Challenges to Building a Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluationsystems of Civil Engineering Projects and Programmes

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ABSTRACTS: Organizational and political costs and risks associated with implementing result-based monitoring and evaluation do exists but however, there are also crucial costs and risks involved in not implementing a result-based monitoring and evaluation systems. There are a variety of political and technical challenges involved in building result-based systems. The political ones are often the most difficult to overcome.

KEYWORDS: Political challenges, Public knowledge, Organizational performance, Public exposure, Political champion, Development goals, Technical issues, special monitoring & evaluation challenges, two budget systems.

I.   INTRODUCTION

By comparison with the politics of instituting result-based monitoring and evaluation systems, technical issues are much easier to address and much easier to provide solution. Organizations do prefer to operate in the shadows, they do not wish that their data regarding their performance and outcomes be a public knowledge because accepting to practice result-based monitoring and evaluation will definitely beam light on issues of the organizational performance knowing very well that not all stakeholders will be pleased to have such public exposure. This is an instance of the many ways monitoring and evaluation systems constitute a political challenge. It therefore takes a strong and consistent political leadership and will power of a political champion to institute a monitoring and evaluation system.

Although by comparison with the politics of instituting result-based monitoring and evaluation systems technical issues are relatively less complex to proffer solution, designing and building a result-based reporting system which can transparently produce trustworthy, timely, and relevant information on the performance of government projects, program and policies required experience, skill and complete organization's institutional capacity and the capacity of a result-based reporting system will include at least, the ability to successfully construct indicators, the means to collect, aggregate, analyze, and report on the performance data in relation to theindicators and baselines and very competent technical managers with the required skill and understanding to know what to do with the information once it's available. Most challenging is the reality that building these capacities in governments and organizations for these systems is a long-term effort.

i.   Political   Challenge   of   Result-Based Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

The role of a political champion is definitely a key to ensuring the institutionalization and sustainability of result-based monitoring and evaluation systems. By a political champion bringing result-based information into the public knowledge will definitely change the dynamics of institutional relations, budgeting, resource allocations, personal political interests and agendas, and public perceptions of organization and governmental effectiveness, besides all these, very strong vested interests could perceive themselves to be under political game attack and even as there may be counter reformers within and outside the organization and government who for selfish interests or for some other flimsy reasons will actively oppose result-based management systems' efforts. Although result-based monitoring and evaluation are components of the governance of governments and organizations and are hence related to the political and power systems of the government and organization, monitoring and evaluation systems provide critical information which empower politicians and the policy makers to make better informed decisions, but at the same time, providing such information does lessen and or pose as a constraint, the number of available

options to politicians. Thus leaving them much less room to manipulate or maneuver in their policies.

Instituting monitoring and evaluation systems which highlight outcomes of but negative and positive, that include the success or failure of the government or organization and hence providing greater transparency and accountability will be especially challenging and even seen to be strange to governments and organizations whose previous and present regimes are manifested by centralized, authorization and self-interest serving political regimes.

ii. Technical Challenges of Result-based Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Most governments and organizations do not have the basic capacity to successfully measure inputs, activities and outputs (implementation) but they sure need to be able to technically monitor and track at each level of the result-based monitoring and evaluation systems of implementation (input, activities, output), outcomes and goals (impact) using means of indicators, baselines data, means to collect/aggregate/ analyze/ report on the performance of the data in relation to the indicators and baselines and highly experienced technical personnel with the requisite skills in using the made available information.

These information and data must be and should be valid, verifiable, transparent, and widely available to the governments and organizations and interested stakeholders that must include the general public - though this may be extremely difficult for organizations and governments that will opt for not disclosing and sharing information and data due to political consideration and corruption practices.

There must be available technically sound and skilled professionals that understand how the collected information and data should be used because providing mounds or heaps of files of information and data and no analysis will not generate the information needed to improve projects, programmes and policies of governments and organizations.

iii. Special Monitoring and Evaluation Challenges

In developing nations and still in teething stage organizations, the challenges of planning, designing and constructing a result-based monitoring and evaluation system is indeed most difficult and never to be underrated, it is a venture whose expected gains are not immediate but it is not enough to say it is complicated, demanding or a very sophisticated undertaking for a developing nation or a teething organization. However, all

countries whether developed or developing and organizations desire to have good information systems that will enable them monitor performance of their projects, programmes and policies not minding the following challenges:

- Lack of demand for and ownership of result-based monitoring and evaluation which is as a result of the absence of performance orientation both in the public and private sectors even by a minimum of interested stakeholders and commitment is expected for such a system such as monitoring and evaluation to be established in any country whether developed or developing.

- Lack of sufficient governmental and organizational cooperation and coordination can be a factor in both developed and developing countries leading to (a) challenges to do longer-term strategic economic investment and policy planning (b) impediment of progress towards strategic planning (c) difficulties in inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination.

- Lack of highly placed champions who are ready to hold the bull by the horn and ready too to assume the political risks in advocating result-based monitoring and evaluation systems. The presence of a national champion can go a long way toward helping an organization and a government to develop and sustain monitoring and evaluation systems.

- Lack of strong, effective institutions. Instituting monitoring and evaluation systems helps in informing and guiding the organization or government in putting together all needed reforms in administrative or civil service reforms and whether revamping of legal and regulatory codes or frameworks.

- Lack of a basic foundation. Traditional implementation focused monitoring and evaluation system must first be established and this will require basic statistical systems and data including budgetary systems. This is because whether developed or developing governments or organizations, governments must have the need to know their baseline conditions that is where are we now with respect to this project or programme?

- Technical assistance and training for capacity and institutional development is required to train officials in modern data collection, monitoring methods and analysis. This way the

workforce is empowered with the capacity to develop, support, maintain and sustain the system.

- Developing governments and still teething organizations will definitely need to establish a political and administrative culture characterized by accountability and transparency including concern for ethics and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

- Attempts to shed light on resource allocation and actual results through the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation systems may hit the rock due to political resistance, hostility, and opposition. Therefore, creation of a more mature monitoring and evaluation system requires interdependency, alignmentand co-ordination across multiple government levels.

- Both developed and developing governments of countries must work and continue to work toward linking performance to a public expenditure framework or strategy because if these linkages are not made, there will be no way to determine if the budgetary allocations in support of programmes and projects are at the end of the day supporting a success or failure and there would be no means of providing feedback at interim or phase stages to determine if fiscaladjustments could be made to alter projects or programmes so as to adjust for desired result because monitoring and evaluation is seen as a tool to correct policy, project and public expenditure programmes through more direct linkages to the national development plan and resource allocation process.

- Many organizations and governments still operate two budget systems, the recurrent and the capital expenditures where the Ministry of Finance or the department of finance oversees the recurrent and planning budgets, the capital but consolidating the recurrent and the capital expenditure budgets within one ministry of government or within one department of an organization makes it simpler and easier for the government or organization to consider a result-based monitoring and evaluation system to ensure the government's or organization's goals and objectives will be met.

II. CONCLUSION

But what governments and organizations not willing or are strongly opposed to result-based management systems do not know is that strong economies are not build on weak governments or organizations. They need to know too that result-based management systems strengthen governments and organizations by reinforcing the emphasis on demonstrable outcomes. They need to know also that getting on well on the workings and outcomes of economic and governmental programmes and policies can contribute to poverty reduction, higher economic growth and achievement of the organization's vision and mission statements which will as well results in wide range of development goals. It is a common dilemma in organization and governments that decision-makers do not always have the information they need when they need it but with result-based monitoring and evaluation systems provision of analytical feedback information and data, policy-makers are empowered to make more well-informed decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There should be demand for and ownership of result-based monitoring and evaluation.

- There should be sufficient governmental and organizational cooperation and coordination.

- There should be highly placed champions who are ready to hold the bull by the horn and ready too to assume the political risks in advocating result-based monitoring and evaluation systems.

- There should be strong, effective institutions.

- There should be a provision for basic foundation.

- There should be technical assistance and training for capacity and institutional development.

- There is the need to establish a political and administrative culture characterized by accountability and transparency.

- There should be creation of a more mature monitoring and evaluation system that requires interdependency, alignment and coordination across multiple government levels.

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