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Executive Summary: Diagnostic of Supply and Demand of Evaluators Benin, April 2018

CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES:

As part of the Twende Mbele Programme, the Office of the Evaluation of Public Policies and Analysis of Government Action (BEPPAAG) of the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic of Benin, commissioned a diagnostic study on the demand and supply of evaluators in Benin. The study focused on the following:

- evaluation market (its strengths and weaknesses),
- the supply and demand capacities for evaluation services (to take stock of skills and identify needs for evaluation capacity building to balance demand and supply for evaluators)
- the size of the evaluation market (as a means of achieving a balance between supply and demand for evaluation), especially in a context of growing demand for valuations.

METHODOLOGY:

The interviews aimed at interrogating both demand and supply side evaluation stakeholders. The targets reached on the supply side were few. However, this deficit was filled with the help of the National Network. This allowed their members to participate in the questionnaire.

Those interviewed were able to provide adequate information to establish a basis for analysis. Donors and civil society organizations were also solicited for this study. The questionnaire assessed the proficiency profiles, practice, quality of demand, constraints to the practice of the profession and community life.

Given the time constraints and delays related to the nature of the project, a qualitative approach was favored for this research. The collection of empirical data was carried out through in four ways;

1. extensive **literature review** (various evaluation reports from both government and donors)
2. **interviews** (with both supply and demand actors),
3. **preset questionnaires** and
4. Participation in a **workshop** (launch of the government evaluation database) which allowed for results obtained to be compared with other reports (24 government evaluation reports conducted between 2006 and 2016 by The



TWENDE MBELE

Office of Public Policy Evaluation). Ultimately, the interviews and questionnaires used in this study.

LIMITATIONS.

The literature review looked at various evaluation reports from both government and the donor partners. Although valuable, this proved to be a limited tool.

The time constraints induced by the contractual conditions severely limited the scope of this study. Principal actors who could have been more intimately involved, both regarding demand and supply, could not be involved.

The weaknesses in the organisation of the demand-side evaluation processes, resulting in a program or service-based dispersion of the evaluation archives has made it more difficult, if not impossible, to collect information on past studies.

Because one of the central objectives of this study is to take stock of skills and identify needs for evaluation capacity building to balance demand and supply. This necessary information on the profile of the supply was not found.

Information on evaluations conducted by sectoral government departments is almost non-existent. Apart from the data obtained from the BEPPAAG database, no department was able to provide information. A similar finding, with two exceptions, occurred with donor partners as well. Information on evaluations conducted by sectoral government departments is almost non-existent. Apart from the data obtained from the evaluation database under construction at BEPPAAG level, no department was able to provide information on the evaluations conducted in recent years.

The same observation is noticed among donors, except UNDP, which has been able to show a systematic evaluation database presenting the types of evaluation, implementers and budgets allocated, no other donor has been able to give a comprehensive account of past evaluations sponsored by their services. The information collected from donors was found to be sparse or absent.

Donors who were met with did not return the completed table that they were to fill out, in several cases the information provided data by other donors were subpar. One donor, in particular, reported only one evaluation, whereas, over the last two years, the evaluation team conducted three (3) evaluations for the same applicant, apart from the one for which he provided contact information. This has severely reduced the number of evaluations available for analysis.



TWENDE MBELE

FINDINGS. The findings below relate to the supply and demand of evaluation services:

- **In the area of supply:** the consultant profile, evaluation skills, information on the practice and information on the associative movement.
- **Demand side:** general information on demand and demand assessment (terms of reference, procurement and administration of evaluation)

On the supply side, it became evident that this was almost exclusively male dominated (out of 19 donor evaluation conducted, only one female head of mission was identified). The male domination of evaluation supply was very similar to the government.

Regarding consultant profiles: the supply varied supply of adequate academic and professional level (minimum BAC + 5 and ten years of experience for the main consultants) and weakness in the initial and continuous training system. In the current state of the valuation universe, supply is sufficient to cover demand. This balance is likely to shift if efforts to promote evaluation at the decentralised levels and institutions of the republic are realised.

1.1. Consultant type

It is an alarming fact that the professional evaluation environment in the country is predominantly male dominated. Similarly, on the side of donors as well as the government departments, heads of mission are predominantly male.

In this study, out of the 43 evaluation conducted (24 by government and 19 by donors) only one head of mission was female, she conducted a study in public health. Her credentials were backed by her academic qualifications (a Master's degree with 35 years of experience). Out of a total of 37 responses to the consultants' questionnaires in the study only three (3), less than 10 percent (8.1%), came from women as opposed to the 34 from men.

Interviews with stakeholders have confirmed mainly this male dominated trend. In organisations like the United Nations System (UN), a special effort has been made to encourage and promote the use of female consultants.

On specific subject matter and themes, a female gender profile was particularly sought after, but it has become clear that the supply of women to the field of evaluation is (as many applicants have stated), limited in number. At times, this small cohort is said to be of poor quality, which forces the usage of male consultants instead.



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The Swiss Cooperation in one of its programs has endeavoured to sponsor the studies of female candidates in research and or professional Masters degrees in evaluation to strengthen their presence in this highly male dominated profession. Even at this level, it was noted that applications for these programs were limited in both numbers and quality of candidates.

The researchers of this research on evaluation only met up with two female evaluation consultants. In their opinion, the stresses, pressures of delivery times and very irregular working hours places an additional burden on family obligations, and thus fewer women get involved in the supply chain of evaluation services.

Academic level

A vast majority of organisations seeking suppliers of evaluations services found themselves demanding a minimum level requirement of a Master's degree, in some cases a preference of a PhD or doctorate is required.

Thus in many cases, PhD graduates would apply for projects whose minimum requirement is a master's degree.

The feedback from the questionnaires conducted illustrates that two thirds (24/37) of the supply of evaluation consultants hold a Master's degree, as opposed to the 13 PhD holders.

Seekers of evaluators were interviewed at both government and donor levels; they stated that their generally need for consultant's education level is at a minimum of Master's degree and even higher. In a limited number of cases, it was found that the level of suppliers of evaluation services was not enough to meet local needs. Thus the demand for evaluators would, therefore, be sought and fulfilled through international consultants

Number of years of experience

The number of years of experience required for Chief or Heads of Mission varied between 10 and 15 years. Consistently, seekers and consultants both agreed that this criterion has mostly fulfilled. The seekers of evaluators confirmed that the average number of years of experience of evaluation supplier averaged at a minimum of 20 years of experience. Of the cohort who answered the questionnaires, the distribution on the years of experience shows that of the 37 responses interviewed, only one consultant's expertise was below ten years. The vast majority (29/37- almost 80% of the consultants) contained between 10 and 20 years of experience in evaluation. The remaining 20% consisted of consultants with over 21 years of experience.



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An exciting observation presented itself between the supply-side and the demand-side results. Applicants for Head of Mission possessed beyond (100% of the candidates) 20 years of experience. This high percentage can be explained by the fact that about 20 of the questionnaires were completed by consultants who were members of the Benin Monitoring and Evaluation Network, which consists of evaluators of various levels.

Conversely, applicants respond by professionals recruited after undergoing a competitive selection process.

1.2. Initial training in evaluation

No consultant had undergone any initial training in evaluation. Conversely, almost all have come across modules or subjects related to evaluation. Regarding training institutions at the national level, only two institutions offer courses that specialise in evaluation: The African School of Economics (ASE) and The National School of Administration and Judiciary (ENAM), with the latter scheduling to offer a Master's degree in Public Policy Evaluation from 2017 and 2018. Although this has been delayed by the protests and other disturbances within the university. The ESA offers a certificate in impact assessment and provides training on data collection to consultants for impact evaluations as well as impact assessment for specialists.

These trained consultants and specialists become valued and sought after by organisations such as the World Bank for both national and internationally impact assessments.

ENAM offers a Master in Public Policy Evaluation since the beginning of the academic year 2017-2018.

1.3. Continuous evaluation training

Many structures offer capacity building in evaluation. In response to the interviews and questionnaires conducted in this research, the training ranged from university training institutions and other organisations such as that of the UN.

The responses from the questionnaires illustrate that of the 37 people interviewed 31 of them at some point, reinforced their evaluation skills through a form of educational upskilling. In the supply market, the main findings were that skills were accentuated in a particular sector that the consultants have proven competences in.

The consultants gradually invested in themselves through short courses and online modules on evaluation.



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Capacity building, in this case, came in the form of continuous evaluation training. In interviews with academic training institutions, it became evident that the largest applicants for continuing education in evaluation came from fields such as economics and finance, agriculture, health and transport. This was possible through the support of bilateral and multilateral organisations. In less frequent cases, consultants enrolled in continuing education on their own.

1.4. Individual or Office

Are consultants working from offices or Individually/personal spaces?

This question allows for some clarity around the structuring of the supply of evaluation services

and the assessment of whether these services are conducted in formalised consultancies or individual capacities.

The increase in the number of consultancy offices and their specialisation, as well as their diversification of scope, is a factor that illustrates an improvement and formalisation of the supply side of evaluation services.

From consultants who answered the questionnaires, only 11% of these consultants reported working in formal offices for most of the time. According to the consultants interviewed, there seems to be a preference to conduct evaluations in personal spaces to avoid the recurrent costs inherent in the management of an office. At times when a project demands a multiple skill set, they would sooner prefer to team up on an ad hoc basis and then resume their private practice afterwards. This assists in managing the costs associated with the supply of consulting services.

Other aspects raised during the interviews included the encouragement by consultants towards independent practice. Some consultants attested to the fact that they would prefer to recruit additional skills and build their teams when necessary as opposed to working with consulting firms. In instances where a consulting firm is required for an evaluation, consultants confirmed that they would sooner take the work to an existing smaller consulting firm and pay a once off institutional cost than to create their own company. The country's national tax policy and the administrative bureaucracy in the field of evaluation have been noted as discouraging factors for the creation of companies in evaluation.

It became clear that consultants prefer to work in a private capacity to manage costs. These factors have resulted in the commitment to the supply of evaluation services on an ad hoc basis. This was confirmed in the research through the realisation that most Heads of Mission were involved in other vocational training such as teachers,



TWENDE MBELE

researchers, physicians, engineers, etc. They would only get involved in the provision of evaluation services on a needs basis.

1.5. The number of the evaluation conducted over the last two years

Regular practice is an essential element in capacity building for the improvement of the supply of evaluation services. Irrespective of whether consultants conducted an evaluation within teams or as individuals, the questionnaire used assessed the number of the evaluations conducted within the last two years.

Consultants were asked to specify the number of evaluations conducted over the stated period. The results illustrated that more than half (57%) conducted only one evaluation during the two-year period. 11% of these respondents accounted for those who conducted two evaluations during that set period, while 5% constituted of those who attended three to four evaluations during the past two years. The last batch of evaluators who did five or more evaluations during this set period constituted 22% of the total.

Interviews with consultants illustrated that the demand by donors for local evaluation is pretty limited, this reduction in market demand results in limited opportunities for consultants to practice conducting evaluations. Thus inferring to weak capacity building and poor quality evaluations.

1.6. Breakdown of Evaluation users

As indicated by consultants through questionnaires and the interviews, the largest users of evaluation services are the technical and financial partners (donors). Specific guidelines govern the practice of each applicant/user, but it is possible to define the broad outlines relating to this.

The questionnaires provide four ways of answering the question: "Indicate the distribution of applicants/users for evaluations services conducted in the last two years.

- 1: Government: 8%
- 2: Donors/ technical and financial partners: 92%
- 3: Civil society: 0%
- 4: Others (Specify): 0%

Sadly, civil society was not represented as a source of demand for evaluation services. This was illustrated by a zero frequency. One would think or hope that at least civil society might have been expected to be represented in the usage of such services.



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The above findings indicate that the primary reason for the usage of evaluation services by technical and financial partners (donors) is because they are mandated to conduct evaluations as part of their programs (good governance). In the case of government, external financing sources also come with evaluation conditions as part of the financing agreements. The research can confirm that government departments have not submitted all evaluations and assessments conducted, despite this donor still composed of the largest users of evaluation services.

Pricing range:

The information on pricing range for consultants provides a trend assessment towards the investment in evaluation. This along with other indicators provide information on the level and extent to which evaluation services are demanded, which in essence illustrates the importance of evaluation for consultants.

The choices of the tariff range are as follows:

1 – 11% of the consultants ranged between: 50,000 F / 100,000 F

2 – 30 % of the consultants ranged between: 100,000 F / 150,000 F

3 – 35% of the consultants ranged between: 150,000F / 200,000F

4 – 24% of consultants ranged between 200,000 and more

Nearly 60% of the consultant's pricing was located in the upper bracket at F150,000. Note that 24% were beyond the 200,000 F tariff mark (with daily rates of up to 500,000F).

The pricing spectrum is broad for the various consultants due to their different skills and diverse demand levels, but this shows that there's a significant demand for evaluation services yet the supply does not meet this growing need.

2. Capability in evaluation

The capacities/capabilities in evaluation section examine the following;

- the supply of evaluation services,
- the availability of skills to meet the demand for evaluations,
- the most sought-after skills in the market and the least available skills.

It also provides information on both the initial and training institutions that offer continuing training facilities as a way of contributing to the capacity building of evaluators which in essence has the possibility of continually improving the supply chain of evaluation services.



TWENDE MBELE

2.1. Availability of skills

This section looks at the availability of the necessary skills to conduct evaluations. The responses are generated from interviews conducted with both demand and the supply actors of evaluation services.

Evaluation skills were generally available at the national level (89%). This corroborated the information attained earlier through the assessment of the academic level of the consultants interviewed. Both government and the technical and financing partners (donors) confirmed that they are generally satisfied with the required level of competence/skills by consultants at a local level. In cases of handovers or transfer of projects, seekers of evaluation services often turned to international consultants for the sake of continuity. In the case of specific specialised projects, it was discovered that the shortage (11%) of specialist consultants reduced the demand for evaluation and raised the costs of the evaluation.

The creation of training institutions in the evaluation will result in the widening of the supply base of evaluators as well as likely improve the general availability of skills in the market.

2.2. Most sought-after skills

Consultants and consulting firms were interviewed about the type of skills that were most-sought after by the market. The consultant questionnaire has investigated only the choice of four possibilities. At treatment,

The responses to these questions were answered about the consultant's area of expertise. However, the most sought-after skills were found in the following sectors: Impact Evaluation, Impact and Effect Evaluators, Statistical analysis (statistician) and specialists in various fields such as; education, health, sociologists, anthropologists, public health experts, data specialists, macro-economists, financial analyst to name a few.

2.3. Less available skills

Conversely, some of the least available skills included things like educational statisticians. There was a presence of statisticians, but those specialising in education were scarce.

The same could be said for economic and financial analysis. This shortage of skills meant that data shortages were frequent and that there was a need to seek internationally for foreign consultants that could meet the skills gap.

2.4. Training institutions (training in evaluation)



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Capacity building in evaluation training can be achieved through the use of training institutions. Primarily through first training institutions.

To test the awareness of consultants on training institutions, consultants were asked to cite training institutions that offered training in evaluation.

- 23% stated that the African School of Economics (ASE) offered training in evaluation.
- While another 23% mentioned that this was available from The National School of Applied Economics and Management (Ecole Nationale d'Economie Appliquée et de Management -ENEAM).
- The remaining 54% of the respondents mentioned that evaluation training was on offer at The National School of Administration and Judiciary (Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature-ENAM).

It became evident that the majority of the consultants were not aware of institutions that offered training in evaluation services because although launched at the start of the academic year 2017-2018, the Master's program in Public Policies Evaluation at ENAM had not started to train consultants in the field. This indicates further infers that consultants have not taken part in further training and capacity building initiatives.

Continuing education institutions

Continuing education training opportunities are usually more common than the initial training ones. The training offered there are more flexible and are provided in various settings. The replies to the questionnaire, cites academic institutions, consulting firms, organisations such as the United Nations and online courses.

From the responses: three people (8%) knew at least one institution, seven (19%) of the respondents knew of two, while 19 (51%) knew of three and eight (22%) knew of four.

The answers above illustrate that unlike with the first training institutions, the majority of respondents knew of training institutions, which can also infer into the usage of training and education.

3. Information on the practice of evaluations

This section looks at some aspects of the evaluator profession.



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It looks at whether consultants usually work alone or in teams, how they come to be made aware of evaluation opportunities, the best ways of improving the supply side of evaluation services as well as addressing frequently identified problems by these evaluators (how these can be discussed)

3.1 Evaluations alone or in a team

Consultants generally expressed a desire to bid for projects as a team (78%) as opposed to individuals (22%). According to the information gathered through the interviews conducted, consultants said that they preferred to team up because in most cases it was a requirement for applicants of evaluation services. Tenders requirements specified that consultants would have to present themselves as part of a team and thus provide the profile of each member of the team. Consultants would, therefore, submit their tender offer with specification on the roles that they would apply for. This finding corroborates the statement earlier that consultants chose to work in teams as a result of requirements but go back to working in solitude after the completion of a project.

3.1. Means of information most frequently used

This section looks at how the demand for evaluation (tender offerings) is communicated to suppliers of evaluation services (consultants). From the answers to the questionnaires, short listings were seen as the most common ways of receiving information about evaluation needs/tenders.

- 60% of the consultants interviewed stated that it is by short listings that they are informed of calls for tenders.
- 19% which was the second most frequent way consisted of lists of groups or personal networks of consultants.
- 16% said that they found out about tender briefings through advertisements in local newspapers.
- The least frequently used method came through specialised websites (8%)

Several consultants confirmed that it is faster and more efficient for them to find work through consultant databases in which they are short listings. This would speed up the hiring and contracting processes while the recruitment of professionals (whose performance has been tested are tried). Some evaluation seekers start with a notice of expression of interest before launching calls for short listings.

3.2. How to build capacity

Consultants interviewed were asked how best to strengthen capacity building to improve the supply side of evaluation services. Doing this efficiently would enhance



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the practice of evaluation and assist in building local capacity. The suggestions below make it possible to assess the needs on the ground in this area of evaluation.

Below are some of these responses:

- encourage training structures for supervisory staff in monitoring and evaluation in Benin;
- help young students from all fields to become interested in the practice of evaluation;
- emphasise the reconstruction of the theory of change in evaluations;
- clear, realistic and comprehensive terms of reference for evaluations;
- clear and precise eligibility conditions;
- transparency in the awarding procedures;
- promotion of accountability;
- strengthening of results-based management;

Despite these, the issue of capacity building at the level of evaluation supply is further addressed in recommendations section.

Frequent issues faced (by evaluators)

In an attempt to help to remedy the challenges faced in the supply side of evaluation services, consultants were asked to present four of the most frequently encountered difficulties/problems in the provision of evaluation services.

The following points were raised:

- difficulties in data collection
- Difficulty in utilising specific data (not disaggregated by class, gender, etc.)
- Unavailable or inaccessible documentation required to successfully monitoring and evaluation programs or projects
- Unavailable and unreachable respondents in evaluations (multiple appointments not honoured or ignored)
- An unreliable respondent who are familiar with evaluation issues (contextual understanding)
- Mistrust of the evaluator by respondents
- Short and demanding turnaround times
- Late payment of consultant's fees
- Funder's control of evaluation process that affects the impartiality of results (jeopardizing the independence of evaluation).
 - Evalu-phobia, this is the fear that the results and outcomes of the evaluation process will be used to punish (this raises problems with the evaluation culture in Benin).
- Poor communication between funders and consultants regarding expectations of the evaluation
- No feedback regarding not being selected for an evaluation



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- Imposing and authoritative style of management by funders
- The inability of financiers to adequately manage the various stakeholders

These issues were also examined from the perspective of demand for evaluation services by evaluation seekers and thus also appear in the recommendations section of improving demand and supply of evaluation in Benin.

How did you become an evaluator?

How does one become an evaluator? This question provides an answer to the following things:

It allows one to understand the path towards evaluation training

As well as how professionalisation occurs in the field of evaluation.

It also offers elements that can be used to design capacity building initiatives and create a balance between the supply and demand for evaluation.

The responses from the consultants are summarised below (how does one become an evaluator):

- by professional choice
- through training on evaluation modules
- by starting off with primary consulting activities and then progressively moving on to more complex consulting
- through basic training in monitoring and evaluation and other follow up practices in the evaluation
- learning through senior mentors
- through the mastery of issues related to a specific sector of activities and then participation in numerous workshops etc.

General information on the associative movement

This section relates to the formation of associations of evaluations. These associations are groups that make it possible for evaluators to build the capacity of their members, share useful information and promote evaluative activity and the involvement of young people. This section looks at the knowledge derived from these associations as well as the benefits that membership derives from these associations.

The existence of a national association for evaluators:

The presence of a professional community for evaluators provides a framework of exchange and development for members. This can also create a vessel for capacity building and transfer of business opportunities where novices get to improve by being in contact with more experienced practitioners.

Respondents were asked if such an association existed in Benin. Thirty-two of these



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respondents confirmed their awareness of such an associative body. Only one respondent admitted to not being aware of the existence of such and four respondents said that they were not sure.

The large number of "YES" can be partially attributed to the fact that the questionnaires were distributed through the lists of various associations. Despite this, it rather strange that in such a small evaluation environment like Benin, such a professional association can exist without all of the practitioner's knowledge.

3.3. Affiliation to an association of evaluators

The section relates to the affiliation to an association of evaluators. In response to the questionnaire, almost 40% of the respondent confirmed that they were not affiliated to an evaluators' association. 62%, on the other hand, confirmed their affiliation to an associated body. This was because questionnaires could not cover individual consultants, so the respondents were selected based on the email database of the Beninese Monitoring and Evaluation Network (ReBSEv). Despite this database, it's evident that not all consultants are aware or affiliated to evaluation associations.

The next question indicates the level of participation of the respondents within an association.

3.4. Responsibilities within an association

The extent of involvement and responsibilities within an association was taken into consideration during this section: The central question posed was: "Do you hold any responsibilities within an evaluation association?" To this question, only 3% of the cohort said YES while 97% said NO.

Keeping in mind that this question was targeted to approximately 60 members of the association yet only 37 agreed to participate. Of the 37 respondents, only (1) one confirmed having responsibilities within the evaluation association.

By all the above realisation, one might wonder about the strength and impact of evaluation associations within Benin if members join but don't see the need to get involved or take up responsibilities within them.

Benefits to be members:

By combining the information gathered from the interviews and the answers to the questionnaires, one can collate the advantages of being members of an evaluation association as follows:



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- sharing of information by email and on the virtual platform of the Benin database for Monitoring and Evaluation (Réseau Béninois de Suivi et d'Évaluation- ReBSEV)
- publication regarding consulting notices/ or job offers
- publication regarding training opportunities
- participation in webinars
- receiving alerts of new publications/literature on evaluations
- participation in the activities of evaluation networks and associations within other countries
- Benefits of joining international networks (training, travel, exchanges, sharing of knowledge, networking, etc.).

3.5 Capacity building activities

As part of the capacity building activities carried out by evaluation associations, key things stand out, these include:

- training on specific themes related to monitoring and evaluation as well as results-based management
- sharing of experiences within the association and with other associations
- publication of needs in evaluation
- discussion on various topics about evaluations.

At the level of demand, a total of 43 assessments (24 Government and 19 donor evaluations) with an increasing trend in demand and a faltering institutionalisation of the evaluation (reduced visibility, project evaluation law pending, the involvement of peripheral levels and Parliament slowed down, lethargy of the National Assessment Council). There is also a weak systematisation/capitalisation of the practice of evaluation, in general, resulting in the unavailability of reports and information on past and future evaluations and a large number of organisational shortcomings attributed mainly to government services.

2.2.1. General information on the demand for evaluation services

This section "Information on demand" creates an inventory of

- the most frequent demander (utilisateurs) of evaluation services)
- the best organised
- the current trends for the demand for such services and prospective ones
- Determining the actor most systematic in his demand for such services

2.2.1.1. Most frequent seekers of evaluation services



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Both interviews and questionnaires unanimously show that the most significant and most constant demand for evaluation services comes from technical and financing partners (donors) relative to both government and civil society. The study illustrates that within a ten-year period, 24 evaluations were conducted by government whereas donors conducted 19 within over two years (this is despite the fact that not all information regarding the demand or execution of evaluations were disclosed).

In the outcomes of the questionnaires illustrated the following:

- 89% of the demand for evaluation services came from donors
- 11% of this demand came from government
- while civil society organisations and others didn't record any demand (0%) for evaluation services. In this instance, "others" include; state institutions such as the Parliament, the Constitutional Court, etc. which didn't respond to the questions posed.

In essence, the most substantial demand (utilisiers) for evaluation services in Benin comes from donor organisations. This reality infers on issues such as of good governance.

2.2.1.2. Organised seekers of evaluation services

From the comparative table drawn up regarding the most organised seekers of evaluation services. It became clear that donors unlike government and civil society organisations are most organised in their demand for evaluation services. This is illustrated through their organisation of things like the terms of reference (TOR), awarding of contracts and general administration of the tender process.

Civil society at the presents moment presents no demand for evaluation services in Benin. The respondents of the study identified donors as the chief utilisiers of evaluation services which is an embarrassment for the government who is supposed to uphold good governance and public policy evaluation.

2.2.1.3. The current trend of demand

The questionnaire looked at the current trend in demand for evaluation. In the absence of reliable budget information from government and other demand actors, questions were posed to the various actors to determine their feelings on the market demand for evaluation culture in Benin.

60% of the respondents said that it is up while 30% believed that the market was down.



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11% said the market demand was stagnant. The implications of rising market demand are discussed in the analysis section.

2.2.1.4. The prospective trend of demand for evaluation services

This was done by very similar principles as the ones discussed above regarding the trend demand section. The question was asked about the prospective trend of demand and whether they are increasing or decreasing. The responses to the increase are more pronounced than in the previous section.

16% of the opinions envisage a decrease whereas to 84% the rest of the respondents expect an increase of the tendency of demand (the implications of this get discussed in the analysis section).

2.2.1.5. Actors who are seen to be driving a systematic and robust demand for evaluation services.

Almost 90% of the respondents mentioned that donors are most likely to drive demand for evaluation serviced as well as bring about change to the local industry.

Thus, in this case, a fundamental conclusion that can be reached is that the evolution of evaluation services and general public policy in Benin rest in the hands of donor organisations.

The government conducted five evaluations in 2010 and seven in 2012. Since then, the demand has slowed down, yet donors still maintain the lead in this regards.

Despite the dominance of donors in the evaluation space, the general findings of the study indicate that the institutionalisation of evaluation has begun to decrease in recent years. This slowdown could serve as a way for the government to re-position itself as the most frequent demander of evaluation and perhaps even become the more significant driving force for systematic change in the demand of evaluation services.

2.2.2. The appreciation of demand for evaluation services

The "Demand Assessment" section examines the process of demand from the terms of reference to the awarding of the contract (bid) as well as the administration linked to the evaluation process.

Respondents identified government as a large requester of demand for evaluation services as a way of improvement its general governance. Civil society, on the other hand, was virtually excluded from this debate. Donors, although the largest requester still has points of development that need to be noted. The respondents/consultants



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were asked to give their opinions on the challenges faced regarding the various actors of the demand process, such include:

2.2.2.1. Terms of reference

Terms of reference serve as a compass for evaluations and are of particular importance. With regards to the terms of reference, the government came up in all cases as having notoriously unclear terms of reference.

According to these respondents, government's terms of references are generally poor and lead to ambiguity in the scope of work. Donors were also accused in some cases of having similar issues as to a lesser extent than the government. This created unrealistic expectations for both the seekers and providers of evaluation services and ultimately resulted in an underestimation of the scope of work to be done. Poor communications by sponsors of evaluation services also came up in this section. It was illustrated by the respondents that at least a third of donors found difficulty communicating their expectations to consultants., whereas this is the case with government services in all cases.

2.2.2.2. Awarding of bids/tenders

Issues were identified in the awarding of contracts or bids by respondents for both government and donors. In most cases, government's challenges were worse than donors.

The government was seen as providing little or no feedback in cases of short contractual deadlines for evaluation.

Unclear eligibility of conditions was also raised by respondents.

The details of the calls for tenders were generally presented in the form of a scoring system for technical and financial bids. These were intended to indicate the conditions of eligibility for the bids but were not clear.

The Length of the recruitment /contracting process.

According to all the consultants interviewed, the administrative processes of government's hiring and contracting processes were seen to be rather long. No apparent reason could be given for this in the cases of both government and donors (although donor's we slightly shorter than government).

These elements illustrate that there are poor communication channels between the seekers of evaluation services and consultants. Consultants rarely received feedback



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on the application and selection processes. Weakness in the procurement process was also identified as an issue in the evaluation demand.

Short or hasty contractual deadlines for evaluation were also identified as a challenge.

2.2.2.3. Administration of the evaluation process

Participatory and interactive management of the evaluation is a guarantee of effectiveness. Respondents raised several elements as being the source and cause of poor evaluation processes.

- At the evaluation administration level, respondent's opinions confirmed that participatory and interactive management of the evaluation process was weak. This was particularly severe in the case government and less with donor organisations.
- Micro-management by the donors: In this case, the micro-management process by donors was seen and experienced through the interference of the evaluation process. The respondents confirmed that this was generally the case for evaluation conducted by the government. In the case of donors funded evaluations, this was experienced in a little more than 50% of the time.
- Managerial and authoritative management style by funders. Respondents felt here that donors tended to be controlling and rigid in their management style of evaluation projects. This was said to be absolute in government funded evaluations, whereas only about half the time in donor sponsored projects.
- A change of scope and modification of objectives after the start of an evaluation was also said to be standard practice by funders of evaluation services. This resulted in an unclear and unrealistic change to the terms of reference, which made it too difficult to access donor data. This was raised as a significant hindrance to useful evaluations.
- Poor stakeholder engagement and management was recorded by respondents too. This is said to be common in both government and donor evaluations.

Significant delays in obtaining approvals for evaluation deliverables and subsequent delays in payment. Several respondents criticised the setup and composition of steering committees. Once the evaluation process commenced, it became difficult to bring together these various committees. This ultimately affected the quality of deliverables.



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Difficulties in payment processing were also raised as a challenge here. The general financial systems within the public administration were identified as being crippling to evaluation services.

CONCLUSIONS.

The conclusions have been synthesised and bear as a whole on the question of gender, initial and continuing training, the anchoring of the institutionalisation of evaluation, the weakness of the systematisation of the organisation of evaluations and the relationship between offer in evaluation services and demand.

Gender. Women are almost absent from the evaluation market. Efforts to involve them in evaluations are often not productive. This situation could worsen in a context of rising demand, which would further marginalise them.

Initial and ongoing training. More than the initial training that keeps its importance, it is thanks to short courses that many develop their skills. They prepare sectoral technicians to become confirmed evaluators.

The institutional anchoring of evaluation. The government has always held the lead, but its momentum is running out of steam remarkably, especially for the extension to decentralised levels and institutions. The services in charge of the evaluation change too often of supervision which does not facilitate the coherence of the action and the collaboration in the long term.

The weakness of the systematisation of the organisation of evaluations. For both the government and donor partners, the gap of the organisation has made it impossible to surrender points on the assessments carried out and even that to come. The basis of BEPPAAG is emerging as a sustainable solution to this significant defect.

The relationship between supply of evaluation services and demand. At the time of this evaluation, the supply meets the demand for evaluation. Given the fact that the assessment would be reinforced with the involvement of new applicants, this supply might prove to be inadequate. This situation calls for the strengthening of evaluation capacities.

RECOMMENDATIONS. The recommendations stem from the conclusions and therefore relate to the same points.

The gender question.



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The supply of evaluators is mostly male, despite all the positive discriminations put in place.

Recommendation: Increase capacity building and involve women in monitoring and evaluation services in all evaluations of their structure.

Initial and continuous training.

a. Initial training has an insufficient offer.

Recommendations:

- promote evaluation training;
- pursue policies to strengthen grassroots assessment processes;
- resurrect the strategic plan for evaluating public policies.

b. Continuing education is more widely available and builds capacity more quickly.

Recommendations:

- refine and increase modular and short-term training opportunities;
- integrate evaluation training into the professional development curricula of service agents involved in evaluation (monitoring and evaluation, procurement, human resources, etc.);
- multiply partnerships with training institutions.

Poor systematisation of the organisation of the evaluation and institutional instability

Recommendations:

- revitalise the structures and programs for rooting the evaluative culture
- revive the voting process of the Public Policy Evaluation Act which includes the creation of an autonomous national agency for the evaluation of public policies
- finalise the manuals and guidelines for public policy evaluation

The supply of services satisfies the current demand but could be quickly overwhelmed