Training in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a common element of efforts to strengthen country M&E systems. This Guide provides a framework for assessing the quality—strengths and weaknesses—of M&E training currently provided in a country. This framework should prove useful to governments, their donor partners, and to the training organizations themselves in assisting them to identify options for strengthening such training.

Guide to Conducting Reviews of Organizations Supplying M&E Training

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Marie-Hélène Adrien

Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) helps build sound governance in countries—improving transparency and building a performance culture within governments to support better management and policymaking, including the budget process—through support for the creation or strengthening of national/sectoral monitoring and evaluation systems. OED aims to identify and develop good-practice approaches in countries, and to share the growing body of experience with ECD efforts.

The OED Working Paper series disseminates the findings of work in progress to encourage the exchange of ideas about enhancing development effectiveness through evaluation. An objective of the series is to get the findings out quickly, even if the presentations are somewhat informal.

The findings, interpretations, opinions, and conclusions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the authors. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Operations Evaluation Department or any other unit of the World Bank, its Executive Directors, or the countries they represent.

CONTENTS

The Operations Evaluation Department (OED) of the World Bank has a long-standing program of support to strengthen monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacities in developing countries, as an important part of sound governance. In providing this support, OED works closely with the Bank's operational areas, with governments and with other donors. Countries assisted under this program in recent years include Benin, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Honduras, the Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania and Uganda.

A common feature of M&E capacity-building work is provision of training—for evaluation practitioners, evaluation managers and planners, and for those who provide M&E training. This *Guide* was prepared to assist governments, donors, and others in assessing strengths and weaknesses of national organizations that provide M&E training. These organizations can include universities, research centers, civil service colleges, national evaluation associations, and NGOs.

A draft of this *Guide* was prepared by Universalia, a Canadian consulting company, in 2001, under contract to OED. Funding support for this work, and also for the Ghanaian review discussed below, was provided by the Policy & Operations Evaluation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Government. The author of the *Guide* was Marie-Hélène Adrien, and OED's task manager was Keith Mackay.

In tandem with work on the Guide, OED sponsored a review of training organizations in Ghana, and this provides a useful illustration of the review methodology (Marie-Hélène Adrien, "Assessment of Ghanaian Organizations Involved in the Delivery of Monitoring and Evaluation Training," report prepared for OED, 2001.) A copy of this review is available at OED's website for evaluation capacity development: <www.worldbank.org/oed/ecd>

1   INTRODUCTION

As part of its efforts to promote sound governance, the World Bank is working with a number of countries to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacities and systems. This capacity-building focuses on the ability of governments and civil society to conduct good-quality M&E and to use it systematically in reviews of government performance. A key activity in strengthening capacities is the provision of training to civil servants and others in a range of M&E tools and techniques, including poverty monitoring, logical framework, performance monitoring indicators, results-based management, program evaluation, impact evaluation, cost-benefit analysis, sector reviews, policy analysis, rapid review techniques, participatory and stakeholder evaluation, statistical sampling, research methodology, and development of M&E systems.[1]

Training in M&E is ideally provided by local organizations such as universities, research centers, specialist organizations including civil service colleges, national evaluation associations, or even non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Another approach to provision of M&E training is reliance on expatriate experts or foreign training organizations. However, this approach is considered less likely to lead to the development of sustainable local capacity, nor is this approach well suited to adapting M&E training to national conditions and experience. For these reasons, the Bank has provided trainer-training to staff of local organizations in a number of Sub-Saharan African and Central Asian countries, so that the capacity of these organizations to deliver M&E training will be strengthened in a sustainable manner.

A number of governments put a high priority on the development of national capacities for M&E. In any country, it is likely that training in some types of M&E is already provided. It is useful for governments and the donors that support them, as well as for the organizations themselves, to have a clear understanding of the quality of this training and also of the types of M&E in which training is not currently offered locally.

This *Guide* is intended to assist in the in-depth review of organizations delivering M&E training in developing countries. Since a number of these organizations also provide consulting services in M&E and are thus a potentially important source of expertise for ministries and other agencies wishing to commission evaluations, the *Guide* also encompasses an assessment of the ability of these training organizations to provide M&E consulting services.

The *Guide* provides a general checklist of issues to be considered in conducting a review, which can and should be adapted to the specific circumstances of the country.

The *Guide* covers the following issues:

- The extent of supply of evaluation training, including the strengths and weaknesses in the existing curriculum, and the supply of different areas of M&E consultancy work

- Adequacy of training facilities

- Staff experience and expertise in M&E

- The organization's clientele and their feedback on the quality of M&E activities delivered by the organization

- The entrepreneurial and marketing ability of the organization to commercialize M&E activities

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[1] A sample of these is discussed in OED, *Monitoring & Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods and Approaches*, (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2002).

- External stakeholder feedback and support
- Charges for various M&E training courses.

2 CONDUCTING AN ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

2.1 Overview

There are five basic steps in an organizational review:

1) Planning

2) Data collection

3) Data analysis

4) Report writing

5) Options and recommendations for action.

2.2 Planning the Review

Which organizations can or could potentially supply M&E training and consultancy services?

The range of organizations supplying M&E training and consultancy services in evaluation vary from one country to the next. In general, however, the following organizations are often good sources of these services:[2]

- Universities (for instance, departments of administration, planning, or statistics)

- Research centers

- Specialized agencies (civil service colleges, national audit offices, national statistical agencies)

- NGOs and other groups in civil society (such as evaluation associations and networks of evaluators).

Prior to a formal targeting of organizations for review, an M&E organizational capacity mapping exercise can be conducted to ensure that all organizations that can or could supply M&E training and consultancy services are considered.

What framework can be used to assess an organization's present or future abilities to supply training and consultancy services in M&E?

A comprehensive framework for assessing the ability of an organization to supply M&E training and consultancy services in M&E can be used to develop a checklist of issues.
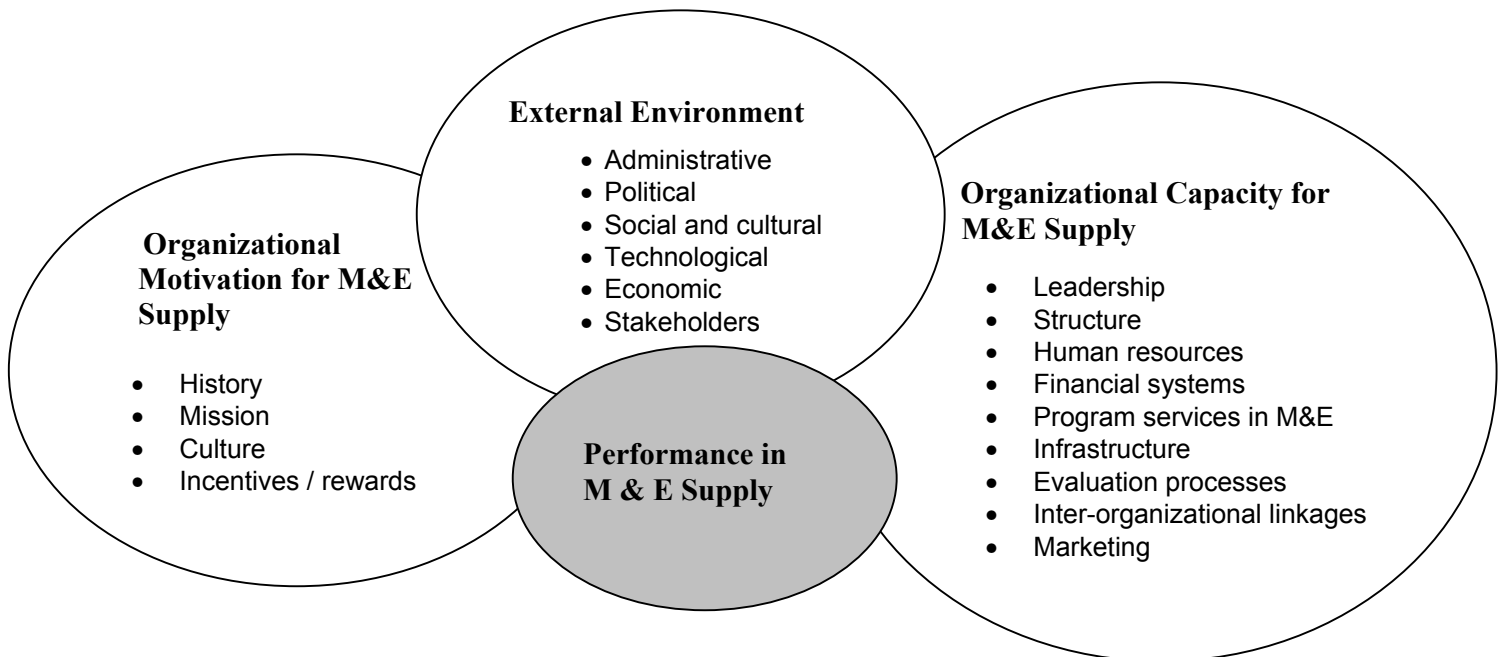
This performance framework[3] (figure 1) presents three dimensions that can be assessed to determine the organization's existing and potential supply of M&E training and consultancy services:

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[2] This list excludes ministries, which might contain M&E departments or units with skilled staff in M&E, but which usually would not offer their services to others outside their ministry.

[3] Adapted from a framework for assessing organizational performance: Lusthaus, C., Adrien, M-H., Anderson, G., and Carden, F., *Enhancing Organizational Performance: A toolbox for self-review* (IDRC Publications, 1999).

1. The external environment within which the organization is evolving, and its effects on the organization's ability to supply M&E training and consultancy services. Key issues include the level of external demand for M&E, stakeholder support for the organization as a delivery agency, and the sanctions that exist for poor managerial performance. This review is also referred to as a diagnosis of the public sector environment, including incentives and ethics.[4]

Figure 1: Framework for Conducting a Review of an Organization Supplying M&E Training and Consultancy Services

External Environment
- Administrative
- Political
- Social and cultural
- Technological
- Economic
- Stakeholders

Organizational Motivation for M&E Supply
- History
- Mission
- Culture
- Incentives / rewards

Performance in M & E Supply

Organizational Capacity for M&E Supply
- Leadership
- Structure
- Human resources
- Financial systems
- Program services in M&E
- Infrastructure
- Evaluation processes
- Inter-organizational linkages
- Marketing

2. The organizational motivation for supplying M&E training and consultancy services. This includes the extent to which the mission and mandate of the organization support the supply of M&E training and consultancy services, whether the organizational culture[5] supports M&E for accountability and learning purposes, and whether there are internal incentives for supplying M&E training and consultancy services.

3. Its organizational capacity. This includes leadership for supplying M&E, infrastructure, faculty members, outreach to other organizations, curriculum content, administrative systems, and organizational structure for the delivery of M&E training and consultancy services.

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[4] See Keith Mackay, *Evaluation Capacity Development: A Diagnostic Guide and Action Framework*, World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, ECD Working Paper No. 6 (Washington D.C.: OED, 1999), p. 6-7.
[5] Note that for public sector agencies the distinction between the external, public sector culture and the internal organizational culture is at best a blurred one. For ministries and other public sector agencies the latter is likely to be strongly influenced by the former.

Based on this framework, specific terms of reference can be developed to guide the review. Annex I presents an example of terms of reference in which the emphasis was the review of the organization's M&E capacities, as well as stakeholder perspectives.

What should be requested from the organization prior to the review?

Conducting a review requires an organization to invest time. First, the organization must allocate time for meetings with designated staff. Second, the organization must collect a series of documents that will be important for the review. As a rule of thumb, plan to give the organization a three-week advance notification to enable it to get ready for the review. Annex II provides an example of a list of things to request in advance from the organization.

How long will it take?

The scope and depth of a review will vary depending on its purpose and on the time allocated for it, the uses to which the review might be put, the number of issues to be assessed, the size of the organization, and the availability of documents and informants. For an in-depth assessment of the type outlined in this review, allow two to three days of data collection per organization, including document review, visit, and interviews. For some organizations, especially those suspected to have very weak capacities, a short visit might be sufficient to rule them out from further consideration (or perhaps to indicate that a more in-depth assessment of them is warranted).

2.3 Data Collection

Data for an organizational review typically come from three sources: people (inside and external to the organization), documents, and observation of the facilities.

People inside the organization

During the review, data should be collected from the following groups or individuals:

- The director, CEO, or equivalent: a two-hour, individual face-to-face meeting is usually needed for this interview.

- The director of M&E programs (or equivalent).

- Faculty and staff members involved in the supply of M&E training and consultancy services, training or consulting. Depending on staff availability, this meeting can be conducted as a focus-group interview, followed by individual meetings with key informants from the group when they emerge.

Annex III provides a set of questions from which interview guides can be developed and adapted for each category.

In addition, if time permits and if judged appropriate, interviews or focus groups can be conducted with other internal staff members, such as:

- Librarian

- Students

- Business development director, coordinator, or head

- Finance director, coordinator, or head.

People external to the organization

Stakeholders' opinions are important. They reflect the extent to which there is external support for the organization, the organization's reputation, and its reach inside and outside the country. Stakeholder groups generally include one or more of the following:

- Existing donors and funding agencies
- Competitors (other organizations supplying M&E training and consultancy services in the country)
- Participants who have attended training, or the ministries, local governments, or other organizations that employ them[6]
- Organizations that have received M&E consulting services
- National government agencies which oversee public sector reform efforts
- Any other external stakeholder deemed appropriate.

Annex IV provides a list of questions that can be adapted to develop interview guides for external stakeholders.

Documents

Documents are a rich source of information. To the extent possible, try to obtain the following documents for your review:

- Background documents on the organization, including commercial brochures, annual reports, strategic plans, previous evaluations of the organization, donors' and funding agencies' reports on the organization, mission statements
- Program and course documents, both general and specific to M&E, such as lists or outlines of courses, lecture notes on M&E courses and services, and bibliographies
- M&E course and workshop materials: review exercises, theory presented
- Recent publications, particularly as they relate to the M&E field
- Course evaluation ratings by participants
- Curricula vitae of faculty and staff
- Consulting reports conducted in the field of M&E
- Client lists (type of organization, as well as level of participants involved) for the services provided in general and for the M&E training and constancy services in particular
- Follow-up to the services delivered (such as tracer studies of former participants)
- It is also useful to review other documents—for instance, local newspapers that may include advertisements for the organization's M&E training and consultancy services.
- Pricing structure (rates charged for training or consultancy services in M&E).

Availability of documents is often a limitation in these reviews. In some instances the documents do not exist, in other cases they are not readily available or are only partially complete.

Observation

Another source of data is on-site observation of the premises. As you visit the organization, collect data that will allow you to answer the following questions:

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[6] While it is easy to track employers, it is in practice very difficult to track former participants or their direct supervisors. It is useful to ask the organization for a list of participants (with their contact information).

- How well located is the organization? Is it easily accessible to participants?
- Does the organization have the basic infrastructure to run a training course—for instance, access to water and electricity at all times, and a generator in case of electrical shortages?
- Is there adequate ventilation in the classrooms? Is there air conditioning?
- How many classrooms can accommodate the training?
- Does the organization have modern training equipment, such as overhead projectors, flipcharts, VCRs, LCD projectors, and computers?
- Can the organization provide accommodations and meals for the participants? For how many? Are the provisions of suitable quality?
- Is the organization equipped to provide distance-learning sessions?
- What is the level of technology, such as access to the Internet? How many staff members have or use computers?
- What have former participants said about the adequacy of the premises?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the organization's facilities?
- How do the facilities of the organization compare with those of its competitors?

2.4   Analysis

Once the data are collected, your document analysis, observation notes, and interview results can be reviewed in light of the following criteria:

- The mission and mandate of the organization—in particular, the extent to which supply of M&E training and consultancy services is a key component of the mission and mandate.
- Areas of strength and weakness in M&E—that is, the areas of M&E in which the faculty provides training and conducts research or consulting assignments.[7] Organizations may have very focused areas of M&E supply expertise; some organizations may be stronger in training than in consulting. Similarly, faculty experience and expertise in M&E can vary in terms of academic experience (research, publication, teaching, conference presentations) and practitioner's experience (conducting M&E assignments).
- The adequacy of the organization's facilities for the delivery of M&E workshops.
- The organization's existing clients for M&E courses—for specific and general training courses (depending on the data available). It is useful to separate clients by categories (private, public sector, or civil society) and to examine any trends in clientele for M&E training or consulting services.
- The marketing ability of the organization—that is, its capacity to sell courses to an external target audience.
- The level of stakeholder support—that is, the degree to which either internal or external stakeholders rate favorably the ability of the organization to deliver M&E training or to undertake consultancy work in M&E.
- The comparative advantage of the organization in providing training and consultancy services in M&E, particularly from a pricing perspective.

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[7] Areas such as poverty monitoring, logical framework, performance monitoring indicators, results-based management, program evaluation, impact evaluation, cost-benefit analysis, sector reviews, policy analysis, rapid review techniques, participatory and stakeholder evaluation, statistical sampling, research methodology, consulting in M&E, training in M&E, and developing M&E systems.

2.5   Report Writing

The report will incorporate the results of the review and can be presented as follows:

- Abstract, including major findings, and key recommendations
- Background to the assignment: mandate of the study, methodology, data sources, team of consultants, and limitations to the study
- Presentation of the review:
  - Presentation of the organization, including mission and mandate in the supply of training and consultancy services in M&E
  - Strengths and weaknesses in the supply of training and consultancy services in M&E
  - Assessment of the facilities
  - Assessment of the entrepreneurial abilities of the organization to commercialize its M&E training and consultancy services
  - Synthesis of stakeholder support for the organization
  - Recommendations
  - Conclusions.

ANNEX I: EXAMPLE OF TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW[8]

The terms of reference for the review of national training organizations are to:

1) Identify the type and amount of training the organization currently provides in M&E and in related areas: poverty monitoring; log frame and performance monitoring indicators; results-based management; program evaluation (including impact evaluation); cost-benefit analysis; sector review and policy analysis; rapid review techniques; participatory and stakeholder evaluation; and other areas of social science research and quantitative analysis.

2) Identify the different types of audience for whom training is provided, especially those in the public sector, and the nature of the training—whether it is introductory (awareness training) or more advanced.

3) Assess the degree to which the organization systematically conducts self-evaluation of its training, based on levels 1 to 4 of Kirkpatrick's model.[9]

4) Review any existing evaluations of training provided—focusing, where possible, on participants' reactions about the usefulness of training to their jobs (that is, Kirkpatrick's levels 1 to 3).

5) Assess the technical quality of the training provided—its content, coverage, and rigor—including its pedagogical effectiveness.

6) Assess the M&E skills and experience of faculty and staff, based on their curricula vitae and on evaluations, research reports, and other reports to which they have made an identified contribution.

7) Assess the quality of training facilities, including the extent of reliable access to computers and distance learning facilities.

8) Assess the reach of the organization in different regions of the country.

9) Assess the entrepreneurial and marketing ability of the organization. How eager is the organization to provide training and consulting services on a fee-for-service basis? Does the organization have a well-developed marketing plan?

10) Assess the extent to which the organization already collaborates with other organizations in the provision of training.

11) Consult with key stakeholders and client organizations to ascertain their judgment concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. These include government central ministries, particularly those involved in provision of training for civil servants; sector ministries that have specialist M&E units; in-country donor representatives; donor headquarters (country and sector operational areas and evaluation offices); regional development banks (especially their evaluation offices); and other institutions, such as a national evaluation association.

12) Prepare a report incorporating the above analysis, and including:

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[8] These ToRs are closely based on those prepared by the Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank for the Ghana review of organizations delivering M&E training.

[9] The four levels comprise: training participant reactions to the training provided; the extent of their learning; extent to which their behavior on-the-job (their work performance) changes as a result of the learning they have acquired; and any consequential impacts on the organization in which the participants are employed. See Donald L. Kirkpatrick, *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1996).

- Identification of organization's strengths and weaknesses in M&E, particularly the ability to provide quality training in M&E
- The ability of the organization's staff to undertake consulting work for government, civil society, and the private sector.

13) Identify options to address substantive weaknesses. These might include provision of trainer-training in specific topics or the provision of twinning or mentoring support.

ANNEX II: LIST OF DATA TO REQUEST IN ADVANCE

Planning the review: What to request from the organization being assessed

Background information about the organization, such as the mission statement, strategic plan, marketing plan, program brochures:

1) List of training courses in areas related to M&E, such as, but not restricted to: log frame, performance monitoring indicators, results-based management; program evaluation; cost-benefit analysis; rapid review techniques, qualitative and quantitative research; and questionnaire design. For each of these courses, the organization should indicate:

- The level at which the course is being given (beginner, intermediate, advanced).

- The duration of the course—is it part of an ongoing degree program or is it a professional development course?

- How often the course has been given and the date of the last time it was given.

- The names and credentials of the trainers and teachers.

- The target audience and the actual types of participants (positions, organizations they come from, demographic characteristics). Of particular interest is the breakdown between participants from the public sector (list the specific ministries or agencies), private sector, and civil society.

2) Course evaluation completed by participants — that is, participant feedback sheets.

3) Results of tests or examinations indicating the extent of participant learning.

4) Follow-up evaluations[10] of the training carried out by the organization (including tracer studies and reports).

5) All training material that supports the M&E courses, including syllabus or outline, bibliographies, reading lists, training content materials.

6) Curriculum vitae of each faculty member providing M&E training in the organization.

7) M&E consultancy reports prepared by faculty members of the organization.

8) Links or alliances with other organizations providing M&E training.

9) Pricing structures (rates charged) for training or consultancy services in M&E.

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[10] Evaluation of the participant's application of the training in the workplace, once the training is completed. This corresponds to Level 3 of Kirkpatrick's model, discussed above.

ANNEX III: SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS WITH INTERNAL STAFF

Interview protocols can be developed and adapted for interviews with internal staff, using a combination of the following questions:

- What is the mission or mandate of your organization, both in general and as it relates to the supply of M&E?

- How does your organization support the government's agenda on M&E?

- What are the strengths of your organization in the supply of M&E training and consultancy services?

- What specific M&E training and consultancy services do you supply?[11]

- How is the supply of M&E training and consultancy services integrated into your strategic plan?

- For how long has the organization been supplying M&E training and consultancy services?

- Who are your main competitors?

- In which types of M&E is your organization recognized as a supplier of training and consultancy services? What is its reputation in these areas?

- What segments or shares of the M&E market does your organization currently supply?

- Has your share of the M&E supply market grown, declined, or remained the same in the last five years? How do you explain these trends?

- What level of experience does the staff have in the supply of M&E—both theoretical (teaching, training) and practical (conducting M&E consulting assignments)?

- In what areas of M&E have your staff specialized?[12]

- Does your organization market or commercialize its activities? How?

- What does your organization charge for different M&E courses? What is the range of charges for its consultancy services? Are you competitive?

- How financially autonomous is the organization today? What have been the trends in financial autonomy in the last five years? Why?

- What incentives and rewards exist in the organization to supply M&E training and consultancy services?

- What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of your organization in the supply of M&E training and consultancy services?

- With which organizations, individuals, or groups does your organization link or network in the areas of M&E? What is the nature of these linkages?

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[11] Areas such as poverty monitoring, logical framework, performance monitoring indicators, results-based management, program evaluation, impact evaluation, cost-benefit analysis, sector reviews, policy analysis, rapid review techniques, participatory and stakeholder evaluation, statistical sampling, research methodology, consultancy in M&E, training in M&E, and developing M&E systems.
[12] See preceding footnote.

- For your organization, what are the main obstacles to supplying M&E training and consultancy services?[13]

- For your organization, what are the main opportunities for providing M&E training and consultancy services?

- What would your organization need to be able to become a better supplier of M&E training and consultancy services?

- Is there any specific support your organization needs to strengthen its M&E training and consultancy services?

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[13] Such as lack of demand for your services; charges and fees viewed as being too high; political and economical constraints; technological difficulties; lack of stakeholder support; lack of incentives for supplying M&E training and consultancy services; poor infrastructure, staff, systems, leadership; funding constraints; lack of linkages; organizational culture that does not support M&E.

ANNEX IV: SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Interview protocols can be developed and adapted for each external stakeholder, using a combination of the following questions:

- What is the nature of your relationship with the organization?

- What kind of M&E training and consultancy services (training, consultancy work, other) has the organization supplied to you?

- How would you characterize the quality of the M&E training and consultancy services provided to you by the organization?

- From your perspective, is the organization a national or regional leader in the supply of M&E training and consultancy services?

- What lessons have you learned from working with this organization?

- In comparison to other similar organizations supplying M&E training and consultancy services in the country or region, how would you rate this organization?

- Does the organization reach to various parts of the country and region?

- How would you characterize the reputation of the organization in the country?

- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the organization?

- How would you characterize the level of support that this organization has from the national government?

- What other organizations compare favorably and unfavorably with this organization in the supply of M&E training and consultancy services?

- To what extent is the organization dependent on external funding?

- Does the organization network or link with other organizations in the country?

- Would you support the idea of strengthening the M&E capacities of the organization? In what topics? Why?

- Are the prices charged for training or consultancy services in M&E competitive?

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Other Recommended Reading

OED, *2002 Annual Report on Evaluation Capacity Development (AREC)*.

OED, *Monitoring and Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods and Approaches*, 2002.

Development Bank of Southern Africa, African Development Bank and The World Bank, *Developing African Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation*, 2000.

K. Mackay and S. Gariba (eds.), *The Role of Civil Society in Assessing Public Sector Performance in Ghana*, OED, 2000.

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