

# **Relevance Of Monitoring & Evaluation In The Development And Delivery Of Effective Job Creation Policies And Initiatives**

**By: Tpl. Ademola Adeyemi**  
**Deputy Director (Monitoring & Evaluation) &**  
**Head of Geographical Information System, NPC.**  
**E-mail: [ademola53@yahoo.com](mailto:ademola53@yahoo.com)**  
**08033312398**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a powerful management tool that can be used to improve governments and organizations' needs such as financial, human resources and audit systems with a good feedback system. In recent times, M&E has metamorphosed from traditional implementation based approach to Results based approach.

In Nigeria, projects, programmes and policies are implemented by government, that is, Federal, States and Local without producing the intended results. For a Result based M&E system, stakeholders usually ask some pertinent questions such as

- Has government delivered on the promises made to the governed?
- Are the programmes implemented by the government actually matched the outcomes expected?

Based on the above pertinent questions, hence; the introduction of a Result Based M&E system which is domiciled in the National Planning Commission (NPC). The Result Based M&E system, no doubt forced the decision makers to further assess if and how goals of projects, programmes and policies are achieved over time. The introduction of results based system helps to answer some grey areas that the traditional M&E system which is equivalent to site inspection only could not answer. The Result Based system answers the all important "so what" question and respond to stakeholders growing demands for results. The technique of Result Based M&E promotes transparency and accountability within government, improves projects, programmes and policies implementation and sustaining successful outcomes.

## **Relevance of Monitoring and Evaluation Data in Result Based M&E.**

Having succinctly summarized what the Results Based M&E is and as regards to assisting the decision making process, it is imperative to fully mention steps involved in the Results Based M&E. according to (Kusek and Rist: 2008). There are ten steps to be followed in order to have effective M&E data that will be useable for decision making process. The data derived from this process will be dependable reliable for employment policies and initiatives that are tailored towards the Transformation Agenda of Mr. President.

Therefore, in the design of a Result Based M&E system that can generate data for decision making, the ten steps listed below must be adhered to strictly:

- **Step one**                    *conducting a readiness assessment*
- **Step two**                    *agreeing on outcomes to monitor and evaluate*
- **Step three**                 *develop key indicator to monitor outcomes*
- **Step four**                 *gathering baseline data on indicators*
- **Step five**                    *planning for improvement i. e. setting realistic targets*
- **Step six**                    *monitoring for results*
- **Step seven**                *evaluate information to support decision making*
- **Step eight**                *analyzing and reporting findings*
- **Step nine**                 *using findings*
- **Step ten**                    *sustaining the M&E system within the organization*

Strict adherence to these ten steps will aid a comprehensive policy formulation for creating jobs in the economy.

As an organization, the National Planning Commission (NPC) has instituted a policy in complying with the above steps.

## **Effective Data Acquisition for Monitoring & Evaluation**

Effective acquisition, maintenance and dissemination of M&E data and report can act as a magnet to investment and can enable governments to understand better area of the employment policy as related to job creation that is weak

and which areas of the job creation initiatives that needs to be strengthened. Due to paucity of funds, regular acquisition, maintenance and dissemination of M&E data and report is becoming difficult. In the case of M&E Department of NPC, some reports have been released spanning three years. These Reports are the Performance reports for 2011, 2012 and yet to be released 2013. These reports are relied upon by the Stakeholders for decision making for Policy formulation generally. Besides, the skills and infrastructure needed to actualize this task is not visible. Acquisition of M&E data alone consumes a lot of money at the initial stage.

## **Job Creation**

Job creation has been a social and economic issue over the years and the impact cannot be over emphasized as it has a direct consequence on the society. In Nigeria, job creation has been one of the critical areas considered priority by successful governments, and in continuation, the present government is not paying lip service to job creation.

The present government in its stride has set up numerous programmes to address the perennial problem of unemployment. These programmes which range from safety nets to direct employment, empowerment of her citizenry by different empowerment programmes by the Federal Government and various States Government have actually created over 2 million jobs over the past 2 years but the deficit is massive such that the jobs created is just a minute fraction of the colossal employment gap.

However, the dearth of adequate data for planning for job creation has been a major issue yet to be fully addressed; thus the need for Monitoring and Evaluation data for the development of effective job creation policies and initiatives.

## **M&E Data for job creation Policies and Initiatives**

Monitoring and Evaluation are integral part of plans, projects, policies and programmes and as a result a failure to adopt a proper M&E system may result into poor implementation of such projects, programmes and policies. The basic aims of M&E are to improve effectiveness and efficiency, promote accountability and to strengthen an existing system as well as right what is wrong. M&E can be formative i.e. improving the conditions of a system during

the life of the project, programmes and policy and also can be summative i.e. drawing lessons learnt from a completed intervention.

As it can be seen from above, formulating and implementing the right policies and initiatives relating to job creation in the country depend largely on quality of M&E Data. These data facilitate planning in a systematic manner such that the gaps job creation deficiency can be identified, baseline set up, targets set and solution proffered. There cannot be effective job creation policy put in place without adequate M&E quality data available.

Nigerian's unemployment rate hovers between 25% and 28% (NBS), a high figure in contrast to vast potentials available in the country is still worrisome despite the initiatives put in place. This worrisome trend can only be abated with qualitative data for planning and thereby giving rise to policies to be put in place.

M&E data identifies the amount of investment and aggregate demand needed to stimulate job creation thereby putting the right policies in place to promote the existence of these jobs. The policies will highlight the amount of investment for each sector of the economy, private sector participation, the number of jobs intended to be created in the sectors, the skills required for such sectors, the training required and the time frame for the investment. In similar manner, the government in increasing the aggregate demand must increase spending to stimulate job creation.

Policies and initiatives when adhered to and enforced provide the springboard for development in critical sectors.

At the moment, data for M&E are collected through some agreed indicators with the use of a scorecard. A column for job created is a generic indicator specified for all the government agencies to furnish the commission with the number of jobs that have been created over the period under review. There has been a consistent increase in the number of jobs that are being created from 2010 to 2012 as contained in the Annual Performance Monitoring Reports over the period. However, the aggregate of jobs created cannot be readily ascertained as each ministry reports separately. For project Ministries like Federal Ministry of Works and Federal Ministry of Transport, the number of jobs created could not be analyzed as direct and indirect jobs were merged together.

## **Critical factors that promote job creation**

Sustainable job creation depends on a number of factors centered around government existing policies on the provision of infrastructure (i.e. power, transport, etc) and financing options with regards to small and medium scale business. A favourable policy to sustain these infrastructure and access to finance will inevitably lead and promote job creation in the economy. A policy that consistently increases power supply on a yearly basis, a policy single digit interest rate for small and medium scale enterprises and manufacturing industries, development of the various means of transportation – especially rail, increase in aggregate demand and reduction in tax rates are policies that could complement M&E data for adequate policies for job creation.

## **Data Quality Policy**

Data Quality Policies (DQP) is defined as a process which sets standards for data to be gathered for evaluation. DQP looks at the correctness and credibility of data, instrument of gathering the data, methodology used for collection, hierarchy of data and reporting lines. DQP certifies the validity and reliability of data before they are used for analysis. Any data that has to be used to formulate job creation policy must be certified to be valid and reliable as any mistake will result to bad policy and wrong decision making. At the moment, there is no institution such as Nigerian Institute of Monitoring and Evaluation to assess the validity and reliability of M&E Data. This Institute of Monitoring and Evaluation is at its formative stage, hence it cannot presently certify M&E Data for decision making process. It is however important that the data been collected through M&E technique adopts the international best practices so that the report generated from these data can have wider acceptability by the major stakeholders in formulating policies that are enduring.

## **Policy Evaluation for job creation**

Policy evaluation is conducted for checking effects of existing policies and for evaluating policies relating to job creation in terms of necessity, efficiency, validity etc to improve the planning and implementation process.

## **Objectives of policy Evaluation on job creation**

- Realization of efficient and high quality data on job creation as it affects the citizenry
- Strengthening collation and analysis of quality data
- Sustainability of policies favourable to job creation

In realizing the objectives stated above, an M&E framework would need to be put in place. This framework would identify the types of data needed for planning for job creation, methods of collection of data, roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in the collection, analysis of data collected, reporting lines and reporting procedures and the transmission of feedback process. Presently, the National Bureau of Statistics is saddled with the responsibility of reporting on the unemployment rate in the country but it may suffice to know the methods adopted in calculating the job deficits in the economy. M&E data is entirely different from statistically derived data which is purely NBS Statutory function as earlier mentioned.

### **Advantages of Monitoring and Evaluation Data:**

- i. M&E data highlights the deficit in job creation
- ii. M&E data helps in planning for job creation
- iii. M&E data strengthens policy making process and
- iv. M&E data support evidence based reporting on job creation

### **Challenges of M&E data for job creation**

Over the course of implementation of the M&E process by the NPC, there have been challenges in the areas of data reported for job creation as there is no existing policy in place for the aggregation of job policy in the country. Every agency of government reports separately on job created and most times, the jobs created are not disaggregated, thus it becomes difficult to analyse the number of jobs created in both the formal and informal sectors. Other challenges in getting M&E data for job creation are non availability of Data Policy, inconsistency in data collection methodology and the use of faulty instruments for data collection.

## **Geographic Information System (GIS) Technology**

Within the last two decades, GIS technology has evolved from single purpose, project based applications to enterprise systems. Enterprise Systems are currently being used by businesses, institutions such as NPC, industries, private sectors to provide services to clients, manage resources and to address multiple issues pertaining to health and human resources, transportation, public safety, utilities and communication, natural resources, defence and intelligence, retail and many more. In the NPC, the GIS technology has added value into making data acquisition and utilization easy for M&E decision-making process due to the proliferation of modern day instruments for collecting data.

The proliferation of sensitive instruments such as Global positioning System (GPS) and Smart-Phones has made M&E data acquisition simple and available for different Stakeholders. Though the data provided by these instruments are location-based but act as input for M&E data. Recently, the Personal Digital Assistants (PDA), iPods and iPads and twitter are becoming dependable data sources for M&E. These instruments have significantly improved the reliability of data obtained for M&E and for Stakeholders to utilize.

## **Recommendations & Conclusion**

The relevance and importance of M&E data in the development and delivery of effective job creation policies and initiatives cannot be underestimated in a developing economy such as Nigeria. Even though Nigeria has not joined the league of Big data users in either formulating and implementing policies, the introduction of M&E department in NPC has started yielding positive results in the area of data collection and reporting.

To this end, the Result-Based M&E has been summarily dealt with and with a strict adherence to the ten steps in order to arrive at a reliable and dependable M&E data for job creation and initiatives.

There are many challenges M&E is currently facing in Nigeria. These are funding, political will, capacity gap, lack of data policy, and lack of synergy from various agencies and stakeholders. Besides, there is lack of commitment from the government to provide enabling environment such as the availability of infrastructure and skill improvement in the hi-tech to reflect hi-touch in M&E data gathering and reporting in Nigeria.

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