

Building Evaluation Capacity of an Organization in Times of Turbulence?

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Words of our Times

‘Evidence’

‘Evidence-based Decision-making’

**QUESTION: But what do we mean by
‘Evidence’?**

'Evidence' and COVID-19

- ❖ COVID-19 analysis drawing on mathematical modelling, risk assessment and a few select health indicators
- ❖ But 'evidence'/knowledge is not singular - Different dimensions
- ❖ QUESTIONS:
 - Is this adequate? (**NO!**)
 - Would social, cultural, behavioural, information; on-the-ground knowledge help? (**YES!**)
 - In going forward, can Evaluation/Evaluators play a 'value-added' role? (**YES, BUT...!**)

Not 'Business as Usual'

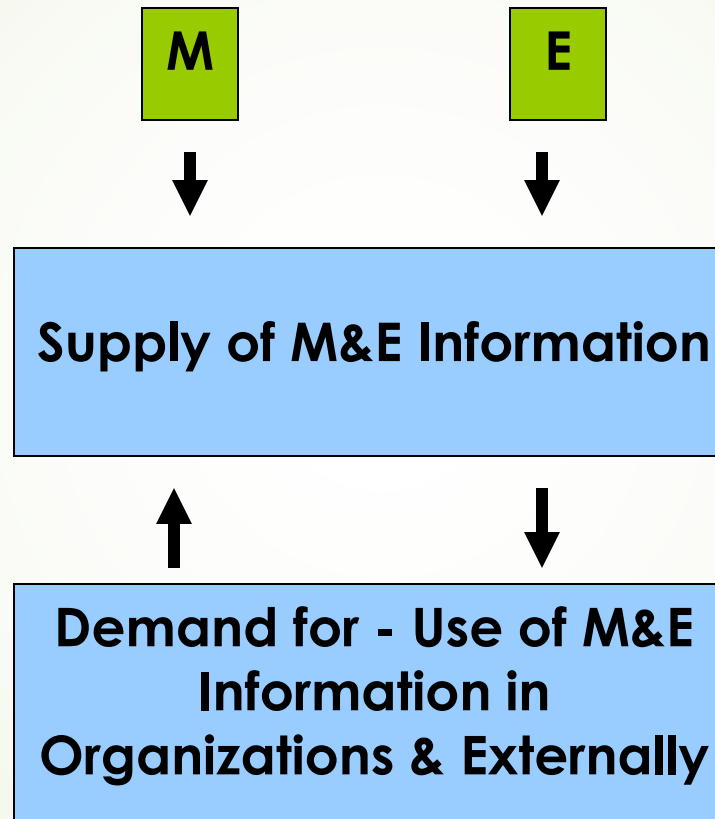
Evaluators need to Understand the Broad Context

- ❖ Being aware of the changing priorities/needs of the organization/government
- ❖ Addressing the key questions – not being limited to the focus and scope of traditional evaluation
- ❖ Being nimble in practice and approach in providing just-in-time and relevant information that meets the changing needs of senior officials

Evaluation Operates Within a Broad 'Systems' Context

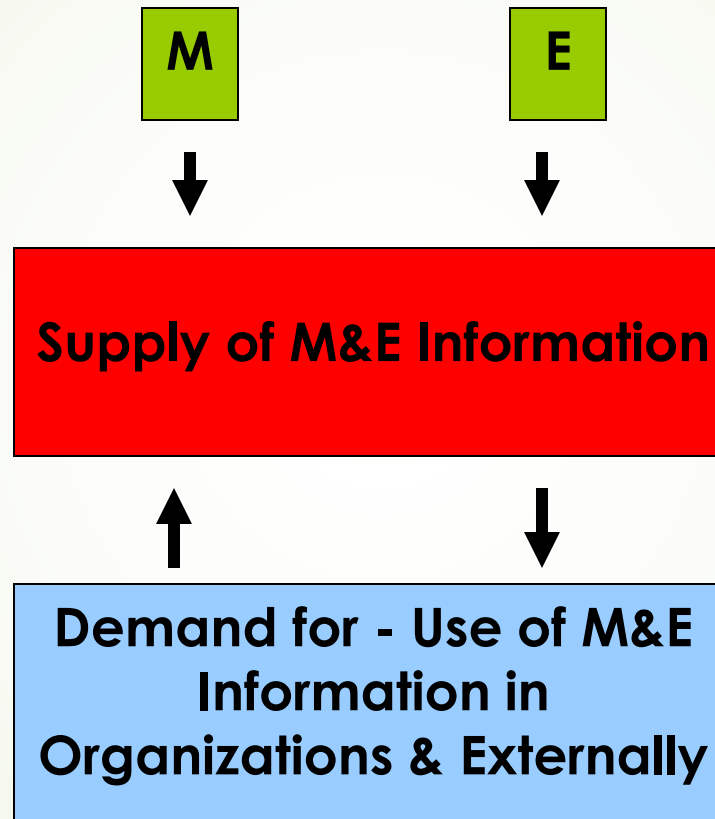
- ❖ Whether an organization, province or country.....
- ❖ Think of Evaluation in a 'systems' context....
- ❖ Where there is a need to focus on both the supply of evaluation product/services.....
- ❖ And the demand for evaluation.

An Evaluation (M&E) System



Developing an Evaluation (M&E) System

Where is the focus generally placed?



A Framework for Understanding Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB)

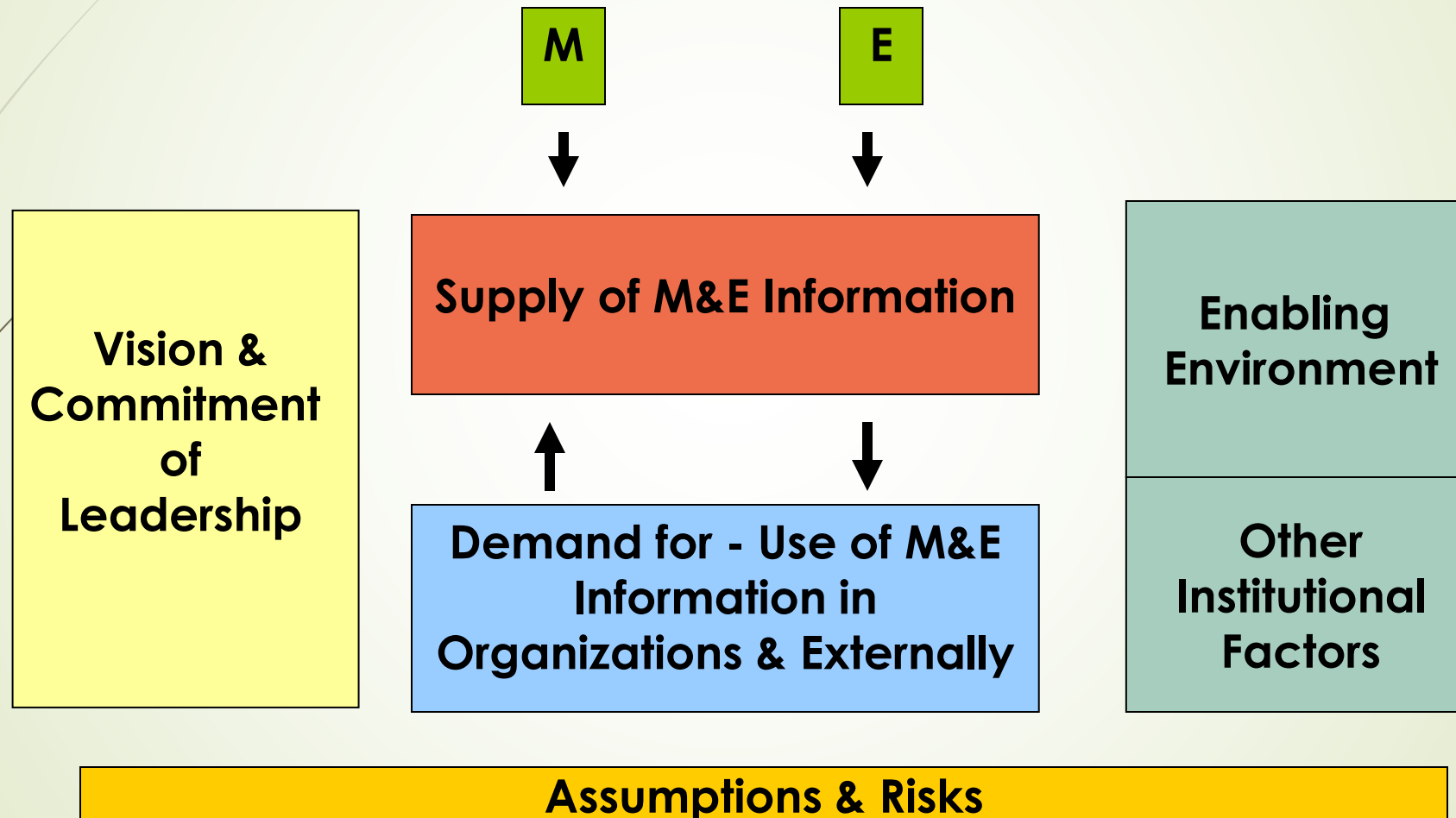
Two over-arching influences

- Political will – Commitment, leadership and resources
- Technical factors – Pace of development of M&E infrastructure

Four essential Building Blocks

- Vision & Commitment of leadership
- An enabling environment
- Technical capacity to supply M&E information
- Capacity within the system to demand & use M&E information

An Evaluation (M&E) 'System' – *Implications for ECB*



Operationalizing the Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) Framework

- ❖ Recognizes the importance of taking a broad and comprehensive approach to ECB
- ❖ For each of the 4 building blocks **Critical Success Factors** identified
- ❖ For each factor, a set of **key considerations for success** are identified – in the form of questions (See References)
- ❖ Framework provides basis for implicitly identifying an ideal ‘end state’ – a comprehensive Evaluation System – a frame of reference
- ❖ Intended as a **Guide**, not a ‘one-size-fits-all’
- ❖ **Success** = an M&E system that is effective and sustainable

'Key Considerations for Success' – Some Examples

Vision and Demonstrated Commitment of Leadership

- Awareness by political & senior officials of importance of M&E & RBM to good governance & management practices?
- Central leadership on change management initiatives?
- M&E 'champions' at political, senior & operational levels?
- Communication strategy and plan?
- A formal plan & resources to launch (for training, etc.)?
- Public sector reform & commitment to 'results'-orientation & good governance?
- A willingness and ability to challenge the status quo & current culture within organizations?
- Leadership allows transparency & fosters accountability in public sector management?

'Key Considerations for Success' – Some Examples

Capacity to Demand & Use M&E Information

- Clarity of what is 'driving' the M&E initiative?
- Clarity of where & how M&E information to be used - planning, management, budgeting, reporting (nationally, sectors)?
- Training & orientation on M&E to non-technical officials?
- Adequate accountabilities & incentives ('carrots & sticks') within organizations to ensure use of M&E information?
- Clarity of roles & responsibilities for use?
- Senior committees to identify priority areas for possible evaluation & use of M&E findings?

Using the Framework in Two Different Environments

1. IF Organization/Government has Little or No Evaluation Capacity

- ❖ How used? – Identifying the major areas for Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB)
- ❖ Basis for a strategy and a multi-year plan for development of an Evaluation capability
- ❖ **Some examples** – National Monitoring and Evaluation System (NMES) capacity building – Botswana, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana

2. If an Evaluation Function exists and has a Track Record

- ❖ How used? - Assessing Capacity, Performance & System Gaps
- ❖ Provides direction for any changes needed to improve Evaluation system and performance
- ❖ **Some examples** – Federal government 'Neutral Assessments' of departmental Evaluation function

1. Using the Framework for Assessing M&E Capacity Gaps and Possible Entry Points for ECB Initiatives

- The Framework serves as a useful lens for identifying both M&E strengths and capacity gaps, system-wide
- Basis for a rapid **M&E 'Needs/Readiness Assessment'** – *What is the current reality?*
- The template of **key considerations for success** – articulated as questions – serve as the lines of enquiry in **broad consultations** with all sectors and all key stakeholder groups
- Also for articulating potential and **practical entry points** for ECB initiatives
- Goal is to arrive at an agreed-upon **strategy** and relevant ECB **action plan** (likely multi-year) to strengthen the M&E system

2. Using the Framework to Conduct a 'Neutral Assessment' (NA) of a Departmental Evaluation Function

In scoping the NA, the broad framework encompassed both department-wide and professional practice standards:

- i. **Governance & Resourcing of the Evaluation Function**: Is there adequate capacity to carry out Evaluation – Is it appropriate for the department?
- ii. **Management Practices & Enabling Environment**: Does the organization adequately support and enable the conduct and use of Evaluation?
- iii. **Evaluation Practice**: Are professional practice standards being met in carrying out individual evaluations?
- iv. **Evaluation Use**: Utilization of evaluation results by management – Is Evaluation meeting the needs of the Deputy Minister and Senior Management?

Performance of the Evaluation Function and Current Areas of Risk

Issue/Criteria related to the Evaluation Function	Performance Rating	Recommendations for dealing with Current 'At Risk' Factors
A. Capacity to Carry Out Evaluation – Is it appropriate for the department?		
A1 Governance of Evaluation	1	
A2 Resourcing and Staffing of Evaluation	2	
A3 Management of the Evaluation Function	2	
A4 Evaluation Planning and Coverage of Programs	1	
B. Performance in Carrying Out Individual Evaluations – Are professional practice standards being met?		
B1 Protocol requirements for Evaluation process – credibility; neutrality/independence; timeliness	1	
B2 Planning and Design of Individual Evaluations	1	
B3 Project Management	1	
B4 Evaluation Reporting	1	
C. Utilization of Evaluation results		
C1 Department-level requirements and use	1	
C2 Use of results of individual evaluations	1	
C3 Meeting the needs of the Deputy Minister and Senior Management	1	
D. Elements to Support and Enable Evaluation within the department		
D1 Senior-level support and oversight	1	
D2 Responsibilities of Managers – Follow-up to Evaluations	1	
D3 Availability of Performance Information to support Evaluation	2	

The Framework – Some Important Considerations

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- Broad set of players for M&E system to be *effective & sustainable*
- A focus on capability to both generate (supply) performance information and use performance information in decision-making.
- Good evaluations are not enough!
- Importance of senior leadership & political support to champion and drive change
- Recognition that training & development required for more than technical specialists – awareness-raising of senior officials
- Need for 'incentives' built into the system that either force or encourage use of M&E information
- Broad context introduces complexity – working across programs and organizations – Importance of communication and partnerships
- ECB is long-term and iterative – far more than a technical issue
- But, each situation is unique: different stages of M&E maturity; individual challenges in 'growing' M&E

Pandemic puts increased focus on Demand side of the Framework for Evaluation

Who are the clients of evaluation? What are their needs?

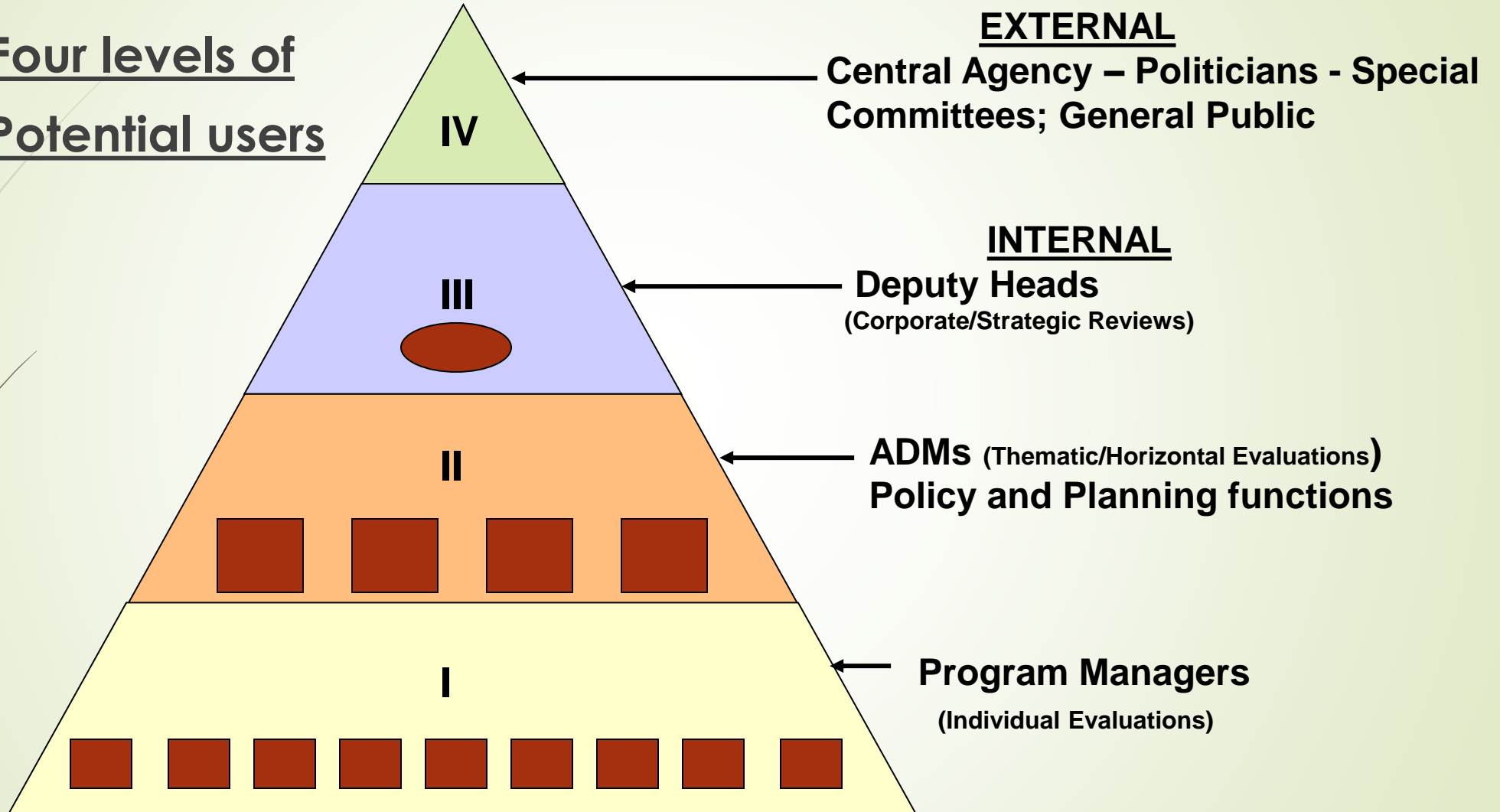
It is important to address demand for/‘use’ of evaluation from both a micro as well as macro perspective

Within a public sector for example, the potential users of Evaluation can be represented at some four levels:

- (i) Program Managers
- (ii) ADMs and those responsible for corporate policy and planning
- (iii) Deputy Head (concerned with both *internal* as well as *external* needs)
- (iii) External

Potential Public Sector Users of Evaluation

Four levels of Potential users



Going Forward: Take/Create the Opportunity to Communicate and Consult with Senior Officials

❖ Raising awareness & understanding with political & senior levels about:

- Pros and cons/value added of the various tools to measure 'performance' – Evaluation, PM, other (flavour of the month)
- Ambiguity/lack of clarity about M&E terms and concepts
- Lack of clarity around the drivers for & potential uses of Evaluation

❖ Assessing the effectiveness and contribution of Evaluation to meeting the needs of senior officials:

- Probe to understand where and how evaluation is being used and contributing. If not, why not?
- Also, what, if anything, could be done to improve the practice of evaluation and the utility of evaluation to those officials.
- Incorporate a forward-looking lens into the consultations.

Some References

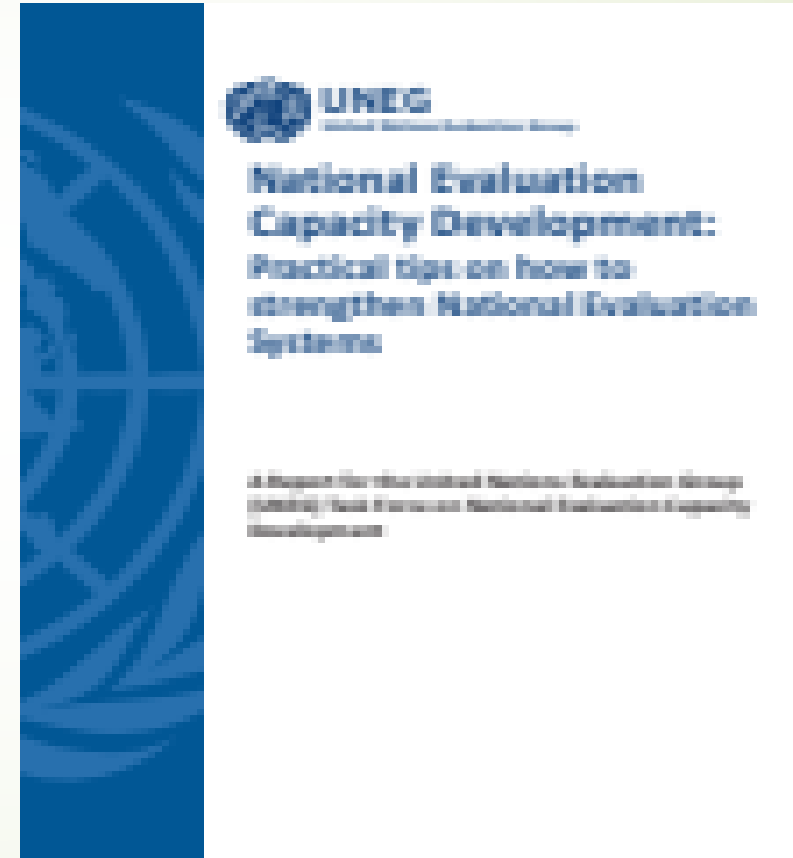
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Robert Lahey

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The Canadian M&E System: Lessons Learned from 30 Years of Development

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**World Bank
Independent Evaluation Group
ECD Working Paper Series •
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