

CHAPTER TEN

CUSTOMISING THE DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION GOVERNMENT-WIDE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE SAFETY AND SECURITY SECTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has grown in recent years into an active discipline and practice in Africa and specifically in South Africa (Chirau, Mapitsa, Amisi, Masilela & Dlakavu, 2020). M&E systems generally enhance accountability, just as effective M&E systems are crucial for enabling the effectiveness of democratic governance and contributing to the efficient delivery of basic services (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023). The realisation of public sector M&E systems goes hand-in-hand with the effectiveness of government planning. It has been observed that several negativities may arise within governmental institutions that lack proper and effective governmental planning in a developing country like South Africa. These negativities include rampant corruption, which undermines public trust and depletes national resources (Meyer & Auriacombe, 2019). An M&E and evaluation culture that supports the practice of M&E often precedes the formalisation of M&E practice (Mapitsa, Ali & Khumalo, 2020). Indeed, M&E culture is often more important than the technical elements of a system. Poor service delivery often triggers protests, which put the resources of the security sector under pressure. Service delivery challenges underline the necessity to inculcate the culture of M&E across government institutions, particularly at the local government sphere, where the needs of the citizenry can be effectively expressed, identified and responded to. Failure to respond to identified needs contributes to dissatisfaction among the citizens (Nel-Sanders & Malomane, 2022), hence the growing number of protests.

In the realm of the safety and security sector in South Africa, the demand for a resilient and tailored approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is paramount. This is necessary to conform to the practice of evidence-based planning, decision-making, and policy implementation that are now accepted as critical ingredients for effective and efficient performance and overall management in the public sector. This chapter embarks on an exploration that acknowledges the unique challenges and priorities within the context of South Africa. The author undertakes the pivotal task of exploring the customisation of the M&E framework, ensuring its pertinence and efficacy within the sector. This process involves a meticulous examination of the specific needs and challenges faced by the sector to tailor the M&E framework

accordingly. By analysing relevant data, engaging with stakeholders, and identifying key performance indicators, the author ensures that the framework is both relevant and effective. This approach guarantees that the M&E processes are aligned with the sector's goals and capable of producing meaningful and actionable insights. This customisation initiative endeavours to directly address the nuanced requisites of the safety and security sector in South Africa.

Customisation is a conscious endeavour that takes account of the intricate socio-political dynamics, ever-evolving security challenges, and the rich tapestry of diverse communities that the safety and security sector serve. The core aspiration behind this framework tailoring is to craft a robust means of assessing intervention impacts, identifying avenues for refinement, and ultimately amplifying the safety and security outcomes that safeguard the citizenry. A prime focal point of this exploration is the Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation's (DPME) Government-wide M&E System (GWM&E) in South Africa.

In 2005, the Cabinet approved the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (GWM&ES) as a comprehensive framework for monitoring and evaluating activities across all government departments. This framework aims to ensure effective Cabinet decision-making by supporting implementation, providing advice, enabling evidence-based resource allocation, and facilitating ongoing policy development and review (Cloete, 2009). In 2009 a Ministry of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation was created in the Presidency, leading to the establishment of the DPME in January 2010. Subsequently, M&E have become a subject of interest in public policy implementation. This provided legitimacy and validity to the M&E policy framework of 2007 in which the executive offered implementation direction to departments in the national, provincial and local government (Ajam & Engela, 2010).

The GWM&ES's main aim is to make government more effective. It is designed on the premise that M&E processes aid in performance evaluation by identifying factors that show results with the outcomes of service delivery (The Presidency, 2007). The GWM&ES includes functions such as monitoring, evaluation, early warning, data verification, data collection, analysis, and reporting. It is, therefore, in this context that the role of M&E in the policy sequence of planning, execution, and monitoring is implemented. The DPME serves as the nexus for orchestrating and overseeing M&E endeavours across the multifaceted spectrum of the South African government (DPME, 2024). This foundation inherently necessitates a harmonised and standardised M&E framework across governmental domains (DPME, 2024). However, against this backdrop of harmonisation, emerges the contention for the need to tailor the M&E framework to the unique contours of the safety and security sector. This sector is distinct with its labyrinth of challenges, diverse contextual underpinnings, and the kaleidoscope of needs spanning disparate regions and communities. In this narrative, the conventional notion of a 'one size fits all' approach to M&E within the sector comes under scrutiny.

The proposition herein is that such an approach might not align with the intricate needs and varying effectiveness of interventions. Hence, as per sections that follow, the focal lens will be fixed on customisation, seeking the perfect fit between the M&E framework and the multifarious tapestry of the safety and security sector. The intention is to delve into a discourse that upholds the sector's intricacies and positions tailored M&E as the cornerstone for optimised safety and security outcomes. Through this exploration, the endeavour is to unlock new dimensions of efficacy and relevance that will, in turn, elevate the safety and security standards.

Customising refers to the process of adapting, tailoring, or modifying a product, service or approach to better suit the specific needs, preferences, or requirements of a particular individual, group, organisation or context. It involves making deliberate adjustments, changes, or enhancements to ensure that the outcome aligns more closely with the unique characteristics and expectations of the intended audience or situation. Customising aims to create a more personalised and effective solution that addresses specific challenges, maximises benefits, and optimises the overall user experience.