



Summative Evaluation of the National Evaluation Policy Framework

Final Report

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BASIC DETAILS	
Evaluation Title	Summative Evaluation of the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) of the Philippines
Evaluation Type	Summative
Geographical Coverage	Not Applicable
Oversight Agencies of the Evaluation Subject	National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Office of the President - Presidential Management Staff (OP-PMS)
Other Government Agencies	All national government agencies State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) Government-Owned and/or Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) Government Financial Institutions (with budgetary support from the National Government including those maintaining special accounts in the General Fund) Other instrumentalities of the national government (including the legislative branch as per NEPF Guidelines)
Evaluator	Benigno C. Balgos
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Commissioning Unit	National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) - Central Office

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It is important to note that the analysis and recommendations presented in this report are solely those of the author. The views expressed in this publication belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of NEDA and UNDP.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

3ie	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADB-IED	Asian Development Bank - Independent Evaluation Department
AEA	American Evaluation Association
ARTA	Assessment of the Anti-Red Tape Act
AO	Administrative Order
BPAR	Budget Performance Assessment Review
CEU	Central Evaluation Unit
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
COA	Commission on Audit
COP	Community of Practice
CPBRD	Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department
DA	Department of Agriculture
DAR	Department of Agrarian Reform
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DepEd	Department of Education
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DOE-PD	Department of Energy - Planning Division
DOH	Department of Health
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DOST-PES	Department of Science and Technology - Planning and Evaluation Service
DOTr	Department of Transportation
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group
ED	Engineering Department
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EO	Executive Order
ETF	Evaluation Task Force
FSD	Fund Sourcing Department
GAA	General Appropriations Act
GAA-NEP	General Appropriations Act - National Expenditure Program
GOCC	Government-Owned and/or Controlled Corporation
JMC	Joint Memorandum Circular
IA	Implementing Agency
ICC	Investment Coordination Committee
IOCE	Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation
JMC	Joint Memorandum Circular
IPET	International Program for Evaluation Development Training
LBP-FSD	Land Bank of the Philippines - Fund Sourcing Department
LWUA-CPD	Local Water Utilities Administration - Corporate Planning Division
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MES	Monitoring and Evaluation Staff
MSMSE	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MTEP	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MWSS-SOMD	Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System - Site Operations Management Department
NB	National Economic and Development Authority Board

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NCCAP	National Climate Change Action Plan
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NEDA-MES	National Economic and Development Authority - Monitoring and Evaluation Staff
NEPF	National Evaluation Policy Framework
NGA	National Government Agency
NHA	National Housing Authority
NIA	National Irrigation Administration
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OPAPRU	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace, Reconciliation and Unity
OPIF	Organizational Performance Indicator Framework
OP-PMS	Office of the President - Presidential Management Staff
PAMANA	Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan
PCC	Philippine Competition Commission
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PDP-RM	Philippine Development Plan - Results Matrices
PIB	Performance-Informed Budgeting
PIO	Project Implementation Officer
PIP	Public Investment Plan
PMED	Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division
PPAs	Programs, Projects, and Activities
PPD	Planning and Programming Division
PPS	Policy and Planning Service
PSD	Policy Studies Division
PWP	Policy Window Philippines
RA	Republic Act
RBM	Results-Based Management
RBPMs	Results-Based Performance Management System
RDC	Regional Development Council
RPMES	Regional Project Monitoring and Evaluation System
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEPO	Senate Economic Planning Office
SMD	System Management Division
SUC	State Universities and College
TIU	Theory-in-Use
TOC	Theory-of-Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB-IEG	World Bank - Independent Evaluation Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The document is the final summative evaluation report that aims to assess the extent to which the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) has achieved its intended objectives. The evaluation examines the significant accomplishments, challenges, and necessary steps to realize the NEPF's goals fully. The summative assessment focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of the policy framework in the following areas: (1) strengthening M&E capacities, including knowledge, skills, competencies, and practices, across government agencies; (2) enhancing the planning, management, and implementation of public sector evaluations by national government agencies; (3) ensuring effective dissemination, management response, and utilization of evaluation outputs; and (4) establishing an organizational structure aligned with the policy framework, including the establishment of a central evaluation unit at the national level.

The evaluation process involved a comprehensive analysis of the NEPF, assessing its alignment with national priorities and adherence to global best practices and evaluation standards. The implementation of the NEPF and its impact on the public sector evaluation system and practice were also reviewed. Consultations with key stakeholders, including government agency representatives and development partners, were conducted to gather their perspectives on the NEPF's implementation. These consultations provided valuable insights into the NEPF's implementation and guided the formulation of recommendations to strengthen the policy framework, the evaluation system, and practices in the Philippines. Overall, this evaluation approach offers a thorough assessment of the NEPF and valuable insights for enhancing the evaluation system and practices within the Government of the Philippines.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

On Relevance. The NEPF aims to address the need for a standardized evaluation system and promote the use of evaluation in the public sector. However, there is limited awareness of the framework among government agencies involved in the evaluation. According to survey respondents, 60% (6 out of 10) reported being unfamiliar with the policy framework, and many interview respondents also expressed their lack of knowledge about it. Despite being signed in 2015, the NEPF remains relevant today due to several factors: (1) increasing demands from the Filipino people for transparency and accountability in government; (2) the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting the importance of evidence-based decision-making in managing public health crises; (3) a growing recognition of the value of quality evaluations in assessing the effectiveness and impact of government programs and policies; (4) a continued focus on results-based management and efficient use of public resources by the national government; (5) the underutilization of the NEPF and the yet-to-be-achieved ultimate goal; and (6) persistent development challenges in public sector evaluation. While the Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) serves as an appropriate policy instrument to institutionalize and govern the practice of evaluation in the public sector, a policy instrument with greater enforcement power would have facilitated optimal NEPF implementation, although the JMC is sufficient to compel government entities to act on the policy framework.

On Coherence. Regarding coherence, national legislation related to evaluation is currently lacking; however, the NEPF aligns with reform initiatives aimed at enhancing results orientation in the management of the public sector in the Philippines. The evaluation also revealed that the NEPF aligns with ongoing efforts to establish a National Evaluation Policy (NEP) in the country. Furthermore, the NEPF adheres to recognized and established international evaluation norms and standards set by organizations such as the Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG), Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), American Evaluation Association (AEA), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (WB-IEG), and the Asian Development Bank - Independent Evaluation Department (ADB-IED).

On Effectiveness. The framework provides a set of guidelines and standards that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and projects. The NEPF's contributions to public sector evaluation are as follows: (1) Established evaluation standards to address fragmented evaluation approaches in the public sector; (2) Conducted or commissioned evaluation studies adhering to the NEPF and draft guidelines (3) Strengthened NEDA's leadership and oversight of public sector evaluation; and, (4) Stimulated conversation and demand for evaluation. The evaluation unearthed several factors that have contributed to the NEPF's accomplishments. These include the availability of the 200 million pesos and the establishment of the M&E Fund, which have played a crucial role in supporting the NEPF implementation roll-out. Despite losing partners from other oversight agencies, NEDA has demonstrated leadership and commitment to the NEPF rollout. Developing the Draft NEPF Guidelines has provided a comprehensive framework for evaluation practice and utilization, mainly through the Strategic M&E Project. Collaboration with development partners, including gje, UNICEF, and UNDP, has also been beneficial.

The NEPF's Theory of Change (ToC) outlines its objective of institutionalizing the evaluation function within government agencies and fostering a culture of evidence-based decision-making. Intermediate Outcome 1.4 of the ToC emphasizes the importance of agencies having an evaluation agenda. However, among the interviewed agencies, only OPAPRU indicated that they had developed an evaluation agenda in response to the NEPF. Other agencies may have established a research and development agenda without familiarity with the NEPF. In addition, National Evaluation Agenda was not developed as planned. The ToC also emphasizes the importance of sustained resources for evaluation initiatives to foster a strong evaluation culture. Planning evaluations with an appropriate budget is crucial to achieving this goal. The evaluation findings reveal that among the engaged agencies, only OPAPRU has successfully developed an evaluation plan due to the NEPF. Although several agencies have provided a list of their evaluation-related resources, the evaluation could not determine if the NEPF has facilitated the implementation of evaluation by other agencies. The evaluation lacks robust evidence to establish a direct link between these outputs and the influence of the NEPF.

Correspondingly, an outcome of the TOC is the effective communication and use of evaluation results. The evaluation uncovered several mechanisms implemented as part of the NEPF rollout to promote the dissemination and utilization of evaluation results, such as the annual M&E Network Forum, the National Evaluation Portal linked to the NEDA website, and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), which is inter-agency in nature. Furthermore, the NEPF encourages using Management Response, a process where the concerned government agency provides feedback on the evaluation findings and outlines actions to address the recommendations. While Management Response is an essential aspect of commissioned evaluations under the Strategic M&E Project, the evaluation identified a lack of a mechanism to track the progress of the actions outlined in the Management Responses.

In the NEPF's ToC, establishing a functional agency-level neutral evaluation unit is highlighted as crucial for strengthening the evaluation culture within the public sector. However, among the agencies engaged in the evaluation, only OPAPRU has established a centralized evaluation unit in line with NEPF provisions, placing the Evaluation Unit directly under the Office of the Secretary. It is worth noting that the Department of Agriculture (DA) also established a Neutral Evaluation Unit through a Special Order released in February 2023. Also, NEDA has established a Central Evaluation Unit. The other evaluated agencies have not established a centralized evaluation unit. These agencies typically have project-based M&E, where each project has its own donor with specific M&E protocols and standards.

Similarly, according to the ToC, improving the capacity of individuals and institutions is crucial for promoting the practice and use of evaluation in the public sector. The ToC identifies two outputs to enhance individual and organizational capacity: (1) the rollout and implementation of a competency framework for evaluation in the public service across the entire public sector and (2) the implementation of a national capacity development plan. However, the evaluation findings indicate

that the National Capacity Development Plan was not developed. Upon reviewing the available information, the evaluation found that a series of M&E webinars was implemented through the Strategic M&E Project. However, due to the lack of data, it is challenging to assess whether these activities successfully increased the capacity of the participating agencies or contributed to developing their capacity-building plans for M&E.

The evaluation found the following significant challenges that may have impeded the full realization of the NEPF's potential. These include the non-convening and non-establishment of the ETF and its Secretariat. Leadership changes following the 2016 national elections resulted in the loss of champions from Oversight Agencies. Limited dissemination and inadequate cascading of the NEPF to agency-level evaluation units by top management officials have hindered its implementation. Insufficient awareness of the NEPF has prevented its institutionalization within agencies, leading to a lack of central evaluation units in implementing agencies. Furthermore, the design limitations and narrow focus on project and program evaluations have overlooked the importance of policy evaluations and have confined the NEPF's scope to the Executive Branch of the government.

On Efficiency. The ETF plays a crucial role in implementing the NEPF in the Philippines, as it is responsible for leading and coordinating the policy framework's implementation across the government. However, the evaluation revealed that the ETF was not convened and formally established as intended by the JMC. Consequently, the ETF's roles and the Secretariat were not performed as envisioned. The Interim Secretariat, led by NEDA-MES, took on the responsibility of overseeing the NEPF implementation. NEDA-MES acted as the custodian of the M&E Fund and played a coordinating and supervisory role in the rollout of the NEPF and the utilization of the fund. The evaluation question regarding the adequacy of the ETF's structures and processes cannot be addressed due to the ETF's non-establishment.

Based on the ToC, sustaining resource allocation for public sector evaluation initiatives is crucial for the Intermediate Outcome of strengthening the culture of evaluation. An initial Php 200 million M&E Fund is allocated to NEDA, along with an annual fund, to support this objective. However, the annual fund is decreasing despite the persistent evaluation challenges in the Philippine government. To fully optimize the NEPF, Budget Guidelines for using the General Appropriations Act specifically for evaluation are necessary. This will ensure sustained resources for capacity development, hiring human resources, and conducting evaluations within the government. Alongside addressing knowledge and skills gaps, organizational and institutional changes are necessary to enhance public sector evaluation.

On Sustainability. A key challenge in sustaining the gains of the NEPF is the limited capacity among implementing agencies and other stakeholders to conduct evaluations effectively. Although the framework provides principles and guidelines, the evaluation revealed that many government agencies have not institutionalized the NEPF. Despite this challenge, efforts have been made to support implementing agencies and other stakeholders in maintaining the benefits of the NEPF, such as the development of the Draft NEPF Guidelines and the regular M&E Network Forum.

On Impact. One of the notable positive effects is the increased emphasis on evidence-based policymaking. The NEPF has established a formal evaluation system, institutionalizing evaluation as a crucial component of the policy-making process. Another positive outcome of the NEPF is its contribution to enhancing the capacity of government agencies to conduct evaluations. On the other hand, an unintended consequence is the potential for evaluations to be viewed solely as a compliance requirement rather than a valuable tool for learning and program improvement. This may result in evaluations being conducted merely to fulfill NEPF's obligations without generating meaningful insights to inform policy-making decisions. At a higher level, the NEPF has contributed to developing a culture of evidence-based policy-making in the Executive Branch. Furthermore, the NEPF has positively influenced the use of evaluations for program improvement. Another positive effect of the NEPF is the enhanced collaboration between government agencies and other stakeholders in the evaluation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The summative evaluation's recommendations are shown in the section below. By strengthening capacity-building initiatives, encouraging evidence-based decision-making, improving coordination and communication among stakeholders, and prioritizing result program design and evaluation, the recommendations aim to fortify the nation's NEPF and evaluation system and practice. The recommendations constitute a road map for enhancing the evaluation system and practice in the Philippines and are based on the evaluation findings.

Recommendations	Timeframe	Who
<p>Recommendation 1: Strengthen the NEPF and its support. This can be achieved through:</p> <p>1.1 Enhancing the NEPF's Institutional, financial, technical, human, and political support resources</p> <p>1.2 Strengthening the policy backing of the NEPF through the National Evaluation Policy (NEP) or an Executive Order (EO).</p> <p>1.3 Re-engaging DBM and OP-PMS and securing their continued support for the NEPF</p>	<p>Immediate and from short to long-term</p> <p>Immediate and short-term</p> <p>Immediate and short-term</p>	<p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.</p> <p>ETF</p> <p>NEDA</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Strengthen the NEFP implementation rollout and public sector evaluation activities. This can be achieved through:</p> <p>2.1 Broadening the application of the NEPF to include all branches of the government, such as the legislative and judicial branches, and integrating policy evaluations into the framework.</p> <p>2.2 Conducting additional evaluation studies and increasing demand for evaluation by providing training and building capacity. It is also essential to continue or finalize the development of the National Capacity Development Plan. Additionally, it is necessary to prioritize the development of a pipeline for evaluation studies in the near to medium term through the formulation of the National Evaluation Agenda.</p> <p>2.3 Optimizing the existing National Evaluation Portal as the centralized evaluation database or registry and tracking actions on the Management Response. Additionally, the current interface can be improved by creating a summary/dashboard of the evaluation studies, classified according to evaluation type and showing key details (e.g., implementing agencies, budget, impact, and outcomes of</p>	<p>Medium to long-term</p> <p>Short to long-term</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within the government.</p> <p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.</p> <p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.</p>

<p>evaluation subject, and the corresponding results). Furthermore, the portal must allow the uploading/submission of evaluation studies and M&E data into the portal by implementing agencies.</p> <p>2.4 Rolling out the Draft NEPF Guidelines.</p> <p>2.5 Establishing an evaluation quality assurance mechanism.</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Short to medium-term</p>	<p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.</p> <p>ETF</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Enhance stakeholder engagement and awareness, particularly the government agencies, to improve their knowledge of the benefits of the NEPF in achieving their organizational goals.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within the government.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: Restructure the ETF by incorporating additional members from both within and outside (academic and research institutions, development partners, NGOs) the government, preferably at the advisory level.</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Evaluation is the methodical process of gathering and examining data regarding the efficacy and efficiency of policies, programs, or projects. A program or policy's intended objectives can be evaluated to see if they have been attained, to find areas for improvement, and to decide what to do next. Good governance and evidence-based decision-making depend heavily on evaluation, especially in the public sector when resources are scarce, and the stakes are high.

For evaluations to be carried out consistently, openly, and rigorously, a national evaluation policy framework is required. A national evaluation policy framework offers a roadmap for stakeholders to follow and explains the concepts, criteria, and rules for conducting evaluations. The integrity, impartiality, and independence of evaluations, as well as the use of the findings to guide decision-making can be ensured with the aid of a well-designed policy framework. By mandating evaluations of government programs and policies, a national evaluation policy framework can also aid in promoting accountability and openness in the government. These evaluations can assist in identifying areas where government programs and policies are not producing the desired results and where resources might be more effectively directed to get better results. A national evaluation policy framework can also aid in fostering a culture of evaluation inside the government, which can result in innovation and ongoing improvement.

The necessity for and interest in creating a national evaluation policy and system has been recognized by countries worldwide. Countries such as [Benin](#), [Canada](#), [Colombia](#), [Mexico](#), [South Africa](#), [Uganda](#), [Botswana](#), [Ghana](#), [Kenya](#), and [Niger](#) have developed national evaluation systems. The implementation of national evaluation systems enables these countries to ensure the systematic and consistent conduct of evaluations. This contributed to improved decision-making, accountability, and learning in different sectors. These systems establish a framework for conducting evaluations, setting evaluation standards, and fostering a culture of evaluation within the country. Ultimately, national evaluation systems contribute to the development and effectiveness of policies, programs, and initiatives, benefiting both the government and society as a whole. Countries with effective evaluation systems offer a significant opportunity to boost public, corporate, and academic evaluation capacities and skills (IPET 2022). As evident in the case of the countries mentioned above, a national evaluation policy has been formulated that enabled them to embed the policy into their national system. In complete contrast, the Philippines had taken the route of formulating an evaluation framework first through the NEDA, and DBM released Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 2015-01 dated 15 July 2015, also known as the National Evaluation Policy Framework of the Philippines (NEPF).

The NEPF seeks to create a framework to advance and strengthen the use of evaluation in the Philippines' public sector., particularly the Executive Branch The NEPF aims to fill capacity gaps by improving institutions, systems, and practices in order to institutionalize evaluation for better development results. The explicit goals of the policy framework are to: **support good governance and evidence-based decisions; promote program improvement, and ensure accountability and transparency.**

The NEPF provides clear guidelines for Implementing Agencies or IAs¹ to set evaluation criteria, assure evaluation competency, adhere to ethical norms, plan for evaluation in line with the sector's

¹ All national government agencies, State Universities and Colleges, Government Owned and/or Controlled Corporations, or GOCCs, Government Financial Institutions with budgetary support from the national government, including those maintaining special accounts in the General Fund, and other national government instrumentalities, including the legislative branch).

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best practices, foster objectivity, and guarantee the dissemination and use of evaluation outputs. The NEPF also clearly mandates that IAs develop and maintain a rolling six-year agenda, establish neutral evaluation units at the national level, present evaluation plans concurrently with budget submissions, and guarantee management reaction to evaluations and the application of evaluations. **Table 1** shows the chronology/timeline of events since the issuance of the NEPF.

Table 1: Chronology of Event Since the Issuance of NEPF

Year	Month	Event
2015	July	Issuance of the NEPF
2016		Issuance of the NBC 565 or the Results-based Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (RBMER) Policy Framework
2018		Partnership Agreement with UNDP on the Strategic M&E Project
2019		Filing of House and Senate Bills on National Evaluation Policy House Bill 03293: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy Principal Author: Alfred Vargas
		Senate Bill 2225: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy Principal Author: Risa Hontiveros
		NEPF guidelines drafted and endorsed to DBM
2020		Filing of House and Senate Bills on National Evaluation Policy House Bill 08025: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy Principal Author: Luis Raymund Villafuerte, Jr.
		Senate Bill 1885: An Act Establishing A Result-Based National Evaluation Policy (RBNEP) Principal Author: Imee Marcos
2021		Filing of House Bill on National Evaluation Policy House Bill 10181: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation for Results Policy (NERP) Principal Author: Sharon Garin
	February	M&E Network Webinar Series ² : Revisiting Fundamentals of M&E in the New Normal
	March	M&E Network Webinar Series: Conducting Evaluability Assessments and Crafting Evaluation Agendas
	April	M&E Network Webinar Series: Commissioning and Managing Evaluations
	May	M&E Network Webinar Series: Communicating Evaluation Results
	June	M&E Network Webinar Series: Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

² The M&E Network Webinar Series activities are culled out from the [PowerPoint Presentation](#) of Director Violeta Corpus entitled, The Philippines' National Evaluation Policy Framework, Evaluation Practices, Challenges and Prospects

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	July	M&E Network Webinar Series: Participatory M&E
	August	M&E Network Webinar Series: Data Collection and Analysis (Quantitative Methods)
	September	M&E Network Webinar Series: Data Collection (Qualitative Methods)
	October	M&E Network Webinar Series: Mixed Methods and Technology-enabled Data Gathering
	November	M&E Network Webinar Series: Data Visualization and Advocacy for Evidence-based Policy and Decision-making
	December	Year-end Session for the M&E Community of Practice
		Contract for the Summative Evaluation of the NEPF awarded
2022		<p>Filing of House and Senate Bills on National Evaluation Policy House Bill 04000: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy Principal Authors: Luis Raymund Villafuerte, Jr., Miguel Luis Villafuerte, Tsuyoshi Anthony Horibata, and Nicholas Enciso III</p> <p>House Bill 05181: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy Principal Author: Luis Raymund Villafuerte, Jr.</p> <p>Senate Bill 1219: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy Principal Author: Risa Hontiveros</p> <p>Senate Bill 1343: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy Principal Author: Loren Legarda</p> <p>Senate Bill 1392: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy Principal Author: Ramon Revilla, Jr.</p> <p>Senate Bill 1437: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy Principal Author: Jinggoy Estrada</p> <p>Senate Bill 2479: An Act Institutionalizing A Result-Based National Evaluation Policy prepared and submitted by the joint Committees on Economic Affairs and Finance with Sen. Rissa Hontiveros, Sen. Imee Marcos, Sen. Sonny Angara, and Sen. Ramon Revilla, Jr.</p>
	September	Submission of the Summative Evaluation's Preliminary Report
2023		<p>Filing of Senate Bill on National Evaluation Policy Senate Bill 1714: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy Principal Author: Imee Marcos</p>
	April	Submission of the Summative Evaluation's Draft Report

	June	Presentation and Submission of the Summative Evaluation's Final Report
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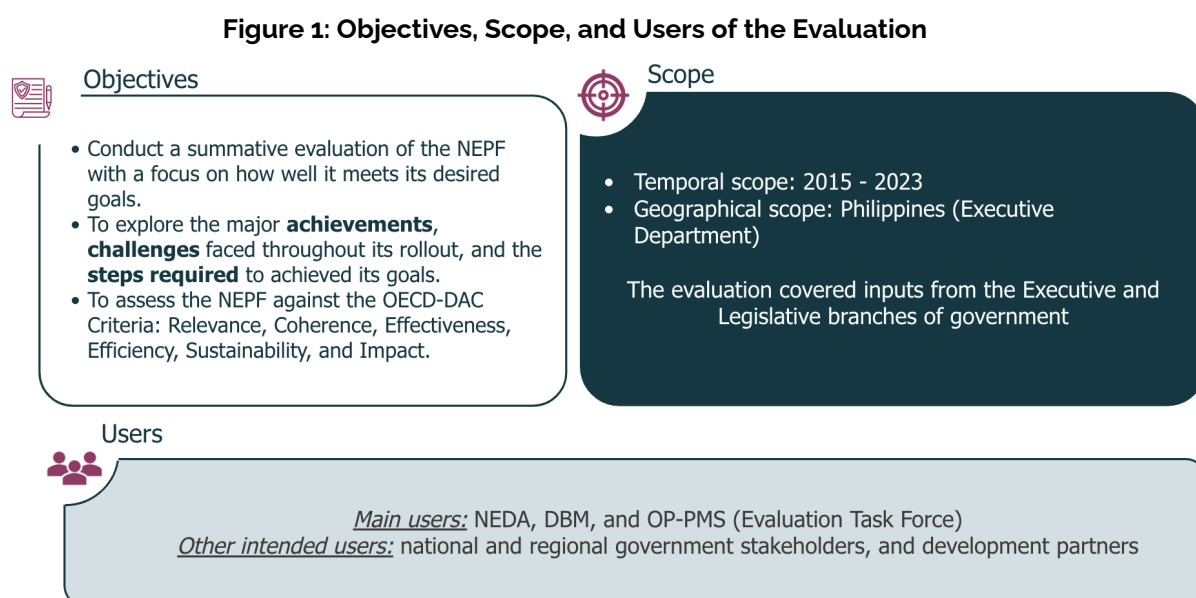
1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

One of the provisions of the NEPF is the conduct of a summative evaluation to examine the framework's contributions to improving the evaluation system and practice in the public sector. A summative evaluation is a type of evaluation that assesses the effectiveness of a program or intervention at the end of its implementation. The primary purpose of summative evaluation is to determine whether the program has achieved its intended goals and objectives, and to assess its overall impact on the target population. Summative evaluation allows one to gather the knowledge to learn and improve future designs and interventions.³

This report is the summative evaluation of the NEPF that aims to examine the NEPF against its goals. Particularly, the evaluation identified the key accomplishments in implementing the NEPF, the challenges encountered in its execution, and the actions needed to attain its objectives fully. The summative evaluation also examined how effective the policy framework is in the following ways:

- 1) Improving M&E capacities (knowledge, skills, competencies, and practices) across government agencies;
- 2) Enhancing national government agencies' capacities to plan, manage, and conduct public sector evaluations;
- 3) Ensuring dissemination, management response, and use of evaluation outputs; and,
- 4) Establishing organizational structure alignment to the policy through creating neutral evaluation units at the national level.

Figure 1 summarizes the objectives, scopes and users of the summative evaluation.



The summative evaluation offers feedback on the effectiveness of the NEPF, which may be used to decide which provisions must be modified and improved. The six (6) evaluation criteria established by

³ Description taken from Community Sustainability Engagement [Evaluation Toolbox](#).

the Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development were taken into consideration in the summative evaluation. These criteria are

RELEVANCE (EQs 1 - 5) Awareness on the NEPF; alignment to national priorities on RBM; extent of support by partners; relevance today; and appropriateness of the JMC.	EFFECTIVENESS (EQs 8 - 15) Contribution; IAs formulation of an evaluation agenda; planned, conducted, and budgeted evaluations; use and dissemination of outputs; establishment of M&E Units; crafting of an M&E capacity development plan; quality of evaluation outputs; and, hindering and facilitating factors.	SUSTAINABILITY (EQs 19 - 21) Capacity of IAs to sustain gains; and, Required resources and supports to IAs.
COHERENCE (EQs 6 - 7) Consistency with existing and/or relevant national policies on RBM and international norms and standards.	EFFICIENCY (EQs 16 - 18) Implementation arrangements; and, Resources available and required.	OVERALL IMPACT (EQ 22) Significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

Relevance: The NEPF's relevance was assessed according to the awareness on the NEPF by IAs, how well it matched the government's results-based management (RBM) priorities and policies, support by partners, its relevance today, and appropriateness of the JMC as a measure.

Coherence: The NEPF's coherence was evaluated to determine whether it is consistent with both national RBM policies and evaluation standard established by different international development organizations.

Effectiveness: The degree to which the NEPF has succeeded in achieving its intended goals served as the basis for evaluating the NEPF's effectiveness. The framework intends to advance an evaluation culture, guarantee the accuracy of evaluations, and make better use of evaluation results in programs, policies, and services. The evaluation measured how well-known, well-understood, and adopted the NEPF was by government organizations. The evaluation also looked at how much evaluation data was used to guide program decisions.

Efficiency: Based on the resources used in its implementation, the NEPF's efficiency was evaluated. The evaluation determined if the resources allotted for the NEPF's implementation, including the ETF structure and support, were adequate.

Sustainability: The NEPF's capacity to continue providing benefits over the long term was used to assess its sustainability. The evaluation looked at how institutionalized the NEPF is inside government agencies and whether it has integrated itself into their evaluation procedures. Also, it looked at stakeholders' levels of dedication and support for the NEPF.

Impact: The NEPF's significant results in encouraging program improvement, ensuring accountability and openness, and supporting good governance and evidence-based decisions were used to evaluate its impact.

An Evaluation Matrix found as [Annex A](#) was prepared following the aforementioned criteria. It lists the evaluation criteria and the corresponding questions. The matrix also provides the indicators/measures for each evaluation question. It also illustrates how the data was examined and the approaches taken

to address each question. This matrix functioned as the foundation for the evaluation's Framework of Analysis.

Box 1: Efforts in Institutionalizing M&E in the Philippines

The Philippine government's efforts to implement monitoring and evaluation (M&E) initiatives can be traced back to 1987 with the reformation of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) through Executive Order (EO) 230. This reform aimed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP). Subsequently, in 1989, EO 376 established the Regional Project Monitoring and Evaluation System (RPMES) under NEDA to facilitate M&E at the sub-national level.

During the 1990s, four significant milestones shaped the government's M&E activities. Firstly, the Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) was tasked with examining projects funded by Official Development Assistance (ODA) to improve the nation's absorptive capacity, as mandated by NEDA Board (NB) Resolution No. 30 in 1992. Secondly, EO 93 led to substantial improvements and streamlining of roles, responsibilities, and operational processes within the RPMES. Thirdly, Republic Act (RA) 8182, later amended by RA 8555, required NEDA to conduct an annual assessment of ODA-funded project progress in 1996. Fourthly, NEDA Board Decision No. 3, published in 1999, mandated the ICC and implementing agencies to report project outcomes and impacts.

In 2001, NEDA and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) initiated the Sector Effectiveness and Efficiency Review to evaluate program and project responsiveness to sector result objectives. The DBM approved the Organizational Performance Indicator Framework (OPIF) in 2007, aiming to align budget allocations with government result goals. Further progress was made in 2011 with the release of Administrative Order (AO) 25, which aimed to establish a unified and integrated Results-based Performance Management System (RBPMS) within the Executive Department.

However, M&E in the Philippines has primarily focused on monitoring, similar to the experience of other countries in developing their national evaluation systems. It was not until July 15, 2015, that NEDA and DBM jointly issued Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 2015-01, known as the National Evaluation Policy Framework of the Philippines (NEPF), to promote and strengthen the practice and utilization of evaluation in the government.

2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This section provides a description of the techniques used, the implementation methods of the evaluation assignment, and any encountered issues. It also presents the procedures employed to gather information and ensure its validity and quality, along with the evaluation and analytical techniques utilized.

2.1 APPROACH

The evaluation goals were accomplished by the Evaluation Consultant using various strategies. Below is a detailed explanation of each.

2.1.1 Construction of Theory of Change

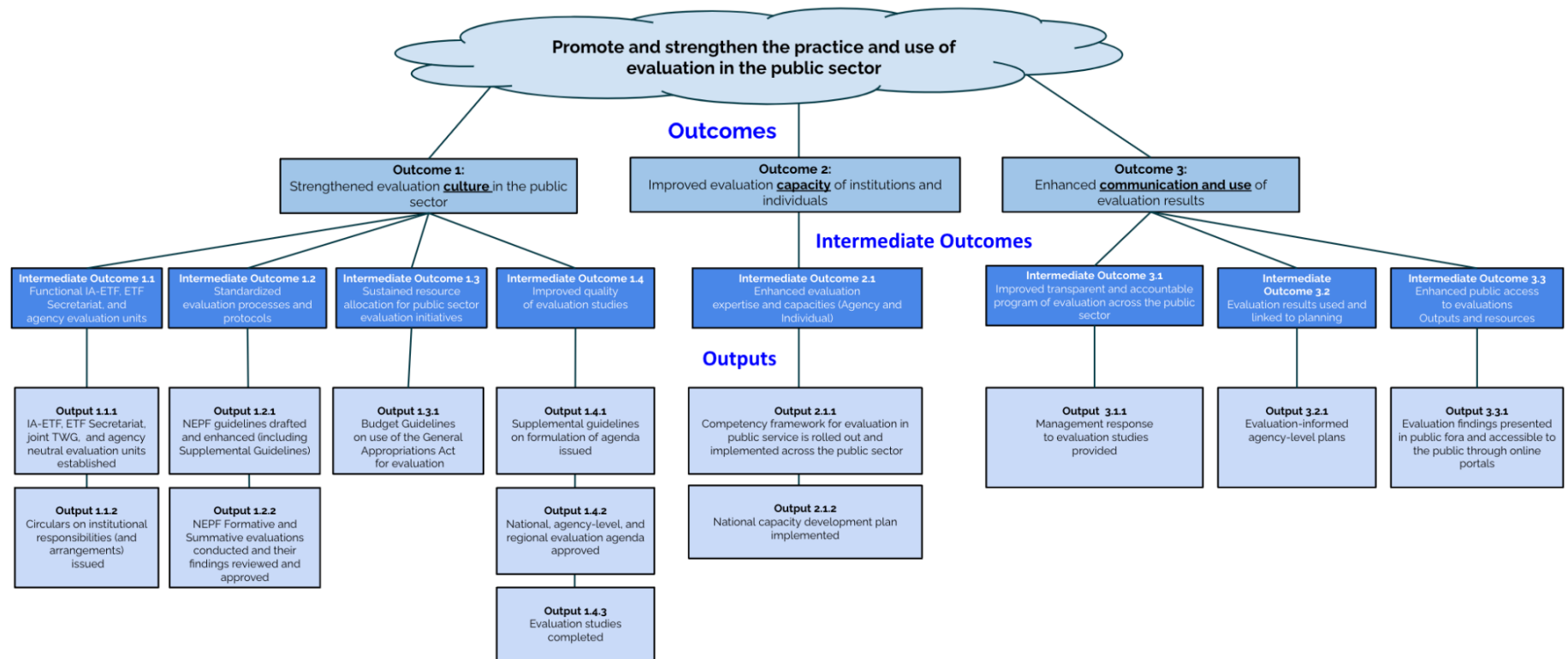
A Theory of Change (ToC) is a systematic approach that helps articulate and visualize the underlying assumptions, causal pathways, and expected outcomes of a program, intervention, or initiative. It serves as a roadmap, outlining the steps and interventions needed to achieve the desired change and explaining how and why that change is expected to occur. By connecting inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts, a ToC highlights cause-and-effect relationships and the expected pathways of change.

The NEPF currently does not have a ToC. In light of this, an initial ToC was developed by the Evaluation Consultant and presented, discussed, and reviewed with representatives from the NEDA Central Evaluation Unit and UNDP both onsite and online in February 2023. Ideally, the ToC would have been based on Problem and Solution Trees, but these foundational elements were lacking. As a result, the ToC primarily draws on the core ideas of the policy framework and the primary issues identified in the Philippine evaluation system and practice, gathered from desk reviews and key informant interviews conducted as part of the summative evaluation process.

The constructed ToC, shown in **Figure 3**, is grounded in the recognition of **the limited effectiveness of evaluations in the Philippines as the root problem**. The following challenges have been identified as underlying causes of this problem:

1. **Insufficient funding and resources:** The design and execution of evaluations in the Philippines lack adequate financial support and resources. This can compromise the quality of evaluation findings and limit evaluators' ability to conduct comprehensive and rigorous evaluations. Insufficient funding also hampers the collection of reliable data, analysis of findings, and effective communication of outcomes. Consequently, many evaluation initiatives may not provide the necessary insights to inform program and decision-making or achieve their intended objectives.
2. **Limited evaluation experience:** There is a shortage of qualified and knowledgeable evaluators in the Philippines. This scarcity hinders the planning and execution of thorough and credible evaluations, potentially leading to inaccurate findings. Insufficient expertise may result in evaluations that lack rigor and fail to provide the insights needed to guide policy, program, and decision-making effectively.
3. **Limited demand for evaluations:** One of the main challenges in the Philippine evaluation system and practice is the low demand for evaluations. Many policymakers and government executives may not fully grasp the importance of evaluations in improving program performance and achieving better results. Often, evaluations are primarily motivated by donor requirements rather than recognized as an integral part of enhancing program effectiveness.

Figure 3: Constructed Theory of Change



4. **Fragmentation and duplication:** The evaluation practices and systems among government agencies lack coordination and uniformity, resulting in a disjointed evaluation system and practice.
5. **Limited use of evaluation findings:** Evaluation results are rarely utilized in policy-making and decision-making processes. The lack of agreement and clarity among stakeholders on how to effectively use evaluation findings hampers their value in guiding practice and policy.
6. **Limited stakeholder engagement:** Stakeholder participation in the evaluation process is minimal, impeding the inclusion of diverse viewpoints and ensuring that evaluation conclusions are relevant and useful for meeting stakeholder needs.
7. **Strong focus on monitoring, not evaluation:** The evaluation system and practice in the Philippines tend to prioritize monitoring over comprehensive evaluation. Programs and regulations emphasize tracking inputs and outputs rather than measuring results and impact. This has resulted in a lack of emphasis on conducting thorough evaluations to assess program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

To address these challenges, the NEPF aims to establish a framework that advances and strengthens the use of evaluation in the public sector, as depicted in **Figure 3**. The NEPF focuses on three outcomes organized into **3Cs**: strengthening the evaluation **culture** by improving institutions and systems, enhancing evaluation **capacities** at individual and institutional levels to promote better evaluation practices, and improving **communication** and utilization of evaluation results to ensure accountability and transparency.

The constructed ToC visually presents the logical framework and flow of intermediate outcomes and outputs, which were validated and vetted with NEDA-CEU and UNDP to ensure their appropriateness and alignment with the NEPF's objectives. The NEPF document served as a key reference in identifying the appropriate intermediate outcomes and outputs for the ToC.

The constructed ToC plays a vital role in the summative evaluation. It provides a roadmap for understanding the intended goals and outcomes of the NEPF, guides data collection and analysis, and promotes evaluative thinking and learning. Furthermore, it enables the Evaluation Consultant to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the NEPF.

The analysis section under the Framework of Analysis provides more detailed information on how the ToC was utilized. The ToC was transformed into a Theory-in-Use (TiU), allowing it to be tested against the realities encountered during NEPF implementation. The TiU differs from the ToC as it reflects the actual implementation experience rather than being a theoretical framework.

2.1.2 Contribution Analysis and Ranking

Contribution analysis is an evaluation methodology that assesses the impact or contribution of a specific program, intervention, or initiative to observed outcomes or changes. It aims to systematically identify and understand the causal relationships between the program and its outcomes, as well as the extent to which the program has made a difference in achieving desired results. Unlike attribution, which seeks to assign sole credit for an outcome, contribution analysis recognizes that multiple factors can influence outcomes and focuses on understanding the specific contribution of the program in question.

In the summative evaluation, contribution analysis was utilized to some extent, particularly in addressing the Effectiveness Questions that primarily examine the contributions of the NEPF in enhancing evaluation capacity in the public sector.

Specifically, Evaluation Question 3.1, "What is the Contribution of the NEPF?" involved analyzing key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussion (FGD) responses to identify patterns and common themes. Based on these themes, contribution statements consistent with the ToC were formulated. The contributions were then ranked based on the frequency of mention by the respondents. Subsequently, a Process Tracing (PT) approach was employed by the Evaluation Consultant to gather relevant evidence and assess the plausibility and strength of the contributions to the ToC.

It's important to note that making judgments regarding the contributions relied on evidence from the KIIs and FGDs. These judgments were informed by the NEPF's contribution to the set outcomes. In Contribution Analysis, judgments can range from weak to strong contributions, depending on the strength of the evidence and confidence in the causal links. In the case of the summative evaluation, the contribution statements were based on the evidence collected during the data gathering process.

2.1.3 Mixed Method

The Evaluation Consultant adopted a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the NEPF, its implementation, and its outcomes. This approach acknowledges the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data and aims to leverage them effectively.

Qualitative methods, such as key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and desk research, were employed by the Evaluation Consultant. These methods allowed for in-depth exploration, capturing diverse perspectives, and examining existing literature and documents.

On the other hand, quantitative methods, including surveys and a review of evaluation resources from implementing agencies (IAs), were utilized to collect numerical data, analyze patterns, and identify relationships. This approach provided the advantage of generalizability and a broader perspective on the evaluation findings.

By integrating these two approaches, the Evaluation Consultant was able to address the evaluation questions in a comprehensive manner. Triangulating findings from qualitative and quantitative sources enhanced the rigor and validity of the evaluation results. This mixed-methods approach facilitated the provision of qualitative insights alongside quantitative evidence, offering a more robust evaluation of the NEPF's impact and effectiveness.

Desk Research. The Evaluation Consultant obtained written material from interviewees and gathered data from NEDA, UNDP, IAs, and secondary web sources such as literature on evaluation in the Philippines and outside the country, policies, reports, and other relevant materials. The list can be found in [Annex B](#). The desk research exercise was built on these. Moreover, documentation was used to create the Inception Report and verify the information from the other approaches. The IAs were also requested to provide data on resources allocated or utilized for evaluation. The inventory can be found in the [Annex C](#) of the report. A total of 21 IAs provided information are shown in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: List of Agencies that provided data on Resources Allocated or Utilized for Evaluation

1	Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
2	Department of Agriculture (DA)
3	Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)
4	Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)

5	Department of Education (DepEd)
6	Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)
7	Department of Energy (DOE)
8	Department of Health (DOH)
9	Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
10	Department of Science and Technology (DOST)
11	Department of Transportation (DOTr)
12	Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)
13	Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)
14	Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
15	Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP)
16	Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA)
17	Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS)
18	National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
19	National Housing Authority (NHA)
20	Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU)
21	Philippine Competition Commission (PCC)

Online Survey. To gain insights into how agencies perceive evaluation and the role of the NEPF in promoting good governance, evidence-based decision-making, program development, and public sector accountability and transparency, an online survey was conducted using [GoogleForms](#). The survey consisted of 31 questions that covered various topics:

1. **Respondents' Profiles:** Questions 1 to 6 gathered information about the respondents, including their age, gender, organization, duration of service, unit/division within the organization, and whether they had evaluation-related duties.
2. **Familiarity with the NEPF:** Question 7 asked participants if they were familiar with the NEPF, while question 8 inquired about alternative documents or policies supporting their agency's evaluation system and practice if they were not familiar.
3. **Existing Policy Documents on Evaluation:** Question 9 explored whether the agency, division, or unit had established policies and procedures, such as handbooks, for evaluation tasks. Question 10 asked respondents to name these documents if they existed.
4. **Evaluation Agenda:** Question 11 requested a description of the agency, division, or unit-level evaluation agenda, and question 12 inquired whether it aligned with the NEPF. Question 25

further asked if the evaluation agenda guided current and future research and evaluation within the organization.

5. **Evaluation Needs and Gaps:** Question 14 aimed to identify evaluation needs and gaps in the agency, division, or unit and determine if the NEPF addressed these requirements. Questions 13 and 15 provided additional context, and question 16 asked for evidence of how the NEPF supported evaluation capacity. Question 17 explored the influence of the NEPF on evaluation priorities and actions, and question 18 requested evidence to support the response.
6. **Enhancing Staff M&E Skills:** Question 19 asked if the M&E staff's evaluation-related abilities and competences were assessed in the past six years due to the NEPF. Question 20 inquired about the presence of a Human Resource Capacity Building Plan and its adequate budgeting. Question 21 sought to determine if there was a nationally endorsed M&E training program for staff members.
7. **Presence of a Budgeted M&E Plan:** Question 22 asked whether the organization, division, or unit had an M&E plan for the current year, and question 23 inquired if the plan was budgeted due to the NEPF.
8. **Data Collection and Analysis Protocol:** Question 24 addressed the existence of policies outlining data recording, gathering, compilation, and reporting.
9. **Use of Evaluation Results:** Question 26 examined whether research and evaluation findings assisted in decision-making, and question 27 explored the consistency of communicating evaluation results.
10. **Factors Facilitating/Hindering NEPF's Success:** Questions 28 and 29 invited participants to mention elements related to people, institutions, or resources that they believed contributed to or hindered the effectiveness of the NEPF.
11. **Overall Current Evaluation Capacity:** Question 30 asked respondents to describe the agency/division/unit's evaluation capacity in the six months following the NEPF's adoption. Question 31 requested suggestions for further measures that could be taken after six years of NEPF implementation.

The original plan was to email the online survey link to all national government agencies (NGAs) with UNDP providing technical assistance. However, due to email distribution restrictions, the survey link was only sent to the 11 individuals within the Project Implementation Officer (PIO) system provided by NEDA. The limited number of survey responses made it challenging to conduct a quantitative analysis, which was intended for the summative evaluation. As a result, the planned quantitative analysis could not be carried out. Only nine agencies responded to the survey, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Online Survey Respondents

1	Department of Science and Technology - Planning and Evaluation Service (DOST-PES)
2	Department of Energy - Planning Division (DOE-PD)
3	Land Bank of the Philippines - Fund Sourcing Department (LBP-FSD)
4	Local Water Utilities Administration - Corporate Planning Division (LWUA-CPD)
5	Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System - Site Operations Management Department (MWSS-SOMD)

6	National Irrigation Administration - System Management Division (NIA-SMD)
7	National Irrigation Administration - Engineering Department (NIA-ED)
8	National Irrigation Administration - Planning and Programming Division (NIA - PPD)
9	Philippine Competition Commission (PCC)

KIIs and FGDs: The evaluation findings were derived from qualitative inputs obtained through KIIs and FGDs, in addition to desk research and the online survey. Initially, it was suggested in the Inception Report that only representatives from the eight agencies where the NEPF was implemented should be interviewed, as mentioned by NEDA. However, to ensure a balanced perspective and gather nuanced data, the Evaluation Consultant and UNDP recommended interviewing agencies that were not involved in the implementation. This would provide insights into the current evaluation methods and systems of those agencies. NEDA approved this recommendation.

The KIIs and FGDs were conducted in four phases. In the first phase, four agencies that responded to the online survey were invited for interviews after their survey responses were reviewed. The selection was based on their familiarity with the policy framework. Out of the four agencies invited, two, namely DOE-PD and LWUA-CPD, agreed to participate.

The second phase involved interviews with agencies that were part of the NEPF implementation rollout. The focus of these interviews was on the implementation of the NEPF and/or evaluation systems and practices within their respective agencies. Three agencies, namely DENR, NHA, and CHED, provided positive feedback and participated in the interviews.

The third phase involved interviews with ETF members. Only NEDA and DBM participated in these interviews. Although OP-PMS was invited, they were unable to provide a preferred timetable during the data collection period. The interviews also included representatives from ETF, UNDP, and the recently established Central Evaluation Unit (CEU). UNDP's participation is crucial in this evaluation as they commissioned it and played a key role in the NEPF rollout as a development partner.

In the fourth phase, additional agencies, including NIA, LBP, OPARU, PCC, Senate Economic and Planning Office (SEPO), and Congressional Planning and Budget Research Department (CPRBM), participated in the interviews.

Table 4 presents the KII and FGD Respondents, while their profiles can be found in [Annex D](#).

Table 4: KII and FGD Respondents

	Organization	Number of respondents
1	DOST	1
2	DOE	2
3	LBP	2
4	NIA	3
5	NHA	6
6	PCC	3

7	SEPO	6
8	CPBRD	1
9	OPAPRU	1
10	CHED	2
11	DENR	2
12	DILG	1
13	NEDA	6
14	DBM	3
15	UNDP	2
Total		43

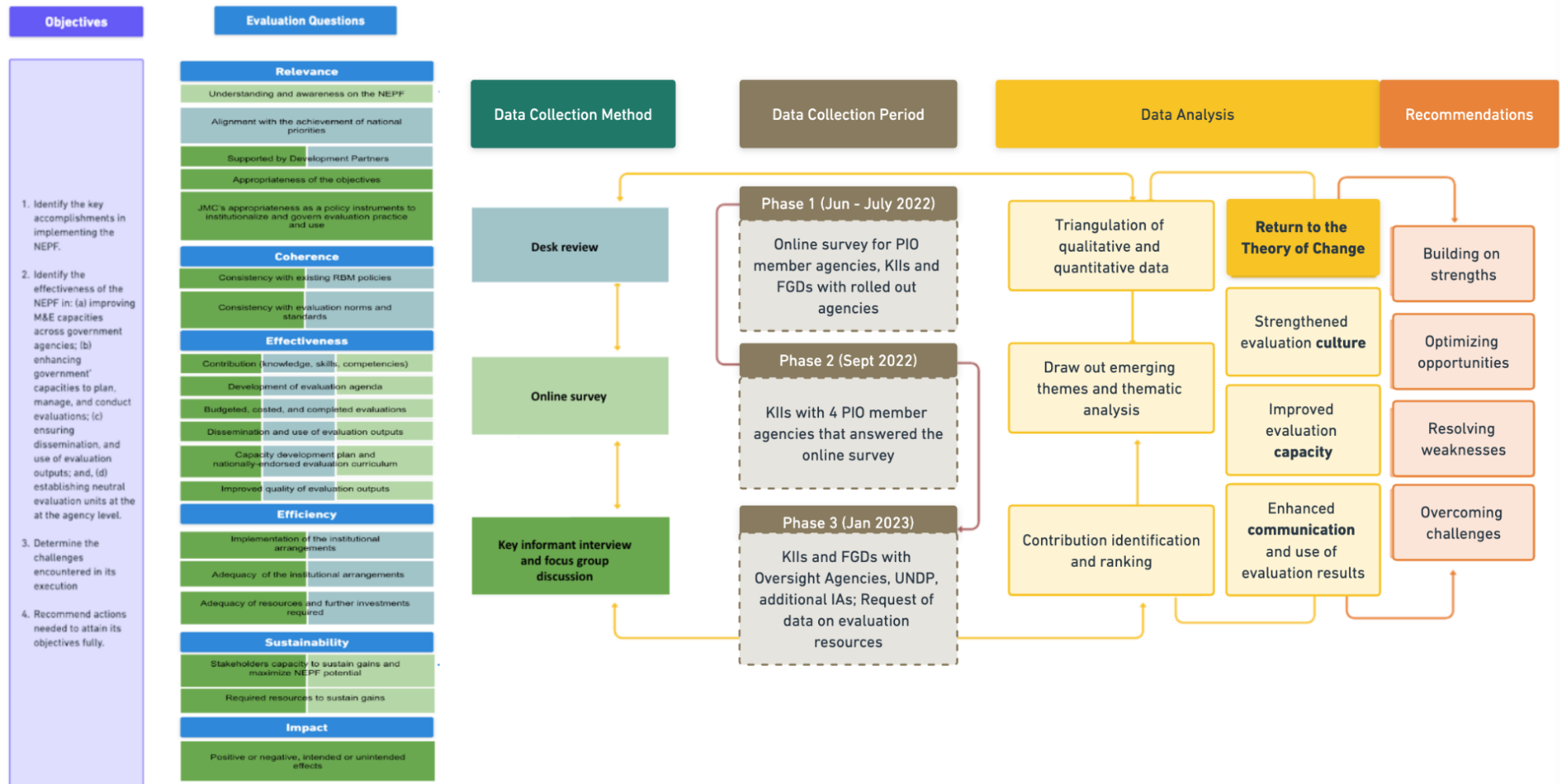
2.2 FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The evaluation framework, depicted in **Figure 4**, provides an overview of the key components of the evaluation, including its objectives, evaluation questions, indicators, measures, and data gathering techniques. The framework highlights the use of desk research and semi-structured interviews as standard methods for data collection, along with the online survey for specific evaluation items. It also outlines the phases of primary data collection, specifying the techniques and parties involved.

In terms of data processing and analysis, the evaluation primarily employed triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data, identification of emerging themes, thematic analysis, and contribution analysis. The Evaluation Consultant created an Excel-based Coding Matrix ([Annex E](#)) to capture the emerging themes from the data gathering techniques, and the results were derived from this matrix. The analysis conclusions were then connected to the evaluation questions.

The main objective of the summative evaluation is to assess the contribution of the NEPF to its implementing agencies (IAs) and the use of evaluation in the public sector. To examine this contribution, the Evaluation Consultant utilized Contribution Identification as a method. Effectiveness questions were designed to investigate significant changes, results, or contributions brought about by the policy framework. The Consultant inquired about these changes in evaluation methods, policies, and procedures and established their connection to the inputs and outputs of the NEPF, showcasing the Contribution Analysis component. The Consultant began by tracing the process to ensure that the identified results and procedures were fully or partially related to the policy framework. After identifying the most significant change, the Consultant clustered and rated the causal pathways to provide evidence of attributable impacts. The availability of key stakeholders for co-verification and the accessibility of relevant documents were considered when determining the confidence levels of attribution. The built Theory of Change (ToC) greatly facilitated the Contribution Analysis method.

Figure 4: Framework of Analysis



Throughout the evaluation, there is a close alignment between the findings and the ToC. The evaluation results specifically assess whether the NEPF implementation rollout achieved its intended objectives and whether decisions made regarding its concepts, principles, and features were appropriate. Ultimately, the evaluation determines the extent to which the NEPF successfully achieved its predetermined goals, such as generating evidence-based findings on public sector projects and programs and informing the development and improvement of current and future programming through feedback and learning. The framework also outlines how recommendations are formulated based on the findings, categorized into building on strengths, maximizing opportunities, addressing weaknesses, and overcoming challenges.

2.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION STUDY

The section underscores the limitations of the evaluation and the challenges encountered.

Limitations

- **Insufficient data gathered for some evaluation questions.** The findings of the report are primarily based on information received from the participants and methodology. The conclusions are restricted to the contributions from stakeholders, as was already mentioned. The reliability of the results could be contested. Even if this were the case, the veracity and robustness of the results were ensured by triangulating the data from various methods. In addition, in so
- **Lack of institutional memory.** The staff that has worked for or been involved in the NEPF during the review period has changed, it was disclosed to the Evaluation Consultant. Because the evaluation is longitudinal, some interviewees who were familiar with past attempts may have changed. The prior staff's institutional memory is crucial to the evaluation. To lessen this, the evaluation consultant used documents that were provided and online in order to comprehend the context and other pertinent facts. Also, although the UNDP contacted other IAs and Oversight Agencies to invite them to join in the evaluation process, no interviews could be scheduled. As a result, only NEDA and a few Implementing Agencies provided suggestions that were not included in the evaluation's results. The evaluation's conclusions are primarily based on the aforementioned data collection techniques.
- **Transition due to the change of administration following the National Elections.** The evaluation was conducted at a time when the entire Philippines was preoccupied with the nationwide and local elections. The Evaluation Consultant expected that the IA representatives would only participate in part in the interviews and online survey. The letters the NEDA Central Office sent to the replies and the coordination of the designated IAs made possible by UNDP, however, helped to lessen this.

3. FINDINGS

In this section, the evaluation results are presented based on six criteria: **Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, and Impact**. Each criterion was assessed in relation to specific evaluation questions and indicators to provide a comprehensive understanding of the NEPF's performance.

3.1 RELEVANCE

This section focuses on the findings related to the **Relevance** criterion. The evaluation examined the Relevance of the NEPF by considering questions and indicators such as the awareness of government agencies about the NEPF (EQ 1.1), its alignment with national priorities (EQ 1.2), the support from development partners (EQ 1.3), the relevance of the NEPF's objectives in the present context (EQ 1.4), and the appropriateness of a Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) to institutionalize the NEPF (EQ 1.5). The evaluation results will indicate how well the NEPF addresses the current and future needs of stakeholders and whether it aligns with the prevailing policy and practice environment.

Evaluation Question 1.1: To what extent do government agencies understand and are aware of the NEPF?

Although the NEPF is a crucial tool for enhancing program effectiveness and accountability, the evaluation findings indicate a low level of awareness of the framework among government agencies. Out of the survey respondents, 60% (6 out of 10) stated that they were unfamiliar with the policy framework, and during interviews, five respondents explicitly expressed their lack of knowledge about it. However, three interviewees mentioned that they became aware of the NEPF through the summative evaluation process itself, as they were provided with an interview letter and needed to familiarize themselves with the framework. Additionally, one respondent acknowledged being familiar with the NEPF but lacked detailed knowledge of its specifics. **The low awareness can be attributed to various factors, including the limited presentation of the Draft NEPF Guidelines to Project Implementation Officers (PIO) members, the refusal of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to sign the guidelines, resulting in limited communication reach, changes in focal points within government agencies, and the lack of dissemination of the NEPF by top management to agency-level evaluation units.** Furthermore, the evaluation revealed that knowledge of the NEPF is primarily confined to the agencies involved in its implementation rollout and those agency representatives who have participated in the M&E Forum and M&E Network Webinar series organized by NEDA and its development partners.

Despite the overall low awareness of the NEPF, one respondent from the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU) demonstrated a strong understanding and appreciation for the NEPF and its significance. The respondent confirmed that the agency had utilized the NEPF in several evaluation projects, such as the Rapid Appraisal for the AECID-supported project on Mainstreaming Peace and Development in Local Governance in 2016. The OPAPRU linked the evaluation questions to the NEPF's OECD-DAC criteria and employed the NEPF in the Terminal Evaluation of the AECID Project, as well as two PAMANA evaluations conducted by the NEDA-UNDP Strategic M&E Project and the DLSU-Jessie Robredo Institute of Governance (JRIG).

Furthermore, despite the limited awareness of the NEPF, interviews revealed that several government agencies have their own evaluation standards and systems in place, which they consider more relevant to their specific programs, projects, and priorities. For example, the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) integrates evaluation into its planning process, developing a 3-year plan and reviewing targets after 1.5 years. The PCC also conducts an Annual Program

Review, assessing targets under the General Appropriations Act (GAA), financial performance, and physical targets. Another agency, the National Housing Authority (NHA), has implemented the Strategic Management Performance System and the Corporate Governance Scorecard. Additionally, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has its own M&E system established in 1992, but the interviews revealed differences in the M&E system used for programs and special projects, depending on the donor's standards. Efforts are underway to develop an integrated M&E system to address this inconsistency. Apart from these agencies, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has adopted a results-based M&E approach. However, the agency respondent noted that the department's evaluation primarily focuses on the output level rather than the outcome, indicating that while agency-level outputs are measured and determined, the impact and results of their programs on stakeholders have yet to be assessed.

To understand how the NEPF was introduced and disseminated, the evaluation found two primary approaches. Firstly, the M&E Network Forum served as a platform for promoting and disseminating the NEPF. While the initial three iterations of the forum specifically focused on the NEPF, subsequent iterations emphasized strengthening the evaluation system and practice in the Philippines in line with the NEPF's principles and goals.

Secondly, collaborative activities with development partners, including UNICEF, the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) on the Policy Window Philippines, and UNDP on the Strategic M&E Project, aimed to support NEDA's efforts in rolling out the NEPF and fostering an evaluation culture in the public sector. As part of these partnerships, a monthly M&E Network Webinar Series was conducted in 2021 through the Strategic M&E Project. The webinars covered various topics such as revisiting the fundamentals of M&E in the new normal, conducting evaluability assessments, crafting evaluation agendas, commissioning and managing evaluations, communicating evaluation results, monitoring and evaluation systems, participatory M&E, data collection and analysis using quantitative and qualitative methods, mixed methods and technology-enabled data gathering, and data visualization and advocacy for evidence-based policy and decision-making. Additionally, the partnership with UNDP facilitated the organization of three annual M&E Network Forums, engaging approximately 300 individuals from 27 NGAs through the Community of Practice (COP) on M&E.

The lack of awareness and/or absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in the public sector can have significant negative consequences, resulting in reduced program effectiveness and accountability ([World Bank, 2004](#)). The World Bank publication emphasizes the difficulties and challenges posed by the lack of an M&E system and its potential to hinder the development goals of countries. It also highlights the importance of evaluation in promoting good governance, accountability, transparency, and the achievement of societal goals. Consequently, the lack of awareness on the existing policy framework governing public sector evaluation can lead to the following outcomes:

- **Ineffective program implementation:** When government agencies are unaware of the existing evaluation framework, they may prioritize monitoring over evaluation, which hampers effective program implementation. Without evaluation, it becomes difficult to identify program gaps, address challenges, and make necessary improvements. This perpetuates the continuation of ineffective programs that waste resources and fail to achieve their intended outcomes.
- **Missed opportunities for learning:** Evaluation offers valuable learning opportunities to improve program implementation. Government agencies that lack awareness of the evaluation policy framework miss out on these chances to learn from both successes and failures. As a result, their ability to enhance programs and foster innovation is limited.
- **Limited impact:** Without evaluation, it becomes challenging to determine the impact of programs on beneficiaries and stakeholders. This limitation hampers government agencies' capacity to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs, reducing their ability to attract funding, support, and partnerships from donors and stakeholders.

Addressing the low awareness of the policy framework, particularly among government agencies in the executive branch, is crucial to prevent and mitigate these challenges. Doing so ensures effective program implementation, accountability, learning, and impact.

Evaluation Question 1.2: To what extent do the NEPF outcomes align with the achievement of national priorities?

The NEPF's outcomes are consistent with the Philippines' results-based management (RBM) policies, particularly the [Philippine Development Plan's Results Matrix \(PDP-RM\)](#), Performance-Informed Budgeting (PIB), [Administrative Order 25 on Results-based Performance Management System \(RBPMS\)](#), and the [National Budget Circular 532 \(Results-based Budgeting\)](#). It demonstrates its relevance and usefulness for guiding evaluation practices across sectors and levels of government.

The **Philippine Development Plan's Results Matrix (PDP-RM)** serves as a vital government planning tool, aligning programs and projects with national development goals and priorities. The NEPF shares several key alignments with the PDP-RM:

1. The NEPF emphasizes the importance of evaluating government programs and projects to ensure their alignment with national priorities and to facilitate the achievement of PDP-RM goals and targets.
2. The NEPF focuses on outcomes and results-based evaluation, encouraging the use of evaluation to attain program results. This approach complements the PDP-RM's focus on tracking progress toward development goals through data-driven decision-making.
3. The NEPF promotes utilizing evaluation results to inform policy formulation and decision-making, which aligns with the PDP-RM's emphasis on evidence-based decisions and utilizing data for policy development.
4. The NEPF recognizes the significance of stakeholder involvement and participation in evaluation processes, aligning with the PDP-RM's focus on participatory governance and inclusive development.

The **Performance-Informed Budgeting (PIB)** is a budgeting system that utilizes past performance information to allocate resources to programs and projects that have demonstrated effectiveness. The NEPF aligns closely with the PIB in the following ways:

1. The NEPF underscores the importance of evaluating government programs and projects to ensure alignment with national priorities, aiding in the identification of programs and projects that deliver results and merit continued funding.
2. The NEPF encourages the use of evaluation results to inform policy formulation and decision-making, echoing the PIB's emphasis on utilizing performance information to enhance decision-making processes.
3. Both the NEPF and PIB share a common goal of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of government programs and projects. The NEPF achieves this by evaluating programs and projects to determine their impact and effectiveness, thereby enabling optimal resource utilization.

The **Administrative Order 25, s. 2011 on Results-based Performance Management System (RBPMS)** mandates agencies to establish a results-based performance management system. The NEPF aligns with the RBPMS due to the following reasons:

1. Both the NEPF and RBPMS aim to foster a results-oriented management culture within the Philippine government. The RBPMS emphasizes the importance of measurable goal-setting and using performance data for informed decision-making. Similarly, the NEPF stresses the evaluation of programs and projects to determine their effectiveness and impact. Together, they promote a management culture focused on achieving results and ensuring efficient resource utilization.

2. Both the NEPF and RBPMS highlight the significance of utilizing performance information to inform policies and decisions. The NEPF emphasizes the use of evaluation results for policy-making, while the RBPMS advocates for leveraging performance data throughout the budget cycle to enhance decision-making processes. By utilizing performance information, both approaches contribute to effective resource allocation.

The **National Budget Circular 532, s. 2011 on Results-based Budgeting** is a system that connects planning and budgeting by aligning organizational outcomes with sectoral outcomes and the societal goals of the PDP-RM. The NEPF aligns with results-based budgeting as it encourages the use of evaluation results for decision-making and policy development. Here are the reasons for the alignment between the NEPF and NBC 532:

1. Both approaches promote a results-oriented culture in the Philippine government. The NEPF emphasizes the evaluation of programs and projects to assess their effectiveness and impacts, while NBC 532 encourages the use of performance information to make informed decisions and allocate resources efficiently.
2. Both approaches advocate for using performance information to shape policies and decisions. The NEPF emphasizes the utilization of evaluation results to inform policy-making, while NBC 532 promotes the use of performance information to prioritize funding and allocate resources to programs and projects that have demonstrated results. By incorporating performance information into decision-making processes, both methods contribute to the optimal utilization of resources.
3. Both approaches aim to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of government programs. The NEPF achieves this by evaluating programs and projects to determine their effectiveness and impact, while NBC 532 encourages funding programs and projects that have already shown results. The alignment between the NEPF and NBC 532 ensures a focus on achieving results and improving program outcomes.

Regarding the alignment with RBM principles, **the evaluation findings indicate that the NEPF is designed to adhere to RBM principles. RBM emphasizes achieving results through a systematic and integrated approach that emphasizes planning, monitoring, and evaluation.** The NEPF is consistent with RBM due to the following reasons:

1. The NEPF provides standards for evaluating government programs and projects, aligning with RBM's emphasis on systematic evaluation processes.
2. The NEPF highlights the importance of developing a logic model or results framework for programs, outlining their expected outputs, outcomes, and impacts. This ensures alignment with national goals and priorities and emphasizes the measurement of results.
3. The NEPF stresses the significance of using evaluation results to inform decisions and policy formulation. By incorporating evaluation findings into decision-making processes, policymakers can make informed choices about program effectiveness and resource allocation. This alignment ensures that programs are aligned with national priorities and goals.

Apart from the said policies, the NEPF is closely aligned with the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 ([Chapter 21: Plan Implementation and Monitoring](#)) and the PDP 2023-2028, specifically in [Chapter 14 and 16](#), which emphasizes the monitoring and evaluation of national initiatives. The NEPF serves as a strategic guide to enhance the evaluation capacity and practices of government agencies, ensuring that evaluation efforts are consistent with the broader development agenda outlined in the PDPs. The NEPF supports the PDPs by providing a framework that fosters accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making. It underscores the importance of evaluation in assessing the impact and effectiveness of programs and policies, thereby contributing to the achievement of the development goals established in the PDPs.

In the Chapter 16 of the PDP, it incorporates specific references to national evaluation initiatives, acknowledging the pivotal role of evaluation in identifying gaps and facilitating ongoing improvement in the implementation of national programs and projects. This integration reinforces the government's commitment to evidence-based planning, policy formulation, and resource allocation.

Aligned with the PDP, the NEPF aims to institutionalize evaluation practices at the national level by providing guidelines, standards, and mechanisms for conducting evaluations. It ensures consistency and quality across different government agencies. Moreover, the NEPF encourages collaboration and coordination among stakeholders involved in evaluation activities, promoting knowledge sharing and learning among them. Finally, the NEPF aligns with the PDP's emphasis on inclusive development and sustainable growth. By emphasizing the evaluation of programs and policies in terms of their impact on vulnerable and marginalized groups, the NEPF supports the PDP's commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind and to promoting equitable and sustainable development.

Table 5 shows how the NEPF's focus on results aligns with other results-oriented public sector management efforts. The table is the Evaluation Consultant's reconstructed and expanded version of Bermudez's (2015) PowerPoint presentation.

Table 5: Alignment of NEPF outcomes with other public sector management results-oriented efforts

PSM Process	PSM Framework Component	Related Policy Documents	Alignment with the NEPF Outcomes
Planning	Plan for results (Indicators with targets are specified for each level of results)	Philippine Development Plan (PDP), Results Matrix (RM), and Public Investment Plan (PIP)	Consistent with Outcomes 1 and 2. Outcome 1 provides knowledge on project/program results facilitating evidence-based decision-making related to current and future programming. At the same time, Outcome 2 provides feedback and learning that supports improving current and future programming.
Budgeting (and Programming)	Budget for results (Budget supports planned national targets)	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), Organizational Performance Indicator Framework (OPIF), Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) Programming, General Appropriations Act - National Expenditure Program (GAA-NEP)	It is consistent with NEPF outcomes in that public resources must be efficient and results-based. Budgets must be based on evidence-based studies to optimize the use of resources and to promote value for money.
Implementation	Implement for results (policies, people, processes oriented to deliver intended results)	Procurement, contracting, disbursement, ICC Reevaluation	
Monitoring	Monitor for results	Official	

	(Defined indicators are used to track the achievement of agreed results)	Development Assistance (ODA) Review, Budget Performance Assessment Review (BPAR), and Commission on Audit (COA) Reports	
Evaluation	Evaluate results (Evaluation methodology enables assessment of results and informed decision-making)	Socio-economic Reports, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Report, Project Evaluation Reports	Consistent with Outcome 3 on a transparent and accountable program of evaluation across the public sector implemented and findings were shared with and disseminated to stakeholders.

Evaluation Question 1.3: To what extent did development partners support the NEPF?

The evaluation revealed that development partners such as UNICEF, UNDP, and 3ie, as well as civil society groups (CSOs) and academic institutions⁴, have played a role in implementing the NEPF. However, the evaluation only obtained data on the support provided by UNDP and 3ie. While UNICEF, CSOs, and the academe were mentioned in a few interviews, they were not directly engaged in the evaluation process. One interview informant confirmed that development partners were motivated to collaborate with NEDA because they recognized the NEPF as an opportunity to strengthen and promote the culture of evaluation within the government. The informant also mentioned that although the budget for collaboration was sometimes insufficient, there was a natural inclination to maximize resources outside of NEDA. Furthermore, NEDA did not decline the offer of support. The informant emphasized that NEDA required the assistance of development partners due to their advanced practices, while the government was still in the early stages of building its evaluation capacity. Notably, the development partners provided technical assistance to the government in implementing the NEPF, which included developing evaluation guidelines, conducting capacity-building activities, and carrying out evaluations.

Regarding the partnership with the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, Inc (3ie), NEDA, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and 3ie formalized their collaboration through the Policy Window Philippines (PWP). The objective was to change the mindset of people in the Philippines regarding the use and perception of evaluations. The PWP supported government agencies and CSOs in monitoring and evaluating development programs and projects by providing technical assistance, capacity building, and funding. As part of the PWP, five impact evaluations were conducted, covering areas such as Sustainable Livelihood Program, Special Program for Employment Studies, and Court Justice Reforms.

⁴ Based on the documents shared (i.e. Attachment A - NEPF Briefer and PWP Phase 2) and interview notes, the highlighted organizations were UNICEF, UNDP, and 3ie. The CSOs and academic institutions were involved in conducting the evaluation studies for SMEP include Asian Social Project Services, Inc (ASPSI), DLSU Jesse Robredo Institute, ID Insight, Innovations for Poverty, and others. There was a separate evaluation specifically focused on the SMEP, which could provide more detailed insights into the involvement of the mentioned actors and others. However, the scope of the summative evaluation does not encompass a discussion of the specific tasks and responsibilities of these actors within the SMEP project.

Moreover, the PWP facilitated the development and sharing of evaluation guidelines and tools, enhanced the skills of government agencies and CSOs, and established a platform for managing evaluation data and results. As confirmed by an informant, several high-level policy forums were organized to generate greater demand for and understanding of evaluations. The aim was to enable government stakeholders to independently request studies in the future, thereby increasing the overall appreciation and utilization of evaluation.

NEDA and UNDP established a partnership called the "Using Strategic Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) to Accelerate the Implementation of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022" (Strategic M&E Project). The collaboration involved NEDA transferring USD 5,905,098.00 to UNDP for the project's implementation from December 2017 to December 2022. The project utilized UNDP's Nationally Accelerated Modality (NAM) facility, which was introduced in the early 1990s to assist governments in Latin American countries in managing non-performing loans and projects facing significant operational and implementation challenges. As per the agreement, NEDA utilized UNDP's streamlined processes to support the achievement of NEPF goals. An informant noted that the partnership with UNDP primarily involved hiring consultants to manage the M&E Fund, establishing a portal for publishing evaluation results, making evaluation modules accessible to the public for self-paced learning, and developing the National Evaluation Agenda—a compilation of planned evaluation studies. Similar approaches have been employed in recent partnerships between UNDP and other government agencies, such as the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), particularly for procurement of supplies and equipment.

The Strategic M&E Project aimed to achieve various goals, including: 1) strengthening NEDA and other government agencies' institutional capacity to utilize M&E systems and tools for monitoring and evaluating PDP implementation; 2) supporting the development and implementation of sectoral M&E frameworks to monitor PDP progress and guide policy decisions; and 3) promoting a culture of evidence-based decision-making by disseminating M&E information and findings. To accomplish these objectives, UNDP provided technical assistance to NEDA and other government agencies in developing and implementing M&E systems and tools. The project also involved organizing capacity-building activities such as training workshops on M&E concepts and tools for government officials and stakeholders. Furthermore, UNDP supported the procurement and management of evaluations, established an M&E database and knowledge management system, and facilitated the dissemination of evaluation findings, among other activities.

The evaluation revealed that the partnership with UNDP was beneficial for two main reasons. Firstly, from a technical perspective, there was a recognized need to enhance and strengthen evaluation practices, particularly with the increasing emphasis on "results orientation" during the Aquino and Duterte administrations. While monitoring was a key focus of the NEDA Monitoring and Evaluation Staff (MES), evaluation received less attention. Interviews with NEDA and UNDP confirmed challenges in the evaluation outputs produced by NEDA Regional Offices (NROs) for commissioned studies. Some NROs lacked clear guidance on managing evaluations, and there were issues with the clarity of Terms of Reference based on OECD-DAC criteria. To address these concerns, NEDA sought the expertise of development partners like UNDP, known for their experience in delivering quality, sustainable, impactful, and results-oriented programs. UNDP's assistance was particularly sought to develop guidelines that would enhance the quality of evaluations.

Additionally, UNDP's global network and pool of evaluators were seen as valuable resources that could be utilized to build the government's capacity and conduct evaluation studies. Although the exact utilization of the roster was not indicated in the interviews, evidence suggested its application in the NEPF through evaluation studies commissioned from organizations listed on the roster.

Secondly, from an operational perspective, the workload of NEDA's MES encompassed various portfolios, including Official Development Assistance (ODA) and providing support to the executive department in M&E. According to interviews with NEDA and UNDP, MES faced significant

demands and had numerous responsibilities to handle. Therefore, administrative aspects such as commissioning consultants and overseeing their work were transferred to UNDP. This allowed NEDA to focus on critical management decisions, such as chairing or co-chairing the Evaluation Reference Groups (ERGs), reviewing and approving evaluation plans and Terms of Reference (ToRs), as well as reviewing and endorsing evaluation outputs.

Moreover, UNDP's procurement and financial management systems were found to be more adaptable, flexible, and less bureaucratic compared to those of the public sector. UNDP demonstrated the ability to efficiently allocate funds and deliver results.

Evaluation Question 1.4: To what extent are the objectives of the NEPF still relevant?

The policy framework, despite being signed in 2015, the objectives of the NEPF remain relevant today for the following reasons:

First, one of the main objectives of the framework is to enhance transparency in government operations. This objective is still essential today, as the Filipino people continue to demand greater transparency and accountability from their government. With the advent of social media and other digital technologies, governments are increasingly expected to be more transparent and provide real-time information to citizens. The NEPF gives government agencies a way to do open and accountable evaluations, which is very important for building public trust and confidence in government.

Second, the objective of the NEPF is to promote a culture of evidence-based decision-making. This goal is fundamental because the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important it is to make decisions based on facts when dealing with public health crises. The NEPF provides guidance on designing and implementing rigorous and reliable evaluations, which is critical in ensuring that decision-makers have access to high-quality evidence to inform their decisions⁵.

Third, the NEPF also aims to improve the quality of evaluations conducted in the country. This goal is still important today, as more and more people realize how important good evaluations are for figuring out how well government programs and policies work and what kind of effects they have. The NEPF provides guidance on the evaluation process, from the evaluation design to the dissemination of the findings, which is critical in ensuring that evaluations are conducted rigorously and reliably.

Fourth, the NEPF is aligned with other national policies and initiatives, such as the PDP-RM and the RBPMS. The desk research and interviews show that the push for results-based management and efficient use of public resources will remain a high national government priority. It is evident in the existing policies already mentioned above. Although evaluation results are recognized as inputs in decision-making and results-based management, there is little evidence to prove that in-depth evaluation findings are used in policy formulation, planning, and implementation. This alignment demonstrates the continued relevance of the NEPF in supporting the country's development goals.

Fifth, by referring to the ToC of the policy framework, it can be said that while the NEPF has contributed to some extent in promoting the use and practice of evaluation in the public sector, many of its intermediate outcomes and outputs have yet to be materialized. For instance, looking at its ToC, the IA-ETF, ETF Secretariat, joint TWG, and agency evaluation units are yet to be established. Moreover, circulars on institutional responsibilities are yet to be issued. In addition, based on interviews, there

⁵ One of the key lessons from COVID-19 is the persistent demand of Filipinos for increased transparency and accountability from their government. With this in mind, the government must provide real-time information and relevant data to its citizens, promoting transparency and enabling informed decision-making ([NDRRMP 2020 - 2030](#), and its RBMES).

are no indications that budgets for NEPF implementation by IAs have been appropriated. Based on online interviews, the IAs have no evaluation agendas. At the same time, the competency framework for evaluation in public service is yet to be rolled out and implemented across the public sector. On these grounds, the NEPF has not been fully maximized.

Lastly, the failure to meet the NEPF goals results in the persistence of fundamental challenges in public sector evaluation, including: (1) Poor utilization of evidence in public sector decision-making. An informant confirmed that evaluations and evidence are generally not utilized to support decisions within their agency; (2) Lack of a standardized evaluation framework across agencies. An interview informant confirmed the existence of multiple evaluation standards and protocols within their agency, often based on the requirements of different donors; (3) Insufficient human resources and evaluation skills, leading to shallow and less rigorous evaluation outputs. The prioritization of performance and portfolio monitoring over in-depth ex-post evaluations is expected to continue. An agency representative mentioned that they primarily focus on monitoring their corporate performance, while another representative described their evaluation work as reviewing research and extension proposals. They also conduct mid-term and terminal evaluations and monitoring activities, typically led by resource persons or technical experts. Another representative mentioned that their agency's evaluation practices involve comparing accomplishments against targets and conducting tariff adjustment assessments. It was further revealed that their agency last conducted an impact study in the 1990s, with no such study undertaken since then; (4) Absence of a central evaluation unit within agencies. An interview highlighted that a government department has two units within its Service/Unit responsible for evaluation functions at different levels. For example, the Project Management Division focuses on day-to-day operations monitoring of foreign-assisted projects, while the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division concentrates on outcomes and results; and, (5) Lack of demand for in-depth evaluations from external or internal sources, including top management within the agency. Evaluations conducted by agencies are primarily driven by their development partners rather than internal demand.

Evaluation Question 1.5: How appropriate is the JMC/NEPF as a policy instrument to institutionalize and govern the practice of evaluation in the public sector?⁶

The Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) on the NEPF is an appropriate policy instrument for institutionalizing and governing the practice of evaluation in the public sector. The JMC provides clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of government agencies in conducting evaluations, including establishing evaluation units, developing evaluation plans, and reporting evaluation results.

⁶ The consultant deems that conducting a more comprehensive and in-depth study is necessary to thoroughly compare different policy instruments. This endeavor can be pursued as a future step. In this evaluation, the consultant's argument revolves around the NEPF - that the effectiveness of the NEPF lies not in the type of policy instrument introduced, but rather in the political support and commitment to its implementation. To support this argument, a well-known fact in Philippine society: we have numerous excellent policies drafted by brilliant and competent lawmakers. However, many of these laws remain ineffective due to a lack of implementation.

In stark contrast, there are Joint Memorandum Circulars (JMCs) such as the [NDRRMC-DBM-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2013-1](#) and [NDRRMC-DILG-DBM-CSC Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2014-1](#), which are diligently and consistently followed by the executing parties involved in the utilization of the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (LDRRM) Fund. The reason behind the full enforcement of these JMCs by the executing agencies is multifaceted: the JMCs were effectively cascaded to them, LGUs regularly report on the use of the LDRRM funds as stipulated in the JMCs, and there is robust monitoring and compliance checks conducted by the Commission on Audit (COA). In summary, wants to emphasize that it is not the type of policy instrument that holds the most significance, but rather the political support and buy-in necessary for the successful implementation of the instrument.

It also requires using a theory-based approach and the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process to ensure that evaluations are relevant and useful for decision-making. Furthermore, the JMC provides for establishing the Evaluation Task Force (ETF) to oversee the implementation of the NEPF and to provide guidance and support to government agencies. The ETF comprises representatives from NEDA, DBM, and OP-PMS, ensuring a multi-stakeholder approach to evaluation.

However, while the JMC is an appropriate policy instrument, its implementation rollout has faced several challenges. Although the JMC would be sufficient to cause the government entities to act on the policy document, an instrument with more “force” and “teeth” would have facilitated NEPF implementation at the optimum level. The evaluation suggests that the JMC, as a form of a policy framework document, may have caused the NEPF to not be institutionalized and fully maximized by the implementing agencies. Several sources said that the JMC could have been made a permanent part of the government system if there had been a policy to support it.

3.2 Coherence

This section presents the findings on the **Coherence** criteria, which were assessed based on evaluation questions and indicators. These questions and indicators aimed to determine whether the NEPF complements, supports, or enhances the existing RBM policies (EQ 2.1) and whether it complements, supports, or enhances the current international evaluation standards (EQ 2.2). The results shed light on the degree to which the NEPF offers a well-defined and coherent framework for program evaluation, as well as its alignment with other pertinent policies and strategies.

Evaluation Question 2.1: To what extent is the NEPF coherent with the existing or other policies on evaluation?
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National legislation pertaining to evaluation is currently lacking; however, the NEPF is in line with reform initiatives that aim to enhance results orientation in the public sector management of the Philippines. These reform endeavors include various measures such as NEDA Board Resolution No. 3 in 1999, which mandated reporting of project outcomes and impact by the ICC and implementing agencies. Another significant initiative was the Sector Effectiveness and Efficiency Review in 2001, conducted jointly by NEDA and DBM, to assess program and project responsiveness to sector outcome objectives.

Additionally, [AO 25](#) was issued in 2011 to establish a unified and integrated RBPMS within the Executive Department. In 2012, DBM adopted the [OPIF](#), aligning budget-supported goods and services with the government's desired outcome objectives.

The evaluation further revealed that the NEPF is aligned with ongoing efforts to establish a National Evaluation Policy (NEP) in the Philippines, as summarized in **Table 6**, which provides information on the title, principal authors, and current status of proposed bills. Notably, the earliest proposed bill in the House to establish a NEP was introduced in 2019, followed by a Senate bill with the same purpose. These bills delineate the roles and responsibilities of key evaluation stakeholders, including government agencies, evaluation professionals, and civil society organizations. The bills seek to foster a culture of evaluation in the government by facilitating evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation using evaluation results.

Both the NEPF and the proposed bills advocate for accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making in government programs and policies. These initiatives recognize the crucial role of evaluation in improving program and policy outcomes, aiming to establish a comprehensive evaluation framework applicable across sectors and government levels. Enactment of these policies into law would cultivate a culture of evaluation within the government, promoting the use of

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evaluation results to inform policy decisions and ultimately leading to more effective government programs and policies.

Table 6: National Evaluation Policy-related House and Senate Bills

Year	Policy / Proposed Policy	Principal Author(s)	Status
2019	House Bill 03293: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy	Cong. Alfred Vargas	Pending with the Committee on Economic Affairs since 2019-08-06
	Senate Bill 2225: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy	Sen. Risa Hontiveros	Pending with the Committee
2020	House Bill 08025: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy	Cong. Luis Raymund Villafuerte, Jr.	Pending with the Committee on Economic Affairs since 2020-11-23
	Senate Bill 1885: An Act Establishing A Result-Based National Evaluation Policy (RBNEP)	Sen. Imee Marcos	Pending in the Committee
2021	House Bill 10181: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation for Results Policy (NERP)	Cong. Sharon Garin	Pending with the Committee on Economic Affairs since 2021-09-15
2022	House Bill 04000: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy	Cong. Luis Raymund Villafuerte, Jr., Cong. Miguel Luis Villafuerte, Cong. Tsuyoshi Anthony Horibata, and Cong. Nicholas Enciso III	Pending with the Committee on Economic Affairs since 2022-08-30
	House Bill 05181: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy	Cong. Luis Raymund Villafuerte, Jr.	Pending with the Committee on Economic Affairs since 2022-09-28
	Senate Bill 1219: An Act Establishing a National Evaluation Policy	Sen. Risa Hontiveros	Pending in the Committee
	Senate Bill 1343: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy	Sen. Loren Legarda	Pending in the Committee
	Senate Bill 1392: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy	Sen. Ramon Revilla, Jr.	Pending in the Committee

	Senate Bill 1437: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy	Sen. Jinggoy Estrada	Pending in the Committee
	Senate Bill 2479: An Act Institutionalizing A Result-Based National Evaluation Policy	Prepared and submitted by the joint Committees on Economic Affairs and Finance with Sen. Rissa Hontiveros, Sen. Imee Marcos, Sen. Sonny Angara, and Sen. Ramon Revilla, Jr.	Pending Second Reading
2023	Senate Bill 1714: An Act Institutionalizing a Results-Based National Evaluation Policy	Sen. Imee Marcos	Pending in the Committee

Evaluation Question 2.2: To what extent is the NEPF consistent with the relevant international norms and standards on evaluation?

The NEPF is consistent with the conventional, known, and established international norms and standards on evaluation, such as those of the [Evaluation Cooperation Group](#) (ECG), the [Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation](#) (IOCE), the [United Nations Evaluation Group](#) (UNEG), the [American Evaluation Association](#) (AEA), the [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) (OECD), the [World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group](#) (WB-IEG), and the [Asian Development Bank Independent Evaluation Department](#) (ABD-IED) in several ways. **Table 7** summarizes the NEPF's alignment with the conventional, known, and established international norms and standards on evaluation.

First, the aforementioned standards, as well as the NEPF, adopt the DAC Criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Impact, and Coherence) as fundamental aspects to be considered in evaluation studies. This alignment is evident in the evaluation studies commissioned through the Strategic M&E Project, where the questions centered around these criteria. However, in the case of evaluations conducted through the NEDA track, the Evaluation Consultant was unable to review the Terms of References (ToRs) of the studies to confirm the use of these criteria. Nevertheless, an interview informant verified that the NROs referenced the criteria set in the NEPF when commissioning their evaluation studies.

Second, the evaluation standards adopted by the NEPF also prioritize accountability, learning, and evidence-based decision-making. These principles are explicitly included as part of the outcomes (Outcome 3) in the NEPF's Theory of Change (ToC).

Third, the NEPF aligns with established international norms and standards on evaluation, which emphasize conducting evaluations systematically, independently, and with stakeholder involvement. This is exemplified in the evaluations commissioned through the NEDA and Strategic M&E Project tracks, where external and independent third parties are contracted to conduct the evaluations instead of internal evaluations. Furthermore, the ERGs, comprising representatives from various agencies, ensure a systematic approach to evaluation and strive for rigorous and comprehensive evaluation methodologies. The ERG provides guidance on evaluations and assesses the robustness and appropriateness of the evaluation approach and methodology while upholding the independence of the commissioned party throughout the evaluation process.

Table 7: Evaluation Standards and Norms and their Alignment with NEPF

Evaluation International Norms and Standards	OECD-DAC ⁷	UNEG ⁸	WB-IEG ⁹	ADB-IE ¹⁰	NEPF	Remarks
Evaluation Criteria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The different evaluation standards and norms adopt the DAC Criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Impact, and Coherence) as the aspects to be examined when commissioning and conducting evaluation studies.
Accountability, learning, and evidence-based decision-making	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A key outcome of the NEPF is the communication and use of evaluation as a form of accountability, learning, and evidence-based decision-making.

⁷ The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) has defined six evaluation criteria—relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability—and two principles for their use. These criteria provide a normative framework used to determine the merit or worth of an intervention (policy, strategy, program, project, or activity). They serve as the basis upon which evaluative judgments are made (source: OECD official website).

⁸ The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, adopted in 2005, have served as a landmark document for the United Nations and beyond. For the last ten years, it has been used successfully to strengthen and harmonize evaluation practice and has served as a key reference for evaluators around the globe. In 2016, UNEG adopted the updated 2016 UNEG Norms and Standards. The ten general norms should be upheld in the conduct of any evaluation, and; the four institutional norms should be reflected in the management and governance of evaluation functions. The associated standards support implementing these normative principles (source: UN Evaluation Group official website).

⁹ The Independent Evaluation Group evaluates the work of the World Bank Group to find what works, what doesn't, and why. IEG evaluations give an unbiased look at the results of the World Bank Group and point out what can be learned from past mistakes. Through independent evaluation, IEG is helping the World Bank Group achieve its twin goals of eradicating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity (Source: Independent Evaluation Group Official Website)

¹⁰ The ADB's policies, strategies, operations, and special concerns related to organizational and operational effectiveness are evaluated by the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) in a systematic and independent way. Doing so contributes to achieving the development effectiveness of ADB operations by providing evaluation feedback on performance, and generating and disseminating evaluation lessons (Source: Independent Evaluation Group Official Website)

Systematic, independent, and participatory evaluations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The ERGs ensures, rigorous and systematic approaches, while safeguarding the independence of the commissioned party in the evaluation process.
Theory-based evaluations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	In the NEPF, the use of ToC to inform data gathering and analysis is promoted as in the case of the Formative Evaluation on PPAN and this summative evaluation.
Independent and objective evaluations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Section 3 of the Draft NEPF Guidelines provides the criteria for selecting competent and skilled evaluators to ensure that findings are credible and trustworthy.
Stakeholders involvement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Section 3 of the Draft NEPF Guidelines highlights that stakeholders must engaged through the data-gathering process. The formation of an ERG is another form of stakeholder engagement initiated by the NEPF.

Fourth, established international norms and standards on evaluation endorse a theory-based approach. This approach, widely employed in evaluations worldwide, necessitates a clear and explicit Theory of Change (ToC) that illustrates the interrelationships among inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. By utilizing this approach, evaluations can ensure relevance, validity, and reliability. Several evaluation studies commissioned through the Strategic M&E Project have embraced this approach. For example, in the Formative Evaluation of the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN), a ToC workshop was conducted, engaging stakeholders in co-designing the ToC. The resulting ToC served as the foundation for data collection and analysis in the evaluation. Similarly, the present summative evaluation emphasizes the use of ToC, as discussed in Section 2.1.1 of the report.

Fifth, international norms and standards emphasize that evaluations must be conducted independently and objectively—a principle also embraced by the NEPF. Evaluations should be carried out by competent and impartial evaluators who possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience. Section 3 of the Draft NEPF Guidelines outlines the initiation of evaluations and includes criteria for selecting capable evaluators, ensuring that evaluation findings are credible and reliable.

Sixth, stakeholder involvement is crucial in evaluations, as endorsed by the NEPF and international standards. Involving stakeholders allows for their perspectives and experiences to be considered. Section 3 of the Draft NEPF Guidelines further supports this notion. Additionally, the engagement of program or project stakeholders is integral to the data-gathering process. Another avenue for stakeholder involvement is through the establishment of Evaluation Reference Groups (ERGs). These approaches guarantee that evaluations are relevant, responsive, and meaningful to stakeholders.

3.3 Effectiveness

This section presents the evaluation findings on the **Effectiveness** criteria. These criteria were assessed based on a set of questions and indicators. The evaluation questions include the contribution of the NEPF (EQ 3.1), the development of an evaluation agenda by implementing agencies due to the NEPF (EQ 3.2), the budgeting, conduction, and completion of planned evaluations by implementing agencies due to the NEPF (EQ 3.3), the dissemination and utilization of evaluation outputs by implementing agencies due to the NEPF (EQ 3.4), the establishment of neutral M&E Units/Divisions due to the NEPF (EQ 3.5), the development and implementation of a capacity-building plan for M&E by implementing agencies (EQ 3.6), the NEPF's contribution to improving the quality of evaluation processes and outputs (EQ 3.7), and the factors that facilitated or hindered the achievement of the NEPF's desired outcomes (EQ 3.8). The evaluation results provide valuable insights into the extent to which the NEPF has effectively promoted robust evaluation practices and enhanced the utilization of evaluation results in decision-making processes.

Evaluation Question 3.1: What is the contribution of the NEPF?

The question examines the NEPF's contribution on government agencies' knowledge, skills, competencies, and practices to enhance evaluation capacities. The findings for this question were derived from a combination of desk research, semi-structured interviews, and online surveys, specifically focusing on questions Nos. 12, 17, 19, 20, 21, and 23. While an online survey was used, the respondents' limited familiarity with the NEPF resulted in a greater reliance on analysis of interview responses. By triangulating qualitative data, the Evaluation Consultant identified themes and utilized Contribution Analysis to analyze the NEPF's claimed contributions as reported by interview respondents. The analysis sought evidence supporting these contributions, as well as the underlying drivers. Furthermore, each contribution's relevance to critical development problems and its manifestations were discussed.

Based on this process, the NEPF's contributions to public sector evaluation are as follows:

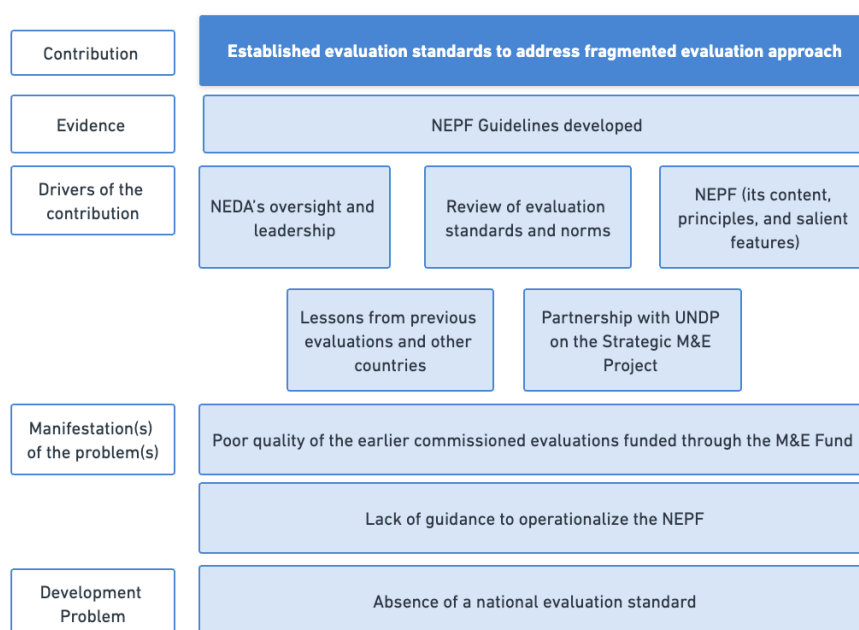
1. Established evaluation standards to address fragmented evaluation approaches in the public sector.
2. Conducted or commissioned evaluation studies adhering to the NEPF and draft guidelines.
3. Strengthened NEDA's leadership and oversight of public sector evaluation.
4. Stimulated conversation and demand for evaluation.

Each contribution is elaborated upon below. The evaluation data indicates a combination of outcomes and outputs for these contributions. Notably, the establishment of standards (Contribution 1) and the commissioning of evaluations (Contribution 2) emerged as the top two contributions associated with Outcome 1, focused on strengthening the evaluation culture.

NEPF CONTRIBUTION 1: ESTABLISHED EVALUATION STANDARDS TO ADDRESS FRAGMENTED EVALUATION APPROACH

The development of a standard on public sector evaluation practice and its use, as demonstrated through the formulation of the Draft NEPF Guidelines, stands out as the most significant contribution of the NEPF. Interview respondents mentioned this contribution on five occasions. **Figure 5** illustrates that this contribution addresses the issue of lacking shared and definitive guidelines, resulting in agencies following their own standards or primarily relying on commissioning donors' or organizations' guidelines. Interviews confirmed problems with past evaluations conducted under the NEDA track due to the absence of standardized rules. Additionally, interviews highlighted the need for more detailed operationalization of the policy framework. Therefore, the establishment of standard guidelines is crucial.

Figure 5: Contribution 1 Tracing



Desk research and interviews identified several factors that facilitated the development of the standard, including NEDA's leadership and oversight to ensure the production of a common standard, a review of existing evaluation norms and standards (**Table 7**), the NEPF's contents, principles, and features serving as the basis for the guidelines, lessons learned from previous evaluations and experiences of other countries, and partnerships with development partners such as UNDP, with the NEPF Guidelines being one of the outputs. The Draft NEPF Guidelines have set a robust standard for evaluation in the public sector. However, it should be noted that the standardization of the evaluation process is currently limited to the pilot agencies and commissioned evaluations under the Strategic M&E Project. Thus, the evaluation conclusions are specific to this context.

The development and utilization of the Draft NEPF Guidelines in the policy framework rollout are essential for promoting the use and culture of evaluation in the public sector. The absence of a standard poses a risk of inconsistent evaluations or deviations from best practices, leading to less reliable results and challenges in drawing conclusions about program and policy effectiveness. A well-defined evaluation standard provides consistency and ensures that evaluations follow proven best practices, enhancing the quality and credibility of their findings. It also fosters a culture of evidence-based decision-making, highlighting the importance of using evaluation to inform policy and program decisions. The NEPF Guidelines clearly define evaluation stages such as initiation,

preparation, implementation, and utilization of evaluation results. The guidelines also delineate stakeholder involvement and the necessary institutional setup for conducting evaluations. However, it is worth noting that the DBM declined to sign the JMC issuing the guidelines.

NEPF CONTRIBUTION 2: CONDUCTED/COMMISSIONED EVALUATION STUDIES FOLLOWING THE NEPF AND THE DRAFT GUIDELINES

Conducting or commissioning evaluations plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of evaluation and promoting its use in the public sector. Evaluations enable government agencies to identify areas for improvement and make informed decisions regarding program and policy design, implementation, and funding. However, interviews have confirmed that agencies are primarily focused on meeting their annual targets, resulting in a greater emphasis on monitoring rather than on conducting formative, process, summative, or ex-post evaluations. Notably, the evaluation standards shared by different government agencies primarily concentrate on annual performance, and if evaluations are conducted, the responsibility often falls on donors for commissioning and contracting them.

Figure 6: Contribution 2 Tracing

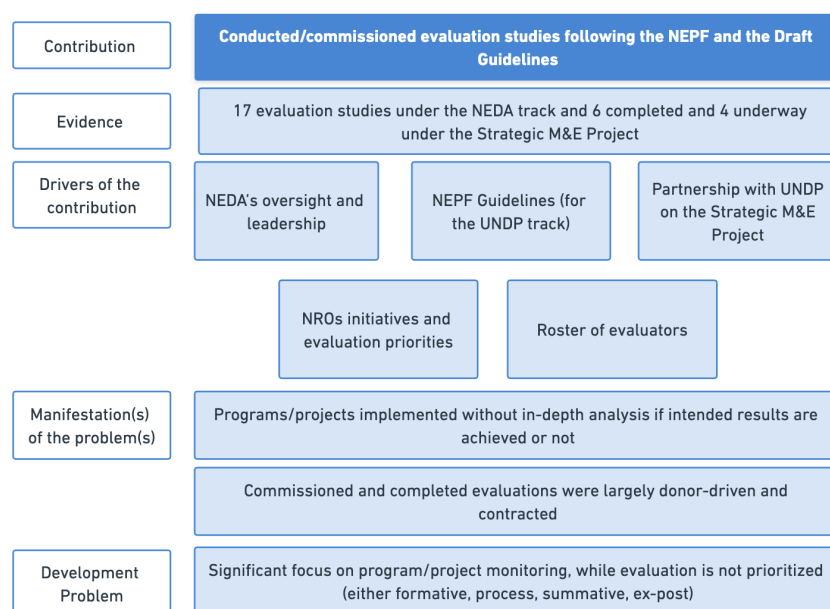


Figure 6 demonstrates the significance of the NEPF in commissioning evaluation studies. A total of 17 studies were commissioned under the NEDA and 3ie tracks, while six evaluations were completed through the Strategic M&E Project. Table 8 provides additional support for this finding by presenting the evaluations commissioned and conducted under both tracks. The evaluation indicates that the NEPF, through its guidelines, serves as the overarching framework for initiating, preparing, and implementing evaluations. Furthermore, each completed evaluation is supported by an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), an institutional setup specified in the guidelines that guides and oversees every stage of the evaluation process.

Table 8: Evaluation studies produced under the NEPF

NEDA Track	Status
Impact Evaluation Study of the Agri-Pinoy Livestock Program (A-PLP) in Samar Island	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the Agrarian Reform Infrastructure Support Project Phase III	Completed
Impact Evaluation of the Batangas Port Development Phase II Project	Completed
Impact Evaluation of the Camiguin Coastal Resource Management Project	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the Cervantes-Mankayan-Abatan Road Project	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the Diversified Farm Income and Market Development Project	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the National Early Childhood Care and Development Program	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the Awang-Upi-Lebak-Kalamanansig-Palimbang-Saranggani Road	Completed
Impact Evaluation of the Lower Agusan Development Program - Flood Control Component (LADP-FCC)	Completed
Impact Evaluation of Laguna De Bay Institutional Strengthening and Community Participation (LISCOP) Project	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the Light Rail Transit 2	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the Marikina-Infanta Road Project	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Development Plan and Priority Programs	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) with Focus on the Food Security Pillar	Completed
Impact Evaluation of the National Shelter Program	Completed
Impact Evaluation Study of the Rural Road Network Development Project	Completed
3ie Track	Status
Sustainable Livelihood Program, Special Program for Employment Studies, and Court Justice Reforms	Completed

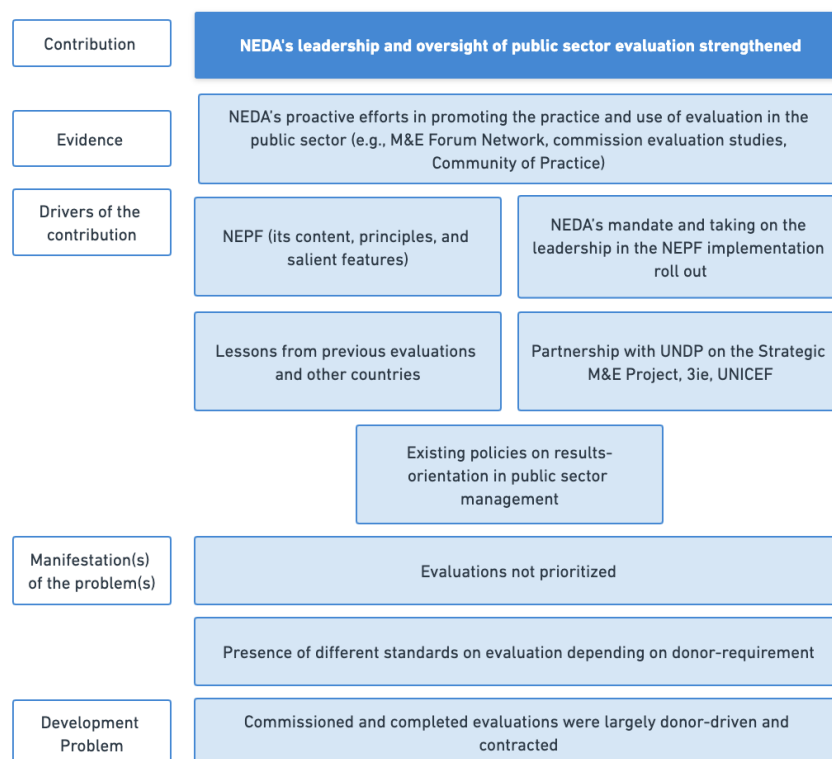
UNDP Track	Status
Assessment of the Anti-Red Tape Act Policy of 2007	Completed and turned over
Formative Evaluation of the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition	Completed and turned over
Evaluation of the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan Program	Completed and turned over
Evaluability Assessment of MSME Development Plan and Priority Programs	Completed and turned over
Evaluation of the National Climate Change Action Plan (Food Security Pillar)	Completed and turned over
Evaluation of the National Early Childhood Care and Development Program	Completed and turned over

NEPF CONTRIBUTION 3: NEDA'S LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT OF PUBLIC SECTOR EVALUATION STRENGTHENED

To promote the use and culture of evaluation in the public sector, strong leadership is crucial. This is primarily achieved through the presence of a lead agency that can provide guidance, resources, and support to the government and other organizations to conduct evaluations effectively and consistently. Having a lead agency helps ensure that evaluations adhere to best practices and yield reliable results. Moreover, it can play a vital role in fostering a culture of evidence-based decision-making by demonstrating the value of evaluation and making it a government priority. Ultimately, developing a robust evaluation culture and encouraging the use of evidence in policy and program decisions necessitate strong leadership from a lead agency. **The evaluation findings indicate that NEDA has improved its leadership and strategic oversight of public sector evaluation.** This is evident through proactive initiatives such as hosting the annual M&E Network Forum and establishing a Community of Practice, as depicted in **Figure 6**. NEDA has also played a critical role in proposing the National Evaluation Policy bill, as shown in **Table 6**, by providing expertise during Committee Hearings. This contribution aligns with the NEPF's Theory of Change.

However, interviews revealed that NEDA faced challenges in assuming the oversight function of the NEPF after losing support from Oversight Agencies. In response to demands for results orientation and available funding, NEDA had to take the lead. Nevertheless, it was noted that NEDA had limited capacity to manage evaluations and lacked sufficient human resources to meet the requirements of the NEPF. Enhancing NEDA's ability to lead public sector evaluations, providing better technical assistance to agencies, and fulfilling its oversight responsibilities were identified as areas needing improvement. Nonetheless, NEDA has strengthened its evaluation role in public sector management through lessons learned from other countries' experiences and partnerships with development partners. The evaluation findings also indicated that NEDA's efforts to steer evaluation in the public sector have led to increased support and traction for the use and practice of evaluation within and outside the government. This is evident in the active participation of stakeholders in the M&E Network Forum and the implementation of evaluation studies.

Figure 7: Contribution 3 Tracing



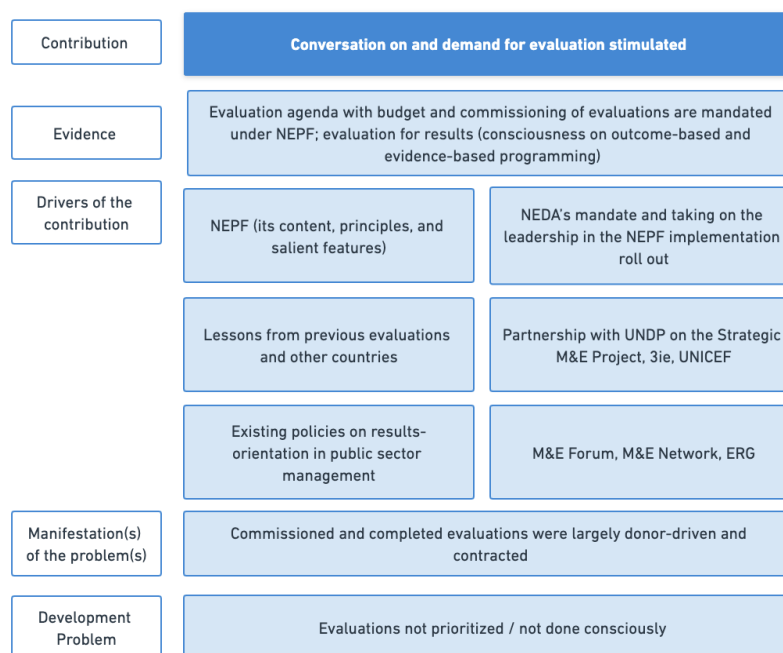
NEPF CONTRIBUTION 4: CONVERSATION ON AND DEMAND FOR EVALUATION STIMULATED

Government agencies play a crucial role in promoting the use and culture of evaluation in the public sector by actively demanding evaluations and engaging in discussions about evaluation findings. By prioritizing the demand for evaluations and taking an internal initiative rather than relying solely on external or donor-driven requirements, government agencies ensure that programs and policies are regularly assessed for their effectiveness and efficiency. This proactive approach helps identify areas for improvement and enables evidence-based decision-making.

Furthermore, government agencies can foster a culture of evaluation by actively discussing evaluation findings and utilizing them to inform decision-making processes. This involves sharing evaluation results with policymakers, program managers, and the public and using those findings to guide the development of future programs and policies. Openly discussing evaluation findings helps build trust and transparency with stakeholders, showcasing the value of evaluation in promoting effective and efficient programs and policies.

Based on the interviews conducted, **one of the notable contributions of the NEPF is that it has encouraged discussions and generated demand for evaluations within the public sector, particularly in the Executive Branch.** However, the interviews also highlight that agencies tend to prioritize monitoring over evaluation. Monitoring receives more attention due to agencies' mandates to meet specific program or project targets. Evaluation, on the other hand, is often overlooked unless it is a donor requirement for foreign-assisted programs and projects. Limited resources, simultaneous implementation of multiple projects, and a lack of capacity and expertise are identified as reasons why agencies struggle to prioritize evaluations.

Figure 8: Contribution 4 Tracing



The implementation of the NEPF, as depicted in **Figure 8**, has amplified conversations and increased the demand for government-driven evaluations. It has stimulated discussions on the need for agencies to develop a rolling six-year evaluation agenda and plan with a dedicated budget. The commissioning and completion of evaluation studies have become more prevalent, reflecting an improved focus on results-orientation, outcome-based programming, and evidence-based decision-making. Prior to the NEPF, evaluations in the executive branch were primarily driven by donors, but the framework has encouraged government agencies to take a more active role in commissioning and conducting evaluations.

Evaluation Question 3.2: To what extent have implementing agencies developed an evaluation agenda due to the NEPF?

The NEPF's Theory of Change (ToC) outlines its objective of institutionalizing the evaluation function within government agencies and fostering a culture of evidence-based decision-making. Intermediate Outcome 1.4 of the ToC emphasizes the importance of agencies having an evaluation agenda. An evaluation agenda serves a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of government programs and policies to people's needs. It enables agencies to collect feedback, make informed decisions based on data, and implement necessary changes that lead to improved outcomes for the public.

One significant advantage of having an evaluation agenda is accountability and transparency. The public expects government agencies to be accountable for their use of public funds, and the evaluation agenda helps monitor the performance of programs and policies. It ensures that resources are utilized effectively and that programs and policies align with their intended goals. Additionally, an evaluation agenda promotes transparency by providing insight into how taxpayer money is allocated and how well programs and policies function. Furthermore, having an evaluation agenda assists government agencies in identifying areas that require improvements or modifications.

However, it is important to note that **the current state of the Philippine bureaucracy lacks an evaluation agenda. Among the interviewed agencies, only OPAPRU indicated that they had developed an evaluation agenda in response to the NEPF.** Other agencies, like DOST, had established a research and development agenda even without familiarity with the NEPF. This implies that, apart from OPAPRU, the evaluation could not determine if the NEPF has facilitated the formulation of evaluation agendas in other agencies. In addition, National Evaluation Agenda was not developed as planned.

The United Kingdom and Canada serve as exemplary countries that have effectively developed their evaluation agendas. In the United Kingdom, there exists a well-established evaluation agenda, supported by the government's "What Works Network." This network comprises independent centers specializing in various policy domains, including crime reduction, education, and social issues. Through rigorous evaluations, these centers generate evidence-based recommendations for policymakers. Additionally, the UK government has established the "[Magenta Book](#)," a comprehensive guide that delineates principles and best practices for conducting evaluations within the public sector. Likewise, Canada has demonstrated significant dedication to advancing its evaluation agenda, particularly at the federal level. The government places great emphasis on evidence-based decision-making and has established the [Centre of Excellence for Evaluation \(CEE\)](#) within the Treasury Board Secretariat. The CEE plays a pivotal role in providing guidance, training, and resources to federal departments and agencies, aiming to enhance evaluation practices. Notably, the Canadian government enforces a policy on evaluation, mandating regular evaluations of programs and initiatives to uphold accountability and effectiveness.

Evaluation Question 3.3: To what extent were the planned evaluations of the implementing agencies budgeted, conducted, and completed?

In addition to the evaluation agenda, the NEPF's Theory of Change emphasizes the importance of sustained resources for evaluation initiatives to foster a strong evaluation culture. Planning evaluations with an appropriate budget is crucial to achieve this goal. By strategically planning evaluations and allocating a corresponding budget, government agencies can assess the impact and effectiveness of their programs and projects, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions based on data.

Without planned evaluations and a dedicated budget, government agencies may face various challenges that hinder their ability to achieve their objectives effectively. **The evaluation findings reveal that, among the engaged agencies, only OPAPRU has successfully developed an evaluation plan as a result of the NEPF. According to the informant, OPAPRU had an evaluation plan for the period of 2019-2022, which enabled the agency to conduct five implementation reviews, two formative evaluations, and a process evaluation. Currently, OPAPRU is in the process of updating its evaluation plan.**

It should be noted that, **apart from OPAPRU, the evaluation could not determine if the NEPF has facilitated the implementation of evaluation plans in other agencies.** [Annex C](#) provides a list of M&E outputs from different agencies; however, **the evaluation lacks robust evidence to establish a direct link between these outputs and the influence of the NEPF.**

Evaluation Question 3.4: To what extent have the implementing agencies disseminated and used their evaluation outputs?

One of the identified outcomes in the NEPF's Theory of Change is the effective communication and use of evaluation results. Communication of evaluation outputs involves sharing the findings and recommendations of an evaluation study with relevant stakeholders, while the use of evaluation

outputs refers to integrating these findings and recommendations into decision-making processes. Failing to disseminate and utilize evaluation outputs can lead to missed opportunities for program and policy improvement, as well as wasted resources.

The evaluation uncovered several mechanisms implemented as part of the NEPF rollout to promote the dissemination and utilization of evaluation results. Firstly, NEDA organizes an annual M&E Network Forum in collaboration with development partners to share the findings of commissioned studies and evaluations. Secondly, the National Evaluation Portal linked to the NEDA website, provides open access to completed and commissioned evaluation studies. Lastly, evaluation findings are communicated and presented in the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), which serves as an interagency meeting engaging stakeholders, including policy/program/project stakeholders. The ERG plays a crucial role in the evaluation process by providing guidance, oversight, and expertise. As a quality assurance mechanism, they ensure the evaluation's rigor, credibility, and validity. Additionally, the ERG plays a vital role in promoting the utilization of evaluation findings. Through active engagement with stakeholders and decision-makers, they help ensure that evaluation recommendations are given due consideration, facilitating evidence-informed decision-making, policy improvements, and programmatic changes.

Furthermore, the NEPF encourages the use of Management Response, a process where the concerned government agency provides feedback on the evaluation findings and outlines actions to address the recommendations. While Management Response is an essential aspect of commissioned evaluations under the Strategic M&E Project, the evaluation identified a lack of a mechanism to track the progress of the actions outlined in the Management Responses.

Evaluation Question 3.5: To what extent were the M&E units and divisions created due to the NEPF?

In the NEPF's Theory of Change, the establishment of a functional agency-level neutral evaluation unit is highlighted as crucial for strengthening the evaluation culture within the public sector. This independent unit plays a vital role in ensuring the objectivity and credibility of evaluation processes by evaluating programs and policies without bias or conflict of interest.

The evaluation findings indicate that 10 out of 11 online survey respondents stated that they perform M&E-related functions in their respective organizations. Additionally, the interviewed agency representatives confirmed that M&E is a part of their agency's responsibilities, indicating its integration into the structure of agencies under the Executive Department. However, **the interviews revealed that M&E functions are dispersed among several units within the agencies, with a predominant focus on monitoring. Among the agencies engaged in the evaluation, only OPAPRU has established a centralized evaluation unit in line with NEPF provisions, placing the Evaluation Unit directly under the Office of the Secretary¹¹.** The informant shared that OPAPRU's Neutral Evaluation Unit assesses the programs of other units while maintaining objectivity by not being deeply involved in their day-to-day operations. The informant also mentioned that OPAPRU's reporting structure refers to the NEPF, which provides a clear framework for their relationship with other units.

In contrast, **the other evaluated agencies have yet to establish a centralized evaluation unit within their organization. These agencies typically have project-based M&E, where each project has its own donor with specific M&E protocols and standards.**

¹¹ DA has successfully established their Neutral Evaluation Units through the issuance of Special Order (SO) 171 in February 2023. This achievement is a significant effort on the part of DA and an important accomplishment related to the NEPF. However, it's worth noting that the SO became available after the completion of the data gathering phase for the summative evaluation

Evaluation Question 3.6: To what extent have implementing agencies developed and implemented a capacity-building plan for M&E?

According to the Theory of Change (ToC), improving the capacity of individuals and institutions is crucial for promoting the practice and use of evaluation in the public sector. Capacity building involves enhancing the skills, knowledge, and resources of staff in evaluation activities. By developing capacity, it becomes possible to conduct thorough evaluations of programs and policies, leading to informed decision-making and effective implementation.

The ToC identifies two outputs to enhance individual and organizational capacity: (1) the rollout and implementation of a competency framework for evaluation in the public service across the entire public sector, and (2) the implementation of a national capacity development plan. However, **the evaluation findings indicate that the National Capacity Development Plan was not developed.** Therefore, more data is needed to determine if these agencies have indeed developed capacity-building plans for monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Upon reviewing the available information, it is evident that a series of M&E webinars was implemented through the Strategic M&E Project. These webinars aimed to enhance the capacities of agencies in various aspects of evaluation. The webinar topics covered a range of subjects, including revisiting the fundamentals of M&E in the new normal, conducting evaluability assessments, managing evaluations, communicating evaluation results, establishing monitoring and evaluation systems, and utilizing technology-enabled data gathering, among others. However, **due to the lack of data, it is challenging to assess whether these activities successfully increased the capacity of the participating agencies or contributed to the development of their capacity-building plans for M&E.**

Evaluation Question 3.7: To what extent has the NEPF contributed to improving the quality of evaluation processes and outputs?

The Theory of Change (ToC) identifies the establishment of standardized evaluation processes and protocols as one of its Intermediate Outcomes, contributing to the strengthening of the evaluation culture. To achieve this, it is necessary to draft and enhance the NEPF Guidelines, including Supplemental Guidelines. **The evaluation findings indicate that the NEPF Guidelines have indeed been drafted and designed with the aim of improving the quality of evaluation outputs, processes, and protocols in the public sector. Both the NEPF and the Draft Guidelines have played a role in setting evaluation standards and enhancing the quality of evaluation practices,** as confirmed by multiple interview respondents. These guidelines were developed to provide guidance to government agencies in aligning their evaluation practices with established standards and guidelines.

Furthermore, informants from NEDA and UNDP confirmed that the evaluation outputs through the NEDA track have encountered quality and process issues, which prompted the partnership with UNDP and the crafting of the Draft NEPF Guidelines. This collaboration aimed to enhance the initiation, preparation, implementation, and dissemination of evaluations. As a result, the evaluation process has significantly improved. Now, before an evaluation is commissioned, an evaluation plan and Terms of Reference (ToR) must be developed. NEDA and the members of the evaluation ERG (Evaluation Reference Group) would provide comments on these documents to ensure the evaluability and appropriateness of the evaluation questions. The ERG is also involved in reviewing and ensuring the quality of the evaluation outputs produced by consulting firms. **In terms of process, the Draft Guidelines have contributed to achieving the following:**

First, they have provided a standardized set of guidelines that all government agencies can follow when conducting evaluations. This ensures consistency in evaluation practices and facilitates the comparability of results across different agencies. The NEPF has also offered clear guidance on appropriate evaluation methods, data sources, and quality standards. **Second**, the importance of stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process is emphasized. Involving stakeholders allows evaluations to consider the needs and perspectives of those impacted by government programs and policies, making evaluations more relevant and valuable. This approach enables a comprehensive assessment of how programs and policies affect people. **Third**, the Draft Guidelines highlight the significance of disseminating evaluation results to stakeholders. By making evaluation findings accessible to those affected by government programs and policies, transparency and accountability are enhanced. This fosters greater public trust in the government and its initiatives.

Evaluation Question 3.8: What factors facilitated and/or hindered the achievement of the NEPF's desired outcomes?

Gaining an understanding of the factors that have either facilitated or hindered the achievement of the desired outcomes of the NEPF is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of the policy framework. By identifying these factors, stakeholders can develop strategies to address gaps, overcome challenges, and capitalize on opportunities to improve results. This valuable insight can inform policy and decision-making processes and enhance the design and implementation of evaluation policies and practices. Additionally, comprehending the factors that have influenced the success or failure of the NEPF's desired outcomes can contribute to the development of a stronger evaluation culture within the government. It can also promote the utilization of evaluation results to inform policy and decision-making, leading to improved governance and more effective programs and policies. The findings from desk research, semi-structured interviews, and the online survey (specifically questions 28 and 29) provide valuable insights into the factors that have facilitated or hindered the achievement of the NEPF's desired outcomes.

FACILITATING FACTORS

The evaluation found several factors that facilitated the implementation rollout of the policy framework. These are:

Strengths: Internal

Initially, the availability of 200 million pesos and subsequent establishment of the M&E Fund played a vital role in supporting the implementation of the NEPF. The adoption of the NEPF in 2015 marked a significant milestone for the country. However, effectively implementing such a policy framework requires adequate resources, capacities, and incentives. The creation of the M&E Fund was a crucial step in facilitating the NEPF rollout. According to the informant, the M&E Fund was first introduced in 2016 as a special budget provision under the General Appropriations Act (GAA). It was specifically designated to support performance monitoring and evaluation activities across various government agencies, with NEDA overseeing its management and administration.

The M&E Fund has contributed to the NEPF rollout in several ways. **First**, it has provided a dedicated source of funding for evaluation activities, addressing the previous lack or insufficiency of financial resources in many government agencies. The fund is managed by NEDA, and access to it is limited to agencies involved in evaluation activities or partnerships. **Second**, the M&E Fund has facilitated capacity building in evaluation through the hiring of experts to conduct evaluation studies and the establishment of the M&E portal. **Third**, the fund has supported the dissemination and utilization of evaluation findings and recommendations by financing knowledge management initiatives like workshops, forums, and online publications.

Overall, the existence of the M&E Fund has contributed to the institutionalization of evaluation as a regular and essential practice within government agencies. It has also enhanced the quality and utility of evaluation outputs. Furthermore, the M&E Fund has fostered a culture of evidence-based decision-making and accountability, which are crucial for achieving development goals and building public trust in government institutions. However, sustaining and expanding the impact of the M&E Fund will require ongoing political commitment, stakeholder engagement, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of its own performance.

Second, despite losing its partners from other oversight agencies, NEDA has taken on a leadership role and remained committed to the NEPF implementation rollout. As the primary agency responsible for formulating and implementing development plans in the country, NEDA's leadership has played a crucial role in facilitating the implementation of the NEPF. There are several key ways in which NEDA's leadership has been instrumental. **First**, NEDA has provided a clear and strong mandate for NEPF implementation. Being the top economic planning agency, NEDA has a broad and strategic perspective on development, enabling it to guide and coordinate the efforts of various government agencies, civil society organizations, and academic institutions in implementing the NEPF. This ensures alignment with national development goals and priorities, integrating the NEPF into the broader policy and programmatic agenda. **Second**, NEDA's leadership has facilitated stakeholder engagement and collaboration in NEPF implementation. Through the establishment of an inter-agency ERG for commissioned evaluation studies, NEDA serves as a quality assurance body, offering direction, guidance, and feedback throughout the evaluation process. As the Interim Secretariat of the ETF, NEDA plays a vital coordinating role in NEPF implementation across government agencies. NEDA has also fostered partnerships with civil society organizations, academic institutions, and international development partners, promoting transparency, accountability, and participation. **Third**, NEDA's leadership has enabled the leveraging of international partnerships, such as with UNDP and 3ie, to access international best practices, knowledge, and resources in evaluation.

Third, the Draft NEPF Guidelines have served as a comprehensive framework for the practice and utilization of evaluation, particularly within the Strategic M&E Project for commissioning and managing evaluations. Guidelines play a crucial role in ensuring effective policy and program implementation. In the case of the NEPF, the presence of guidelines has significantly facilitated its implementation. The NEPF guidelines provide a structured framework for conducting relevant, credible, and valuable evaluations that inform decision-making. Developed jointly by UNDP and NEDA, with input from various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and academic experts, the guidelines outline a step-by-step evaluation process. They cover essential aspects such as planning, scoping, data collection and analysis, and reporting. Additionally, the guidelines incorporate evaluation principles, standards, and quality criteria, including relevance, validity, reliability, and utility.

Strengths: External

Collaboration with development partners, including 3ie, UNICEF, and UNDP, within the Strategic M&E Project has played a significant role in facilitating the implementation of the NEPF. These organizations possess extensive evaluation experience, which has been invaluable in supporting the government's efforts to strengthen its evaluation capacity. Implementing the NEPF is a complex and multi-stakeholder endeavor that necessitates collaboration among various actors, including government agencies, civil society organizations, academia, and international development partners. The partnership between NEDA, UNDP, 3ie, and other stakeholders has greatly facilitated the rollout of the NEPF implementation. NEDA, as the lead agency responsible for formulating and implementing the NEPF, has been instrumental in creating an enabling policy framework for evaluation in the country. It has also served as the coordinating focal point for monitoring the NEPF's implementation across different government agencies. However, NEDA has faced resource constraints and technical expertise gaps that have limited its capacity to fully implement the NEPF. In this context, the partnership with UNDP and 3ie has provided crucial support in several ways. **First**, it has strengthened NEDA's capacity to lead and coordinate the NEPF implementation through

technical assistance, capacity building, and knowledge sharing. UNDP and 3ie have shared their international best practices, tools, and methodologies in evaluation, assisting NEDA in developing its evaluation guidelines and standards. **Second**, the partnership has ensured that the NEPF aligns with global and regional evaluation frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNEG, and the OECD-DAC. This has enabled the country to both learn from and contribute to the global evaluation discourse, adopting a more results-oriented and collaborative approach to development. **Third**, the partnership has leveraged additional resources and established further collaborations for evaluation activities in the Philippines. For instance, DFAT through the PWP program have implemented evaluation studies on priority sectors such as Sustainable Livelihood Program, Special Program for Employment Studies, and Court Justice Reforms. They have also mobilized local and international evaluation experts to provide technical support to government agencies and civil society organizations. **Lastly**, the dissemination and promotion of the NEPF policy framework have been supported by development partners, including the sustenance of the M&E Network through the organization of the M&E Network Forum.

HINDERING FACTORS

On the other hand, there are significant challenges that hinder the full maximization of the NEPF:

Weaknesses: Internal

First, one of the key challenges is the non-convening and non-establishment of the Evaluation Task Force (ETF) and its Secretariat to drive the implementation of the NEPF. The ToC highlights the establishment of the ETF as an intermediate outcome that would contribute to the overall goal of strengthening the evaluation culture. However, the ETF has not been established, which has hampered the rollout of the NEPF. The findings suggest that the NEPF could have been fully institutionalized if the ETF had been formally established. The ETF was intended to serve as the central body responsible for implementing the NEPF, coordinating evaluation activities, and monitoring the progress and impact of the framework. Without the ETF, there has been a lack of clear and consistent leadership and coordination in the implementation of the NEPF. NEDA, as the Interim Secretariat, has had to shoulder significant responsibilities in implementing the NEPF without the support of the ETF. Furthermore, the absence of the ETF has prevented the full integration of the NEPF into the government's broader policy and programmatic agenda, resulting in limited impact on development outcomes.

Second, another challenge has been the change in leadership following the 2016 national elections, which led to the loss of champions from the Oversight Agencies. The evaluation findings indicate that the departure of champions from the DBM and the OP-PMS has had a significant impact on the implementation of the NEPF. These agencies were expected to provide critical support and leadership in implementing the NEPF, and their absence has caused several challenges and setbacks. **First**, the loss of champions has resulted in a lack of high-level political will and support for the NEPF. The DBM and OP-PMS played crucial roles in advocating for the NEPF, mobilizing resources, coordinating inter-agency efforts, and communicating the importance and benefits of evaluation to the broader government and public. Without their advocacy and leadership, expanding the reach of the NEPF to more agencies and fully integrating it into the bureaucratic practices has become a considerable challenge. **Second**, the departure of champions has disrupted institutional continuity in the NEPF implementation. The DBM and OP-PMS were instrumental in designing and developing the NEPF, as well as establishing partnerships and networks. Their absence has resulted in a loss of institutional support and continuity, making it difficult to sustain the momentum and support for the NEPF over time, and hindering the achievement of its goals and objectives.

Weaknesses: Internal

First, the limited dissemination and inadequate cascading of the NEPF to agency-level evaluation units by top management officials have hindered its implementation rollout. The NEPF's goal is to institutionalize evaluation as a tool for evidence-based decision-making in the government, but achieving this requires the support and commitment of all stakeholders, including top management officials and government agencies. The limited dissemination efforts have resulted in a lack of awareness and understanding of the NEPF among stakeholders, including government agencies. Many agencies have expressed a lack of knowledge about the NEPF, its objectives, and its potential benefits. Consequently, evaluation has not been prioritized, resources have not been allocated for evaluation activities, and collaboration with other stakeholders to promote evaluation has been minimal. Furthermore, insufficient efforts by top management officials to cascade the NEPF have impeded its integration into government decision-making processes. Top management support is essential to create an enabling environment for evaluation, encourage participation, and use evaluation findings for policymaking. Without their commitment, evaluation may not be seen as a priority, and evaluation activities may not be effectively integrated into planning and budgeting processes. As a result, government agencies lack the capacity to implement the NEPF, conduct high-quality evaluations, and utilize evaluation findings to inform decision-making.

Second, the inadequate awareness of the NEPF has prevented its institutionalization within agencies, leading to a lack of central evaluation units in implementing agencies, among other issues. The limited awareness of the NEPF has been a significant barrier to its implementation rollout, particularly in terms of establishing the policy framework within agencies. Many implementing agencies have a limited understanding of the importance and benefits of evaluation due to this lack of awareness. As a consequence, evaluation is not prioritized, resources are not allocated, and collaboration with stakeholders is lacking. Additionally, the limited awareness has resulted in weak evaluation capacities within government agencies. Stakeholders may lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to implement the NEPF, conduct high-quality evaluations, and utilize evaluation findings effectively. Consequently, evaluation activities may not be timely, relevant, or credible, and the opportunity to improve policies and programs through evaluation findings is missed. Moreover, the limited awareness has made it challenging to establish a culture of evaluation within agencies. Shifting the mindset from viewing evaluation as a compliance activity to a learning and improvement activity requires the support and commitment of all stakeholders, particularly top management officials who can effectively communicate the importance and benefits of evaluation.

Finally, the NEPF has limitations in its design and scope. The evaluation identified two main limitations. **First, the NEPF's scope is limited to the Executive Branch of the government, excluding the Legislative and Judicial Branches.** While the NEPF provides guidance and standards for evaluation activities in the Executive Branch, this exclusion can lead to fragmentation in evaluation approaches, with different branches using different frameworks and standards. The lack of coordination and collaboration among branches can result in inconsistent and incomparable evaluation findings. This limitation hinders the use of evaluation in cross-sectoral policy-making and coordination. Additionally, the absence of a comprehensive approach across branches prevents the sharing and utilization of evaluation findings, missing opportunities for learning and improvement. **Second, the NEPF has a narrow focus on project and program evaluations, neglecting policy evaluations.** While project and program evaluations are important for assessing specific interventions, policy evaluations are crucial for evaluating the impact of policies on broader outcomes and goals. Policy evaluations provide insights into unintended consequences, distributional effects, and the sustainability and scalability of policies. The absence of policy evaluations in the NEPF limits the scope of evaluation activities in the government and hampers the use of evaluation in national-level policy-making. Policy evaluations offer valuable feedback to policymakers on policy impact, implementation effectiveness, and the need for policy revision or reform. By incorporating policy evaluations into the NEPF, the government can adopt a more comprehensive and integrated approach, enhancing the informed and effective development of policies.

3.4 EFFICIENCY

This section presents the findings on the **Efficiency** criteria, which aimed to assess the efficiency of the NEPF in promoting sound evaluation practices and resource optimization. The evaluation examined specific questions and indicators related to Efficiency, including the performance of the Evaluation Task Force (ETF) and adherence to NEPF provisions (EQ 4.1), the adequacy of ETF structures and processes in supporting implementing agencies (EQ 4.2), and the allocation and efficient use of resources within the NEPF (EQ 4.3). By analyzing these criteria, the evaluation results provide valuable insights into the NEPF's success in promoting sound evaluation practices while effectively utilizing available resources.

Evaluation Questions 4.1 and 4.2: To what extent were the purpose, coverage, and critical elements, such as implementation arrangements, standards, and responsibilities of concerned entities, such as agencies, the Evaluation Task Force, and the Interim Secretariat, implemented? To what extent were the Evaluation Task Force's structures and processes adequate to support implementing agencies in delivering M&E results?

The ETF plays a crucial role in implementing the NEPF in the Philippines, as it is responsible for leading and coordinating the policy framework's implementation across the government. However, **the evaluation revealed that the ETF was not convened and formally established as intended by the Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC). Consequently, the ETF's roles and the Secretariat were not performed as envisioned.**

To address this, the Interim Secretariat, led by NEDA-MES, took on the responsibility of overseeing the NEPF implementation. As the Interim Secretariat, NEDA-MES acted as the custodian of the M&E Fund and played a coordinating and supervisory role in the rollout of the NEPF and the utilization of the fund.

One of the key functions of the ETF was to establish an evaluation system that would guide evaluation activities across government agencies. This system would include guidelines and procedures for conducting evaluations, developing evaluation plans, and reporting evaluation findings. By establishing a standardized evaluation system, the ETF aimed to ensure consistency and effectiveness in evaluations, leading to more reliable and accurate results. Additionally, the ETF was expected to develop and implement capacity-building programs to enhance the evaluation skills and knowledge of government personnel. These programs would contribute to strengthening the government's capacity to make evidence-based decisions, ultimately leading to more effective policies and programs.

The ETF plays a crucial role in promoting coordination and collaboration among government agencies in implementing the NEPF. The NEPF emphasizes the importance of interagency coordination and collaboration in evaluations, and the ETF acts as a facilitator in this process. It bridges the gap between different government agencies, enabling the exchange of information and fostering collaboration in evaluations. This approach ensures more comprehensive evaluations and avoids duplicating efforts across agencies.

Furthermore, the ETF contributes to the promotion of a culture of evaluation within the government. The NEPF aims to enhance evidence-based decision-making, and the ETF plays a vital role in building awareness and understanding of the significance of evaluation in decision-making. Through capacity-building programs and coordination efforts, the ETF promotes the integration of evidence and evaluation into decision-making processes, resulting in more effective policies and programs.

Another important responsibility of the ETF would have been to ensure the effective implementation of the NEPF and the achievement of its intended outcomes. While the NEPF provides a broad

framework for evaluation in government, the ETF would have been responsible for overseeing its implementation, monitoring progress, identifying areas for improvement, and making policy change recommendations. Unfortunately, these envisioned roles and responsibilities of the ETF were not realized, and as a result, the NEPF was not fully integrated into the government system, and its goals were not fully maximized.

Regarding the evaluation question on the adequacy of the ETF's structures and processes, it cannot be answered due to the ETF's non-establishment. The evaluation identified reasons for this, such as leadership changes and the absence of champions from DBM and OP-PMS, which hindered the establishment of the ETF. Consequently, there were no structures and processes to evaluate since the ETF was never convened. Additionally, even if the ETF had been established, developing and implementing its structures and processes would have required more time. Therefore, any evaluation of the ETF's effectiveness would have been premature.

In conclusion, the evaluation question regarding the adequacy of the ETF's structures and processes cannot be addressed due to the ETF's non-establishment.

Evaluation Question 4.3: To what extent were resources invested in the efficient implementation of the policy? At what level of additional investment is needed to achieve improved or desired outcomes?

NEDA: The M&E Fund

According to the ToC, sustaining resource allocation for public sector evaluation initiatives is crucial for the Intermediate Outcome of strengthening the culture of evaluation. As mentioned earlier, an initial Php 200 million M&E Fund is allocated to NEDA, along with an annual fund, to support this objective. However, the informant confirmed that the annual fund is decreasing despite the persistent evaluation challenges in the Philippine government. Based on the gathered data, the M&E Fund has been utilized to finance NEDA track evaluations, activities in the annual M&E Network Forum, M&E Network Webinar Series, and the SMEP. Nevertheless, to fully optimize the NEPF, it is essential to produce the ToC output on the Budget Guidelines for the use of the GAA (General Appropriations Act) specifically for evaluation. This will ensure sustained resources for capacity development, hiring human resources, and conducting evaluations within the government. Alongside addressing knowledge and skills gaps, organizational and institutional changes are also necessary to enhance public sector evaluation.

In addition to funding through the GAA, it is important to seek support from development partners, particularly in terms of knowledge and skills transfer and financing actual evaluations following the NEPF guidelines. Furthermore, support from other sectors of society, particularly on the supply side, is crucial. It is necessary to harness evaluation skills in research and academic institutions to ensure a sufficient supply of capable individuals who can meet current and future evaluation demands. This will reduce dependency on international experts for conducting public sector evaluations.

Agency-level Resource Utilization and Allotment on Evaluation

As part of the summative evaluation, a scanning of online and publicly available information on M&E activities by 21 national government agencies¹² was conducted. Inputs were likewise sought from the same agencies, and eight (8)¹³ provided additional data. The mapping yields at least **288** activities relating to M&E conducted by the agencies from 2016 to 2022. The publication of overall agency

¹² CHED, DA, DAR, DENR, DepEd, DILG, DOE, DOH, DOLE, DOST, DOTr, DPWH, DSWD, DTI, LBP, LWUA, MWSS, NIA, NHA, OPAPRU, PCC

¹³ CHED, DA, DAR, DOH, DSWD, DTI, MWSS, NHA, and OPAPRU

annual, semestral, or quarterly reports constitute the majority (129, 45%). Close to one in every five (54, 19%) are impact and post evaluation studies; 29 (10%) are process evaluations; 14 (5%) are mid-term and progress evaluation reports; and 34 (12%) are case, tracer, or other specialized assessments. Capacity building in the form of training, research fora, conferences and workshops, and mentoring sessions (17, 6%), and development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks and guidelines (11, 4%) were likewise reported. Outside of the 2016-2022 timeframe, an additional six (6) activities are either ongoing or set for completion by 2023 by the DOH (4), DepEd (1), and DSWD (1).

The DA has the highest number of tagged activities at 60, most of which are impact or post evaluations (21), process evaluations (11), and regular periodic agency reports (11). Majority of DSWD's 59 total activities consist of specialized assessments and/or case studies (19), capacity buildings and fora (14), and impact and post-implementation evaluations (10). These two agencies are followed by DENR, DAR, and DTI which have at least 20 monitoring and evaluation-related initiatives.

Table 9: Evaluation-related costs¹⁴

Category	Cost	Agency reference
Evaluation Study		
Mid-term evaluation	PhP 22,627,963	DA
Impact Assessment	USD 399,986	DSWD (cost shouldered b y DFAT)
Performance Evaluation	PhP 10,066,980	DSWD's 4Ps
Iterim Monitoring	PhP 1,967,727	DOH's Sweetened Beverages Tax.
Tool creation and validation	PHP 5,000,000	DOH's Universal Health Care (UHC) Act

Data on the total costs of the M&E initiatives is limited and publicly inaccessible. Table 9 shows a picture of evaluation-related cost in the public sector. Based on data shared by select agencies for this mapping, government expenditure for individual M&E initiatives ranges from PhP 24,000, as is the case for a semestral strategy review of OPAPRU, to as high as PhP 22,627,963 for a midterm evaluation study of DA. Costs of as high as USD 399,986 were shouldered by development partners, as in the case of DFAT for a DSWD impact assessment.

As special cases, the NHA does not receive national government subsidy for evaluations, and the MWSS sources funds from its Corporate Operating Budget which is provided by concessionaires.

Agencies (e.g., CHED, DAR, DOH, DSWD, OPAPRU) have hired or partnered with third-party or external evaluators for evaluations (e.g., World Bank, UN agencies, Asian Development Bank, think tanks). The Philippine Institute for Development Studies, which is the government's primary policy think tank, is also commonly commissioned to conduct a review of program implementation, as well as process and impact evaluations by agencies.

There are likewise evaluations conducted in compliance with legal mandates. Laws with mandatory provisions on monitoring and evaluation require the responsible agency to conduct M&E activities either annually, every three (3) years, or every five (5) years, or establish a dedicated office or unit depending on the provisions stipulated in its Implementing Rules and Regulations. For instance, Republic Act 11310 or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act mandates the DSWD to monitor the program implementation and report its status every three (3) years, and thus a performance evaluation is slated for completion in 2023 costing PhP 10,066,980; while Republic Act

¹⁴ There is no data on capacity building and staffing/human resources

11510 or the Alternative Learning System (ALS) Act requires DepEd to conduct an annual review of the program and submit the report to Congress. Furthermore, DepEd in collaboration with development partners, is required to conduct an impact assessment every five (5) years.

The Universal Health Care (UHC) Act (RA 11223), on the other hand, requires the DOH to set up a Performance Monitoring Division to keep an eye on how well the health sector is doing while the law is being put into effect. The creation and validation of tools for the 2022 UHC evaluation are being implemented in 2023 at a cost of PHP 5,000,000. DOH in 2021 likewise completed a PhP 1,967,727 interim monitoring for the Sweetened Beverages Tax.

3.5 SUSTAINABILITY

Ensuring long-term benefits of the framework depends on its sustainability, which is a crucial factor. This section examines the findings related to the criteria of **Sustainability**. The evaluation assessed sustainability based on several questions and indicators. These included evaluating whether implementing agencies and other stakeholders had the capacity to sustain the gains of the NEPF (EQ 5.1), whether the ETF provided necessary support and resources to supplement agency efforts in implementing the NEPF (EQ 5.2), and whether the Interim Secretariat and implementing agencies had the resources required to sustain the NEPF implementation (EQ 5.3).

Evaluation Question 5.1: To what extent were the implementing agencies and other stakeholders capacitated to sustain the gains of the NEPF?

One of the main challenges in sustaining the gains of the NEPF is the limited capacity among implementing agencies and other stakeholders to effectively conduct evaluations. Although the framework provides principles and guidelines, the evaluation revealed that many government agencies have not institutionalized the NEPF. The responsibility for implementing the framework lies with individual agencies and stakeholders, which poses a further challenge. Additionally, there is a lack of political will to support the NEPF, as demonstrated by the loss of champions from the DBM and OP-PMS. While the government initially supported the framework's launch, concerns have been raised about potential shifts in political priorities over time, leading to a lack of commitment to the NEPF's principles and guidelines. This lack of commitment can undermine the long-term sustainability of the framework's achievements.

Despite these challenges, efforts have been made to support implementing agencies and other stakeholders in maintaining the benefits of the NEPF. First, the development of the Draft NEPF Guidelines enables the public sector, particularly the Executive Department, to initiate, plan, execute, and manage evaluations. These guidelines can serve as a model for conducting evaluation studies. Second, the regular M&E Network Forum provides a platform for agencies and stakeholders to learn about evaluation practices and participate in capacity-building activities.

However, the NEPF has only been implemented by a small fraction of the bureaucracy so far. The evaluation results also suggest that the government has not fully embraced the policy framework. Therefore, assessing the increased capacity of agencies may be premature and require further investigation. Moreover, only a few participants in the evaluation were able to identify initial institutional changes linked to their agency's involvement in NEPF rollout activities.

Evaluation Question 5.2: To what extent should the Evaluation Task Force provide necessary intervention and resources to complement agency efforts in implementing the NEPF?

The ETF plays a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of the NEPF and providing the necessary support to complement agency efforts. To ensure the sustainability of the NEPF, it is essential for the ETF to actively support agencies in their implementation endeavors. One way the ETF can offer support is by fostering a coordinated approach to evaluation across different sectors. This involves approving and endorsing the Draft NEPF Guidelines, encouraging consistent evaluation practices across sectors, and ensuring that results and recommendations are comparable.

Another way the ETF can provide assistance is through technical support to agencies and other stakeholders. This includes developing training programs for evaluators, offering guidance on evaluation methodologies, and supporting the creation and execution of evaluation plans. By providing technical assistance, the ETF can enhance the capacity of agencies and stakeholders to conduct effective evaluations. Financial support can also be provided by the ETF to facilitate evaluations, ensuring their execution and the wide dissemination of findings and recommendations to relevant stakeholders.

In addition to technical and financial support, the ETF can offer advocacy and communication assistance. This involves raising awareness about the significance of evidence-based policymaking and evaluation, engaging with key decision-makers and stakeholders, and ensuring that evaluation findings and recommendations are considered during policy-making processes. By providing advocacy and communication support, the ETF can maintain ongoing political backing for the NEPF and foster a culture of evidence-based policymaking in the Philippines.

Lastly, the ETF should provide oversight and monitoring of NEPF implementation. This includes monitoring progress towards the NEPF's objectives and offering feedback to agencies and stakeholders regarding their performance. By exercising oversight and monitoring, the ETF can ensure the proper utilization of the NEPF and ensure that agencies and stakeholders adhere to the framework's requirements.

Evaluation Question 5.3: What resources are needed by the Interim Secretariat and IAs to sustain the NEPF implementation?

To ensure the sustained implementation of the NEPF, both the Interim Secretariat and implementing agencies require various resources, including financial, technical, human, and institutional resources.

For Implementing Agencies:

1. Financial resources are necessary to support evaluations across sectors, as well as the development and implementation of capacity-building initiatives for evaluators and stakeholders. Adequate financial support is essential for sustaining the NEPF's gains in the long term.
2. Technical resources are needed to ensure effective evaluations that adhere to the NEPF's principles and guidelines. These resources also support capacity-building initiatives, such as training workshops and mentorship programs.
3. Institutional resources are required to integrate evaluation into the policy-making process. This involves developing systems and processes to ensure evaluations are incorporated into decision-making and that findings and recommendations are considered. Establishing appropriate institutional arrangements is crucial for sustaining the NEPF's gains and promoting evidence-based policymaking.

For the Interim Secretariat:

Over the past five years, the NEDA-MES has served as the Interim Secretariat for the NEPF. However, it is crucial to establish a dedicated unit with staff specifically focused on the NEPF and other evaluation functions. The availability of human resources is vital for successful NEPF implementation. This includes having dedicated staff at the Interim Secretariat who can guide and support implementing agencies and stakeholders, as well as evaluation teams capable of conducting evaluations across various sectors. Human resources are also necessary for implementing capacity-building initiatives, such as trainers and facilitators.

To address this need, the Central Evaluation Unit (CEU) was created under the NEDA-UNDP Strategic M&E Project in July 2022. The CEU has temporarily assumed the role of the Interim Secretariat until a permanent Evaluation Staff at NEDA is established. The evaluation findings highlighted the importance of the CEU in sustaining NEPF implementation. It is recommended that the CEU takes the lead in all NEPF-related initiatives, including addressing resource and technical capacity gaps within implementing agencies. As a newly established body, the CEU requires capacity-building support to fully optimize its functioning and effectiveness.

3.6 IMPACT

The ultimate objective of the NEPF is to make a positive impact on national priorities by enhancing policies and programs. This section focuses on the **Impact** criteria and presents the evaluation findings. It assesses how effectively the NEPF has led to improvements in policies and programs and its overall contribution to the achievement of national priorities.

Evaluation Questions: To what extent has the NEPF generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? To what extent has the NEPF made a significant difference?

On the positive outcome

Since its adoption in 2015, the NEPF has had various effects, both positive and negative, intended and unintended, at different levels. **One of the notable positive effects is the increased emphasis on evidence-based policymaking.** The NEPF has established a formal evaluation system, institutionalizing evaluation as a crucial component of the policy-making process. This has resulted in a greater focus on program effectiveness and impact, as well as a more rigorous approach to evaluating government programs and policies. **Another positive outcome of the NEPF is the contribution to enhance capacity of government agencies to conduct evaluations.** Through the development of evaluation standards and capacity-building initiatives, the NEPF has contributed to improving agencies' ability to carry out evaluations effectively. This has led to higher-quality evaluations and a greater utilization of evaluation findings in policy-making. However, there are also negative and unintended effects associated with the NEPF.

On the unintended consequence

One unintended consequence is the potential for evaluations to be viewed solely as a compliance requirement rather than a valuable tool for learning and program improvement. This may result in evaluations being conducted merely to fulfill NEPF's obligations, without generating meaningful insights that can inform policy-making decisions.

On the higher level effect

At a higher level, the NEPF has contributed to fostering a culture of evidence-based policymaking within the Executive Branch. By establishing a formal evaluation system, the NEPF has elevated the importance of evaluation in the policy-making process. This has generated a greater demand for evidence and a heightened focus on program effectiveness and impact when making policy decisions.

Furthermore, **the NEPF has positively influenced the use of evaluations for program improvement.** Since its adoption, there has been a significant increase in the number of evaluations conducted by government agencies. For example, the NEPF prompted the OPAPRU and DA to conduct evaluations of its programs and other projects. This increased utilization of evaluations has helped OPAPP ensure evidence-based and effective programs, leading to improved service quality for stakeholders. Another **positive effect of the NEPF is the enhanced collaboration between government agencies and other stakeholders in the evaluation process.** Through mechanisms like the ERG, partnerships with evaluation experts, and the M&E Network Forum, the NEPF has emphasized the importance of involving stakeholders. This has facilitated greater collaboration and dialogue between government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. Such collaboration ensures transparency and participation in evaluations and promotes the widespread sharing and utilization of evaluation findings in policy-making.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the conclusions and recommendations of the summative evaluation conducted on the NEPF. The evaluation assessed the framework's Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, and Impact and identified areas that require improvement. Based on the findings, conclusions regarding the overall performance of the NEPF were drawn, and provide recommendations to enhance the framework further.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

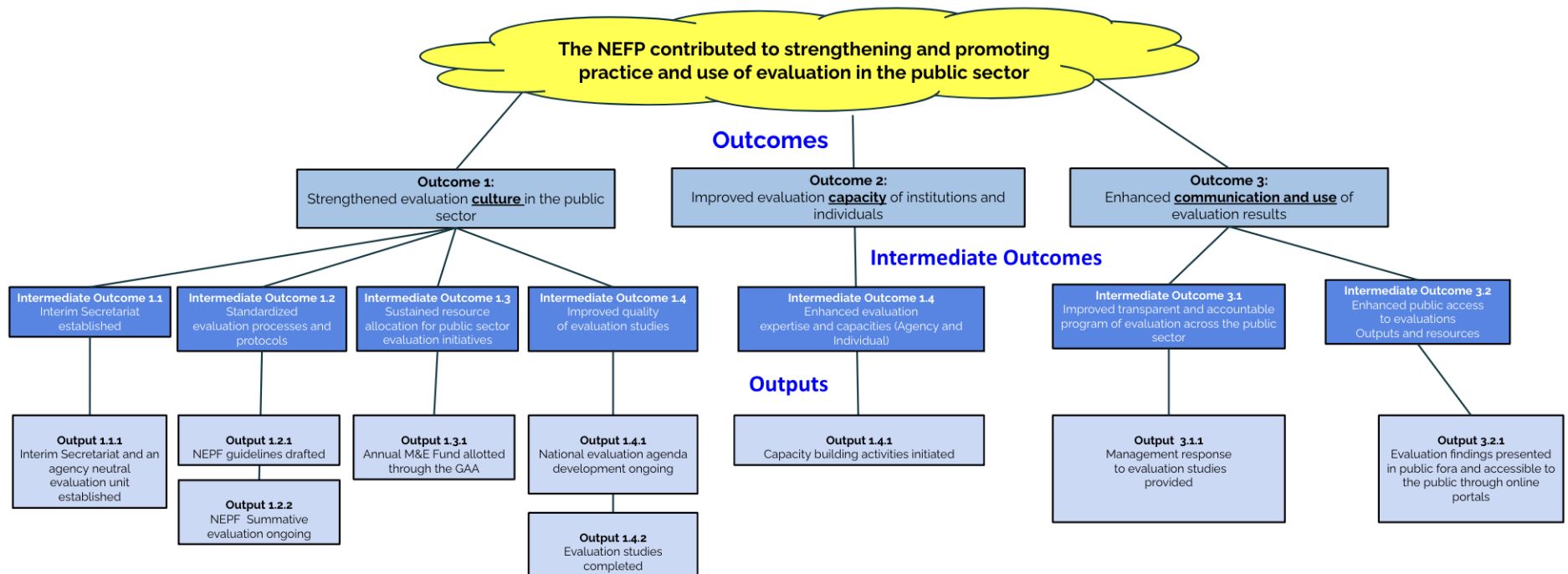
In conclusion, the NEPF has made significant contributions to promoting a culture of evaluation within the government and emphasizing the importance of evidence-based decision-making. As shown in the Theory-in-Use in **Figure 9** illustrates the key achievements of the framework, particularly in Outcome 1, which is evident through the establishment of clear standards (Draft NEPF Guidelines), supporting structures (Interim Secretariat and CEU), and regular resource allocation via the annual M&E Fund. However, there have been challenges in achieving Outcome 2, as the intended Competency Framework and National Capacity Development Plans have not been formulated. Additionally, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of capacity-building activities such as the M&E Webinar Series in enhancing participants' evaluation skills. In terms of Outcome 3, the Theory-in-Use highlights the existence of mechanisms for communicating and utilizing evaluations, including Management Responses and the National Evaluation Portal. However, there is a lack of clarity regarding whether Management Responses have translated into actions and actual program improvements.

The evaluation has identified several factors that have contributed to the NEPF's accomplishments. These include the availability of the 200 million pesos and the establishment of the M&E Fund, which have played a crucial role in supporting NEPF implementation roll-out. Despite losing partners from other oversight agencies, NEDA has demonstrated leadership and commitment to the NEPF rollout. The development of the Draft NEPF Guidelines has provided a comprehensive framework for evaluation practice and utilization, particularly through the Strategic M&E Project. Collaboration with development partners, including *gie*, UNICEF, and UNDP, has also been beneficial.

However, there are significant challenges that impede the full realization of the NEPF's potential. These include the non-convening and non-establishment of the ETF and its Secretariat. Leadership changes following the 2016 national elections resulted in the loss of champions from Oversight Agencies. Limited dissemination and inadequate cascading of the NEPF to agency-level evaluation units by top management officials have hindered its implementation. Insufficient awareness of the NEPF has prevented its institutionalization within agencies, leading to a lack of central evaluation units in implementing agencies. Furthermore, the design limitations and narrow focus on project and program evaluations have overlooked the importance of policy evaluations and have confined the NEPF's scope to the Executive Branch of the government.

Finally, although the NEPF has not been fully institutionalized in the public sector and there is limited awareness among government agencies, it has played a significant role in promoting a culture of evaluation within the Executive Department of the Philippines.

Figure 9: Theory-in-Use



4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the recommendations of the Summative Evaluation of the NEPF. These recommendations are formulated based on the evaluation findings and are aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and impact of the policy framework. They are intended to provide guidance to NEDA, the ETF, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of effective evaluation policies and practices.

Recommendations	Timeframe	Who
<p>Recommendation 1: Strengthen the NEPF and its support. This can be achieved through:</p> <p>1.1 Enhancing the NEPF's Institutional, financial, technical, human, and political support resources</p> <p>1.2 Strengthening the policy backing of the NEPF through the National Evaluation Policy (NEP) or an Executive Order (EO).</p> <p>1.3 Re-engaging DBM and OP-PMS and securing their continued support for the NEPF</p> <p>These recommendations focus on strengthening the NEPF as a framework and ensuring it has the necessary support and resources. Recommendation 1.1 addresses the overall support and resources, while Recommendation 1.2 emphasizes the policy backing, and Recommendation 1.3 specifically targets the support from DBM and OP-PMS.</p>	<p>Immediate and from short to long-term</p> <p>Immediate and short-term</p> <p>Immediate and short-term</p>	<p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.</p> <p>ETF</p> <p>NEDA</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Strengthen the NEFP implementation rollout and public sector evaluation activities. This can be achieved through:</p> <p>2.1 Broadening the application of the NEPF to include all branches of the government, such as the legislative and judicial branches, and integrating policy evaluations into the framework.</p> <p>2.2 Conducting additional evaluation studies and increasing demand for evaluation by providing training and building capacity. It is also essential to continue or finalize the development of the National Capacity Development Plan. Additionally, it is necessary to prioritize the development of a pipeline for evaluation studies in the near to medium term through the formulation of the National Evaluation Agenda.</p>	<p>Medium to long-term</p> <p>Short to long-term</p>	<p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within the government.</p> <p>ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.</p>

2.3 Optimizing the existing National Evaluation Portal as the centralized evaluation database or registry and tracking actions on the Management Response. Additionally, the current interface can be improved by creating a summary/dashboard of the evaluation studies, classified according to evaluation type and showing key details (e.g., implementing agencies, budget, impact, and outcomes of evaluation subject, and the corresponding results). Furthermore, the portal must allow the uploading/submission of evaluation studies and M&E data into the portal by implementing agencies.	Immediate	ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.
2.4 Rolling out the Draft NEPF Guidelines.	Immediate	ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.
2.5 Establishing an evaluation quality assurance mechanism.	Short to medium term	ETF
These recommendations focus on the implementation and operational aspects of the NEPF and evaluation activities. Recommendation 2.1 expands the NEPF's scope and integration, while Recommendation 2.2 emphasizes conducting more evaluation studies and capacity building. Recommendations 2.3 and 2.4 address the optimization of the evaluation portal and guidelines, respectively, while Recommendation 2.5 introduces a quality assurance mechanism.		
Recommendation 3: Enhance stakeholder engagement and awareness, particularly the government agencies, to improve their knowledge of the benefits of the NEPF in achieving their organizational goals.	Immediate	ETF and other relevant stakeholders within the government.
Recommendation 4: Restructure the ETF by incorporating additional members from both within and outside (academic and research institutions, development partners, NGOs) the government, preferably at the advisory level.	Medium term	ETF and other relevant stakeholders within and outside the government.
This recommendation pertains to the restructuring of the ETF by including additional members from the civil society, non-government organizations, development partners, and the academe, at the advisory level.		

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