



**REPORT FOR
SOUTH AFRICAN MANAGEMENT
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (SAMDI)**



the samdi

Department:
SA Management Development Institute
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Executive summary

The South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) is presently undertaking various capacity-building initiatives to ensure effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices throughout the public sector. A research organisation was commissioned by SAMDI to conduct a survey of M&E Practitioners in the Public Sector to determine the requirements for M&E training. Of the 137 respondents interviewed, 77 (56%) worked at national level, whilst 60 (44%) worked at provincial level.

Overall, the research showed that the respondents shared similar views regarding what is required for undertaking effective monitoring and evaluation in government. The answers to the questions related to M&E practice and the responses to the rating scales were very similar across national and provincial departments. Most people thought that the issues identified in the questionnaire were very important and the methods mentioned were generally said to be frequently used. This shared understanding is the main finding of the report, and indicates a high level of understanding of M&E principles as a starting point for training. The analysis that follows is therefore based on small differences in perceptions, rather than large variations.

More than 90% of the total sample reported that they applied M&E principles to strategic and operational planning and the management of service provision.

Respondents were asked to focus specifically on **monitoring** and whether they are presently using monitoring principles in relation to any of the following aspects of the work being done in their departments: tracking inputs, activities, processes, progress toward reaching outputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts. More than 80% of respondents in total and in both national and provincial departments said that they monitored each of these aspects of work. Most respondents indicated that they applied monitoring methods and principles to a large extent for both the processes of problem identification and problem solving.

After focusing on monitoring, respondents were asked to focus specifically on **evaluation**. They were asked whether their present work involves using evaluation methods for the following: undertaking a situational analysis, analysing and interpreting baseline data, analysing inputs and activities that constitute the work and processes or the links between activities. They were also asked about assessing the quality of outputs, outcomes and impacts. More than 80% said that they performed all of these tasks.

Respondents were then asked to indicate to what extent in their present work situation evaluation is used for: improving the work to be done in the future; setting priorities for the future; planning; project performance management; and personal performance agreement. Overall, evaluation was regarded as an important input into all these

activities. The majority of respondents indicated that evaluation was used ‘to a large extent’, to assist with all of the specified functions.

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of certain information sources for them to do their jobs well as M&E practitioners, along a 5-point scale. In general, administrative data sources such as departmental white papers were rated as very important by a large proportion of respondents than research data sources such as the household surveys of Stats SA.

Ratings of the frequent usage of these information sources were lower than ratings of how important these sources are for respondents to do their jobs. The least frequently used sources were household survey and population census data and qualitative research findings.

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of a number of skills required for M&E purposes. They thought that the full range of skills listed in the questionnaire were important for carrying out the work of an M&E practitioner. The skills which were considered relatively more important in relation to other skills rated as very important were report-writing and presentation of M&E findings. Amongst the least used skills were: logframe analysis, the design of quantitative and qualitative research, and drawing samples for surveys.

When asked to indicate the success of government performance in relation to certain key interventions, the areas in which government was considered to be doing very well relative to other areas, are predominantly in the economic sphere: namely, in encouraging foreign investment and promoting economic growth. Amongst the areas of government performance that obtained low ratings were: providing a safe environment; fighting crime; improving transport services and providing good quality health care in clinics and hospitals.

Respondents were then asked to describe the most important ways in which M&E could help to make government more effective. Key themes to emerge included the following: facilitating evidence-based decision-making through using M&E findings; improving public sector management at all levels through promoting M&E; promoting government accountability and transparency through M&E principles; enhancing government implementation of programmes by diagnosing problems and identifying needs of the people through applying M&E principles; providing M&E information for feeding back into interventions in a timely manner; promoting a culture where information is widely available; and using M&E to help to improve government service delivery

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) is presently undertaking various capacity-building initiatives to ensure effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices throughout the public sector. These initiatives are to be aligned with the requirements of the government-wide M&E framework, National Treasury regulations and other programmes within government..

Social Surveys was commissioned by the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) to conduct a survey of M&E Practitioners in the Public Sector to determine the requirements for M&E training.

1.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The survey was designed for public sector officials who, in their current positions, are required to undertake M&E activities or to apply M&E principles in their work. This includes both officials who hold the title or designation of ‘M&E practitioner’, as well as officials without this designation, but who nevertheless are directly involved in M&E practices during the execution of their work functions. The survey was undertaken with public sector officials at national and provincial government levels.

It is a baseline survey to provide information on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of these employees *prior to* undergoing a SAMDI-facilitated M&E training intervention. Thereafter, it is envisioned that a post-intervention survey will be undertaken with the same sample of individuals, to assess the extent to which there has been any shift or change in the specific attributes (the knowledge, attitudes and practices) measured by the baseline survey, after some people undergo training and others do not, according to their choice.

In addition to providing an indication of the knowledge, attitudes and practices of public sector employees prior to exposure to a SAMDI M&E training intervention, the survey may also provide some information (albeit indicative, rather than a definitive picture) of the current state of M&E practice within the public sector with respect to certain key M&E-related competencies, but only among M&E practitioners. This could assist in informing future M&E capacity-building and institution-strengthening initiatives within the public sector.

SAMDI, in its aim of massifying training sees the target audience for M&E capacity-building as much wider than M&E practitioners.

Furthermore, information on gaps in knowledge, attitudes and practices identified in the baseline survey may also inform the design and development of M&E capacity-building courses, specifically those training-related interventions targeting public sector officials.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is structured according to the main focus areas of the questionnaire.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The process undertaken in developing the survey instrument was as follows:

- Prior to the survey being undertaken, SAMDI undertook qualitative research (focus group discussions with M&E practitioners from various government departments). The results of this research were documented and largely informed the design of the baseline survey instrument.
- The survey was undertaken utilising telephonic interviews.
- SAMDI had commissioned the development of the original research instrument to a research consultant.
- Social Surveys-trained interviewers conducted a pilot of the survey instrument with 10 SAMDI officials. The pilot interviews provided useful feedback on both interviewer skills in conducting the interviews as well as on the effectiveness of the interview questions in soliciting the desired information.
- The original research instrument was revised to accommodate feedback from the pilot process.
- The final research instrument was reviewed and approved by SAMDI.

2.2. TOPICS COVERED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey instrument is a structured questionnaire, which includes the following sections:

- Section 1: Background information
- Section 2: Work information
- Section 3: Biographical information
- Section 4: Important aspects of work (this section assessed the extent to which respondents' current positions require them to implement M&E practices or to utilise M&E principles).
- Section 5: Obtaining information for M&E (this section assessed the extent to which respondents viewed certain M&E-related information sources as important and the frequency with which they actually utilised this source).
- Section 6: Skills required by M&E practitioners (this section assessed how important respondents found certain M&E- relevant skills to be, and whether or not they were using them).
- Section 7: Overall performance of Government

2.3. THE RESPONDENTS

The respondents were identified using multiple lists obtained from various organisations involved in M&E capacity-building and networking activities.

- SAMDI list: an initial list of approximately 150 individuals who had participated in M&E learning network events was provided. This list had been compiled in June 2007 and was to be the official sample list for the survey. However, many of the individuals (more than 50%) on the list could not be traced. Upon calling the contact numbers provided, it was found that a significant number of those individuals were no longer in those positions, or could not be reached, even after several attempts at contacting them.
- Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) and World Bank lists: an internet search yielded 2 additional lists of individuals who had participated in M&E workshop events hosted by these organisations. However, calls to these individuals resulted in similar difficulties as encountered with the original SAMDI list.
- South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) list: a list provided by SAMEA provided the most significant results. Most respondents were reachable, and were interviewed as part of the sample of 137.

The Research brief required a minimum sample size of 135 public sector individuals. The sample realised was 137.

2.4. RESPONDENT PROFILES

Table 1: Respondent profile by sphere within government

Level within Government	Number	%
National	77	56
Provincial	60	44
Total	137	100

- Of the 137 respondents interviewed, 77 (56%) work at national level, whilst 60 (44%) are at provincial.

Table 2: Respondent profile by province

Provinces	Number	%
Gauteng	13	22
KwaZulu Natal	12	20
Mpumalanga	8	13
North West	8	13
Eastern Cape	6	10
Northern Cape	6	10
Limpopo	3	5
Western Cape	3	5
Free State	1	2
Total Provincial Respondents	60	100

- Amongst the 60 provincial-level respondents interviewed, all provinces were represented. The largest group of respondents was drawn from Gauteng, 13 (22%), followed by 12 (20%) from KwaZulu Natal. Three provinces had rather low representation: Limpopo and Western Cape each with three respondents or 5% respectively, and Free State (1 respondent or 2%).

Table 3: Respondent profile by salary level

Salary level	Number	%
Salary Level 13-16 (Senior Management)	56	43
Salary Level 11-12 (Middle Management)	48	37
Salary Level 3-10 (Emerging and Junior Management)	26	20
Total	137	100

- Respondents were asked to report their salary level in terms of the government salary scale, which ranges from salary level 1 to level 16. Responses were classified into three categories, which equate to three different levels of management within government: emerging and junior, middle and senior management.
- The largest group of respondents interviewed, 56 (43%), reported their salary at level 13-16. These respondents fall within the senior management echelon. Forty-eight (37%) fell in the salary level category '11-12' i.e. middle management, whilst the smallest group of respondents, 26 (20%), fell in the salary levels 3-10.

Table 4: Respondent profile by years of work experience

Years of work experience	Number	%
0-5	17	12
6-15	62	45
16-20	31	23
21+	27	20
Total	137	100

- The largest group of respondents 62 (45%) had between 6 and 15 years of total work experience. A substantial number of the respondents interviewed had worked for longer periods: thirty one (23%) had worked for 16-20 years and 27 (20%) had worked for more than 21 years. The smallest category of respondents, 17 (12%), consists of those that had worked for less than 5 years.
- The ‘total years of work experience’ represents the sum of all experience accrued over the respondent’s lifespan, regardless of sector/industry and/or rank. It may thus include work undertaken both within and outside of the public sector.

Table 5: Respondent profile by age category

Age categories	Number	%
25-34	30	24
35-44	70	55
45+	27	21
Total	137	100

- In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents were 35 years and older, while 70 (55%), fell within the age category of 35-44, and 27 (21%) fell within the 45+ category. The remaining 30 (24%) fell in the 25-33 age category.

Table 6: Respondent profile by highest level of education

Highest level of education	Number *	%
Batchelor's Degree or lower	35	26
Honours Degree and post-graduate Diplomas	39	29
Master's Degree and Above	62	46
Total	136	100

* Refusals excluded

- The largest number of respondents, or 62 (46%), hold qualifications at the master's level or above. Thirty-nine (29%) hold post-graduate qualifications (honours degrees and post-graduate diplomas), whilst 35 (26%) have bachelors degrees or lower.

2.5 OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Table 7: Respondent profile by sex

Sex	Number	%
Male	71	52
Female	66	48
Total	137	100

Table 8: Respondent profile by population group

Population group	Number	%
Black African	98	72
Coloured	8	6
Indian / Asian	14	10
White	17	12
Total	137	100

Table 9: Respondent profile by home language

Language	Number	%
IsiZulu	26	19
IsiXhosa	16	12
Afrikaans	12	9
Sepedi	8	6
English	34	25
Portuguese	2	2
Setswana	14	10
Sesotho	3	2
Xitsonga	5	4
SiSwati	5	4
Tshivenda	10	7
IsiNdebele	1	1
Refusal	1	1
Total	137	100

2.6 DATA COLLECTION

The Data collection process proceeded as follows:

- Social Surveys' trained the interviewers and undertook the survey by contacting individuals on the final sample list via the telephone.
- Although it was initially envisaged that respondents would be called to set up an interview time, given the difficulties encountered with accessing people (described above), interviews were generally conducted with respondents at the time that the initial contact was made. However, in some instances, respondents were called back to be interviewed at a more convenient time.
- Some respondents requested that official documentation be sent to them prior to agreeing to be interviewed. SAMDI provided a letter explaining the study objectives that was then sent to such respondents.
- A log of telephone responses was compiled, indicating precisely when each individual was called, the number of calls made to reach each individual, but more importantly, the reasons provided for excluding an individual from the sample list. However, these trends cannot be generalised to the rest of the public sector or to M&E practitioners within the sector. The log of responses was submitted to SAMDI for their records.
- The survey interview process was initially projected to take two weeks. In total, due to the challenges described above, the process was extended by an additional two weeks, totalling four weeks.
- A number of respondents indicated an interest in the study. Some requested the actual survey instrument, which they said may be useful for their own work. Others requested a copy of the findings on completion of the study.

2.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The survey instrument is a structured questionnaire comprised largely of closed-ended questions, with one open-ended question. The data analysis process was as follows:

- The quantitative data was organised and analysed using SPSS and in accordance with the areas of interest detailed in the survey instruments. Given the small sample, the data analysis was confined to frequencies and cross-tabulations, with some regression analysis on a small sample of the questions.
- Results are reported by level within government (i.e. National or Provincial), as well as by salary level.
- Content analysis was performed on the open-ended question.

Several consultative meetings were held between Social Surveys, SAMDI and the consultant researcher, Dr Ros Hirschowitz, to report on progress and strategise as to how

to overcome some of the challenges encountered during the survey process. These discussions also guided priorities for the purposes of refining the original survey instrument and the data analysis.

2.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The group of respondents on which the survey is based does not constitute a representative sample of M&E practitioners in government drawn by probability principles, as they were merely compiled from various list sources. As such, survey findings cannot be extrapolated or generalised to the rest of the public sector or taken to be generally true for all M&E practitioners within government. The main utility of the survey is the indication that it gives of the type of training that is required for M&E practitioners. It also serves as a baseline or initial measure against which to compare the results of a follow-up or post-intervention survey to follow the outcomes of any SAMDI facilitated M&E training interventions.
- The data relies on self-assessment and does not take any objective, independent ‘measure’ of knowledge or skills.
- The sample size of 137 limits analysis of the data. The most meaningful analysis is that performed at the group / total sample level, rather than within sub-groups. For example, the Public Service Commission (PSC) report refers to the finding that ‘pockets of systems and practices are emerging in different ways and at different places’. Due to the restricted sample size, this report may not be definitive with respect to patterns amongst sub-group respondents. Nevertheless, it is indicative of data requirements and skills that are needed for applying M&E principles within government.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Overall, the research showed that the respondents shared similar views regarding what is required for undertaking effective monitoring and evaluation in government. The answers to the questions related to M&E practice and the responses to the rating scales were very similar across national and provincial departments. Most people thought that the issues identified in the questionnaire were very important and the methods mentioned were generally said to be frequently used. This shared understanding is the main finding of the report, and indicates a high level of understanding of M&E principles as a starting point for training. The analysis that follows is therefore based on small differences in perceptions, rather than large variations.

3.1 APPLICATION OF M&E PRINCIPLES TO AREAS OF WORK

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their present work involves the application of M&E principles in relation the following Areas of work:

- Strategic planning
- Operational planning
- The management of service provision
- Project management
- Budget control / control of expenditure

The answers to these questions are illustrated in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 below.

The percentages in the graphs that follow should be regarded as illustrative of a pattern, rather than being reliable values since some were based on fewer than 50 respondents (refer to Tables 1, 3, 4 and 6 for actual numbers of respondents in each relevant category).

Figure 1

Percentage of respondents in national and provincial government who said that they applied M&E principles to each area of work

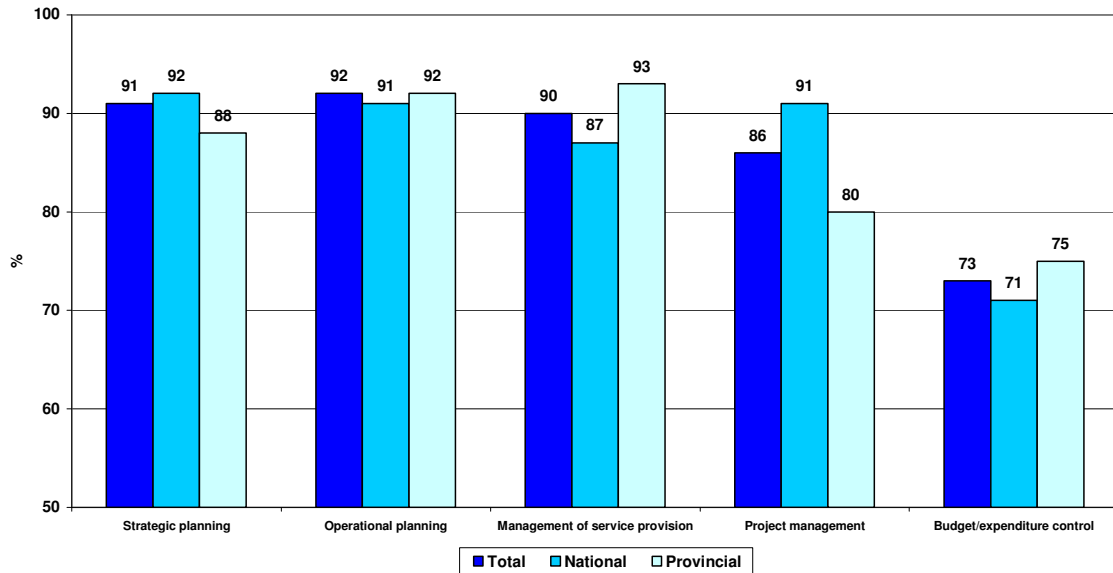


Figure 1 shows that respondents reported a high level of application of M&E principles to most of the areas of their work.

- More than 90% of the total sample reported that they applied M&E principles to strategic and operational planning and the management of service provision.
- A slightly lower percentage of the total number of respondents reported applying M&E principles to project management (85%) and budget control / control of expenditure (73%).
- When comparing national and provincial responses, higher percentage of national-level respondents reported that they applied M&E principles to strategic planning (92% compared to 88% at provincial-level) and project management (91%, compared to 80% at provincial-level).

Figure 2:

Percentage of respondents in each salary level who said they applied M&E principles to each area of work

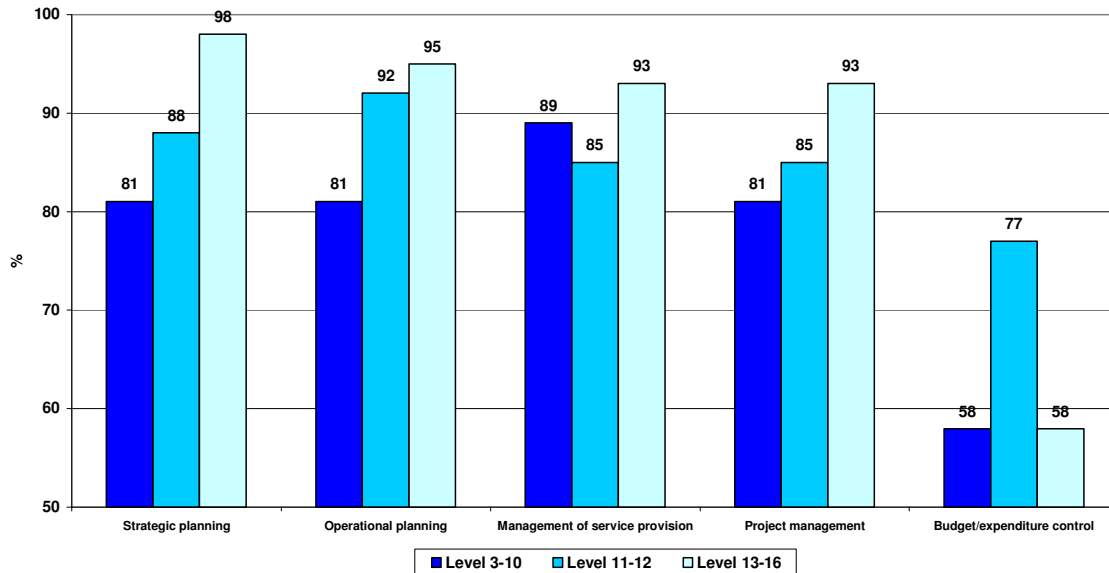


Figure 2 is based on the same data as Figure 1. It disaggregates the total percentage of those applying M&E principles to each area of work by salary level of the respondent:

- A higher percentage of senior managers reported the application of M&E principles to all of the identified areas of their work than did middle and junior managers.
- The exception was budget control / control of expenditure, where a higher percentage of middle managers reported applying M&E principles to these areas.
- A slightly lower percentage of middle managers reported application of M&E principles to the management of service provision.
- The main area where application is generally lower at all levels is the area of budget control / control of expenditure, although a high percentage of middle managers (77%) reported application of M&E principles to this area.

Figure 3

Percentage of respondents in each educational category who said they applied M&E principles to each area of work

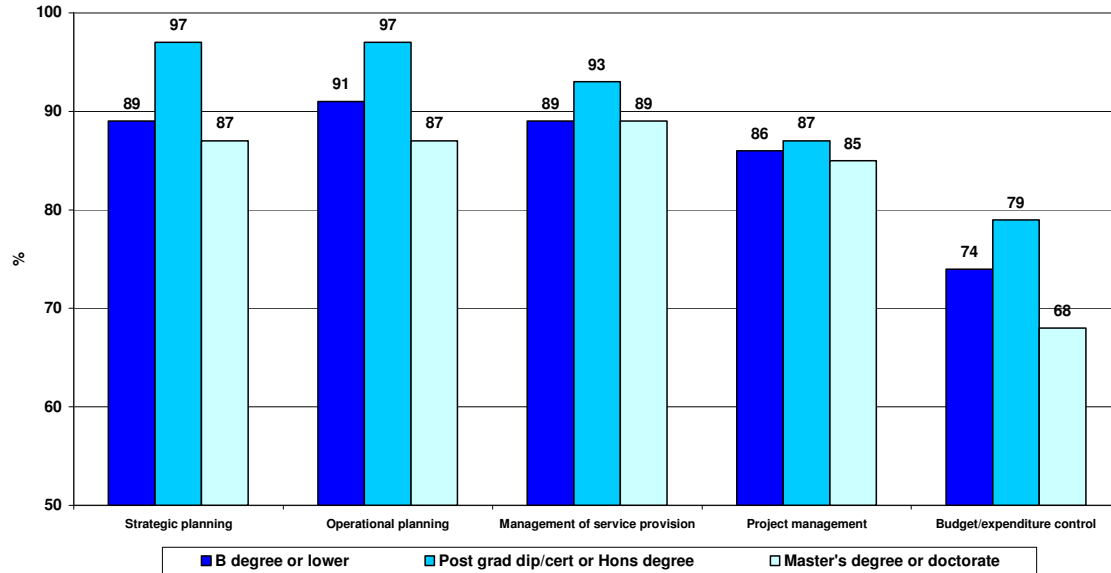


Figure 3 is also based on the same data as Figure 1. It disaggregates the total percentage of those applying M&E principles to each area of work by highest level of education of the respondent:

- A higher percentage of those with post-graduate diplomas and certificates and/or Honour's degrees reported the applying M&E principles to all of the identified areas of their work than those with both higher and lower levels of education.
- A relatively low percentage of those with master's degrees or doctorates (68%) applied M&E principles to budget control or expenditure management.

Figure 4

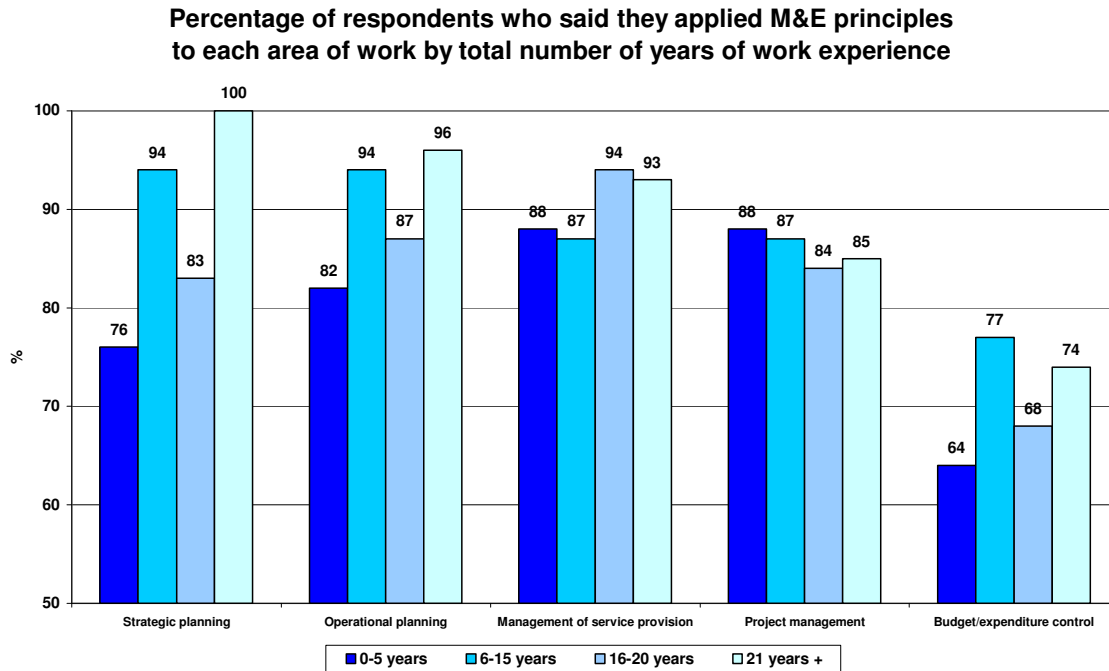


Figure 4 is again based on the same data as Figure 1. It disaggregates the total percentage of those applying M&E principles to each area of work by total number of years of work experience of the respondent:

- The total number of years of work experience showed some differences regarding applying M&E principles to particular areas of work.
- All respondents with 21 or more years of work experience applied M&E principles to strategic planning, compared to 76% of those with 5 or fewer years, for example.

3.2 APPLICATION OF MONITORING PRINCIPLES

Respondents were asked to focus specifically on **monitoring** and whether they are presently using monitoring principles in relation to any of the following aspects of the work being done in their departments:

- Tracking inputs
- Tracking activities
- Tracking processes
- Tracking progress toward reaching outputs
- Tracking outputs
- Tracking outcomes
- Tracking impacts

The answers to these questions are illustrated in Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 below.

The percentages in the graphs that follow should again be regarded as illustrative of a pattern, rather than being reliable values since some were based on fewer than 50 respondents (refer to Tables 1, 3, 4 and 6 for actual numbers of respondents in each relevant category).

This cautionary note applies to all the findings that follow.

Figure 5

The percentage of respondents in national and provincial departments who said that they monitor aspects of the work in their departments

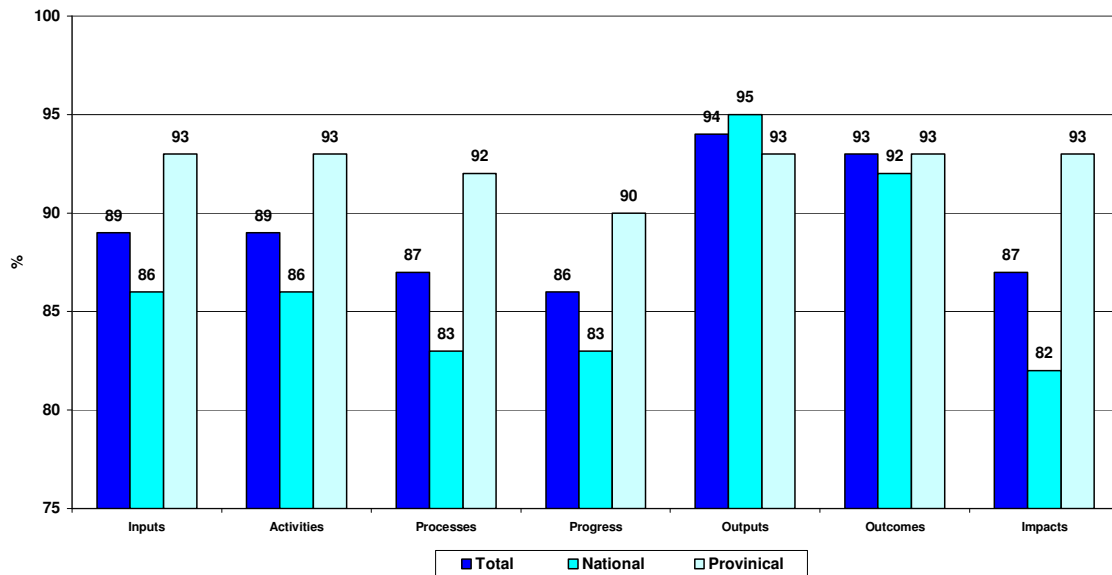


Figure 5 shows the proportion of respondents who apply monitoring principles to each listed aspect of the work done in their departments.

- More than 80% of respondents in total and in both national and provincial departments said that they monitored each aspect of work listed above.
- With the exception of monitoring outputs, a larger proportion of respondents in provincial than in national departments said that they monitored all the listed aspects of the work done in their departments.

Figure 6

The percentage of respondents in each salary level who said that they monitor aspects of the work in their departments

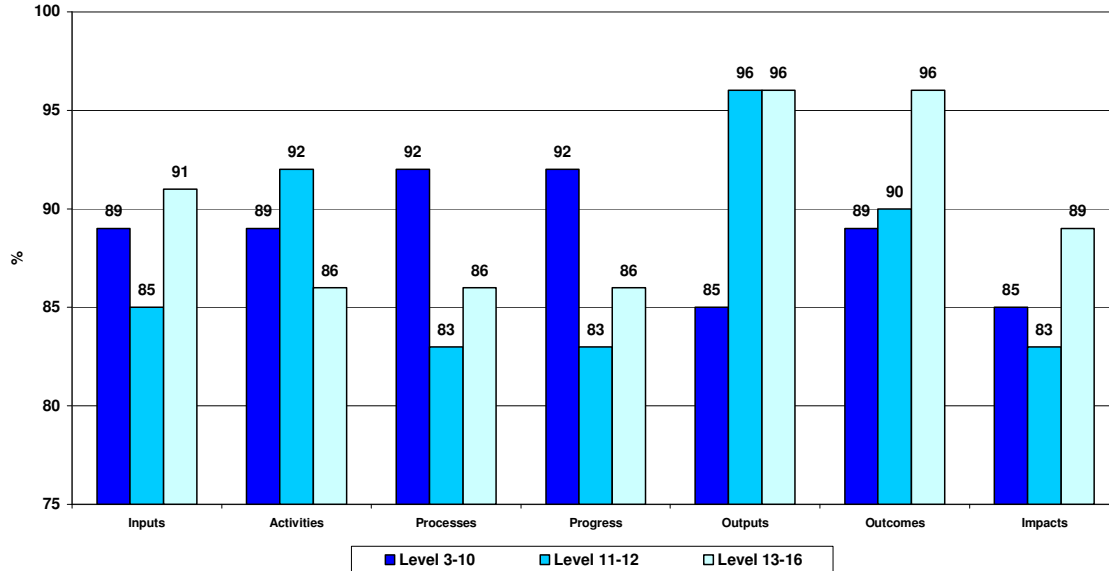


Figure 6 is based on the same data as Figure 5. It disaggregates the total percentage of those applying monitoring principles to each listed aspect of the work of their departments by salary level of the respondent:

- A high percentage (85% or more) of those in salary level 10 or lower reported the application of monitoring principles to all aspects of work.
- Concerning the aspects of tracking processes (92%) and tracking progress toward reaching outputs (92%), a higher percentage of junior managers were involved in these tasks than other levels of management.
- Middle and senior managers were highly likely (96%) to report tracking outputs.
- Senior managers were also highly likely to be involved in tracking outcomes (96%)

Figure 7

Percentage of respondents who said they monitor aspects of work in their departments by total years of work experience

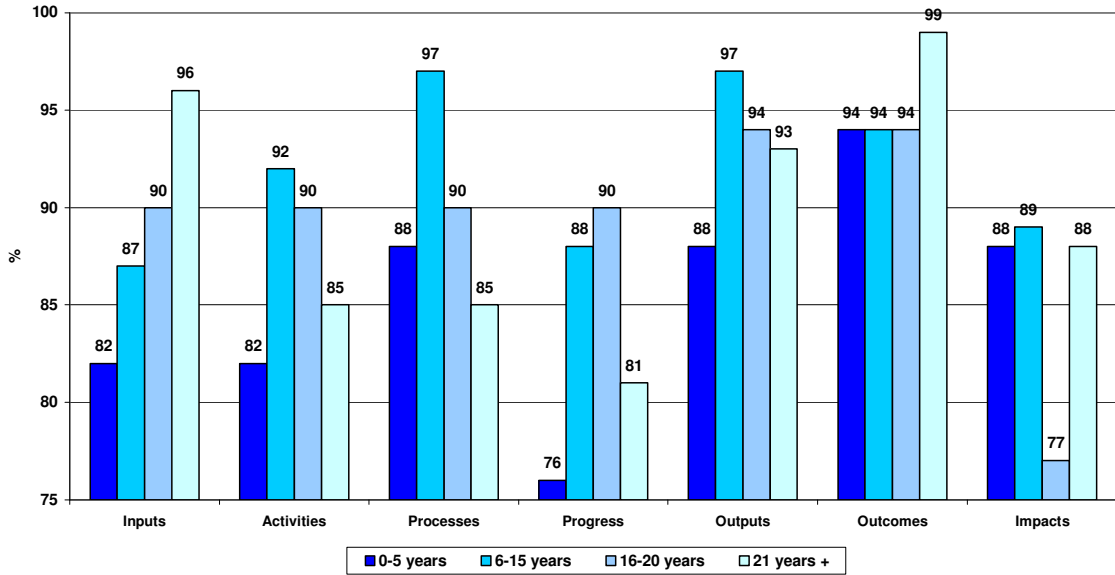


Figure 7 is based on the same data as Figure 5. It disaggregates the total percentage of those applying monitoring principles to each listed aspect of the work of their departments by total number of years of work experience of the respondent:

- Those with fewer years of work experience were less likely than the others to say they monitored inputs, activities, processes and particularly progress.
- Those with 16-20 years of work experience were less likely than the others to say that they monitored impacts.

Figure 8

Percentage of respondents who said they monitor aspects of the work in their departments by highest education level

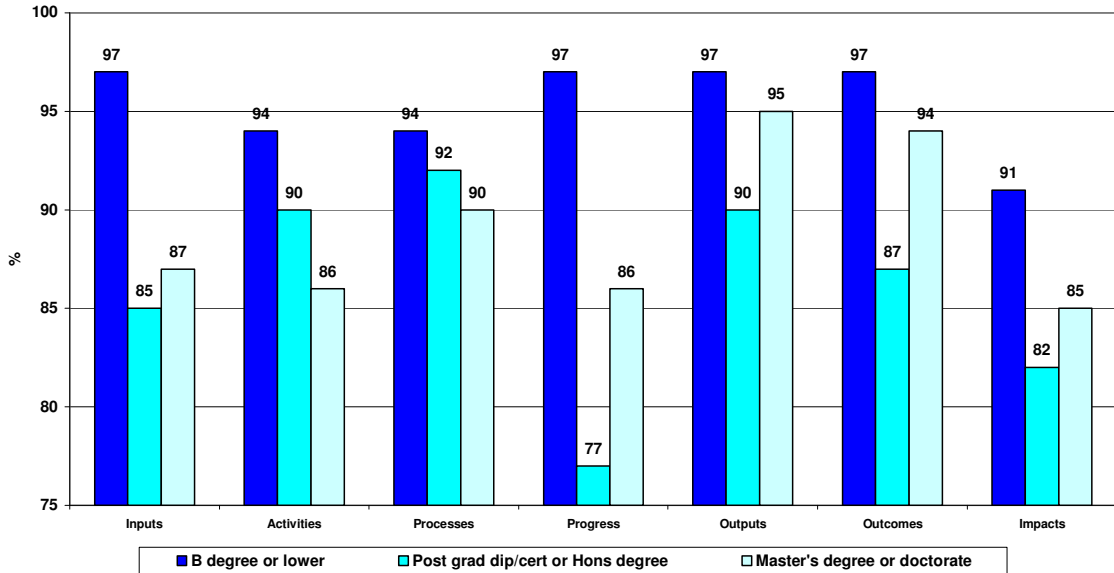


Figure 8 is also based on the same data as Figure 5. It disaggregates the total percentage of those applying monitoring principles to each listed aspect of the work of their departments by the highest level of education of the respondent:

- Those with a B degree or lower were more likely than the other respondents to say they were involved in all aspects of monitoring.
- Those with a post-graduate diploma or certificate or an honour's degree were the least likely group to say that they monitor the progress of a project towards reaching the output.

3.3 USE OF MONITORING PRINCIPLES FOR IDENTIFYING AND SOLVING PROBLEMS

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they applied monitoring principles for problem identification and problem solving, as shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10: Application of monitoring principles in national or provincial departments

Activity	National or Provincial	1 – not at all	2 – to a slight extent	3 – to some extent	4 – to a large extent
Early identification of problems in the workplace					
	Total	4%	11%	29%	56%
	National	4%	12%	30%	54%
	Provincial	6%	8%	28%	58%
Solving problems as they occur in the workplace					
	Total	4%	11%	28%	57%
	National	5%	12%	33%	50%
	Provincial	3%	10%	22%	65%

Table 10 shows that:

- Most respondents indicated that they applied monitoring methods and principles to a large extent for both problem identification and problem solving.
- Those in provincial offices are more likely to use monitoring to a large extent for problem-solving than those in national departments.

Table 11: Application of monitoring principles in each salary level

Activity	Salary level	1 – not at all	2 – to a slight extent	3 – to some extent	4 – to a large extent
Early identification of problems in the workplace					
	Level 3-10	4%	11%	35%	50%
	Level 11-12	6%	15%	29%	50%
	Level 13-16	2%	7%	23%	58%
Solving problems as they occur in the workplace					
	Level 3-10	8%	12%	34%	46%
	Level 11-12	4%	17%	29%	50%
	Level 13-16	2%	5%	23%	70%

Table 11 shows that those in the highest salary levels were more likely to use monitoring for problem-solving than those in the lower levels.

Tables 12 and 13 show the extent to which M&E are used for problem identification and problem solving disaggregated by total number of years of work experience and highest level of education of the respondents.

Table 12: Application of monitoring principles by total number of years of work experience

Activity	Work experience	1 – not at all	2 – to a slight extent	3 – to some extent	4 – to a large extent
Early identification of problems in the workplace					
	0-5 years	6%	18%	35%	41%
	6-15 years	2%	8%	31%	60%
	16-20 years	10%	10%	19%	61%
	21 years or more	4%	11%	33%	52%
Solving problems as they occur in the workplace					
	0-5 years	6%	0%	41%	53%
	6-15 years	2%	10%	32%	56%
	16-20 years	10%	19%	13%	58%
	21 years or more	4%	11%	26%	59%

Table 12 shows that those with the lowest number of years of work experience were least likely to use monitoring to a large extent for both problem identification and problem-solving.

Table 13: Application of monitoring principles by highest level of education

Activity		1 – not at all	2 – to a slight extent	3 – to some extent	4 – to a large extent
Early identification of problems in the workplace					
	B degree or lower	11%	6%	23%	60%
	Post grad dip/cert Hons.	0%	13%	28%	59%
	M or D degree	3%	11%	34%	52%
Solving problems as they occur in the workplace					
	B degree or lower	6%	6%	29%	68%
	Post grad dip/cert Hons.	0%	15%	33%	52%
	M or D degree	7%	11%	29%	53%

Table 13 shows that those with lower educational qualifications were more likely to frequently use monitoring for both problem identification and solving than those with higher educational qualifications.

3.4 APPLICATION OF EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

After focusing on monitoring, respondents were asked to focus specifically on **evaluation**. They were asked whether their present work involves using evaluation methods for the following:

- Undertaking a situational analysis (understanding the background against which an intervention takes place)
- Analysing and interpreting baseline data
- Analysing inputs used to do the work
- Analysing activities that constitute the work
- Analysing processes or the links between activities
- Assessing the quality of outputs (what we actually deliver)
- Assessing outcomes (to what extent have we achieved what we wished to achieve)
- Assessing impacts (to what extent has the desired change actually taken place)

Figures 9 to 12 indicate the percentage of respondents who undertook these tasks in the four categories of disaggregation used in this report, namely working in a provincial or national department; salary level; total number of years of work experience and highest level of education.

Figure 9

Percentage of respondents in national and provincial departments who said that they evaluate aspects of work in their departments

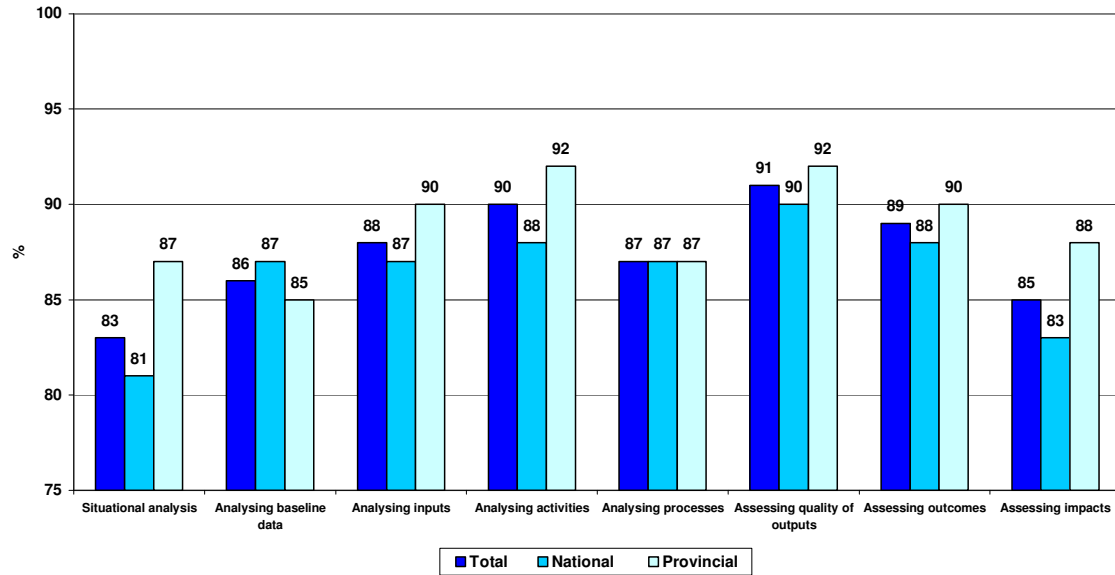


Figure 9 shows that those respondents answering the questionnaire were highly likely to say they performed all of the listed evaluation activities. Those in provincial departments were more likely to say this than those in national departments.

Figure 10

Percentage of respondents in each salary level who said that they evaluate aspects of the work of the department

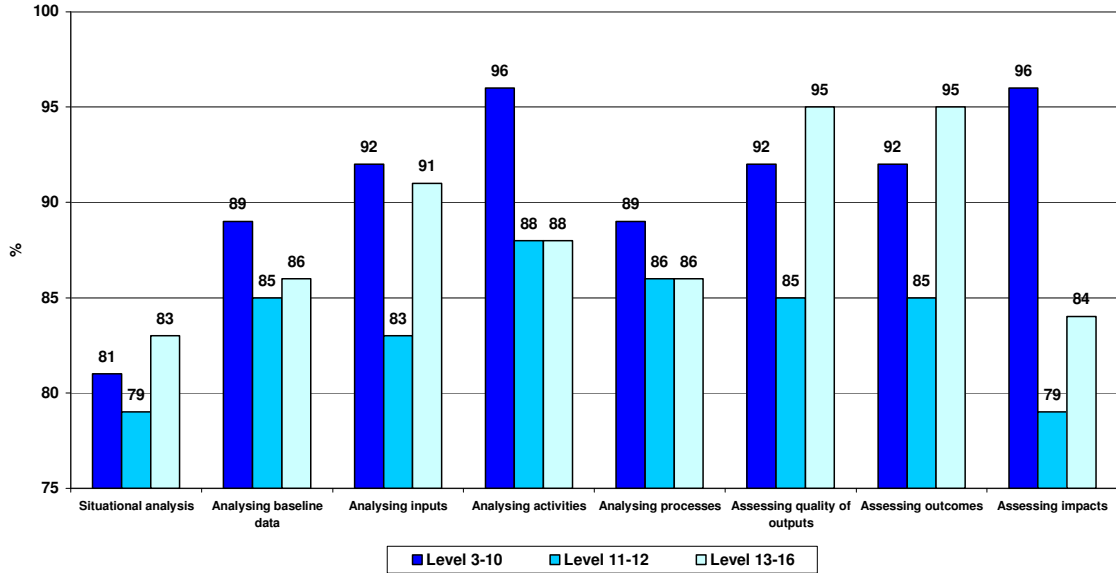


Figure 10 shows some variation in the percentage of respondents undertaking evaluation activities by their salary level.

Figure 11

Percentage of respondents who evaluated aspects of the work of their departments by number of years of working experience

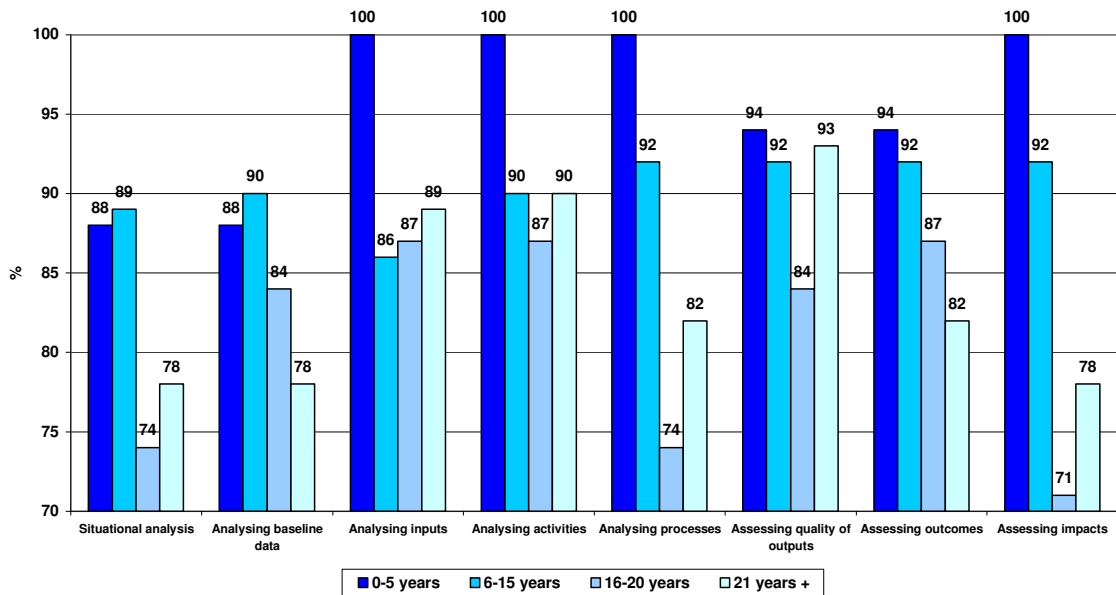


Figure 11 shows that there is some variation in undertaking evaluation tasks according to number of years of work experience.

Figure 12

Percentage of respondents who evaluate aspects of work done in their departments by their highest level of education

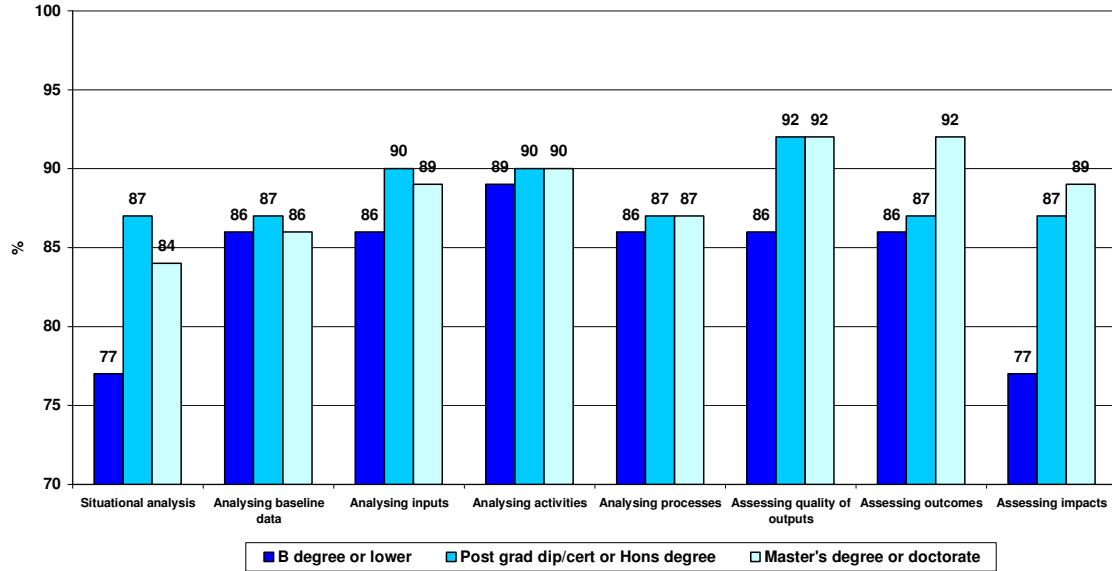


Figure 12 shows some variation in the application of evaluation methods by level of education of the respondent

3.5 USE OF EVALUATION PRINCIPLES FOR A RANGE OF PURPOSES

Respondents were asked to what extent in their present work situation evaluation is used for the following:

- Improving the work to be done in the future
- Setting priorities for the future
- As a planning tool
- As a project performance management tool
- As a personal performance agreement tool

Table 14: Application of evaluation principles by national or provincial departments

Activity	National or Provincial	1 – not at all	2 – to a slight extent	3 – to some extent	4 – to a large extent
Improving the work to be done in future					
	Total	2%	14%	24%	60%
	National	1%	16%	19%	64%
	Provincial	3%	10%	29%	58%
Setting priorities for future work					
	Total	3%	11%	26%	61%
	National	2%	13%	24%	61%
	Provincial	5%	7%	28%	61%
As a planning tool					
	Total	5%	11%	20%	64%
	National	3%	16%	14%	67%
	Provincial	7%	5%	26%	62%
As a project performance management tool					
	Total	6%	14%	22%	58%
	National	4%	18%	20%	58%
	Provincial	8%	8%	24%	60%
As a personal performance agreement tool					
	Total	11%	11%	21%	57%
	National	11%	15%	17%	57%
	Provincial	12%	5%	25%	58%

Table 14 shows that, overall, evaluation was regarded as an important input into all the activities listed above. The majority of respondents indicated that evaluation was used ‘to a large extent’, to assist with all of the specified functions.

Table 15: Application of evaluation principles by salary level

Activity	National or Provincial	1 – not at all	2 – to a slight extent	3 – to some extent	4 – to a large extent
Improving the work to be done in future					
	Level 3-10	0%	12%	38%	50%
	Level 11-12	6%	19%	15%	60%
	Level 13-16	5%	11%	32%	62%
Setting priorities for future work					
	Level 3-10	0%	8%	27%	65%
	Level 11-12	4%	13%	32%	51%
	Level 13-16	4%	9%	16%	71%
As a planning tool					
	Level 3-10	0%	12%	31%	57%
	Level 11-12	6%	15%	19%	60%
	Level 13-16	5%	8%	13%	74%
As a project performance management tool					
	Level 3-10	0%	12%	26%	62%
	Level 11-12	6%	19%	25%	50%
	Level 13-16	9%	12%	14%	65%
As a personal performance agreement tool					
	Level 3-10	4%	12%	27%	57%
	Level 11-12	15%	19%	19%	47%
	Level 13-16	11%	5%	18%	66%

Table 15 shows that those in senior management posts (level 13 -16) were more likely to frequently use evaluation as a toll for all the listed activities than those in the other salary levels.

Table 16: Application of evaluation principles by total years of work experience

Activity	National or Provincial	1 – not at all	2 – to a slight extent	3 – to some extent	4 – to a large extent
Improving the work to be done in future					
	0-5 years	0%	12%	18%	70%
	6-15 years	2%	14%	23%	61%
	16-20 years	9%	7%	26%	58%
	21 years +	4%	19%	23%	54%
Setting priorities for future work					
	0-5 years	0%	0%	24%	76%
	6-15 years	2%	13%	27%	58%
	16-20 years	9%	7%	23%	61%
	21 years +	4%	15%	27%	54%
As a planning tool					
	0-5 years	0%	6%	18%	76%
	6-15 years	3%	10%	24%	63%
	16-20 years	9%	13%	16%	62%
	21 years +	11%	19%	15%	55%
As a project performance management tool					
	0-5 years	0%	6%	29%	65%
	6-15 years	3%	15%	23%	59%
	16-20 years	9%	13%	19%	59%
	21 years +	12%	18%	15%	55%
As a personal performance agreement tool					
	0-5 years	0%	0%	41%	59%
	6-15 years	8%	11%	16%	65%
	16-20 years	20%	13%	23%	44%
	21 years +	15%	12%	15%	58%

Table 16 shows that those respondents with the fewest total number of years of work experience were more likely to use evaluations for all the listed functions than those with more years of work experience.

Table 17: Application of evaluation principles by highest level of education

Activity	National or Provincial	1 – not at all	2 – to a slight extent	3 – to some extent	4 – to a large extent
Improving the work to be done in future					
	B degree or lower	3%	7%	24%	66%
	Post grad dip/cert Hons.	0%	13%	33%	54%
	M or D degree	5%	18%	16%	60%
Setting priorities for future work					
	B degree or lower	3%	6%	24%	67%
	Post grad dip/cert Hons.	0%	13%	31%	56%
	M or D degree	6%	11%	24%	59%
As a planning tool					
	B degree or lower	3%	6%	23%	68%
	Post grad dip/cert Hons.	0%	13%	31%	56%
	M or D degree	8%	13%	11%	68%
As a project performance management tool					
	B degree or lower	3%	12%	12%	73%
	Post grad dip/cert Hons.	0%	15%	34%	51%
	M or D degree	12%	15%	19%	54%
As a personal performance agreement tool					
	B degree or lower	9%	6%	24%	61%
	Post grad dip/cert Hons.	5%	10%	23%	62%
	M or D degree	16%	13%	18%	53%

Table 17 shows that those respondents with B degrees or less were more likely to use evaluations for all the listed functions than those with higher qualifications.

3.6 IMPORTANCE AND USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES FOR M&E PRACTITIONERS

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of certain information sources for them to do their jobs well as M&E practitioners, along a 5-point scale as follows:

- 1 = Not at all Important
- 2 = Slightly Important
- 3 = Unsure/Don't Know
- 4 = Rather Important
- 5 = Very Important

The information sources to be rated consisted of the following items:

- Data from the population census
- Statistics South Africa's (Stats SA) household survey data
- Other household survey data
- Departmental reports from others in the department
- Work plans in the department
- Existing data sets in government, e.g. the population register
- Results of qualitative research, e.g. focus group discussions
- Administrative records in your department, e.g. hospital admission forms
- Financial audit reports
- Budget publications
- Departmental annual reports
- Medium-term strategic framework
- White papers and policy document relevant to the department

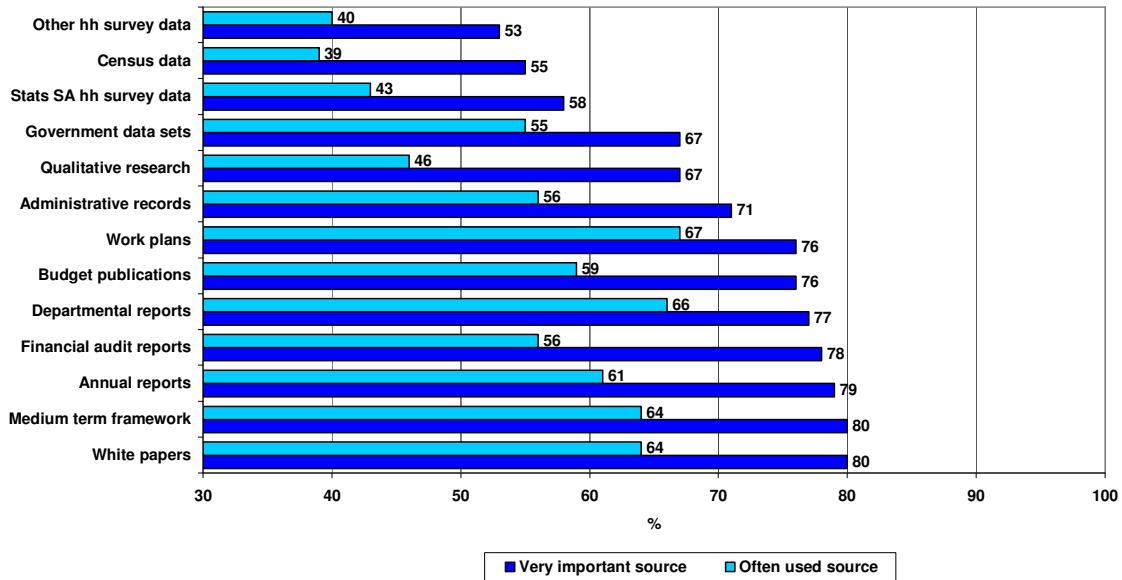
The respondents were also asked to indicate how frequently they used each source where:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Seldom
- 3 = Unsure/Don't Know
- 4 = Sometimes
- 5 = Often

Figure 13 compares the responses. It indicates the percentage of those who thought that each source of information was very important and the percentage who actually used that particular data source frequently.

Figure 13

Percentage of respondents who said that each data source was very important and the percentage who used each source frequently



The figure shows that a high percentage of respondents indicated they viewed each of the data or information sources as very important.

- In general, administrative data sources such as departmental white papers were rated as very important by a large proportion of respondents than research data sources such as the household surveys of Stats SA.
- Ratings of the frequent usage of these information sources were lower than ratings of how important these sources are for respondents to do their jobs.
- The least frequently used sources were household survey and population census data and qualitative research findings.

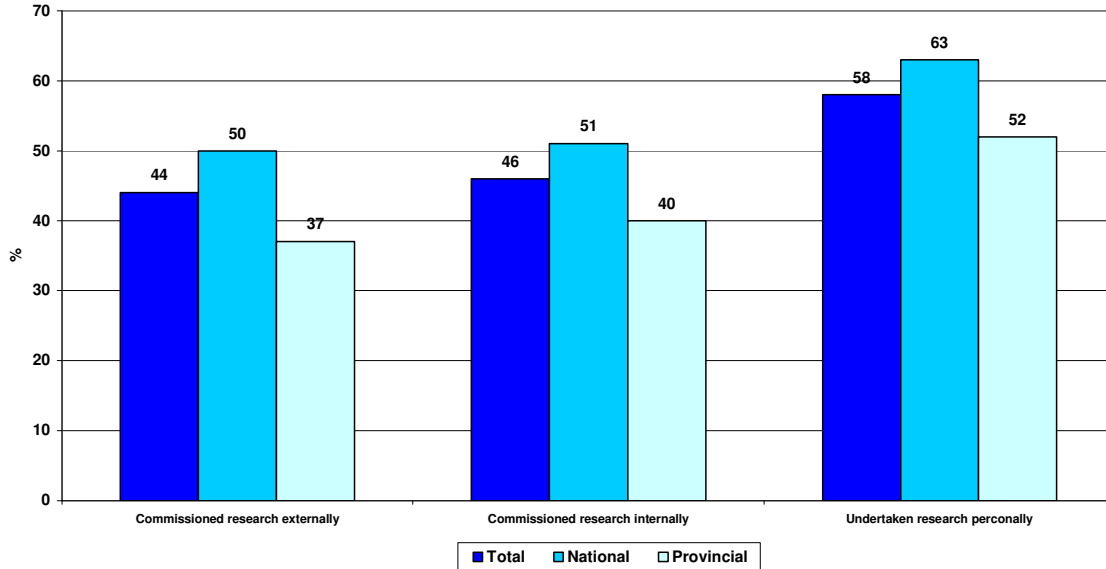
The findings on the perceptions of the use of data should also take into account the fact that use is often determined by accessibility and availability of data. The Public Service Commission’s report points out that due to the fact that many departmental Management Information Systems (MIS) are not functioning optimally, challenges abound to make them usable, such as the need to manually search for information and data. This situation impacts on the accessibility of these data, often resulting in non-use.

In addition, the need to report specific information to various institutions such as National Treasury, may further determine usage patterns.

Figure 14 shows the percentage of national and provincial respondents who had either commissioned research (internally or externally) or undertaken a research project themselves.

Figure 14:

Percentage of respondents in national and provincial departments who had commissioned or done research for M&E purposes¹



- Less than half of all respondents had commissioned research externally or internally in their current jobs
- More than half (58%) of respondents had, however, undertaken a research project themselves in their current jobs.
- Both amongst national and provincial respondents, a higher percentage reported that they had undertaken research themselves than the percentage that had commissioned research.
- A higher percentage of national-level respondents had commissioned research both internally and externally as well as undertaken a research project themselves, than provincial respondents.

3.7 IMPORTANCE AND USE OF SKILLS FOR M&E PRACTITIONERS

A list of skills was presented to respondents that may be needed to do the work of an M&E practitioner in government. They were asked to rate how important each of the following skills are for carrying out this work, on a five-point scale:

- 1 = not at all important
- 2 = somewhat important
- 3 = rather important
- 4 = very important

They were also asked to indicate whether or not they actually used each skill listed below in their work in the past year.

- LOGFRAME analysis
- Developing relevant indicators to measure all aspects of an intervention (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact)
- Using indicators as measuring instruments
- Undertaking qualitative research
- Designing quantitative research such as experiments, quasi-experiments and surveys
- Using statistics as a research tool
- Doing a situational analysis
- Obtaining baseline information
- Drawing samples for surveys
- Conducting interviews for surveys
- Developing a questionnaire
- Establishing a data base
- Using existing data bases
- Data analysis
- Estimating data quality
- Using administrative data
- Report writing
- Constructing tables
- Presenting M&E findings

The answers to these questions are presented in Table 18. The percentage who rated each skill as very important and the percentage who said that they actually used each skill in the past year is shown in the table.

Table 18: The percentage that rated each skill as very important and the percentage that actually used each skill

Skill	Very important %	Skill used %
Logframe analysis	67	64
Developing indicators	78	84
Using indicators	90	86
Qualitative research	80	68
Quantitative research	78	58
Statistics	85	83
Situational analysis	84	87
Baseline information	86	84
Drawing samples	82	67
Conducting interviews	83	77
Developing questionnaires	84	79
Establishing data bases	90	82
Using existing data bases	93	87
Data analysis	94	88
Estimating data quality	90	81
Using admin data	85	90
Report-writing	96	96
Constructing tables	88	91
Presenting M&E findings	93	79

- The table shows that respondents thought that the full range of skills were important for carrying out the work of an M&E practitioner. All skills were rated as ‘Very Important’ by the majority of respondents.
- The one skill which was considered relatively less important in relation to other skills was logframe analysis.
- The skills which were considered relatively more important in relation to other skills rated as very important are report-writing and presentation of M&E findings. When compared to other skills, the highest number of respondents (129, or 94%), believed report-writing to be very important, followed by presentation skills (126 respondents, or 92%).
- Amongst the least used skills were logframe analysis, used by only 87 (64%) of respondents, the design of quantitative research (78 of 137 respondents or 57%), and drawing samples for surveys (90 of 137 respondents or 66%).

3.8 OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT

Respondents were asked to rate government performance on each of a range of key priority areas using a 4-point scale as follows:

- 1 = Not Doing Well At All
- 2 = Doing Slightly Well
- 3 = Doing Rather Well
- 4 = Doing Very Well

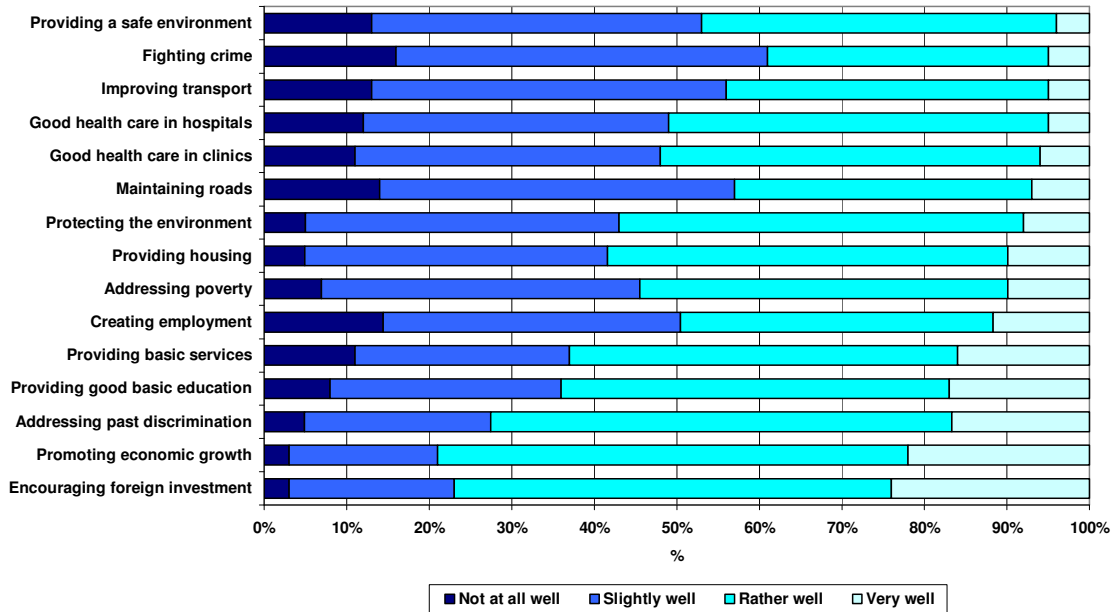
The areas for rating were as follows:

- Creating employment
- Fighting crime
- Providing a good basic education for all
- Providing adequate housing
- Improving transport services
- Maintaining roads
- Providing good health care in clinics
- Providing good health care in hospitals
- Providing a safe environment in which people can live
- Providing basic services such as electricity, clean water, sanitation
- Addressing poverty and inequality
- Addressing past discrimination
- Protecting our environment
- Promoting economic growth
- Encouraging foreign investment in the country

Figure 15 indicates how well the respondents think government is doing in relation to each of these issues.

Figure 15

Ratings on how well government is doing on addressing issues



- The areas in which government was considered to be doing very well relative to other areas, are predominantly in the economic sphere: namely, in encouraging foreign investment and promoting economic growth
- Overall respondents tended to rate government performance as either ‘doing slightly well’ or ‘doing rather well’, rather than ‘not doing well at all’ or ‘doing very well’
- Amongst the areas of government performance that obtained low ratings were: providing a safe environment; fighting crime; improving transport services and providing good quality health care in clinics and hospitals.

3.9 MOST IMPORTANT WAYS M&E COULD HELP GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE ITS SERVICES

Respondents were asked to describe the most important way M&E could help to make government improve their services.

Key themes to emerge included the following:

- Facilitating evidence-based decision-making (emphasised the use of indicators, data, measurement)
- Improving of public sector management at all levels (including capacity-building)
- Promoting government accountability and transparency
- Enhancing government implementation of programmes by diagnosing problems and identifying needs of the people
- Providing information for feeding back into interventions in a timely manner
- Promoting a culture where information is widely available
- Helping to improve government service delivery

4 CONCLUSION

In general, the study indicates important areas for M&E capacity-building throughout government. The respondents were in agreement about the importance of most of the areas mentioned as essential for good M&E practice. But some key differences were found for the various sub-groups according to which the analysis was conducted. However, given the sample limitations, these differences cannot be taken to be statistically significant, although they may have some practical significance. They should be treated as indicative.

Regarding the importance of M&E skills and data sources mentioned in the questionnaire, respondents overwhelmingly rated these skills and data sources as very important. Self-reported ratings of use of these skills and data sources were, however, lower than ratings of the importance of these skills. This may reflect an acknowledgement of the potential role of these skills and data sources, but limited use in the respondents' current jobs. Usage patterns may also be related to the capacities (infrastructural, etc) within various departments that constrain or inhibit the use of certain skills and capacities.