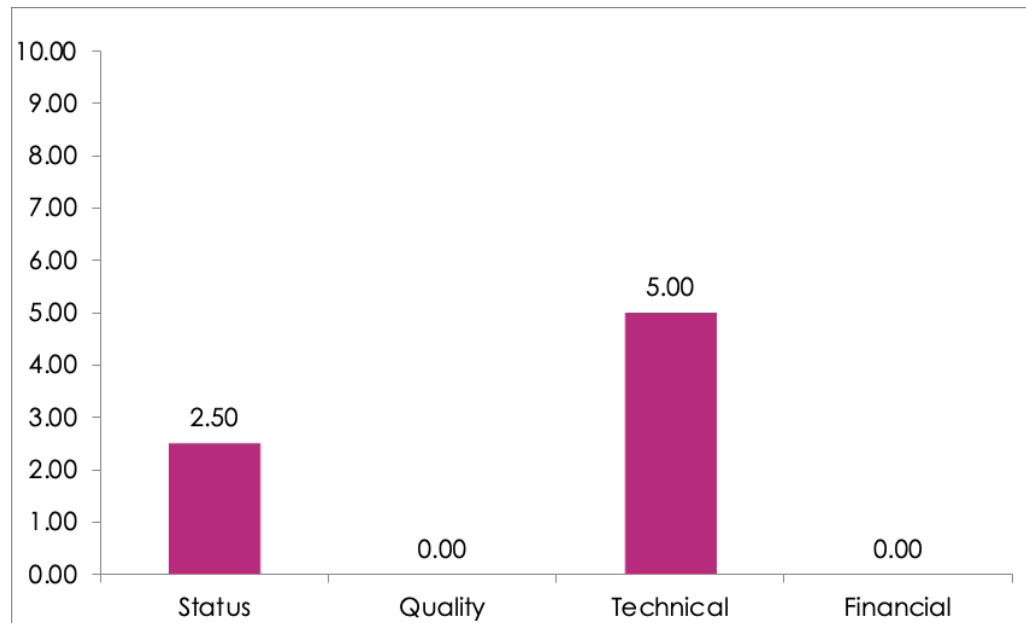
5.0 Annual Costed Monitoring and Evaluation Workplan



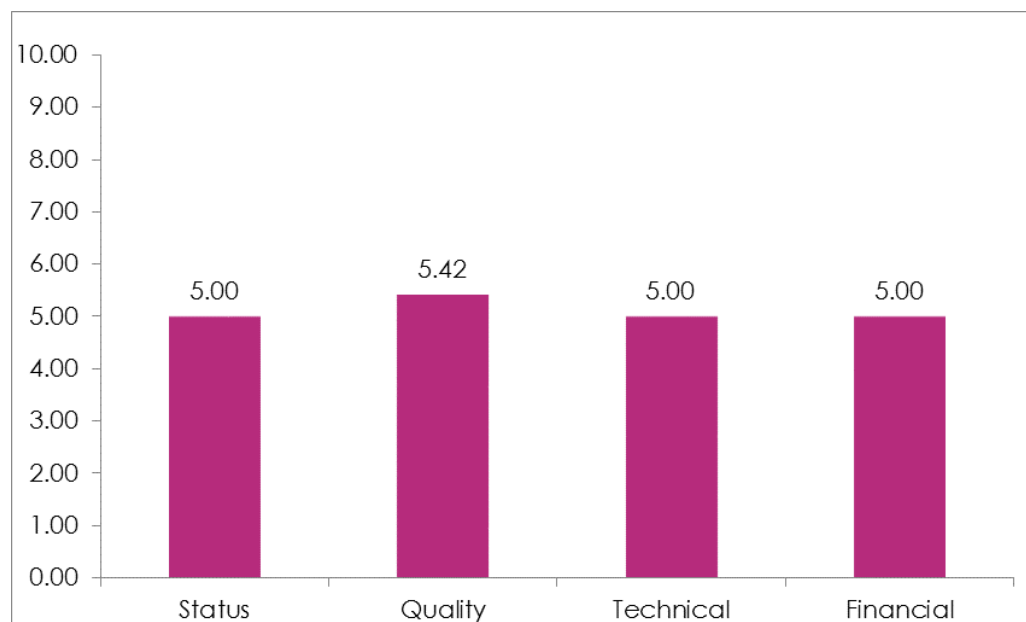
6.0 Advocacy Communication and Cultural Behaviour



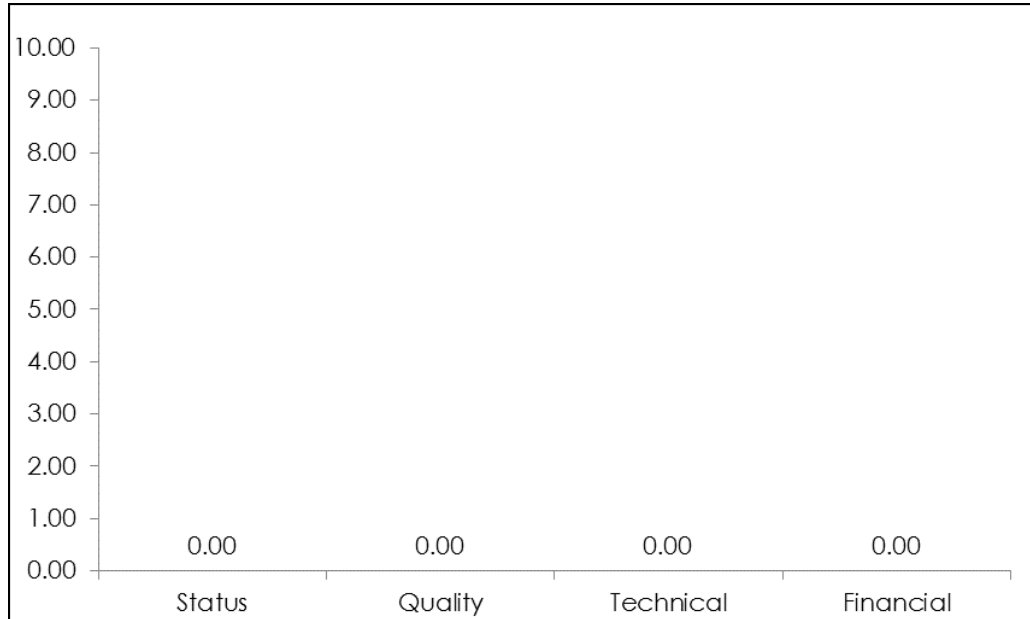
7.0 Routine Monitoring



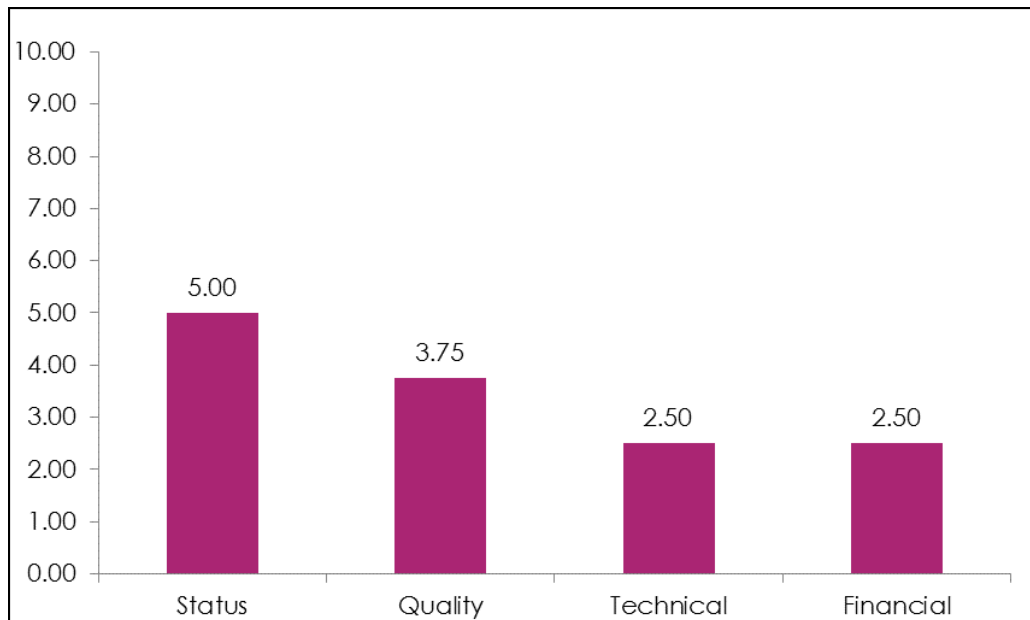
8.0 Survey and Surveillance



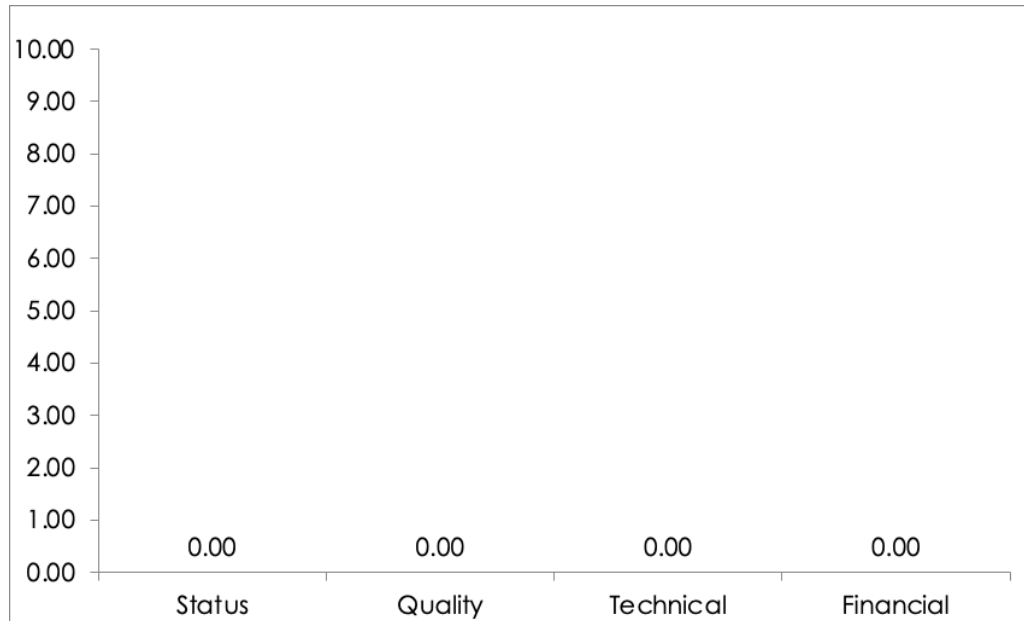
9.0 National and Sub-National Database



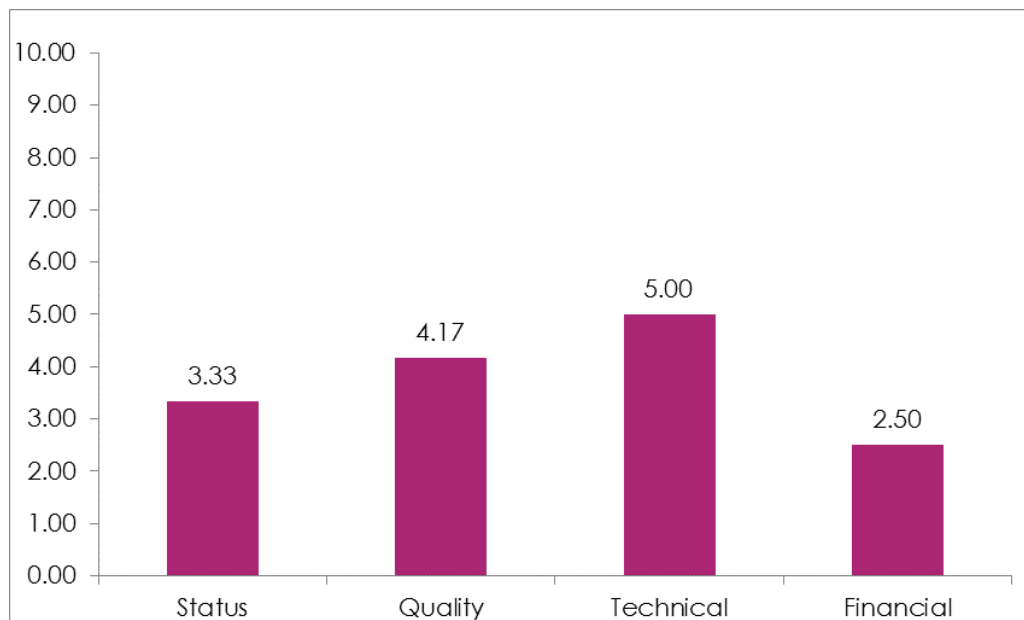
10.0 Supervision and Auditing



11.0 Evaluation and Research



12.0 Data Demand and Use



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