



**RESULTS
FOR ALL**



An Initiative of Results for America

**100+ Government
Mechanisms to
Advance the Use of
Data and Evidence
in Policymaking:
A Landscape Review**

July 2017



Results for All

Working with decision makers at all levels of government to harness the power of evidence and data to solve the world's greatest challenges.

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Executive Summary

Governments across the globe face pressure to improve how they allocate and spend resources and deliver public goods and services. Increasingly engaged citizens are demanding transparent, accountable governments that are responsive to citizen demands. Data and evidence are important tools for understanding how to prioritize and allocate limited resources to reflect the needs of communities.

Despite the increased availability of data and evidence in many countries, the use of information and analysis to inform policy and improve the welfare of populations remains limited. Reasons include a shortage of resources, lack of commitment from political leadership, gaps in technical skills, and an absence of clearly defined strategies and mechanisms to support sharing and use of data and evidence.

This review surveys the strategies and mechanisms that governments across the globe are using to advance and institutionalize the use of data and evidence in policymaking. The aim of the report is to compile examples that show the range of approaches governments are taking to build capacity for promoting evidence-informed policymaking (EIP) at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels.

Evidence-informed policymaking is influenced by the combination of a broader enabling context, organizational capacity to facilitate production, use and dissemination of data and evidence, and policymaker knowledge, skill, and motivation to use data and evidence (Newman, Fisher, & Shaxson, 2012). These areas, which we have also found to be key contributing factors to the use of data and evidence in policymaking through our research, correspond to the strategies and mechanisms identified in this landscape review.

We highlight four key conditions that enable the use of data and evidence at a government or institution level: (1) commitment, (2) allocation of resources, (3) incentives, and (4) a culture that supports learning and improving. Factors that contribute to the use of data and evidence are access to high-quality data and relevant evidence, partnerships and collaborations between the policy community and evidence producers, and policymaker knowledge, skill, and motivation.

In summary, the main observations resulting from this review are as follows:

Governments around the world are using a mix of strategies and mechanisms to promote the use of data and evidence. Approaches range from research units to big data analytics, performance management systems, citizen engagement platforms, information clearinghouses, and training programs to enhance knowledge and build skills of policymakers. While individual capacity and motivation are critical, formal organizational and institutional mechanisms and strategies help secure a foundation that can withstand transition between leadership and political parties.

Most of the government strategies and mechanisms reviewed here are recent initiatives, introduced in the last five to seven years. This suggests a growing, but nascent movement to improve the use of data and evidence in policy.

Evidence-informed policymaking operates within a broad political framework. Many factors contribute to EIP, including commitment from political leadership; state power structures; resource levels for data collection, research, and evaluation; and broader values and beliefs surrounding the use of data and evidence.

There is no simple, one size fits all approach to advancing evidence-informed policymaking. Evidence-informed policymaking is not about a specific approach or type of evidence but rather about finding ways to make better use of data and evidence in decision making (Porter, 2011). It is more of an art than a science, and the specific path or approach countries take will depend on individual contexts.

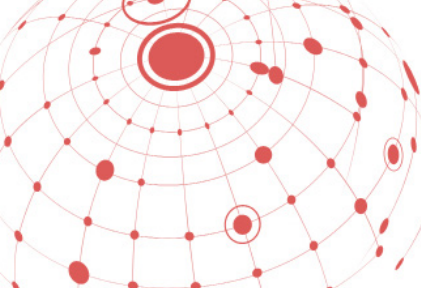
Government efforts to institute EIP seem to be focused largely on improving access to quality data and evidence. There appears to be an emphasis in government on building systems and platforms for collecting data and evidence and improving access to it.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play a key role in supporting government efforts to build demand for the use of data and evidence in policymaking. Many of the interventions aimed at building policymaker demand for data and evidence—knowledge and skill building, facilitating collaboration between policymakers and evidence producers—are driven and funded by NGOs.

Partnerships and learning and exchange opportunities can play a key role in advancing the use of data and evidence in government. This review found a concentration of mechanisms for promoting use of data and evidence at the national level. It would be beneficial to find ways in which learning, experiences, or expertise in using data and evidence can be shared with subnational governments that have organizational capacity constraints and limited access to data. We note high demand for learning and partnership opportunities at the regional or country level to advance a practical sharing of experiences and lessons learned in evidence-informed policymaking.

Abbreviations Used

AEN	Africa Evidence Network
AFIDEP	African Institute for Development Policy, Kenya
BCURE	Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence
CLEAR	Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results
CONEVAL	National Council for the Evaluation for Social Development Policy, Mexico
CSTC	Civil Service Training Center, Ghana
DANE	National Administrative Department of Statistics, Colombia
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, South Africa
EIP	Evidence-informed policymaking
EU	European Union
GINKS	Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing
ICT	information and communications technology
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
LMICs	low- and middle-income countries
NEP	national evaluation policy
NGOs	nongovernmental organizations
NQAF	National Quality Assurance Framework
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSOs	national statistical offices
NSS	National System for Evaluation of Public Sector Performance, Colombia
PEMANDU	Performance Management and Delivery Unit, Malaysia
SINERGIA	National Results Evaluation System, Colombia
WHO	World Health Organization
ZeipNET	Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network



Section 1

Introduction and Background

Introduction

Governments across the globe face pressure to improve how they allocate and spend resources and to improve the delivery of public goods and services. Citizens who are increasingly more engaged and involved are demanding transparent, accountable governments that are responsive to their demands. Policymakers in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in particular confront critical challenges in providing basic social services—primary health care, education, clean water, and proper sanitation—for their constituents.

Data and evidence are important tools for better understanding how to prioritize and allocate limited resources to reflect the needs of communities. The information generated can have a powerful influence on policy when used to develop and implement cost-effective solutions, track progress, and make changes to policy and adjustment to systems based on real-time issues, analysis of what works, and an understanding of the impact interventions have. Despite the increased availability of data and evidence in many countries, however, the use of information and analysis to inform policy and improve the welfare of populations remains limited. The reasons for this can range from a shortage of resources to lack of commitment from political leadership, gaps in technical skills, and/or an absence of clearly defined strategies and mechanisms to support sharing and use of data and evidence.

From January 2016 to March 2017, [Results for All](#), a global initiative of Results for America, conducted a landscape review to better understand the strategies and mechanisms that governments around the world are using to build demand and advance the use of data and evidence in policymaking.¹ The review included information gleaned from literature reviews, a survey questionnaire, interviews with experts, country visits, and Evidence Works 2016, a global forum that brought together senior government officials from forty countries in Africa, Asia, South America, North America, and Europe and from Australia to share experiences, challenges, and lessons learned in promoting evidence-informed policymaking (EIP).²

Purpose of the Report

The aim of this landscape review has been to compile examples that show the range of approaches governments are taking to advance the use of data and evidence in policy, budget, and management

1. [Results for America](#) (RFA) is a US-based nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting better use of data and evidence in policymaking at all levels of government.

2. For a list of countries in attendance and to learn more about the event, see the summary report [Evidence Works 2016: A Global Forum for Government](#). Evidence Works 2016 took place on September 29–30, 2016, in London, UK. It was organized by Results for All and Nesta's Alliance for Useful Evidence.

decisions.³ It describes how governments are building capacity at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels to promote better use of data and evidence in policymaking. The scope of this landscape review does not include analysis of the effectiveness or impact of these strategies and mechanisms. The hope, however, is that this compilation will encourage further studies to examine the impact of different mechanisms and approaches.

This report does not represent an exhaustive collation of governments and their strategies for implementing EIP. We highlight relevant and promising models in the body of the report to illustrate specific points, with no intention of promoting or critiquing them. A broader list of examples with resources and links is included as a series of tables that correspond to each section of the report. (See hyperlinks in Table of Contents.) This landscape review also does not explore project-specific data collection or monitoring/evaluation systems and processes that governments are putting in place for the unique purpose of satisfying reporting requirements of the donor and development community. There are often questions around the contribution that these types of interventions make to building government capacity to use data and evidence, another topic we have reserved for future studies.

KEY TERMS AS USED IN THIS REPORT

Evidence: Information that is collected from a broad range of sources such as evaluations, research, administrative and statistical data, and citizen opinion, in a rigorous, systematic and transparent process (Shaxson, 2016). Evidence can be used by decision makers, policy practitioners, the media, philanthropic organizations, NGOs, the private sector, and other groups outside of government.

Data: Facts and statistics used in decision making.

Quality data and evidence: The dimensions of high-quality data and evidence include credibility, objectivity, reliability, clarity, timeliness, and relevance.

Policymaker: An official or nonelected staff member at any level in government with the ability to make budget, policy, or management decisions or influence the extent to which data and evidence are used. A policymaker can be a politician (e.g., head of state, governor, legislator, or political appointee), a bureaucrat with an administrative role in day-to-day policy- or program-related decisions, or a public-sector servant responsible for implementing programs. Policymaking thus can be influenced by a wide range of government actors.

Policymaking: The process by which policy is formulated, typically involving four stages: (1) agenda setting, (2) policy formulation, (3) implementation, and (4) monitoring and evaluation. Policymaking is a complex, iterative, multidimensional process that is influenced by political, social, and economic contexts and a range of stakeholders with diverse interests inside and outside of government who interact through formal and informal channels.

Evidence-informed policymaking (EIP): Government officials or institutions having access to quality data and evidence and using it to inform budget, policy, and management decisions.

Strategies and mechanisms: Policies, programs, processes, systems, and operational practices that governments put in place to promote evidence-informed policymaking.

3. A brief description of the methodology can be found in appendix 1.

Structure of This Report

Evidence-informed policymaking is influenced by the combination of a broader enabling context, organizational capacity to facilitate production, use, and dissemination of data and evidence, and policymaker knowledge, skill, and motivation to use data and evidence (Newman, Fisher, & Shaxson, 2012; see Figure 1). We group the strategies and mechanisms identified through the landscape review according to categories that correspond to these areas, which we have also identified as key contributing factors to the use of data and evidence in policymaking through our research.

Framework for Categorizing Strategies	
What are the enabling conditions for evidence-informed policymaking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commitment^a from political leadership and champions at all levels of government• Allocation of resources• Incentives^b that foster the use of data and evidence• A culture that supports learning and improving
What factors contribute to the use of data and evidence in policymaking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to quality data—to measure, track progress, and make improvements to policies and programs• Access to quality, relevant evidence—to assess policy and program choices and make changes to achieve desired outcomes or to influence or build consensus for policy choices• Partnerships and collaborations between the policy community and evidence producers—to facilitate information sharing and a coproduction of policy and evidence• Policymaker knowledge, skill, and motivation^c—to find, appraise, synthesize, and use evidence

^a Commitment is defined as dedication to a cause (e.g., use of data and evidence to inform policy) as demonstrated by political leadership or prioritized funding.

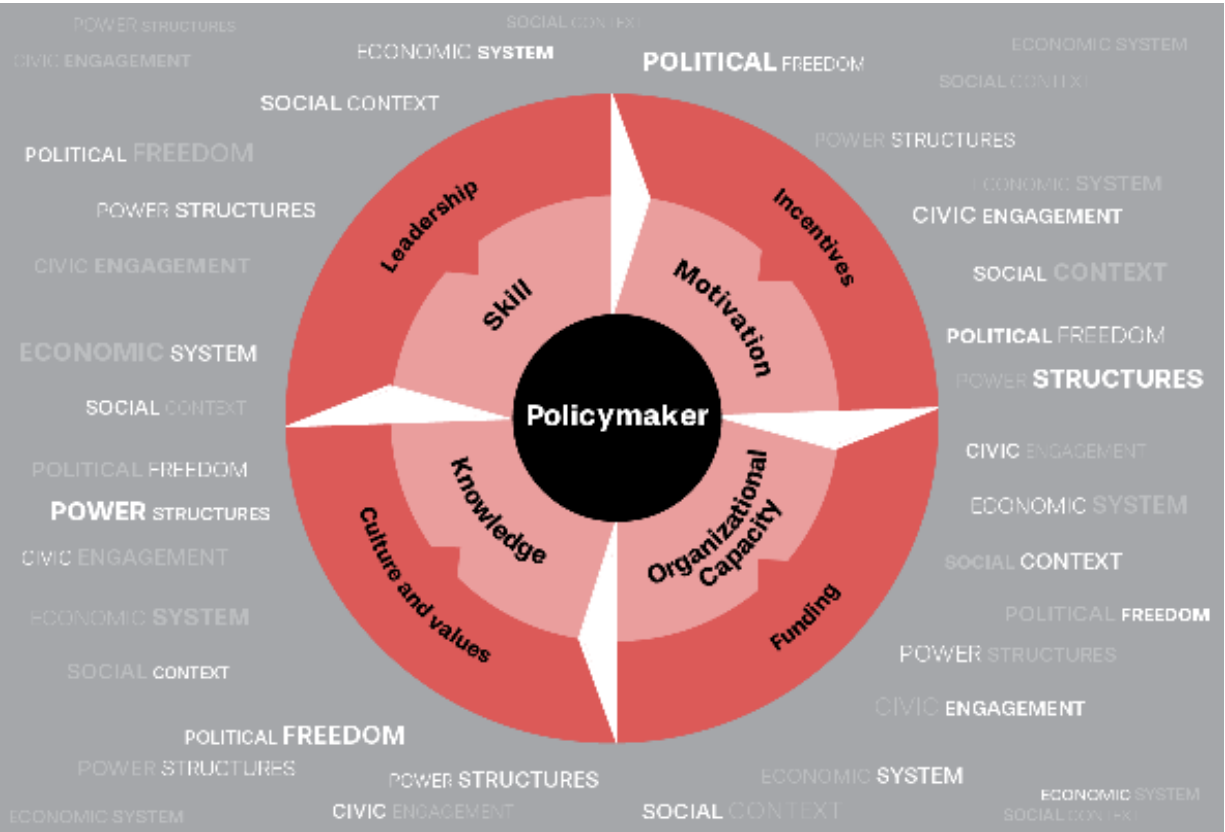
^b Incentive is defined as the external reward to encourage use of data and evidence.

^c Motivation is defined as the internal drive to use data and evidence.

Government mechanisms such as an information management system, evidence use guidelines for a government ministry, or a training program for policymakers in a department can help to build capacity to use data and evidence at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels. But their existence alone does not translate to better and consistent use of data and evidence in decision making. It is important also to acknowledge the broader context in which policy decisions are made and the specific political and institutional challenges policymakers face in using data and evidence (Weyrauch, Echt, & Suliman, 2016; Liverani, Hawkins, & Parkhurst, 2013). Government policymakers often experience a disconnect between what evidence-informed policymaking means in theory and how it is achieved in practice as a result of the complex political environments in which decisions are made; see, for example, Cronin and Mastoera's (2015) study on the attitudes of senior government officials in South Africa toward the use of evidence in policymaking.

The context in which policy decisions are made can include the politics of an election cycle, party or ideological agendas, the power structure of government, how government agencies relate to each other, the historical relationship between evidence producers and policymakers, and attitudes toward the actual data and evidence, specifically norms, beliefs, and values. The broader context can also include factors like the availability of resources to invest in infrastructure and human resources for the collection of data and evidence and the commitment and drive to do so from the highest levels of leadership (Weyrauch, Echt, & Suliman, 2016). Following Weyrauch et al. (2016), we focus in this review on the key contextual factors that influence the use of data and evidence at a government policymaker or institution level. We indicate key enabling conditions in Table 1 and spotlight them throughout the report in the context of specific strategies and mechanisms.

Figure 1. What Influences Evidence-Informed Policymaking in Government?





On how the power structures in a country can shape the demand for and use of evidence

Patrimonial states like Ethiopia and Rwanda have centralized leadership and tightly controlled development agendas, with limited opportunity for external actors to influence policy decisions. Ministries have strong technical expertise and a capacity and openness to using evidence for delivering on development goals and legitimizing the state.

In neopatrimonial contexts, such as in Malawi, Ghana, and Zambia, state power and resources are controlled by a patronage structure. Policy change can be difficult to achieve as dominant groups can use evidence to advance their own interests. These states have weaker central ministries and technocratic controls, but the competing interests of different groups can offer an entry point for external voices like civil society groups to play a role in the policy process.

Source: Porter and Feinstein (2014).

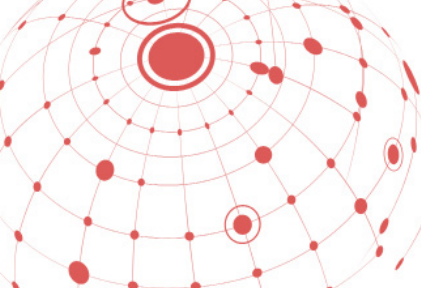
“It’s all very well generating the evidence, but how are we trying to make sure the evidence is used, that it is informing policy and practice change?”

—Ian Goldman, Deputy Director General and Head of Evaluation and Research, Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, South Africa*

Many of the strategies and mechanisms described in this report contribute to the use of data and evidence in multiple ways (for example, a research unit that generates policy-relevant evidence or synthesizes and disseminates evidence on what’s effective). As such, we assign each strategy or mechanism to its primary or most significant contribution, with the understanding that there are likely to be varying perspectives on best fit. Some of the strategies and mechanisms are designed explicitly to promote EIP, while others have broader objectives that are also helping to promote the use of data and evidence.

Each of the following sections explores specific strategies and mechanisms governments are introducing to build demand for the use of data and evidence in decision making, in terms of strengthening policies, programs, processes, systems and practices, and creating enabling conditions.

*All of the quotations in this report were collected at Evidence Works 2016: A Global Forum for Government, September 29–30, 2016, London, UK.



Section 2

Improving Access to Quality Data

Overview

Governments need access to timely, high-quality, and relevant data in order to identify pressing policy concerns, inform program design and policy choice, conduct forecasts, monitor policy implementation and evaluate impact (Stuart, Samman, Avis, & Berliner, 2015). Data used for government decision making typically come from administrative and statistical systems, and increasingly from big data analytics which give governments access to massive amounts of information from different sources and at unprecedented speeds. In addition, the real-life experience of citizens interacting with public goods and services is a valuable source of feedback to government on policy priorities.

COMMITMENT FROM LEADERSHIP AS AN ENABLER FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICYMAKING

The Bloomberg Philanthropies [What Works Cities](#) (WWC) initiative has found that a mayor's public commitment to getting better results is a critical predictor of a city's success in using data. However, while necessary, public statements alone are not enough to advance the use of data and evidence at any level of government (Brody, Koester, Markovits, & Phillips, 2016).

Some examples of the ways in which specific governments have expressed commitment include:

- A statement from ministers of finance, planning, and economic development, underscoring the importance of strengthening national statistical systems, presented by the [Africa Data Consensus](#) initiative at a March 2015 African Union meeting
- The personal and close leadership of the prime minister of Ethiopia in establishing and governing the [Agricultural Transformation Agency](#) (ATA), a strategy and delivery agency that seeks to accelerate growth and transformation in the agriculture sector
- [Open Data Champions](#) in various city departments in Seattle who are accountable for maintaining department data and ensuring public data are refreshed regularly
- A civil servant from a ministry in Ghana who followed through on a post-training policy action plan

“ Sometimes [the data] are too complex for the average citizen to understand, and we are not translating them still into a simpler, a more condensed format. ”

—Philipp Schönrock, Director,
Cepei, Colombia

Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) face significant challenges in improving official data, including limited resources to support statistical systems, a shortage of trained analysts and statisticians, lack of information management systems to support data collection and storage, and limited access to information and communications technology (ICT) to power these systems. For these countries, the task of putting in place the many national and subnational indicators needed to monitor progress in achieving such benchmarks as the United Nations Development Programme's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a total number of 241 indicators, can seem like an insurmountable undertaking. This is true even for a country like Colombia, where there is high-level commitment to improving statistical processes and deliberate measures are being taken to strengthen partnerships for building a better data system (Wahlén, 2016).

Data are also needed to track and review progress and make real-time improvements to policies and programs. Tools like performance management systems can help governments take a systematic approach to using data, by helping to establish and track links between strategic priorities, performance, and budget. The key to realizing evidence-informed policymaking is to move beyond measuring performance for accounting or compliance purposes to using performance data to inform real-life decisions and improve outcomes.

It is important to emphasize that data are of value to policymakers only to the extent that they are relevant, credible, timely, and easy to access and interpret. As one example of the challenges policymakers face in accessing data, civil servants in Ghana describe the process of obtaining official government data as bureaucratic and time-consuming, with long waiting periods (interview, Accra, Ghana, March 2017). Reasons for these types of delays can include political considerations, lack of capacity to publish, and limited understanding of what users need or want (Center for Global Development, 2014).

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF DATA FOR GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING

- Statistical data include census data and other national and international surveys, such as the [Demographic Health Survey](#) and the [Living Standards Measurement Study](#), which are administered in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- Administrative data are data collected for management or operational purposes (e.g., housing data, tax records, crime reports) through administrative systems managed mainly, although not exclusively, by government departments or ministries (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2015). Administrative data usually represent the full universe of individuals, communities, or businesses affected by a program or regulation.
- Big data is continuously generated digital data that comes from a variety of sources, primarily in the private sector. They are typically characterized by the “3 Vs”: (1) greater volume, (2) more variety, and (3) a higher rate of velocity (UN Global Pulse, 2016).

The examples that follow highlight strategies and mechanisms governments are putting in place to improve access to high-quality data for use in decision making, with a focus on the following five areas: collecting data, making data accessible, using data to measure results, innovating with big data, and citizen opinion as a source of data. For more examples with resources and links, see [Table 1: Improving Access to Quality Data](#).

Collecting Quality Data

National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)

The [NSDS](#) is designed to provide low- and lower-middle-income countries with a framework for raising awareness about the key role that official statistics play in the policy process, ensuring buy-in from users, identifying and mobilizing resources, and creating a detailed, costed action plan for improving dissemination of information.

A January 2016 update for least-developed LMICs indicates ongoing, newly developed, or planned NSDS programs have been implemented in twelve countries in Africa, six in Asia-Pacific, two in Eastern Europe, and three in Latin America and the Caribbean ([Paris21](#), 2016). Despite the efforts of Paris21 (the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st century) and other partners, such as the World Bank, evidence suggests that there has been little improvement in the performance of national statistical offices (NSOs) in Anglophone Africa, where statistical agencies lack independence, are unable to attract and retain qualified staff, and rely on external funding for most of their budget (Sandefur & Glassman, 2014).



On government commitment to strengthening official statistics

Through the adoption of Article 160 as part of the National Development Plan 2014–2015, approved by Congress in May 2015 and ratified by the president in June 2015, Colombia has taken measures to clearly define the roles of its National Statistical System (NSS) and key stakeholders in the production and use of statistics and to provide a legal basis for guaranteeing the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) access to administrative sources for producing official statistics (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2015). This measure also provides a legal basis for reform and signals strong commitment from the Colombian government to ensuring access to quality, reliable statistics to inform policy.

National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF)

Many governments have introduced NQAFs to systematically identify and address quality issues in the collection of statistics, bring greater transparency to the process, strengthen the interaction across NSOs, and build a culture of quality. The frameworks align to principles and guidance from the United Nations Statistics Commission and are adapted for local contexts. South Africa's [Statistical Quality Assessment Framework](#) (SASQAF) provides criteria and procedures for evaluating official statistics and other data and can be used by data producers for self-assessment of their own products. The framework is accompanied by operational standards and guidelines for achieving best quality statistics.

Statistics South Africa produced the second edition of the SASQAF within a year and a half of the publication of the first edition to improve the clarity of the framework, strengthen its training component, and make it more user-friendly.

Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act

In the United States, the bipartisan commission formed by the [Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act](#), which became law in March 2016, is conducting a comprehensive study of the data inventory, data infrastructure, and statistical protocols to explore how the US government can make better use of administrative data. Other crucial components of the act include identifying ways to promote data transparency so that data may be readily available to outside researchers and to facilitate better data sharing across federal departments and different levels of government. The final recommendations of the commission are due to Congress and the administration in fall 2017.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION

In 2012, the National Bureau of Statistics in South Sudan conducted a high-frequency panel survey with technical and financial support from the World Bank. The survey used Android-based tablet computers to collect data on social, economic, and security conditions. Data were transmitted in real time via a mobile network to a central database facilitating immediate detection of any changes in social or economic indicators. The survey was a success despite the country's significant development challenges and limited statistical capacity.

Source: Prydz (2014).

USING DATA TO SET HEALTHCARE PRIORITIES

Governments are developing health benefit plans (HBPs) as a policy tool for improving equity in the selection of beneficiaries, service coverage, and financial protection. The plans, which publicly describe who and what should be covered under national health services or schemes, draw on the following types of data:

- Disease burden and utilization data to assess differences in health status and access
- Household surveys to gather information on health expenditure and understand financial barriers to health care
- Cost-effective analysis to direct spending toward high-impact, low-cost services

As one example, Chile's Universal Access with Explicit Guarantees (AUGE) health benefit plan prioritizes services where data show large differences in health status among different population groups.

Source: Nakhimovsky et al. (2015).

Making Data Accessible

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Public Data Portal

[MGNREGA](#) is India's most expansive public works program, with one of the largest databases in the world. In 2014, through a partnership with Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) based at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, the program launched a user-friendly public data portal.⁴ The portal has more than fifty indicators, interactive data visualization, and report dashboards. While the portal makes it easier for administrators and anyone else who wants to know about MGNREGA to access information, whether the new easy-to-interpret formats will lead to an increased use of data remains uncertain (McIntyre & Evidence for Policy Design, 2016).

DATA COLLECTION AND VISUALIZATION TOOLS ARE NOT THE PANACEA

While data portals, information systems, and interfaces such as dashboards are designed to give users quick and easy access to data, they do not necessarily translate to better use of data in decision making. Policymakers can face additional challenges that stem from a lack of technical capacity to analyze and interpret data or the absence of supportive leadership to encourage a culture of data use. Further, a policymaker's ability to access data can be constrained by institutional silos that limit collaboration and information sharing.

Afghanistan's Education Management Information System (EMIS)

Many governments use some form of health management information system (HMIS) or education management information system (EMIS) to facilitate data collection for planning, management, and decision making and to provide access to multiple indicators or data sets.

[Afghanistan's EMIS portal](#) contains comprehensive education data that can be publicly accessed through an online platform. The EMIS is being used to compile and compute real-time information from Afghanistan's first-ever national learning assessment, administered with tablets to students across Afghanistan, including those from poor and remote areas. Another component—the certificate distribution system—allows the Ministry of Education to accurately identify students who are registered in the school system for distribution of school leaving certificates. This automated process has reduced the time of certificate distribution from as long as three years to a few months (De Silva & Valsangkar, 2015).

4. The partnership was supported by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) funded Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) program.

Seattle, Washington, Open Data Program

In 2010, Seattle launched its [Open Data Program](#) aimed at increasing the quality of life for its residents, promoting greater transparency and accountability in the delivery of services, encouraging research and innovation, and improving internal performance management. Since the program launched, more than four hundred datasets have been produced. In 2016, Seattle's mayor signed an executive order directing all city data to be "open by preference," meaning that after accounting for privacy, security, and quality considerations, the city's preference will be to publish all its data.

Using Data to Measure Results

Ministers' Scorecards in Malaysia's Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU)

The Ministers' Scorecards are used to assess and monitor ministry progress against key performance indicators (KPI) for the Growth Transformation Program and Economic Transformation Program. Housed in the prime minister's office, [PEMANDU](#) serves as an in-house consultancy that cuts across ministries. It hosts a yearly clinic with ministers to discuss scorecard indicators and results areas, which are then approved by the prime minister. Progress is reported monthly, and for some programs weekly, to ensure timely problem solving of issues. The ministers meet with the prime minister twice a year—midyear and year-end—to review progress and discuss difficulties that may require the prime minister's intervention. The prime minister uses the year-end session to offer a final assessment and feedback on progress to each minister.

In 2014, 87 percent of 573 KPIs were achieved or overachieved, as compared with 87.4 percent of 606 KPIs in 2013, and 86.5 percent of 703 KPIs in 2012.⁵

Anchorage, Alaska, Performance Management Framework

The Bloomberg Philanthropies [What Works Cities](#) initiative is supporting close to sixty-five US cities in its effort to strengthen performance management and build capacity to set goals, identify key performance indicators, and track progress toward these indicators and overall city goals. As one example, the city of Anchorage, Alaska, partnered with GovEx to design and launch a performance management framework to improve city operations, track progress, and achieve the mayor's goal of ending homelessness.⁶ To inform the design of the framework, the city, through its partnership with GovEx, conducted an inventory of existing performance measurement programs, reviewed the mayor's vision to better understand priorities and goals, identified ways to track progress, and developed key performance indicators and datasets.

Through its partnership with WWC, Anchorage has created an open data policy, hired a chief innovation officer to oversee performance management and open data, and publicly stated its commitment to performance management to improve outcomes (Bloomberg Philanthropies, n.d.).

5. For more information, see http://etp.pemandu.gov.my/annualreport2014/upload/20_MinistersScorecard_ENG.pdf.

6. GovEx is the Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University. The center's mission is to help governments use data to improve the lives of their citizens.



On using performance incentives to strengthen results-based budgeting

Results-based budgeting is a performance- or results-based management tool that seeks to align decisions involved in the preparation of budgets with results.

In Chile, the Ministry of Finance, National Budget Office (DIPRES) introduced the Public Management Improvement Program (PMG) under Law 19,553 in 1988 to create performance incentives for civil servants as part of its effort to strengthen budget preparation and analysis and make the process more transparent. The PMG provides incentives to more than 87,000 public servants. Employees that meet over 90 percent of indicator goals are rewarded with a 7.6 percent bonus on annual salary. DIPRES has continually redeveloped the program framework over the years to incorporate lessons learned and best practices and to ensure incentives are aligned with achievement levels.

Source: Diaz and and Herrera (2007).

IrelandStat

IrelandStat is a whole-of-government performance measurement system that can be publicly accessed online with information about the spending, allocation, and accounting of public resources. For each of its eight policy themes (economy, health, education, public safety, infrastructure, environment, social protection, and public service) IrelandStat addresses progress achieved, actions taken, and cost and performance as compared with that of other European Union (EU) member states and an EU average. A traffic light signal is used to provide performance trends and a visual indication of whether a program is “improving” (green), “worsening” (red), or “being maintained” (yellow). The process of collecting and uploading data, which comes from sources such as department strategy statements, annual reports, and websites, is ongoing.

The IrelandStat website presents fifty-one programs across four ministerial voting groups. It includes almost 1,500 metrics.

Innovating with Big Data

United Nations Global Pulse Lab

The [United Nations Global Pulse](#) innovation initiative partners with governments, academia, and the private sector to implement data innovation programs to improve data-driven decision making, contribute to the development of regulatory frameworks to address data sharing and privacy issues, and strengthen the public sector’s ability to integrate real-time insights into policy and practice.

Global Pulse operates as a network of labs that conduct and coordinate research on big data. It has a lab in Jakarta, Indonesia, and one in Kampala, Uganda. Pulse Lab host countries express an interest in hosting the labs and a commitment to sharing experiences and lessons learned with other countries.

Pulse Lab Jakarta conducted a research project to investigate the feasibility of “nowcasting” (estimating in near real-time) commodity prices in Indonesia, one of the most social media–dense countries in the world. Researchers found that Indonesians tweet about food prices and that those prices closely approximate official figures. This insight led to the development of a tool that extracts daily food prices from public tweets to generate a nearly real-time food price index.

Pulse Lab Kampala is developing a prototype that will make it possible to analyze public discussions on the radio with the aim of better understanding the perspective of citizens to help advance the United Nations Development Programme’s Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the Global Goals.

Using Scanner Data to Measure Price Change for Consumer Electronics

[Statistics New Zealand](#) is using scanner data from barcodes to estimate price change for products sold through supermarkets and for consumer electronics products. The benefits of using scanner data to create official statistics include greater accuracy of price measurement, the ability to reuse information that is already being collected by businesses, more accurate reflection of seasonal changes in purchasing patterns, and learning how consumers behave toward substituting products.

Using Mobile Phone Data to Optimize Bus Routes in Seoul, South Korea

The data and statistics division of Seoul’s metropolitan government partnered with telecom company KT Corporation to analyze [mobile phone data](#) from late-night calls. These data were used to help inform the city’s decisions about late-night bus route offerings to fill the void in public transportation created by closing the metro (train) system at midnight. Faced with budget constraints and the ability to offer only a limited number of new routes, the city wanted a way to ensure that the bus routes were servicing areas where demand was the highest.

The city used data from call records to introduce bus lines in nine of the mostly heavily trafficked corridors of the city. The new bus lines have resulted in reduced bus fare costs, a benefit especially to low-income groups. The bus new bus routes also translate into fewer cars on the road and reduced carbon emissions, which can bring both environment and public health benefits to the residents of Seoul. Finally, the bus lines have prioritized women’s safety, adding lights and serving well-lit areas, resulting in 12 percent of women reporting that they feel safer about late-night bus transportation as compared with earlier options.

Using Satellite and Cell Phone Data to Eliminate Malaria in Namibia

In Namibia, [cell phone and satellite data](#) are being used to understand how communities transmit malaria. Satellite images map where malaria parasites and mosquitoes are present along with the environmental conditions that support breeding and growth, while cell phone records track the movements of groups of people.

Namibia's Ministry of Health, with support from the Global Fund and the Clinton Health Access Initiative, used the satellite images and phone data to distribute mosquito bed nets to key areas. The ministry's distribution strategy targeted 80,000 people based on a better understanding of travel patterns of people and the environmental factors that affect the malaria transmission cycle, rather than the previously estimated at-risk population of 1.2 million.

BIG DATA AND THE POLICY PROCESS

While there are many challenges to implementing big data solutions, particularly in LMICs, including privacy-related concerns, high costs, limited community access to data, and a lack of robust data systems, big data may have the potential to change how and where evaluation fits into the policy process.

Evaluation activities typically take place at the end of a policy cycle, but with big data, results are available as soon as data are gathered. This allows for continuous evaluation and feedback at any stage of the policy process and offers an opportunity for a potential change to the traditional method of conducting evaluations. This change could make the policymaking process more efficient as feedback is incorporated along the way rather than at the end of policy implementation, and it may significantly shorten the decision-making process.



“There is some civil society pressure, I would say, in terms of how you spend the money, [and this I think] helps to build evaluation culture.”

—Paula Darville, Head of the Management Control Division,
Budget Office, Ministry of Finance, Chile

Using Citizen Opinion to Drive Accountability and Performance in Government

Town halls and other forums that give voice to citizens can be a way to build trust between government and citizens, incentivize transparency and accountability in service delivery, and provide an important platform for monitoring and bringing greater efficiency to government services. The success of these types of engagement platforms depends on the extent to which purpose and role are clearly defined (see, for example, South Africa's [Framework for Strengthening Citizen-Government Partnerships for Monitoring Frontline Service Delivery](#)), leadership is supportive and committed, government has the capacity to engage with citizens at the local level, and citizen feedback is considered in policy and program decisions.

Uganda Community Advocacy Forum (Baraza)

[Barazas](#) are designed to encourage citizen participation at local levels of government in monitoring the use of public resources in service delivery. Through forums such as town hall meetings, Barazas bring leaders and members of the community together to share information and discuss implementation of programs, helping to build accountability and transparency in service delivery. A 2015 baseline survey report for an impact evaluation of the Barazas found that they are helping to improve information sharing between policymakers, development partners, civil society members and local governments, empowering citizens to hold government accountable by communities.

Albuquerque, New Mexico, Goals Forum

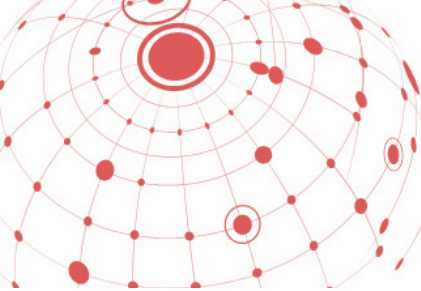
Since 1995 the US city of Albuquerque, New Mexico, has hosted a [Goals Forum](#) every four years to solicit citizen input for the city's goal-setting process. Following the forum, a report is submitted to the mayor with the recommended vision, goals, and desired community conditions.

Crowdsourcing with Mi Quito, Ecuador

In Quito, Ecuador, citizens are using crowdsourcing platforms such as [Mi Quito](#) to offer their feedback on the city's pressing public concerns and to share creative solutions for addressing them. The ideas with the most votes are considered for adoption and implementation by the government.

New Orleans BlightSTAT

To coordinate blight-reduction efforts the mayor of New Orleans created [BlightSTAT](#), a process that brings together representatives from the Department of Code Enforcement, the Office of Community Development, the Office of Information Technology and Innovation, the Law Department and the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority to set goals and report on progress. BlightSTAT meetings are held monthly and are open to the public. Feedback from residents and the New Orleans police department is used to identify priorities among the dilapidated properties. Residents can also get updates on the status of specific properties on a [BlightStatus](#) website. By early 2017, the city had reduced the number of blighted residential properties by about 13,000 from a 2010 high of 43,755 properties.



Section 3

Facilitating Access to Quality, Relevant Evidence

Overview

Shaxson (2005) defines evidence as information that helps turn strategic priorities and objectives into something concrete, manageable, and achievable. Newman et al. (2012) expound on this further, suggesting that different types of evidence are needed to inform policymaking: “Evidence-informed policy is that which has considered a broad range of research evidence; evidence from citizens and other stakeholders; and evidence from practice and policy implementation as part of a process that considers other factors such as political realities and current public debates” (p. 17). Evidence is one of the many factors that comes into play in the broader political, economic, and social context in which policy decisions are made. In addition to the technical feasibility of a policy solution, it is important to consider political feasibility, that is, whether policymakers are motivated and have opportunity to consider adoption (Cairney, 2016).

Different dimensions of evidence are critical in informing the stages of the policy process. These dimensions are as follows:

- Agenda setting—credible evidence that is based on a strong and clear line of argument to identify the problem and gather evidence (Shaxson, 2005)
- Policy formulation—timely and relevant evidence to demonstrate understanding of the current situation and options, including links between activity and outcome
- Implementation—credible, reliable, and objective operational evidence to improve effectiveness of initiatives
- Monitoring and evaluation—credible, reliable, objective evidence that is clearly communicated to inform ongoing policies (Sutcliffe & Court, 2005)



“ Putting policymakers at the center of defining research needs is a good thing to do but it’s challenging as well, and can cause delays. But it’s important because it builds ownership in the process. ”

—Rose Oronje, Director, Science Communications and Evidence Uptake, African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), Kenya

WHAT MAKES EVIDENCE POLICY-RELEVANT?

- When it aligns with policymaker priorities, that is, when the evidence agenda is driven by policymaker research questions
- When it is collaboratively produced by policymakers and research community
- When it is timely and responsive to policy windows

Strehlenert, Richter-Sundberg, Nyström, and Hasson (2015) highlight the importance of looking at policy implementation to fully understand how evidence informs the policymaking process. They use a case study approach to explore the role of evidence in health-care policy in two examples in Sweden and found a correlation between evidence use and policy type. The implementation of a practice policy (i.e., clinical practice) in the first case followed a rational, linear approach to sourcing and using evidence, whereas the link between evidence and governance or service policies in the second case was found to be weaker.

Governments are taking different approaches to building organizational capacity to generate, package, and disseminate knowledge to inform the policy agenda and develop policy solutions. They include establishing dedicated evidence or research units in the form of independent, semiautonomous, or in-government departments, networks, commissions, and labs that provide support to different arms of government; and developing national policies and frameworks to guide the production and use of evidence.

The examples that follow highlight the strategies and mechanisms governments are putting in place to ensure a supply of high-quality, relevant evidence. For more examples with resources and links, see [Table 2: Facilitating Access to Quality, Relevant Evidence](#).

Dedicated Units

The Australia Productivity Commission

[Australia's Productivity Commission](#) is an independent research and advisory body providing advice to the government on economic, social, and environmental issues affecting the welfare of its citizens. The commission has its own budgetary allocation and permanent staff and operates at arm's length from other government agencies. Additionally, the commission is committed to ensuring that the information and analysis it produces takes public input into consideration by holding hearings, workshops, and other consultative forums to share draft of reports and research findings.

The UK What Works Network

The [What Works Network](#) comprises seven independent What Works Centres and two affiliate members. The members of the network distinguish themselves from standard research centers through the services they provide to enable policymakers, commissioners, and practitioners to make

evidence-informed decisions. This includes collating and synthesizing evidence, assessing the effectiveness of policies and practices, framing and packaging findings in an accessible format, and encouraging the use of evidence in decision making. Several of the centers support capacity-building activities aimed at building a better understanding of the evidence base and supporting policymakers and practitioners in incorporating evidence in policy and program decisions. The centers are funded by a combination of government and nongovernment sources.

Government Research Units in the United States

The [Congressional Research Service](#) (CRS) serves Congress by providing comprehensive, reliable legislative research on and analysis of current and emerging policy issues that is timely, objective, and nonpartisan. The CRS produces policy reports, tailored confidential memoranda, briefings and consultations, seminars and workshops, expert congressional testimony, and responses to individual inquiries. It is staffed by more than four hundred policy analysts, attorneys, and information professionals across many disciplines. Most of the CRS's research is conducted in response to congressional committees and individual members of Congress and is kept confidential.

The CRS is joined by two other prominent nonpartisan government research units, the [Congressional Budget Office](#) (CBO), which provides Congress with independent analysis of budgetary and economic issues to support the congressional budget process, and the [Government Accountability Office](#) (GAO), which conducts audits, investigations, and evaluations of federal programs to ensure the performance and accountability of the government. Most of the reports produced by the CBO and the GAO are publicly available.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT OF AN EVIDENCE OR RESEARCH UNIT

Potential Benefits Autonomous units with distance from political influence can have greater independence and transparency in producing evidence, particularly when it comes to communicating findings that may challenge government viewpoints. The distance can give them greater control over their research agenda and enable them to take a systematic and strategic approach to informing policy and promoting evidence use that is based on long-term priorities rather than short-term administrative needs or crisis.

Potential Challenges But distance from government can also make it harder to get political buy-in on policy matters and build the trust of government. Proximity to leadership or government that could come from being embedded in a central unit or an arms-length arrangement can provide increased leverage or inside access to an approval process or a window of opportunity like a budget or election cycle. It can also yield unexpected opportunities for timely policy influence (Tilley, Shaxson, Rea, Ball, and Young (2017)).

Peru Ministry of Education Lab (MineduLAB)

[MineduLAB](#) is an innovation lab for education policy housed within the government of Peru. The lab is using administrative data to pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of innovations in education and to generate evidence for identifying solutions for improving educational outcomes.

Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)

[KIPPRA](#) is an autonomous public institute established in 1997 to provide policy advice that would help the government of Kenya achieve its national development goals. KIPPRA's activities include research and analysis on public policy issues, advisory and technical services, collection and analysis of data, capacity building for government and the private sector, and facilitation of partnerships and networks to encourage the sharing of information between government, the private sector, and civil society.



On commitment from senior leadership in Malaysia's Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU)

PEMANDU was established with the support of senior leadership and is located centrally in the government, in the office of the prime minister. The central location gives PEMANDU easy access to senior leaders who can be pulled in as needed to help troubleshoot issues and facilitates its ability to work across government.

Source: Datuk Chris Tan, Africa Region Director, Big Fast Results Initiative, Prime Minister's Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU), Malaysia, at Evidence Works 2016, September 29–30, London, UK.

Practices, Tools, Processes, or Regulations to Inform or Guide the Production and Use of Evidence

National Evaluation Policies

National evaluation policies (NEPs) provide agencies and departments with guidance on how to manage nationally supported evaluations on topics such as budgeting, roles and responsibilities, frequency of evaluations, standard technical support needs, and development of follow-up implementation plans. NEPs are administered by different agencies or units in various countries.

NEPs provide a framework that enables governments to take a formal and systematic approach to producing the evidence needed to assess progress toward achieving outcomes. Establishing a common and coordinated approach to conducting evaluations can help reduce duplication of efforts and minimize inefficiencies associated with parallel projects or donor-specific monitoring and evaluation systems in agencies and departments. While it may seem like standard practice to have an overarching framework to guide evaluations, a mapping project conducted in 2013 found

that of the 115 countries surveyed for the study, spanning Europe, Africa, Latin America, South Asia, and Australia, only twenty had legislated evaluation policies (Rosenstein, 2015). These countries include Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, South Africa, Switzerland, Uganda, Ukraine, and the United States of America. While countries like Canada, Colombia, Mexico, and South Africa have taken a whole-of-government approach to legislating evaluation policies, in the United States this process has been driven by individual federal agencies. For example, the US Department of Labor has a formal evaluation policy statement that emphasizes the principles of government evaluation, including rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics.

Of the countries with NEPs, only a handful have whole-of-government national evaluation systems put in place to operationalize the legislated policies, notably, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Benin, Mexico, Uganda, and South Africa.



On creating a culture that takes a business as usual approach to using evidence

In 2004, the United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) adopted a systematic approach known as evidence investment strategy (EIS), for mapping evidence needs to policy priorities. The EIS is based on four principles: (1) put policy in the lead such that policy priorities determine the type of evidence that is collected rather than having the evidence define policy priorities; (2) use a broad definition of evidence; (3) invest in long-term priorities; and (4) make efficient use of resources by using the evidence that already exists in addition to commissioning new evidence. These principles have helped DEFRA move from a "research for science" to an "evidence for policy" approach.

The EIS takes a whole organization approach to mapping evidence needs, looking across departments to understand policy priorities and identify potential overlapping evidence needs. Further, the EIS is embedded in business processes, helping to establish a clear link between evidence budgets and program budgets and to build a culture where use of evidence is embedded in routine operations.

Source: Shaxson (2014).

Guidelines for Using Evaluation Findings

It is critical that governments also develop clear guidance and incentives for evidence use—identifying what is working, what is not, and how to correct the course of programs and initiatives through continual learning. Without a clear process for addressing recommendations, a culture may form where evaluations are conducted as an end in themselves that come to take priority over performance and learning.

South Africa's [Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation](#) (DPME) has an improvement plan that features practical guidance on how to address the findings of an evaluation. The guidelines include templates for synthesizing recommendations, developing an improvement plan, and hosting a workshop to review findings. In Mexico, [CONEVAL](#) (National Council for the Evaluation for Social Development Policy) has established a mechanism with four tiers to

incentivize the use of evaluation results (de la Garza, 2013). The process begins with analysis and selection of evaluation results and is followed by a prioritization of the results to be addressed, development of an improvement plan, and finally, public dissemination of the plan to build accountability and motivate follow-through on recommendations for improvement.

Uganda Government Evaluation Facility (GEF)

The [Government Evaluation Facility](#) provides a structure for systematic expansion of the quality and supply of public policy investment evaluations, with the aim of improving service delivery. The elements of the GEF include a rolling agenda of topics for evaluation and a virtual fund to ensure reliable financing for public policy and investment evaluations, as well as standards, guidelines, and a database for communicating evaluations findings. Evaluations completed to date include a process evaluation of Uganda's Universal Primary Education program. The fund is a way to ensure that resources in the government's budget are committed to evaluation, underscoring the importance of dedicated funding streams to promote the generation of evidence.



On ensuring resource allocation for research and evaluation

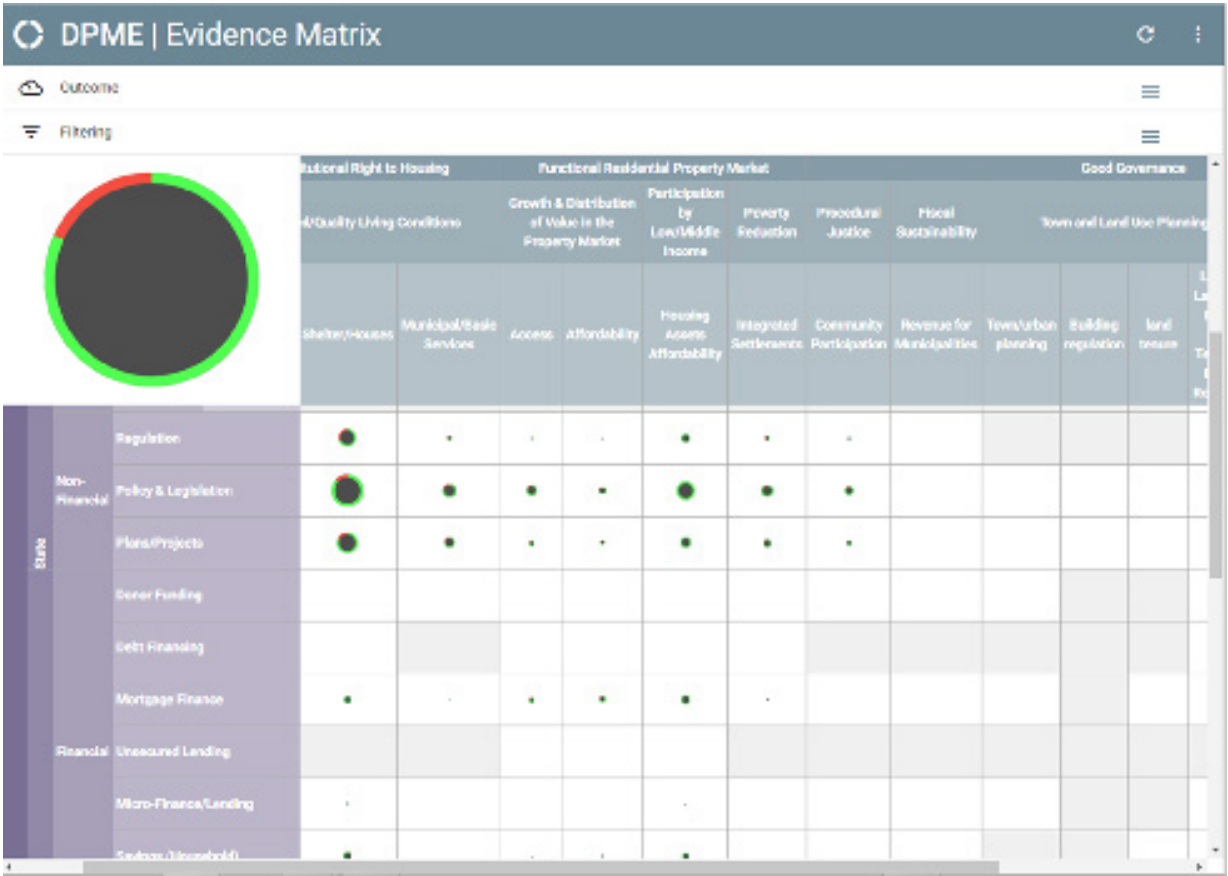
Recognition and support for EIP require a commitment to funding research, evaluation, and data collection activities; using findings regardless of whether they are favorable or not; and taking initiative to discontinue a policy or program where evidence shows that it is not effective (Sutcliffe & Court, 2005).

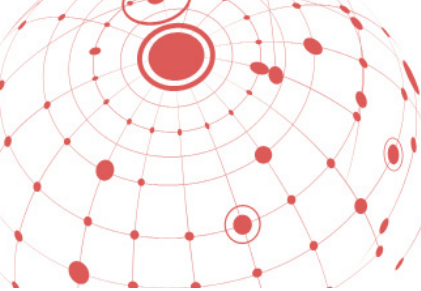
South Africa's Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation has completed or has underway fifty-nine evaluations in its short five years of existence. This is due in large part to its commitment to championing monitoring and evaluation and to its ability to raise significant funding for the national evaluation system (Goldman et al., 2015).

Evidence Gap Maps

Evidence gap maps are designed to help policymakers quickly explore and assess the quality of evidence by issue or sector and make informed decisions about research needs. Gap maps have been developed by the South Africa Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and piloted in the Human Settlements Sector. The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), an international grant-making NGO that funds impact evaluations and systematic reviews to promote evidence-driven solutions in development programs, has also been developing evidence gap maps for issue areas ranging from education to forest conservation and reproductive health. Gap maps are presented in a visual, interactive format that allows policymakers to identify existing sources of evidence and where additional information may be needed to answer policy questions. In the same way, the [Research Roadmap](#) developed by the Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) in the US Department of Housing and Urban Development is a strategic research plan developed through extensive stakeholder engagement, that identifies the critical, policy-relevant research questions to help guide research investments.

Figure 2. Sample of an Evidence Gap Map, South Africa Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation





Section 4

Strengthening Partnerships and Collaboration between Policymakers and Evidence Producers

Overview

While there can be many obvious differences between policymakers and evidence producers in terms of priorities, depth of technical knowledge, and communication style, the contrast between the groups may not be as stark as it is usually perceived to be. In low- and middle-income countries, for example, policymakers often have research backgrounds and researchers, in turn, have policy experience, creating a fluid rather than distinct community dynamic (Shroff et al., 2015).

Further, Levine (2016) challenges the notion that policymakers have pressing needs and researchers are slow and deliberate. While this may be true in some contexts, she points out that policy often waits for research and that new policies are not developed overnight. Mendizabal (2011) contends that rather than a divide or gap, what exists is a space that is filled with interactions between the different actors who play a role in the policy process, including policymakers and research bodies.

Within this dynamic, policymakers can have different roles and responsibilities, varying levels of technical understanding, and thus different information requirements. For politicians, who tend to be involved during short windows of change or innovation, timing is key, while demand for information from bureaucrats may be most critical during implementation and the needs of technocrats may be contingent on the stage in the implementation or policy process (Ademokun, Dennis, Hayter, Richards, & Runceanu, 2016). Communication strategies thus should be targeted to address the specific needs of policymakers. Regardless of who is targeted, short action-led messaging is an effective way to gain the attention of busy policymakers (Stone, Maxwell, & Keating, 2001). In South Africa, for example, evaluation findings are presented to the Cabinet in a concise, seven-page format to promote transparency and accountability and invite constructive



“Somewhere between the land of the irrational consumer and the very political politician we must make sure that our research is absolutely compelling, relevant, timely, easy to read, and that those of us who are briefing you do a really sharp job and arm you brilliantly.”

—Penny Young, Librarian and Director General of
Information Services, House of Commons, UK

“*In the past, it was assumed that research findings would somehow find their way in a passive manner into policy and practice, but as we have learned over the years, that is not the case. And so, in Malawi, we have formed what we call the Malawi Knowledge Translation Platform. There is the website. That is the mechanism we are using to promote the use of evidence. It’s a brokerage.*”

—Damson Kathyola, Director of
Research, Ministry of Health,
Malawi

dialogue on progress and improvement plans (Goldman, 2016). Governments are turning to knowledge-brokering mechanisms to improve communication, bridge gaps, and foster interaction between the policymaking and evidence communities. A knowledge broker can be an individual, an organization, or a structure with functions that span information sharing, capacity strengthening, and partnership building (Ward, House, & Hamer, 2009).

The examples that follow highlight the some of the strategies and mechanisms governments are putting in place to facilitate interactions between policymakers and evidence producers, both in terms of knowledge management and translation—synthesis packaging and dissemination of information—and how partnerships between policymakers and evidence producers are being forged. As the examples will show, many of the interventions that come from countries in the Global South are donor-funded activities led by regional organizations. For more examples with resources and links, see [Table 3: Strengthening Partnerships and Collaboration between Policy-makers and Evidence Producers](#).

TRUSTED, INFORMAL NETWORKS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE POLICY PROCESS

In addition to formal and established mechanisms like scientific advisors, advisory boards, or government agencies that generally aim to promote better use of data and evidence in decision making, informal relationships play an equal, if not more important, role in supporting and facilitating the use of data and evidence in decision making.

For example, a study in Indonesia found that policymakers relied on trusted informal and personal networks to identify and engage directly with individual academics for advice in the policy process, enabling them to avoid regulatory barriers that limit engagement with informal networks and to gain access to the analytic and technical expertise they seek (Datta et al., 2011). In Ghana, policymakers at all levels of government draw on trusted networks and partnerships to gain quick access to data from ministries and departments as they wait for the approval of formal information requests, a process that many describe as long and cumbersome (interview with George Amoah, March 2017). In another example, a staff member at a prominent research institute in Kenya highlighted the importance of being available to policymakers—demonstrating a willingness to participate in events and meetings at short notice—as a way to build trust and so that policymakers know who to call when they need information (interview in Nairobi, Kenya, 2017). The staff member also noted that inflexible donor funding structures tied to specific deliverables make it a challenge to engage in trust and awareness-building activities.

Knowledge Management and Knowledge Translation

Malawi Ministry of Health Knowledge Translation Platform

The [Ministry of Health Knowledge Translation Platform](#) helps bring policymakers and researchers together to collaborate on addressing priority health issues. Accomplishments of the Knowledge Translation Platform include creation of two communities of practice; coproduction of evidence briefs; facilitation of capacity-building workshops for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers; and a series of science cafes to encourage policy dialogue.



On building a knowledge-sharing culture

The [National Administrative Department of Statistics](#) (DANE) of Colombia, through its Moderno initiative, has taken a systematic approach to building an internal culture of knowledge sharing and collaboration that has changed the way staff interact with each other and share knowledge both internally and externally. In consultation with staff, DANE's senior management team drafted a vision statement and an action plan to achieve that vision which included setting up a cross-departmental knowledge management team, creating knowledge management policies, and developing technical capacities for knowledge capturing, packaging, and sharing. As a result, DANE's staff members have reported feeling more motivated to share knowledge with each other and with outside organizations.

Source: Janus (2016).

Research Hubs/Clearinghouses

The [Maisha Maarifa Research Hub](#), in Kenya, is an online platform designed to facilitate sharing of knowledge and research (including research reports that do not make it into peer-reviewed publications) on HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, and comorbidities such as tuberculosis. The research hub promotes dialogue and exchange of information through communities of practice and allows users to both access and upload information.

Most information clearinghouses have the broad objective of making research more accessible to policymakers, researchers, practitioners, the public, and other stakeholders. They typically report on what works for a specific topic or issue area. Some appear to be more research focused, like the Maisha Maarifa Research Hub, for example, while others, such as the UK's [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#) (NICE), are more practice and policy focused.

Research suggests that clearinghouses serving as passive repositories of information are less likely to have a positive effect on evidence use (Langer, Tripney, & Gough, 2016). To address this challenge, clearinghouses such as the [Institute of Education Sciences What Works Clearinghouse](#) in the United States have begun to develop briefs and practice guides in user-friendly formats that are disseminated to users through email alerts targeting their specific area of interest. This type of targeted outreach can help policymakers stay on top of new research in a timely way and encourage or motivate use in policy decisions. Not surprisingly, given the ICT infrastructure that clearinghouses require—including basic power supply, Internet connectivity and access, and digital

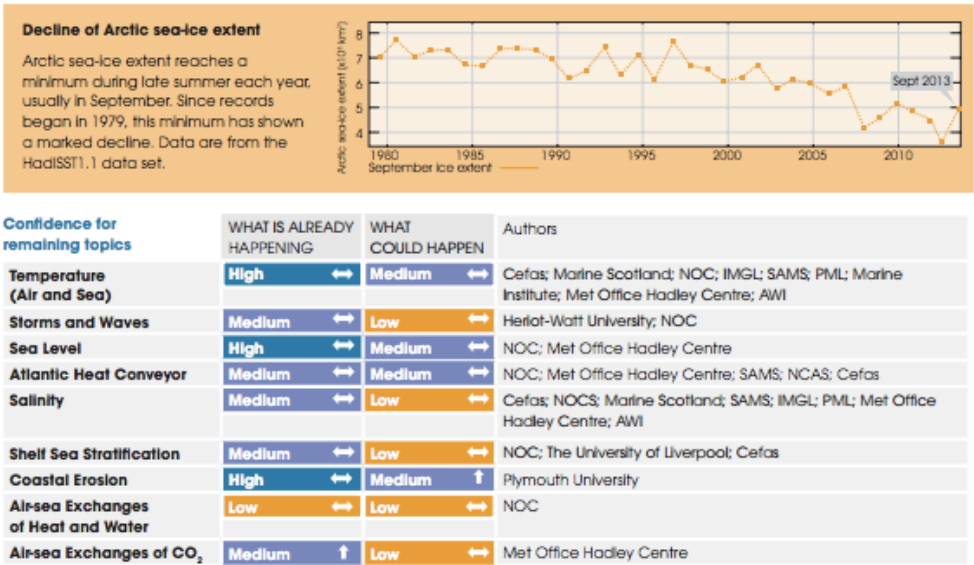
storage platforms (servers), which can be a significant challenge in many low- and middle-income countries—this landscape review has identified many more clearinghouses in high-income countries, although not all are included in this report.

At the subnational level, the [Results First Clearinghouse Database](#), housed within the Pew Charitable Trusts, an NGO in the United States, was designed to support governments, particularly at the state level, in identifying information on the effectiveness of various interventions. The Results First Clearinghouse has compiled information from eight clearinghouses in one location, reconciled the different systems and vocabularies, and provides the data in a clear, accessible format.

UK Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership (MCCIP) Annual Report Card

The UK [Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership](#) (MCCIP), a partnership between government, the academic community, and NGOs to address climate change in the United Kingdom, publishes an annual report card (ARC) on the state of scientific evidence on climate change, covering both the current state and potential future changes. For each issue area, the ARC includes an assessment of MCCIP’s level of confidence in the evidence, using a color-coded system to indicate low, medium, or high confidence ratings. Arrows are used additionally to show whether the degree of confidence has increased, decreased, or remained the same since the last assessment (Shaxson & Tsui, 2016).

Figure 3. Excerpt from the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership Report Card 2013.



“As a country, we have been able to collect information. We have the capacity to collect information on what is working, but our biggest problem is to turn this information into reality.”

—Albert Byamugisha, Commissioner and Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda

Government Units and Actors as Knowledge Brokers

In South Africa, the role of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) as knowledge broker is to support production, sharing, and use of evidence in policy and implementation in the national evaluation system. In this capacity, DPME has developed practical guidelines and standards to ensure a common understanding and minimum standard for conducting evaluations, all which are available on the DPME website. On the capacity development side, DPME offers learning-by-doing support and short courses to train staff and departments working on evaluations and to build the knowledge and skill levels of senior leaders. DPME also plays an advocacy role in broadly promoting evaluations and supporting effective communication of evaluation findings (Goldman et al., 2015).

The government chief scientific adviser (GCSA) in the United Kingdom also serves as a knowledge broker. The [GCSA](#) is responsible for providing scientific advice to the prime minister and members of the Cabinet, advising the government on science and technology policy issues, and promoting the use of scientific evidence in government. Most government departments have chief scientific advisers who work together under the leadership of the GCSA to support each other and address cross-departmental issues and challenges.

The Inter-Sectoral Committee for Evaluation and Management of Results in Colombia's National Results Evaluation System (SINERGIA) was created as a mechanism for building ownership in the evaluation process and motivating the use findings. The committee is comprised of representatives from the national planning and budget authorities, the president's office, and line ministries and agencies of the programs undergoing evaluation. It collectively determines evaluation priorities and methodology and coordinates the overall evaluation process, which is conducted by independent, outside evaluators (Stolyarenko, n.d.). Ministries and line agencies that buy in to the evaluation process are more likely to draw on the findings to inform budget and policy decisions.

USING ONLINE TOOLS TO MAKE RESEARCH ACCESSIBLE TO POLICYMAKERS

Australia's Center for Informing Policy in Health with Evidence (CIPHER) conducted a study to better understand how policymakers use its online tool, [Web CIPHER](#). Web CIPHER is an interactive online portal designed to facilitate policymaker access to research evidence. Membership to the site, which includes features such as hot topics, research updates, a blog, a community bulletin board, a multimedia section, and a research portal, is free.

The study examined usage patterns of 223 policymakers from more than thirty-two organizations over a sixteen-month period and found the blog and community bulletin board to be the most frequently used features of the tool. The blogs were written in a jargon-free, easy-to-understand format and often provided summaries of research findings with clear recommendations. The fact that they were written by trusted experts in health policy and research may have motivated policymakers to not only read and use them but also to explore other features of the platform. The study found that the blog posts were most frequently accessed through weekly email summaries. Finally, even though there were few submissions made to the community bulletin, it had a high number of unique views, suggesting that policymakers were perhaps looking for a space to share and exchange views and ideas.

Source: Makkar, Gilham, Williamson, and Bisset (2015).

Nongovernmental Organizations as Knowledge Brokers

Several NGOs have established knowledge-brokering platforms for production and dissemination of key findings of evaluations and systematic reviews to inform policy and program decisions. Examples include the [International Initiative for Impact Evaluation](#) (3ie), the [Campbell Collaboration](#), and several initiatives supported by the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO). The 3ie's impact evaluations are conducted in partnership with implementing government agencies committed to generating high-quality evidence that is relevant to policy. The Campbell Collaboration produces systematic reviews, summaries, and policy briefs and provides a link to featured evidence portals, all made available for use through its website and intended for use by policymakers. The WHO initiatives include the [Evidence-Informed Policy Network](#) (EVIPNet) covering thirty-six low- and middle-income countries and Regional East African Community Health (REACH).

Established in 2005, EVIPNet comprises country, regional, and global nodes. Country-level teams include policymakers, researchers, and members of civil society who work closely with decision makers to identify priority health issues and develop solutions using the best available research evidence. This approach allows EVIPNet to engage with a wide group of stakeholders across agencies and organizations and to sustain communities and relationships despite changes in political leadership. The teams produce outputs such as policy briefs, rapid synthesis reports, policy dialogues, and clearinghouses and are supported at the global level by a Global Steering Group. EVIPNet's key achievements over the past ten years have been in building policymaker knowledge and skill, fostering collaboration between policymakers and research communities, responding to urgent requests for evidence, affecting policy change, and creating a culture of evidence-informed health policymaking.

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

Results for America's [What's Works Media Project](#) is using the power of storytelling to celebrate champions of evidence-informed policymaking, whether these are cities, nonprofit organizations, or other communities. The project aims to tell compelling, relatable stories that move policymakers to become more evidence- and data-driven. The project's first film describes how the mayor and the City of Seattle used data and evidence to fight homelessness and help more families access permanent housing.

Policy Roundtables, Science Cafes, and Research Weeks

The [Climate Science Technology Roundtables](#) in Kenya were a series of discussions that aimed to strengthen the links between Kenyan climate policymakers, researchers, civil society, and other stakeholders. The discussions informed the Kenya Climate Change Bill and took a dialogue- and debate-centered approach to building partnerships. The roundtables welcomed diverse viewpoints and provided a platform for discussing, documenting, and sharing different approaches for ensuring the use of research evidence in climate legislation, policy, and implementation in Kenya. The roundtables were organized by the Kenya African Center for Technology Studies (ACTS), a research think tank, with funding from the [VakaYiko Consortium](#).

STRENGTHENING MONITORING AND EVALUATION CAPACITY

South Africa's Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation has developed a range of approaches to strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacity at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels, some of which are described below. A key enabler for this process has been strong political commitment from leadership.

At the individual level:

- Training courses for staff who are designing and implementing evaluations
- Training course to build commitment of senior leadership
- Learning network to support information sharing and exchange among peers in South Africa and with international partners, communication of new policies, professional communities of practice, and networking
- Development of tools, templates, and guidelines for conducting evaluations and addressing evaluation findings

At the organizational level:

- Development of evaluation framework and standards
- Coalition building across government to gain broad support for monitoring and evaluation
- Whole-of-government approach to building partnerships and capacity to demand and use evaluation at all levels of government

At the institutional level:

- Emphasis on learning and sharing experiences to build a culture of evaluation

Source: Phillips, Goldman, Gasa, Akhalwaya, and Leon (2014); Goldman et al. (2015).

Over the past two years, science policy cafes organized by the [Strengthening Capacity to Use Research Evidence in Health Policy Program](#) (SECURE Health) in Kenya and Malawi, with funding from UK Aid, have also provided a platform for bringing together policymakers, researchers, funding agencies, and other stakeholders to deliberate on policy issues and proposed solutions ("Science-policy cafés in Kenya and Malawi," 2015).

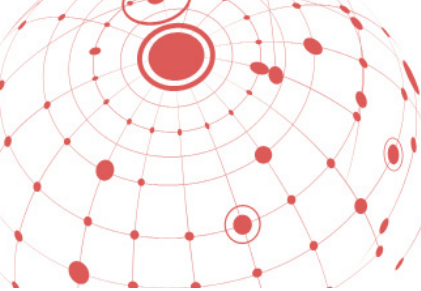
In a similar approach, Uganda's Department of Research Services (DRS) and the Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS) recently held their first ever Research Week with support from the VakaYiko Consortium. The aim of the Research Week was to build parliamentary knowledge about evidence use and strengthen the relationship between DRS, policymakers, and researchers (Hussain, 2016).

Secondments and Exchange Programs

Secondments—or temporary transfer, for example, of academics or researchers to government positions or public sector officials to academia—are a relatively low-cost approach for strengthening partnerships between policymakers and the research community (O'Donoghue Jenkins & Anstey, 2017). The secondment arrangement enables host organizations to benefit from new perspectives and

provides an opportunity for those seconded to gain new skills. For example, the [UK Royal Society Pairing Scheme](#) gives policymakers and researchers an opportunity to experience each other's worlds. Parliamentarians who participate in the pairing scheme come away with a better understanding of how research findings can help inform policymaking, and researchers develop a better understanding of how government and parliament work and how their research can inform the policy process. A new landscape analysis by the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) (AAAS) identifies mechanisms used to connect scientists with policymakers, including pairing schemes, internships, rotating fellowships, and government details and rotations.

Finally, networks such as the [Africa Evidence Network](#) (AEN), which includes researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from universities, civil society, and governments, also play a role in fostering connections between the policymaker and research communities. The AEN connects people who share a common objective of promoting better use of data and evidence in Africa. Membership is free and has reached over one thousand members across Africa and outside of the continent, signaling a high demand for information sharing and networking.



Section 5

Building Policymaker Knowledge, Skill, and Motivation

Overview

In terms of capacity to demand and use data and evidence in decision making, policymakers need a combination of knowledge, skill, and motivation to facilitate the process (Newman, Fisher, & Shaxson, 2012). To begin, it is important for them to understand how data and evidence can be used to inform decisions, be able to identify the type of evidence needed to answer a research or policy question, and know how to identify and engage with key stakeholders in the process.

Policymakers also need critical thinking and analytic skills to appraise, synthesize, and communicate information, but they often face challenges due to limitations in research skills (see, for example, Christine, Campbell, Davidson, & Graham, 2011; Oliver, Innvar, Lorenc, Woodman, & Thomas, 2014; Peirson, Ciliska, Dobbins, & Mowat, 2012; for a list of commonly cited barriers in EIP, see Punton, 2016).

To illustrate, a series of key informant interviews with stakeholders in the Federal Ministry of Health in Ethiopia revealed that existing research often goes unused because of gaps in analytic capacity to access and analyze the evidence (Hibret, Flannery, & Berman, 2016). In another example, a 2014 federal manager survey conducted by the US Government Accounting Office notes that only 64 percent of agency managers report having sufficient analytical tools to collect, analyze, and use performance data (Obama White House Archives, n.d.). Findings from another research initiative show a need for analytic tools in local villages and health facilities in Ghana, Tanzania, and Sri Lanka to facilitate use of data by practitioners (Development Gateway, 2016).

Through knowledge and skill-building efforts, policymakers can become more proficient, confident, and motivated to demand and use the evidence they need to frame a policy issue, implement solutions, and monitor and evaluate progress (Colquhoun et al., 2016). A study on federal agencies in the United States found a greater use of evaluation in decision making in agencies that had external experts and staff with strong technical understanding and skill in research methods (US Government Accountability Office, 2014).

“ I think essentially the problem is that we’ve gotten to the point where we have become very good at collecting information. The question is now, what do we want to do with it . . . because information is available that doesn’t automatically mean that it’s going to result in impact. It’s how you interpret it and how you use it. ”

—Rwitwika Bhattacharya,
Founder and Chief Executive,
Swaniti Initiative, India

Beyond knowledge and skill, commitment and strategic leadership can motivate policymakers to achieve and sustain the use of data and evidence in decision making by establishing norms and putting infrastructure or processes in place to create an environment that supports learning and improving (Stetler, Ritchie, Rycroft-Malone, & Charns, 2014). A mandate requiring all social programs to be evaluated or a legislative act that sets aside resources and/or funding for evaluations can drive adoption of data- and evidence-backed policies and programs. The general political context in a country can also affect a policymaker's motivation to use evidence. For example, a controlled political climate where there is little tolerance for failure can discourage innovation and experimentation. An environment where a change in leadership signals a politicized halt to a predecessor's initiatives, regardless of performance, can make it difficult to build and sustain a culture of evidence use.

As a positive example of how evidence can be used to counter the disruptions of an election cycle, the rigorous evaluation of Mexico's largest conditional cash transfer program was used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program and make the case for its continuation. This effort helped instill a broader value regarding the use of data and evidence, which led to the passing of the Social Development Law, requiring monitoring and evaluation of social programs and the creation of the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development (CONEVAL) to coordinate evaluations.

MOTIVATORS AND DEMOTIVATORS

What motivates or demotivates a policymaker's use of data and evidence in decision making?

Motivators

- Commitment from leadership at the highest levels
- Commitment to improving outcomes and the perceived value of doing so
- Budgetary or fiscal constraints that demand efficient use of resources
- A desire to be recognized by interest groups (e.g., media, private sector, donors, and constituents) for reasons that could include personal or political ambition
- Pressure from peers or leadership
- Financial rewards, whether personal or organizational

Demotivators

- Lack of committed leadership at the highest levels
- High staff turnover, which can make it a challenge to establish networks and relationships with peers
- Lack of adequate resources, including financial support, information and communications technology (ICT), and research materials
- Lack of consistent access to high-quality, relevant data and evidence
- Lack of technical skills needed to find, appraise, synthesize, and use evidence
- Lack of guidance on how to use and improve on evaluation findings
- An organizational culture that places emphasis on producing over learning and improving

The examples that follow highlight some of the strategies and mechanisms governments are putting in place to improve policymaker knowledge, skill, and motivation to demand and evidence. We focus on training courses and tools for senior leadership and mid-level policymakers, mentorship programs, and peer networks that facilitate sharing of practical experiences to reinforce knowledge and skill, all of which encourage joint problem solving and discussion of solutions (Peirson et al., 2012). We also include a few examples that show the ways in which diagnostic tools and needs assessments are being used to tailor strategies for assessing gaps in technical capacity. For more examples with resources and links, see [Table 4: Building Policymaker Knowledge, Skill, and Motivation](#).

It should be noted that apart from the training course for director generals in South Africa, the policy courses offered by the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, Ghana's Institute of Management and Public Administration, and the Performance Improvement Council in the United States, all other programs and tools described in this section are NGO-driven initiatives.



On building a culture of evaluation in Mexico

Political transition or a change in leadership often brings a change in policy and program priorities that can affect the funding of government programs. In Mexico, there had been a long history of scrapping antipoverty initiatives when incoming presidents sought to introduce signature programs. When the country's largest conditional cash transfer program, then known as Progresa, was introduced in 1997, its lead architects recognized early on that for the program to live beyond an election cycle, its success would need to be demonstrated through rigorous evaluations. The government took notice of the program's evaluation, which gained international visibility and helped pave the way for institutionalizing the use of evaluations in federal programs.

Source: Lustig (2011); Fernando Castro, Lopez-Acevedo, Beker Busjeet, and Fernandez Ordonez (2009).

Learning/Training Programs

Evidence-Informed Policy Making Training, Ghana

The Evidence-Informed Policy Making course, offered by the [Ghana Civil Service Training Center](#) (CSTC) in partnership with the [Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing](#) (GINKS) through the VakaYiko Consortium, incorporates pragmatic training on topics such as data visualization, how to write a policy memo, and how to assess the validity of evidence in addition to a theoretical overview of evidence-informed policymaking.⁷

Civil servants who participated in the training program stated that they valued the emphasis on practical how-to skills that could be used to inform their day-to-day operations, and they reported

7. VakaYiko is part of the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) funded Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) program.

that they had become faster in completing certain tasks (interview, Accra, Ghana, March 2017). In addition to an overall improved understanding of EIP, trainees highlighted that they had gained new networks and built relationships across different ministries, which they were drawing on for information and data requests. Training cohorts were using WhatsApp, a messaging tool, to stay connected and share information about professional and social activities.

WHAT MAKES A TRAINING PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL?

In a review of the effectiveness of interventions to increase the use of research evidence by policymakers, Langer and colleagues (2016) find stand-alone, interactive training programs to be more effective than a traditional lecture-style course or a small add-on module. Several of the programs identified in this review are designated participatory EIP programs or initiatives in ministries or department.

The report also points to evidence suggesting that longer-term learning or training engagements may be more effective than one-off workshops, and that skill-building interventions are only effective at increasing the use of evidence in decision making if they also foster motivation or a change in attitude about evidence.

Source: Langer, Tripney, and Gough (2016).

The Performance Improvement Council (PIC), United States

The PIC supports performance improvement officers—senior-level federal agency leaders charged with supervising agency performance management activities—through activities such as training programs on performance management offered at no charge to federal employees three times per year, as well as a professional development program called the Performance Enthusiast and Ambassador Program. The PIC leads cross-agency working groups in areas such as goal setting, performance reviews, and capability building to improve agency performance management capacity. Another priority of the PIC is to support cross-agency collaboration between arms of government that typically function as silos by supporting the Office of Management and Budget's efforts to develop and implement cross-agency priority (CAP) goals. The CAP goals are designed to improve the way the government works and delivers services to citizens. Focus areas include customer service, information technology, open data, and benchmarking agency progress against time and each other (Performance.gov., 2017). The president's 2017 report indicates progress across all goal areas. As one example, open data successes include the White House Police Data Initiative (PDI), which is designed to bring greater transparency and accountability to police departments. Another example is the College Scorecard tool, which is designed to help students compare college costs and outcomes and identify quality and affordable education options.

The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)

KIPPRA is an autonomous public institute that takes a more traditional approach to public policy training; its offerings are aimed at building the policy skills of young professionals in the public and private sectors. The one-year program covers topics such as the public policy process, research methodology, applied econometrics, macroeconomic modeling, and structure of government. After completing the program, the young professionals return to their jobs, where they are expected to play a key role in policy formulation.

Since the program's start in 2003, 110 officers from the public and private sectors have been trained through this program. A survey to assess the usefulness of the program found that participants reported better research and analysis skills, but also noted a need for improvement in follow-up supervision, mentoring, and coaching.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR MID-LEVEL POLICYMAKERS

The stated objectives of the [training curriculum](#) for mid-level policymakers developed by the Strengthening Capacity to Use Research Evidence in Health Policy (SECURE) program, a consortium of five organizations led by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), provide a window into the type of skills policymakers need. The objectives, listed below, reflect feedback received from implementation experience in Kenya and Malawi and can be considered among the “must have” skills for effective engagement in evidence-informed policymaking.

- 1) Define policy questions that can benefit from evidence.
- 2) Identify leading sources of research evidence.
- 3) Conduct systematic and effective/productive searches of evidence.
- 4) Critically appraise evidence.
- 5) Adapt research findings from elsewhere for use in local contexts.
- 6) Review various evidence documents and synthesize key policy messages and recommendations for tackling a given policy question or issue.
- 7) Develop a policy brief to provide recommendations for tackling a current policy issue from their work.
- 8) Effectively communicate key policy issues and recommendations to senior government officials and political leaders.

Source: Evidence-Informed Policy-Making Training Curriculum Archives (2016), retrieved from <https://www.afidep.org/?training=evidence-informed-policy-making-training-curriculum>

Training for Senior Leadership

The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in South Africa also offers a training course entitled Evidence for Policymaking and Implementation targeted to senior managers at the director general, deputy director general, and chief director levels within the government. The course strives to build commitment for the use of evidence in decision making among senior leadership and to

make policy implementation more effective. Since a first pilot in 2013–2014, DPME has trained 220 leaders from the top three levels of public service.

The [Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration](#) (GIMPA) reaches minister-level participants and members of parliament through a leadership training program that includes short courses on the basics of monitoring and evaluation.

Kenya's [Parliamentary Caucus on Evidence-Informed Oversight and Decision-making](#) works to build awareness among members of parliament about the importance of using evidence in oversight and policy decisions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EIP TRAINING FOR SENIOR LEADERSHIP

In an early iteration, the [training course on Evidence-Informed Policy Making](#) offered through the Civil Service Training Center (CSTC) in partnership with the Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS) targeted junior and mid-level civil servants who worked in the policy departments of ministries. However, on completing the course—designed to improve policymaker ability to find, understand, and communicate evidence—many of the trained staff felt they did not have the support of their respective ministries, who knew little about the training program, to implement the follow-up action plans they had developed during the training program.

To address this challenge, GINKS and CSTC agreed to include higher-level staff in the training program, extending a special invitation from CSTC and the Office of the Head of Civil Service to senior leadership. Their participation in subsequent trainings helped build buy-in and support for implementing follow-up action plans, such as developing policy briefs and creating forms for requesting evidence.

Source: Interview with Ibrahim Inusah, Executive Secretary, GINKS, February 2, 2017.

Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network (ZeipNET) Mentorship Program

Through its partnership with the VakaYiko Consortium, [ZeipNET](#) provided training in evidence-informed policymaking to civil servants and parliamentary staff. The training seeks to build policymaker ability to find, communicate, and use evidence in decision making. The training was followed by a mentorship program designed to offer continued support in the use of evidence and to deepen the knowledge and skill of selected participants. Components of the mentorship program included regular meetings and a learning and exchange visit to the United Kingdom.

VakaYiko's side of the project report, [Approaches for Developing Capacity for the Use of Evidence in Policy Making](#), shares useful insights from the consortium's experience with mentorship programs in several additional countries, including Ethiopia and the Philippines. They found job shadowing to be a more effective and dynamic way of promoting learning and exchange between policymakers and researchers, compared to mentoring programs that often have a one-way dynamic of sharing knowledge (International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), 2016).



On incentivizing performance in the delivery of public services in Rwanda

In the 2000s, the Rwandan government recognized the need to introduce mechanisms into its civil service to promote evidence-informed policymaking. To motivate the use of evidence across government departments without diverting significant resources toward employee bonuses, Rwanda implemented its modern, decentralized *imihigo* system. The system rests on agreements between the president's office and regional and local governments to meet certain goals in social service provision through improvements in management and planning. The system relies on the traditional notion of *imihigo*—understood in the precolonial era as a semi-binding vow to perform a service or feat—to ensure that leaders do not employ empty rhetoric in committing to goals. By harnessing the collective understanding of the *imihigo* tradition, the central government has generated great public interest and participation in the performance management process. Said a former central government official of the system, “People wouldn’t understand if you talk about performance contracts, but if you say *imihigo*, they understand.” Such public buy-in bestows recognition on districts and leaders performing at high levels, which is further developed through the prime minister’s high-profile tours through districts and public ceremonies in which leaders evaluate and recommit to performance goals.

Source: Scher (2010, pp. 4, 8).

Diagnostic Assessments for Tailoring Capacity-Building Interventions

Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network (ZeipNET) Policymaker Needs Assessment

ZeipNET conducted a one-time needs assessment to evaluate the capacity and challenges of using evidence in the Zimbabwean Parliament. The process consisted of a brainstorming and feedback session to improve patterns in the use of research evidence in which staff from four parliament departments participated. ZeipNET also conducted a needs survey to identify knowledge and capacity gaps that impede the use of evidence. The inputs received from the brainstorming session and survey were used to develop a capacity-building course on evidence-informed policymaking tailored to the needs of staff in the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

Canadian Foundation for Health Improvement (CHFI) Organizational Self-Assessment Tool

[CHFI](#)'s self-assessment tool is designed to help health policy officials and other stakeholders assess the use of research at the organizational level in public health policymaking and identify areas for improvement. The tool has four general areas of assessment: 1) acquiring capacity to find and obtain research findings; 2) assessing capacity to assess relevance of evidence; 3) adapting capacity to present research in a useful way; and 4) applying organizational structures in place to promote use of research.

Guidelines and Good Practices for Promoting Evidence Use

Malawi Ministry of Health Guidelines for Evidence Use in Policy-Making

The [Guidelines for Evidence Use in Policy-Making](#) were developed by senior officials in Malawi's Ministry of Health to clarify and provide instruction on the use of evidence in policymaking. Ministry staff are expected to draw on the guidelines to prepare Malawi's 2016–2021 Health Sector Strategic Plan and to ensure that best practices are applied in its development and implementation. The guidelines provide direction in areas that include developing a policy question, accessing, appraising, and applying evidence in the policy process.

South Africa Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) Guidelines and Good Practices for Evidence-Informed Policymaking in a Government Department

The DEA Guidelines and Good Practices for Evidence-Informed Policymaking in a Government Department are designed to inform other departments seeking to take an evidence-informed approach to policy. The guidelines offer good practice suggestions for defining evidence; linking evidence needs to policy priorities; linking evidence-informed policymaking to planning, budgeting, and reporting; and ensuring wide participation across stakeholder groups in the design and production of policy and evidence.

ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND USE OF DATA AND EVIDENCE IN POLICYMAKING

Several nongovernmental organizations are taking a lead in developing tools and frameworks to assess capacity and use of data and evidence. They include:

- Results for America's [Federal Invest in What Works Index](#) assesses US federal agency capacity to use evidence and evaluation in budget, policy, and management decisions
- The [Show Your Workings](#) framework developed by the Institute for Government in the UK in partnership with Sense About Science and the Alliance for Useful Evidence assesses how well government departments use evidence in decision making

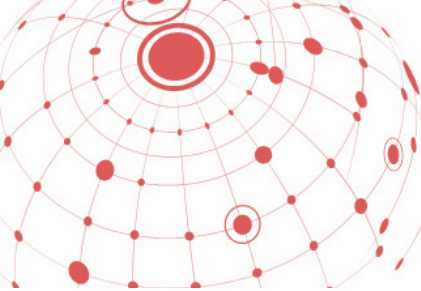
Each has a scoring component that seeks to motivate government agencies and departments to make better use of data and evidence.

At the local level in the United States, the newly launched Bloomberg Philanthropies [What Works Cities Certification Process](#) assesses the practices and policies of cities who apply for certification across a set of criteria aligned with the What Works Cities Standard's four foundational components for accelerating the use of data and evidence to achieve better outcomes for citizens—Commit, Measure, Take Stock, and Act. Cities that apply for certification are scored based on the presence or strength of policies and practices that correspond to these four components. Based on the number of points, cities can receive one of three certification tiers: platinum, for working across all components in the What Works Standard; gold, for working across at least three components; or silver, for working across at least two components.

Peer Networks

The [Twende Mbele](#) partnership between the governments of Benin, Uganda, and South Africa and the [Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results](#) (CLEAR) and the [African Development Bank](#) seeks to build the technical and institutional capacity of national evaluation systems. The desired immediate outcome of the partnership is to improve monitoring and evaluation systems in the three partner countries, based on shared experiences. In the long term, the partnership seeks to promote wide sharing of lessons learned from successful monitoring and evaluation systems across countries in Africa.

Several nongovernmental organizations such as the [Alliance for Useful Evidence](#) in the United Kingdom, [Evidence for Democracy](#) in Canada, Results for America in the United States, [PACKS Africa](#) in Ghana, ZeipNET in Zimbabwe, and the global Think Tanks Initiative are also helping to build peer networks by creating awareness about EIP in the policymaker and research communities and by mobilizing a bench of champions who are helping to promote better use of data and evidence in decision making.



Section 6

Final Observations

The following are some observations gleaned from this landscape review of government strategies and mechanisms for advancing the use of data and evidence in policymaking.

Governments around the world are using a mix of strategies and mechanisms to promote the use of data and evidence. Approaches range from research units, to big data analytics, performance management systems, citizen engagement platforms, information clearinghouses, and training programs to enhance knowledge and build skills of policymakers. While individual capacity and motivation is critical, formal organizational and institutional mechanisms and strategies help promote a secure foundation that can withstand transition between leadership and political parties. Thus, a commitment to strengthening capacity at all levels—individual, organizational, institutional—is needed to facilitate routine and consistent use of data and evidence in decision making.

Most of the government strategies and mechanisms reviewed here are recent initiatives, introduced in the last five to seven years. This suggests a growing, but nascent movement to improve the use of data and evidence in policy.

Evidence-informed policymaking operates within a broad political framework. Many factors contribute to EIP, including commitment from political leadership; state power structures; resource levels for data collection, research, and evaluation; and broader values and beliefs surrounding the use of data and evidence.

There is no simple, one size fits all approach to advancing evidence-informed policymaking. Evidence-informed policymaking is not about a specific approach or type of evidence, but rather about finding ways to make better use of data and evidence in decision making (Porter, 2011). It is more of an art than a science, and the specific path or approach countries take will depend on individual contexts. In countries where limited value is placed on the use of data and evidence in decision making, government policymakers may need the protection of formal laws to facilitate use of data and evidence in policy formulation and implementation. Other contexts may give government actors the latitude to test and make fully operational a series of practices before turning them into permanent laws. This was the case in the development of the national monitoring and evaluation system in Chile and South Africa (Guzmán, Irarrázaval, & de los Ríos, 2014; Phillips et al., 2014). Similarly, while in some contexts an NEP is needed to lay ground rules for conducting evaluations, they are executed routinely in other settings despite the absence of a national policy.

Government efforts to institute EIP seem to be focused largely on improving access to quality data and evidence. There appears to be an emphasis in government on building systems and platforms for collecting data and evidence and improving access to it. We found fewer government-led and government-funded initiatives dedicated to building knowledge and technical skill of policymakers or to strengthening partnerships to promote use and sharing of information. A government actor shared with us that it was expensive to host policy forums and dissemination activities and that it was a

challenge because “sometimes the right people don’t show up” (interview in Nairobi, Kenya, March 2017).

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play a key role in supporting government efforts to build demand for the use of data and evidence in policymaking. Many of the interventions aimed at building policymaker demand for data and evidence—knowledge and skill building, facilitating collaboration between policymakers and evidence producers—are driven and funded by NGOs. This may be due to the fact that these areas often are less politicized and bureaucratic, making them easier entry points for organizations outside of government who have identified a clear gap and an opportunity to play a role in advancing the use of data and evidence in government.

The collaboration between the national statistical agency in Colombia (DANE), the Bogota Chamber of Commerce, academic institutions, and civil society to monitor Colombia’s progress toward the United Nations Development Programme’s Sustainable Development Goals showcases the type of broad partnership governments are building to advance the use of data. In Malaysia, the prime minister’s delivery unit implements what it calls “labs” to break institutional silos, bringing partners from across different agencies, the private sector, and other stakeholders together for an intense six-week problem-solving workshop. The labs have become an institutional way of drawing on input from diverse partnerships to find solutions to achieve better results (Ganapathy, 2016).



“ *I think we really need to start seeing countries develop an evidence use cache of sorts, like maybe what’s happening in Rwanda. It’s a result of strategic, committed leadership, but also sustained investment in processes that actually promote evidence use.* ”

—Eliya Zulu, Executive Director, African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), Kenya

Partnerships and learning and exchange opportunities can play a key role in advancing the use of data and evidence in government. This review found a concentration of mechanisms for promoting use of data and evidence at the national level. It would be beneficial to find ways in which learning, experiences, or expertise in using data and evidence to make government effective and accountable at the national level can be shared with subnational governments. This is especially critical in contexts where state power is decentralized and the availability of high-quality data and organizational capacity to support the use of data and evidence is limited at the local government level.

Cross-country sharing of experiences in implementing evaluation systems is already happening through initiatives such as the Twende Mbele partnership between Benin, Uganda, and South Africa and the Africa Evidence Network, which brings together policymakers from across the African continent for dialogue and exchange. Further validating the importance of learning and exchange opportunities is the observation that South Africa’s evaluation system was informed by a study tour to Colombia, Mexico, and the United States. In turn South Africa is helping to inform evaluation systems in Sri Lanka and Lesotho (International Partnerships and Engagements, 2016).

Finally, participants at the September 29–30 Evidence Works 2016 forum in London have expressed an overwhelming need and interest in continuing to dialogue and exchange with other government leaders as they work to accelerate evidence-informed policies and programs that lead to better outcomes.

Going forward our intention is to regularly update the tables of strategies and mechanisms that accompany this report. The organization of the tables corresponds to the sections of this report: Improving Access to Quality Data; Facilitating Access to Quality, Relevant Evidence; Strengthening Partnerships and Collaboration between Policymakers and Evidence Producers; and Building Policymaker Knowledge, Skill, and Motivation. The tables include brief descriptions of the strategies and mechanisms, along with links to resources for further information. We welcome feedback and suggestions on how to improve this compilation of information. Our goal is to create a useful and practical tool that facilitates a sharing of experiences around the strategies and mechanisms governments are putting in place to strengthen the use of data and evidence in decision making and ultimately to achieve better outcomes for their citizens.

Appendix 1

Methodology

This landscape review has been prepared using a combination of literature reviews, expert consultations (including several interviews conducted in country), country visits and learnings from the Evidence Works 2016 forum in London, and an in-depth questionnaire (approximately forty responses from fifteen countries).⁸

We used Internet searches and a snowball strategy to identify experts for consultation. Their contributions, along with the lessons learned from Evidence Works 2016, have informed this report tremendously.

The questionnaire was administered early in the research process, and responses received helped highlight themes that are pertinent to the discussion of EIP in government, namely, the significance of an enabling environment and the challenges introduced by resource and capacity constraints both at the individual and organizational levels. These overarching themes were validated through conversations with experts and a review of the literature on building capacity to use evidence. The questionnaire, interviews with experts, the Evidence Works 2016 forum, and existing literature base were the sources for the specific examples, strategies, and mechanisms included in this report.

Broadly, the following criteria were considered in determining which strategies and mechanisms to include in this landscape review:

1. **Relevance:** Is the strategy or mechanism designed to facilitate government policymaker use of data and evidence?
2. **Availability of public information:** Is there adequate public documentation or an existing network of relationships or contacts that can be accessed for consultation to learn more about the strategy or mechanism?

Questionnaire

1. Which country will you be telling us about? Responses to the questions that follow should relate specifically to this country. The examples that you provide can be cross-cutting, sector-specific, national, subnational or local level government examples.
2. Please describe policy or policies that the government is putting in place to support use of data and evidence in policymaking. Please feel free to respond simply with links to documents or websites (3–4 sentences).
 - a. For each example, please list the level of government at which the policy is implemented (multinational, national, regional, local) and whether the policy is sector specific (e.g., health, education, energy).

8. See appendix 2 for the list of experts interviewed. The research team also held consultations in Canada, Ghana, and Kenya to inform a complementary series of case studies.

3. Who are the champions in promoting use of evidence and data in policymaking and what have their roles been?
4. Please list innovative government program(s) that are facilitating the development of capacity for the use of data and evidence in policymaking.
 - a. For each example, please list the level of government at which the program is implemented (multinational, national, regional, local) and whether it is sector specific (e.g., health, education, energy).
5. Please describe the systems (e.g., data systems, monitoring/evaluation systems, information and knowledge management, reporting) that the government is putting in place to support use of data and evidence. Please feel free to respond simply with links to documents or websites (1–2 sentences for each example).
 - a. For each example, please list the level of government at which the system is implemented (multinational, national, regional, local) and whether the system is sector specific (e.g., health, education, energy).
6. Please describe the platforms that government is putting in place to support use of data and evidence in policymaking (e.g., an open-data platform, a forum for engaging with stakeholders, social accountability tools that have a formal position in government). Please feel free to respond simply with links to documents or websites (1–2 sentences for each example).
 - a. For each example, please list the level of government at which the policy is implemented (multinational, national, regional, local) and whether the policy is sector specific (e.g., health, education, energy).
7. For the government example(s) you are highlighting, what are the greatest challenges or barriers faced in promoting evidence-informed policymaking? Please list in priority order (1 is highest priority and 6 is lowest priority):
 - a. Personnel/human resources
 - b. Budget/funding
 - c. Data integration
 - d. Political support/champions
 - e. Knowledge about best practices/evidence frameworks
 - f. Authority to use data and evidence in policymaking and funding decisions
 - g. Other
8. For the government example(s) you are highlighting, what do you view as the greatest success in promoting evidence-informed policymaking? Please be as specific as possible (2–3 sentences).

9. Is there anything else you would like to add? Please use this space to suggest or list government mechanisms from other countries for inclusion in our landscape study.
10. Are there other people you feel we should reach out to for additional information to inform this landscape study? If so, please provide their names and any contact information.
11. What sector do you currently represent?
12. Please provide your contact information
13. May we contact you for additional information?

Appendix 2: List of Experts Consulted

George Amoah, Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations, Research, Statistics and Information Management Directorate, Ghana

Sixto Aquino, Millennium Challenge Corporation, United States

Baikuntha Aryal, Ministry of Finance, Nepal

Kirchuffs Atengble, Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing, Ghana

Paulin Basinga, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, United States

Rwitwika Bhattacharya, Swaniti Initiative, India

Jonathan Breckon, Alliance for Useful Evidence, Nesta, United Kingdom

Tracey Brown, Sense about Science, United Kingdom

Manuel Fernando Castro, National Planning Department, Colombia

Kalipso Chalkidou, Institute of Global Health Innovation, Imperial College London, United Kingdom

Paula Darville, Management Control Division, Budget Office, Ministry of Finance, Chile

Linda Gibbs, Bloomberg Associates, United States

Ian Goldman, Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, South Africa

Ibrahim Inusah, Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing, Ghana

Gonzalo Hernández Licona, CONEVAL, Mexico

Jessica Mackenzie, Overseas Development Institute, United Kingdom

Ursula Martinez, World Bank, United States

Ajay Mathur, The Energy and Resources Institute, India

Dale McFee, Corrections and Policing, Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, Canada

Enrique Mendizabal, Alliance for Useful Evidence, Peru

Phares Mugo, Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, Kenya

Michael Musyoka, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Kenya

Rose Ngara-Muraya, Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, Kenya

Ximena Fernández Ordoñez, World Bank, United States

Rose Oronje, African Institute for Development Policy, Kenya

Felipe Castro Pachon, SINERGIA, Colombia

Arnaldo Pellini, Overseas Development Institute/Knowledge Sector Initiative, Indonesia

André Portela, CLEAR Brazil and Lusophone Africa

Laura Poswell, J-PAL, South Africa
Carolina Pozo, LINQ Innovation Lab, Ecuador
Carlos Felipe Prada, DANE, Colombia
Jyotsna Puri, Global Climate Facility, India
Philippe Schönrock, Cepei, Colombia
Ruth Stewart, Africa Evidence Network, South Africa
Alex Thier, Overseas Development Institute, United Kingdom
Claire Walsh, J-PAL, Global
Vanessa Weyrauch, Politics and Ideas, Argentina
Gabriela Pérez Yarahuán, CLEAR Latin America
Eliya Zulu, African Institute for Development Policy, Kenya

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