

CLONESHOUSE NIGERIA



ASSESSING NIGERIA'S READINESS FOR RESULTS-BASED MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Brief prepared by Thelma Obiakor
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Introduction

The ability of an effective and efficient state to implement bold development policies that are critical to sustainable development and inclusive economic growth, hinges on information. In particular, pivotal information that:

- 1) Guides policymakers and decision makers as to whether they are doing the right things and helps them track progress and demonstrate the impact of a given policy or program.
- 2) Enlightens policymakers on how things might be done better and identifies potentially promising programs or projects that can be scaled.
- 3) Stimulates public debate about the efficiency of public programs and policies, and empowers citizens to hold their governments accountable.

A strong Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) system is uniquely positioned to provide a platform for this kind of information and accountability. At its best, RBME processes can assist the government in evaluating its performance and identifying factors that contribute to its service delivery outcome. It provides justification for public resource allocation decisions and identifies how best to confront challenges and to replicate or improve upon successes. On a different level, it seeks to enhance the transparency and accountability of government operations with citizens and promotes credibility by reporting on the results of government policies and programs. It stimulates debate about public programs and policies, and with the right mechanisms in place, governments can use the feedback from citizens to make changes in budgeting, planning and efficiency of programs.

Developing an RBME system for a simple project or a small program can be a relatively straightforward task. However, as programs become more complex, multidisciplinary, decentralized, and skill-intensive, the process becomes more intricate. This is especially pertinent for government-wide RBME systems, especially in a country as large, complex and diverse as Nigeria. This intricacy is further convoluted by Nigeria's decentralized governance structure, where powers and functions are distributed across three layers of government. A structure like this often requires an even more intricate M&E system, that provides synchronisation and prevents disintegration between different sectors and at the different levels of government.

Features of such a system will include (but is not limited to):

- I. A broad framework within which all activities will be carried out by all the teams working at different sectors and levels.
- II. A sophisticated Management Information System (database) for knowledge management
- III. Formal processes to prevent information loss across and within sectors and at the different levels.
- IV. A process through which different sectors can operate an RBME system, that when put together, engage with each other to create an overall RBME framework.

Against this backdrop, and given Nigeria's unique political, organisational and cultural features, Cloneshouse Nigeria has launched a project seeking to determine the state of readiness of the government to introduce a strong and holistic framework for managing for results. Using one important instrument: *The Readiness Assessment*, Cloneshouse seeks to examine the requirements for introducing RBME systems within ministries in Nigeria. The

readiness assessment instrument offers a systematic approach to determining the capacity and willingness of a government to construct an RBME system.

This project is especially timely, because this Readiness Assessment will serve as a foundation for building a strong, rigorous and comprehensive RBME system. Such a system will be a powerful tool for tracking Nigeria's progress towards attainment of the Economic and Recovery Growth Plan (ERGP), and most importantly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). An effective RBME system provides essential support in order to achieve the SDGs; the SDGs offer a comprehensive list of indicators, goals and targets against which to benchmark development progress, and the RBME facilitates the tracking of progress against each goal and target of the SDG. Additionally, by offering a platform for planning, monitoring and evaluating results, an RBME system enhances the potential of a policy to make desired impact, and facilitates action toward achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, within the set time frame.

The project will adopt an approach for conducting Readiness Assessments that follows guidance espoused by Jody Kusek and Ray Rist (2004)¹, in their book, *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation system: A Handbook for Development Practitioners*. In their book, Kusek and Rist offer a step by step approach to building an effective M&E system. Their approach recognises the Readiness Assessment as the foundation and rational first step to building any RBME system.

To elucidate, our work will hone in on three key line ministries serving as case studies for the report: **The Ministries of Health, Education and Water Resources**. We provide an analysis of the readiness of these line ministries to conduct coherent and integrated Monitoring and Evaluation in respect of the strategic objectives of the corresponding Sustainable Development Goals that apply to each ministry (SDG 3,4, and 6). The project will provide a practical, action-oriented assessment of the readiness of these line ministries to design and implement an effective RBME system that evaluates its results and impacts.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first readiness assessment that has been conducted in Nigeria since the implementation of the SDG's.

Project Activities

Cloneshouse Nigeria will undertake a series of interviews across three parties:

1. **Central Ministry:** Budget and National Planning,
2. **Line ministries:** Health, Education and Water Resources
3. **Non-Governmental:** Private Sector, think tanks and civil society working in the sectors of the key line ministries.

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Kusek, J. Z. and Rist, R.C. (2004), Ten steps to a result based monitoring and Evaluation System: A Handbook for development Practitioners.

Central Ministry: Our interest in the Ministry of Budget and National Planning is engendered in its central role in formulating economic and development plans for the nation and providing and implementing budget and fiscal policies for the Federal Government. The Budget and National Planning commission monitors the disbursement of funds for centrally sponsored programs and projects to all line ministries. It also monitors the application of the funds and is charged with monitoring and reporting on the funded schemes.

Line Ministries: In choosing the subject line ministries for the study, we chose to focus on agencies that are relevant to service delivery for citizens and are also key thematic areas for the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, Cloneshouse Nigeria has vested interest and experience in these sectors, as over the past 5 years, the organization has evaluated projects in the country in these thematic areas.

Non-Government Bodies: We will examine the private sector, think tanks, international donor organizations and civil society, for the roles they play in both the demand and supply sides of Monitoring and Evaluation.

Readiness Assessment Instrument

This instrument focuses on collecting information on how well situated the ministries are to design, build and sustain an RBME. These line ministries will be assessed across four pillars, covering both the demand and supply-side readiness for an RBME system. The four pillars include:

1. Incentives and Demand for building an RBME system
2. Roles, responsibilities and existing structures for assessing performance of the ministries
3. Capacity Building Requirements for an RBME system
4. Barriers to building and implementing a successful RBME system.

These four pillars will be further broken down into several questions that will provide the basis and guidance for the interview questions. The interview questions will be framed to provide answers to the questions in the table below.

Demand Side

Incentives

- Are there any pressures encouraging the creation of an RBME system in the ministries? Is there a clear mandate for M&E?
- Who are the champions for an RBME system? Who or what is driving it?
- Who will benefit from the system? Who will not?
- Are there already policies in place that support the establishment of an RBME system?
- Are there any proposed or existing programmes in the ministry to which an RBME system might be linked?

Supply Side

Roles, Responsibilities and Existing Structures

- What are the roles of the central and the line ministries in assessing performance?
- What frameworks exist within the ministries to guide the introduction and maintenance of an RBME system?
- Do the ministries share information with each other?
- Are there currently any links between budget and resources allocation, and M&E information?
- Who in the country collects data? Where and how is collected data used?
- How reliable are the data and other information that may be used for policy making?
- Who assesses performance of the ministries?

Organisational Capacity

- Does capacity exist in the following areas: Technical and managerial skills, institutional experience in performance evaluation, public management, data analysis, available technology and fiscal resources?
- Are there any pockets of innovation within the ministries that can serve as pilot programs?
- Are the ministries taking advantage of available training capacity outside of the government?

Barriers

- Do any of the following factors present barriers to building an RBME system:
 - Lack of political will
 - Lack of fiscal resources
 - Lack of a champion
 - Lack of strategy
 - Lack of expertise or knowledge.
- How can these barriers be confronted?

Selection criteria and Process

The assessment will focus on one central ministry (the overarching M&E unit in the country) three line ministries, and Civil society/private sector individuals that may be considered key stakeholders in the three sectors. With regards to the selection process, a memorandum will be sent to the respective officials, communicating the rationale and objective of the study and requesting the nomination of technical officials who may be knowledgeable about the use and function of RBME.

Deliverable

The deliverable for this project will be in the form of three reports, each one covering an assessment of each of the line ministries across the aforementioned four pillars, a set of recommendations for each of the pillars, and an action plan for each ministry.

Next steps

With the information garnered from this assessment, the individual ministries, the government in general, the donor community and other development partners will be poised to address the prerequisite for, and the challenges inherent in building an RBME system.

The ultimate goal is to build an RBME system that links project, program, sector and national goals. Additionally, this study intends to promote a monitoring and evaluation tradition that is sensitive to Nigeria's development constraints and one that can be localized to work with Nigerian traditions, so that advances reflect local realities.

Contact Point

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Cloneshouse Nigeria is an international development consulting firm that provides training and consultancy in Results – Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME). If you have suggestions, comments or questions about this project, kindly email the contact point.

Important Resources

1. **Economic Recovery and Growth Plan & FAQ**
<http://www.nationalplanning.gov.ng/images/docs/ERGP%20%20CLEAN%20COPY.pdf>; <http://statehouse.gov.ng/economic-recovery-and-growth-plan/>
 2. **Sustainable Development Goals**
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>
 3. **Sustainable Goals 3 (Good Health & Wellbeing) - Indicators and Targets**
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg3>
 4. **Sustainable Goals 3 (Quality Education) - Indicators and Targets**
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>
 5. **Sustainable Goals 3 (Clean Water & Sanitation) - Indicators and Targets**
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg6>
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