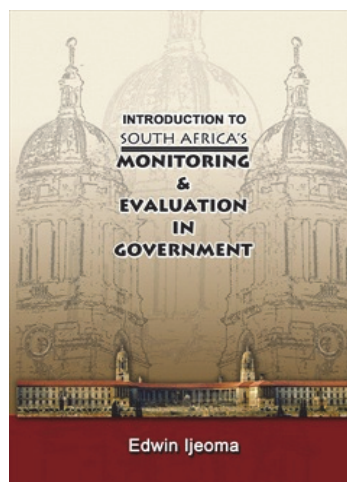


# Introduction to South Africa's Monitoring and Evaluation in Government – A BOOK REVIEW

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Prof. Edwin Ijeoma's 'Introduction to South Africa's Monitoring and Evaluation in Government' discusses monitoring and evaluation in the context of public sector in general and more specifically the South African Government and, therefore, the Government-wide monitoring and evaluation policy. Other than the general outcry for transformation or contextualising of tuition material, there is a specific bankruptcy of monitoring and evaluation text outside those written by multilateral and bilateral development partners or their staff or their consultants—for example, Kusek and Rist (2004) as well as Görgens and Kusek (2009). Therefore, this book, like those by Ile, Eresia-Eke, and Allen-Ile (2012) as well as Cloete, Rabie, and De Coning (2014) fill this gap.



Being a subject that tracks (monitoring) and assesses (evaluation) development interventions, it is engraved in the how we actualise development through public policy (Hill and Hupe 2014). For this reason, Edwin is more than qualified to discuss this subject. First, he is academically competent. He is Professor of Policy and Public Sector Economics at the University of Fort Hare in the School of Public Management and Development and before then he occupied a similar portfolio at the University of Pretoria. Second, he is also practically competent having worked as a Research Specialist in the Secretariat for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). He has served as policy adviser to several public sector and development institutions. More notably, some of the senior officials operationalising activities of the Government-wide monitoring and evaluation are

his former students. He has deliberately continued to collaborate with them on both practical and academic monitoring and evaluation assignments.

The book discusses monitoring and evaluation in the context of the South African Government-wide monitoring and evaluation intervention. This means a balanced interrogation of technical and administrative aspects of knowing as well as actually executing monitoring and evaluation activities. Unlike most text on monitoring and evaluation the book picks up its discussion from indicators without dwelling much on the results chain (impact, outcome, output, activities, and inputs) neither does it discuss the rest of the results framework (baseline values, targets, assumptions, and risks). Please see Table 1 that illustrates the important elements of the results chain and results framework.

Basically, this is the work of any monitoring and evaluation practitioner; however, most interventions delivered by planners are hardly monitoring-and-evaluation-ready. This implies executing their monitoring and evaluation tasks needs recreating the results chain and its accompanying framework. Therefore, one would have expected a monitoring and evaluation tuition text to discuss these explicitly because they provide a platform for undertaking monitoring and evaluation activities. Though an aftermath, one of the elements that the Presidency is paying attention to is risk and its management. Who is better placed to monitor risk than a monitoring and evaluation practitioner? However, a practitioner can only allot the importance this deserves if they have had explicit tuition on the subject during their training of which this book should part of the text.

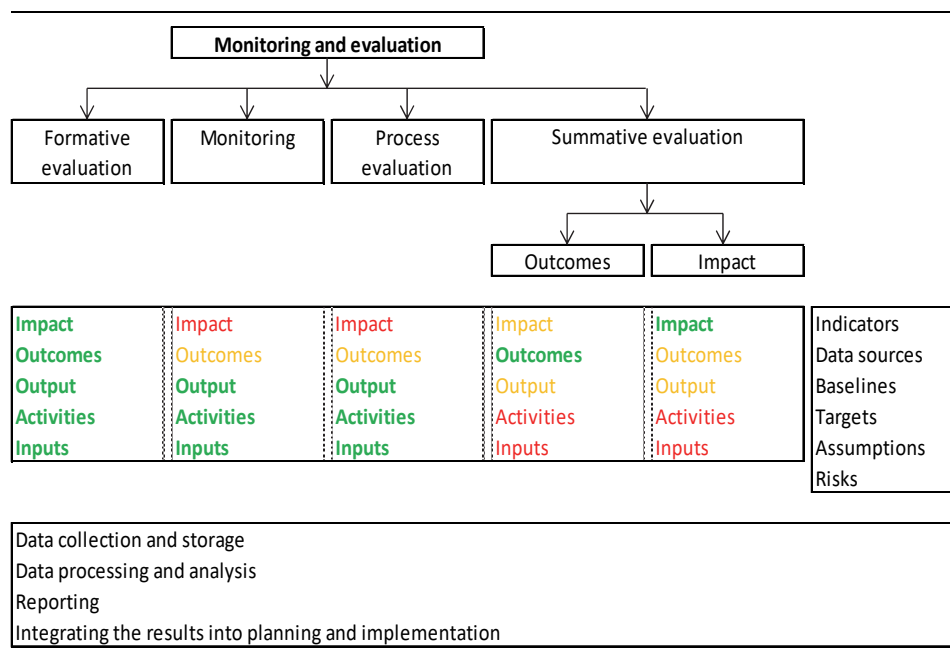
**Table 1: Illustrating the important elements of the results chain and the results framework**

	Results framework					
	Indicators	Data sources	Baseline values	Target values	Assumptions	Risks
Results chain	<b>Impact</b> Higher and long-term aspirations (positive and negative, primary and secondary) towards which an intervention must contribute.	Direct or indirect qualitative attributes or quantitative variables used to measure the <u>impact</u> being created by the intervention.	Sources of data for each <u>impact</u> indicator.	Values of <u>impact</u> indicators describing the situation before an intervention ... against which progress towards attaining <u>impacts</u> can be measured or comparisons made.	Values of <u>impact</u> indicators describing the situation that should be realised because of (or after) an intervention.	Hypotheses about events, conditions, decisions, and factors outside the control of the intervention but necessary to guarantee the successful achievement of its desired <u>impact</u> .
	<b>Outcome</b> The expected or achieved short to medium term results due to an intervention's outputs which are relevant to the achievement of the intended impacts.	Direct or indirect qualitative attributes or quantitative variables used to measure the <u>outcomes</u> being created by the intervention.	Sources of data for each <u>outcome</u> indicator	Values of <u>outcome</u> indicators describing the situation before an intervention ... against which progress towards attaining <u>outcomes</u> can be measured or comparisons made.	Values of <u>outcome</u> indicators describing the situation (number, proportion, timing, and location) that should be realised because of (or after) an intervention.	Hypotheses about events, conditions, decisions, and factors outside the control of the intervention that might negatively affect attaining the desired <u>outcome</u> .
	<b>Output</b> Products and services as well as changes resulting from activities of an intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes. These are under the control of the intervention management team.	Direct qualitative attributes or quantitative variables used to measure the <u>outputs</u> of an intervention.	Sources of data for each <u>output</u> indicator	Values of <u>output</u> indicators describing the situation before an intervention ... against which progress towards attaining <u>outputs</u> can be measured or comparisons made.	Values of <u>output</u> indicators describing the situation (number, proportion, timing, and location) that should be realised because of (or after) an intervention.	Hypotheses about events, conditions, decisions, and factors outside the control of the intervention but necessary to guarantee the successful achievement of its <u>outputs</u> .
	<b>Activities</b> Actions taken or work performed through which inputs or resources are mobilised to produce outputs of an intervention.	Direct qualitative attributes or quantitative variables used to measure the <u>activities</u> of an intervention.	Sources of data for each <u>activity</u> indicator.	Values of <u>activity</u> indicators describing the situation before an intervention ... against which performance can be measured or comparisons made.	Values of <u>activity</u> indicators describing what should be done (number, proportion, timing, and location) to realise intended outputs of an intervention.	Hypotheses about events, conditions, decisions, and factors outside the control of the intervention that might negatively affect implementing the desired <u>activities</u> .
	<b>Inputs</b> The financial, human, and material resources required by the intervention management to produce outputs.	Direct qualitative attributes or quantitative variables used to measure <u>inputs</u> of an intervention.	Sources of data for each <u>input</u> indicator.	Values of <u>input</u> indicators describing the situation before an intervention ... against which availability and consumption of <u>inputs</u> can be measured or comparisons made.	Values of indicators describing <u>inputs</u> (number, proportion, timing, and location) required to perform prescribed activities of an intervention.	Hypotheses about events, conditions, decisions, and factors outside the intervention control but necessary to guarantee availability of its <u>inputs</u> .

Sources: Adapted from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (1999) as well as Kusek and Rist (2004)

What takes the cup is a dedicated chapter on data management as well as data collection. Truth be told, the work of monitoring and evaluation begins with collecting data on monitoring and evaluation indicators (see Figure 1). This implies articulating to data collection instruments, target population and sampling, ethical considerations, data collection and storage, data processing and analysis, as well as reporting and facilitating for integrating results into planning and implementation. Therefore, one would have expected that the author to arrange this book in a procedural order for easy assimilation by students. This means Chapter 7 (Data collection in monitoring and evaluation) should have been before Chapter 6 (Data management in monitoring and evaluation) and immediately followed by Chapter 9 (Report writing in monitoring and evaluation). While on the discussion of rearranging Chapters, I think Chapter 10 (Designing a monitoring and evaluation system) should have come after Chapter 4 (Government-wide monitoring and evaluation policy) and Chapter 8 (Developing terms of reference in monitoring and evaluation) should have been the very last Chapter.

**Figure 1: Illustrating the relationship between monitoring and evaluation and its components as well as its processes**



In this book, Prof. Ijeoma demonstrates not only his academic knowledge on the subject but practical knowledge arising from his hand-on experience during his past non-academic professions and his continued collaboration with his former students practising monitoring and evaluation. For example, his discussion of the monitoring and evaluation terminology in Chapters 1 and 2 are in context of both bilateral and multilateral development partners, the South African Government, as well as community and citizen driven. This allows for one to understand the subject from their comfort zone. As a result, this text is quite comprehensive on the subject especially that it covers all bases—for example, Chapter 2 includes a discussion on types of evaluations, how to evaluate, when to evaluate, what to evaluate, and who is involved in evaluation. Further, unlike other text, Chapter 1 (basic concepts used in monitoring and evaluation) is covered in a slightly more detailed way compared with other material that places such texts at the back as glossary usually limiting the description of each term to about three lines or a sentence. Edwin's approach allows for busy government officials or upcoming monitoring and evaluation professionals to appreciate a term on the go.

Lastly, when students attempt to interrogate say the Government-wide monitoring and evaluation policy (Chapter 4), they fail to decipher the several bullet and numbered items included in this policy because most of it remains undetailed. I was, therefore, expecting a detailed discussion of such key terminology in this text. However, the text has several bullet and numbered items most of which are undetailed. Further, an inclusion of a list of abbreviations rather than integrating these within the discussion takes away from the criticality of this text. More fundamentally is the text's inability to ground more firmly monitoring and evaluation in public policy, see for example Ile, Eresia-Eke, and Allen-Ile (2012) and to some extent Hill and Hupe (2014).

Notwithstanding, this is a must have book for budding and practising monitoring and evaluation professionals. Other than supplementing texts such as Kusek and Rist (2004) as well as Görgens and Kusek (2009), it has contextualised the subject comprehensively. For example, when I initially read the South African Government-wide monitoring and evaluation policy in isolation, though alongside other academic material, I could not get the fundamentals underpinning its approaches. However, having read this Policy in context in Prof. Ijeoma's book, I now understand and most likely because of the subnational case study (Western Cape Results-based monitoring and evaluation) and a non-South African case study (Uganda).

### List of References

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