

## **RESPONSES BY INDRAN NAIDOO (PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION)**

- 1. (Fanie Cloete) What they would suggest SAMEA do more to fulfil its mission to promote M&E in SA? Ie what concrete projects or new or changed activities should SAMEA engage in to achieve its strategic goals better.**

SAMEA needs to engage more with civil society, including the NGOs, media and academic and research sector. It also needs to be more visible at points of service delivery, which will include local government and municipalities. If one were to talk about action-oriented or utility focused M&E, this is where the demand is, and it is here that SAMEA can offer assistance in the form of providing expertise. Several reports from government has indicated that local government is a problem, and there is a need for SAMEA to move into this space and offer support. Engaging at this level will also concretize commitments to improve democracy and provide a vibrant, participatory and action-oriented M&E. Thus far it has been successfully in pitching itself at the national level, and less at the provincial level.

I would support from the PSC concrete projects to make this possible, by providing the support and capacity to identify projects around poverty alleviation, public participation, Batho Pele, and the M&E of local government, which engages the sectors mentioned, and produces valuable M&E support. Furthermore, I will draw on such expertise to produce contextually valuable interventions, thus taking forward the Memorandum of Understanding between SAMEA and the PSC.

- 2. (Benita Williams) 1. How much time per week you anticipate spending on board activities? Is your work context supportive of this if this should happen during work time? 2. If a fellow board member consistently misses board meetings and does not deliver on commitments, what would you suggest to solve the problem?**

I will spend 2-3 hours a week on Board activities. This has been the practice whilst Deputy-Chair of SAMEA. My work context is supportive, as it has been over the years, reflective in enabling the PSC to co-host two successful Biennial Conferences (2007 & 2009) and other activities. My track record as the node person between the PSC and SAMEA, and former Deputy-Chair of SAMEA, attests to having delivered on the objectives of SAMEA. Given the MoU between SAMEA and the PSC, this would be considered a part of my work, and as Deputy-Director General, responsive for M&E at the PSC, I would be able to drive projects. If fellow board members consistently are not supportive, then the Board should develop rules that they leave. We do not have the space to have passenger Board members, as the organization is too important at this juncture in our history.

**3. (Raymond Basson) 1. How do you envisage evaluation field building may happen to expand evaluation as field in SA? 2. Do you think evaluators in SA should be encouraged to reflect on their practice to formulate an indigenous conception of evaluation best suited to this country and thereby add to evaluation thinking internationally? 3. If these are important, how may SAMEA best promote both processes?**

In many ways SAMEA is a trailblazer internationally, and as acknowledged by the President of the African Evaluation Association at our 2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial M&E Conference, an example for others. The partnership between the PSC and SAMEA is also unique, and has been mutually beneficial. I often refer to this success when I teach at the International Programme for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) – see [www.ipdet.com](http://www.ipdet.com).

Most certainly, the literature reflects a northern bias in terms of theory and methods, and the absence of southern evaluators in the credible M&E journals is a concern. It probably reflects a lack of being able to write up our stories, rather than an absence of M&E activity. However, there needs to be a way to capture indigenous experiences, and there are many in our country, that have been home-grown and worked. I would support the development of this, by setting up think-tanks that bring together a range of M&E policy makers, practitioners and users, to define how ones gets M&E in the country to not only deepen knowledge, but support impact. Through access to existing networks – as a Board member of IDEAS and instructor at IPDET – I will direct this to international platforms for engagement, so that we genuinely affirm indigenous theory and knowledge. This has already been done in my teaching on good governance at IPDET – see course outline for 2010.

**4. (Mark Abrahams) What is it that you can bring to the Board, given all the desires, demands, and 'dreams' of a bigger, better and more 'effective and efficient' SAMEA**

I bring to the Board an organization that has been central to developing M&E in South Africa, and a strong network and infrastructure. This has helped in the past, as with the improvements in communication networks, this can only get better. I would also initiative more events around government work, as this is a very large and emerging sector, thus helping to improve membership, and provide the opportunities through forums for engagement. Work in this regard has been ongoing.

**5. (Errol Goetsch) What are the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing M&E practitioners in South Africa, and given each of these, how can or will SAMEA respond?**

The main strength is the timing – the support for M&E from all sectors is at a peak, but this must be sustained. It can dissipate if the correct M&E capacity is not in place to support the demand, in which case cynicism will creep in, and the high expectations of M&E get directed elsewhere. It is thus important to seize the moment to institutionalize and professionalise M&E.

M&E practitioners perhaps face a threat if they do not feel supported, and are marginalized. This can be prevented if the M&E is institutionalized and professionalized.

SAMEA can respond, with its members offering services – there is a great expertise within SAMEA already. I would support projects which are inclusive and action oriented, and which seek to build and share expertise – as noted – in a manner that it enhances service delivery and supports the MDGs, and also concretely contributes to transparency and accountability.

**6. (Victor Madziakapita) What strategies will they bring to the Board for fund raising so that the Board can be able to organize activities that benefit the members without charging anything to the members?**

A key question. As a not for profit organization, SAMEA is poised between providing a service without placing financial burden on members. It has thus far supported membership through subsidizing events. The current economic situation is having a real effect of organizations such as SAMEA, with dwindling donor funding a reality. I would engage more with the private sector, around their social corporate responsibility programmes, to secure support. It is necessary to diversity approaches and get multiple streams of support, which overall can be substantial. An effective and credible SAMEA would also be able to seek support of international evaluation organizations, publishers, and others. This will be an ongoing activity, which I believe can be done with the networks I have access to.

**7. (Candice Morkel) What are your thoughts on the current direction being taken in public sector M&E (as driven primarily by the National Dept of PME), and how can/should SAMEA add value to this? What is your opinion around how to maintain the integrity and professionalism of the discipline amongst practitioners and service providers, without stifling its growth and expansion? What role should SAMEA play in this regard (if any?).**

I am not sure that I agree that this is the current direction in the public sector. The public sector is differentiated. M&E in South Africa operates at different levels, with different actors focusing on different areas of performance. The Presidency focus is on outcomes, and is very much about how the Executive is held to account. The National Treasury focuses on is on finances, and value for money. The PSC uses as its basis the 9 Constitutional values and principles for public administration, which is the operational definition for good governance in SA. I think there is space within all of these programmes for SAMEA to participate – and it has, though not enough in all of them. For M&E to vbe credible, it must engage critically with organizations such as SAMEA, and I thus see SAMEA playing this critical role. It means that there must be space for growth and innovation, and SAMEA needs to create this by allowing a diverse membership to work on topics of interest, and by allowing members to also form linkages at local level. SAMEA must support this – embrace diversity and provide the infrastructure for this to flourish.

**8. (Nomisa Dube) 1. It is evidently clear that there is a need for M&E to be recognised as a distinct profession. Is it possible for SAMEA to initiate a certification system similar to the one in the project management field where there are PMPs and the Six Sigma belt system? If so what strategies would you employ to put such systems in place? 2. Any plans or suggestions to expand SAMEA our geographical coverage and also include professionals from other African countries outside South Africa?**

I agree with the professionalizing of M&E, but we must recognize that this is a process, and in a country where it is emerging, we do not want to create barriers that impede entrants. The process of certification is desired, but we are not there yet. My experience is that practitioners are learning as they go along – which must be encouraged. I see the process of certification as a phased one (desirable), which works on accrediting knowledge, both formal and informal, and which eventually leads to what you call for. I would see this as a project that can best be advised by partners in the areas (the accreditation agencies, the professional institutions, academia and others). I would draw in on my fellow Board members of IDEAS, as well as AFREA, IOCE and the AEA and EEA to assist. This can perhaps be a conference session. From government, the PSC as a leader within the Association of African Public Service Commissions (AAPSCOMS) is already supporting African countries and their governments in areas of good governance. SAMEA can assist us here.