Indonesia’s National Evaluation System

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss evaluation capacity development (ECD) in Indonesia, in particular its key success factors, and to formulate lessons learned that might assist other ECD efforts. Part I provides an introduction, including an overview of ECD in Indonesia, a summary of the key success factors and a digest of the lessons learned. Part II furnishes more details regarding each of the key success factors and associated lessons learned.

Part I

Introduction

Experience in Indonesia confirms that success or failure in ECD ultimately depends on the awareness, appreciation and common understanding by decision-makers and evaluation managers of the importance and necessity for evaluation, and on the subsequent commitment of adequate financial and human resources to support a professional, dedicated and effective cadre of evaluators.

In many developing countries evaluators are limited to producing evaluation information, usually for a restricted number of people. But the presence of evaluators must encompass the whole process of ECD, generating relevant and timely evaluation information, and seeing that this information can be readily understood and properly used by decision-makers.

So the challenge to evaluators is to continue development on the supply side of evaluation, while doing more aggressive work on the demand side. Working on the supply side alone, hoping that demand will come after the evaluation function shows it can deliver useful evaluation information, will not work. A focus for evaluation information requires a demanding client, and such clients must be developed concurrently with the production of such information.

In Indonesia, the success of ECD can be largely attributed to the efforts made to promote the supply and the demand for evaluation information, and to the resourcefulness and dedication of those involved.

ECD in Indonesia

A Steering Committee was established in 1994 by the Government of Indonesia (GOI) to oversee the development of a national strategy and framework for performance evaluation. This Committee (and a supporting Technical Committee) have been meeting for the past four years. Both committees have been assisted by the Bureau for Project Implementation Monitoring in Bappenas (the National Development Planning Agency) and by the World Bank, through the provision of an Institutional Development Fund Grant.

A diagnostic study of some thirty government institutions was first carried out in 1994. The study confirmed the absence of any performance evaluation function in GOI. By tapping into the vast amount of knowledge and experience available internationally, Bappenas was then able to quickly adapt this knowledge and develop its own performance evaluation strategy and framework.

The National Policy on Development Project Performance Evaluation, promulgated in December 1996, stipulates that performance evaluation is to become an essential part of the management process of departments. The intention of GOI now is to strengthen its capacity for performance evaluation, and progress towards a more comprehensive approach when evaluating its development activities.

ECD in Indonesia: Some Milestones

- Steering Committee in 1994
- IDF Grant by the World Bank
- Diagnostic Study (30 institutions)
- Development of Evaluation Framework
- Training (120 middle managers)
- National policy on Development Project Performance Evaluation in 1996
In anticipation of the Ministerial Decree on Performance Evaluation, a number of departments proceeded, under the general guidance of Bappenas, with their own capacity-strengthening activities. For example, performance evaluation sub-directorates have now been created or reorganised in the Program Development Directorates of various departments. Other capacity-strengthening activities have taken place in the central planning bureaus of many departments. Finally, limited efforts are beginning at the regional level in the provincial offices of some departments.

The focus of performance evaluation in GOI is on the results and benefits, not on the procedures and processes which lead to these. The purpose of performance evaluation in GOI will be to derive lessons from experience regarding the results and benefits of government activities, mainly development projects, and to feed these lessons back into the government management process to improve performance and better allocate resources.

Performance evaluation will not only be an ex-post exercise that takes place after a project has been completed. Performance evaluation will be done primarily during implementation, whenever appropriate. Concern about performance evaluation should be present throughout the management process.

Performance evaluation will focus on two separate tracks. The first will be the formulation of performance indicators for development projects. The second, the carrying out of performance evaluation studies of development projects, programs, and sectors. Initially, efforts will concentrate on the development of performance indicators. Later a more comprehensive approach will be developed to include more evaluation studies. Bappenas has the functional responsibility for performance evaluation in GOI while departments actually carry out the evaluation work. Bappenas assumes that functional responsibility by overseeing and assisting the development, use and overall effectiveness of evaluation in supporting decision-making. Bappenas will work closely with departments to develop and use performance indicators for GOI development projects, as part of the national budgetary prioritisation and decision-making system.

Underlying the new national policy on performance evaluation is a belief that a better understanding of the accomplishments of government efforts, in particular those of development projects, will improve the capability of departments and agencies, and of GOI as a whole, to allocate scarce developmental resources more appropriately and to manage them more effectively. The successful implementation of performance evaluation is seen as an institutional development needed to provide better information for decision-making.

Key ECD Success Factors in Indonesia

The importance of the awareness, appreciation and common understanding of evaluation by decision-makers and managers implies that those responsible for evaluation are responsible for the supply of good evaluation information, and for the creation of a demand by decision-makers and managers.

Evaluators must be more active in developing a viable evaluation function for their country, thus contributing to public sector reforms. Evaluation should not wait for public sector reform but contribute to it as it is in process.

Success for ECD in Indonesia is attributable to the sustained efforts of a few key senior public servants, and the aggressive stance they took to promote and encourage the supply and the demand for performance evaluation in GOI. These efforts were greatly enhanced by the active participation of the World Bank.

More specifically, the ECD successes in Indonesia may be attributed to six key factors:

1. Considerable efforts in Indonesia to establish, from the very start, a clear terminology and common understanding related
to evaluation, and to eliminate many misconceptions and misunderstandings about evaluation.

2. Considered and forceful actions (that often went against bureaucratic culture) by the champions of ECD in their efforts to promote and encourage performance evaluation in particular, through their careful selection of participants to committees, meetings, study tours and training.

3. A participatory approach taken in adapting the general principles of evaluation to the Indonesian context, and the resulting creation of a core group of committed ECD support-

### Lessons Learned

1. One of the very first steps for successful ECD has to be the development of a clear terminology and a common understanding of evaluation and its purpose. From there, a clear set of concepts and a workable evaluation approach can be developed in an explicit evaluation framework. Once in place, every effort by the developing country and associated donors should be made to reinforce the evaluation framework and support the national policy.

2. The creation of a core group of strong advocates of evaluation, a critical mass that can later create a multiplier effect in the government, is essential. This requires forceful action on the part of the champions of evaluation to select the right people for the job and to ensure continuity of participation. It is critical that someone really take charge of the process and give it direction, focus and continuity.

3. A participatory approach to the adaptation of accepted evaluation principles is needed to secure the support of senior decision-makers and middle managers who are responsible for the demand and the supply of evaluation information. In developing countries the pre-existing conditions in the government and the limited capabilities in producing evaluation information must be considered when developing a consensus towards an evaluation framework.

4. In developing countries, the source of information is in departments. There is usually little governmental infrastructure to provide alternative sources of information. Departments tend to be strong and to guard fiercely their sphere of authority. Initially, any attempt at evaluation will be seen as a threat to be resisted. Consequently, any evaluation policy must recognise the key role of departments. This is usually best accomplished by having a central agency, such as Bappenas, be functionally responsible for the evaluation function and having the departments responsible for the application of evaluation work initially through using performance indicators.
ECD in Indonesia: Lessons Learned

- Develop a common understanding
- Create a core group of supporters
- Use a participatory approach
- Let departments do the evaluation work
- Provide both financial and moral support
- Promulgate a decree on evaluation

5. Developing countries often lack confidence when it comes to the implementation of new management practices for which there is little previous internal expertise or experience. Donors, for example the World Bank, can reassure developing countries of the importance and benefit of new management practices like evaluation. Attendance and participation by donor senior officials at key meetings, and their implicit support for the efforts of the country, are as important as financial assistance, and will bring legitimacy to the evaluation function.

6. In the bureaucracies of developing countries it is essential to have a decree in place to provide a legal basis for the development of evaluation. The mobilisation of resources and the authorisation for action requires such legal backing. In developing countries ECD should have as one of its aims the promulgation of a decree in support of an evaluation function. Intense lobbying will often be needed to ensure this.

Conclusion

A key ECD success factor to emerge from the experience in Indonesia is the importance of developing, early on, a clear terminology and common understanding regarding evaluation, leading to a robust evaluation framework later to be confirmed in a governmental decree. Strong direction for ECD, combined with a participatory approach leading to the establishment of a core group of committed evaluation supporters, contributed greatly to the achievements of ECD in GOI. The decision to give Bappenas functional responsibility for evaluation and to focus initially on performance indicators for the results and benefits of development projects in departments contributed to success.

Donors can back ECD directly by providing guidance and support, both moral and financial, or indirectly by subordinating their own evaluations of development projects to existing national evaluation policies. ECD will also be strengthened if donors and recipients use the same set of structured performance indicators for a given development project.
Part II

Part II of this paper expands the six key success factors and corresponding lessons learned.

Key Success Factor #1

_Determined efforts to establish, from the very start, a clear terminology and common understanding related to evaluation, and to eliminate many of the misconceptions and misunderstandings about evaluation._

Decision-makers typically see evaluation in different ways. For many it is the ex-ante evaluation found in planning exercises. For others it is evaluation in the context of quality control and assurance practices. Many fail to differentiate between audit and evaluation or between process compliance and results evaluation. Many have encountered monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and see evaluation as being mainly the monitoring of inputs and outputs. Yet others have participated to donor agency sectoral or impact ex-post evaluations and associate evaluation with quasi-research major undertakings.

Initially in GOI there were many definitions of evaluation. Many government institutions had evaluation specified in their mandates, but often meaning different things. The Auditor General, the Department of Finance, Bappenas, the departments themselves all have evaluation in their inception decrees. This had to be untangled and a common definition for performance evaluation agreed to, so that who would be responsible for evaluation in GOI could be decided.

In developed countries, it is usual to try and situate management systems (like evaluation) within a broader governmental framework and to then relate such systems to each other. This is done to avoid overlaps and inefficiencies, and to ensure complete coverage of the accountability mechanisms.

In developing countries, many of these accountability systems differ from those in developed countries; audit, for example, is still a purely financial compliance exercise — it is process-oriented and seeks to ensure compliance. It looks for faults, and the audited party is usually on the defensive.

Linking evaluation to other accountability mechanisms like auditing may not be the most sensible approach to developing an evaluation function in developing countries where the focus in developing evaluation should be kept narrow, understandable and doable. Essentially, evaluation should be treated as a stand-alone function.

In GOI evaluation is needed in the context of development projects to know, for example, if the irrigation structures built have increased the amount of cultivable land and the quality of such land in a given area. To know if the new farming techniques developed are being used and have increased disposable household incomes. To know if the number of trainee days were given as planned and if the training is actually being used in the field. To know how much money has been disbursed to date on an activity and how many tool kits have been distributed to the appropriate targeted farmers as a result. To know what constitutes success and whether it has been reached.

Evaluation in GOI has to do with inputs, outputs, results, and impacts, as captured in the imagery of a “results spectrum” approach, a simplified logical framework (i.e., a logframe approach) which is now well known, understood and accepted. This new approach puts much less emphasis on process, compliance and controls and should, in time, be of considerable assistance to public reforms in Indonesia.

**Common Understanding**

- Evaluation has many facets, choose one
- Evaluation must be a stand alone function
- Develop a suitable evaluation framework
- Aim for a national policy

It is understandable that in developing countries confusion can exist regarding evaluation and that terminology must be clarified. Evaluation, whatever its ultimate and appropriate nature may be for a given developing country, must have a clear set of concepts to which all can agree in principle. Achieving this, as has been done in Indonesia, was a key success factor, and it should be considered an essential early step for any ECD effort. Every subsequent effort by the developing country and associated donors should reinforce the existing evaluation framework.
Lesson Learned

One of the very first steps for successful ECD has to be the development of a clear terminology and common understanding of evaluation and its purpose. From there a clear set of concepts and a workable evaluation approach can be developed. Once in place, every effort by the developing country and associated donors should reinforce the evaluation framework and support the national policy.

Key Success Factor #2

**Considered and forceful actions (that often went against bureaucratic culture) by the champions of ECD in their efforts to promote and encourage performance evaluation in Indonesia, in particular, through their careful selection of participants to committees, meetings, study tours and training.**

The participants were chosen with great care according to their intellectual capabilities, current position, influence in their respective organisations, formal training, work experience, and demonstrated interest in government reform.

All too often the selection process for government-wide initiatives including committees, meetings, study tours and training is left to the decision-makers in the departments and agencies themselves. As a result selection of the people chosen for official functions, like the development of an evaluation function, often fails to reflect the purpose of the activity.

In Indonesia, selecting the right people was done from the very start. A series of informal group discussions around a number of key topics related to ECD was held. Some sixty carefully-selected people were involved in four consecutive meetings. Later, the best participants, perhaps half, were retained for a wrap-up meeting. Those same people, who had been screened, were involved in further committees, meetings, study tours and training. These people formed the basis for a core group of evaluation managers.

In developing countries the membership of committees once established tends to shift constantly, incumbents change frequently, and there is also a tendency to send delegates. So it is necessary to force continuity to form a solid core group of participants. In GOI the core group later acted as leaders and trainers, creating a multiplier effect in the government. Many have since had the opportunity to manage their own departmental evaluation units.

On the negative side evaluation can become a dumping ground for marginal public servants. (This continues to happen even in developed countries.) Any activity which is not central to delivery such as research or training, faces this danger. An alert ECD team will guard against this.

Even before the establishment of a core group of evaluation managers, a group of senior officials, the decision-makers, were invited to be members of a Steering Committee for evaluation in GOI. This Committee was further supported by a Technical Committee and both benefited from secretarial support from the Bureau for Project Implementation Monitoring in Bappenas, the National Development Planning Agency. The Steering Committee established in 1994 still exists, and has now been confirmed by the Ministerial Decree regarding performance evaluation in GOI. Continuity of membership and leadership has been maintained. As a result, an experienced core group of decision-makers in GOI now has the responsibility for the further development of performance evaluation.

**Strong Direction**

- A plan of action, a vision
- “Champions” of evaluation
- Selection of the right people for ECD
- Creation of a dedicated core group
- Continuity

Strong direction, a clear plan of action and attention to the process of bringing together the right people, resulting in the formation of an experienced core group of decision-makers and evaluation managers, were all key success factors. When the Ministerial Decree came out in December, 1996, all these “core” people could understand it, explain it to others and use it immediately in their departments. In fact, many of these people had lobbied for the promulgation of the Decree.
Lesson Learned

The creation of a core group of strong advocates of evaluation, a critical mass that can later create a multiplier effect in the government, is essential. This requires forceful action by the champions of evaluation to select the right people for the job and to ensure continuity of participation. It is critically important that the appropriate leader take charge of the process and give it direction, focus and continuity.

Key Success Factor #3

A participatory approach taken in adapting the general principles of evaluation to the Indonesian context, and the resulting creation of a core group of committed ECD supporters, both decision-makers and evaluation managers.

The general principles of evaluation (e.g. the OECD set of evaluation principles) are by now well understood and accepted in developing countries. The difficulty for developing countries is in adapting these principles to their own circumstances.

Early during the ECD efforts in Indonesia, a participatory approach was chosen that would bring together the people best suited to assist in the development of performance evaluation. These people would assist in adapting the general principles of evaluation to the Indonesian context.

Developing countries may be handicapped by a scarcity of financial and human resources, the lack of a well-developed public service infrastructure, and the absence of a tradition of transparency and accountability in the conduct of government affairs. The implementation of sound management practices, in particular performance evaluation, under such circumstances becomes a daunting task.

Considering how costly and time-consuming ECD has been in developed countries, in spite of their considerable pre-existing governmental infrastructure, it is disconcerting to realise that developing countries are expected to achieve the same results using considerably fewer resources, and to do so in less time.

Initially the work of developing a strategy and evaluation framework in GOI was divided into a number of “ECD” themes such as examining the merits of a central vs. decentralised approach, the limitations of human resources capabilities, and the current role of M&E units in departments. Informal working group meetings were held on these topics. Steering Committee meetings involving senior officials were held, often with World Bank staff in attendance. Key senior officials were also interviewed and World Bank staff met many of them.

Full coverage of all the key departments and agencies was a determining factor in membership to these committees and meetings. The “accountability” agencies were all specifically invited to participate. In this way a comprehensive and representative group of dedicated public servants was created for spreading ECD. Many of these same people remain involved to this day. They now form the basis of a common understanding about evaluation and a resource by which the basic principles of the national policy are being quickly passed on to all departments and agencies.

In Indonesia a number of one-week training courses were given to over 100 carefully-selected middle managers in 1995. This was done well in advance of the publication of the Ministerial Decree on Performance Evaluation, which only came at the end of 1996. The courses succeeded in contributing to the development of a practical policy statement on evaluation, and in creating an expectation for a solid legal basis for the trainees to apply what they had learned.

Many of the middle managers trained were the same people who had earlier participated in the initial development of performance evaluation. They had been part of a participatory process which started in 1994, and by the end of 1996, many of them were anxiously awaiting the promulgation of the Decree by Bappenas.

Participatory Approach

- Adapting evaluation principles
- Participation by all interested parties
- Representation of all accountability agencies
- Training as a development tool
- Creation of an interest in evaluation
This highly participatory approach adopted for ECD succeeded in creating both a demand for evaluation and the basis for the resources needed to satisfy that demand.

**Lesson Learned**

A participatory approach to the acceptance of evaluation principles is needed to secure the support of both senior decision-makers and middle managers who are responsible for the demand and the supply of evaluation information. In developing countries the existing conditions in the government and the capabilities of producing evaluation information must be considered when developing a consensus towards an evaluation framework.

**Key Success Factor #4**

*The decision to have Bappenas, the National Development Planning Agency, be functionally responsible for the evaluation function, and to have the departments be responsible for its application, initially through the use of performance indicators.*

In GOI most departments and agencies are responsible for evaluating what they do. Departments were not prepared to relinquish their control of departmental evaluation to Bappenas. Consequently, the decision as to who would be responsible for evaluation (and how they would be responsible) was critical to the success of ECD in GOI.

The concept of having Bappenas as functionally responsible and the departments as responsible for doing the actual evaluation work was the key to the acceptance of an overall approach for performance evaluation in GOI.

Bappenas, with its few hundred staff, would never have able to do the evaluation work needed. Retaining functional responsibility, prescribing how evaluation work was to be carried out and reported, and having departments do the evaluation work, was the only viable solution.

Departments are closest to the development work and they have access to the information needed for evaluation. Unlike developed countries where there may be many alternative sources of information possible for evaluation, in developing countries there is only one real source of information ¾ from the departments. It follows that, evaluation work can only be performed well if the departments are involved.

However, without central guidance from Bappenas, departments would not do evaluation at all or would do evaluation work using a wide range of different approaches, making the evaluation data of little use government-wide. Bappenas would then be unable to fulfill its national task regarding performance evaluation.

Bappenas now has the functional responsibility for performance evaluation in GOI while departments actually carry out the evaluation work. Bappenas assumes functional responsibility for performance evaluation in GOI by overseeing and assisting its development, use and overall effectiveness in supporting decision-making. Bappenas works closely with departments to develop and use performance indicators for GOI developmental projects (donor-assisted or not), as part of the budgeting system.

This arrangement has been made possible, in part, by developing a system of performance indicators, largely based on development results, formulated and maintained by departmental (structural) managers, and by bringing this system in close parallel with evaluation efforts practised by professional (functional) staff independent of management. All this is performed under the overall functional responsibility of Bappenas staff.

In the initial stages of implementing the national policy on performance evaluation, emphasis has been placed on the development and use of performance indicators. Later, more evaluation studies will be added to complement the performance evaluation efforts. The use of these performance indicators for development projects brings Bappenas and the departments closer together through both using performance indicators as a common language.

In Indonesia donors now can support the national policy on performance evaluation by co-operating with GOI in the development and use of performance indicators for development project inputs, outputs, results and impacts. The use of the same set of structured performance indicators for a given development project by both donor and recipient should strengthen ECD. Parallel reporting systems for recording the achievements of donor-assisted development projects, in line with donor evaluation systems, should be discouraged. Instead, as much as possible, donor countries should adapt to the evaluation systems of the developing countries.
**Lesson Learned**

In developing countries, the source of information is departments. There is usually insufficient governmental infrastructure to provide alternative sources of information. Departments tend to be strong and to guard fiercely their sphere of authority. Any attempt at evaluation will be seen as a threat and will be resisted. Consequently, any realistic evaluation policy must recognise the key role of departments. This is usually best accomplished by having a central agency, such as Bappenas, be functionally responsible for the evaluation function and having the departments be responsible for the application of actual evaluation work, initially through the use of performance indicators.

**Key Success Factor #5**

An active, visible and continuous participation by World Bank staff to the efforts of GOI affirmed the legitimacy of the evaluation function and reassured decision-makers about the importance and benefits of evaluation.

In developing countries there is an understandable lack of confidence with new management approaches which have not yet been tried out or that change the status quo. This is especially true in matters having to do (or appearing to have to do) with accountability.

Rightfully, senior managers will first want to be reassured by senior World Bank staff of the appropriateness of new management systems, and will want to hear more about these systems as they have been implemented elsewhere, preferably in other developing countries. For this reason, the World Bank, and other donors, should be active as advisors to senior management.

The support of donors, especially in early days of ECD, is critical. This certainly was the case in Indonesia where the Bank staff were involved in numerous visits, steering committee meetings and seminars regarding evaluation, as well as in providing feedback to GOI on the ECD proposals and plans.

**Key Success Factor #6**

Lobbying for and promulgation of a National Policy for Development Project Performance Evaluation, in the form of a Ministerial Decree, around which continued support of a core group of ECD supporters could be consolidated, and a common understanding about evaluation confirmed.

Formal instruments, like the Ministerial Decree on performance evaluation in GOI anchor future management actions and provide legitimacy, authority and credibility to those performing managerial tasks. Without such formal instruments, little can be accomplished. In Indonesia, as in other developing countries, managerial

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**Functional Responsibility**

- Departments have the information
- Departments need direction
- Functional responsibility of Bappenas
- Decentralized implementation
- Performance indicators initially
- Donors should subordinate and integrate their evaluation efforts to existing practices

**Support by Donors**

- Compensate for a lack of confidence
- Financial support
- Moral support, to guide and reassure
- Participation, feedback and encouragement
actions have to be supported by some form of state authority.

The Decree on performance evaluation confirms a uniform terminology and common understanding of what is meant by performance evaluation in the Indonesian context.

**National Policy**

- Formal instruments are important for:
  - Consensus
  - Common understanding
  - Empowerment
- ECD goal from the very start
- Strong lobbying

The development and promulgation of the Decree required the unrelenting and sustained effort of a few senior bureaucrats from early 1994 to the end of 1996. Consensus is essential in Indonesia and can only be achieved after long and often difficult discussions among the various stakeholders. Initially, departments and agencies could all see their authority and independence being diminished. Considerable time and effort was needed to arrive at consensus as to the advantage of having a national policy.

**Lesson Learned**

In the bureaucracies of developing countries it is essential, to have a formal instrument to provide a legal basis for the development of evaluation. The mobilisation of resources and the authorisation for action requires such legal backing so it is critical in developing countries that ECD secure the promulgation of a decree (or its equivalent) in support of the evaluation function. Intensive lobbying will often be needed to ensure that this happens.
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