

**THE LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE KWAZULU NATAL DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE  
GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (KZN CoGTA)**

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## DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Science (Policy and Development), in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, Siyabonga Innocent Nxumalo declare that:

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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I am grateful to my family for making the sacrifices over the past few years, by allowing me the time to study and finally conduct this research. I remain indebted to my parents for the solid foundation they laid in my life, and my brother, sisters and relatives for their on-going encouragement. My friends and colleagues have also been very supportive. It has been a long and tiring journey, but one which I hope has and will continue to advance the quality of governance and development in the country.

The South African public service, where I work, supported this research with extensive body of policy practice which I could draw upon. I am certain that the skills acquired through the research will benefit the South African public service, as it continues to advance good governance in the country and beyond.

## **ABSTRACT**

As South Africa seeks to consolidate and deepen the country's democracy post-1994, subsequently it has had to focus on good governance to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in the conduct and operations of government. The country's development efforts towards improving accountability, transparency, efficiency as well as effectiveness of government in service delivery seeks to create and maintain high levels of performance in government departments. As a result monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has developed into a significant practice in guiding the transformation of the South African Public Service.

M&E is the systematic assessment of the policy processes as well as the measurement of a policy's impact. It can be used to assess whether a policy or program achieves its objectives. M&E practice in South Africa is anchored towards developing an efficient Public Service that delivers on the objectives and mandate of the South African Government as enshrined in the country's post-1994 Constitution. In 2005, Cabinet approved a plan for the development of a Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (M&E), which was envisaged as a system in which each department would have a functional M&E system. In 2009 a Ministry of Performance M&E was created in the Presidency, and a Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in January 2010 was established. Subsequently, monitoring and evaluation has become a subject of interest in public policy implementation.

This study seeks to understand the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation using the KwaZulu Natal Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (KZN CoGTA) as a case study. It aims to ascertain how M&E as defined in the National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the literature is implemented, conceptualised and used. KZN CoGTA is a South African provincial government Department whose legislative mandate according to the South African Constitution is to provide effective, transparent, accountable and coherent intergovernmental system for the Provincial government departments. Evidently, as a relatively new strategic and operational practice in the South African government, M&E exposes some of its own limits and possibilities. Ultimately, not all resources invested into M&E actually get implemented to strengthen transparency, accountability and improvement.

The study adopted an interpretative approach whilst using a qualitative methodology to identify and capture meaning that informs the understanding and implementation of

monitoring and evaluation, (M&E). Non-probability; purposive sampling was used to select elements for a specific purpose of their unique position and capabilities to provide information on practical and expert knowledge in M&E. Therefore, the data collection method includes interviews with relevant personnel in the M&E practice, as well as the documents about the implementation of monitoring and evaluation in KZN CoGTA, South Africa.

The implementation of M&E which is the focus of the study was analysed within the theoretical framework of public policy implementation which involves monitoring and evaluation. The challenges encountered when implementing M&E within the various approaches such as the Results-Based Management are also analysed in order to understand the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation. The results pointed to the importance of an improved and standardised M&E practice with enhanced and standardised coordination between different spheres of government in national, provincial and local government institutions, as responsible for monitoring the process of design, implementation and continuous monitoring and evaluation of the public service, aiming to improve the quality of its services.

## ACRONYMS

<b>APP</b>	-	Annual Performance Plan
<b>COGTA</b>	-	Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs
<b>DPME</b>	-	Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>DPSA</b>	-	Department of Public Service Administration
<b>EBP</b>	-	Evidence Based Policy
<b>GWM&amp;Es</b>	-	Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System
<b>HOD</b>	-	Head of Department
<b>KZN COGTA</b>	-	KwaZulu Natal Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs
<b>KZN</b>	-	KwaZulu Natal
<b>LGTAS</b>	-	Local Government Turn-Around Strategy
<b>GWM&amp;E</b>	-	Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>M&amp;E</b>	-	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MEC</b>	-	Member of Executive Committee
<b>MPAT</b>	-	Management Performance Assessment Tool
<b>NDP</b>	-	National Development Plan
<b>NEP</b>	-	National Evaluation Plan
<b>NEPF</b>	-	National Evaluation Policy Framework
<b>OTP</b>	-	Office of the Premier
<b>PSC</b>	-	Public Service Commission
<b>RBM</b>	-	Results Based Management
<b>RBM&amp;E</b>	-	Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>RSA</b>	-	Republic of South Africa
<b>SA</b>	-	South Africa
<b>SASQAF</b>	-	South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework
<b>SG</b>	-	Statistician General
<b>STATS SA</b>	-	Statistics South Africa
<b>GEAR</b>	-	Growth, Employment and Redistribution,

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## **CHAPTER ONE: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

As South Africa progresses into consolidating and deepening the country's democracy post-1994, subsequently it has had to focus on good governance in terms of the conduct and operations of government, (DPME, 2013b:2). The country's development efforts are geared towards improving accountability, transparency, efficiency as well as effectiveness of government in service delivery, (Phillips, et al. (2014). These efforts towards good governance are intrinsically infused into the public sector to maintain high levels of performance in government departments, (DPME, 2013b). To this end monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has been included into government's effort practice in order to guide the transformation of the South African Public Service.

This study seeks to understand the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation using the KwaZulu Natal Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (KZN CoGTA) as a case study. It aims to ascertain how M&E as defined in the National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the literature is implemented, conceptualized and used. KZN CoGTA is a South African provincial government Department whose legislative mandate according to the South African Constitution is to provide effective, transparent, accountable and coherent intergovernmental system for the Provincial government departments.

Monitoring and evaluation is the systematic assessment of the policy processes as well as the measurement of a policy's impact, (Parsons, 1995). It can be used to assess whether a policy or program achieves its objectives. M&E practice in South Africa is anchored towards developing an efficient Public Service that delivers on the objectives and mandate of the South African Government as enshrined in the country's post-1994 Constitution, (Public Service Commission, 2012: vii). Monitoring and Evaluation can assist in evaluating performance as well as the delivery outcomes of the public service, (DPME, 2007). In 2005, Cabinet approved a plan for the development of a Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (M&E).

The M&E was envisaged as a system that seeks to initiate a program in which each department would have a functional monitoring system, out of which the necessary information about programme or policy effectiveness can be extracted, (DPME, 2007:8). Following the 2009 elections the government was faced with a number of service delivery challenges, which led to a greater necessity and willingness to address the concerns about the quality of public services, corruption and other governance problems, (Goldman, 2013:1).

Whilst reflecting on service delivery capacity and quality challenges in the South African government, a study by the World Bank on accountability in the public service in South Africa highlighted that by 2010, reported that there was great concern by government and civil society that the huge investment in development was having less impact than expected, (World Bank, 2011: ix). The inadequate services combined with poverty and unemployment had led to township riots and protests which became known as service delivery protests. These protests necessitated vigorous policy analysis, debate and reform proposals about the possible interventions that could ensure accountability for results in all levels of government, as demonstrated by the establishment of a new Ministry responsible for Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation, (World Bank, 2011). There was a political consensus to improve government performance, including through a greater focus on M&E. In 2009 the Ministry of Performance M&E was created in the Presidency, and a Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in January 2010 was established, (Goldman, 2013:1).

In 2012, a study by the South Africa Public Service Commission, (PSC) reported that through the M&E undertaken in the country's public service institutions, there has been an entrenchment of democracy, (PSC, 2012:5). M&E has increased transparency and accountability of government, and the country at large is kept informed about government's performance. Correspondingly, the push towards evidence-based decision-making has gained momentum, and the production of performance information has created knowledge sources for more effective developmental management, (PSC, 2012).

In seeking to ensure a system in which each Department would have a functional monitoring system, M&E requires that the accounting officer of a department or municipality or chief executive officer is mandated to establish an M&E system for the institution, (Presidency, 2007: 04). The M&E system would assess whether a public policies or programs are achieving their mandatory objectives while it would also assist in evaluating employee and

departmental performance by measuring the delivery outcomes of the public service. However, as a new strategic and operational practice in the South African government, M&E exposes some of its own limits and possibilities. It is not all of M&E resources invested into Monitoring and Evaluation that actually get implemented effectively. Only some of these M&E resources are partially implemented to strengthen transparency, accountability and improvement, (DPME, 2013b). In order to learn about the possibilities of M&E and to seek to address its limits, it is important to embark on an in-depth analysis of the practice of M&E in the South African public service.

According to Tuckerman, (2007: 21), it is through understanding the challenges as well as the strengths of M&E that organizations can use monitoring and evaluation to enhance the implementation of their programmes. The manner in which policy, resources and budget are organized in alignment with the aim of effective public service is dependent on the quality of good governance reinforced through monitoring and evaluation within particular government departments as well as local government organizations, (DPME, 2013a:01).

Public sector reform in South Africa has come a long way since 1994 from a centralized „command and control“ practice to a decentralized function of government with decentralized authority to national departments, provinces and local authorities, (Muthien, 2013:3). The National Development Plan (NDP) affirms this decentralization and goes further to make a call for transferring more power to the metros at local government level, (Muthien, 2013:3) which are essentially the users of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA ) supportive function. Since 1994 there has been considerable innovation in organizational design, management practices, public policy and law making emanating from the new Constitution, (Muthien, 2013:3).

In concurrence with the global theoretical shifts which influence public service reforms, the new public management paradigm in South Africa became rooted in the transformation discourse of the country and its public service, (Muthien, 2013:3). Bardill, (2000:106-107), argued that South Africa’s adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution, (GEAR) in 1996 led to public service reform being implemented in a more budget-driven paradigm with an emphasis on goals such as cost-cutting, rightsizing and privatization. The approach to public service reform as adopted by the government of South Africa informs the approach to the means and processes of tracking the effectiveness of government efforts to public service

reform. It is through monitoring and evaluation that the government seeks to pursue the assessment of the policy processes as well as the measurement of a policy's impact. Nonetheless, it is imperative that the efficacy of monitoring and evaluation is examined, whilst understanding its progressive stages and the approaches adopted in the implementation of M&E in the South African public service.

This study attempts to shed a light on the limits and possibilities of M&E by the means of exploring how M&E is conceptualized and used in the KwaZulu Natal Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (KZN CoGTA). This is envisaged to provide a case study that explores and reveals the experiences and challenges encountered in the implementation of M&E in a South African public service institution. A number of hypotheses are presented in an attempt of using M&E theory against the experiences expressed by M&E practitioners to explain the limits and possibilities of M&E in the South African public service.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

South Africa's Policy framework, the National Development Plan (NDP) points out that the creation of a developmental and capable state is a prerequisite for addressing South Africa's development challenges. The capability of government institutions remains weak in terms of management practices, quality of frontline service delivery, effective complaints management and community/citizen involvement in monitoring. This results in service delivery failures and drives citizen dissatisfaction and poor staff morale, (DPME, 2015).

In the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, DPME points out that the analysis of audit outcomes and MPAT, (Management Performance Assessment Tool) findings points to systemic and institutional weaknesses in financial management, human resources management, strategic management, governance and accountability across national and provincial government. Institutions at the frontline of service delivery - such as health facilities and police stations, face challenges relating to poor management, low staff morale and inappropriate resource allocation. These impacts on the quality of services provided to citizens. This is compounded by poor responsiveness from complaints systems and inadequate recourse mechanisms. Citizen participation is not utilized as a way to enhance the efficiency and productiveness of service delivery, (DPME, 2015).

Since the establishment of the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation and the National Planning Commission in 2010, much progress has been made in entrenching long term planning and institutionalizing the outcomes system in government, (DPME, 2015:10).

Despite the gains made after the introduction of the National Planning Commission and the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, challenges still remain in improving the quality of services provided to citizens, ranging from education, health care, creation of sustainable jobs, housing, safety and security, sanitation and social and economic infrastructure. Also, planning and performance monitoring and evaluation in government have not been without challenges, (DPME, 2015:10).

Concurrently, the subsidiary to the national department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the KZN CoGTA was mandated by the CoGTA Annual Performance Plan 2015/16, to analyze and develop policy in order to drive transformation in local government and in the system of planning and cooperative governance more broadly.

The strategic goals for CoGTA as stipulated in the Performance Plan includes creating a functional local government system based on accountability for performance Strengthen intergovernmental arrangements for delivery of services, collaborative planning, and oversight within the system of cooperative government by 2019. CoGTA is required to ensure significant improvements in service delivery through sound infrastructure management and the provision of efficient and effective corporate governance and administrative support services for COGTA to deliver on its mandate by 2019.

The glitches in achieving the departmental objectives is identified by the DPME in the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 to be the continuous silo approach to planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting, a lack of accountability for poor performance, weak monitoring and reporting on performance information, unrealistic target setting and poor quality of performance information are some examples of remaining challenges, (DPME, 2015:11). There is also a need to ensure alignment in planning, without overburdening the system with more compliance.

In addition, there is a need to understand how National Planning can support provincial and local governments to achieve their planned objectives, (DPME, 2015). These desired objectives and the opposing challenges represent the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation in the South Africa government and particularly in the case study department, KZN CoGTA.

### **1.3 General and Specific Objectives**

The broader issues of this study are to critically examine understand the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation in the public sector. It aims to ascertain how monitoring and evaluation is implemented, conceptualised and used. The objectives of the study include the following:

- The study seeks to provide understanding about how the various conceptions of M&E inform the purposes and uses of M&E in the public sector.
- The analysis of the process of designing and implementing the monitoring and evaluation systems also forms part of the study's objectives.
- Furthermore, the study aims to examine the effects of Evidence-Based Policy making on M&E.
- This also involves gaining insight into the experiences of the implementers of the monitoring and evaluation systems in the public sector.
- Lastly, the study aims to examine the issues and challenges that emerge during the implementation of public sector M&E systems as well as the methods and techniques that are employed to better inform a successful M&E implementation strategy in the public service.

Particularly to the case study, the research seeks to understand the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation at KwaZulu Natal Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (KZN CoGTA).

- It aims to ascertain how monitoring and evaluation as defined in the National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework as well as the literature is implemented, conceptualised and used in this department.
- Similarly is seeks to gain an understanding of challenges that emerge during the implementation of M&E at KZN CoGTA as well as the practices that are adopted to ensure a successful M&E implementation strategy at KZN CoGTA.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The key research questions of this study are specific to the case study. They relate to the limits and possibilities of M&E in the public service and particularly at KZN CoGTA. The questions include the following:

- What are the conceptions of monitoring and evaluation in the public sector, particularly at KZN CoGTA?
- How do these conceptions inform the purposes and uses of M&E in the public sector, particularly at KZN CoGTA?
- How are the public sector monitoring and evaluation systems designed, particularly at KZN CoGTA?
- How are the public sector monitoring and evaluation systems implemented, particularly at KZN CoGTA?
- What are the effects of Evidence-Based Policy making on M&E, particularly at KZN CoGTA?
- What are the experiences of the implementers of THE monitoring and evaluation systems in the public sector, particularly at KZN CoGTA?
- What are the issues and challenges that emerge during the implementation of public sector M&E systems, particularly at KZN CoGTA?
- What methods and techniques are employed to better inform a successful M&E implementation strategy in the public service, particularly at KZN CoGTA?

## **1.5 Research Methodology**

### **1.5.1 Methodology**

The study adopted an interpretative approach whilst using a qualitative methodology.

#### Qualitative Methodology

The qualitative methodology seeks to explore in order to identify and capture meaning, or qualities that inform the understanding of the subject, (Silverman, 2004). It aims to understand a small group or setting in depth by using data findings to present meaning not generalized explanations about the subject, (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). It values the subject's perspective and does not see the subject as merely passive, (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The qualitative methodology seeks to explore the understanding from the participant's perspective about their experiences and activities, rather than generalized explanation,

(Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The qualitative methodology is appropriate for this study because the study explores the processes followed in conducting evaluations as well as the participants' understanding of M&E, its purposes and uses.

### Interpretative Approach

The position of interpretivism is that it considers that the reality is multiple and relative (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). These multiple realities also depend on other systems for meanings, which make it even more difficult to interpret in terms of fixed realities (Neuman, 2000). The knowledge acquired in this discipline is socially constructed rather than objectively determined, (Carson et al., 2001, p.5) and perceived (Hirschman, 1985, Berger and Luckman, 1967, p. 3: in Hudson and Ozanne, 1988).

Therefore, the interpretative approach seeks to avoid rigid structural frameworks such as in positivist research and adopt a more personal and flexible research structures which are receptive to capturing meanings in human interaction and make sense of what is perceived as reality, (Carson et al., 2001). This approach considers the researcher and his/her informants to be interdependent and mutually interactive, (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). This means that the researcher enters the field with some sort of prior insight of the research context but assumes that this is insufficient in developing a fixed research design due to complex, multiple and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality, (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). The researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study and lets it develop with the help of informants. The use of such an emergent and collaborative approach is consistent with the interpretivist belief that humans have the ability to adapt, and that no one can gain prior knowledge of time and context bound social realities, (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988).

Therefore, the interpretative approach is the appropriate tool for the study because of the goal of interpretivist research to understand and interpret the meanings in human behaviour rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects, (Neuman, 2000; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). The study recognises it as important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and context bound in the conceptualisation, implementation and utilisation of M&E in the public service, particularly KZN CoGTA.

### **1.5.2 Case study**

According to Babbie & Mouton, (2001: 644) a case study is an intensive investigation of a single unit. The case study approach is useful for describing what the intervention looks like on the ground and why things happen as they do, and focuses on the effects of an

intervention, (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:644). In this case, the unit of analysis is the KZN CoGTA government department which as a government department has similarities in monitoring and evaluation as other public service departments mandated by a common legislative and regulatory framework. KZN CoGTA is used as the case study to describe the processes, behaviour, activities and experiences of a practitioners or organisation implementing monitoring and evaluation in the public service.

### **1.5.3 Data Collection Methods**

The study used semi-structured interviews with key participants. These were guided by an interview guide with open ended questions. Semi-structured interviews refer to deliberately asking the respondent to explain and elaborate on their understanding of the subject matter based on their engagement with it, (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). This study used semi-structured interviews with open ended questions. Semi-structured interviews allow the respondents to give their views about a subject matter, (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:233). They are appropriate in providing respondents to give their interpretations and experiences in relation to the subject of M&E.

The study used primary as well as secondary data. Primary data refers to the data which is collected from scratch, while secondary data refers to the data that is already in existence from readily available sources, (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:76). These documents are developed by the M&E Unit to report on the performance measurement of the various programmes at KZN CoGTA. Amongst some of the documents, the study also looks at the Periodic Evaluation Report for the 2013/14 Financial Year, Consolidated Periodic Evaluation Report for the 2011/12, Provincial Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Local Government Turn-Around Strategy (LGTAS) Programme, and the 4th Quarter Performance Evaluation Report for the 2012/13 Financial Year

### **1.5.4 Sampling**

The sampling method that was used is a non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling refers to a sampling method where the samples or respondents are selected for the study in a process that does not give all individuals in the sample population equal chances of being selected, (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). It does not involve random selection. Purposive sampling is the strategy that was used by the study in the selection or sampling of elements to be studied as cases. This involves the selection of elements for a specific purpose that includes their unique position and capabilities to provide information on practical and expert

knowledge, (Babbie and Mouton, 2001) from participants and officials. The non-probability purposive sampling technique was used in the study because only those individuals working within or directly with the M&E unit and CoGTA, M&E documents were selected in order to get information to the study's research questions about the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation.

The role of the KZN CoGTA M&E Unit is to coordinate monitoring as well as the assessment, analysis and evaluation of the overall performance of the department. The unit manages the integrated performance management system of the department, KZN CoGTA as well as co-ordinate, manage and report on performance, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

The sample for the study comprised of a total of five (5) individuals from the M&E Unit personnel at KZN CoGTA. The unit is subdivided into two Sub-units, Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-units. Firstly, the Evaluation Sub-unit comprises of the Director / Manager, two Deputy Managers and two Assistant Managers whilst the Monitoring Sub-unit is made up of one Director / Manager (Acting), two Deputy Directors and one Assistant Director (currently vacant) and one Data Capturer, (KZN CoGTA, 2015). The interviews were held with the Director (Evaluation), Acting Director (Monitoring), two Deputy Manager and one Assistant Manager.

### **1.5.5 Data Analysis**

The study conducted a content analysis on the data gathered from semi-structured interviews and documentation review. Content analysis is the collection as well as formulation of systematic conclusions concerning the characteristics and meaning of the recorded material in the form of books, reports or policy, (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 48). The responses from the respondents were also analysed using thematic analysis. As a form of analysis in qualitative social research, thematic analysis examines the patterns within data that are important to the description of a phenomenon which is explored by the study, (Bryman, 2001).

Thematic analysis is used in this study in identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It is seen as appropriate because it also interprets various aspects of the research topic, (Boyatzis, 1998). It differs from other analytic methods that seek to describe patterns across qualitative data – such as „thematic“ discourse analysis, thematic decomposition analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and grounded theory. Both IPA and grounded theory seek patterns in the data, but are theoretically bounded, (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

On the one hand, IPA is wed to a phenomenological epistemology (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2003), which gives experience primacy (Holloway & Todres, 2003), and is about understanding people's everyday experience of reality, in great detail, so as to gain an understanding of the phenomenon in question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

On the other hand, the benefit of thematic analysis is its flexibility, (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is not wed to any pre-existing theoretical framework, and so it can be used within different theoretical frameworks (although not all), and can be used to do different things within them. Thematic analysis is used in this study because it can be an essentialist or realist method, which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants, or it can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society, (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It can also be a „contextualist“ method, sitting between the two poles of essentialism and constructionism, and characterised by theories such as critical realism which acknowledge the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining focus on the material and other limits of reality, (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, thematic analysis can be a method which works both to reflect reality, and to unpick or unravel its surface, (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The lenses used in the analysis of data are theme and conceptual analysis as an appropriate tool to focus on the, conceptions, uses, purposes, systems and challenges of monitoring and evaluation.

## 1.6 Structure of Dissertation

This study is divided into six (6) chapters.

- (i) **Chapter One (1)** provides the background to the study and explains the research questions for the study. It also outlines the methodology used to conduct the research.
- (ii) **Chapter Two (2)** discusses the study's theoretical framework which includes public policy, monitoring and evaluation, evidence- based policy making as well as results-based monitoring and evaluation (R-BM&E), M&E models and the theory of change.
- (iii) In **Chapter Three (3)**, the legislative and policy framework that underpins monitoring and evaluation is discussed.
- (iv) **Chapter Four (4)** presents the Case Study of M&E at KZN CoGTA.
- (v) In **Chapter Five (5)**, the study analyses and presents the findings in congruence to the research questions.
- (vi) Lastly, **Chapter Six (6)** draws the conclusions as revealed by the findings to the research study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a theoretical framework which is a body of knowledge that organizes, categorizes, describes, predicts, explains, and otherwise aids in understanding of monitoring and evaluation. Firstly, in explaining the practice of monitoring and evaluation the chapter discusses the idea of public policy as well as the implementation of public policy. Public policy implementation constitutes a segment of project implementation under which monitoring and evaluation is practised. The definition for M&E is discussed in this chapter in relation to the purposes of M&E types, processes, approaches, theoretical debates as well as considerations on the transformational use of monitoring and evaluation. Lastly, the intended change and organisational design is discussed as well as the challenges in implementing the models of monitoring and evaluation. It is the examination of these concepts that enable the understanding of how M&E is understood and implemented by its implementers, thus revealing the challenges as well as the limits and possibilities of M&E in the public service.

### **2.2 Public Policy**

In pursuing the responses on how M&E is implemented in the public service, the study examines the implementation of monitoring and evaluation within the public policy perspective. As one of the stages in the public policy cycle, monitoring and evaluation and the M&E systems in the study is discussed within the conceptual framework, theories and models that are within the context of public policy. Public policy is an action calculated to achieve a specific desired objective, (Parsons, 1995). The policy is enacted in the form of ordered sequence stages, (Parsons, 1995). The purpose for any public policy is to bring change into an existing undesirable situation, (Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey, 1999). Policy is executed through a programme of action aimed at eliminating the undesirable social condition and improves the situation for better, (Cloete, 2009).

There are various stages within the policy process. The stages usually begin with problem identification, wherein a societal issue is raised into a policy agenda by policy communities, (Parsons, 1995: 546). Subsequently, programme options are discussed to identify alternative means of achieving program goals with the purpose of achieving the cost-effective alternative, thus resolving the problem, (Parsons, 1995: 547). Successively, the next stage of

policy activity consist of the policy legitimization phase which involves decision-making and acceptance of a program or policy by the public and stakeholders, (Parsons, 1995).

Once the decision has been taken about the appropriate alternative that will be applied in resolving a problem, then the policy is implemented. Implementation refers to the actual application of the selected alternative with the aim to realise the objectives set during the deliberation process, (Parsons, 1995: 547). This understanding of policy as a programme or set of activities to meet a social need (Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey, 1999) requires for effective tools to be used in ensuring that the programme is well-implemented as planned. Monitoring and evaluation system is an important management tool to track progress in policy implementation and facilitate decision making. By closely examining the program implementation, organizations can design programs and activities that are effective, efficient, and which would yield intended results, Sera, Y. and Beaudry, S. (2007:1). Correspondingly, this study examines how the conceptualisation, design and approaches adopted by a government department affect the efficiency and effectiveness of implementing monitoring and evaluation.

### **2.2.1 Managing Public Policy Implementation**

Hamilton-Smith, (2002) argues that the growth in the neo-liberalist approach and political ideology rise of the new-managerialism approach to the management of programmes. This neo-liberalist approach assumes that the management of organisation ought to be similar, irrespective of the definitions of the organisations' responsibilities. This model for management of organisations is understood as being based on the business organisational model of management, wherein, the community and other forms of collective responsibility are dismissed. The responsibility is seen as being based solely on an individual person, (Hamilton-Smith, 2002). As Margaret Thatcher is quoted on various occasions to suggest that it is the individuals who either become winners or losers and that there is no longer such a thing as society, (Hamilton-Smith, 2002).

The result to this is rather a simplistic and inappropriate management of the public service and its public policies, (Hamilton-Smith, 2002:1). It must be acknowledged that a similar pressure is faced by the NGOs. The pressure is exerted by the government under the purchaser - provider service agreements. Such pressures in the NGO sector are usually dictated by donors as part of the funding requirements, (Hamilton-Smith, 2002). Meanwhile the staff members in the organisation are perceived as machines that should operate by

procedures which are controlled and directed by management, (Hamilton-Smith, 2002). 2.2 Public Policy Implementation

Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002: 17) described the process of managing policy implementation to be as much about how to do the various aspects of the chosen policy alternative. This is successive to the initial stage of policy formulation which addresses the question of determining “what to do”, (Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2002: 17). Management of policy implementation relies on performing the implementation tasks which the decision-makers can assess through implementation monitoring to make sure that a policy is being put into operation according to the consented policy design, (Patton, 1997: 200). The study discusses how the processes and tools for monitoring assist in the evaluation of policy and government department interventions.

Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), cited in Hill and Hupe (2002: 46), identify different variables for policy implementation, namely “a) policy should provide concrete and specific standards for goal achievement; b) resources and incentives for implementation should be readily available; c) the policy implementation process should address the quality of inter-organizational relationships during implementation; d) implementing agencies are characterized by their linkages with policy making or a policy enforcing body; e) the policy implementation process and planning should include considerations of the social, economic and political environment; and, f) policy implementers should have the capacity to perform their tasks adequately and efficiently” (Hill & Hupe, 2002: 47). These variables for policy implementation are cautioning policy practitioners on crucial points to consider during each task in the process of policy implementation. It is these variables that are considered in this study to examine how M&E is implemented with an aim of tracking whether the concrete and specific standards and goals of the projects are achieved. M&E as a policy is examined to understand how it addresses the problems of policy implementation in the public service.

### **2.2.2 Factors for Successful Policy Implementation**

Brinkerhoff & Crosby, (2002: 24) recognised that the policy implementation process employs a set of tasks to be performed during implementation in order to achieve the identified policy objectives. The tasks as identified by Brinkerhoff & Crosby, (2002:24) comprise of:

- (i) Policy legitimisation,
- (ii) Constituency building,
- (iii) Resource accumulation,

- (iv) Organisational design and modification,
- (v) Mobilising resources and
- (vi) Monitoring progress and impact.

The policy needs to be seen by the stakeholders as a legitimate intervention. Individuals or groups need assert that the proposed policy reform is a necessary intervention to their problem or issues, (Crosby, 1996:4). An adequate constituency for the introduction of a policy must be developed. Those individuals or groups who will benefit from the new intervention are the constituents of a policy. Constituency building refers to the creation and mobilization of positive stakeholders in favour of the new policy, (Crosby, 1996:6). This will ensure support for the policy and could enable its implementation against those who oppose the policy.

The policy implementation process requires policy stakeholders to facilitate and provide the necessary support to the policy being implemented. In order to capacitate the policy implementation stakeholders, there is a vital need to conduct adequate accumulation and allocation of resources. Policy requires human, technical, and financial resources to be put in place and to be channelled in the appropriate directions, even though the accumulation of these resources is not an easy task due to the resistance about redirecting the resources in the organisation, (Crosby, 1996:10). The inability of governments to allocate appropriate resources to new policies is frequently the cause of programs or projects to fail. They are required to be utilised as part of the project input to support implementation activities, (Crosby, 1996:7).

The introduction of a new policy is likely to necessitate modifications in the organisation. This may encounter resistance of the new tasks which need to be implemented. The resistance could also be towards the structural modifications that are required to execute the policy changes. New units such as policy planning, monitoring and evaluation or their advisory groups may be created which do not fit within the organization's hierarchical culture, (Crosby, 1996:10). Subsequently, the changes are likely to create a certain amount of shock and resistance in the organisation. Moreover, this shows the challenges that could be faced in policy implementation. The impact of policy changes will be demonstrated in some ways through behavioural-changes and an improvement in the benefits to the beneficiaries or clients. Effective and efficient production as well as the efficient use of resources may also be as a result of the new policy. Nevertheless, it is not all policy change strategies that actually result in positive benefits, some may result in negative impacts, (Crosby, 1996:12). Hence the

importance of the monitoring of the impact of policy change is for the purposes of providing information to decision makers to judge whether the policy needs to be halted, altered, modified or completely changed.

The inputs, activities and entire implementation processes needs to be monitored to allow the implementing agents to track the progress of the policy whilst ensuring that the policy is producing the desired results, (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002: 24). The policy implementation process could often become chaotic when there is no strategic identification of the most appropriate approach to policy implementation has been identified and where the unexpected challenges arise.

The variables and processes related to policy implementation also relate to the implementation of monitoring and evaluation. Ile, Eresia-Eke & Allen-Ile, (2012: 22) states that monitoring involves re-examining the approved plan of the policy in order to enable identifying and managing the variables of cost, time and quality which can be used as benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of policy implementation. This will require tracking that the processes and mechanisms are having a positive impact on the variables.

The introduction of monitoring and evaluation and its systems may face resistance. This study discusses the effects of resistance to M&E as a relatively new intervention in the public service. It also explores how constituencies are built to overcome resistance and to enable that adequate resource are made available for effective monitoring and evaluation of government projects.

Moreover, prior to the implementation of the program, it is important for those responsible for monitoring and evaluation to adopt a particular standpoint or approach of theory and ideology and use specific norms and criteria are translated into effective implementation on the ground, (Bhola, 2006:11). Similarly, they need to ensure that the discourses on purposes and methods, and values used in the design and implementation of both the program and M&E strongly resonate with the achievement of the desired objectives of the program. This study examines the efficacy of the various approaches adopted in the implementation of M&E.

### **2.2.3 Approaches to Policy Implementation**

Even though there is general consensus amongst theorists that the policy implementation process should be towards the realisation of previously set goals, however there are different

policy implementation approaches that can be adopted or used jointly. The two most common approaches to policy implementation are the top-down approach as well as the bottom-up approach. The top down approach is also referred to as forward mapping whilst the bottom up approach is labelled as backward mapping, (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002). Weimer and Vining (2005: 280) state that both the forward and backward mapping is a process of anticipating implementation problems.

(i) Top-Down Approach to Policy Implementation

The rational model approach under which the top-down approach is adopted sets the goals to be achieved as well as the implementation process. It is concerned with the processes taken to achieve the identified set of goals (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). This approach is prescriptive since its focus is on the specification of the chain of behaviours that the policy implementers must execute to link a policy to its desired outcomes, (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995:156). It assumes that the policy process can be viewed as a series of chains of command in which political and policy leaders articulate a clear policy preference which is then carried out through by policy implementers through the government's administrative machinery. Forward mapping is set off by the decisions of the government which examines the extent to which street-level bureaucrats or other government officials implement or fail to implement government decisions.

The top-down approach seeks to find the reasons underlying the extent of the implementation by tracking whether the prescribed stages of implementation were appropriately followed, (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995). Consequently, public participation is overlooked in this approach, which strongly emphasises the control over individuals or organisations that are involved in policy implementation without taking into account the role of other actors in the policy implementation process, which is then evident in the following discussed, bottom up approach.

(ii) Bottom-Up Approach to Policy Implementation

The bottom up approach or backward mapping means starting to think about policies by looking at the behaviour that one wishes to change (Weimer and Vining, 2005:281). Its perspective shows that street-level bureaucrats or other policy implementation operatives are also making policy, as they turn problems into routines and articulate the alternatives for the problems and seek the commitment of organisational resources to address them, (Colebatch,

1998:59). This approach focuses on public and private actors involved in implementation process of programmes and it examines their personal and organisational goals, strategies, network of contacts they have built as well as their needs to be capacitated in order to facilitate effective policy implementation, (Howlett and Ramesh (1995).

The decisions made by street-level bureaucrats as part of their coping mechanisms during times of pressure, effectively become the public policies they carry out, (Lipsky, 1980). Policy implementation operatives exercising discretion under challenging working conditions where there are limited resources, (Lipsky 1980: 76). The implementers of public policy in this approach are perceived to possess high service principles for policy implementation to be effective.

This approach identifies the critical role of other actors in policy implementation and in the various preceding stages of the policy cycle, including the subsequent monitoring and evaluation stage which is discussed next.

(iii) Differences between implementation approaches: Top-Down and Bottom-Up

<b>Top-Down</b>	<b>Bottom-Up</b>
Centrally located actors are seen as the most relevant to producing the desired targets, (Matland, 1995:146)	Identifies the critical role of other actors in policy implementation and in the various preceding stages of the policy cycle, including the subsequent monitoring and evaluation stage which is discussed next.
Demands a clear and consistent statement of the policy goals, a minimization of the number of involved actors, a limitation of the extent of change necessary and to find an institution which supports the point of view of the policy makers in order to guarantee that the implementers sympathize with the new policy (Matland, 1995, p. 147).	Policy implementation is set on two levels: at macro-implementation level, centrally located actors devise a government program; at the micro-implementation level, local organizations react to the macro-level plans, develop their own programs and implement them, (Berman, 1978, p. 156)
Local level implementers are not given the freedom to adapt the program to local conditions. The approach clearly favours the	Acknowledges the fact that implementers on the micro-level think about their work and form their own opinion about the tasks they

<p>decision-makers as key actors in the process of implementation and does not pay much attention to the administrative staff that carries out the legal act. For them the politicians own the expertise to formulate a good law and the role the implementers play to deliver the legislation to the people does not receive much appreciation.</p>	<p>receive and change the given programs in order to improve them or adapt them better to the real circumstances. They not only recognize this behaviour, they state that it is even positive to the development of the whole project as the worker who is connected with the actual situation can judge better than the policy makers who do not have the same information as he does.</p>
<p>The most striking criticism the top-down approach has to deal with is the way it regards the single actors within the process (Matland, 1995, p. 148). The approach clearly favors the decision-makers as key actors in the process of implementation and does not pay much attention to the administrative staff that carries out the legal act.</p>	<p>Bottom-up theorists are criticized for the overvaluation of the degree of actual local independency from the policy-makers as the implementation could not work without the resources and institutional structure provided by the central planners. Financial and human resources might have a great impact on the implementation process as it can make it more efficient.</p>

### 2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of the stages in the policy cycle, monitoring and evaluation seeks to ensure that the policy or programme is implemented accordingly as planned in order to resolve the identified social issue, (Worthan, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1995: 05). On the one hand, monitoring, which is the regular observation and recording of activities taking place in a project or programme, is also a process of routinely gathering information on all aspects of the project, (Worthan, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1995). To monitor is to check on how project activities are progressing.

On the other hand, evaluation is defined as a systematic and independent assessment of on-going or completed projects or programmes, to determine their design, implementation, results, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and recommends the way forward, (Worthan, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1995). The need for good governance,

accountability and transparency as well as better performance, policy effectiveness and achievement of results, proves the various purposes for conducting M&E. It is within these definitions of monitoring and evaluation that this study ascertains whether there is consistency in the theoretical and legislative definition of M&E with the conceptualisation of M&E by the implementing agents in the government department, who are the respondents in the study. Moreover, it discusses how the common or inconsistent conceptualisation of M&E affects its implementation and thus creates its limits or possibilities. It is the assertion of this study that the conceptualisation of M&E influences the understanding of the purposes and uses of M&E by the M&E and public service practitioners.

### **2.3.1 Purposes and Uses of M&E**

Weiss, (1998:20) asserts that there are various purposes for which M&E is conducted. Moreover, the evaluation findings and recommendations are used in different ways. The purpose for which monitoring and evaluation is used determines the particular orientation of each evaluation, (PSC, 2008: 4).

Evaluations are conducted for the purpose of organizational learning, (Palumbo and Hallet 1993, 13). Moreover monitoring and evaluation serves other purposes such as recording a programme history, providing feedback to practitioners, stressing the needs of a programme as well as to enact accountability and critical understanding of the social interventions, (Palumbo and Hallet 1993).

Ile, Eresia-Eke and Allen-Ile, (2012: 92) assert that usable and result-based M&E systems are formulated with an aim to produce the information required by the various stakeholders in policy development and implementation. The importance to put M&E systems in place to monitor and evaluate programmes from their initial stages helps in the tracking of programme performance as it escalates through to implementation, (Palumbo & Hallet, 1993).

In outlining the main purposes and uses of M&E, the DPME which is a custodian of the planning, monitoring and evaluation of public service programmes in South Africa outlines the reasons for monitoring and evaluation within four primary purposes. Firstly, evaluation aims to improve performance. Secondly, to improve accountability and thirdly it is aimed to generate knowledge about what works and what does not work with regards to public policy. Lastly monitoring and evaluation is done to inform and enable decision makers to judge the merit and worth of an intervention, (DPME, 2013a).

### **2.3.2 Types of Evaluation**

There is a distinction made between formative evaluation which is usually conducted prior to the commencement of the programme, and summative evaluation (Weiss 1998: 31). On the one hand, formative evaluations generally lead to the conception of some programmes by determining the need and desirability of the programme or policy during its formulation, (Weiss 1998: 31). On the other hand, the summative evaluation is conducted to provide feedback during or after the implementation of a programme. The summative evaluation provides information which is used to make a decision whether the programme should be modified or discontinued entirely. As a tool to determine whether the programme has succeeded or failed to achieve its objectives, the summative evaluation is intended for programme improvement through presenting findings which can lead to modifications being made to make the programme more effective, (Palumbo & Hallet, 1993: 22).

As there are approaches to public policy implementation, similarly, monitoring and evaluation assumes approaches under which its implementation is implemented. Identifying goals and indicators for the M&E system creates a base position to inform the selection of the most appropriate methodologies to execute an evaluation in order to attain the most useful results.

### **2.3.4 Approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation**

During the relatively short history within which monitoring and evaluation has existed, M&E has been categorized into a range of approaches, philosophies and models. M&E approaches involve identifying the logical purposes and processes adopted and utilised by evaluation practitioners to inform the most appropriate methodologies to achieve the most useful results, (Cloete, 2009:7). Moreover, a methodology is appropriate if it is able to provide useable evidence in the decision-making processes. The concept of evidence-based policy making has been gaining currency over recent years because of the use of strong evidence in informing decision-makers about the appropriateness of the design, implementation and impact of a policy, (UNICEF, 2008:7). Similarly, M&E has adopted the use of evidence to inform decision making.

(i) *M&E and Evidence Based Policy Making*

The approach of M&E as an assessment practice is grounded on evidence-based policy analysis, (Cloete, 2009:7). Evidence-Based Policy-making (EBP) is based on the assumption that government policy action can be founded upon the sourcing and analysing sound evidence developed through social scientific research, (Sanderson, 2015). As a result evaluation as well as the understanding that such evidence is used by practitioners in policy-making, (Sanderson, 2015: 62) seemed to be the necessary approach to be introduced into the performance measurement in the public sector, (Goldman, 2014). This approach in public policy towards a rational system of policy monitoring and evaluation informed the formulation and implementation of the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation system (M&E), (DPME, 2007:05), which is the focus of this study. The M&E intervention was aimed at introducing a uniform system of monitoring and evaluation across government as well as including the business and voluntary sector of South African organizations, (Cloete, 2009: 65).

As it is an evidence-based practice, M&E asserts an assumption that the collection and provision of evidence in the form of technical data could provide sound information for planning more effective programs and could provide a rational basis for the Public Service, (Palumbo and Nachmias, 1983). The ideal role of evaluation in ascertaining early warning signs in the process of delivering service is based on the view that evaluations should lead to the decision of either to terminate or continue a government program after its completion, (Parsons, 1995).

Evidence based policy making has its challenges. The basic concern about evidence-based policy making and its focus on scientific means of extracting knowledge is about the emphasis on theory as a basis of deriving knowledge of cause and effect relationships, (Sanderson, 2015: 61). The fundamental factor in evidence based policy (EBP) is the use of evidence in order to accumulate data and thus make an informed decision, (Sutcliffe & Court, 2005: iii). This approach aims to ensure successful policy implementation by focusing on evidence that substantiates the achievement of intended results, (Sutcliffe & Court, 2005: iii).

The relationship between the varying evaluation methodologies and the actual organizational behaviour suggests the idea that in order for the findings to be utilized, methodologies used by evaluators must be compatible with organizational behaviour in the Public Service, (Palumbo and Nachmias, 1983). However, Kettun (2003), argues that to base the management of services on performance since it puts too much emphasis on the outputs and

ignores other aspects of the framework such as processes of policy formulation and implementation is a lacking assessment exercise, (Kettun, 2003: 04). If a doctor focussed only on the number of consultations, irrespective of the process, the results could be dismal. The failure to implement policy could be caused by the lack of precision in the activities performed. In addition, measuring performance in the Public Service has other limitations. Whereas, the ultimate measure for the private sector is the measure of profitability and financial performance, public sector performance is measured through the impact of service delivery in the lives of citizens, (Kettun, 2003: 04). Confusing

Good evidence can ameliorate or neutralize policy obstacles, thereby making reforms more feasible. Banks, (2009:14) argues that the challenge in evidence based policy making begins with evidence itself. Firstly, what constitutes real evidence is dependent on the methodology used to gather the data as well as the approach that is adopted in the analysis of data to allow for proper consideration of the problems. Additionally, insufficient capacity as well as research skills can lead to failure to produce credible evidence, (Banks, 2009).

Secondly, the production of evidence takes place at specific periods of time which could allow or disallow adequate evidence to be available to inform decisions, (Banks, 2009:14). Time is needed to harvest data, gather new data and test the analysis, (Banks, 2009). The timing for the production of evidence requires alignment with other processes that are linked to policy formation and implementation.

Thirdly, there is a challenge in ensuring that the evidence is credible. The lack of transparency and absence of openness which could allow open debate and discussion by other stakeholders to test the evidence may result in the evidence that is not credible and could be used for devious purposes, (Banks, 2009:15). Independence in the production of evidence may allow for biased findings to support those individuals or groups who are involved in the production of evidence, (Banks, 2009:15).

Lastly, evidence requires a receptive environment for its utilization. Without a level of willingness from the personnel, the structures and processes, evidence becomes unusable, (Banks, 2009:18). An evidence-based approach requires a policy-making process that is receptive to evidence. Similarly, the monitoring and evaluation system which adopts a particular theory on which the assumptions will be based requires an environment which is receptive to its utilisation.

(ii) Theory-Based Evaluation

Theory-based evaluation which refers to identifying the understood theories or assumptions about why and how a policy will work to achieve its intended effects, is also prevalent in governments' M&E systems, (Sanderson, 2015: 64). It derives from the rationality which defines the role of M&E as a technical exercise without any normative basis. Policy making by positioning M&E as a technocratic political exercise, undermines the capacity for its appropriate practice, (Sanderson, 2015). The appropriate practice according to Sanderson, (2015) involves ethical-moral implications of decisions and action which is restricted by rationality by focusing on what works more effectively, (Sanderson, 2015:71). As a result the scope of dialogue excludes some of those stakeholders with normative concerns.

(iii) Results-Based Management (R-BM)

The explanation given by Ile, Eresia-Eke and Allen-Ile, (2012:74) is that management is a process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the use of resources and personnel to achieve a specific objective. The results based management focuses not only on the processes and systems to achieve the intended objectives but it also pays attention to the goals or results, (Ile, Eresia-Eke and Allen-Ile, (2012:77). The notions of effectiveness and efficiency are also embraced in results-based management. In the assessment of performance, R-BM emphasizes the measurement of effectiveness, which is the extent to which the results have been realised. Efficiency is also a subject of focus for R-BM wherein the means to achieving the results is measured. Measuring efficiency entails the measurement of how well the resources were used in the pursuit of the results. The measurement of efficiency and effectiveness is a common consideration in monitoring and evaluation. M&E is able to adopt an approach which focuses on measuring the extent to which the objectives are achieved through processes and that the resources of policy are utilised for achieving the clearly-stated results, (McCoy et al, 2005:02). It even can provide a framework for performance management by focusing on the achievement of important changes in the way that organisations operate with the aim of improving performance but achieving results as a central orientation of policy implementation, (Sanderson, 2015). M&E is infused into the various stages which make-up the life cycle of the result-based management approach, (Ile, Eresia-Eke and Allen-Ile, (2012:80). By providing evidence that the right things are being done, monitoring and evaluation can demonstrate how effective the performance is, and whether or not the policy goals are being achieved. M&E is able to achieve this through its

possibilities to be infused into the critical stages of either the management and assessment of policy processes and resources or even the policy results. Furthermore, M&E can also focus on the outcomes of a policy.

## **2.4 Models of Monitoring and Evaluation**

In understanding M&E, it is also important to discuss the varying models of evaluation as adopted by evaluators are concerned with the utility of their findings.

### *(i) Goal Orientated and Decision Orientated Evaluation*

Before a monitoring and evaluation system can be set up to assess the effectiveness of a policy or project in achieving its objectives, it is necessary to define the specific goals that the policy wants to achieve, select key indicators and also to set targets for such indicators which are a measuring rod of changes caused by the policy or project, (Wollman, 2003: 06). The goal-orientated evaluation tends to emphasize the impact of service delivery towards its beneficiaries, while a decision orientated evaluation enables intelligent judgments by decision makers, (Herman, et al.). Evaluation that shows program processes and the value perspectives of key people defines a responsive evaluation, (Herman, et al.). These models of evaluation employ a number of techniques or approaches which measure the relation of cost to benefits, while others can measure performance or utilize experiments to evaluate a government policy or program, (Parsons, 1995:545). Better understanding of the role of these techniques and the information they produce can be obtained by relating them to phases in the policy cycle, (Parsons, 1995).

Goal orientated M&E systems confront some limitations in extracting empirical data that measures whether the changes or improvements are caused by the policy or project itself. This is because side effects and unintended consequences are hard to trace in order to measure the conditions or the before and after effects of a policy or project, (Wollman, 2003)

### *(ii) Theory of Change*

Underlying the design of an M&E system is the theory of change, (Perrin, 2012: 08). A theory of change is a model that explains how a particular intervention is expected to achieve the intended impact, (Perrin, 2012: 08). It refers to the results chain or program logic which the theory of change illustrates as a series of assumptions.

The theory of change makes assumptions by presuming the relationships between inputs to be used in a program, activities to be done, outcomes that will be obtained and finally the intended impact that will be achieved by the program, (Perrin, 2012).

Burke (2002) states that change in strategy means that the organization's culture must also be modified if success of the overall change effort is to be realized. Whereas, change in the culture is in support of the changes in the mission and strategy, in essence, change strategies are successful if the behaviour and strategies of the people within the organization are altered to address the new strategy.

Therefore, the study identifies the objectives of KZN CoGTA is informed by the theory of theory of intended change. It also examines how M&E at KZN CoGTA is organised to support the achievement of the department's planned change. Moreover, it also looks at how CoGTA's theory of change influences the design of the department's M&E system. Structural arrangement within KZN CoGTA is discussed as an important to the evaluation of policy and project impact.

## **2.5 Organisational Design and Culture**

The key to building more effective results management and evaluation is the need to develop and maintain an evaluative culture in an organization, (Mayne, 2010). The monitoring and evaluation of impact needs to be guided by supportive structures to ensure meaningful impact evaluation, (Mayne, 2010). Some organisations may choose a centralised and specialised M&E unit while others may prefer to decentralise the monitoring and evaluation functions of various components within the organisation.

While the organisational structure for M&E function may differ from one organisation to another, however it is important that it is sufficiently visible and effective within the organisation, (Mayne, 2010). There needs to be a climate in the organization where evidence on performance is valued, sought out, and seen as essential to good management. Without such a climate, adherence to M&E systems and procedures cannot dominate attitudes toward results management and evaluation, (Mayne, 2010).

Kusek and Rist (2004), cited in Ile, Eresia-Eke & Allen-Ile (2012: 90), state that a good monitoring and evaluation system must be based on ownership, management, maintenance and credibility. It should employ a participatory approach that includes all M&E stakeholders, to ensure that M&E information adequately addresses the information needs of

all stakeholders, and to ensure that organization members buy into the M&E system. Adopting a strategy is directly linked with how the strategy will be implemented.

It is also important to consider the level of compliance with the M&E system once it has been developed in the institution, (Presidency, 2007: 12). Therefore, in order to effect compliance to M&E systems, institutions should consider the acquisition of an electronic system to support M&E. The specifications of this electronic system should effectively support the implementation of the institution's M&E strategy and should be integrated with the IT systems of the institution, (Presidency, 2007: 12).

In identifying the limits of M&E Melchor (2008: 12) states that when the need for change is imposed, it is difficult for stakeholders to commit to the reform initiative and this can essentially undermine success. The M&E systems are vulnerable to degenerate into superficial "box ticking exercise" if there is no support from the political heads and senior officials of the institution. Burke et al. (2012: 11) state that "for an innovation to be successfully implemented, it must become culturally embedded within the organization". Without a management culture which demands performance and which regards the M&E findings as an opportunity to explore problems openly and engage in critical introspection, M&E could be undermined into a deteriorated and futile exercise, (Presidency, 2007: 12).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In discussing the conceptual and theoretical framework for monitoring and evaluation, this chapter has discussed relevant issues concerning the implementation of an M&E system from a theoretical and conceptual perspective. It has identified and discussed the relevant terms that inform the study, including the public policy, monitoring and evaluation, implementation theory, theory of change as well as organisational theory. The chapter attempted to present a theoretical and conceptual link between the concepts that government or public organisations implementing public policy try to use to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of these organisations.

The chapter presented the theoretical and conceptual framework for the purposes of understanding the implementation of monitoring and evaluation within the KZN CoGTA. The approaches, processes and challenges discussed in the chapter are used to analyse how the implementation of M&E at the KZN CoGTA is conceptualised, formulated and implemented. That conceptualisation, formulation and subsequent implementation of M&E enable an analysis of the resulting limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation in the

public institution, KZN CoGTA. The next chapter describes the legislative and policy framework of the GWM&E system in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER THREE: Policy and Legislative Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation in the South African Government Departments**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an outline of the policy and legislative framework that informs the implementation of monitoring and evaluation in the South African government departments. This enables an understanding of the legislation which correspondingly guides the government department, KZN CoGTA which is a case study for this research. KZN CoGTA is a provincial government department which is responsible for providing effective, transparent, accountable and coherent intergovernmental system for the Government Departments in the Republic as a whole, (CoGTA, 2015:10). The department is in charge of performing oversight and support to municipalities and Traditional Leaders and their respective structures. As guided by the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System KZN CoGTA has a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at KZN CoGTA which is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the department's programmes.

The chapter discusses the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System as well as its applicability at the national, provincial and local government level. The chapter explains the South African legislation and policy that informs the procedural requirement for Monitoring and Evaluation for government departments. The national Constitution is discussed since it sets the legislative mandate as the highest law of the country.

In addition to the Policy Framework for the M&E the chapter also discusses other policy documents that inform monitoring and evaluation, including the Framework for Managing Programme Performance (2007), the South African National Evaluation Policy Framework (2011) and the South African Statistics Quality Assurance Framework (2008). Finally the Purposes and uses as well as the approaches to M&E are discussed in correlation to the processes and implementation challenges of monitoring and evaluation.

In efforts to promote sound governance, accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector, the democratic government of South Africa adopted a legislation framework that informs monitoring and evaluation in various levels of government and its departments. Whilst the GWM&E is part of the government's M&E approach to strengthen sound governance, (Presidency, 2007:5), there are other pieces of legislation that seek to inform the M&E and effectiveness in government, (Presidency, 2007).

The Constitution (1996), Public Finance Management Act (1999), Public Service Amended Act (1999), Statistics Act (1999), and the Public Audit Act (No. 25 of 2004), are legislations that indirectly inform the M&E as well as monitoring and evaluation in various levels of South African government and its departments. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is the highest law of the country and it informs the policy and legislation for the tracking and measurement of government performance and accountability by articulating very specific requirements for monitoring and evaluation of the government.

### **3.2 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa**

The South African Constitution No 108, (RSA, 1996) Section 85(1) orders the State President and the executive authority to implement and develop national policy and co-ordinate the functions of state departments and administrators, (RSA, 1996). This directive mandatorily informed the Office of the Presidency to launch the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, (DPME) in South Africa, whose mandate is to ensure co-ordination of the outcomes approach to monitoring and evaluation in government. As the main custodian of the M&E in South Africa, DPME also conducts monitoring of frontline service delivery, (Presidency, 2012: 6). The DPME ensures the development and implementation of performance monitoring mechanisms for all spheres of South African government.

Section 215-216(1) of the Constitution (RSA, 1996) and the Public Finance Management Act No 1 of (1999) mandates that government establish the National Treasury, which should develop standardised methods for government departments that ensure transparency and expenditure control in all spheres of government (RSA, 1996; RSA, 1999a). The Constitution (1996) makes provision for establishment structures and practices which ensure that public administration promotes good governance.

According to Section 188(1) of the Constitution (RSA, 1996) the South African government is required to appoint an Auditor-General. The Auditor-General is responsible for the audit and report on the accounts, financial statements as well as financial management of all national and provincial state departments and administrations, (RSA, 2004). The mandate of the Auditor-General is to measure performance of government institutions against each of the department's allocated budget and provide a report on the efficiency of the South African public sector, (RSA, 1996).

On the management of the South African public administration, The Constitution further proclaims in Section 195 (1) (a-e) that public administration should be guided by the following:

- ✓ A high standard of professional ethics;
- ✓ Accountable administration;
- ✓ Efficient, economic and effective use of resources;
- ✓ A public administration that is development oriented;
- ✓ Services that are provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
- ✓ Peoples needs that are responded to and encourage greater participation in the policy making process;
- ✓ Transparency of the public with timely, accessible and accurate information;
- ✓ Good human resource management and career-development to maximise human potential, (RSA, 1996).

Section 196 (f) (i), of the Constitution, (RSA, 1996) makes a provision for the formation and operationalization of the Public Service Commission (PSC). The mandate of the Public Service Commission is to investigate and evaluate the interpretation of personnel as well as public administration processes and subsequently report to the relevant executive authority and legislature, (RSA, 1996).

### **3.3 Statistics Act 6 of (1999)**

Additionally, the Statistics Act 6 of (1999) makes a provision for the appointment of Statistician-General (SG) to establish a framework to enable the evaluation of statistics data collected by the various organs of state, (RSA, 1999c). The Act outlines the data collection tools and procedures that can be used to produce credible and reliable data which may be used for M&E purposes.

The various clauses of the Statistics Act 6 of (1999) provide an outline into the collaborative tasks with which the (SG) could engage. Notably, Section 14 (6) of the Statistics Act makes provision for the Statistician-General to give advice to any organ of state on the application of quality criteria and standards. ;

Section 14 (7) of the Statistics Act gives power to the Statistician-General to assess and approve or disapprove statistics produced by other organs of state as official statistics. Meanwhile, Section 14 (8) authorises the SG to comment on the quality of national statistics

produced by another organ of state, and to publish such other department's statistics, (RSA, 1999c).

### **3.4 Public Audit Act (No. 25 of 2004)**

The Public Audit Act (No. 25 of 2004) is aimed to give effect to the provisions of the Constitution in establishing and assigning functions to an Auditor-General. It seeks to provide for the auditing of institutions in the South African public service. The Act enshrines the legislative mandate to provide for accountability arrangements of the Auditor-General and to repeal and provide for matters connected to certain out-dated legislation for the auditing of government institutions.

### **3.5 The Public Service Amended Act (No. 5 of 1999)**

Chapter Three, of Section (7) (1), of The Public Service Amended Act No 5 of (1999), requires government to establish the Department of Public Service and Administration(DPSA) which is a government department. The DPSA's mandated is to provide a framework of standards which promotes representativeness, human resource management and training in the public service in order to continually reform and develop organisational measures that ensure the effectiveness of government. In addition, Chapter Two, Section (4), mandates the South African Management Development Institute to provide capacity building for the Public Service in the country (RSA, 1999b).

In the light of the influences from the legislations that indirectly inform the M&E as well as monitoring and evaluation in various levels of South African government, the implementation of the M&E necessitates capacity building to help government department officials to develop M&E related skills and expertise. The legislation discussed above seeks to provide the legal basis for the effective and efficient administration of the South African public service.

### **3.6 Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005**

The mandates of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs as it is embodied in various Sections of the Constitution, 1996 are guided further by the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005. The objective of this Act is to provide within the principle of co-operative government set out in Chapter 3 of the Constitution a framework for the national government, provincial governments and local governments, and

all organs of state within those governments, to facilitate co-ordination in the implementation of policy and legislation, including coherent government; effective provision of services; monitoring implementation of policy and legislation; and realisation of national priorities, (Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005).

In order to promote the objectives of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005, the national government, provincial governments and local governments must conduct their affairs by taking into account the circumstances, material interests and budgets of other governments and organs of state in other governments, (Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005).

When exercising their statutory powers or performing their statutory functions, the various levels of government must consult other affected organs of state in accordance with formal procedures, as determined by any applicable legislation, (Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005). The Act also states that the consultation must also be steered by other accepted convention or as agreed with or by the relevant departments or, in the absence of formal procedures, consulting them in a manner best suited to the circumstances, including by way of direct contact or any relevant intergovernmental structures. The Act advocates for co-ordinating the actions of government departments, when implementing policy or legislation affecting the material interests of other governments; avoiding unnecessary and wasteful duplication or jurisdictional contests, (Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005).

Moreover, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that departments have sufficient institutional capacity and effective procedures to consult, to co-operate and to share information with other organs of state, (Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005). The consultation also requests the department to respond promptly to requests by other organs of state for consultation, co-operation and information sharing; and participating in intergovernmental structures of which they are members; and in efforts to settle intergovernmental disputes, (Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005).

In the light of KZN CoGTA's mandate as a department which provides oversight for provincial intervention in local government. This intervention in municipalities includes the issuing of directives, and managing interventions to support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise their powers and to perform their functions in accordance with the provisions of section 154(1) and (2) of the Constitution. Moreover, by legislative and other measures, the municipalities must be monitored for the

effective performance of their functions, (RSA, 1999b). The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 supports the implementation of a Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System which is itself an intergovernmental M&E guide.

### **3.7 Implementing the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System, (GWM&E)**

The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), in its role as driver of M&E from a national perspective, has focused effort on establishing a common approach to M&E amongst all delivery agents across the three spheres of South African government. The department has built on the Presidency's 2010 Guide to the Outcomes Approach, which sets out the government's approach to M&E and the management of each of the outcomes aimed to collectively address government's strategic priorities.

In 2005, the South African Cabinet approved the recommendations on an implementation plan to develop the GWM&E system, (Presidency, 2007). Monitoring and evaluation as one of the ways government sought to improve its effectiveness in policies, strategies, plans and government performance, (Presidency, 2007).

The GWM&E System seeks (Presidency, 2007: 5) to "provide an integrated, encompassing framework of M&E principles, practices and standards to be used throughout government, and functions as an apex level information system which draws from the component systems in the framework to deliver useful M&E products for its users". The M&E initiative is a public service reform which aims to consolidate the public service by encouraging M&E practice in government. The Policy Framework for the M&E (2007) and the National Evaluation Policy Framework (2011) define monitoring and evaluation. "Monitoring involves the continuous collecting, analysing, and reporting of data in a way that supports effective management. Monitoring aims to provide managers with regular feedback on progress in implementation and results and early indicators of problems that need to be corrected. It usually reports on actual performance against what was planned or expected" (The Presidency, 2007: 2). Evaluation is then "the systematic collection and objective analysis of evidence on public policies, programmes, projects, functions and organizations to assess issues such as relevance, performance (effectiveness and efficiency), value for money, impact and sustainability, and recommend ways forward" (The Presidency, 2011: iii).

### **3.8 South African National Evaluation Policy Framework**

Apart from the legislative framework, it is important to consider the policy framework that directly guides the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System. The post-1994 South African government identified the need for the formulation of the M&E to strengthen sound and effective service delivery to meet the needs of all South Africans.

The Green Paper on Improving Government Performance (2009) is a government policy provision which captured the rationale by the government to improve its performance. It states the government intention to improve performance through reflecting on what has been done and achieved against what had been set out to be achieved. It highlights the importance of diagnosing the reasons for the unexpected results in order to evaluate and learn from the successes and failures or mistakes, (Presidency, 2009:3).

The South African government has developed various pieces of legislation that directly inform the M&E. These include the Policy Framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (2007), the Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information (2007), the South African Statistics Quality Assurance Framework (2008) and the National Evaluation Policy Framework (2011).

Other legislation, such as the Role of the Premier's Office in Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation (2008) Policy Document, the Improving Government Performance (2009) Policy Document and the Framework for Strengthening Citizen Involvement in Monitoring Government Service Delivery (2013). Each piece of legislation outlines the practices and procedures which subsequently informs the M&E. The following section outlines the purpose of the South African M&E.

### **3.9 Purposes and Uses of GWM&E**

The South African National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF), (2011) is a policy framework that provides a clear outline for implementing evaluation activities and serves as a valuable reference point in ensuring consistency of approach, while also allowing individual departments to customise the system to suit their needs. It states that evaluations should be conducted to improve performance, improve accountability, generate knowledge and for decision-making for public service interventions (Presidency, 2011: 2).

The Framework also prompts that by conducting credible and quality evaluations the public sector would be able to plan policies and allocate budgets whilst strengthening the culture of using evidence to improve government performance, (Presidency, 2011: 2). The NEPF recommends that government departments undertake impact evaluations, implementation evaluation, design as well as economic evaluation, because these types of evaluations are linked with the results-based management approach adopted by the South African government, (Presidency, 2011: 8).

Whereas the NEPF informs the M&E approach that is pursued by national government, the Policy Framework for the GWM&E (2007) outlines the guiding principles for M&E, which among other aspects assert that:

- M&E should contribute to improved governance through transparency, accountability, participation and inclusion;
  - M&E should be rights based;
  - M&E should be development-oriented, nationally, institutionally and locally;
  - M&E should be undertaken ethically and with integrity;
  - M&E should be utilisation oriented;
  - M&E should be methodologically sound;
  - M&E should be operationally effective;
- (Source: Presidency, 2007: 3).

The objectives of the GWM&E System are outlined in the Policy Framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (2007). These include:

- Improved quality of performance information and analysis at programme level within departments and municipalities (inputs, outputs and outcomes);
  - Improved M&E of outcomes and impact across the whole of government;
  - Sectoral and thematic evaluation reports;
  - Improved M&E of provincial outcomes and impact in relation to Provincial Growth and Development Plans;
  - Projects to improve M&E performance in selected institutions across government; and
  - Capacity building initiatives to build capacity for M&E and foster a culture of governance and decision-making which responds to M&E findings,
- (Source: Presidency, 2007: 7).

### **3.10 Monitoring and Evaluation Methods: Structures and Tools for implementing M&E**

There are a number of procedures that have been adopted by the South African public sector to ensure that M&E practice produces the desired results. The following section discusses the structures, processes and tools for implementing the M&E.

South Africa adopted a results-based management approach as it is based on defining strategic goals which provide a focus for action and specifying expected results which contribute to the achievement of strategic goals. It is used to align the programmes, processes as well as resources to achieve expected results. Moreover it enables on-going monitoring and assessment of performance as well as using lessons learnt from implementation to inform future planning; and improving accountability for results, (Presidency, 2007: 22).

In 2001, the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation developed the Management Performance Assessment Tool as well as a reporting scorecard which aim to increase the strategic focus of government and ensure co-operative governance in South Africa, (Presidency, 2012b: 17). In aiming to ensure that M&E information informs planning, budget allocation implementation and reporting of government strategies, the policy framework for the GWM&E System stresses that the Monitoring and Evaluation system must be integrated into the existing management and decision-making systems of government. (Presidency, 2007: 11).

The DPME also formulated a Framework for Strengthening Citizen Involvement in Monitoring Government Service Delivery (2013) which aims to address the lack of public participation in the government's existing monitoring approach. This framework seeks to provide a common understanding of citizen-based monitoring and its importance to government performance in service delivery. It offers guidance to government departments on how to reinforce the involvement of citizens in monitoring and evaluation whilst also asserting the roles and responsibilities and a set of principles for M&E. Lastly it presents an action plan for reinforcement of citizen-government partnerships for monitoring frontline service delivery, (Presidency, 2013: v).

The involvement of the Premiers Office asserts the role of this Office as a structure in the process of monitoring and evaluation of the different levels of government and its departments. The M&E (2008) policy document requires all provincial as well as national government departments to develop monitoring and evaluation systems that are integrated into each department's existing management and decision-making systems, (Presidency,

2008: 8). This policy document emphasises the importance of capacity building that all M&E strategies should implement in order to increase the human capacity, (Presidency, 2008: 13).

The DPME also developed a National Evaluation Plan (2012) which is a tool that sets the target for evaluation for South African government departments. The National Evaluation Plan (NEP) outlines the details on the evaluations of interventions that are addressing national priority issues, (Presidency, 2012a: 1). It also offers a standard for selecting those government interventions that will be evaluated, (Presidency, 2012a: 1).

### 3.11 The Outcomes Approach to Monitoring and Evaluation

In assessing the effectiveness of government performance the M&E practitioner may adopt an outcomes approach to monitoring and evaluation. The outcomes approach is designed to ensure that government is focused on achieving the expected real improvements in the life of the target population. It clarifies what is expected to be achieved, how to achieve it and what will be a measure to detect whether it has been achieved, (The Presidency, 2010: 9-10). In introducing this approach and assuming its methods, the South African Presidency adopted a definition which looks at outcomes as a changed state of being as a result of the effects, benefits or consequences that occur due to the outputs or programs, processes or activities of a project, (The Presidency, 2010: 12).

The Presidency (2010: 11-12) noted the following as the central elements included in the outcomes approach:

Figure – 1: Relationship between Key Performance Information Concepts

<b>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KEY PERFORMANCE INFORMATION CONCEPTS</b>	
<b>Inputs</b>	Everything that is needed to accomplish a task. This could be in terms of finance, human resources, infrastructure etc.
<b>Activities</b>	A collection of functions (actions, jobs, tasks) that consume inputs and deliver benefits or impacts.
<b>Outputs</b>	These can be immediate and intermediate products and services generated through processes or activities without specific reference to their ultimate purpose.
<b>Outcomes</b>	A changed state of being that describes the effects, benefits or consequences that occur due to the outputs or programs, processes or activities. The realisation of the outcomes has a time factor and can be in either the medium or long-term.
<b>Impacts</b>	These are long-term developmental results at a societal level that are the logical consequence of achieving specific outcomes.

*Source: The Presidency (2010: 11-12)*

Whereas a number of procedures that have been adopted by the South African public sector to ensure that M&E practice have been discussed, it is also important that the processes of the M&E are considered to explain the role of various executed in different phases of the conception and implementation of the M&E.

### **3.12 Organisational Design and Processes for M&E**

The processes and organisational structures for the implementation of the M&E are informed by the national monitoring and evaluation policy as well as legislative frameworks. Subsequently, the development of the South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF) seeks to enhance and extend transparency in data evaluation, (Stats SA, 2008: i) which can be used for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation of government initiatives. The SASQAF provides the criteria that are used for evaluating and certifying statistics produced by government departments and other organs of state as well as by the non-governmental organizations, (Stats SA, 2008: 1). It also outlines the data collection method and processes for collecting M&E information. The framework also provides consistent standards that aim to promote the collection and usage of credible information across the public sector, (Presidency, 2007: 9). Evidently, the role Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) is a central one in the evaluation and improvement of data quality as the agency responsible for the collection and dissemination of official statistics,(Stats SA, 2008: i).

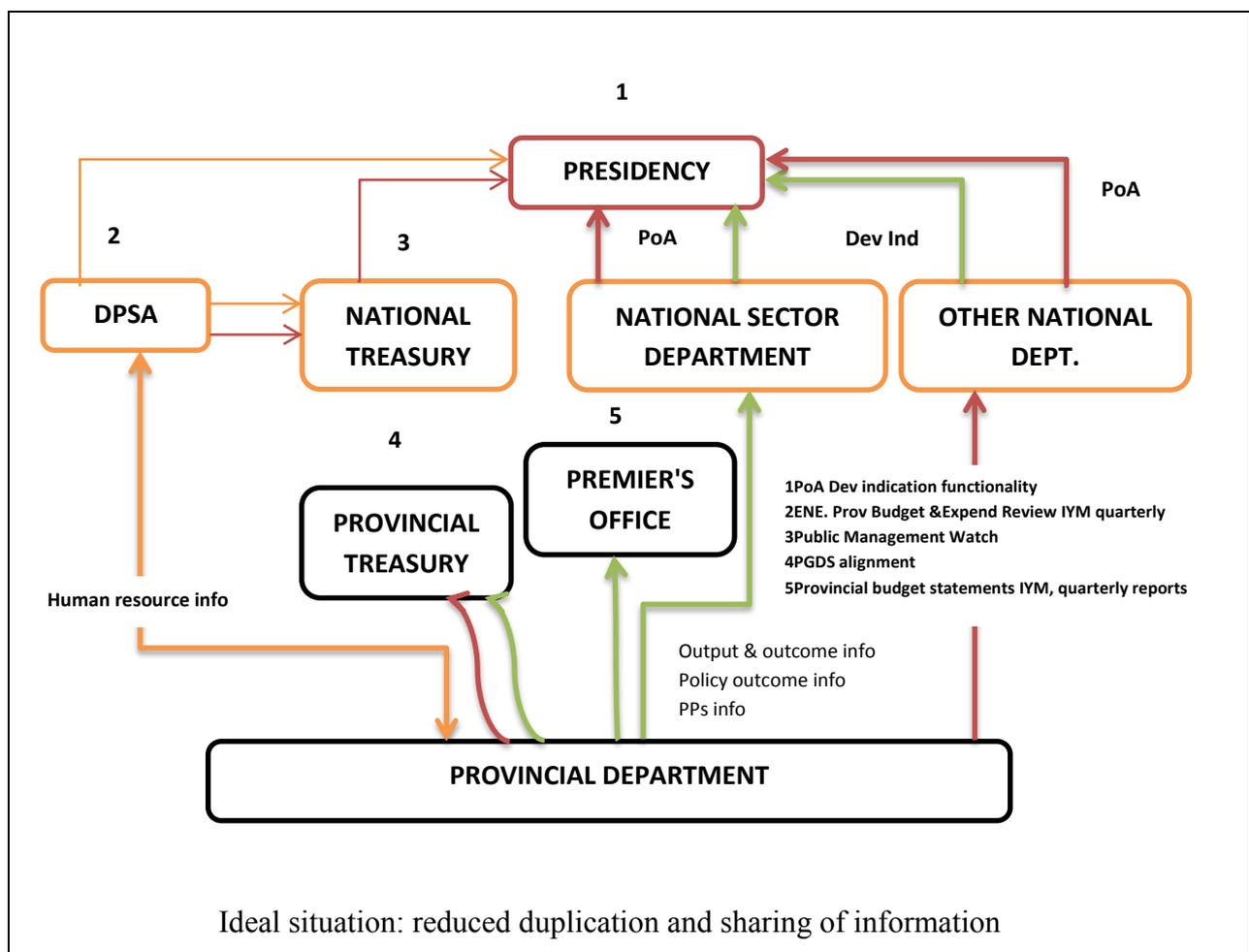
The M&E Co-ordinating Forum and the Provincial M&E Forum have been established with the aim to develop the implementation plan of the M&E for national and provincial government, (Presidency, 2008). The M&E (2008: 8) policy document states that the role of the Office of the Premier is to coordinate the development of M&E systems in all government departments. This seeks to outline how M&E findings will inform strategic and operational planning, budget formulation, and implementation as well as in-year and annual reporting whilst ensuring that the M&E systems are aligned with the National and Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, (Presidency, 2008: 10). The Office of the Premier needs to have access to the information that is already being collected by provincial departments. This enables the Premiers' Offices to analyse M&E information provided by provincial departments, (Presidency, 2008: 10). Efficient process of reporting of M&E information emphasises the sharing of information across the various levels of government.

The role of various institutions responsible for M&E in national and provincial departments is outlined in the Policy Framework for GWM&E System (2007). The framework states that

executive authorities are responsible for using M&E information for accountability and decision-making and to report on the performance of their respective government institutions/departments.

The role of programme managers, project managers and other line managers and officials is to develop and maintain M&E systems. They are also responsible for ensuring that M&E information is collected, analysed, verified and utilised in decision-making processes. These officials may collaborate with M&E units which are part of the M&E structures responsible for ensuring the implementation of M&E. M&E units provide the expertise for M&E functions, reporting as well as capacity building on M&E strategies, (Presidency, 2007: 14).

Figure - 2: Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting Lines



*Source: The Presidency, 2007*

The illustration in Figure 2 (above), demonstrates the reporting lines of provincial departments and the sharing of information across the different levels of government. These are the structures in the process that is supposed to be followed by government departments towards contributing into a coordinated accumulation of evaluation information for decision

making. The study discusses the implications of make use of these structures and the effects of failure to utilise them.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the legislative as well as policy framework that informs M&E in South Africa. The chapter discussed at length the South African constitution and its supportive legislation and policy frameworks that inform M&E, indirectly and directly. It explained the aims and objectives, approach and processes of the M&E, according to the currently available legislation and policy documents. The Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Office of the Presidency ensures that the principles and practices of M&E have been established, while tracking the performance of the public sector. The chapter discussed the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System. The policy document outlines the implementation roles and responsibilities of public servants and public institutions of M&E. This chapter has discussed the policy framework measuring the performance of the public sector to determine whether or not there has been an improvement in administrative quality and government service access to citizens.

The legislative and policy framework which informs the implementation and management of M&E in South Africa seeks to improve the performance of public administration by using evidence gathered from monitoring and evaluations for future learning and decision making. The aims, approaches and processes of the M&E are used in this study to analyse KZN COGTA's implementation of the M&E. The following chapter presents the case study of this study on the limits and possibilities of M&E at KZN CoGTA.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Case study of the KwaZulu Natal Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the structural and procedural arrangement of KZN CoGTA and how M&E is strategically positioned within the department for the purposes of explaining the limits and possibilities of M&E within the specific case study of KZN CoGTA. The examination of the mandate of the department and the M&E Unit seeks to understand the role of M&E in the actualization of KZN CoGTA's mandate. The chapter also looks at the organisational design and the role of M&E practitioners within the structures, mechanisms which facilitate the processes of monitoring and evaluation at KZN CoGTA. The purposes and uses of Monitoring and evaluation are also discussed in this chapter. Firstly, the chapter presents the background as well as the mandate of KZN CoGTA as well as the mandate of the M&E Unit within the department.

### **4.2 Background: The KwaZulu Natal Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs**

KZN CoGTA is a South African provincial government Department. Its legislative mandate according to the South African Constitution is to provide effective, transparent, accountable and coherent intergovernmental system for the Government Departments in the Republic as a whole, (KZN CoGTA, 2013b:10).

The mission of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs is "to strengthen cooperation among all spheres of government; support and build the capacity of local governance institutions; and facilitate and coordinate stakeholder engagement in pursuit of people-centred, accelerated service delivery", (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

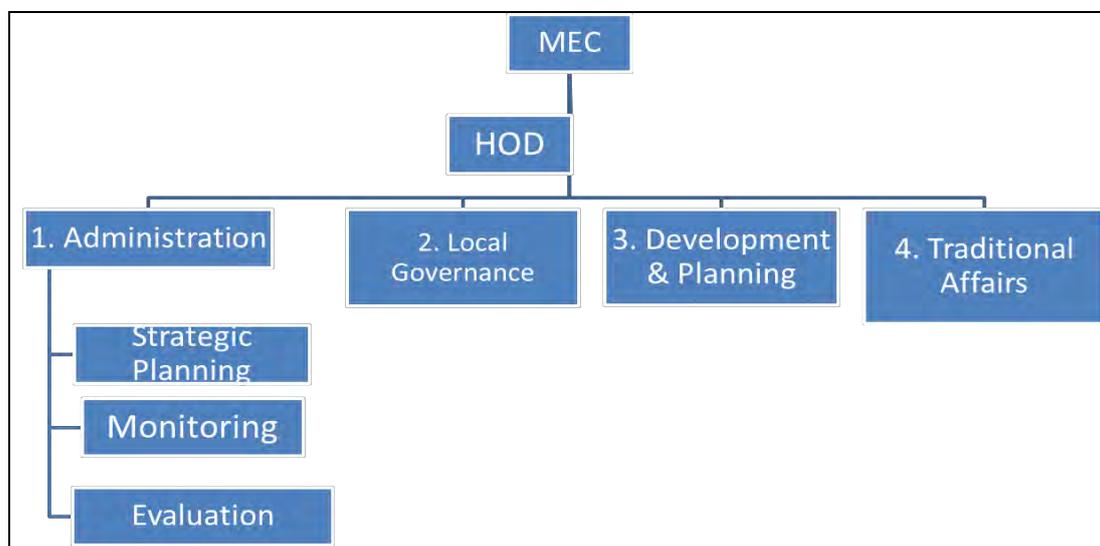
The Department's strategic goals are to achieve a sustained performance of institutions of local governance and strengthened co-operative governance; efficient and effective oversight; as well as improved organisational capacity and proficiency of the Department and Ministry, (KZN CoGTA, 2015). Furthermore, KZN CoGTA is responsible for performing oversight and support to 54 municipalities and 296 Traditional Leaders and their respective structures, (KZN CoGTA, 2016).

The department is subdivided into various branches (units) which respectively specialise in their specific roles and responsibilities. The M&E unit forms part of the Administration branch of the department at KZN CoGTA.

### 4.3 Organizational Structure of KZN CoGTA

The KZN CoGTA established an M&E unit as part of its Strategic Planning department. The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at KZN CoGTA is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the department’s programmes. The unit coordinates monitoring, assessment, analysis and evaluation of the overall performance of the KZN CoGTA Department. These include monitoring projects, identifying projects that will be monitored, developing indicators and verifying indicators according to the KZN CoGTA’s performance agreement with the service providers, (KZN CoGTA, 2015). According to KZN CoGTA’s M&E unit, the major goal of their evaluations is to influence decision making or policy formulation and to ascertain the impact that projects a project has had for the period of its implementation by KZN CoGTA, (CoGTA, 2013a:02).

Figure 3 - Organisational Structure of KZN CoGTA



Source: KZN CoGTA Presentation, 2015

The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at KZN CoGTA reports to the Chief of Operations whose purpose is to manage the service delivery operations of the Department, (KZN CoGTA, 2015). It is made up of three Sub-units. Firstly, the Evaluations Unit which is made up of a Director / Manager (Evaluation), Personal Assistant and two (2) Deputy Managers as

well as two (2) Assistant Managers. Secondly, the Monitoring Unit which is made up of a Director / Manager (Monitoring), Personal Assistant as well as two (2) Deputy Managers, one (1) Assistant Manager (currently vacant post) and one (1) Data Capturers. Thirdly, the Systems and Reporting Directorate, whose purpose is to manage systems and report on performance, is made up of a Manager, Personal Assistant and three (3) Deputy Managers, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

As the KZN CoGTA M&E units is made up of two separated Sub-units, the first branch which is the Monitoring Unit develops and maintains an integrated performance management system and monitor the achievement of targets against budget. It also revises the targets on quarterly basis whilst also coordinating the monitoring process between relevant stakeholders, (KZN CoGTA, 2015: 21). Meanwhile, the Evaluation Unit coordinates, manages and report on performance. The unit also coordinates quarterly review programme and the alignment of organisational performance against individual performance for the entire department. It facilitates external evaluation for each programme for impact and analyses performance of the department against that of municipalities, (KZN CoGTA, 2015: 21). The two units (Monitoring and Evaluation) are made up of a team of M&E personnel who are tasked with specific roles and responsibilities that seek to achieve the mandate of the KZN CoGTA M&E unit.

#### **4.4 Processes for Implementing Monitoring and Evaluation at KZN CoGTA**

The Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation units belong into a division called Programme One at KZN CoGTA, (KZN CoGTA, 2015). Strategic Planning is responsible for planning the department's programme and projects. The unit develops indicators and targets for each unit which they will utilize to judge whether the various units are performing applicably as planned in their Annual Performance Plans which are also developed by Strategic Planning, (KZN CoGTA, 2015). The Annual Performance Plans are developed from the KZN CoGTA's Five-Year Plan. The unit also develops the Business Plans which are used by the various divisions in the implementation of the programs and projects by KZN CoGTA, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

The assessment of whether these indicators and targets are accomplished by KZN CoGTA's subdivisions is the responsibility of the Monitoring unit which monitors the achievement of the targets and indicators, (KZN CoGTA, 2015). They monitor the Business Plans to check what is achieved and what is not achieved and they compile a report on quarterly basis, report

whether the subdivisions achieve what was sought to be achieved per quarter, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

When the Monitoring has completed compiling the performance reports, then Evaluation comes at the end to evaluate the outcomes as well as the impact of the various programs, (KZN CoGTA , 2015). The Evaluation unit looks at the performance report to see which projects have been completed, whether the targets of those projects have been achieved or not achieved according to the monitoring report. Moreover, the Evaluation unit also conducts periodic evaluations which are done on quarterly basis, (KZN CoGTA, 2013c).

In presenting the structural and procedural arrangement of KZN CoGTA and how M&E is strategically positioned within the department, it must be stated that for the purposes of explaining the limits and possibilities of M&E within the specific case study of KZN CoGTA, the research firstly, sought to understand the mandate of KZN CoGTA. Secondly, it sought to understand the role of M&E in the actualization of KZN CoGTA's mandate. This seeks to understand whether M&E succeeds or fails to positively contribute to the realization of CoGTA's mandate.

#### **4.5 Human Resources for Implementing Monitoring and Evaluation**

The M&E Unit personnel at KZN CoGTA are subdivided into two Sub-units, Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-units. Firstly, the Evaluation Sub-unit comprises of the Director, two Deputy Managers and two Assistant Managers whilst the Monitoring Sub-unit is made up of one Director (Acting), two Deputy Directors and one Assistant Director (currently vacant) and one Data Capturer, (KZN CoGTA, 2015). There are different roles and responsibilities that are performed by the various personnel within the M&E unit.

##### *(i) Director / Senior Manager - Evaluations Unit*

The job purpose of the Director (Evaluations) is to coordinate and manage evaluation of performance of the Department and provide the reports on the evaluation of the department's performances. The key responsibilities for the Director (Evaluations) involve the coordination of quarterly programme reviews of the programmes in the Department and undertake mid-term strategic evaluation of departmental programmes, (KZN CoGTA , 2015). The Director should also provide input to national and provincial policy and legislative process as well as structures regarding monitoring of public sector policies; programmes and projects. Furthermore, the Director provides strategic direction to the

component and gives input to the Chief Directorate's strategic planning process, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

(i) Two (2) Deputy Managers - Evaluations Unit

The Deputy Managers (Evaluations) are tasked with facilitating the implementation of reporting and evaluation system within the Department as well as national and provincial, policy and legislation including the processes which underpin reporting and evaluation in Government, (KZN CoGTA , 2015). Their key responsibilities include providing input into review of national and provincial policies, legislation and initiatives in support of evaluation. They are expected to support the development and implementation of Departmental programmes on evaluation of policies and programmes. Additionally, Deputy Managers (Evaluations) need to support the compilation of reports and reporting of the Department on its performance and also support the implementation of the evaluation capacity building strategy. They must coordinate policy and programme evaluations and also provide support to the development and implementation of evaluation guidelines, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

(ii) Two (2) Assistant Managers for Evaluations.

The role of the Assistant Managers (Evaluations) is to support the implementation of reporting and evaluation system within the Department as well as national and provincial, policy and legislation and processes which underpin reporting and evaluation in Government, (KZN CoGTA , 2015). Assistant Managers (Evaluations) are responsible for providing input into review of national and provincial policies, legislation and initiatives in support of evaluation. Moreover they need to support the development and implementation of Departmental programmes on evaluation of policies and programmes whilst also supporting the compilation of reports and reporting of the Department on its performance, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

(iii) Director - Monitoring Unit

The role of the Director (Monitoring) is to coordinate and manage the report back and monitoring of performance of the Department. This needs to be done through coordinating quarterly programme reviews of the programmes in the Department as well as through the undertaking of mid-term strategic monitoring of departmental programmes. The Director (Monitoring) is expected to provide input to national and provincial policy and legislative process as well as structures regarding monitoring of public sector policies; programmes and

projects. Additionally, this person must provide strategic direction to the component and give input to the Chief Directorate's strategic planning process, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

(iv) Two (2) Deputy Managers for Monitoring

Deputy Managers (Monitoring) are tasked with facilitating the implementation of reporting and monitoring system within the Department as well as national and provincial, policy including the legislation and processes which underpin reporting and monitoring in Government, (KZN CoGTA , 2015). Their key responsibilities involve providing input into review of national and provincial policies, legislation and initiatives in support of monitoring whilst also supporting the development and implementation of Departmental programmes on monitoring of policies and programmes. In addition they are expected to provide support in the compilation of reports and reporting of the Department on its performance as well as in the implementation of the monitoring capacity building strategy. These officials coordinate policy and programme monitoring whilst supporting the development and implementation of monitoring guidelines, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

(v) One (1) Assistant Managers for Monitoring

The Assistant Manager's position in the Monitoring unit is vacant. However, the role of the Assistant Manager is to support the implementation of reporting and monitoring system within the Department as well as national and provincial, policy and legislation and processes which underpin reporting and monitoring in Government, (KZN CoGTA, 2015). The key responsibilities of the Assistant Manager are to provide input into the review of national and provincial policies, legislation and initiatives in support of monitoring. This official must support the development and implementation of Departmental programmes on monitoring of policies and programmes whilst also supporting the compilation of reports and reporting of the Department on its performance, (KZN CoGTA , 2015).

(vi) One (1) Data Capturer (Monitoring)

The responsibility of the Data Capturer (Monitoring) is to enter information onto a computer system related to monitoring of programmes within the Department which contributes to reporting and monitoring in Government. In total, nine (9) respondents from KZN CoGTA, M&E Unit are aimed to be involved in the study. In addition to these respondents, the research also involves an analysis of some of the documents produced by the M&E unit at

KZN CoGTA. This enables the study to examine and gain an understanding of the purposes for which M&E is used at KZN CoGTA.

#### **4.6 Purposes and Uses of Monitoring and Evaluation**

The documents that form part of the sample are developed by M&E practitioners and programme managers who ensure that all projects are implemented as planned and that relevant progress reports have been submitted. Amongst some of the documents, the study looks at:

- (i) The Periodic Evaluation Report for the 2013/14 Financial Year
- (ii) Consolidated Periodic Evaluation Report for the 2011/12.
- (iii) Provincial Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Local Government Turn-Around Strategy (LGTAS) Programme
- (iv) The 4th Quarter Performance Evaluation Report for the 2012/13 Financial Year

These reports by the M&E Unit reflect the performance measurement of the various programmes at KZN CoGTA. The reports contain specific information which is the inputs, activities and outputs of the implemented projects. These reports also reveal the status of the projects and whether or not the projects are achieving the intended objectives, (KZN CoGTA, 2013b).

In 2009 the KZN CoGTA – M&E unit also embarked on a process of evaluating the impact and effectiveness of its support over the 2005-2009 period. The evaluation reports and documents are produced by the internal monitoring and evaluations agents who make up the M&E Unit that forms part of the structures that facilitate the implementation of M&E in the KZN CoGTA, (KZN CoGTA, 2013a). These reports present the approaches, methods and tools use in conducting M&E. The reports also contain the findings and recommendations to influence decision making. It is these reports that enable the study to examine the approaches, processes, purposes and uses of M&E.

The study seeks to understand why does M&E succeed or fail? In other words, what were its limits and possibilities? The aim is to understand whether the limits or possibilities are caused by the lack of resources such as human capacity in the implementation of M&E. Moreover, does the conceptualization and purposes of M&E as understood by the M&E practitioners at KZN CoGTA have an influence in the limits and possibilities of M&E. Furthermore, the study ascertains how the processes and structures of implementing M&E affect the uses of

M&E within the KZN CoGTA department. This subsequently reveals the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation at KZN CoGTA.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the legislative and policy framework that informs monitoring and evaluation in South Africa. The Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation which guides the implementation of M&E in the South African public Service has been discussed. The chapter also highlighted the purposes and uses of M&E in measuring performance of projects in the public sector. The chapter also described organisational design and structures for M&E processes. This is discussed to ascertain the limits and possibilities of M&E in the South African public administration. The policy and legislative framework discussed in this chapter clearly outlined the guidelines, mechanisms and approaches needed to institutionalise the M&E at provincial and national level. The following chapter on the study's findings seeks to answer the research questions about the limits and possibilities of M&E. It analyses the responses of the participants within the specific themes highlighted in the study's theoretical framework about the limits and possibilities of M&E.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: Findings and Analysis**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings and analyses from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted during the study of the limits and possibilities of M&E. It discusses the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation at KZN CoGTA in the view of the purposes and uses as well as the approaches of M&E. Data was collected during in-depth interviews of five participants. Those interviewed included a Director (Evaluations Unit), two Deputy Managers and one Assistant Manager, as well as one Acting Director for Monitoring Unit. This sample of five draws participants from public officials involved in different capacities, at different roles and responsibilities in the KZN COGTA – M&E unit.

The responses are based on the experiences of the participants in the M&E practice. The responses of the five respondents have been coded as R-1 and R-2, Assistant Managers, R-3 Deputy Managers, and R-4, Director (Evaluations Unit), as well as R-5 – the Acting Director for Monitoring Unit.

The respondents' answers to the research questions were categorized within four broad themes; the conceptualization of M&E at KZN CoGTA, the approach to M&E in the KZN COGTA and thirdly, the processes of M&E at KZN COGTA. The last categorical theme is the issues and challenges that emerge during the implementation of M&E. These themes are discussed to ascertain how the understanding of M&E by its implementers at KZN CoGTA affects the effectiveness of M&E thus revealing the limits and possibilities in implementing M&E at the KZN COGTA. Appendix – 1 provides the schedule of the interview questions.

The following research questions guided the investigation:

- How is the M&E conceptualized at KZN CoGTA?
- What are the purposes and uses of M&E at KZN CoGTA?
- How were the monitoring and evaluation systems at KZN CoGTA designed?
- How monitoring and evaluation systems at KZN CoGTA were implemented, (process, structures and resources)?
- What are the experiences of the implementing agents of monitoring and evaluation systems at KZN CoGTA?
- How is M&E information used at KZN CoGTA? (For what and by whom?)

## **5.2 Purposes of Monitoring and Evaluation within KZN CoGTA**

This section discusses issues related to the understanding of the purposes of M&E by M&E implementers at KZN CoGTA. It reflects on how the understanding of the purposes of M&E that the respondents have of M&E constitutes either to the possibilities or limits of the implementation of M&E within the KZN CoGTA. Moreover, it also reflects on the implications of KZN CoGTA's conceptualization of M&E in fulfilling the department's and government's mandate.

M&E is a support mechanism which assists government officials and development projects with better means to improve service delivery, planning and resource allocation. The World Bank, (2004:5) recognises how M&E provides evidence and results for accountability to relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries. Managing the various public policy implementation challenges which are revealed by M&E findings can assist government from dealing with the problems of irrelevant and ineffective policy implementation. Therefore in order to avoid technical problems related to M&E, the KZN - COGTA needs to boost its capacity in order for the M&E Unit to perform its tasks more impactful.

### **5.2.1 Evidence Based Policy Making**

Like monitoring and evaluation itself, these varying conceptualizations are all sophisticated and complex, incorporating the various approaches which are frequently adopted when conducting M&E at KZN CoGTA. Take for example the responses from three M&E practitioners describing the purpose of M&E:

*“The purpose of monitoring is to determine whether are you achieving the set goals and objectives that you have set for yourself, so if you monitor then you determine whether you are in the right track, will you continue with the way you are doing thing, will you speed up, will or correct certain things that are not going to achieve the outcomes that you have set for yourself. So the purpose of monitoring is to determine whether whatever you do leads to the results that you expect”, (R-4).*

*“Evaluation checks on the quality of issues while monitoring checks on the number. Like to say you have promised to deliver 5000 houses, did you deliver them. The evidence will be provided, 5000 houses but do not care about the quality. Now evaluation will go there and ask the clients whether they are happy. That's where now*

*this information comes in... so that "swhy now evaluation came in as a thing in South Africa", (R-1).*

It is notable that in the conceptualization of the purpose of M&E expressed above by the respondent, there is also an emphasis on the use of evidence. In this instance evidence is used to support any claims by those who are responsible for the delivery of service. In fact the Director (Monitoring) bluntly puts it by stating that:

*"...we are evidence based, so whatever has been done should be substantiated by evidence that is relevant for audit purposes."*

This emphasis on evidence in the participants' responses is only partial to the theoretical bases for the understanding the purpose of M&E as evidence-based. In fact evidence-based M&E as defined in M&E theory refers to the utilization of evidence as produced by the evaluations conducted to influence decision making. Evidence-based policy making uses the best available evidence to help planners make better-informed decisions.

Evidence-Based Policy-making (EBP) is based on the assumption that government policy action can be founded upon the sourcing and analyzing of sound evidence developed through social scientific research, (Sanderson, 2015). Palumbo and Nachmias, (1983) assert that the assumption in EBP is that the collection and provision of evidence in the form of technical data could provide sound information for planning more effective programs and could provide a rational basis for the Public Service. This understanding of the purpose of M&E is also held by the M&E implementers at KZN CoGTA; however there is a lack of clarity from the respondents' answers to explain that the project monitors and evaluators who produce M&E findings are suppliers of evidence which informs evidence-based policy making. Policy-makers are the users of evidence supplied by the researchers and evaluators. (UNICEF, 2008). Therefore, the importance of M&E lies in the utilization of its findings to inform policy and not in its ability to merely collect evidence. This study argues that this is not only a limit to M&E but it is also a challenge that is faced by evidence-based policy making.

### **5.2.2 Outcomes Evaluation**

The Monitoring and Evaluation purpose of outcomes forms part of the understanding of purposes of M&E at KZN-CoGTA as exemplified in the response by R-2 when asked to give a their understanding of M&E, stating that:

*“Evaluation is more of a value judgment on a certain product. Monitoring gives us a picture of what has been done. We ask what difference has it made? We determine what value has this product created for the beneficiary on the ground, our cases being municipalities and institutions of traditional leadership”, (R-2).*

The emphasis on beneficiaries as expressed in the response by R-2 highlights the understanding that M&E is focused on assessing whether the public policy projects are achieving the expected real improvements in the life of the target population. This is encompassed in the outcomes approach evaluation. The challenges with this approach are discussed in the section about approaches, below.

The understanding of M&E practitioners at KZN CoGTA also highlighted the relationship between M&E and research. M&E practices typically draw on research methodologies of data collection, data analysis and compilation as well as presentation of findings. This is exemplified in the response by one of the participants:

*“Evaluation is evaluation whereby you know that you are evaluating performance of the department that has been monitored but when it comes to evaluation we borrow the research methodology.*

*Then you just go out there you do your evaluation within the methodology as it is stated by some of the guide lines. There are guidelines that are stated from Government-Wide Monitoring, what type of evaluation you will be doing”, (R-3).*

The adoption of research methodologies in M&E coupled with the M&E guidelines further informs the understanding of M&E as a data and evidence based exercise which must consider appropriateness by considering methods such as triangulation as used in research. In providing the guidelines for M&E, the M&E states that M&E should be methodologically sound, (UNICEF, 2008). This means that M&E must have common indicators and data collection methods that are used where possible to improve data quality and allow trend analysis. Furthermore, as a research based exercise M&E findings must clearly be based on systematic evidence and analysis where multiple sources are used to build more credible findings and the methodology matches the questions being asked.

The challenge with association of evaluation with research is the possibility to confuse the different roles of evaluation versus research. Evaluation is designed to improve something, while research is designed to prove something, (UNICEF, 2008). Evaluation provides the basis for decision-making; research provides the basis for drawing conclusions. The failure to

make this distinction may result in the futility of M&E findings which are not supported as they should be by the recommendations. As expressed in the response by one of the respondents, the M&E Unit at KZN CoGTA has considered resolving this challenge. R-2 states that:

*“... take for example we did an evaluation on Back to Basics and some of the findings that we came with, two major findings were that the coordination is not there when it comes to them providing support to the municipalities.”*

*Researcher: “Back to Basics evaluation results informed those recommendations?”*

*Interviewee: “Exactly, as a result to prove that coordination is there, they have got a calendar now that say at a particular date where they would and what they would be doing with the municipalities. As a result you would find that five business units go to one municipality within one date and they share the platform and the municipalities, so, coordination and communication has really improved.”*

Lastly, the focus on the evaluation of “performance of the department”, (R-3) as stated in the response above by the respondent shows the conceptualization of M&E as an assessment of whether all the resources and activities are effectively contributing to the production of service delivery outputs and outcomes. This understanding of M&E as a goal orientated evaluation focuses on assessing whether the department is effective in achieving its mandatory objectives.

When asked about their understanding of the M&E system, the participants commented to say that it is to track performance. When asked what their role is in relation to M&E activities, they reveal that the Evaluations unit collects information for evaluating the outcomes whilst the Monitoring unit tracks the performance of projects according to the indicators. These responses show the understanding of the various systematic roles of M&E practitioners and what these roles entail. It is clear where the M&E practitioners fit into the two separate units in the M&E process. The responses indicate that the responsibilities they described of M&E practitioners are essential for effective monitoring and evaluation responsibilities at KZN CoGTA. Moreover, the units are responding to the government requirement:

*It’s a government thing that each and every department is supposed to be evaluating. We collect this information so as to assist when the politicians draft their policies. We do it so as to assist the department, the highest management of the department when they plan, they use this information. When they budget they use this information also*

*the municipalities, they also can use this information. That's the reason why we do evaluations, (R-3)*

According to Ile, Eresia-Eke & Allen-Ile (2012: 92), monitoring and evaluation must seek to track performance in order for it to be able to expose areas of performance.

The respondents presented their understanding of the purposes of M&E to be about tracking performance. R-3 stated the purpose of monitoring:

*"The Monitoring side of it, they monitor the performance of each and every indicator they put in the Annual Performance Plan (APP)."*

R-1 concurs with the purpose of M&E as an exercise used to track performance and elaborates on the compilation and use of the monitoring report:

*"Then Monitoring will do that performance report... Then we look at the performance report to see which projects have been completed, whether they have been achieved or not achieved according to the monitoring report."*

In the light of the responses by the participant, it is important to note the argument by Worthan, Sanders and Fitzpatrick (1997: 6) that how one defines monitoring and evaluation is a dependent on what one believes to be the purpose of evaluation. Therefore, the definitions of M&E provided by respondents describe what M&E is, based on the approach adopted by the those particular M&E practitioners in their quest to use M&E for a particular function.

### **5.2.3 Organizational learning**

Organizational learning is another purpose of M&E which is expressed by the respondents. Organizational learning involves creating and transferring knowledge within the organization so that the organization improves overtime as it gains experience, (O'Donnell & Boyle, 2008:46). The respondents expressed the possibility of M&E to uncover the organizational challenges in the department. R-4 explains the contribution of M&E to organizational learning:

*"Let me take for example the one on Back to Basics. One recommendation said CoGTA you need to try and coordinate yourself when you do things. That was a recommendation from the municipalities to say please do things in a coordinated*

*manner. As a result of that recommendation, the Business Plan of that unit has managed to actually encourage coordination.”*

So, one recommendation pointed to the need to develop a strategy that will improve the work of the organization and its effectiveness. Whilst organizational learning can be linked to organizational culture due to its effect on the systems, structure and processes of project and policy implementation, it highlights the purpose and uses of M&E when it is directed to the organization itself.

Another purpose of M&E in assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of project or programme implementation involves the generation of findings in order to provide feedback to practitioners. Whilst elaborating on the provision of feedback to relevant policy stakeholders, the participants at KZN CoGTA revealed that this process is currently weak in some sections. For example, R-3 states that:

*“The municipalities never get feedback. When it comes to the feedback to municipalities, it’s not the problem for Evaluation Unit, we’ve completed our part and we’ve submitted to the Branch Managers. But we want to break that barrier. The finding needs to be shared.”*

Whilst generate knowledge about what works and what does not work about the project, the purpose of M&E is understood to be to inform and enable decision making. As R-1 bluntly puts it that:

*“The reason why we conduct evaluations is in order to influence decision-making in the department.”*

The understanding of the purpose of M&E as a means to affect decision making affirms M&E as a critical stage in the cyclical exercise of policy making. However, M&E itself is also cyclical since it comprises of various stages. R-3 warns that:

*“We need to understand that evaluation doesn’t start from developing the tools, it starts as a system whereby you are just talking evaluation entirely as in line with the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. That’s where our mandate is based,” (R-3).*

The aim of policy evaluation is „learning about the consequences of public policy” (Dye, 1987: 351). From the M&E practitioners’ perspective,

*As the program runs then it has to be evaluated so that we identify the problems whilst the project is running. If there is a need for the program to be stopped then the recommendations will call for the program to be stopped, (R-3)*

*On the one hand, “the Monitoring side of it, they monitor the performance of each and every indicator they put in the Annual Performance Plan (APP) then managers implement their indicators by doing the activities... That is monitoring part of it. Monitoring at the end of the quarter says they (departments) did achieve these activities. On the other hand, Evaluation takes that information from Monitoring and we conduct evaluations....” (R-3).*

The responses from participants show that M&E is perceived to improve performance, governance and ensure accountability and planning. It was revealed by (R-3) that they do not assert M&E as some kind of spying and policing their colleagues, but it done for the purpose of “not only looking for the problem we are also looking for the progress.

*“We also report on the successes and say here are the successes then we are happy that this is happening like this, (R-3).*

R-3 also stated that as M&E practitioners, they had basic understanding of the M&E concept, but through HR capacity building they now appreciate the purpose of conducting M&E. R-3 further states that as a result, the M&E unit has also gained confidence that their evaluations are up to the higher standard to be posted on DPME’s website. R-3 asserts:

*“Our evaluations get publicized by the provincial Office of the Premier (OTP).*

M&E practitioners (R-4 and R-5) revealed that there is much focus on M&E being for performance and less attention is paid to assessing the impact as an objective of the M&E system. All the respondents portray a common understanding of M&E as well as its aims and objectives.

The various purposes of M&E as explained through the responses from participants show that M&E can adopt various approaches and that the evaluation findings and recommendations are used in different ways. As Weiss (1998:20), puts it, the purpose for which monitoring and evaluation is used determines the particular orientation of each evaluation. However, this evidence-based approach for M&E requires a policy-making process that is receptive to evidence. Without a level of willingness in the organizational culture from the personnel, the structures and processes, evidence becomes unusable.

### **5.3 Implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation**

Implementing M&E systems is an organization wide effort that requires rethinking organizational structure and culture. Ile, Eresia-Eke & Allen-Ile, (2012) advises that M&E systems must also adopt a participatory approach that allows for key stakeholders' concerns and ideals to be considered. This means that the M&E process must be consultative. Therefore, M&E systems should put emphasis on ownership to ensure that there is buy-in and production of quality information for the implementation of M&E by all stakeholders, (Ile, Eresia-Eke & Allen-Ile, 2012: 92).

#### **5.3.1 Organizational Culture and Structure**

In the absence of the buy-in from stakeholders, evaluation findings may face rejection by project managers, as illustrated in the account by R-3:

*“We involve the relevant project managers, just to get the buy-in from them and ownership because if they are involved from the beginning up until the end, they own the product of that evaluation. Unlike simply saying I will do an evaluation for you and end up coming with the findings on something in which they were not involved”,*  
(R-3)

The narrative from R-3 illuminates the possibilities of the organizational adopts a participatory approach thus M&E becomes accepted by project manager whose project performances are being evaluated. As the organizational culture in the department turns out to be receptive to M&E, the link between the various departments becomes more critical to ensure that the findings are utilized.

#### **5.3.2 Results-Based Monitoring**

Effective planning needs to be able to identify the desired results or outcomes and impacts as well as how these will be achieved and measured, (DPME, 2013b: 05). Due to the fact that plans need to identify good quality measurable indicators which will be monitored, therefore there needs to be a logical link between planning, monitoring and evaluation. The cooperation and defragmentation between the three units enables the sharing of information towards the actualization of project objectives. As the respondent explains:

*“Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, we are so fortunate because there is no fragmentation between the three. Strategic Planning, they plan and what”s more*

*important there at Strategic Planning is the Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan and the Business Plans. When they plan, they involve us in terms of the indicators of the business units, (R-3).*

The importance and value of monitoring and evaluation is about having the evaluation information available and useable to assist in the improvement of government performance, (Bamberger, 2010). There are various ways in which M&E information can be utilized to enhance the results-based management of government projects, service delivery, and management of staff performance, (Bamberger, 2010).

The participants in the study commented that:

*According to the structure, Monitoring is one component within Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, (R-5).*

Another respondent elaborates on the link between the stakeholder departments within CoGTA:

*“Even then we consult, sometimes we select them on our own but sometimes the business unit will request that we conduct an evaluation of a specific project. That’s how we link with Monitoring; we select projects from the monitoring report. Then we go to validate that „since they said they have built a dam in this area and they say the dam is complete thus they have met their target”, we go and validate whether the physical structure is there and is it functional as they said. Then we come up with a report as Evaluation to say indeed what they said they have done (built) is there and it’s functional. That’s how we link these three”, (R-1).*

The role of the practitioners in the implementation of M&E at KZN CoGTA was also elaborated on:

*“We meet with the Senior Managers who actually give us topics that they would like us to look into because these topics affect the ... performance plans and strategic plans... So from there we develop what is called the terms of reference otherwise known as an evaluation plan where we define how we’re going to conduct the evaluation. We present the terms of reference or the evaluation plan where they can either add, maybe there are other things they want us to look into...From there we do the field work on the ground either through meetings in which we actually use the data collection tools. From there we analyze the data and then we draft a report. We present it back to our stakeholders that requested that the evaluation to be conducted.*

*Recommendations are made, we implement those recommendations and they are followed up”, (R-2)*

The purpose of M&E provided by the respondents emphasized the processes adopted specifically by the M&E unit at KZN CoGTA. These purposes are in concurrence with those articulated by the South African Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission, (2008) provides a definition of M&E to be a “continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds”, (PSC, 2008). The conceptualization, design and implementation of M&E are impacted upon by the approach which is adopted by the respondents about the purposes, and structures for implementing M&E.

#### **5.4 Approaches to M&E in the KZN COGTA**

The M&E design and implementation is informed by the approach to M&E. The approach utilized by evaluation practitioners seeks to identify the most appropriate methodologies to achieve the most useful results. When respondents were asked about the approaches involved in the M&E they answered that:

*We are more of an implementation evaluation. As the program runs then it has to be evaluated so that we identify the problems whilst the project is running. If there is a need for the program to be stopped then the recommendations will call for the program to be stopped, (R-3).*

##### **5.4.1 Impact and Outcomes Orientated Evaluation**

When asked further about the approaches to M&E as adopted by the department, the responses from the respondents indicated that they utilize an outcomes approach. This is demonstrated in the extract of the researcher and respondent conversation below:

*Researcher: “Do you do any of these outcome evaluations as the department?”*

*Interviewee: “Yes we did one last year. One of them was a UKZN program. We did it in partnership with UKZN, training Amakhosi on governance and leadership issues.”*

As expressed in the response by (R-3) and as argued in the section which discusses the conceptualization of M&E by KZN CoGTA that the department has adopted an outcomes-based approach to M&E. Subsequently, in introducing this approach and assuming its methods, the KZN CoGTA - M&E unit adopted this approach which looks at outcomes as a changed state of being as a result of the effects, benefits or consequences that occur due to the outputs or programs, processes or activities of a project.

There is a challenge about limited capacity in government and externally around evaluation. In order to address this, evaluations can be outsourced to external evaluations using an accredited panel, (DPME, 2013b:21).

(i) Internal and External Evaluations

The KZN Department of Co-operative and Traditional Affairs discloses that its evaluations are conducted both internally by the department and sometimes externally by independent M&E consultants. External evaluations are asked to be balanced by internal evaluations which, in turn, are required to be participatory, so as to serve the needs and interests of all relevant stakeholders, including learners, field workers, facilitators, families, and communities, (Bhola, 2006:03). When questioned about the choice of using internal or external evaluators, the respondents answered by stating that:

*“If the project is big for example we need to evaluate the strategy of the department meaning everything in the department that becomes bigger than us. Then we decided that this one we can give to a consultant.*

*The main purpose of using the external it’s because of capacity, it’s just four of us ... and we are expected to do internal ones (evaluation) so we couldn’t do internal and the Five-Year Term one because it was too big so we needed to employ other people,”*  
(R-1).

The response from the respondents also revealed even though the evaluations could be done externally, however there was still a significant role played by the M&E unit during the evaluation process, that of collaborating with external evaluators:

*“Our role was to be part of what was happening so that we can learn from them and they can learn from us as well and I think it was to transfer skills but I think our manager or our director also oversees the whole process, (R-1).*

*They even developed another committee where they will present their terms of reference. We were also involved in that committee. They would present their terms of reference and their tools. We were involved in data collection, we assisted them to collect data and they did analysis on their own and they presented the findings but we were part of the committee to make comments, (R-1).*

The use of external evaluators or consultants is perceived to capacitate internal evaluators who are employed in government departments' M&E units by government for the purpose of conducting M&E inside the government department. M&E practitioner (R-4) warns:

*“The other challenge is the confidence that we have as evaluation officials in conducting evaluation. I’m saying to DPME, if you continue outsourcing, you will have these people outside government like your service providers calling themselves evaluators because they are evaluating and we as government will never become evaluators because we have been outsourcing this thing. Therefore, our confidence will never reach theirs. Therefore the work that we are doing will never reach theirs because we have never had the opportunity to do this thing”, (R-4).*

Responses on the usage of internal and external evaluations in the department reveal that the lack of capacity may require a strategic positioning of the M&E unit to give it authority and power to affect the organizational culture which will enhance the implementation of M&E.

(ii) Organizational Design

The Presidency, (2008) suggested that M&E Units in government departments should be situated at higher levels of a government department, to ensure that M&E is taken seriously and there is buy-in from political principals. The M&E unit is strategically located within the administrative branch in the department. It forms part of the subdivisions that issue support to the branches which provide services to the public. However, the unit's mandatory activities are far reaching to conduct evaluations of projects that are implemented even outside the department by the various branches. The M&E Unit is positioned with Strategic Planning which accepts from the national government and devises the Departmental Five Year Plan, the Annual Performance Plans and Business Plans for the entire department and its subdivisions.

As the Administration branch of the department, the M&E unit consolidated a buy-in from senior management and political principals. A respondent asserts that:

*“It’s a fact, our MEC supports us. Then our SGMs, the Senior General Managers for Local Government, Traditional Affairs and Development & Planning. They support us. We come and sit now. It doesn’t matter whether it’s the biggest manager ever,” (R-3).*

The responses reveal that M&E has enough political and administrative support to be able to conduct M&E related tasks efficiently and influence the work ethic and culture in the organization.

(iii) Organizational Culture

Respondents were asked what they have identified from the implementation of M&E in the department. They raised issues about the organizational culture in the department:

The Assistant Manager states:

*“Fragmentation led to many challenges before, due to the fact that we kept that gap between us and the business units. It’s a revolution. There has been significant change in how reporting is done in the department. Mind you evaluation has been there as far back as 1996 but I think one other thing that has been making it difficult for evaluation to surface is that most of the time the focus was on monitoring within the department. There was no understanding of what evaluation was about before. Through the mistakes that we also identified amongst our-selves then we are moving correctly now and moving with the business units that are implementing the projects”, (R-3).*

When asked about resistance towards M&E due to a perception from people that saw M&E as an investigation, respondent (R-3) thinks stated that:

*“Monitoring and evaluation was looked at as the police anyway, being these people who are looking for evidence, because we have evidence based monitoring approach. Evaluation was looked at as the investigators who do things and come back with findings and people would be complaining about the findings. They would think they will be under fire. They would become very defensive. But it all went back to the way we communicated it. Previously, we placed the mandate at lower management level of senior management but now placing it at the level of DDG level is better because a DDG has an overall view. It is also a perception, I believe. Luckily we have SSGs that*

*are more mature about how you can use an evaluation study to influence decision making”, (R-2).*

The responses reveal that the introduction of M&E has brought organizational change in the government department with regards to M&E informing planning and project implementation (R-2), as well as a change in the awareness of what the M&E system entails. The Director-Evaluation reveals that changes in perceptions of M&E have shifted as a result of capacity building, (R-3). To further assess the change brought about by the M&E system in the department, participants were asked to state their perceptions of organizational culture and buy-in to M&E. R-3 explains the M&E culture in the organization as shown by the level of commitment and approval by the department and senior management:

*“The reason why the senior managers are so passionate about evaluations is just that there is a lot of buy in from the department. We don’t have to make it like it is a policing thing. Prior to going into it, let’s consult with the business units. Let them have inputs in the terms of reference... on the tools we are going to use and when they have a chance; they can go with us when we collect the data”, (R-3).*

When the Senior Manager was asked whether or not M&E information assists in realizing their programme goals and objectives, he said:

*“If the system was implemented correctly the COGTA and its M&E unit would be able to improve in terms of project implementation. But sometimes, because the department is too big, it does not have the capacity to address individual issues as much as it would like to do so, and there is a gap in addressing issues to strengthen project implementation” (R-1).*

There are critical things to point out in the participants’ responses. Firstly, there is some support by officials towards M&E however it is felt by the respondents that the system still needs to improve in terms of project implementation. This indicates that the findings are not adequately utilized for project improvement even though it appears that the department values M&E information from the M&E unit.

In assessing the experiences of the M&E practitioners regarding organizational culture and their impact in this organizational culture as the M&E unit, they state:

*“We used to have those challenges of people asking why my unit, until we decided to come up with this approach to let them tell us what they need”, (R-3).*

The responses indicate that the approach to M&E as adopted by the M&E Unit manages to overcome resistance from the Senior Managers in the KZN COGTA, whose projects are evaluated. As a result M&E is no longer seen by the Project Managers as an imposed measure of their performance.

The participants' responses also indicated that the capacity of M&E in the department needs to be enhanced. A reference was made by (R-4) to the need for capacity building in people, to ensure the effectiveness of the M&E in the department, province and country as a whole. It is evident that though the M&E culture has not been easily accepted by government employees however, the methods introduced by the M&E Unit at KZN CoGTA strive to establish partnerships to foster M&E for accountability and transparency of government, politicians as well as leaders. This is expressed in the response by R-4, stating the possibilities of M&E to utilize expertise from other units through creating partnerships within the department's subdivisions internally:

*As from last year we decided that there's Policy and Research, there's Internal Audit, there's Performance Monitoring and Evaluation that deals with municipalities so since we are all doing something almost similar, why don't we partner internally to say if we out and if it's too much then I will partner with Research so they will assist me with data collection just to address the issue of capacity but Yah, capacity is one of the challenges."*

Perceptions of organizational culture and buy-in to M&E indicate a strong attention towards M&E, but that the system is not used to its full potential.

The respondents' comments also emphasized consultation to be a significant practice to gain the Buy-in from the departments in the implementation of M&E at KZN CoGTA. The M&E unit practitioners provide an example to illustrate the importance and effects of consultation:

*"If I'm going to be evaluating ..., I've got to develop terms of reference to say, this is the methodology, this is the population, the sample, stakeholders and all those things. Then I should consult with the relevant client to say that my line function is that because what we don't want to do, we didn't want to come back and present a report to find that the person says no you should have consulted me. It's one of the principles that are highlighted in the DPME guidelines which say that you need to make sure that you consult, (R-4).*

*“We involve the relevant project managers, just to get the buy-in from them and ownership because if they are involved from the beginning up until the end, they own the product of that evaluation. Unlike simply saying I will do an evaluation for you and end up coming with the findings on something in which they were not involved because they get involved even when we schedule the appointments, they are the ones who refer us to the people we can contact in the municipalities, so that they are involved from the beginning until the end”, (R-1).*

The involvement of stakeholders through consultations done by the M&E unit seems to eliminate animosity against M&E’s intrusive approach. The respondents stated that the stakeholders are also involved in so far as knowing what tools will be used in the evaluation of their programs, however, the external stakeholders are also involved in M&E.

❖ M&E Reference Committee

The KZN CoGTA M&E unit has collaborated with external stakeholders in order to form a Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Committee to assist in the quality and credibility of evaluations, (R-4). The committee membership is explained by a practitioner:

*“It is us Evaluation, Monitoring and Strategic Planning, Policy and Research, University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), Durban University of Technology (DUT), Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), National Treasury they refer to themselves as GTECH”, (R-1)*

Another M&E practitioner explains:

*“They get involved from when we develop the Terms of Reference (TOR). We present the Terms of Reference to the committee ... because the terms of reference are used as a proposal to say here is the topic and how we going to go about and then they would make their comment, especially in terms of the methodology, the tools that we are going to use”, (R-3).*

The M&E reference committee is acknowledged to have been of great importance to the M&E unit and the department. When asked about how the unit has benefited from the benefit Reference Committee, a respondent commented.

*“The reference Committee helped us a lot ... with the presence of the researchers and people who deal with research, it has assisted a lot, specifically in terms of the methodology. Not to say that we did not know it before. We know it but ... research is*

*diverse and if you want your evaluations or research to be proper, have as many specialists as possible. We do a report, we do it perfect. The more it passes to many people, the more it becomes of greater quality.*

The respondent (R-3) stresses the importance of having their terms of reference and evaluation reports being analyzed and questioned before they are submitted as recommendations. Stating that:

*“When academics criticize your work they can’t be lenient. They open a platform for debate and dialogue. You defend your work, you convince an academic. You don’t convince an academic, and then you’re out on bail. For your work to be proper, let there be many people viewing your work. So the reference committee helps us a lot, (R-3).*

The M&E Reference Committee is also used to affect the quality and credibility of evaluations and greater unintended benefits, as one respondent explains:

*“The reference committee consists of institutions like UKZN and DUT and DPME, for people to make independent inputs in our evaluations. Remember we are doing them ourselves so we need independent people to make an input into our evaluations. Also to improve credibility of our reports ... So it helps us in terms of credibility but another benefit... which was towards institutions is that it created a platform for them to know how government do things. And then there is the issue of networking. So that reference committee really helps in those areas.*

#### ❖ Role of various Levels of Government

Stoker (1991), cited in Hill and Hupe (2002: 73), reasons that different layers of government may exercise autonomy, but still work in collaboration to achieve the same goal. Though central government may introduce a policy to be initiated, lower levels of government have the discretion to show how they will implement the national strategy in a particular context (Hill and Hupe, 202: 73).

The respondents confirm that there is a relationship between national and provincial government. National priorities are interpreted to suit the context of provincial government. The KZN CoGTA receives its mandate from national government and then the KZN CoGTA - Strategic Planning unit develops the Five-Year Plan from which the Annual Performance

Plans and Business Plans are developed to guide policy implementation of each subdivision within the KZN CoGTA. An M&E practitioner points out that:

*“There is government but within government we are implementing the policies of the political organization of the day. That we cannot run away from it, as of now we are implementing the policies of the governing party. Then when that period of five years comes to an end, then another political party takes-up, then we will be implementing those policies of whichever political party that wins, for a period of five years”, (R-4).*

Although the collaboration between the different spheres of government can have some advantages in terms of planning, however, it is evident from the responses that there is not enough capacity at the provincial government regarding the implementation of M&E. Another issue seems to be about an unclear position by the national government regarding whether the government departments need to conduct evaluations internally or outsource the M&E services from independent consultants. An M&E practitioner commented:

*“I think that at national level DPME has got to be clear, has got to have a clear stand of saying in the first place, are we supporting departments to do evaluations internally or are we supporting them to appoint service providers. I found DPME not clear on that regard and I’ve engaged them and I said in the light of the economic climate, on this side you are saying for evaluations to be credible, we must outsource. So at the same time on the MPAT you want departments to establish evaluation directorate. For what if this function is outsourced? That’s the first thing at national level which I think DPME has got to come clear”, (R-4).*

O’ Toole (2001), cited in Hill and Hupe (2002: 173), explains that a top-down approach to policy implementation focuses on compliance and monitoring whereas the bottom-up approach to implementation incorporates innovation, collaboration and creativity. The Presidency (2009: 14) advises that performance cannot be achieved through coercion; instead, the implementing agents of a new policy need to buy-in to the reform to avoid „malicious compliance“. In their responses, participants emphasize the notion that monitoring and evaluation practice in the department is conducted through consultations with stakeholders. One of the respondent’s states:

*“In everything you do, attitude is important. Respect and consultation is important. If I’m going to be evaluating you unit, I’m not here to find faults but I’m here to identify*

*what's working and what's not working. No, evaluation is not always to be about bad things.*

*I think we have tried to change the perceptions to make sure that our colleagues who are our clients, when we evaluate we are not there to find faults, we are looking for what's working and what's not working. And how we do that, we consult.” (R-4)*

❖ Internal Partnerships

In order to address the challenge of capacity, the Evaluation unit has developed a partnership with internal role players in research and auditing, (R-1).

*“As from last year we decided that there's Policy and Research, there's Internal Audit, there's Performance Monitoring and Evaluation that deals with municipalities so since we are all doing something almost similar, why don't we partner internally to say if we out and if it's too much then I will partner with Research so they will assist me with data collection just to address the issue of capacity but Yah, capacity is one of the challenges”, (R-1).*

#### **5.4.2 Implementing Results-based M&E system**

The World Bank, (2004) states that a results-based M&E system must have the capacity to develop indicators, data collection tools and combine and analyze M&E reports against indicators and baselines (Kusek and Risk, 2004: 22). A participant explains the process for developing M&E tools prior to conducting data collection.

*“Our work is guided by DPME, but then we as a department, taking that national guidelines, at the beginning of the year, what we do is we develop what we call the department Evaluation Plan”, (R-2).*

Burke et al. (2012: 10) define an implementation plan as a clear setup of the objectives of the innovation, specific tasks relating to its implementation, the individuals responsible for accomplishing these tasks and agreed timelines. In short, the implementation plan provides information about what will be done, when it will be done and how it will be done. Another participant elaborates:

*The department's Evaluation Plan consists of all the evaluations that the department will be evaluating in a particular year. Our department evaluation plan also consist of references, that means for each project that we will be evaluating, we should be*

*developing the terms of reference because you need to make sure that all your steps of evaluation are within the plan and your clients are well aware of it. For example if I'm going to be evaluating Functionality of Ward Committees, I've got to develop terms of reference to say, this is the methodology, this is the population, the sample, stakeholders and all those things, (R-4).*

## **5.5 Implementation Processes of Monitoring and Evaluation**

M&E implementers are tasked to monitor projects implementation and utilize the data from monitoring to assess the benefits of the project to the beneficiaries, (KZN CoGTA, 2013b). The M&E practitioners are responsible for initiating consultations with the project managers within the department in order to identify projects to be evaluated. Then they develop the tools for doing the actual evaluation which is followed by data collection which involves site visits. The data from monitoring is also utilized in the form of periodic progress reports. However, the process is greater and results in generating reports. This is discussed in detail to explain the approach and methodology used. Finalized evaluation findings culminate into a report which determines the performance and impact of a project.

The M&E Unit at KZN CoGTA has devised a strategic division of duties and specialization performed by its M&E Practitioners. An M&E Practitioner explains:

*“We are four in the unit and we work within four budget programs within the department. Program-One is administration, Program Two is Local Governance, Program Three is Development and Planning and Program Four is related to Traditional Affairs. So each of us four are allocated to a specific program”, (R-1)*

Moreover, the challenges of capacity and the need to actualize a results based approach to M&E necessitates that the Evaluation unit reinforces the systematic linkages between the Evaluation, Monitoring as well as Planning units.

Meter and Horn (1975), cited in Hill and Hupe (2002), argue that to build a system, policy makers should develop a model or framework that explains the implementation process. In doing so, policy-makers ensure that “high consensus and high change” is possible concerning the new policy. Participants reveal that legislation and policy documents guide how the M&E is to be implemented.

An M&E practitioner explains the various stages in Monitoring and Evaluation processes of in the KZN COGTA:

(i) *Getting the mandate:*

*“We have to get a mandate for what we do; we meet with the Senior Manager who actually gives us topics that they would like us to look into. Our MEC can even give us a topic and say Evaluation can you look at this particular matter because there’s a certain decision which she wants the study to influence.”*

(ii) *Developing the Evaluation Plan and Tools*

*“From there we develop what is called the terms of reference ... where we actually define clearly of how we’re actually going to conduct this evaluation, moreover, the questions that we are going to ask.”*

(iii) *Consultation with Stakeholders*

*“So before we even go to conduct the evaluation we actually present the terms of reference or the evaluation plan where they (Project Managers), can either add, maybe there are other things they want us to look into.”*

(iv) *Data Collection*

*“Then from there we do the field work. We go on the ground either meeting with municipalities or the institutions of traditional leadership... in which we actually use the data collection tools. We actually use the data collection tool informed by the evaluation plan to actually conduct our data collection.”*

(v) *Data Analysis*

*“From there we analyze it and then from analyzing it we draft a report.”*

(vi) *Findings and Recommendations*

*“From the report, we present it back to our stakeholders that requested that the evaluation be conducted. Recommendations are made, we actually implement those recommendations and they are followed up,” (R-2).*

The various stages of implementing M&E require consideration of the usability of M&E findings in decision making. Whereas the practitioners discussed how monitoring information

is collected, collated and reported, the timing for presenting the findings against the Annual Performance Plan was also revealed. The M&E Practitioner stresses that:

*“The reason why we conduct evaluations is in order to influence decision-making in the department, so some of the recommendations influence decision making in the sense that it changes the indicators in the Annual Performance Plan (APP) but we make sure that we present our recommendations before the APP is finalized. Our recommendations must be ready before the APP is finalized in case there are some recommendations that influence the APP”, (R-3).*

Even though the KZN CoGTA’s monitoring and evaluation strategy is guided by the DPME guidelines, however, KZN CoGTA seems to have developed a special M&E approach whose efficacy and integration to influence decision-making at CoGTA is epitomized in the M&E Units self-developed evaluation cycle, (*Appendix: 4*). The evaluation cycle guides the management of M&E processes to ensure that the evaluation information is readily available at strategic periods to inform decision making.

## **5.6 Managing DPME Monitoring and Evaluation Mandate**

The responses from participants stated that KZN COGTA is guided by the national mandate which if managed and directed by the DPME at national level. About this mandate from DPME, a participant states that:

*“DPME orders that all government departments and institutions should develop and institutionalize M&E practice, processes and management systems to strengthen government performance” (R-2).*

The development of a legislative and policy environment for the M&E in South Africa contributes to how M&E is practiced at a national, provincial and departmental level. The legislation and policy documents spell out the rules of implementing the GMWES in the country and in the KZN COGTA. One M&E practitioner (R-4) comments further, stating that  
Meanwhile, Director: Monitoring, explains the practice of monitoring and its process at the KZN COGTA, stating that:

*“In order to ... implement programmes, you plan first on how the programme will be implemented. Thereafter, if you are implementing something you need to know*

*whether you are making progress or no progress is being made, to determine whether you need to make some corrective actions or not, or set new targets, (R-5)*

*“There”sa section in DPME mainly looking at evaluation in South Africa. They have developed guide-lines to guide us on the evaluations that could be conducted in South Africa. They even give you some types of evaluation that could be conducted. ... They even guide you what kind of questions you can ask because there were too many evaluations that we developed as government departments and it was even difficult to compare them because one would talk about Outcomes Evaluation the other would talk about Impact Evaluation, others Implementation Evaluation. Now we are starting to standardize so that we can be able to synthesize these evaluation. So, our work is guided by that (DPME) but then we as a department, taking that national guidelines, at the beginning of the year, what we do is we develop what we call the department Evaluation Plan.*

The National Evaluation Policy Framework as well as the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework are broader and require the department’s Strategy to refine its applicability to the nature of KZN COGTA and the departments’ mandate. The KZN COGTA has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and Strategy which is guided by the National Evaluation Framework and the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, (KZN CoGTA, 2015).

Simon, (1997: 359) argues that administrative activity is a group activity. To implement a policy requires more than one person or department; instead it involves a number of people. In attempting to discover the processes involved with implementing M&E in the KZN COGTA, there seems to be an extensive role performed by DPME in the various stages of M&E up to the reporting stage. Respondents provided responses about where the M&E reports are submitted to when they leave CoGTA and the role of DPME in the M&E process.

When asked about the relationship between the national and departmental M&E system, an M&E practitioner further points out that:

*“Within the department, DPME in Pretoria firstly they get involved right from the planning phase. They approve our Annual Performance Plans, together with the Office of the Premier as well as provincial Treasury. Once the Plans are approved they have to be monitored, so we submit reports on annual basis as well, through Management Performance Assessment Tool (MPAT) that is the route where they get*

*involved more than the performance information as per the APP but the involvement on their side is also to track and see whether what we committed ourselves to do are we really on track. They provide guidance on development of the APPs as well as the Strategic Plans for the departments in conjunction with the Office of the Premier,” (R-5).*

When questioned about whether there is a hierarchical reporting system which leads to evaluations being submitted from a provincial department to the Office of the Premier (OTP) or national department such as CoGTA and eventually DPME, an M&E practitioner at the Evaluation Unit responded to state that:

*“When it’s DPME that has funded the evaluations then the reports need to go to the office of the DPME. But we are not working for DPME. We are not working for the Office of the Premier. But now that I think we have also gained confidence that our evaluations are up to the higher standard, surely they can be posted on DPME’s website, they can go to the Office of the Premier (OTP). They go to the OTP now that there’s that Evaluation Plan that says these are the evaluations that we’re going to be doing, and then we’re being asked by the OTP to come up with those evaluations so that they can be incorporated in the Provincial Plan, and then they can go to them. Otherwise we do not report to the OTP. We are not reporting to DPME. We are reporting to CoGTA and the evaluations we are doing are done for CoGTA and the municipalities in the province of KwaZulu Natal”, (R-4).*

The DPME is the custodian of monitoring and evaluation in the country however, the responses from participants show that there is no mandatory requirement to submit evaluation reports to DPME which reveals that there is absence of a coordinated reporting hierarchy between the three spheres of government.

Melchor (2008: 12) feels that managing change is the ability to “influence people’s mindsets, culture, attitudes and practices to adapt to a new environment and arrangement”. He adds that new strategies can be implemented successfully or unsuccessfully, depending on the level of public participation in the definition of the reform strategy (Melchor, 2008: 12). The Outcomes Performance approach (Presidency, 2009: 18) warns that meaningful change occurs when central government provides top-down political support and civil servants provide bottom-up support towards a new policy.

Another M&E practitioner discusses the difficulties of implementing monitoring and evaluation. The practitioner explains:

*“The challenges I think, mostly it’s non-availability of senior management because as I said that you need their approval. If they are not available then you don’t get that approval”, (R-1).*

An Assistant Manager attests to the challenge of noncooperation and lack of coordination by stating that:

*“One of the major, I’ll start from the implementation part. As much as you would have a sample of what you’re going to study and look into, the challenge is that when you get to the ground and your sample number is not met. That is a big challenge. You drive up to ... spending fuel to meet six people and you actually end up meeting one person. It’s highly reliant on stakeholders that you’re working with on the ground.”*

*“Others don’t even bother so you find yourself with a problem. A very good example, last week I drove up to ..., when I get there, the person that was supposed to be there, I discover he was only available on Tuesdays and it was a Thursday when I arrived. So you’re not even told. The district office said no don’t worry we’ll make contact with them. You go there and find that the person is not even there...” (R-2)*

## **5.7 Challenges of Implementing M&E at the KZN COGTA**

The implementation of M&E is confronted with a various number of challenges such as capacity, noncooperation as well as the lack of coordination in the execution of M&E activities. The challenges limit the effective implementation of M&E.

In the analysis and presentation of the challenges of the performance monitoring, the DPME (2014) stated in the report entitled “Performance Monitoring and Evaluation: Principles and Approach”, that there is generally an absence of a strong M&E culture in government. The report states that 54% of 96 departments surveyed showed the absence of M&E in the government departments, (DPME, 2014). Moreover, M&E in government departments is seen by 39% of the departments, as a policing and controlling function rather than a continuous improvement function. The general perception is that monitoring is an activity carried out by monitors who monitor the work of others. Subsequently, M&E seen as a

performance monitoring and evaluation leads to limited appreciation and acceptance by managers.

(i) Resources for Monitoring and Evaluation: Human Resource Capacity at KZN CoGTA

The challenges which limit the effective implementation of M&E at the KZN COGTA as revealed by CoGTA M&E practitioners reflect Melchor (2008: 21) argument, which states that implementing a new strategy requires trained staff, financial and material resources which are the basic necessities for successful implementation of M&E. Furthermore, according to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), new policy often lacks these essential resources, to effectively implement policies. Moreover, having the capacitated pool of policy-makers as well as implementers to implement policy increases the likelihood of its success, (Bester, 2009: 8). The capacity gap between national and provincial as well as local government organisations can influence the credibility of evaluations conducted. An M&E practitioner (R-4) explains the capacity challenges encountered and how they affect the work they do:

*“In terms of warm bodies, I’m still fine but in terms of the expertise I’m not that happy because that’s why now I’m trying to bring students. I’m augmenting the capacity. With the warm bodies we can still augment them. I don’t necessarily see that I have to appoint more deputies, more assistants. As long as I can find another source of data collection,” (R-4).*

A respondent elaborates on the challenge of capacity by explaining that:

*“Each person will do their evaluation and there’s a lot,*

The Deputy Manager – Evaluation identifies fragmentation as another challenge, stating:

*“Fragmentation led to many challenges before ... due to the fact that we kept that gap between us and the business units,” (R-2).*

In the midst of the challenges, the M&E unit at KZN CoGTA has identified some solutions to attempt to resolve capacity challenges in the unit. R-5 explains some of the interventions:

*“One of the solutions for which I’m having a meeting, I’m having a partnership with STATS S.A. to collect data for us. STATS S.A. they are much more equipped. They are nationally recognized for data collection. They’ve got everything for their area of specialty, so let me partner with them. I give them my topics, they collect data. I guide them. Then I analyze data from their systems. Then my deputies and assistants mainly*

*analyze data from STAS S.A. So, there are means I'm trying to augment the capacity that I have.*

Besides the collaboration with STAS SA, some of the solutions that are anticipated by the M&E unit involve what R-4 referred to as professionalization of M&E.

*I'm trying to professionalize this field, not only evaluations but also research. I'm trying to professionalize them and make them one thing", (R-4).*

*Researcher: What do you mean professionalize?*

*Interviewee: I mean it shouldn't be something that everyone should just go and do.*

(ii) Uses of Monitoring and Evaluation

The production of M&E information does not go without rejection of the findings, as one participant explains:

*"You go to the field you find something and they say no I don't agree with this finding, and you're on a deadlock because they say no; you're doing what you're not supposed to do... I asked you to do this and you're coming back with this. In explaining the reasons for rejection of the findings, (R-2) explains that this is often caused by the fact that "that your evaluation plan is not intact, it's not detailed. So the mitigating factor to it is that you have to make your evaluation plan and your terms of reference very clear as to how am I going to get to here to here so I can get the answers... but if you vaguely say you are going to do a qualitative, quantitative, you going to come back with something that will not be accepted by project managers", (R-3)*

An M&E Practitioner warns:

*"The unit has got ... two Deputy Directors and two Assistant Directors. All of them are assigned their own projects and they go and evaluate. Fortunately the department has got four programmes. Programme One being Corporate Services, Programme Two being Local Government, Programme Three being Development Planning, Programme Four being Traditional Affairs. So I assigned each colleague to a programme, then they evaluate their own programmes. That also helps to create some kind of relationships. So colleagues would go out and collect data." (R-5)*

It is notable from the participant's responses that M&E practice in the KZN COGTA focuses more on efficiency and effectiveness rather than impacts. The aim of M&E is to improve the results of effectiveness of government interventions on citizens. It is not enough that the projects are implemented, but projects also need to address the basic needs of the beneficiaries.

Currently the implementation of the M&E findings and recommendations is not mandatory. Managers are not compelled to implement the recommendations as a result the cycle of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation seems not well coordinated to ensure effective utilization of M&E information. The Director – Evaluations explains:

*"I think within government planning, monitoring and evaluation, that circle, I don't think we are living up to that circle fully in government, that to what extent are the recommendations informing the plan, they got monitoring and to what extent monitoring feeds into evaluation. I don't think we are doing that yet... there's no regulation which compels them but the cycle, the M&E Framework says that, but there is no regulation which says that to what extent those recommendations feed the loop. There's no regulation compelling them", (R-4).*

The four stages of monitoring and evaluation are represented as a continuous cycle which consists of planning, monitoring, evaluation and using the findings, (UNDP, 2009:10). It can be argued further to state that without effective planning, monitoring and evaluation, it would be impossible to judge if work is going in the right direction, whether progress and success can be claimed, and how future efforts might be improved, (UNDP, 2009:5).

Patton (1997: 201) points out that the implementation challenges occur during the implementation process. Therefore, stakeholders should plan and prepare adequately to ensure that, when problems do arise, corrective action can be employed, Patton (1997:201). When respondents were asked about the measures they have taken to address issues related to M&E, they answered:

*"Now, I am floating like this when it comes to evaluation and there's a lot that we are learning. Our frameworks are in place. Our guidelines from DPME are in place. Trainings that I have exposed myself to are in place", (R-1).*

Responses reveal that there have been some attempts to address problems, but more effort is needed to ensure that the M&E system is effective even though there are some improvements as expressed by R-4 who states that:

*“What is starting to happen now, my recommendations when the planning Unit starts doing the Plans, the Business Plans, the APPs of that unit, they check the recommendations to ensure that those recommendations are planned for. Now, once they are planned for, it means monitoring will monitor them”, (R-4).*

*“There is this recognition of the possibilities that evaluation provides, now that we come out with the findings that are very valid, they saw the fact that there needs to be a change here and there. They’re just so passionate in the sense that they see that most of the M&E information assists to identify problems” (R-3).*

The understanding of M&E and its purposes influence how M&E findings are valued by stakeholders. When participants were asked how monitoring and evaluation findings are utilized, the M&E practitioners answered:

*“On a quarterly basis the M&E Unit examines progress reports from project managers and service providers to determine the indicators identified for the projects. The M&E unit tracks the performance of projects within the KZN COGTA. The Unit then compiles a monitoring report quarterly to determine what intervention was achieved in the quarter. The quarterly reports make up the annual monitoring report” (R-4).*

*“The M&E Units then conduct site visits with the project managers. Interviews and observations are undertaken to determine how beneficiaries perceive the intervention. Performance information is collected first because progress reports provide the information on the aims and objectives of the project.*

Since reporting M&E information can be used to make decisions around a project and to address identified challenges. Reporting should follow a specific format and should always keep in mind the audience of the report (Rossi & Freeman, 1989: 176). When asked about reporting cycle in the KZN COGTA, the M&E practitioners stressed:

*“Having made the findings then we liaise with clients and we come with the recommendations ..., we talk about those recommendations, then we agree on some of the recommendations that they are going to be implementing then we form the report, (R-3).*

*“After the report then we form the improvement plan for the recommendations. Then from the improvement plan, when they draft their operational plan ... they will make sure that they include those recommendations that we’ve agreed upon, (R-3).*

The extent to which clients and stakeholders are involved in all the stages of the M&E process determines whether an evaluation will be useful and whether its findings will be utilized, (Bamberger, 2010). This means that clients need to associate with the valuation and own it in order for them to anticipate its results when the final report is being presented. A respondent asserts that:

*“When you do a big study and you do it yourself, the department is always asking or questioning the credibility. But let me tell you this, when a client starts to look at the credibility of findings, sometimes that is just trying to shy away from the findings. There cannot be an issue of credibility if I came to you and explained the methodology and you agree on the methodology.” (R-4).*

In ensuring that the recommendations are implemented, the KZN CoGTA M&E unit instituted a measure to effect commitment from Project Managers. The practitioner explains:

*“To make sure that they implement those recommendations, we developed a template which they sign and our Chief Director also signs to say that they are going to implement the recommendations on such a date. If they said they will implement the recommendations during a current year, then they have to include that in their business plan,” (R-1).*

Bamberger, (2010) points out that there is a serious underutilization of data that has been collected and analyzed at a great expense. In other words, M&E is not used as much as one would like it to be used, considering the efforts undertaken to collect M&E information. In seeking to understand the level of consultation and cooperation amongst the stakeholders, the study enquired about how M&E findings and recommendations presented to stakeholders and how they are accepted for the purposes of implementation. Participants in the study revealed that:

*“We present the recommendations as well because we have developed a template where we list the recommendations. We discuss with them (relevant managers) to agree on when they will implement the recommendations based on the evaluation results. So to make sure that they implement those recommendations, we developed a template which they sign and our Chief Director also signs to say that they are going to implement the recommendations on such a date. If they said they will implement the recommendations during a current year, then they have to include that in their business plan.” (R-4).*

## 5.8 Successes of Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E Unit at KZN CoGTA illustrates some examples wherein the evaluation findings and recommendations were implemented to enhance administrative performance within the department. Participants were asked about how M&E findings and recommendations had been used; the following are some of the experiences revealed by the Director- Evaluation, Assistant Manager and the M&E practitioners:

*“One recommendation said CoGTA you need to try and coordinate yourself when you do things. That was a recommendation from the municipalities to say please do things in a coordinated manner. As a result of that recommendation, the Business Plan of that unit has managed to actually encourage coordination. Another one which I can make an example of is ... one issue we picked up was that this other unit ... is mainly „reactive“ in its work. So, one recommendation said you need to develop a strategy and package to say exactly what the unit is, so that you work in a productive manner than in a reactive one.*

In illustrating the tracking for the implementation of recommendation such as the one mentioned above, the Director-Evaluations continued by demonstrating the cooperative relationship between the Monitoring and Evaluations Units in ensuring the implementation of recommendations. The Director explains says:

*“I was just phoning another manager to say I don’t see the recommendation in their Business Plan and that Business Plan has got to be created and then it has to be monitored.*

Responses from the participants of how M&E information is used show that information is being used. Reports are often presented early and in time to influence the Annual Performance Plans. This appears to have been useful. The M&E practitioner (R-4) says that M&E information used to inform decision-making. The Director elaborates to affirm how implementation of recommendations has been included as part of the Director’s employee performance duties:

*“Part of my indicators this year, it was not only to develop evaluations but also to monitor the implementation of those recommendations. I started to monitor now the implementation of those recommendations. So in a way the recommendations are not just done and then they sit there. There is an interesting one that we have just done this year on ICT and it’s interesting because it starts to point fingers to say that”s*

*where the problem is and it can even lead to some level of disciplinary hearing if it is accepted but it starts to say so and so is failing the unit, (R-4)*

The efforts to emphasize M&E as a useful tool to improve performance seeks to resolve the limits of M&E as identified by Nielsen & Ejler, (2008), that M&E practice is poorly understood and rarely implemented, resulting in evaluation practice being used as a means to an end, not improving future performances of government.

The different views from the respondents affirm that M&E information can be utilized when its utilization is adopted as mandatory requirement for Project Managers. Whereas the responses from the participants reveal that M&E information is used to plan and influence the nature of corrective action, the following section discusses some of the implementation challenges experienced when implementing the M&E.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Chapter Five presented the analysis of findings from semi-structured interviews. Using wide-ranging quotes from the various respondents, the following four broad sections have been discussed: firstly, the aims and objectives of the M&E system within the KZN COGTA, secondly, the approach to M&E in the KZN COGTA and thirdly, the processes of M&E in the KZN COGTA, lastly, the issues and challenges that emerge during the implementation of M&E. These themes have been discussed in terms of the limits and possibilities in implementing M&E as guided by the M&E in the KZN COGTA. Each of these revealed that the aims and objectives of M&E influence the approach and the processes involved for the implementation of M&E. The study revealed that there is, in fact, an M&E system in place in the KZN COGTA, whose possibilities to improve performance and influence decision making is being affirmed in processes of M&E practice in the department.

On the one hand, the M&E unit as the main component which is responsible for the M&E in KZN CoGTA revealed that there are implementation challenges. The findings show that the M&E system in the department is not fully serving its intended purpose. A major contribution to this is the lack of capacity and lack of coordination, support and focus to conduct even more effective evaluations, including impact evaluation. The findings suggest that M&E should become well-coordinated, in order to overcome the current duplication of roles and responsibilities which culminate into wastefulness of resources and isolationism of findings as well as their usage. Consequently, M&E as practiced in the current moment in public

institutions such as KZN CoGTA fails to feed into the joined strategic cycle of planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects.

The study showed that there is a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the M&E and M&E, but also that are limitations in the implementation of M&E. M&E is mainly done for compliance purposes and to monitor outcomes in project performance. This undermines the greater purpose of M&E to assess the impact of public service projects in the lives of community members. The Citizen-Based approach to M&E seems to be missing. This is because of a lack of focus on impact evaluations due to lack of capacity to handle the sizeable scope of this type of evaluations but instead evaluations focuses on tracking project implementation.

The experiences of the participants about the M&E system in the department were that evaluation findings are not always used and only partially inform future planning and implementation. This is due to the absence of legislation to compel the utilization of evaluation findings and recommendations. However, the cumulative cooperation between the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation units at the department seems to strengthen the strategic inclusion of the evaluation recommendations to be implemented. This is due to the ability of the Planning units to infuse evaluation recommendations into the Annual Performance Plans and for Monitoring to track the implementation of the recommendations and finally for Evaluations to assess the results of this implementation.

The findings also show that even though the understanding of the objectives of M&E are common amongst the M&E practitioners at KZN CoGTA, however there seems to be no hierarchical reporting system which is directly linked to the DPME as the national custodian of M&E. The responses by M&E practitioners show that such a systematic hierarchical reporting is neither mandatory nor formally recognized by M&E officials at KZN CoGTA.

Based on the findings, this study concludes that role of the M&E is noteworthy for successful implementation of the M&E system in a government department. It is the M&E practitioners who stress that KZN CoGTA's senior management strengthens the system, by cooperating and providing adequate support mechanisms such as the incorporation of M&E findings in the various Business and Annual Plans for various units. This is done to strengthen the possibilities of M&E as well as to ensure that M&E is taken seriously and that it serves the needs of the department's strategic goals and objectives, moreover to ensure that the limits of M&E are rectified.

## CHAPTER SIX: Conclusions and Recommendations

Monitoring and Evaluation in South African public service was introduced as an initiative to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of governance in South Africa. The study set out to critically analyse the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation in South Africa's provincial government departments, using the KZN Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs as a case study. The aim was to investigate the experiences of the implementing agents of the M&E system in the KZN - COGTA. The study's objective was to explore the intended aims and objectives of the M&E and determine how they have been realised at a provincial level.

The following broad questions guided the investigation:

- How is the M&E conceptualized at KZN CoGTA?
- How were the monitoring and evaluation systems at KZN CoGTA designed?
- How monitoring and evaluation systems at KZN CoGTA were implemented, (process, structures and resources)?
- What are the experiences of the implementing agents of monitoring and evaluation systems at KZN CoGTA?
- How is M&E information used at KZN CoGTA? (For what and by whom?)

Three concluding observations are worth special consideration: firstly, that the implementation of the M&E within the KZN - COGTA is top-down and it is used for compliance and monitoring, rather than as a learning tool; secondly there is a gap between the theory and practice of M&E; and thirdly, there is a capacity gap which taints the possible effectiveness of the M&E system in the department.

The study shows that KZN CoGTA only focus on process and outcome evaluation approaches and neglects impact evaluation due to a lack of capacity,

In answering the first question, the study revealed that the aims and objectives of the M&E seek to strengthen governance in the public sector and ensure that government delivers on their service delivery mandate. Within the KZN - COGTA, the M&E system was perceived as a mechanism that assists the department to measure its performance and ensure that the department's interventions are achieving the desired goals. The M&E system aims to help

project managers plan and budget their projects and essentially make sure that the department is doing the right things right.

The findings show that the implementation approach used was top-down. The low organisational culture of the M&E system and what it entails has resulted in government officials merely complying to M&E processes, because it has to be done. Public Policy Programmes are policy-connected interventions underpinned by the Constitution and Bill of Rights of the Republic of South Africa. The design of the M&E system lacks elements of participation by all relevant stakeholders especially the beneficiaries from whom the final long-term multispectral consequences of the programmes needs to be assessed to evaluate the transformative objective of policy which the department KZN CoGTA must contribute as part of the government's constitutional objectives. This has played a major factor on how M&E is perceived. In the KZN - COGTA, there is support regarding M&E from management, resulting in the M&E being taken seriously but this is only at the limited abilities of M&E as a merely administrative surveillance of box ticking, whereby M&E merely investigates the delivery of services to recipients and whether eligible persons and objectives are omitted from the delivery of services by the various programmes. None of the evaluation reports presented the design of an evaluation which intended to determine the attainment of desired effects on long-term social conditions besides the administrative and programme oriented proof of improvements.

The South African government has gone to great lengths to provide an enabling legislative environment for the M&E to flourish. Legislation provides detailed information on how to institutionalise the M&E system and provides guidelines on M&E practice to help maintain the system. The KZN - COGTA has developed its own Monitoring Strategy and Evaluation Framework, which guide the practice of M&E in the KZN - COGTA. Implementation of the M&E within the KZN - COGTA shows that there is an M&E system in place, but it is not fully functional as per national mandate. There is a serious capacity challenge within the department, because government officials are not clear on their roles and responsibilities regarding M&E. The capacity challenge influences the M&E system's ability to produce quality M&E information timeously. It is essentially a great threat to the survival of the M&E system. If the department does not attempt to change the perceptions of M&E by enhancing capacity, then M&E practice will remain a technical function conducted for compliance and not for improvement through organisational learning.

The M&E should address the implementation barriers of the system in order for it to take corrective action and get back onto the path of improving governance and performance in the South African public sector. Williams, cited in Patton (1997: 200), argues that the lack of concern for implementation is the crucial impediment to improving complex operating programmes, policy analysis and experimentation of social policy areas. Williams suggests that implementation processes should be addressed more carefully, as they determine the success or failure of a project. To reduce the gap between the theory and practice of M&E, government needs to address challenges, so that progress can be made.

In answering the third and fourth questions, the study shows that the implementing agents within the KZN - COGTA experience a great deal of difficulty performing their M&E tasks. A lack of capacity, support and resources make it difficult for M&E information to truly produce the intended results. The South African approach to Monitoring and Evaluation has moved towards effectiveness and results. The reality is that government interventions focus on the efficiency aspect and little attention is given to the true effectiveness of government interventions.

The rationale for implementing the M&E was to assist government to plan better, to budget and to increase the use of evidence to inform policy. The constraints in the M&E system have led to M&E practice in the M&E Sub-programme being done for compliance, in order to meet the needs of the performance agreement. Organisational resistance to the M&E system makes it more difficult for M&E to collect reports, analyse data and report on its findings. Data collection tools and the management information system of the department need to address the needs of a result-based M&E system. The M&E Sub-programme needs to develop an M&E plan which will assist in evaluation practice being more focused on addressing the needs of the KZN - COGTA.

The M&E legislation and policy documents discussed in chapter three in this study, emphasised how M&E in government seeks to improve policy implementation as well as encourage learning from experience and ensuring accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. In the KZN - COGTA, the study found that M&E is done to improve performance and government decision-making. Often, when problems are found, practitioners are praised for identifying problems, M&E recommendations are not addressed by the project managers and the practitioners make efforts into the implementation of the recommendations. The need for the M&E system to be fully functional and serving its intended purposes requires strengthening the efficacy and cooperation between stakeholders.

This will enable M&E to be seen as a collaborative practice aimed to assist government in the realization of their goals. One of the reasons for this recommendation is that M&E theory and practice is still relatively new in South Africa. The department is in the early stages of implementing M&E and, as a result, many problems may arise and the limits of M&E seem to be revealed. Meanwhile, addressing these limits regularly will lead to the department improving M&E practice and its ability to provide relevant information to be utilized in fulfilling the KZN - COGTA's mandate.

Through the findings, the study thus concludes that M&E has affirmed its possibilities to help in improving government effectiveness as it produces the information which enables engagement on a project relevance, effectiveness and performance or even the termination or continuation of government projects. M&E appears to have been limited in taking on board citizens to date, and where it has assessed service delivery, the assessment of changes or impacts have been limited and this meant that despite investment in the production of performance information, this has not been acted upon.

Furthermore, the possibilities of M&E which have been implemented have helped in a long and difficult process to put in place systems which can be worked on, and which help to create a performance discourse, which is a key contributor to effective programme implementation by government. Overall, whilst M&E is strong, well-responded to and brings about administrative compliance, it has not gone far enough in generating a more citizen oriented M&E, evident as the limits of the current M&E type which is not found within communities. There have been probably self-imposed limits to citizen based monitoring and evaluation and how far the oversight bodies have gone to focus on citizen-based impact rather than project performance.

The case study that has been used has served to illustrate the experiences in the implementation of M&E and it has also shown where the limits and possibilities are for M&E. The case study has revealed that the cooperation between the M&E cycle which is made up of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation is a key guarantor of enacting findings into action. Whilst improving recently in the quality of its oversight, this cycle has generally not been effective in helping to support in a practical manner the large body of oversight work undertaken in the government departments and the country. Given these qualifications as they have proven the limits of M&E, however, none of these should undermine the fact that the research does prove that M&E has its possibilities to lead to effective programme implementation and a level of good governance.

## **Recommendations**

Even though the study supports the assertion that M&E contributes to effective programme implementation and a level of good governance but an integrated approach is recommended and emphasised to recognise the multi-faceted nature of social problems. This is in assertion to the idea that recognises public policy programmes as policy-connected interventions underpinned by the country's Constitution. Therefore, there needs to be improvement in the collaborative practice aimed to assist government in the realization of intergovernmental goals.

The need for the M&E system to be fully functional and serving its intended purposes requires strengthening the efficacy and cooperation between stakeholders. This will enable M&E to be seen as a collaborative practice aimed to assist government in the realization of their goals. One of the reasons for this recommendation is that M&E theory and practice is still relatively new in South Africa, as a result, many difficulties could be expected to highlight the limits of M&E. The commitment to habitually address these limits will lead to improving the M&E practice and its ability to provide relevant information to be utilized in fulfilling the government's mandate.

Mandated use of evaluation results needs to be firm. The results of M&E must be used by government and shown to make a difference; otherwise the motivation for doing this will disappear. Managers and project managers need to be mandated to implement the credible evaluation recommendations.

On-going capacity building is needed. A lack of capacity, support and resources make it difficult for M&E information to truly produce the intended results. It is recommended that further education and training needs to be given to many M&E practitioners as well as project managers in aspects of monitoring and evaluation so as to encourage them to effectively utilize the M&E tools and findings. Furthermore, given the issues of resistance and new influences to organisational culture discussed in the study, it is recommended that government; particularly DPME should take a firm position to lead the capacitation of government departments and other supportive public institutions to conduct M&E to balance the alternative of outsourcing the service from private consultants.

Capacitation will allow government departments to conduct credible impact evaluations which seem to be a shunned category in the evaluations that are currently conducted. This is due to its demand for resources which the government departments are currently lacking.

M&E appears to have been limited in taking on board citizens to date, and where it has assessed service delivery. There is a need to consider and incorporate the implementation of DPME's Citizen-based Monitoring and Evaluation.

### **Areas for Further Research**

Experience of community-based monitoring thus far has shown several key factors that need to be considered. As a managerial practice M&E is linked to the rise and development of the neo-liberalist political ideology has led to immense changes in public policy. These include the intensification of the new managerialism and the recognition of the risk management. The new managerialism is based in the assumption that all organisations should be managed in the same way irrespective of their definition of responsibility. The model for management is seen as being based upon the business organisational model. Subsequently, community or other forms of collective responsibility are dismissed and responsibility is seen as being based in individual persons.

Ulrich Beck as quoted on Jarvis, D. (2007), comprehended that neo-liberalism would lead to many organisations and people feeling at risk, (Jarvis, 2007). Beck identified that one of the reasons why M&E has become such a major industry is that so many bureaucrats and administrators spend a lot of time devising systems and programs which protect them, their agencies and their political masters from being charged with a failure of what the community often sees as their responsibility, (Jarvis, 2007). It is often assumed that M&E protects the public, but without Citizen-Based monitoring and evaluation, M&E to the public is of little concern within the new managerialism. It could appear to be a bureaucratic and administrative strategy of an immense accumulation of pseudo-accountability, (Jarvis, 2007).

Therefore, further studies need to be done on the applicability of M&E in public policy. Such a study needs to be done from the perspective of scrutinizing M&E's capacity as a business born practise to solicit a public aligned accountability. Such a study would not shun advanced research into Citizen-Based Monitoring and Evaluation.

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (KZN CoGTA)**

KwaZulu Natal Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs

***Introduction:*** *Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.*

Respondent No. \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the limits and possibilities of monitoring and evaluation. It uses the KwaZulu Natal Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs as a case study.

- What specifically are your roles and responsibilities (tasks) in relation to M&E within KZN CoGTA?
- What is your understanding of M&E? (Hint: aims and objectives/ purposes)
- What is the relationship between monitoring and evaluation? How are they linked?
- Why do / conduct M&E?
- How is/was the monitoring and evaluation system at KZN CoGTA designed?
  - What processes were involved in the design? (Hint: workshops, consultations, meetings etc. What kind of input did you give?)
  - Deciding which programs to evaluate
  - Deciding on key issues
- Who is responsible for the implementation of M&E at CoGTA (Hint: Personnel - Deciding who to involve – internal and external evaluations)
- How is M&E being implemented at KZN CoGTA? What are the structures, processes, data collection tools, data inputting / M&E system management?
- What types of evaluations do you conduct? (Hint: implementation, impact evaluation etc.)
- How is M&E information used at KZN CoGTA? (For what and by whom?)
- What is the reporting hierarchy i.e. Local Government – Provincial – National / What is their role in the usage of M&E information
- What has been your experience been like in carrying out your tasks related to M&E?
- What are some of the issues / challenges that have emerged for you in M&E?
- How have you attempted to resolve some of those issues?
- Is there any other thing you would like to mention or add to this interview?

**(This study is purely for academic purposes. Your participation is highly appreciated)**

**Appendix 2: KZN CoGTA Evaluation Recommendations: Implementation Plan  
(Template)**

<b>Name of Evaluation</b>						
<b>Type of Evaluation</b>						
<b>Date of Evaluation (year and quarter)</b>						
<b>Name of Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsible Branch</b>	<b>Leading Business Unit</b>	<b>Supporting Business Units</b>	<b>Monitoring Implications (which aspects of the recommendation can be monitored)</b>	<b>APP implications (explain incorporation into the APP process and how this can be linked to the SO)</b>	<b>Budgetary implications (where applicable, costing must be provided to guide the budgeting process of the Department)</b>

Supported by :

.....  
Senior Manager : Evaluation

.....  
Date

Supported by :

.....  
General Manager : Monitoring & Evaluation

.....  
Date

Approved by :

.....  
General Manager :  
Corporate Services

.....  
Date

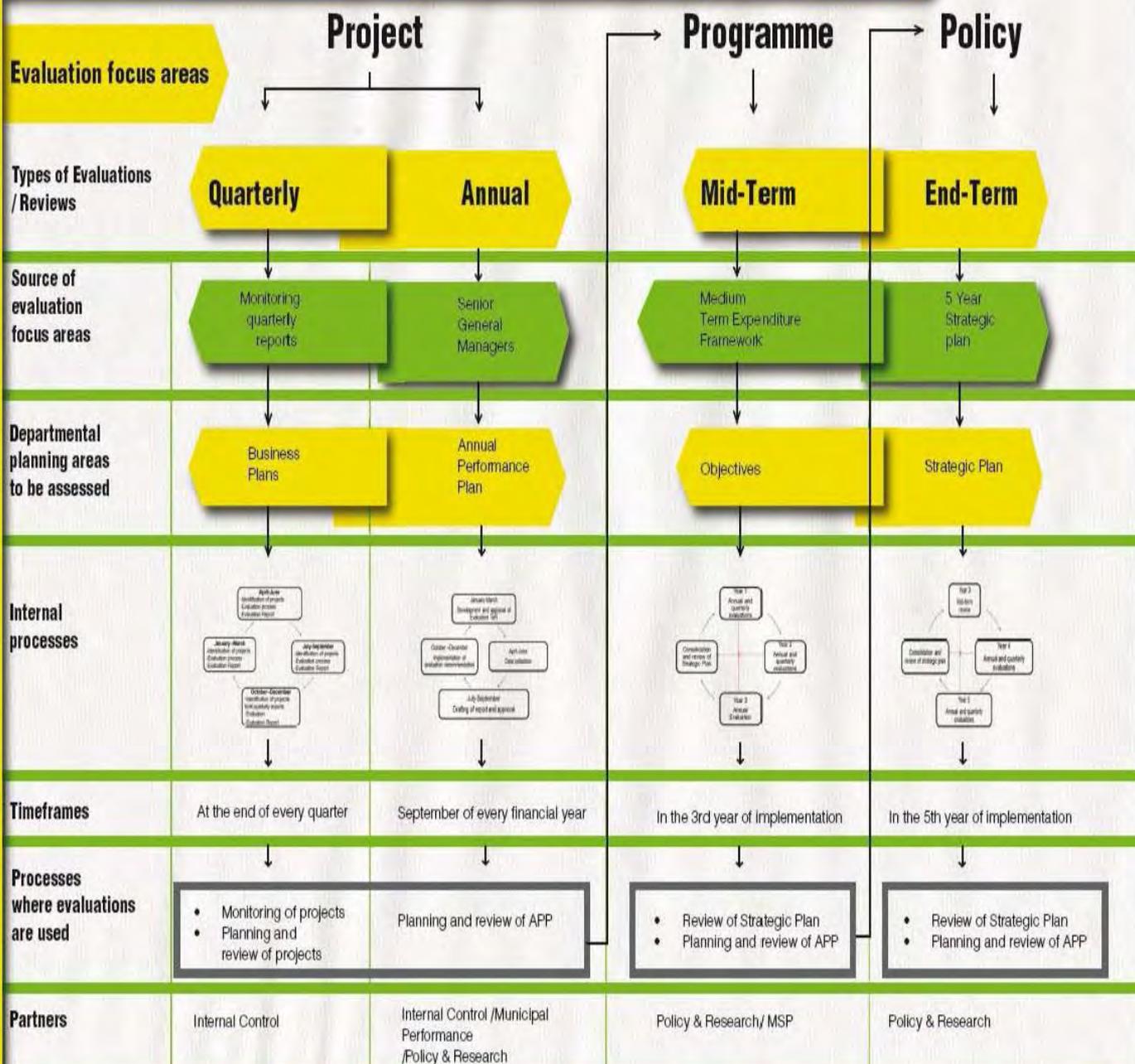
# Appendix 3: KZN CoGTA Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle



**cogta**

Department:  
Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

# EVALUATION CYCLE



Conceptualised by : KZN Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs Evaluation Directorate 2016/17