# FINAL REPORT

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A POLICY RESEARCH REPORT ON

# Strengthening Policy Evaluation in the Policy Cycle Through Existing Frameworks

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FELLOW

**Ms. Diya Shrestha**

Daayitwa Nepal Public Policy Fellow 2026

PUBLIC PARTNER

**Mr. Kabindra Nepal**

Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM)

MENTOR

**Dr. Kashi Kafle**

Nepali Academics in America (NACA)


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## DNPPF 2026: Policy Research Report

# Strengthening Policy Evaluation in the Policy Cycle Through Existing Frameworks

Diya Shrestha

Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers

Research Mentor: Dr Kashi Kafle

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## Chapter 1: Background, Policy Context, and Problem Statement

Independent evaluation of programs and policies is a critical component of evidence-based policymaking and effective governance. The role of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) was first formally recognized in Nepal's Fifth Five-Year Plan (1975-1980) and has since been incorporated into successive national plans (Shrestha, 2023). However, while its importance has steadily increased within Nepal's development sector, it has not been commonly used within government bodies. Even though there is increasing recognition that evaluation should not be confined solely to development programs and projects and it has to make its way to national policies and programs for ensuring transparency and accountability, most policies and programs implemented by relevant line ministries have not been evaluated historically. This begs the question of 'what's the current policy evaluation landscape in Nepal?' and "what institutional framework is needed to strengthen systematic policy evaluation in Nepal?"

This report provides an overview of policy evaluation in Nepal, recognizing its central role in determining the effectiveness, impact, and accountability of public policies. Despite progress in institutionalizing evaluation practices, Nepal's evaluation system remains fragmented. As of 2022, government ministries, departments, and parliamentary bodies frequently conducted evaluations independently, often with limited coordination and collaboration. This fragmentation has contributed to inefficient resource allocation, duplication of efforts, and inconsistencies in evaluation methodologies.

Given the potential benefits of a robust and coordinated evaluation system, this report focuses on an existing policy evaluation tool which include: Post Legislative Scrutiny (PLS), OPMCM Policy Audit, and National Planning Commission's M&E Guidelines. In particular, this report investigates the M&E Act 2080 (2023) alongside the Legislative Act 2081 (2024), using OPMCM as the primary governing institution for policy evaluation.

The core responsibilities of the OPMCM is to oversee the entire policy cycle: formulation, approval, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of short-term and long-term policies, periodic plans, and strategies of the Government of Nepal. Therefore, this policy recommendation is relying on existing policy evaluation frameworks whilst considering the overlapping functions of policy review, audit and scrutiny and identifying it as relevant policy evaluation frameworks primarily focusing on the coordination and empowerment of stakeholders in the evaluation process.

### What is Public Policy Evaluation?

Based on the National Planning Commission (NPC) M&E Guidelines published in 2018, evaluation is seen as a systematic purposeful undertaking carried out by internal and external evaluators to appraise relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts as well as sustainability generated by the policies, plans, programmes and projects under/after implementation.

M&E policy is looked over through the lens of the state providing a range of services to its citizens, sees it as programmes to deliver services aligned with respective policies and therefore must undergo monitoring of activities to evaluate the outcomes and impacts.

## 1.1 Institutional Context

Since 1952, evaluation has featured in Nepal's administrative reform agenda, and it is now widely recognized as a vital component of evidence-based policymaking and effective development governance. In practice, however, policy evaluation remains significantly underdeveloped. The National Planning Commission (NPC) has relied primarily on program- and project-level evaluation indicators geared toward development projects, rather than on systematic evaluation of policy outcomes. Parliament's legislative committees scrutinize and review laws, but this post-legislative review is not equivalent to policy evaluation. As a field, policy evaluation in Nepal is still at a nascent stage: practice is uneven and scattered, with several bodies loosely assigned responsibility. Across both government and legislative bodies, there is a requirement of an enabling environment; institutional, procedural, and cultural that builds evaluation as a routine step in the policy cycle.

Although the law requires every plan published by the NPC to incorporate monitoring and evaluation, the M&E Guidelines issued in 2018 have proven insufficient for this purpose. There has been gradual progress on the legal and policy framework for M&E, but this progress needs to be matched by an accessible policy evaluation framework that can be contextualized at every level of federalism, supporting the professional development of evaluation as a discipline.

This report responds to that gap. It proposes a robust policy that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved, and that promotes a culture of evaluation across government. It recognizes that government bodies will need to invest in capacity building given the technical nature of evaluation work, and that this requires strengthening the roles of the NPC, the Policy Research Institute (PRI), and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA), alongside the primary M&E mandate held by the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) utilizing its policy auditing framework.

## 1.2 Policy Background and Problem Context

Nepal's Constitution requires the government to report annually to Parliament on implementation of state policy (Article 53) and mandates a parliamentary committee to monitor and evaluate that implementation (Article 54). Below this, three mechanisms exist: the NPC's legally mandated M&E function, operationalized through its 2018 M&E Guidelines but focused on project-level delivery rather than policy outcomes; OPMCM's policy audit mandate, under which it is responsible for maintaining an integrated national policy profile and examining implementation; and the Legislation Act, 2081's post-legislative scrutiny provision, letting parliamentary committees review delegated legislation against its stated aims.

Nepal has multiple overlapping legal starting points for policy evaluation, but no standardized methodology, no fixed ownership that survives changes in government, and no feedback loop that reaches ministries or legislators. The problem is not absent mandate but absent practice. Of roughly 90 national policies Nepal has formulated, OPMCM has examined only four. The NPC's M&E guidelines have not been translated into a policy-evaluation framework. Post-legislative scrutiny remains largely unknown even among the officials meant to use it.

## 1.3 Policy Relevance

Evaluation is a vital stage of the policy cycle, where governments assess whether the intentions of a policy are actually delivered as promised. Successful evaluation informs decisions such as continuing, modifying, scaling, or terminating a policy. When executed well, evaluation strengthens governance; when done poorly, the consequences cascade from government institutions down to citizens. In Nepal, successive governments have promised accountable, inclusive governance with improved service delivery. Evaluation is therefore central to delivering on this promise. Yet Nepal's policies have largely been shaped by immediate pressures, crises, and political interests rather than by systematic planning, research, data analysis, and evidence-based policymaking.

Martin (2026) argues that reform should first utilize existing formal rules and processes, reserving structural change as a last resort. Nepal has undergone a critical juncture with its governance, while previous policy frameworks have struggled to be implemented due to uneven practices, limited capacity and split priorities this policy recommendation requires a concerted effort from stakeholders within Nepal to transition into better informed robust policy decisions. This policy ensures policymakers understand the efforts for the practice of M&E with the core focus on professionalization of evaluation. Policy evaluation is no more just a reporting requirement it is vital accountability and decision making enabler. In order to truly gauge the reach and effectiveness of a policy which directly indicates the performance of governance and government of Nepal evaluation is the key indicator.

## 1.4 Linkage to National and Institutional Priorities

The Constitution of Nepal, under Article 103, mandates parliamentary committees to examine and monitor the implementation of laws and policies (Nepal Law Commission, 2015). Article 55 further specifies the accountability relationship between Parliament and the executive, requiring the government to remain answerable to the legislature (Nepal Law Commission, 2015). The 15th Plan (2019–2024) committed Nepal to results-based and evidence-based policymaking, a commitment that can only be meaningfully fulfilled through continuous evaluation alongside monitoring (Nepal Planning Commission, 2019). The 16th Plan (2024–2029) builds on this foundation, emphasizing institutional reform and improved public service delivery (Nepal Planning Commission, 2024).

Central to OPMCM's good governance agenda is a genuine commitment to evaluation, one that goes beyond swift administrative reform to establish a sound, stable, and institutionalized evaluation methodology conducted by officials with evaluation expertise..

## 1.5 Statement of the Policy Problem

Despite Nepal's growing legal and rhetorical commitment to evidence-based policymaking, the country has no functioning system for evaluating public policies once they are enacted. Responsibility for evaluation is scattered across the OPMCM, NPC, PRI, MoLJPA, and parliamentary committees, but no single institution holds it as a core mandate, and none has the enabling environment or technical capacity to carry it out consistently. The NPC's existing tools measure project and program delivery rather than policy outcomes; the 2018 M&E Guidelines, the parliamentary mechanism of evaluation through PLS and lastly the OPMCM oversight through Policy Audit framework. Outside of these major stakeholders who

are explicitly mandated to the policy evaluation there are several other bodies and third parties that are immensely suitable for policy evaluation strengthening and formalization in Nepal's policy cycle.

## 1.6 Research Questions

I investigate what institutional framework is needed for OPMCM to strengthen systematic policy evaluation in Nepal. I achieve this by answering for distinct research questions:

1. To what extent has OPMCM exercised its policy audit mandate to examine the implementation of Nepal's national policies? Would this role be suitable for OPMCM's policy lab?
2. How effective is the M&E Act 2080, which is similar to the NPC M&E Guidelines (2018), for policy evaluation?
3. Can we apply Post-Legislative Scrutiny as a policy evaluation framework in the context of Nepal?
4. Is the current institutional arrangement appropriate for policy evaluation? What other stakeholders and institutions are we missing?

## Chapter 2: Policy and Literature Review

### अध्ययन अनुसन्धानमा आधारित प्रशासन सुधारको आवश्यकता (Need for Research Based Administrative Reform) - (Tritaal, 2021)

This article has diagnosed that in order to reform Nepal's Public Administration it is necessary to institutionalize monitoring, evaluation, supervision, feedback loop and examination. There must be an institutional design, a permanent expert mechanism under OPMCM's direct authority over the reform agenda for whose job includes setting priorities, commissioning subject specific research and running continuous supervision/monitoring/evaluation of implementation with leadership of the mechanism able to change while the work itself continues uninterrupted.

### नीति परीक्षण (Policy Audit) (Nepal, 2021)

Nepal has used the Institute of Development Studies definition of policy audit, "Policy audit is a systematic review of a set of policies, policy processes and usually focused on a particular theme or area of the policy." Nepal states that despite the OPMCM holding the major responsibility for building an integrated profile of national policies and getting their implementation examined it has been fully actualized. Roughly 89–90 national policies Nepal has formulated (per OPMCM's own 2075 National Policy Categorization Study Report), only four have ever actually been examined; the National Drug Policy (2051), National Policy on Rural Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation (2060), National Agriculture Policy (2061), and Science and Technology Policy (2061).

Similar to OECD and NPC's evaluation indicators, a policy audit's framework should assess: impact, sustainability, effectiveness, equity, relevance, implementation status, how workable it is when multiple stakeholders are involved, and implementability (economically, socially and politically). Concrete methods are similar to NPC's guidelines: comprehensive/full-scope review, participatory review involving affected stakeholders, interviews/questionnaires, quantitative data analysis against targets, focus-group discussion, and qualitative impact assessment after a fixed implementation period.

Nepal notes Article 53 of the Constitution requires the Government to submit an annual report on implementation of the state's directive principles, policies and responsibilities to the President, who forwards it to the Federal Parliament, and Article 54 requires a parliamentary committee to monitor and evaluate progressive implementation of those same directive principles.

Nepal recommends:

- The ministry primarily responsible for a given national policy should submit a policy audit report to OPMCM at least every two years
- OPMCM should study these reports and develop a system for issuing suggestions and directions back to the relevant bodies
- OPMCM should standardize a common policy audit format/structure across all ministries rather than leaving it ad hoc
- OPMCM should build and maintain the integrated national policy portal/profile, updating it whenever policies are added or repealed

- OPMCM should establish a dedicated coordination unit (or designate a section within an existing ministry) to handle inter-agency coordination for national policy implementation.

## Institutionalization and Use of Evaluations in the Public Sector in Nepal (Dhakhal, 2014)

As of 2014 this paper notes that there was no separate evaluation policy and no separate law requiring M&E of development programs/projects at the central level. There were only scattered provisions in sectoral instruments like the Health Service Act 1997, Education Rules 2004, Forest Regulations 1995, and more substantively the Local Self-Governance Act 1999, which required evaluation of projects at VDC, municipality, and district levels. On the empirical record of 29 evaluations, the sectoral distribution was heavily skewed: over 50% (16 of 29) were in agriculture, including irrigation and land reform, with irrigation alone accounting for 9; social sector got 8 (28%); infrastructure 3 (10%); economic sectors just 2 (7%). By type, 66% were project evaluations, 24% were program evaluations, and only 10% were policy evaluations. The paper explicitly flags this as evidence that "planners and policy makers want to learn more about projects and programs compared to policies," which till date stands true.

On quality, the findings are fairly damning: only 60% of the evaluations had actual baseline data, with the other 40% relying on recall methods to reconstruct a starting point; most reports focused on implementation process, efficiency, and outputs rather than outcomes or impacts, largely because clear results chains and indicators didn't exist to measure the latter; methodology was overwhelmingly quantitative with weak before-after comparisons and no real triangulation; and despite rich data collection, analysis was often weak enough to undermine the credibility of the recommendations themselves. Not a single one of the 29 offices produced a management response plan to systematically act on findings, and dissemination, while reasonably good toward line-ministry policymakers and posted online, systematically excluded civil society and local-body representatives.

As for the recommendations, the paper suggests:

- The policy needs to include evaluation norms, standards, regulations and plans so that it can guide both the commissioners and evaluators to systematically and independently conduct evaluations maintaining acceptable standards.
- Proper documentation and rigorous analysis of evaluation evidences alongside proper policy briefs
- Evaluation must be considered as a form of baseline evidence to support improvement of policies and programs, recommendations in evaluation must consider that it is applied beyond national policymakers; it is relevant to line agencies, financial agencies, planning agencies and subnational level actors.
- High quality report must include theory of change, indicators should already be defined to evaluate results
- There must be clarity of objective to frame specific evaluation questions, evaluators need to factor in that recommendation will be executed by politicians and policymakers therefore it must combine technical and policy comfort to apply recommendations.
- Independence helps reduce biases and increase credibility of evaluations that ultimately promote the implementation of evaluation recommendations
- Users of the evaluation report should be identified

- A sound evaluation policy as such should aim at involving a wide range of stakeholders in all stages of the evaluation process.
- A need to develop a system that takes evaluation as an integral part of the annual performance management cycle of the government.

## NPC's M&E Guidelines (2018)

Nepal has experimented with project/programme monitoring and evaluation since the Fifth Plan (1975-1980), the weightage and importance of it was dependent on the expenditure. It was based on pre-identified sectoral performance indicators. These efforts were not sustainable; it was reintroduced in the Eighth Plan (1992-1997) building a high level political commitment on the output/outcome evaluation system. The provision of the National Development Action Committee (NDAC) chaired by the PM, and Ministerial level Development Action Committee (MDAC) in each ministry chaired by the minister were an institutional arrangement of M&E.

The flow of report (Annex 1) clearly shows that the main collaboration of M&E report is through local level to the federal level through the provision of NDAC and MDAC. The flow chart has not accounted for the Provincial Policy and Planning Commission (PPPC) as an agent of conducting M&E reports.

This is consistent with the entire guideline, where the provincial level is not institutionally integrated in the M&E system. The reporting is directly unitary, rejecting the federal structure applied since 2015. Which further proves that the guideline itself needs an evaluation of how aligned it is with Nepal's constitutional realities to ensure that M&E is effectively utilized in every layer of federal, provincial and local levels. .

With the guidelines directly inspired by OECD's public policy evaluation, the criteria and indicators are based on Results Based Management that primarily is utilized to enhance the effectiveness of investments by linking outputs and outcomes with inputs and activities. Basic logical frameworks, result matrices, sources of information, management information systems (MIS), are used for results-based M&E. Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Reliable, Time Bound (SMART) is the guideline for how indicators should be. The level and sources of the indicators are also heavily dependent on project/programmes. The guideline elaborately covers evaluation methods for development programs and projects which can be entirely different from policies (Annex 2). Policy is folded into generic phrasing ("plans, policies, programmes, and projects") in definitions, but never gets a dedicated methodological treatment the way programme/project M&E does. Policy is acknowledged conceptually and folded into national outcome/impact indicators, but every concrete tool, form, template, and page of operational guidance in this 2013 document is built around the programme/project unit of analysis.

## Post Legislative Scrutiny (PLS)

PLS is seen as a vital quality control mechanism that ensures laws remain dynamic, responsive and grounded in citizen's realities and demand. This mechanism ensures that it enables parliaments to make informed decisions and build an oversight for the government system. It is a systematic and structured

process through which parliaments review the implementation and impact of legislation (Kelly & Everett, 2013). In Nepal, inspired by the Westminster Foundation Democracy (WFD) model, this tool has been applied since 2018 (Shrestha, 2023).

In Nepal, Post-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) has, to date, only been institutionalized in the National Assembly, beginning in 2018, with the Legislative Management Committee mandated to scrutinize laws governing fundamental rights and citizenship, the protection of individual liberties, and good governance with judicial administration treated as a priority area. The NA initiated this practice by incorporating provisions for the "evaluation, study, and research of the implementation status of the Act" into its regulations. The House of Representatives followed suit in 2022, introducing provisions for evaluating the implementation status of laws within its jurisdiction under Rule 178(J).

Institutional responsibility for PLS differs between the two houses: in the NA, this authority rests solely with the Legislative Management Committee, whereas in the HoR, the responsibility is shared across all parliamentary committees. Separately, the NA's Public Policy and Delegated Legislation Committee is tasked with reviewing delegated legislation, which forms an integral part of the broader PLS process.

To date, the NA's Legislative Management Committee has conducted PLS evaluations on the Social Behaviour Reform Act, the Infectious Disease Act, provisions on Dalit rights to land, the Public Procurement Act, child participation provisions under the Children's Act, and Section 19 of the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act (Baral, 2026).

The predominant challenge facing PLS implementation in Nepal, stated in the 2023 Legislative Management Committee Report indicates that implementation status of directions issued through PLS reports remains poor. Similarly, the House of Representatives' Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee has shown unsatisfactory follow-through on its own PLS findings. Compounding this, awareness of PLS remains low among government ministries and bodies, with many newly drafted bills continuing to lack PLS provisions altogether (Devkota, 2024).

## Laws

### *Monitoring and Evaluation Act 2080 (2024)*

Given that this Act was drafted after NPC’s M&E Guidelines were published in 2018 most of the responsibility and technical expertise is given upon the NPC. M&E must be regularly and periodically conducted at federal, provincial, and local levels. M&E should be based on (long-term vision, periodic plans, log-frames/results chains, gender equality and inclusion, international commitments, poverty and sustainability lenses) and what gets checked (resource flow, staffing, public/social audits, expected results, design and quality standards, implementation capacity, problems and remedies). This Act explicitly states that bodies responsible for M&E are OPMCM, NPC, ministries, departments, project chiefs, provincial governments, local governments and district assemblies whilst also allowing third parties. The Act does not specify the role of PRI nor does it mention PRI. NDAC is mandated to meet at least every 4 months, it is chaired by the PM and its core aim is to investigate underperforming projects therefore there is authority to even direct province and local levels on project implementation. MDAC chaired by the minister includes department heads and joint secretaries covering M&E reviews project implementation status meetings at least once per trimester.

### *Legislative Act 2081 (2025)*

The preamble states the purpose of this Act is to bring transparency to legislative drafting, increase public participation, ensure stakeholder involvement, and produce quality legislation. Section 36 clearly states that within one year after an Act completes five years from its commencement and every five years after that the concerned ministry must evaluate the status of that Act's implementation and submit a report to the Federal Parliament. Therefore, the evaluation is ministry led and NA and HoR mandated a report must be submitted to the legislative body consistently building a feedback loop.

### *Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act, 2064 (2008)*

The preamble frames the goal as making public administration citizen-oriented, accountable, transparent, inclusive and participatory, delivering results to the public, internalizing rule of law and corruption-free administration, decentralization, financial discipline, and efficient management of public resources. Section 38 establishes a Central Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, coordinated by the Chief Secretary and secretariat at the PM & Council of Ministers Office, tasked with monitoring and evaluating whether officials are performing their assigned work effectively and with quality; it allows parallel committees at province and district level, and requires every ministry to maintain its own evaluation and monitoring mechanism to feed the central one. Provision leaves virtually everything to be "as prescribed" by Rules, and is anchored in the PM's Office/Chief Secretary chain rather than NPC.

## Public Overview of Policy Evaluation

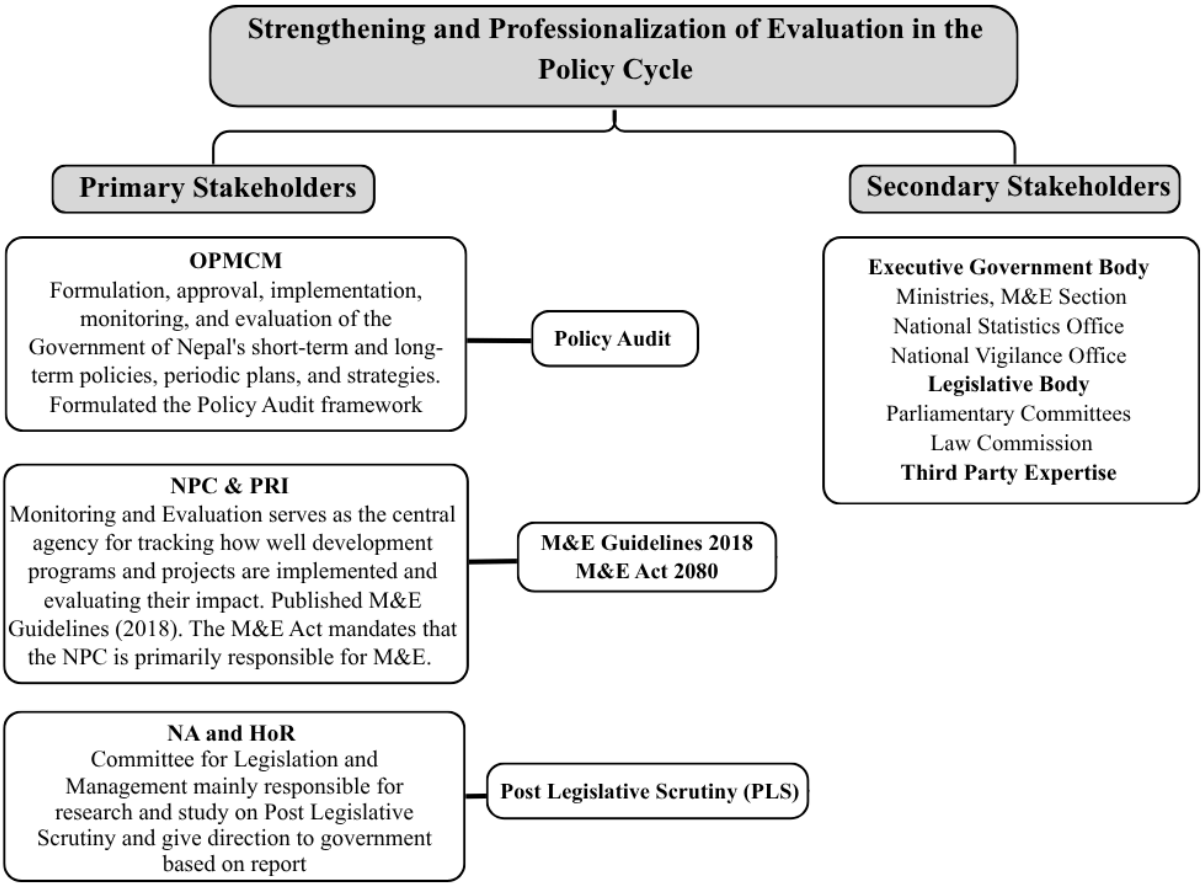
Recently, the PRI has shown renewed efforts to ground policymaking in evidence through research. For its August 1–5 2026 report submission to the OPMCM alone, eight reports were submitted for expert and internal review. This push extends to policy dialogue and planning as well, most recently around the 20-year-old National Drug Control Policy of 2063 (REPUBLICA, 2026). However, one of the biggest hurdles facing Nepal's research ecosystem is weak coordination between universities and policymakers. Tribhuvan University recently has been declared a vital collaborator for the NPC and PRI, but what about other universities that report that their research findings are rarely translated into policy briefs or formally shared with ministries or regulatory bodies for implementation. A telling example comes from Pokhara University, where a 120-page thesis on breastfeeding practices in Kaski never reached despite being a few kilometers given the struggles with maternal health outcomes faced by the municipality. The rhetoric of evidence-based policymaking, then, needs to translate into practice across federal, provincial, and local levels alike. A strong recommendation here is to treat research as a knowledge product rather than an academic obligation, building a formal system that connects universities directly with policymakers and decision-makers (Khabarhub, 2026).

Dr. Pandit identifies three core reasons behind the failure of public service delivery: people, process, and performance. On people, he notes a lack of expertise and capacity within the human resource pool: In Nepal generalists are appointed as bureaucrats and policymakers rather than technical specialists, and few students graduate from public policy administration or management programs. Compounding this, the politicization of appointments and transfers means political loyalty and patronage carry more weight than competence, producing a deeply personalistic bureaucratic system. On process, he points to ad hoc policymaking driven by urgency, political pressure, and crisis response rather than consistent procedure, with underutilized government budgets reflecting aggregated failures in planning, procurement, and execution. On performance, he cites a poor grasp of ground realities and a lack of accountability. Major

projects such as the Melamchi Water Supply Project, national highways, and the Hulaki Marg have all suffered delays and poor quality due to inadequate preparation, procurement bottlenecks, weak supervision, political interference, contractor-politician nexuses, and frequent staff transfers. Project reviews, he adds, tend to focus on budget disbursement rather than outcomes or quality, while oversight bodies like the Office of the Auditor General and parliamentary committees are not provided reports (Pandit, 2026).

Sharma likewise argues that policy evaluation is essential to evidence-based policymaking, since feedback drives improvement. Sweden's continuous evaluation system for targeted interventions, as seen in its Vision Zero initiative, shows how ongoing assessment enables adaptation and refinement. For research and data to be valued, he argues, they must be treated as implementable inputs for policy improvement (2026). Rauniyar adds that a contextual, community-led assessment of relevant variables lays a solid foundation for both research and outcomes. Building on Sharma's point, he stresses that program evaluation is central to evidence-based policymaking — most effective when it accounts for costs and benefits (tangible and intangible), enables monitoring, redirects funding away from underperforming programs, and scales successful ones. This evaluation process should involve key stakeholders throughout; politicians, ministries, bureaucrats, NGOs, and the private sector. In developing countries like Nepal, he notes, impact evaluations conducted through policy experiments are especially vital, given how critical efficacy is when funding is scarce (Rauniyar, 2023).

## Chapter 3: Stakeholder Map




## Chapter 4: Proposed Approach and Research/Analysis Methods

| Method | Purpose |
|---|---|
| Policy and Legal Documents | Review acts, bills, committee reports, previous evaluation frameworks |
| KIIs | Semi-structured interviews of all the identified stakeholders |
| Literature Review | Published reports, journal articles and research on policy evaluation in Nepal |
| Comparative Case Studies | Case Studies on policy evaluation structure of India, Japan and UK. |

## Chapter 5: Scope and Limitations

### Scope

Despite the mandate established under the Monitoring and Evaluation Act, 2080, policy evaluation is not carried out with any regularity in Nepal. This report responds to that gap by developing a policy recommendation for OPMCM to consolidate the frameworks that already exist and can function as policy evaluation tools principally OPMCM's own policy audit framework and post-legislative scrutiny, extending the scope of evaluation beyond the NPC M&E Guidelines.

**The unit of analysis:** institutional – existing frameworks and mandates that are applicable, or adaptable, as instruments of policy evaluation. The report does not evaluate any individual policy.

#### *Theory of Change*

**If** the evaluation framework is itself subjected to evaluation and reformed so that policy becomes a legitimate object of assessment;
**and** the institutions responsible for evaluating policy are clearly assigned and distinguished;
**and** the capability and continuity to carry out evaluation are secured across all tiers of the bureaucracy;
**and** evaluation is extended to the provincial and local levels through a designated institutional anchor;
**then** policy evaluation becomes a routine and repeatable function of government rather than an exceptional one; **and** evidence from evaluation begins to inform how policies are designed, revised and retired, closing the gap between what the state decides and what it learns.

### Limitations

This report's primary analysis rests on key informant interviews (KIIs), supported by analytical memos recording my own interpretation of the responses. To enable triangulation, KIIs were conducted across legislative bodies, executive bodies, and external organizations (UNDP and WFD). Still, 17 KIIs cannot support generalization, and respondents were purposely selected as experts already involved in evaluation-related work, yielding depth of experience, but reflecting the views of those embedded in these processes rather than actors outside them.

A second limitation is conceptual. In both law and practice, "evaluation" spills into adjacent terms: scrutiny, review, audit. It is used interchangeably or with institution-specific meanings. Respondents were at times describing the same function using different vocabulary, making it difficult to draw firm boundaries around what counts as policy evaluation.

Third, the design was shaped by its starting point. Following OPMCM's demand for policy evaluation, the study initially framed post-legislative scrutiny (PLS) as the potential framework, and the first questionnaires and stakeholder mapping followed that focus. The scope later broadened, but the early framing left some vital stakeholders uninterviewed, notably members of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee and directed outreach toward PLS experts; a case-based examination of specific policy evaluations would have complemented this.

Next, I came to this study without prior expertise in policy evaluation, and the knowledge applied here was built during the fellowship itself, through desk review, the Daayitwa-led workshops, and the interviews. This affects the analysis in two identifiable ways rather than generally. First, the study is stronger on institutional diagnosis than on operational design: translating the principle of evaluation into procedural steps: what each ministry would do, at each hierarchical level, so that officers at every tier

hold a defined part of the process, is not backed promisingly. Second, my methodological familiarity is confined to qualitative approaches, principally key informant interviews, focus group discussions and case studies. The wider repertoire of evaluation methods, particularly quantitative and theory-based approaches to establishing impact, lies outside my competence to assess.

Therefore, comparative material that depends on experimental or quasi-experimental capability has been set aside, and the measures proposed are confined to those requiring institutional discipline rather than analytical techniques I could not myself comprehend. Readers should treat the report's methodological prescriptions accordingly, and any subsequent operationalisation of these recommendations would benefit from technical input from evaluation specialists within the PRI, the NPC, or an external partner. This lies true with my lack of legal background for PLS as well which is best consulted with the Law Commission.

Finally, the transfer of my public partner at OPMCM created a gap in institutional knowledge and continuity, and interrupted regular communication and feedback of research’s progress.

## Chapter 6: Findings (Field Report / Consultation Summary)

The consultations conducted during the field period spanned the three constituencies relevant to policy evaluation in Nepal: parliamentary bodies at both federal and provincial levels, executive institutions including the OPMCM, NPC, PRI, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, and external organisations engaged in supporting evaluation practice. Taken together, the consultations produced a consistent account of a system in which the instruments of policy evaluation exist in law and guidance but are not exercised in practice, and in which the constraint lies less in the absence of frameworks than in the absence of a mechanism that compels their use.

The most widely shared finding was the distance between mandate and practice. Respondents from across the legislature and the executive described obligations that are formally established yet have produced almost no output: no PLS reports have been submitted, only two projects have been evaluated under the Monitoring and Evaluation Act, 2080, and the policy audit function is described as not yet actualised. Where evaluation does occur, respondents characterised it as compliance without consequence, noting that scrutiny has been conducted in some form but that its impact has not materialised and its findings have not been utilised. A recurring explanation was the absence of self initiatives. Evaluation, several respondents observed, begins only when it is externally demanded, whether by government instruction or by a specific request, and no institution is presently obliged to initiate it in the ordinary course of its work.

A second finding concerns conceptual and legal ambiguity, which respondents raised without prompting and which appears to be a substantive obstacle rather than a matter of vocabulary. Officials asked directly what distinguishes auditing from legislative review, scrutiny from evaluation, and policy review from policy evaluation, and one described the policy cycle itself as abstract.

Third, respondents consistently identified the point of policy formulation as the origin of the evaluation problem. Policies were described as arriving without indicators, without costing, and drafted with sufficient looseness that criteria for subsequent evaluation cannot be derived from them. Needs assessment was reported as largely absent, with one respondent observing that the government does not hold enough information to establish what a policy is required to address.

Almost unanimously it was agreed that executive bodies are best placed to evaluate, on the grounds that they understand policy intent, hold the relevant data, and are therefore best positioned to set indicators, with one respondent contending that proximity produces grounded rather than biased assessment. Respondents from oversight and research bodies emphasized that self-evaluation must be verified and proposed quality control, third-party scoring, or comparison against an independent assessment. Situating parliamentary bodies, OPMCM, NPC, PRI have technical and coordination institutions for the executive body to submit the evaluation reports.

Fifth, respondents were consistent in identifying the OPMCM as the institution best placed to coordinate evaluation across government. There were concerns about duplication within the OPMCM's own reporting arrangements, and about the policy lab, which respondents described as established under the OPMCM but not yet functioning as intended. On institutional demarcation, respondents were broadly aligned: the NPC's expertise is concentrated on projects, the PRI is better positioned to lead on policy research and evaluation, and a clearer division of responsibility between the two is required. Several

institutions with relevant capacity were identified as available but unmobilized, in particular the Law Commission, whose autonomy and legal expertise respondents proposed could be organised into a standing post-legislative scrutiny team serving ministries, and the National Statistics Office, whose outputs were reported as not reaching the bodies that formulate and evaluate policy.

Sixth, respondents identified capability, continuity and evidence infrastructure as the practical constraints on implementation. Training was described as minimal and declining, with exposure to evaluation methods acquired principally through external partners rather than through government provision, and with an absence of toolkits or procedural guidance for officials to apply. The frequency of bureaucratic transfer emerged as a distinct and repeatedly cited obstacle, with respondents noting that evaluation processes are interrupted, that institutional memory is lost, and that a review conducted across a change of officer will not be conducted consistently. A relevant precedent was identified in the institutional memory handover framework operating in the Lumbini Province OPMCM. The existing OPMCM online monitoring system was proposed as a base that could be extended across the federal, provincial and local tiers rather than replaced.

Finally, and cutting across every other finding, respondents described a systematic failure of utilisation. Reports are produced and submitted, but ministers and officials do not engage with them, officials do not understand how findings are to be used, and no institution is obliged to respond. One respondent framed this as the absence of a loop, questioning whether the government will refer to reports at all and therefore whether auditing or evaluation can be effective. Another framed it as a question of mandate, asking who is required to execute what parliamentary committees have recommended, and observing that failure to act constitutes a failure to serve the public. Against this, respondents articulated what the mechanism is for: post-legislative scrutiny was described as a tool that equips parliamentarians with evidence to scrutinise the executive and thereby enables a feedback loop, achieved through a direct mandate on government to submit its own evaluation for parliamentary examination. The consultations therefore suggest that the decisive gap in Nepal's evaluation system is not the production of evidence but the obligation to answer it, and that this is the point at which any reform of the framework must be directed.

# Chapter 7: Analysis

## Thematic Analysis of the KIIs

The following presents excerpts from the key informant interviews, organised by theme. The analysis is structured across five sections: the current practice of policy evaluation, the evaluability of policy at the point of formulation, institutional architecture, enabling conditions, and the utilisation of evaluation findings. Divergent positions and deviant cases are presented separately in the final section.

### *7.1. Current Practice of Policy Evaluation*

The following excerpts describe the gap between the evaluation mandate as it exists in law and guidance, and evaluation as it is practised.

#### 7.1.1. The Mandate–Practice Gap

**Absence of Output**

"There have been 0 PLS reports."

"There have not been any report submissions because there have not been any initiative to conduct PLS or even initiate research."

"So far based on the M&E Act two projects have been evaluated through the NPC."

**Compliance Without Effect**

"In one way or another PLS does take place, the impact of PLS has not been materialized. PLS has been implemented but it has not impacted and the full utilization has not been formalized."

"Policy audit practice is not actualized."

"The way PLS should be conducted has not happened."

"These project evaluations take place based on the government's demands."

"External stakeholders are not used for evaluation, the request for third party stakeholder involvement for evaluation has to come from the government."

#### 7.1.2. Conceptual and Legal Ambiguity

**Overlapping Terminology**

"What is the difference between auditing, legislative review, scrutiny, evaluation?"

"So what is the difference between law review and PLS? Similarly, what is the difference between policy review and policy evaluation?"

"There are so many frameworks, overlap, there is policy review/audit/evaluation/scrutiny."

"The policy cycle itself is abstract."

"Fundamental law review can be conducted through desk review but PLS demands civic engagement."

"Evaluation: impact vs implementation assessment."

"For eg: the evaluation of the M&E Act itself is a PLS."

**Unclear Terms of Reference**

"TOR and steps for policy evaluation are not clear."

"OPMCM TOR leads with clarity. Legal clarity needs to be led."

"Clear TOR for NPC on whether PRI would now be responsible for M&E of policies."

#### 7.1.3. Prioritisation and Proportionality

**Selective Application**

"PLS of a full bill is very ambitious, but you should do a section/clause."

"Entire law does not go under PLS, it is not realistic to actually go over the entire law, there isn't enough human capacity, time and money."

"Given that PLS for an entire law can be costly, there is a lot of time and resources, however PLS can be practiced selectively. There can be basic comparative study."

**Criteria for Selection**

"How to pick? 1. Pressing public issues. 2. There are certain laws that do not need PLS such as budgets, that happen annually. 3. Agenda and prioritization of which law/policy should undergo PLS."

"Area selection. Act selection. Theme selection. Provision selection."

"Service delivery laws require PLS, the ones that directly engage the public with the GoN."

"Each and every year the policies do not need to be checked."

**Practicality in Agenda-Setting**

"Policy agenda-setting needs to be realistic, with a proper understanding of the available resources."

"Prioritization setting for which policy needs to be evaluated: based on what the ministry's responsibilities and objectives are."

Aggregation as Policy Evaluation

"Multiple laws can be combined and it can be evaluated, that could be a policy evaluation. Laws can impact each other."

### *7.2. Policy Design and Evaluability*

The following excerpts describe the condition of policies at the point of approval and its consequences for whether they can subsequently be evaluated.

### 7.2.1. Absence of Indicators and Costing

"Policies do not frame indicators."

"Policies are long but there is no cost for it."

"Policies are loose, therefore it is difficult to set a criteria for post evaluation."

"The government does not have a fixed indicator."

### 7.2.2. Missing Front-End Assessment

"Challenge: policy harmonization, there is no policy need assessment."

"What is the need? Is there a need assessment? The government does not have enough information to actually know what is required."

"In order to effectively engage stakeholders, there needs to be a needs assessment. This also reduces centralization when it comes to policymaking."

### 7.2.3. Coherence of the Policy Stock

**Volume and Duplication**

"There are multiple policies for handwashing, mouth health etc, there are so many policies within the national health policy it is difficult to analyze one whole policy where there are so many sub sections to it."

"Constitution's Bhag 4: there are 13 broad categories, the national policies are over 90. Therefore, it was to check the coherence of national policies and national law, which needs to be removed and amended."

**Absence of a Common Format**

"How should a policy be formulated, what is the format? We need a common format, where all ministries apply the same format. The same ministry sends different formats."

**The Linear Assumption**

"There is a linear thinking model, once a policy is decided it will be automatically implemented."

"The process is  just of lawmaking and policymaking but there is no analysis of the implementation."

## *7.3. Institutional Architecture*

The following excerpts address who should conduct evaluation, how institutional mandates relate to one another, and how evaluation operates across the tiers of government.

### 7.3.1. Locus of First Evaluation

**Ministry-Led Evaluation**

"The intention of the policy that needs to be evaluated is best understood by the ones who are implementing the policies. Therefore, they are best suited for setting indicators."

"Given that this is a government, it is unlikely that there is bias in the evaluation; rather there is more chances of conducting a grounded evaluation."

"Ministries are the executing body, they have more resources and they already have the data."

"It is most effective when the government sets the indicators, the desired outcomes are planned by the government. Therefore, the government is most responsible to know what should be expected from the policy."

**Verification**

"If the ministries conduct self evaluation how can it be verified?"

"There are no chances for bias if there is evaluation from the ministries, there needs to be further check and balance of how the evaluation was conducted."

"Internal evaluations can be conducted by the ministries, self evaluation has to undergo quality control."

"Self audit can also take place, then this must undergo a verification (which can take place through technical experts like PRI, NPC, Office of Auditor General) — they can score it, therefore the score can be compared with the self-audit."

**A Sequenced Model**

"The Government needs to do the evaluation on their own, then the evaluation needs to be sent to the parliament. If the parliament thinks that there needs to be further investigation then parliament needs to conduct the PLS."

"The line ministry has to conduct PLS and it has to be submitted to parliament."

"The PLS report needs to be submitted to OPMCM, not just the Federal Committee."

### 7.3.2. The Role of the OPMCM

**As Coordinator and Enforcer**

"Supervision and oversight should come from OPMCM."

"OPMCM should hold ministries accountable."

"OPMCM can be held responsible for ensuring that ministries are conducting evaluations."

"Center of Excellence: OPMCM is centrally responsible for monitoring and evaluation."

"OPMCM needs to collaborate with every level of government, from MoLJPA to the District Administration Office."

**Institutional Visibility**

"OPMCM needs to engage more, parliamentary committees do not know what the OPMCM role exactly is, they are still unaware who the right point of contact is within the OPMCM."

"There is a personal level relationship but not necessarily at a committee level."

"Still unclear how much the OPMCM coordination is focused on policy."

**Internal Duplication**

"Even the OPMCM has shown duplication in tasks and responsibilities. For example, the previously developed monitoring website uses similar criteria, yet the current OPMCM requires the same information to be submitted in a different spreadsheet. Officers have to fill in the same information twice."

**The Policy Lab**

"Policy Lab: executive policy decisions are made from OPMCM, therefore this is established in the OPMCM. The policies brought forth by the ministries will be discussed in the policy lab."

"If there are any national policies, then before the policy undergoes the cabinet it goes through the policy lab. It has not entirely been effective yet, the function of the policy lab has not been entirely functioning."

### 7.3.3. Mandate Demarcation

**NPC and PRI**

"PRI should be responsible for research in NPC, especially for policies given that NPC has been specializing in projects."

"Evaluation is NPC's core function, but so far only project evaluations."

"The NPC has been an observer on the execution level. This gives them the access to give indicators for post policy evaluation."

"Policy Audit: Ministry is responsible; Technical: PRI; Other support from OPMCM."

"Government: mainly reporting of what has been implemented and not. Whereas an indepth research focused evaluation should be conducted from PRI."

**Underused Institutions**

"The Law Commission has not been effectively utilized; it is a strong entity for evaluation, especially given that it is an autonomous body."

"Instead of increasing human resources in each ministry, the Law Commission can have PLS expertise and these officers can be mobilized as technical expertise for PLS in government."

"National Statistics: There needs to be further advocacy, they need to outreach and they need to present the existing surveys and findings they have found and alert the ministries and OPMCM of what the findings indicate. The government needs to be attached with the Statistics office."

"Third party audit: national vigilance center."

"OPMCM cannot conduct this on their own, the OPMCM must consult with NPC, PRI, universities, and parliamentary bodies."

**Parliamentary Boundaries**

"While parliamentary committees can initiate evaluations and establish the relevant criteria and indicators, they often lack the executive authority to mandate report submissions or oversee follow-up actions."

"Parliamentary committees sometimes intervene in others' roles and this is a disturbance to the government. The parliamentary committee needs to concisely understand what their role is, they should not intervene in small micro issues."

"The Public Accounts Committee is so far the most active committee; the joint evaluation committee is not strong."

### 7.3.4. Federalism in Evaluation

**Provincial Practice**

"Sushasan Ein: Delegated legislation was checked, even the provincial government was involved. After the review it was evident that the law is not effective. Therefore, it was evident that PLS was successful and it evidently showed what was working and not."

"There is an effort to reintroduce the PLS framework with adjustments deemed relevant. It follows a process similar to PLS."

"M&E Act: the provinces have reflected and implemented similarly."

**Reporting to the Centre**

"OPMCM should receive reports from all seven provinces outlining their demands, needs, challenges, and the measures being taken to address them."

"PMO needs to be Nirdesika where all the 7 provinces need to report to the federal and OPMCM in order to maintain the coordination. The provincial government works closer with the local government. Therefore the provincial government can be mobilized to submit reports to the federal government."

**Coordination Across Tiers**

"As we are a federal country, is the law applicable just at the federal level or local/provincial level? There is a lack of policy coordination in ministerial and federalism coordination."

"Federal structure: all levels must be implemented."

### *7.4. Enabling Conditions*

The following excerpts address the capability, continuity, motivation and evidence base required for evaluation to be carried out.

#### 7.4.1. Capability and Training

"Training design happens, but the technical skill of evaluation is not entirely spent on enough resources or focus."

"There is a lack of toolkits built within committees."

"There is training, but there is minimal training. The concept of PLS was only exposed through WFD, the government needs to build these opportunities for their employers."

"M&E training is mandatory, the number of training has decreased."

"Partnerships with external bodies but this does not happen frequently such as the PSP UNDP led project."

"Training is thoroughly required, capacity building."

#### 7.4.2. Continuity and Institutional Memory

"Lack of institutional memory. There are constant transfers of bureaucrats."

"As the rule of law demands bureaucrats to transfer, it is difficult to conduct PLS with the same bureaucrat as the perspective and way of conducting the PLS can differ throughout the review."

"Given that there is a frequent transfer of bureaucrats it is difficult to entirely process M&E."

"Institution memory handover is part of knowledge management — this was started and implemented in the Lumbini Province. OPMCM has an institutional memory handover framework."

"Succession Planning: this is the responsibility of making your personal agenda very clear to your successor, physically they must be with their successor to clearly indicate what their responsibilities are."

#### 7.4.3. Motivation and Procedural Burden

"Evaluation requires a huge will and commitment from within ministries and there needs to be an incentive alongside training."

"There needs to be willpower to actually conduct PLS."

"The act of empowering yourself with the agency of extending the capability of what you can do with the position you hold. Therefore, how committed are you to fulfill your responsibility?"

"Procedural relaxes exist, for a lot of bureaucrats evaluation is a pushing factor, therefore there needs to be more accessible easy steps towards evaluation for a better quality or at least more frequent evaluation. Clear, simple, precise."

"The Monitoring and Evaluation framework needs to be friendly and accessible."

### 7.4.4. Evidence Infrastructure

**Data Fragmentation**

"We do not have the data to M&E, integrated data is not accessible, data gets lost."

"Lack of data utilization."

"Impact assessment is also PLS. This requires immense data."

**Accessibility of Records**

"Need for digitizations of all reports, the websites include recent reports but it is still inaccessible to retrieve information from old archives."

"We need a record of how many reports have been published."

**An Existing Platform**

"As the OPMCM has already formed an online monitoring system, OPMCM can expand this system on federal-provincial-local level and therefore have an overall integration data system that is backed with evidence."

Monitoring and Evaluation

"Monitoring is valued more than evaluation, there are joint monitoring committees (NPC, OPMCM, MoF) set with milestone targets."

"Without a strong monitoring system, evaluation will not be effective. There needs to be clear process metric monitoring."

"Policy monitoring: Act, but it is not evaluated, therefore whether monitoring is implemented has to be evaluated."

### 7.4.5. Resources

"Resource: budget, technical capacity, outcome analysis expertise."

"Resource management/allocation for M&E: there are enough resources within ministries to conduct evaluation."

"Resources should be increased."

"The budget has allocated that law will be evaluated."

"Policy audit is allocated in the budget."

## *7.5. Utilisation of Evaluation Findings*

The following excerpts address what happens to evaluation outputs once they have been produced.

**Reports Not Acted Upon**

"Multiple prativedan is presented but the minister and officers might not be fully engaged in actually reviewing that."

"The responsibilities are not being conducted effectively, people are not understanding the importance of reports and the further process of how the reports can be utilized."

"Challenge: whether the government will actually refer to the reports, there is a lack of loop of how effective the auditing or evaluation actually will be."

**Absence of a Response Obligation**

"Good Governance: the commitment to structure, clear targets, the questions and inquiries need to be actualized, there needs to be a response."

"Whatever the parliamentary committees have indicated, who is mandated to execute it? The parliament is the public representation, therefore not acting upon it is refusing to serve the public."

"Is the agenda of evaluation in the government or the parliament, there is lack of responsiveness from both."

**The Feedback Loop as Purpose**

"PLS is a tool that uses evidence as a tool to empower the parliamentarians. It is a tool to give the parliamentarians a tool to scrutinize the executive body which actually enables a feedback loop."

"The best way parliaments can be empowered through the feedback loop which will be achieved through a direct mandate of the government submitting a self evaluation report to the parliament to examine whether PLS is required."

### *7.6. Divergent Positions and Deviant Cases*

Two matters on which respondents did not converge, and one case that runs against the dominant finding, are recorded separately.

**Divergence on the Adequacy of Resources**

Respondents differed on whether resources constrain evaluation. One position holds that "there are enough resources within ministries to conduct evaluation" and that the budget has been allocated for both law evaluation and policy audit. The contrary position identifies budget, technical capacity and expertise as binding constraints, and cites cost as the reason full post-legislative scrutiny is unrealistic. The two positions may be reconcilable if the allocated budget is not being drawn down for want of initiation, which would locate the problem within Section 7.1.1 rather than in resourcing.

**Divergence on the Credibility of Self-Evaluation**

As set out in Section 7.3.1, respondents are divided on whether ministry self-evaluation is credible. The division tracks institutional location: the executive respondent defended self-evaluation on grounds of proximity to policy intent, while respondents from oversight and research bodies raised questions of bias and verification.

**Deviant Case: Evaluation Practised Under Other Names**

One respondent reported being unfamiliar with the concept of post-legislative scrutiny, yet described a committee work plan already containing evaluative activity structured across a four-week cycle of legislative work, oversight, stakeholder engagement and monthly review, together with "a constant conversation of what is working and what is not working, an informal analysis of bills." This case indicates that evaluative practice occurs informally, under other designations, disconnected from the formal framework, and qualifies the finding in Section 7.1.1 that evaluation is not taking place.

## Comparative Case Study

| **India** | **Japan** | **UK** |
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| *Department of M&E Office (DMEO) Niti Aayog (DMEO, 2022)*<br><br>Niti Aayog is a policy think tank constituted in 2015. DMEO is a merged product of the Program Evaluation Office and the Independent Evaluation Office. DMEO is mandated to active M&E implementation scheme, programs and initiatives of Government of India (GoI). There are national conferences on M&E virtually every year.<br><br>Indian's 2016 Union Budget established the principle that every scheme carries a sunset date and a mandatory outcome review. Schemes are appraised on a 5 year cycle synchronized to the Finance Commission period.<br><br>DMEO conducts the evaluations | *Government Policy Evaluations Act (Japanese Law Translation, 2021)*<br><br>There is a mandate in Article 6 that at intervals of at least 3 and no more than 5 years the head of an administrative organ must establish a basic plan for policy evaluations.<br><br>Article 7 states that annually head of administrative organ must establish a plan for implementing ex-post evaluations (implementation plan)<br><br>Article 9 mandated that ex-ante evaluations are mandatory by the same administrative organ (does not have to be the head)<br><br>Article 10 Mandates the head of the administrative organ to conduct policy evaluation report | *Magenta Book (HM Treasury, 2026)*<br><br>Policy evaluation is governed by a combination of Cabinet Office and HM Treasury.<br><br>Rationale: Why is the government intervening? What is the problem? What does the evidence say?<br><br>Objective: What would success from the intervention look like?<br><br>Appraisal: What are the options for intervening? What is the evidence on the likely effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of these options? (Theory of Change)<br>Monitoring: Data collection to answer the questions: Did we do what we said we would do? How are our success metrics changing over time? |

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| of centrally sponsored schemes; ministries commission third-party agencies for central sector schemes; the Department of Expenditure coordinates the exercise, and findings feed directly into decisions to redesign, merge, discontinue, or continue each scheme with a determined resource envelope.<br><br>Three modes: consultancy through advertisement/bidding (Expression of Interest, two-stage bidding, technical and financial bids weighted 70:30); consultancy by empanelment (institutions pre-qualified by DMEO, invited to submit financial bids directly); and consultancy by nomination (direct award to an institution DMEO considers most suitable). Nomination and empanelment carry a financial ceiling of ₹25 lakh; bidding has none. | Chapter IV has allocated the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MoIAC) to conduct an evaluation of all the evaluation reports submitted by different ministries. The evaluation is conducted based on necessity, efficiency and effectiveness.<br>Each fiscal year MoIAC must establish a plan for evaluations. The plan must include basic guidelines on implementing evaluations, declare the policies Minister seeks to make the subject of evaluation after the revision is conducted it must be public. | Evaluation: Research and analysis to answer the questions: Did the intervention work as expected? What was the impact, on who, and why? Was it cost-effective?<br>- Before/Ex-Ante: Working through appraisal, piloting and early testing. How intervention is expected to work (evidence), risks, uncertainties, baseline evidence<br>- During: Gaining evidence about the efficacy of the intervention‘s design. Is the intervention being delivered as intended? Is the intervention working as intended? Is it working in the same way in different areas and for different target groups? What are the early indications of possible effect size? How is it operating in practice? Are there any unintended consequences? Can design or delivery be improved (‘in-flight adjustments’)?<br>- After/Ex-post: Implementation and outcome. Did it work? Contribution? Compare it with what was predicted in the appraisal. Unintended |

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| | | negative impacts? Value for money? Transferable lesson?<br><br>Feedback: What have we learnt? How will we use these results in future?<br><br>Value of Money Evaluation<br>Full evaluation type that benchmarks realised costs and benefits against the expectations set at appraisal, and requires accounting for non-monetisable social value that no benefit-cost ratio can capture<br><br>Proportionate evaluation<br>1. Evaluability Assessment: A formal check on whether an intervention can meaningfully be evaluated before resources are committed to evaluating it.<br>2. A short study registration suffices for smaller or lower-risk evaluations<br>3. Higher-stakes ones require a full protocol and a pre-registered statistical analysis plan |
| *OECD M&E*<br><br>DMEO applies Relevance, Coherence, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Sustainability, Impact and Equity guidelines.<br><br>*Output-Outcome Monitoring* | *Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle (PDAC) (Ministry of Finance , n.d.)*<br><br>This is an evaluation guideline presented by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). They stipulate basic matters related to policy | *Post Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) (Kelly & Everett, 2013)*<br><br>1. Cabinet Office guidance requires that "taken together, the impact assessment, explanatory notes and other |

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| *Framework*<br><br>Published annually alongside the Union Budget, which pairs every scheme's financial outlay with defined output and outcome indicators and numerical targets<br><br>*Quick Assessment Studies Toolkit*<br><br>For short-duration, need-based appraisals when a full evaluation is not proportionate.<br><br>*M&E Competency Framework (2020-21)*<br><br>Defines the M&E skills expected of central and state officials and is delivered through Administrative Training Institutes and the iGOT-Karmayogi platform, the institutionalised version of your training recommendation. | evaluation in the plan. MoF prepares an implementation plan and a pre-analysis table that describes the content of the goals, any efforts to achieve them, and measurement indicators every fiscal year. After each policy is implemented the policy effects are identified, analyzed, and evaluated. Finally, a Policy Evaluation Report is prepared. | statements made during the passage of a bill should give sufficient indication of the bill's objectives to allow any post-legislative reviewing"<br>2. The departmental memorandum: 3-5 years after Royal Assent, the responsible department must submit a memorandum on the Act to the relevant Commons departmental select committee, published as a Command Paper<br>3. The select committee receives the memorandum and decides whether to conduct a fuller post-legislative inquiry.<br>4. Where a committee proceeds, it issues a call for written evidence framed around a small set of questions<br>5. The department responds to the committee's report and recommendations |

## Researcher's Memo

Personally, this felt like a mammoth task. As a recent undergraduate of Political Science and Global Development Studies returning to Nepal after eight years, to produce policy recommendations for the OPMCM seemed incapable. The initial demand, "policymaking happens a lot in Nepal, we need to start evaluating them" left me genuinely unsure on how the research should begin.

An ongoing desk review of policy evaluation interventions in Nepal, followed by several advisory meetings, brought me to PLS as a possible framework. With my public partner's initial approval and a plan focused on PLS, the research began. It then stalled when my public partner was transferred. What followed was a period of uncertainty over whether the demand for policy evaluation still stood, compounded by my own limited understanding of how responsibility for policy evaluation actually sits within the office.

The KIIs that followed produced considerable learning, particularly from stakeholders directly engaged in PLS. As someone without a legal background, understanding legislative drafting, review and scrutiny required substantial effort. A great confusion was that evaluation, review, scrutiny and audit were used interchangeably by respondents and in the literature, and it was not obvious how far these terms needed to be distinguished from one another. This led me to settle on working definitions:

Evaluation: A systematic and purposeful undertaking carried out by internal and external evaluators to appraise the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts and sustainability generated by policies, plans, programmes and projects under or after implementation. (NPC, 2018)

Scrutiny: Parliamentary scrutiny can make the government's legislation, policy and delivery both more legitimate and better, through:

- providing the transparency and accountability that flows from government ministers having to regularly explain and justify ideas and decisions to parliament;
- ensuring input from a broad range of perspectives, including parliamentarians, experts and the public;
- allowing flaws in proposals to be pointed out, failures to be brought to light, and amendments to be suggested; and
- causing ministers and officials to better think through plans in advance, knowing that parliament will scrutinise them, sometimes called 'anticipated reactions'. (Hall, 2017)

Audit: A systematic review of a set of policies and policy processes, usually focused on a particular theme or area of policy. (Nepal, 2021)

My strongest conclusion from working through these overlapping definitions is that the differences in vocabulary obscure the functions the terms share. Treating them as distinct instruments narrows the range of tools available for evaluation, when in practice each of them can serve that purpose. This is the origin of my emphasis on existing frameworks. What OPMCM needs to recognise is not a gap in instruments but a gap in coordination and, in particular, the technical expertise that evaluation requires, which can be mobilised by identifying the bodies already conducting this work informally or as the need arises, and

empowering them. The National Statistics Office, the Law Commission and external organisations are the clearest candidates.

A second observation emerged as I spoke with the PRI, NPC, and respondents not directly involved in PLS. Their reactions to PLS were mixed. There was agreement that it is an effective framework, alongside uncertainty as to whether parliamentary bodies are the right entities to conduct evaluation, given how little they have been involved in the process to date. PLS was consistently understood as legal scrutiny alone. My own reading is that it is a considerably more flexible framework, one that extends to policy, particularly because policies are often introduced with the intention of implementing laws. It is also, importantly, a tool directed at the executive: it mandates that executive bodies conduct their own evaluation, which parliamentary bodies then review, engaging and empowering the legislature in the process. That this reading was not shared indicates a gap in how frameworks introduced by one department or body are understood elsewhere in government. Knowledge transfer, therefore, needs to move both vertically and horizontally.

A third source of nervousness was whether I was the right person for this task at all. I do not hold expertise in policy evaluation, and I became conscious of that early. What I brought instead was an ongoing process of self-learning, supported by the Daayitwa-led workshops and by the KIIs themselves which, honestly, gave me the tip of the iceberg of a technical field far larger than the fellowship period allowed me to cover. That gap is still evident to me in one specific respect. I continue to find it difficult to take the theoretical understanding of evaluation and translate it into official procedural steps: what each ministry would actually do, at each hierarchical level, so that officers at every tier carry a defined part of the process and evaluation becomes participatory rather than confined to few. Moving from concept to procedure is where my limits are clearest, and I have flagged where the report relies on principle rather than operational detail as a result.

A further layer is methodological. My familiarity with qualitative methods and the wider repertoire of evaluation methods, particularly the quantitative and theory-based approaches used to establish impact, remains close to foreign to me. This shaped what I was able to assess and what I chose not to recommend, and I have been deliberate in confining the recommendations to measures that require institutional discipline rather than analytical techniques I could not myself evaluate.

Finally, and consistently throughout, the challenges I heard were accompanied by considerable motivation. Most of my interactions were with bureaucrats who had pioneered or been directly involved in evaluation innovations, and there was a real sense among them that solutions can be revised and reintroduced. That rigour and willingness was the most encouraging finding of the fellowship.

## Chapter 8: Discussion and Policy Implications

The Monitoring and Evaluation Act, 2080 does not omit indicators. Section 4(1) refers to the results framework, and Section 4(2) directs that monitoring and evaluation take as their basis "the indicators relating to investment and returns determined at the time the Plan was approved." Read closely, this is an instruction to the evaluator to use indicators if they exist. It is not an obligation on the body formulating the policy to produce them. The Act therefore presumes a condition that no instrument requires anyone to create, which explains why respondents describe policies as un-evaluable without any of them being in breach of the law. The gap is not a failure of compliance; it is a drafting gap, and it is repairable through the Cabinet approval process without amending the Act.

Strengthening evidence-to-policy translation is usually approached as a problem of evidence supply, met by creating research capacity or commissioning more studies. The evidence here points elsewhere. Evidence is generated, policies are monitored, reports are written and submitted. What is missing is the set of connective obligations that make evidence consequential: an indicator framework that makes a policy assessable, a recurring trigger that makes assessment occur, criteria that make it affordable, a named owner that makes it attributable, and a response duty that makes it count.

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

This study asked how policy evaluation might be institutionalised in Nepal through the frameworks that already exist. The answer the evidence supports is that Nepal does not need a new evaluation framework. It has several — the Monitoring and Evaluation Act, 2080 and the National Planning Commission's Guidelines, PLS under the Legislation Act, 2081, OPMCM's policy audit function, and the constitutional committee on directive principles and state policies. What it lacks is the small set of obligations that would cause any of them to operate on a policy.

Four gaps account for the failure, and each is narrower than it appears. First, no instrument requires a policy to carry measurable indicators when it is approved; the M&E Act instructs evaluators to use indicators determined at approval without obliging anyone to produce them, so policies are un-evaluable without anyone being in breach. Second, no recurring event triggers evaluation, so it happens only when demanded. Third, effort is allocated by category membership rather than by risk, cost or learning potential, which leaves standalone national policies outside every enumerated class. Fourth, and decisively, every reporting line in the Act terminates inside the executive, and no institution (inside or outside the chain of command) is obliged to answer what it receives.

The consultations confirm each of these in practice and add two findings the documents cannot supply. Officials themselves cannot reliably distinguish audit, review, scrutiny and evaluation, and face contradictory review intervals across the Constitution, the Legislation Act and committee practice; conceptual ambiguity is therefore an operational obstacle, not a matter of terminology. And practitioners across the legislature and executive independently proposed the sequence that comparative practice has settled on: the line ministry evaluates first, submits upward, and Parliament determines whether deeper scrutiny follows. That convergence indicates the model is institutionally plausible in Nepal rather than transplanted.

The comparative evidence sharpens rather than replaces this. Japan shows with brevity that the policy cycle must be synchronized with the fiscal cycle and appoints the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications as the final check and balance to cross check each department's evaluation. India demonstrates that evaluation becomes routine when it is attached to a consequence, a scheme cannot be continued or refunded without it, and that indicators fixed at budget approval make schemes evaluable by construction. The United Kingdom demonstrates that a cheap, near-universal departmental self-review can carry a system that selective parliamentary scrutiny cannot, and that the government's published response to findings is what converts a report into a decision. All  point to the same conclusion: the binding constraint on evidence-to-policy translation in Nepal is connective, not evidential. Evidence is produced; nothing requires it to be answered.

This is the study's most consequential implication, because connective obligations cost less to establish than institutions, and because most of them sit within OPMCM's existing authority. Reviewing the Guidelines, which are administrative rather than statutory; mandating indicator frameworks and needs assessments through the Cabinet submission process; publishing an evaluation calendar synchronised to the fiscal cycle; designating and publicising a policy evaluation focal point; and requiring ministries to publish a response to each evaluation.

## Chapter 10: Policy Recommendations

### Subject The Evaluation Framework Itself to Evaluation

1. Evaluate the NPC M&E Guidelines: The Guidelines are the operative instrument in daily practice for policies as well, yet they remain oriented almost entirely toward programs and projects. As an administrative instrument they can be reviewed immediately, without waiting for a statutory window. OPMCM should initiate this review and apply its own policy audit, evaluation, framework, as the assessment tools. This can be directed to the OPMCM's policy lab.
    a. Factor in the collaboration between NPC, PRI and TU: How will the TORs change?
    b. Recognizing the policy lab initiative of OPMCM as a strong and relevant entity for policy experiments, the evaluation of such experiments is vital evidence.
    c. Recognize Law Commission as a strong advising entity to execute PLS as a framework for evaluation
    d. Recognize that the National Statistic Office is an essential stakeholder for data and should be included in each stage of evaluation.
    e. Note that NPC, PRI, OPMCM, Law Commission, parliamentary committees and external organizations are most suitable to cross check the ministries evaluation report
    f. Include the UK inspired ex-ante (appraisal) step to evaluation procedure as a mandate to assess the formulation of a policy.
    g. Third party evaluator selection process: Consultancy through advertisement/bidding (Expression of Interest, two-stage bidding, technical and financial bids weighted 70:30); Consultancy by empanelment (institutions pre-qualified by PRI/NPC/OPMCM/Law Commission, invited to submit financial bids directly); and Consultancy by nomination (direct award to an institution, include OPMCM's Talent Forum). Nomination and empanelment could carry a financial ceiling; bidding has none.

2. Prepare the ground for PLS of the M&E Act, 2080. Formally introduced only three years ago, the Act does not yet fall within the scrutiny window contemplated by the Legislation Act, 2081. The recommendation is therefore one of sequencing: OPMCM should now identify the specific clauses requiring scrutiny.
    a. Mandate to synchronise policy cycle with the fiscal cycle
    b. Mandate measurable evaluative indicators at the point of policy formulation, given that policies consequently arrive un-evaluable by design (all policies must undergo ex-ante or policy experimentation)
    c. Identify National Statistics Office, National Vigilance Office, Law Commission, parliamentary bodies (NA and HoR) as additional vital entities for policy evaluation.
    d. Mandate that all policies must undergo the cycle of evaluation: Policy Proposal → Ex-Ante → Implementation → During Evaluation → Ex-post evaluation → Feedback → Response.
    e. Mandate for each ministry to submit their work plan that includes which policies are aimed to be evaluated, a clear agenda setting of explaining the chosen policies for evaluation, including timeframe for all stages of evaluation.
    f. Mandate that all stages and findings of evaluation reports must be submitted to NPC, PRI, OPMCM alongside the organization ministry has chosen to evaluate their evaluation.
    g. Mandate that all self evaluation and assessment must undergo an audit/quality check by a third party entity such as PRI, OPMCM, parliamentary bodies or third party.
3. OPMCM should evaluate its own declared policies using either policy audit, PLS frameworks or NPC M&E Guidelines and submit them to NPC and PRI.

## Clarify Institutional Mandates

4. Delineate the terms of reference of NPC, PRI, and the policy lab. With the policy lab established under OPMCM and both NPC and PRI serving as advisory bodies to it, overlapping mandates are a foreseeable risk.
    a. Position PRI as the lead institution for policy evaluation technical expertise. PRI, with a research mandate and shared leadership with NPC, is better placed to take up the evaluation of policies given that NPC's expertise is in projects and programmes.
5. Mobilize the National Statistics Office as the data backbone of evaluation. Mandate to be formally engaged with the evaluating bodies rather than treated as a separate statistical function.

## Build Capacity and Continuity

6. Institutionalize evaluation training through NPC/PRI experts, open to consulting with third party expertise. Evaluation specialists within NPC and PRI should be mobilized to deliver structured training, with at least one designated representative from every line ministry required to complete it.
7. Officers of the Law Commission should either conduct PLS directly for officials tasked with it, given that the required competence already sits there, with collaboration with an officer from the ministry.

8. Involve every hierarchical level of the ministry in the evaluation process. Evaluation confined to senior or junior officials loses the implementation knowledge held further down the chain. Each tier of the bureaucracy should have a defined role across the stages of evaluation
9. Attach a succession protocol to bureaucratic transfers, due to frequent transfers routinely evaluation processes are unfinished. Handover should require a documented succession plan under which the successors have a period of physical overlap with predecessors. Before the transfer, a report should be submitted to superior indicating completion, work in progress, undone and reasons from their predecessors list of tasks.

## Practice of Federalism in Evaluation

10. Formally designate the Provincial Policy and Planning Commissions (PPPCs) as the institutional anchor for M&E at provincial and local levels. The M&E Act extends to all three tiers, but sub-national evaluation lacks a clearly identified institution. The PPPCs should be explicitly recognized in this role, with a defined mandate to support, coordinate, and quality-assure evaluation at the provincial and local levels. Submit the final evaluation reports made by PPPCs to OPMCM, NPC and PRI.
11. Federal level M&E section officers or trainers from NPC and PRI must hold M&E technical training in all 7 PPPCs.
12. Provinces need to submit their reports to the OPMCM's online monitoring system website or a new website should be curated for provinces.

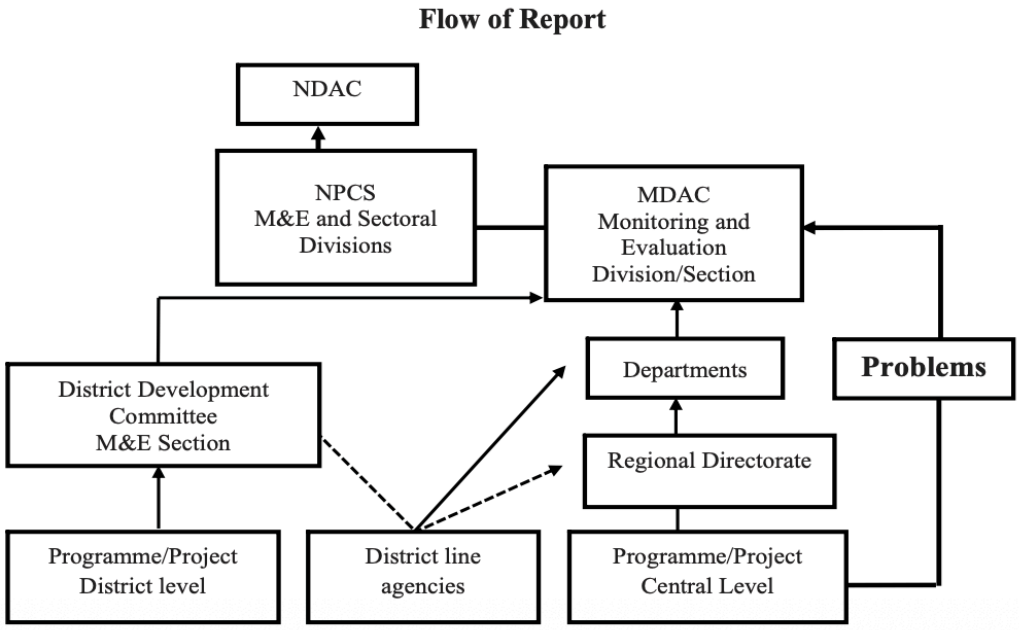
## Ex-Ante (Appraisal) Framework (Green Book, 2026)

Ex-ante appraisal is the process of assessing and comparing the costs, benefits and risks of different policies or projects before confirming the implementation. The core objective of this step is to ensure that public resources are used ideally considering that the chosen policy option delivers the best social value. The framework has two steps: longlisting and then shortlisting. After generating a longlist of options, practitioners should conduct a longlist appraisal to narrow these down into a shortlist. This involves assessing different options to identify those which best meet the objectives and critical success factors of the proposal (Refer to Annex 4). A short list should generally include around five options. This helps ensure that a good range of options is brought forward for more detailed consideration. The five options include:

- **Business as usual (BAU)**: Outcome if the current arrangements continue and the proposal is not implemented
- **A do Minimum:** This is the option that just achieves the proposal's objectives and goes no further in generating additional benefits.
- **A preferred way forward:** This is the option that appears to best meet the objectives and critical success factors, offering the best combination of social costs and social benefits.
- **A more ambitious preferred way forward:** This is a version of the preferred way forward that delivers more social benefits, but either at higher social costs or with increased risks.
- **A less ambitious preferred way forward:** This is a version of the preferred way forward that delivers lower social benefits, but with either lower social costs or lower risks. This may be excluded if the preferred way forward is also the do minimum.

## Chapter 10: Annex

### Annex 1: NPC M&E Flow Of Report




### Annex 2: NPC's Existing Evaluation Frameworks Report

| **Existing Evaluation Frameworks** | |
|---|---|
| Technical Audit | National Vigilance Center (NVC) conducts technical audits of select infrastructure related projects every year, these audits mainly focus on identifying underlying shortfalls and weaknesses in the projects providing necessary inputs for improvement by carrying out technical analysis of cost estimation, design features, as well as the technology and materials used. |
| Public Expenditure Survey | Tracking the course of budget through to the implementation mechanism so as to collect information to determine whether programme resources and budgets reached relevant agencies and target groups on time. |
| Performance Based Budget Release System | Performance indicators have been identified and arrangements have been made for performance-based budget releases so as to ensure that the set out objectives and targets in priority one (P1) projects are achieved within stipulated timeframes. |

## Annex 3: Existing NPC Evaluation Methods

Quantitative

- Questionnaire and Survey: participatory method,  include as many project-related stakeholders as possible.
- Existing databases: ministry and agency management information systems are to be used, naming EMIS (education), HMIS (health) and FMIS (financial management), together with databases maintained by programme and project offices from periodic progress reports.
- Data Analysis
    - Analysis of efficiency and cost-effectiveness: Analysing cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness, comparing the benefits of outputs and outcomes against inputs used, with both inputs and outputs monetised.
    - Before-and-after analysis: Comparing the situation before implementation with the situation after.
    - Comparative analysis of with and without project: Pre- and post-intervention data from intervention (treatment) areas compared with control (comparison) areas.

Qualitative

- Direct Observation
- Focus Group Discussions
- Interview
- Case Studies
- SWOT Analysis
- Document Studies

Mix Methods

Most preferred approach, combining the two to secure both analytical rigour and practical feasibility. There is triangulation in mixed methods, as it is useful in assessing the validity and reliability of findings keeping in view the positive aspects and limitations of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Participatory M&E

- Impact evaluation
- Project management and plan formulation
- Enhancement of organizational competence and institutional learning
- Probing into the perceptions of stakeholders to reach logical conclusion
- Enhance public accountability

## Annex 4: KII Questionnaire

**Role**

1. How would you describe your role and responsibilities?
2. How would you define the role of your department/division/organization?
3. How is the department/division/organization composed, how many members, from which parties, and how is leadership within the committee organized day to day?
4. Are there any evaluation tools for the department/division/organization if so, what are they?

5. Are you involved in the policy evaluation process? If yes, what is your role in the policy evaluation process

**Evaluation Relevance**

6. How important is policy evaluation in the policy cycle?
7. Do you think it aligns with the current government's goals, why or why not?

**Understanding Evaluation Process (For government officials)**

8. Could you tell me about a time when your office engaged in an evaluation process? What happened?
9. Has there been any instances where the committee has engaged with external stakeholders (such as INGOs, NGOs, consultants, auditors) to assess the impact of a passed law or policy? Can you describe one? If not, why not?
10. What factors make a policy more or less likely to be prioritized for evaluation?
11. How effectively have previous evaluation recommendations been implemented by the executive body/ministries?
12. What is the executive body/ministries common response towards evaluation recommendations, how much weight does it hold in terms of implementation?

**OPMCM Opportunity**

13. Are there any stakeholders that can be relevant for policy evaluation that has been underutilized?
14. How effectively has OPMCM prioritized policy evaluation?
15. How can OPMCM further support your department for policy evaluation?
16. Where can OPMCM be best useful and supportive to strengthen policy evaluation in the policy cycle?

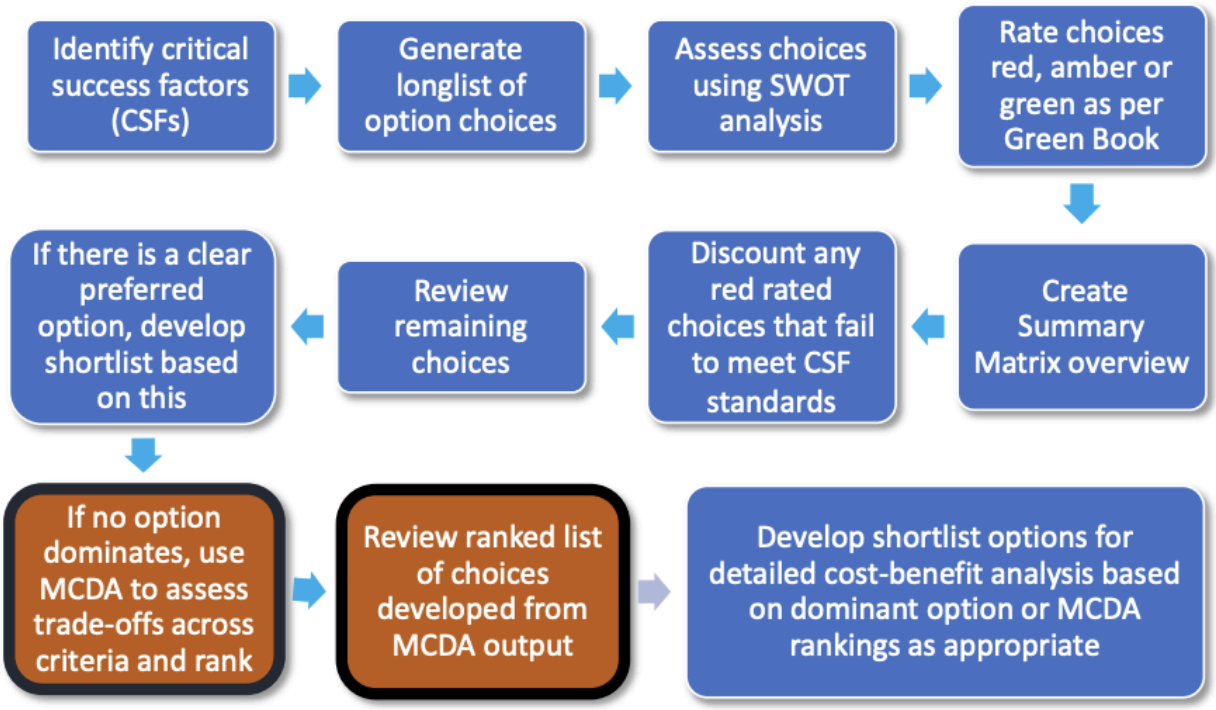
## Annex 4: Longlisting Appraisal Methods

### *Critical Factors*

| Critical success factor | Description |
|---|---|
| **1. Objectives and strategic fit** | • The proposal meets its SMART objectives.<br>• The proposal has strategic fit with other policies, portfolios, programmes and projects being undertaken in the public sector. |
| **2. Value for money** | • The proposal represents the optimal use of public resources to achieve its objectives. |
| **3. Supplier capacity and capability** | • Potential suppliers can feasibly provide the inputs that are required for the proposal.<br>• The government and suppliers can reach a mutually acceptable agreement on payments and risk transfers. |
| **4. Affordability** | • The proposal is affordable for all of the public bodies involved. |
| **5. Achievability** | • There are robust arrangements in place to deliver, monitor and evaluate the proposal. |

*Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA)*

Used to inform technical trade offs at the longlist stage.



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