

SIMON DIEDONG DOMBO UNIVERSITY FOR BUSINESS AND INTEGRATED
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

THE ENABLERS AND BARRIERS TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION
PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY OF WA MUNICIPALITY OF GHANA

BY

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THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING OF THE
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere:

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the enablers and barriers to the implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices in the Wa Municipality, situated in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The research seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing M&E systems in local governance and development initiatives. The study adopts a qualitative research design guided by a social constructivist philosophy, focusing on the subjective experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders involved in the M&E process. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of 50 participants, including Heads of Departments, Field Officers, Assembly Members, Chiefs, Contractors, and donor partners (both international and local).

The findings of the study reveal a complex interplay of enablers and barriers that shape the effectiveness of M&E practices. Enablers identified include active stakeholder collaboration, adequate capacity building programs, the integration of digital tools for data collection and management, and the commitment of local authorities towards improving governance. These factors were found to foster a conducive environment for robust M&E systems and enhance the accountability, transparency, and impact of development projects in the region.

However, the study also highlights several significant barriers that impede the full potential of M&E practices. Key challenges include limited financial resources, inadequate staffing, a lack of technical skills, weak data management systems, and fragmented coordination among local government bodies, NGOs, and private sector partners. Additionally, there is a noticeable gap in community engagement in the M&E process, which limits the effectiveness of these systems in addressing local needs and fostering ownership of development initiatives. These challenges are further exacerbated by political factors and systemic issues within local governance structures.

The study concludes that addressing these barriers requires a multi-dimensional approach, which includes increasing financial and technical support for M&E activities, strengthening the capacity

of human resources, improving coordination among stakeholders, and fostering greater community involvement in M&E processes. It recommends the establishment of a centralized digital M&E platform that can streamline data collection, analysis, and reporting, thereby improving the efficiency and transparency of M&E systems. Furthermore, the research advocates for policies that prioritize M&E as a central component of local governance and development planning.

The research also suggests potential areas for future studies, including the exploration of the role of digital technologies in improving M&E practices, the impact of community-based monitoring systems, and the influence of political will and leadership on the success of M&E frameworks. The findings contribute valuable insights to policymakers, development practitioners, and academic researchers, providing a framework for strengthening M&E practices in the Wa Municipality and similar regions in Ghana.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ACODE – Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
- AI – Artificial Intelligence
- CBR – Crude Birth Rate
- CCT – Community Contribution Training
- CSOs – Civil Society Organizations
- CIFOR – Center for International Forestry Research
- DMTDP – District Medium-Term Development Plan
- DP – Development Partners
- ECPE – Ethiopian Country Program Evaluation
- FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization
- FBOs – Faith-Based Organizations
- GHS – Ghanaian Cedi
- GIS – Geographic Information System
- GSS – Ghana Statistical Service
- ICT – Information and Communication Technology
- IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development
- IFRC – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- ILO – International Labour Organization
- IoT – Internet of Things
- LDG – Local Development Governance
- LFA – Logical Framework Approach
- M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation
- MbDR – Managing for Development Results
- MCP – Master Craft Person

- NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
- NGOs – Non-Governmental Organizations
- OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- ODK – Open Data Kit
- PME – Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
- PR – Public Relations
- RBM – Results-Based Management
- RTAs – Real-Time Assessments
- SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
- SGBV – Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
- ToC – Theory of Change
- TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
- USAID – United States Agency for International Development
- WMA – Wa Municipal Assembly

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent decades, the importance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in enhancing government performance and improving the delivery of public goods and services has gained significant attention. Governments and development organizations globally are increasingly adopting M&E frameworks as essential tools for achieving sustainable development. The use of M&E has been instrumental in enabling program administrators to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions, guiding decision-making processes, and ensuring the judicious use of resources (Kusek & Rist, 2023). As a results-oriented approach, M&E has become integral to governance systems, ensuring that policies and programs are not only implemented but are also aligned with broader development goals (McGill, 2021). By providing evidence-based insights into program operations, service delivery, and outcomes, M&E facilitates learning and accountability, ultimately contributing to the improvement of development outcomes (UNDP, 2018).

Monitoring, as defined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), involves the systematic and continuous collection of data on specified indicators. It aims to provide stakeholders with timely and reliable information on the progress of projects, particularly regarding resource use and achievement of intended objectives (OECD, 2019). Monitoring serves as a critical input to evaluation by offering real-time data on implementation processes, helping identify gaps and areas requiring adjustment. Evaluation, on the other hand, goes beyond monitoring by assessing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of interventions. It involves rigorous and impartial analysis to determine whether the program's design and implementation achieve the intended results (OECD, 2019). Together, monitoring and evaluation provide a comprehensive framework for assessing and

improving the performance of public governance systems, enabling organizations to make informed decisions and adapt to changing circumstances (Reynolds et al., 2020).

The implementation of M&E systems, however, is often shaped by various barriers and enablers that influence their effectiveness. Barriers, which may include resource limitations, inadequate technical capacity, and poor stakeholder engagement, can hinder the successful execution of M&E processes. Conversely, enablers, such as strong leadership, adequate funding, and a culture of accountability, support the institutionalization of effective M&E practices. These factors are context-specific and often vary across sectors, organizations, and regions (Carter et al., 2021). Flottorp et al. (2017) argue that identifying and addressing these barriers and enablers is critical to optimizing the adoption and effectiveness of evidence-based practices in various sectors, including healthcare, education, and governance.

The historical evolution of M&E practices reflects its increasing significance in governance and development. According to Segone (2020), M&E has undergone three main phases of development. The first phase, spanning from the 1950s to the 1970s, focused primarily on project appraisal, with limited emphasis on continuous monitoring and evaluation. The second phase, which emerged in the 1980s, saw efforts to institutionalize M&E within organizational frameworks, driven by the need for accountability and performance measurement. The third phase, beginning in the 1990s, marked a shift toward participatory approaches and knowledge-driven decision-making. During this period, stakeholder engagement became a central component of M&E practices, recognizing the value of inclusive and collaborative approaches to project management and evaluation (Cracknell, 2020). Today, M&E has become a cornerstone of public governance, with countries such as Ghana and Uganda integrating it into their administrative systems to enhance service delivery and foster sustainable development (Goldman et al., 2023).

In Ghana, M&E has been institutionalized within local governance systems through the directives of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are mandated to integrate M&E plans into their District Medium-Term Development Plans (DMTDPs), ensuring alignment with national priorities (Akambang et al., 2024). These frameworks aim to foster accountability, track progress, and guide resource allocation for improved service delivery (Amankwah et al., 2023).

Despite the growing recognition of M&E as a vital governance tool, several challenges persist. Resource constraints remain one of the most significant barriers, with limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient technical capacity undermining the effectiveness of M&E systems. Donor-driven agendas often skew priorities, focusing on short-term outputs rather than long-term development outcomes (Chandani & Tamang, 2023). Moreover, while M&E components are frequently included in project designs, they are not always implemented as integral elements of program success, leading to missed opportunities for learning and improvement (Karani et al., 2019). Weak accountability mechanisms further exacerbate these challenges, particularly in local government settings where oversight and enforcement capacities are often limited (ACODE, 2020).

Scholars such as Ojambo (2019) and Nyagah (2021) emphasize the need for studies that explore the unique barriers and enablers shaping M&E practices in Africa. Understanding these contextual dynamics is critical to developing effective M&E frameworks that address local realities and support sustainable development.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the factors that enable and hinder M&E practices within the Wa Municipality in Ghana. The Wa Municipality presents a unique context for exploring the interplay of various factors influencing M&E, including resource constraints, stakeholder dynamics, and institutional frameworks. By analyzing these factors, the study aims to contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on M&E for sustainable development

in Ghana and beyond. Ultimately, this research seeks to inform the design and implementation of more effective M&E systems that enhance governance, accountability, and development outcomes at the local level.

1.2 Problem Statement

In an increasingly globalized world, governments and organizations face growing pressures to deliver results that meet the diverse and evolving expectations of stakeholders, including government agencies, constituents, traditional authorities, private enterprises, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, international bodies, and donors. Citizens and other stakeholders demand improved governance characterized by transparency, accountability, inclusivity, efficiency, and tangible outcomes. This has placed local governments, as the primary implementers of public services and development initiatives, at the forefront of these expectations. To meet such demands, the establishment and operation of robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks have become essential for ensuring accountability, improving governance, and achieving sustainable development goals.

Monitoring and Evaluation systems play a critical role in providing the evidence needed to support informed decision-making in governance, planning, and program implementation. Monitoring focuses on the systematic collection of data on key indicators to track progress and inform stakeholders about the effectiveness of interventions (OECD, 2019). Evaluation goes a step further, rigorously assessing the design, implementation, and outcomes of projects to determine their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. Together, these components enable governments and organizations to identify what works, what doesn't, and why, fostering continuous improvement in service delivery and resource allocation.

However, while the value of M&E in enhancing governance and development outcomes is widely acknowledged, significant challenges hinder its effective implementation, particularly at the local government level. Globally, experiences with M&E systems have shown that their

success depends on various enabling factors, including institutional commitment, capacity, stakeholder engagement, and resource availability. Conversely, the absence of these factors often results in weak M&E systems.

For instance, Mackay (2007) highlights the success of Chile's M&E system, which is regarded as a global benchmark for its comprehensive and well-structured approach. Chile's Ministry of Finance uses M&E data to inform resource allocation, enhance efficiency, and improve management practices across ministries and agencies. The country's experience demonstrates how robust M&E systems can enhance governance by promoting transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making.

In contrast, other countries, particularly in Africa, face numerous barriers to establishing effective M&E systems. The Ethiopian Country Program Evaluation (ECPE) found that M&E efforts often suffer from resource constraints, poor data quality, and inconsistent dissemination of findings (ECPE, 2010). Similarly, Eckman (1994) identified inadequate resources, limited stakeholder participation, and weak evaluation tools as significant barriers to effective M&E in district development projects. Studies by Temesgen (2004) and Uisso (2009) further highlight the lack of structured M&E frameworks, insufficient technical capacity, and minimal community involvement as persistent challenges in implementing effective M&E practices.

In Ghana, M&E is a cornerstone of local governance, with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) mandating Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to develop M&E plans for their Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs). These frameworks are intended to enhance accountability, facilitate organizational learning, and improve service delivery. However, despite the institutionalization of M&E at the policy level, its implementation remains fraught with challenges. Many local governments face resource constraints, limited technical capacity, weak stakeholder engagement, and fragmented

accountability mechanisms, undermining the effectiveness of M&E systems (Amponsah et al., 2022).

Moreover, the integration of M&E into local governance frameworks often suffers from a lack of prioritization, with M&E activities viewed as an afterthought rather than an integral part of project planning and execution. This leads to inconsistencies in data collection, analysis, and reporting, ultimately affecting the quality of decision-making and the outcomes of development interventions. Additionally, donor-driven agendas often skew M&E priorities, shifting focus away from long-term developmental goals to meet immediate donor requirements (Chandani & Tamang, 2023).

Within this context, the Wa Municipality presents a critical case for examining the challenges and opportunities associated with M&E practices at the local government level. The municipality is responsible for implementing a wide range of development initiatives aimed at improving the livelihoods of its residents. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that M&E practices in the municipality face significant barriers, including resource limitations, inadequate technical capacity, and weak stakeholder engagement. At the same time, the municipality possesses unique contextual factors that could serve as enablers for improving M&E practices, such as the presence of active civil society organizations and a growing focus on participatory governance.

Despite the growing recognition of M&E's importance in local governance, there is a lack of comprehensive research exploring the specific enablers and barriers to its practice in Ghana, particularly at the municipal level. Existing studies have primarily focused on the theoretical benefits of M&E or its application in specific sectors, leaving a gap in understanding the practical challenges and opportunities within local governance contexts.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the enablers and barriers to M&E practices in the Wa Municipality. By identifying the factors that influence the effectiveness of M&E

systems, this research aims to provide actionable insights that can enhance M&E practices, improve governance, and contribute to sustainable development in the municipality. Ultimately, the findings of this study will contribute to the broader discourse on M&E in local governance, offering practical recommendations for strengthening M&E systems in resource-constrained settings.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 Main Research Question

What are the enablers and barriers to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practice in the Wa Municipality?

1.3.2 Specific Research Questions

1. How is M&E practiced in the Wa Municipality?
2. What are the enabling factors of M&E practice in the Wa Municipality?
3. What are the barriers to M&E practice in the Wa Municipality?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Research Objective

To assess the enablers and barriers to monitoring and evaluation practices in the Wa Municipality.

1.4.2 Specific Research Objectives

1. To identify how M&E is practiced in the Wa Municipality.
2. To identify the enabling factors of M&E practice in the Wa Municipality.
3. To identify the barriers to M&E practice in the Wa Municipality.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will contribute significantly to both the academic and practical realms of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). By enhancing the existing body of literature on M&E, this research will provide a valuable resource for students, researchers, and professionals aiming to advance their understanding of M&E systems and practices. It will serve as a reference point for academic discourse, fostering knowledge development and innovation in the field.

From a practical perspective, the study's results will offer critical insights for development practitioners, policymakers, and public sector stakeholders, highlighting the importance of robust M&E systems and quality assurance mechanisms. By demonstrating how effective M&E contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of development initiatives, this research will underscore the role of evidence-based decision-making in governance and development processes.

Specifically, the findings will assist policymakers in designing and implementing effective M&E frameworks that address the unique challenges of local governance in the Wa Municipality. The recommendations will serve as a roadmap for the Wa Municipal Assembly and its staff, guiding them in the development and operationalization of a comprehensive M&E system. Such a system will support data collection, analysis, lesson documentation, and the strategic use of M&E information to drive learning, adaptation, and innovation.

Moreover, the study will have a broader impact on project management practices by promoting the adoption of efficient and effective approaches aligned with global development priorities. By contributing to the achievement of Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the research outcomes will play a pivotal role in enhancing accountability, transparency, and the overall success of development projects within the municipality and beyond.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on evaluating the enablers and barriers to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices within the Wa Municipality, located in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The study is confined to examining M&E activities conducted during the municipality's medium-term development plan implementation period from 2018 to 2022. This timeframe was selected as it represents the most recent completed planning cycle, ensuring the availability of relevant data and the ability of respondents to recall and provide accurate insights regarding the M&E processes and outcomes.

The study will concentrate on the decentralized departments within the Wa Municipal Assembly, as these departments are directly responsible for planning, monitoring, and evaluating developmental projects and programs. These departments serve as the backbone of M&E efforts in the municipality, making them integral to understanding both the successes and challenges encountered in implementing M&E practices.

The choice of Wa Municipality as the study area is informed by its historical and regional significance in Ghana's governance framework. As one of the first municipalities to institutionalize M&E practices and the largest municipality in the Upper West Region, Wa serves as a critical case for examining both the strengths and weaknesses of M&E implementation. The municipality offers a wealth of experiences, including notable achievements and persistent challenges, which provide valuable lessons for enhancing M&E systems at the local government level.

By focusing on this unique setting, the research aims to generate findings that not only address the specific context of Wa Municipality but also contribute to broader discussions on improving M&E practices in local governance structures across Ghana and other developing regions.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five comprehensive chapters to provide a logical and systematic presentation of the research. Chapter one introduces the study, covering the background, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance, scope, and organization of the research. It establishes the rationale and context for assessing the enablers and barriers to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices in the Wa Municipality.

Chapter two delves into the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study. It defines key concepts, explores different types of monitoring and evaluation, and provides an overview of relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Furthermore, it reviews empirical literature, analyzing previous research findings and highlighting gaps that this study seeks to address.

Chapter three outlines the methodological approach adopted for the study. It describes the research area and context, philosophical foundations, research design, study population, sampling techniques, and data sources. The chapter also discusses data collection methods, analytical procedures, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study, ensuring transparency and rigor in the research process.

Chapter four presents and analyzes the findings of the study. It provides an in-depth examination of monitoring and evaluation practices in the Wa Municipality, highlighting both the enabling factors and barriers. The chapter contextualizes the findings within the existing literature and theoretical frameworks, offering a critical discussion of the results.

The final chapter synthesizes the key findings of the study, drawing relevant conclusions based on the research objectives and questions. It offers actionable recommendations for improving M&E practices in the Wa Municipality. The chapter also discusses the implications of the findings for policymakers, practitioners, and future research endeavors. This structured organization ensures a clear and coherent presentation of the research,

facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives, methodology, and contributions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature relevant to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices. It explores key concepts and theoretical foundations, including the definitions and significance of M&E, and examines how M&E has been applied in practice. The chapter also delves into the results-based management (RBM) theory, which serves as the theoretical underpinning for this study, and presents a conceptual framework to guide the research.

Additionally, the chapter empirically reviews the implementation strategies for M&E practices, identifying enabling factors that enhance M&E effectiveness and barriers that hinder its successful execution. The review concludes with a chapter summary that synthesizes the key points discussed.

2.2 Definition of Key Concepts

2.2.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is defined as an ongoing process aimed at providing management and key stakeholders with timely insights into the progress, or lack thereof, toward achieving desired outcomes. The UNDP (2020) defines monitoring as a process that tracks the performance of development interventions, assessing the extent to which planned activities are being implemented as intended. Monitoring involves systematically collecting data on predefined indicators, enabling those involved in a project or program to assess progress toward objectives and make informed decisions regarding resource allocation (Kusek & Rist, 2022). It is a continuous process that focuses on real-time tracking of activities and outcomes throughout the implementation phase.

Kariuki (2022) characterizes monitoring as the continuous evaluation of a project's activities in relation to its timelines and resource utilization. This definition underscores the dynamic and ongoing nature of monitoring, which is essential to identify whether project activities are executed as planned and whether resources are effectively used. Valadez and Bamberger (2023) highlight that monitoring serves a programmatic function, where the main goal is to assess whether the activities align with the plan and, in cases of deviation, to identify the root causes and propose corrective measures. This perspective on monitoring as a key component in day-to-day project implementation management forms a central framework for this study.

The typologies of monitoring, widely discussed in literature, allow for a more nuanced understanding of how monitoring can be approached in various contexts. While this thesis will not address all types of monitoring exhaustively, it draws on key categorizations to help frame the discussion. UNICEF (2022) distinguishes two primary types of monitoring: situation monitoring and performance monitoring. Situation monitoring focuses on tracking changes in the conditions of the project's environment, whereas performance monitoring assesses progress toward specific goals as outlined in an implementation plan. Furthermore, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, 2021) identifies several categories of monitoring, including financial, organizational, situational, beneficiary, process or activity, results, compliance, and scenario/context monitoring. Each type serves a distinct function in ensuring that different aspects of a project are continuously assessed and aligned with objectives.

Table 2.1: Types of Monitoring

2.1: Types of Monitoring

Monitoring	Explanation
Results Monitoring	Tracks effects and impacts of the project or program, assessing if goals are achieved.
Process (Activity) Monitoring	Assesses the delivery of results, progress of activities, and usage of resources.
Compliance Monitoring	Ensures adherence to guidelines, anticipated outcomes, contractual agreements, and regulatory standards.
Context (Situation) Monitoring	Monitors external conditions that could influence the project's success, such as risks and unforeseen issues.
Beneficiary Monitoring	Gathers feedback from project beneficiaries regarding their satisfaction, involvement, and overall experience.
Financial Monitoring	Tracks financial expenditures within predefined categories to ensure budget adherence.
Organizational Monitoring	Observes institutional development and sustainability, often in conjunction with broader organizational monitoring processes.

Source: IFRC (2021)

The rationale behind implementing monitoring can be understood by examining its core purposes. Kariuki (2022) emphasizes that monitoring is crucial for two primary reasons: first, it allows for the identification of deficiencies in meeting predetermined targets (Kunwar & Nyandemo, 2021). This is important for making timely adjustments to ensure project success. Second, monitoring serves as an early warning system, helping to identify emerging problems that need to be communicated to relevant stakeholders for corrective action (Patton, 2023). In

both cases, monitoring is instrumental in ensuring that project activities remain aligned with intended goals and that resources are allocated efficiently.

By continuously tracking progress and identifying issues in real-time, monitoring serves as both a diagnostic tool and a means of ensuring accountability throughout the course of a project. Furthermore, as a feedback mechanism, it enables stakeholders to act proactively, ensuring that project outcomes remain on course and adjustments can be made as needed.

2.2.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is a multifaceted concept with diverse interpretations, but it is generally understood as the systematic and objective examination of processes, projects, programs, strategies, policies, themes, sectors, and operational performance. According to the UNDP (2022), evaluation is a comprehensive process that analyzes both the intended and unintended outcomes of an intervention. This analysis involves considering the results chain, processes, contextual factors, and causality, using criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The goal of evaluation is to provide reliable, evidence-based insights that help organizations and stakeholders incorporate the findings into their decision-making processes.

The IFRC (2023) defines evaluation as a systematic and impartial assessment of a project, program, or policy, focusing on its conception, execution, and outcomes. This definition aligns with USAID's (2022) perspective that evaluation serves as a management tool aimed at examining the effectiveness, performance, and relevance of projects and programs. It focuses on elucidating successes, failures, and the underlying causes, considering key areas such as impact, sustainability, efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance.

Kusek and Rist (2022) emphasize that evaluation is a time-bound process that provides reliable information to answer specific questions and assist managers and policymakers in making decisions. Evaluations may cover various aspects, such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness,

impact, and sustainability. Impact evaluations, for example, assess the validity of the underlying theories and assumptions behind an intervention, focusing on identifying successes and failures and understanding the reasons behind them. Furthermore, evaluations distill lessons from operational experiences, providing valuable insights for adjusting strategic frameworks and improving future interventions.

Rossi et al. (2021) assert that evaluation involves applying social research methodologies to determine the effectiveness of social interventions, while considering organizational and political contexts. Dinnito and Due (2023) further highlight that evaluation assesses how well a program has achieved its goals, often comparing multiple programs to evaluate their success in reaching shared objectives. To ensure impartiality, evaluations are typically conducted by independent assessors, either at the conclusion of a developmental intervention or as it nears completion. Evaluations play a critical role in consolidating findings, offering actionable recommendations to improve project operations for the benefit of beneficiaries, and identifying unintended consequences that may have emerged beyond the project's initial scope.

This study adopts Kusek and Rist's (2022) definition of evaluation, as it comprehensively addresses the factors influencing monitoring and evaluation practices and their implications for development outcomes.

Evaluations can be categorized based on timing, evaluator, and methodology (IFRC, 2023). Timing categories include formative, summative, mid-term, and final evaluations. Evaluator categories encompass internal, external, participatory, and joint evaluations. Methodology-based classifications include thematic, cluster/sector-based, and impact-focused evaluations. The following table summarizes these various evaluation typologies:

Table 2.2: Types of Evaluation

2.2: Types of Evaluation

Evaluation	Evaluation based on the Person Doing the Assessment	Evaluation According to Technicality or Methodology
Formative Evaluations	Internal or Self-Evaluations: Performed by those executing the project or program, often more cost-effective but may lack credibility with certain stakeholders.	Real-Time Assessments (RTAs): Conducted during project implementation for immediate feedback to improve ongoing operations.
Summative Evaluations	External or Independent Evaluations: Carried out by independent evaluators to ensure objectivity and technical expertise, often focusing on accountability.	Meta-assessments: Assess the evaluation process itself, ensuring adherence to policies and practices.
Mid-term Evaluation	Joint Evaluations: Involve beneficiaries and other stakeholders to enhance ownership and capacity.	Thematic Evaluations: Focus on a specific theme (e.g., gender or environment) across multiple projects or programs.
Final Evaluation	Collaborative Assessments: Conducted by multiple partners to foster shared support and credibility.	Cluster/Sector Assessments: Focus on a grouping of interrelated initiatives or programs.
Ex-post Evaluation		Impact Evaluation: Focuses on the long-term effects and sustainability of a project or program, often conducted post-intervention.

Source: IFRC (2023)

Evaluations vary based on their timing within the project cycle, the individuals or entities conducting them, and their technical focus. They are vital tools for assessing the performance of development interventions and generating valuable insights that guide future decision-making and improve overall effectiveness.

2.2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

According to IFAD (2022), M&E practices are essential to project design, ensuring logical reporting and accountability. These practices quantify efficiency and effectiveness, facilitate resource allocation, foster continuous learning, and improve decision-making processes. By quantifying project results across multiple levels (impact, outcome, output, process, and input), monitoring and evaluation practices provide a framework for accountability and support informed decision-making at both project and policy levels.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices involve the methods that allow policymakers and program managers to: monitor the evolution of an intervention over time, assess the efficiency of program implementation, and detect any differences between intended and achieved outcomes (monitoring and evaluation); as well as ascertain if enhancements in well-being can be solely attributed to the program (impact evaluation) (ILO, 2022).

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2021), the practice of M&E serves as a continuous managerial function aimed at assessing progress towards achieving expected outcomes, identifying implementation bottlenecks, and uncovering any unforeseen impacts, whether positive or negative, of an investment plan, program, or project and its activities.

The practices of strategizing, overseeing, and assessing together constitute the Results-Based Management (RBM) methodology, aimed at aiding decision-making toward defined goals. Planning aids in prioritizing pertinent outcomes, while monitoring and evaluation (M&E) help

in deriving lessons from both past achievements and challenges encountered during project implementation (OECD, 2022).

As per OECD (2022), monitoring and evaluation practice involves measuring changes in programs or policies and evaluating their impact. This information enables management and key stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding current and future program planning and delivery.

This study will embrace the definition provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022) as it specifically addresses monitoring, evaluation, and the impact of development interventions.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are critical components of development practice, providing the tools to assess progress, enhance accountability, and inform decision-making. To guide the analysis of M&E systems, several theoretical frameworks have been developed, including the Theory of Change (ToC), Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME), and Managing for Development Results (MfDR). Each framework offers unique insights into how M&E contributes to achieving development outcomes.

For this study, however, the Results-Based Management (RBM) framework has been adopted due to its practical relevance and close alignment with the study's objectives. RBM focuses on achieving specific, measurable results and emphasizes continuous monitoring to ensure accountability and learning, making it particularly suitable for evaluating development programs and policies (World Bank, 2021). It integrates strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation into a cohesive process that enables project and program managers to assess outcomes and make adjustments to improve performance (UNDP, 2022). The RBM framework

is particularly effective in settings where resources need to be carefully allocated to maximize outcomes, which is central to this study's investigation of monitoring and evaluation practices.

2.3.1 Theory of Change (ToC)

The Theory of Change (ToC) is a widely used framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating interventions. It outlines the causal pathways through which a given intervention is expected to achieve its intended outcomes. ToC is particularly effective in providing a clear and detailed roadmap from inputs to long-term impacts, emphasizing the importance of understanding the underlying assumptions and contextual factors that influence outcomes (Coffman, 2020).

ToC is crucial for M&E as it explicitly defines the steps and linkages between resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. It provides a structured narrative for stakeholders to visualize the results chain and understand the conditions necessary for success (Connell & Kubisch, 1998). Unlike RBM, which is more prescriptive and focuses on tracking predefined results, ToC focuses on mapping out the logical connections between interventions and the changes expected. This makes it useful for complex development programs where causality may not be straightforward.

ToC is lauded for its comprehensive and flexible approach, especially in complex and multifaceted projects. It allows for greater stakeholder engagement in the planning process, fostering a shared understanding of the pathways to success. However, one criticism of ToC is that its assumptions and pathways may be overly idealistic, making it challenging to apply in environments with high uncertainty (Vogel, 2012).

ToC is relevant to M&E practices in the Wa Municipality as it allows for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that lead to development outcomes. It provides an opportunity for the study to explore not just what happens in M&E practices but how and why

certain barriers and enablers exist. While RBM focuses more on outcomes and results, ToC allows for a broader exploration of the pathways through which these results can be achieved, aligning well with the goal of identifying causal factors in M&E effectiveness.

2.3.2 Managing for Development Results (MfDR)

Managing for Development Results (MfDR) is a results-oriented management framework that emphasizes the importance of using evidence and data to inform decision-making throughout the project cycle. It highlights the role of planning, implementation, and M&E in ensuring that development results are achieved efficiently and effectively (OECD, 2002). MfDR incorporates RBM's focus on results but extends it to encompass broader principles such as local ownership, accountability, and sustainable development.

MfDR provides a framework for integrating M&E into the entire management cycle. It stresses the importance of setting clear, measurable objectives at the outset, collecting relevant data, and using this data to adjust strategies as necessary. Its focus on continuous learning and adaptation is essential for improving M&E practices and enhancing development outcomes (OECD, 2008).

MfDR has been praised for its systematic and comprehensive approach to managing development interventions. It promotes a culture of continuous improvement by ensuring that data is used to inform decision-making at every stage of the project cycle (World Bank, 2004). The framework's emphasis on evidence-based decision-making ensures that resources are used effectively to achieve development goals and provides a mechanism for assessing whether the intended results are being achieved (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2014). However, one major critique of MfDR is that it can be overly focused on the technical aspects of monitoring and evaluation, potentially sidelining the importance of political, social, and cultural factors that affect development outcomes (Manning, 2013).

MfDR's emphasis on continuous learning and data-driven decision-making makes it highly relevant to the study of M&E practices in the Wa Municipality. The framework's focus on integrating M&E with management practices ensures that development interventions are adaptable and responsive to emerging challenges. By applying MfDR, this study can identify how M&E practices can be more effectively integrated into the management of development programs, contributing to improved results in the Wa Municipality.

2.3.3 Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME)

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) is an approach that emphasizes the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of projects. This approach fosters local ownership, increases transparency, and ensures that M&E processes are inclusive and reflective of the perspectives of those directly impacted by development interventions (Chambers, 1994).

PME challenges the top-down nature of traditional M&E by promoting collaboration and ensuring that marginalized groups have a voice in decision-making processes. This is particularly important in community-driven development projects, where the inclusion of local knowledge and context is crucial to the success of interventions. The participatory approach in PME allows for a more nuanced understanding of development outcomes, as it values qualitative data alongside quantitative measures (Cornwall, 2008).

The primary strength of PME is its emphasis on empowering local communities and ensuring that their voices are heard throughout the project cycle. It improves the relevance and responsiveness of interventions by ensuring that they are aligned with local needs and priorities (Haug, 2012). However, PME can be resource-intensive and time-consuming, and critics argue that it may be difficult to scale up in large, complex projects (White, 2009).

In the context of Wa Municipality, PME is highly relevant as it can provide insights into the local perceptions of M&E practices and their impact on development outcomes. Involving local stakeholders in the M&E process can help to identify barriers and enablers that are not immediately apparent through traditional top-down approaches. Additionally, PME can complement the RBM framework by ensuring that the results measured are truly reflective of local needs and priorities, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of M&E in the study area.

2.3.4 Results-Based Management (RBM) Theory

Results-Based Management (RBM) is a comprehensive approach to management that prioritizes achieving predefined outcomes and results over processes or activities. It emerged as a response to the increasing demand for accountability, transparency, and efficiency in development and organizational management. Rooted in the 1950s through the work of Peter Drucker on Management by Objectives (MBO), RBM developed over time into a key framework for guiding management practices in public administration, development projects, and organizational performance (Drucker, 1954). RBM links inputs and activities directly to desired outcomes, offering a results-oriented framework for managing development interventions.

RBM centers around the achievement of clearly defined results. Unlike traditional management approaches, which may focus more on activities and inputs, RBM shifts the focus to outcomes—what the project intends to achieve—and the impact these results have on the target population or organization (OECD, 2011). This shift from process to result-driven management enables better performance monitoring, accountability, and transparency. A well-defined results chain, which links activities to outputs, outcomes, and impacts, is integral to RBM (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

A cornerstone of RBM is the use of performance indicators to measure progress toward achieving specific results. These indicators help to track outputs and assess whether outcomes are being achieved as planned. Effective RBM systems incorporate both quantitative and

qualitative indicators that are tailored to the specific context of the project, ensuring that results can be measured accurately and adjusted as needed (Hulme, 2018). Recent studies continue to emphasize the importance of context-sensitive indicators that reflect local realities and development priorities (Binns, 2021).

RBM incorporates an adaptive management approach, which allows for continuous adjustments to strategies based on feedback from monitoring and evaluation (M&E). This flexibility ensures that development initiatives remain responsive to changes in the environment or context and can be refined to enhance effectiveness. RBM's adaptability is a key strength, especially in dynamic or challenging settings, where initial assumptions might need to be revised based on new insights or unforeseen obstacles (Dart & Davies, 2018).

Accountability is a fundamental principle of RBM. It involves the transparent reporting of progress and results to stakeholders, including donors, beneficiaries, and the public. By focusing on results, RBM enhances the accountability of development interventions. In addition, RBM facilitates organizational learning by providing data and insights that inform decision-making and improve future interventions (OECD, 2011).

RBM's integration into public and private sector management has expanded globally. Initially adopted by development organizations such as USAID, CIDA, and the World Bank, RBM has since become a key framework for managing large-scale development projects. The approach has evolved in response to critiques of its complexity and implementation challenges. Despite these challenges, RBM has proven to be an effective tool for ensuring the results and outcomes of development programs are measurable, leading to more informed decision-making and resource allocation (UNDP, 2020).

In the public sector, RBM has been widely applied in areas like health, education, and infrastructure development. For instance, RBM is frequently used in managing international

development programs, where accountability to donors and transparency in results reporting are critical. A recent study by Tan and Ma (2022) found that RBM frameworks, when effectively implemented, significantly improve project transparency and donor trust by providing clear performance metrics and reports.

In development settings, RBM has been particularly instrumental in enhancing the effectiveness of interventions aimed at poverty reduction, education, and health outcomes. For example, the implementation of RBM by organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank has contributed to the alignment of development interventions with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recent work by Kumar et al. (2023) highlights the role of RBM in tracking progress toward SDGs, particularly through the use of data-driven decision-making and monitoring tools that support results-based reporting.

RBM's role in development is also closely linked to its focus on local ownership and capacity building. When used in tandem with participatory approaches, RBM can help empower local stakeholders, ensuring that the results of development interventions meet local needs and are sustainable over time. A case study on water management in Sub-Saharan Africa found that applying RBM principles helped enhance community involvement and accountability, leading to more sustainable results (Vanderschuren et al., 2021).

Despite its widespread adoption, RBM is not without criticism. Some scholars argue that the emphasis on measurable results can lead to a reductionist view of complex development problems, ignoring contextual factors and the interconnectedness of outcomes (Eyben, 2020). In particular, RBM's focus on short-term, quantifiable results may undermine long-term sustainability and overlook qualitative aspects such as community well-being or empowerment. Additionally, RBM's rigidity in certain contexts has been criticized for inhibiting flexibility and innovation (Binns, 2021).

Another criticism of RBM is its implementation challenges. Effective RBM requires strong M&E systems, well-trained staff, and significant resources to collect, analyze, and report data. In resource-constrained settings, these requirements can be difficult to meet, and the complexity of the RBM approach may overwhelm organizations that lack the capacity for rigorous monitoring (Patton, 2019). However, recent literature suggests that integrating RBM with adaptive management practices can help mitigate these challenges by allowing for more flexible implementation (Binns, 2021).

The field of RBM continues to evolve, with recent research focusing on improving its adaptability and integration into broader management frameworks. One significant development has been the increased emphasis on using digital tools for data collection, analysis, and reporting. Digital platforms, including mobile applications and cloud-based software, are transforming how M&E data are managed, enabling more real-time tracking of results and greater accessibility for stakeholders (Kumar et al., 2023).

Moreover, the integration of RBM with participatory methods, including the involvement of beneficiaries in the monitoring process, is gaining traction. This combination has the potential to address some of the criticisms of RBM, particularly by ensuring that the voices of marginalized groups are heard and that results are aligned with local priorities (Hulme, 2018).

While ToC, MfDR, and PME offer valuable perspectives on M&E, RBM stands out as the most suitable framework for this study. This is primarily due to RBM's clear focus on results, its structured approach to monitoring and evaluating development interventions, and its strong alignment with the study's objective of identifying and analyzing barriers and facilitators to M&E practices in the Wa Municipality.

RBM's emphasis on results-driven management, accountability, and transparency makes it a practical and effective framework for managing M&E processes. Its integration of performance

indicators and adaptive management processes ensures that M&E practices are directly tied to the achievement of tangible outcomes, which is the central goal of this study. Furthermore, RBM's flexibility allows it to be adapted to various contexts, making it highly relevant to the unique challenges faced by M&E systems in the Wa Municipality.

While other frameworks such as ToC, MfDR, and PME provide valuable insights into M&E practices, RBM's structured, results-focused approach makes it the most appropriate framework for this study. By applying RBM, the study aims to generate actionable insights into how M&E practices can be improved to contribute to sustainable development outcomes in the Wa Municipality.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The figure below shows the conceptual framework for the study. It touched on the practices for undertaking M&E, some of the tools applied, possible barriers and enabling factors (the enablers and barriers are discussed below under empirical review) during M&E practice. It also shows the process from inputs to impacts in projects implementation.

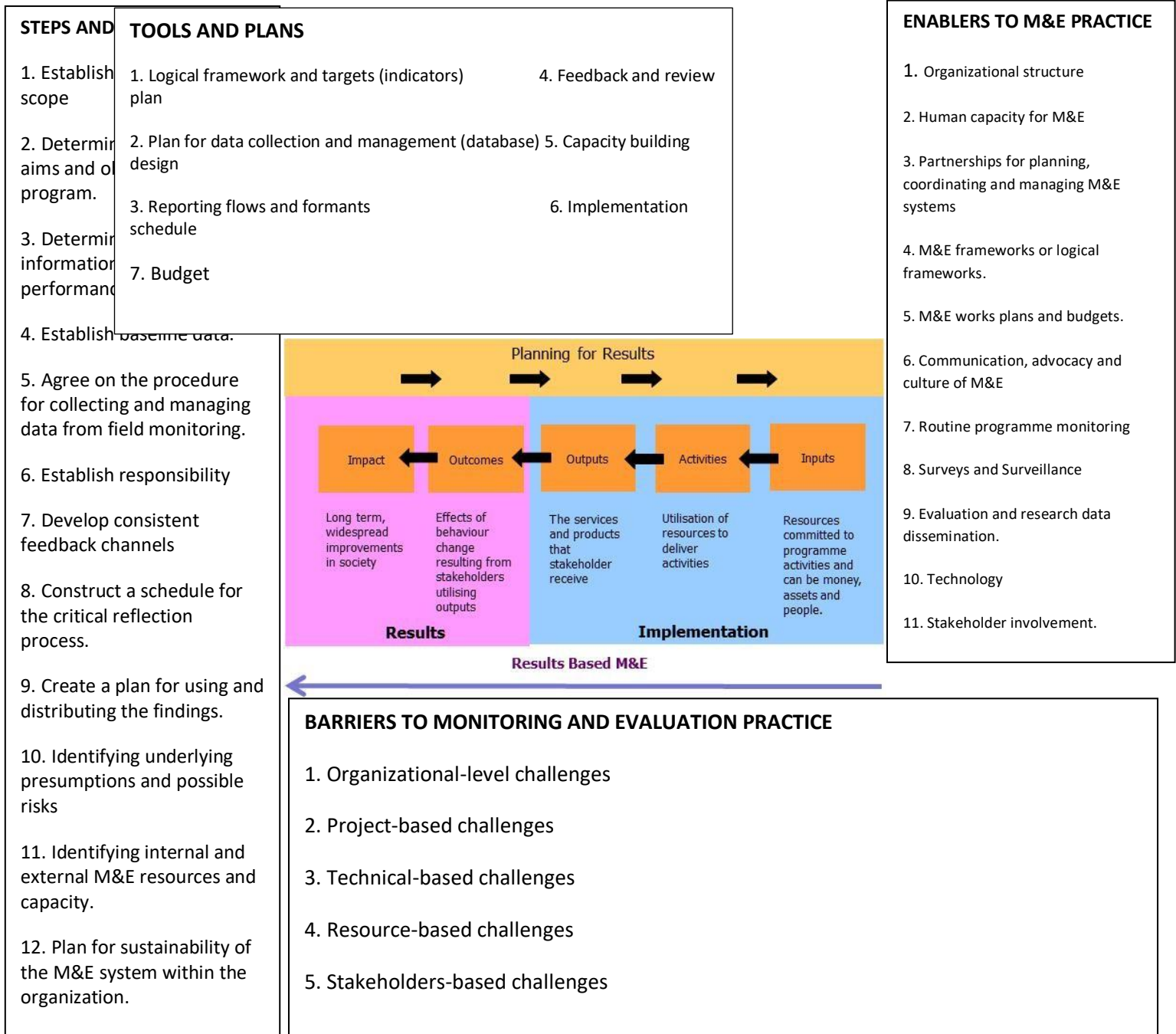


Figure 1.1 RBM Monitoring and Evaluation Practice Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Construct, September, 2022

The conceptual framework for this study emphasizes the process of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and the key components that define effective M&E practices. The framework highlights the flow from inputs to impacts in project implementation, illustrating the relationship between various elements of M&E within a results-based management (RBM) context.

As depicted in the conceptual framework, the M&E process starts with inputs, which encompass the resources required for project implementation, such as financial resources, human capital, and infrastructure. These inputs feed into the next stage, outputs, which are the tangible results of the activities carried out. For instance, outputs could include reports, workshops, or the establishment of new infrastructure. The outputs then lead to outcomes, representing the short- and medium-term changes or benefits resulting from the outputs, such as improved skills, increased access to services, or behavioral changes among beneficiaries. Ultimately, these outcomes contribute to the achievement of impacts, which refer to the long-term, sustainable changes brought about by the project, such as improved economic conditions, better public health, or enhanced community resilience.

The framework also emphasizes the tools and methodologies that are commonly applied throughout the M&E process. These tools could include surveys, performance indicators, feedback mechanisms, and data analysis software, all of which are used to collect and analyze data, track progress, and assess whether the intervention is on track to achieve its intended results. These tools are essential for ensuring that the M&E system is robust, transparent, and capable of providing accurate and reliable information (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

In addition to the tools, the framework acknowledges the presence of facilitating factors or enablers that can enhance the effectiveness of M&E. These enablers include clear communication, effective training, leadership support, and a culture of learning, all of which

contribute to a positive and efficient M&E environment. These factors help to overcome challenges and promote the successful implementation of M&E activities (OECD, 2011).

However, the framework also recognizes the barriers or challenges that can hinder the success of M&E efforts. These barriers may include insufficient resources, inadequate technical skills, poor stakeholder engagement, or low-quality data. Such obstacles can impede the ability to measure progress accurately and make informed decisions, thereby limiting the effectiveness of M&E in achieving project outcomes (Patton, 2019).

Ultimately, the goal of this conceptual framework is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how M&E processes, tools, enablers, and barriers interact to influence project success. By highlighting these elements, the framework underscores the importance of an integrated and adaptive M&E system that not only tracks progress but also ensures that projects lead to meaningful and sustainable impacts (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

2.5 Empirical Literature on Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

2.5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are critical tools for effective program and project management, enabling organizations to track progress, assess outcomes, and drive improvements. The following highlights key best practices identified in the literature to enhance the effectiveness of M&E.

A robust M&E plan is the cornerstone of effective monitoring and evaluation. It integrates performance measurement into project planning and provides a clear framework for defining targets and measuring progress. McCoy et al. (2005) emphasize that an M&E plan facilitates accurate performance assessments and ensures alignment with project objectives.

Using a coherent conceptual framework, such as the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), is another best practice. This approach allows for the early identification of performance indicators and their alignment with project goals. Aune (2000) and Family Health International (2004) note that the LFA fosters systematic monitoring and evaluation throughout the project lifecycle, improving effectiveness.

The allocation of a dedicated M&E budget is vital for ensuring that monitoring activities are conducted without financial constraints. Kelly and Magongo (2004) recommend setting aside 5–10% of the total project budget for M&E. McCoy et al. (2005) also emphasize that having a designated budget underscores the importance of M&E and ensures sufficient resources for its execution.

Integrating M&E activities into the project schedule ensures that they receive consistent attention and are executed in a timely manner. Handmer and Dovers (2007) advocate for embedding M&E tasks into the project timeline to prevent them from being deprioritized or neglected.

Frequent and regular data collection is critical for effective monitoring. Walter (2014) highlights the importance of defining data collection intervals, such as monthly or quarterly, to facilitate timely tracking of progress. Similarly, AusAID (2006) underscores the need for a clear data collection schedule to ensure consistency and reliability.

Stakeholder involvement is essential for fostering accountability, ownership, and inclusivity in the M&E process. Aune (2000) argues that a participatory approach, which involves beneficiaries, staff, and donors, balances upward accountability to funders with responsiveness to other stakeholders, resulting in a more comprehensive and effective M&E process.

Monitoring project inputs ensures that resources such as finances and materials are used efficiently and align with project objectives. Khan (2013) suggests using budget comparisons to track expenditures and maintain accountability in resource allocation.

Aligning human resources with project requirements is another critical practice. This involves equipping staff with the necessary training and tools for M&E tasks and designating a coordinator to oversee M&E activities. Beluhu (2021) emphasizes that a dedicated M&E coordinator enhances focus and ensures effective execution of monitoring tasks.

Regularly tracking project activities against schedules or timelines helps identify delays and keep the project on course. Crawford and Bryce (2003) recommend comparing progress with predefined milestones to enable timely interventions when deviations occur.

Measuring project outputs using both quantitative and qualitative indicators ensures a holistic assessment of performance. Mekonnen (2017) and Gyorko (2015) highlight the importance of combining data-driven measures, such as attendance records, with qualitative insights from interviews or focus groups to capture the full context of project outcomes.

Evaluating project outcomes and goals requires a dual approach that combines qualitative and quantitative data. Muzinda (2007) advocates for this method, as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact and effectiveness, enabling refinement of strategies.

Documenting lessons learned is crucial for improving future projects. Workie (2018) emphasizes that capturing both successes and challenges prevents repeating mistakes and enhances knowledge sharing, fostering organizational learning and growth.

Disseminating M&E findings to stakeholders promotes transparency and accountability while facilitating informed decision-making. McCoy et al. (2005) highlight the importance of structured feedback loops to share results, adapt strategies, and improve future practices.

Finally, clear reporting and follow-up on M&E findings ensure continuous improvement. Shiferaw et al. (2008) stress that concise reporting supports the application of lessons learned, while Kusek and Rist (2004) recommend maintaining robust reporting systems to sustain M&E processes and outcomes over time.

These practices underscore the importance of structured, participatory, and resource-supported M&E systems in achieving project goals and driving sustainable development outcomes.

The Ten-Step Model for conducting Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), developed by Kusek and Rist (2004), offers a comprehensive and systematic framework for implementing results-based M&E systems. This model guides organizations from the initial stages of readiness assessment to establishing sustainable M&E practices. Each step is designed to enhance accountability, foster learning, and ensure continuous improvement throughout the project or program lifecycle.

Conducting a Readiness Assessment: This foundational step evaluates the organization's capacity to adopt an M&E system. It involves identifying existing resources, potential barriers, and incentives that can drive successful implementation.

Agreeing on Performance Outcomes: Clear and concise definition of objectives and desired outcomes is crucial. This step aligns all stakeholders on what success looks like, providing a shared vision and direction for the project.

Selecting Key Indicators: Measurable and relevant indicators are selected to track progress toward the defined outcomes. These indicators form the basis for monitoring performance and assessing results objectively.

Gathering Baseline Data: Baseline data collection establishes the starting point for future assessments. This data serves as a reference to measure progress and evaluate the impact of interventions over time.

Setting Realistic Targets: Achievable performance targets are established for each indicator. These targets ensure that expectations are practical and align with available resources and timelines.

Monitoring for Results: Regular monitoring of activities and outputs ensures the project remains on track. This step allows for the early detection of challenges and necessary course corrections to maintain progress.

Using Evaluation Information: Periodic evaluations are conducted to complement monitoring efforts. These evaluations provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of strategies and help refine implementation approaches.

Reporting Findings: The results of monitoring and evaluation processes are shared with relevant stakeholders through structured reports, presentations, or meetings. Transparent reporting enhances trust and facilitates evidence-based decision-making.

Applying Findings to Improve Programs: The insights gained from M&E are used to inform ongoing and future programs. This step ensures that lessons learned are integrated into practice, driving continuous improvement and responsiveness to emerging needs.

Sustaining the M&E Process: Sustainability is achieved through long-term commitment, capacity-building, and fostering a culture of using data for decision-making. Continuous demand for M&E information helps institutionalize the process within the organization.

The Ten-Step Model emphasizes a structured and adaptive approach to M&E, enabling organizations to achieve their goals more effectively. By systematically integrating monitoring and evaluation into project management, the model promotes accountability, fosters a culture of learning, and supports evidence-based decision-making, ultimately ensuring better outcomes for stakeholders.

2.5.2 Enablers of Monitoring and Evaluation

Research emphasizes that the effectiveness of M&E systems relies on a comprehensive approach that integrates organizational, technical, cultural, and contextual factors to support continuous improvement and learning.

According to Otundo (2019), a robust M&E system benefits from clearly defined organizational structures that assign responsibilities and ensure accountability. Similarly, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2021) highlights that dedicated M&E units or outsourced arrangements with specific roles ensure coordination and clarity in M&E processes. These structures enable seamless data flow, alignment with organizational goals, and accountability mechanisms.

Human capacity is another significant enabler of M&E. Baker et al. (2020) note that skilled personnel with expertise in data collection, analysis, reporting, and interpretation are indispensable. Continuous professional development through training, mentorship programs, and certifications ensures that M&E teams remain equipped to address evolving challenges. Furthermore, Khan and Rahman (2020) stress the importance of fostering a culture of innovation and adaptive learning among M&E staff to enhance system resilience and effectiveness.

Partnerships and stakeholder engagement are pivotal to M&E success. TANGO International (2022) underscores the role of collaboration among internal and external stakeholders in planning, executing, and validating M&E activities. Inclusive partnerships ensure that diverse perspectives are incorporated, enhancing the reliability and relevance of findings. Active stakeholder participation fosters trust, ownership, and alignment with project objectives, as noted by Freeman (2020).

A well-designed M&E framework or logical framework provides the foundation for systematic monitoring and evaluation efforts. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020) explains that such frameworks outline goals, resources, methodologies, and expected outcomes, ensuring alignment between objectives and performance indicators. This approach reduces ambiguities and promotes transparency in assessing project effectiveness.

Budgetary allocation for M&E is a critical enabler. Musomba et al. (2013) and Kimani (2014) advocate for dedicating 3% to 5% of total project costs to M&E activities. Adequate funding ensures timely data collection, analysis, reporting, and dissemination. Timely disbursement of these resources is equally crucial to sustaining the momentum of M&E efforts, as highlighted by Mugo et al. (2015).

Technological advancements play a transformative role in enhancing M&E systems. Tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), mobile-based data collection platforms, and data visualization software have significantly improved data accuracy and accessibility (Bamberger et al., 2016). Real-time dashboards and predictive analytics enable organizations to make data-driven decisions swiftly, ensuring that interventions remain effective and responsive.

Supportive supervision and rigorous data auditing are essential for maintaining the integrity of M&E systems. Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2018) argue that oversight mechanisms, combined with periodic data quality assessments, detect errors, ensure adherence to standards, and build trust in M&E outputs. Effective supervision also enhances the capacity of field-level staff by providing constructive feedback and guidance.

Contextualization of M&E frameworks ensures their relevance and acceptability. Chambers (2017) emphasizes that tailoring indicators, methodologies, and approaches to the socio-cultural and economic environment minimizes resistance and fosters community buy-in.

Integrating local knowledge and practices enhances the inclusivity and effectiveness of M&E processes.

An M&E system that prioritizes learning rather than punitive measures encourages transparency and fosters a culture of continuous improvement. Mayne (2015) highlights that learning-oriented systems focus on generating actionable insights, enabling organizations to adapt strategies in response to emerging challenges.

Decentralization of M&E functions empowers field teams to adapt processes to local realities. Mwangi and Mashauri (2019) observe that decentralized systems enhance responsiveness, encourage local ownership, and ensure that data is relevant and actionable. Such systems also allow for context-sensitive adaptations that improve the utility of findings.

Data dissemination and utilization are critical for maximizing the impact of M&E activities. Bourne et al. (2021) note that effective communication of findings ensures that insights inform decision-making, foster accountability, and drive improvements. Data-sharing mechanisms and collaborative platforms enhance transparency and stakeholder trust.

Strong governance and ethical considerations underpin effective M&E systems. CIFOR (2019) stresses the importance of ethical guidelines, data security protocols, and quality assurance mechanisms to ensure the credibility and reliability of M&E processes. These elements build stakeholder confidence and safeguard the integrity of findings.

Enablers of M&E systems are multifaceted, encompassing organizational structures, human capacity, partnerships, frameworks, technology, and governance. By addressing these factors holistically, organizations can establish M&E systems that are not only efficient and reliable but also adaptive and sustainable in diverse contexts.

2.5.3 Barriers to Monitoring and Evaluation

Despite its vital role in enhancing project outcomes, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems face numerous barriers that undermine their effectiveness. These challenges often intersect organizational, project, and technical dimensions, hindering the ability of M&E to deliver accurate, actionable insights for informed decision-making.

Organizational-level challenges are among the most pervasive barriers to effective M&E. Many organizations lack dedicated M&E units or personnel, which results in poorly coordinated processes and inefficient project management (Cameron, 1993). A weak institutional capacity further compounds this issue. The absence of technically skilled staff, especially in data collection, analysis, and reporting, reduces the organization's ability to track progress or measure project outcomes effectively (Tengan & Aigbavboa, 2016). Additionally, the failure to integrate M&E plans during the early stages of project planning often leads to M&E being treated as an afterthought rather than a core component of the project cycle (Badom, 2016).

Project-based challenges are also significant. Financial constraints frequently impede the development and implementation of robust M&E frameworks. Limited budgets restrict data collection activities, resource allocation, and even the capacity to implement corrective measures based on M&E findings (Cameron, 1993). Poor-quality data collection, characterized by unreliable methods or insufficient rigor, further undermines the credibility and usability of M&E results. This often leads to inaccurate conclusions, limiting the ability to make data-driven decisions (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005).

Another project-level issue is insufficient communication among stakeholders. Effective M&E relies on clear and consistent communication between implementers, funders, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders. When communication is inadequate, misunderstandings arise,

objectives become misaligned, and timely issue resolution is hampered, delaying project progress (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005).

Technical-based challenges present significant hurdles to effective M&E. One of these is the limited demand for evaluation utilization. Stakeholders may fail to prioritize or act on M&E findings due to a lack of awareness about their benefits or reluctance to confront potential shortcomings (Bamberger et al., 2010). Furthermore, the absence of standardized definitions within M&E processes creates confusion and hampers data comparability and analysis. Consistent terminology is essential for ensuring that all stakeholders share a common understanding of objectives and expectations (Patton, 2003; Auriacombe, 2013).

Weak integration between planning and M&E is another critical barrier. When M&E is not seamlessly incorporated into project planning, there is often a disconnect between project activities, objectives, and M&E indicators. This disconnect reduces the ability of M&E systems to provide relevant insights and limits their contribution to project success (Patton, 2003; Auriacombe, 2013).

Inadequate legal and institutional frameworks further exacerbate the challenges. In some regions, the absence of clear policies, regulations, and enforcement mechanisms undermines the legitimacy and support for M&E activities. Weak governance structures fail to provide the necessary guidance and accountability for effective M&E implementation (Basheka & Byamugisha, 2015).

Additionally, cultural and contextual factors can impede M&E systems. Resistance to external evaluations, lack of stakeholder ownership, and social or political dynamics that discourage transparency are often overlooked barriers. Chambers (2017) emphasizes the importance of addressing these contextual nuances to ensure M&E systems are not only technically sound but also socially acceptable.

Rapid technological advancements pose both opportunities and challenges for M&E. While innovations like Geographic Information Systems (GIS), mobile-based data collection tools, and data visualization software have transformed M&E processes, their adoption often requires significant training and investment. Organizations with limited resources or technological expertise may struggle to implement these solutions effectively (Bamberger et al., 2016).

Implementing effective M&E systems is inherently complex and faces a myriad of barriers across organizational, project, and technical dimensions. Overcoming these challenges necessitates a multi-faceted approach, including building institutional capacity, ensuring sufficient financial resources, fostering stakeholder collaboration, and embracing standardized practices. Strengthening legal frameworks, addressing cultural barriers, and leveraging technology are also essential steps toward enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of M&E systems.

2.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter provided a comprehensive review of the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical foundations relevant to the study of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices. It began by defining key concepts, including monitoring, evaluation, and related terms, to establish a clear understanding of the subject matter. The chapter then explored various types of M&E systems and frameworks, emphasizing their relevance to effective public sector management.

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks provided a foundation for analyzing the enablers and barriers to M&E practices. These frameworks were complemented by an extensive review of empirical literature, which highlighted global, regional, and local perspectives on M&E practices. The review identified significant gaps, such as the limited understanding of the interplay between enabling factors and barriers in municipal settings, particularly in the Wa Municipality.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the context of the study and methodology. The research approach discussed into detail the research design, research population and sampling, sampling size determination, sampling techniques, data sources, data collection instrument and data analysis to be used for this study.

3.2 Research Area/Context

3.2.1 Location and Size

The research is carried out within the Wa Municipality situated in the southeastern part of the Upper West Region, as indicated by the Ghana Statistical Service (2021). The municipality's administrative center is Wa, encompassing a land area of approximately 1,078km², positioned between latitudes 9.55 degrees north and 10.25 degrees north, and longitudes 1.10 degrees west and 2.5 degrees west. With a total land area of 584 square kilometers, it shares borders with Wa West District to the west, Nadowli Kaleo District to the north, Wa East District to the east, and Sawla Tuna Kalba Districts to the south. Figure 3.1 illustrates a map delineating the boundaries of the Wa Municipality alongside key towns within its vicinity.

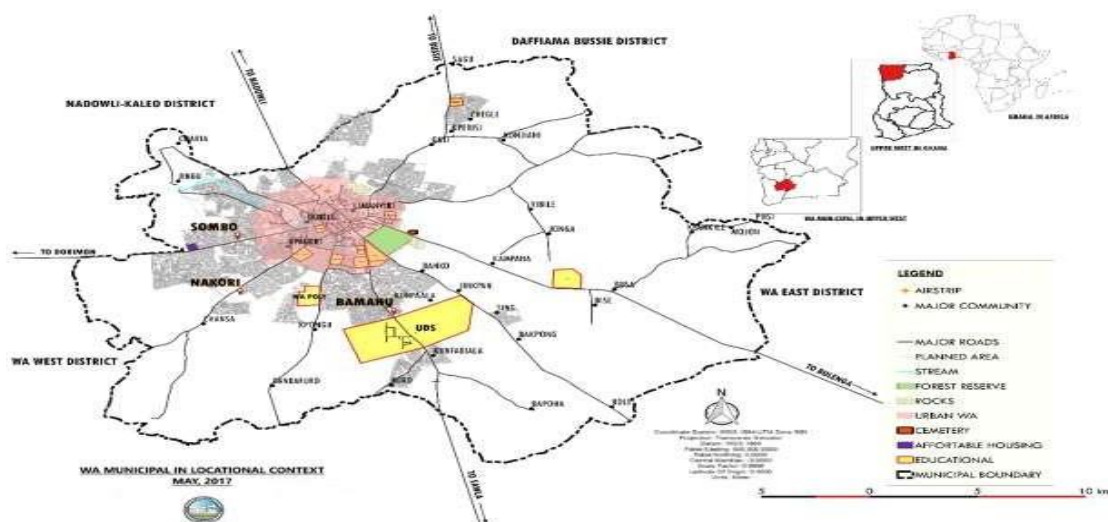


Figure 2.1: Wa Municipal Map Showing the Administrative Boundaries of the Municipality

Source: Wa Municipal Assembly, 2017

3.2.2 Demographic Characteristics

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2021), the population of the Wa municipality is recorded at 200,672 individuals, comprising 98,493 males and 102,179 females. Approximately 34% of the populace resides in rural areas. The municipality exhibits a sex ratio of 97.7. Notably, the population is predominantly young, with 35% below the age of 15, indicating a significant youth demographic, while individuals aged 60 years and older constitute a minor portion at 6%. The total age dependency ratio for the municipality is 65.1, with rural areas showing a higher age dependency ratio at 77.5 compared to urban areas at 59.4.

3.2.3 Fertility, Mortality, and Migration

The municipality's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is 3.3%, slightly lower than the regional rate of 3.5%. The General Fertility Rate stands at 82.6 births per 1,000 women aged 15-49 years, while the Crude Birth Rate (CBR) is 22.7 per 1,000 population. The crude death rate in the municipality is 5.0 deaths per 1,000, with accidents, violence, homicide, or suicide accounting for 7.4% of all deaths; other causes make up 92.6%. Among migrants in the district, 64.6% were born in another region, while 35.4% originated from within the Upper West Region. Of those born in another region, the highest proportion (25.3%) came from Ashanti, followed by 21.2% from the Northern Region.

3.2.4 Vegetation and Physical Features

The flora predominantly consists of Guinea Savannah grassland, characterized by short trees with minimal to no canopy, interspersed with shrubs of diverse heights and density, along with grass ground cover during the wet season (GSS, 2010). Indigenous trees such as shea, dawadawa, kapok, and baobab are prevalent, while exotic species like cashew and mango thrive in the region.

Predominantly underlying the Municipality are Pre-Cambrian granite and metamorphic rocks, which have undergone relatively less weathering compared to similar rock formations elsewhere

in the country, owing to factors such as low rainfall, high evapotranspiration rates, and sparse vegetation (GSS, 2010). Despite this, successful water harvesting from boreholes has been achieved due to the well-developed fracture systems within these rocks. This geological setting has also created opportunities for quarry development along the Wa Busa road.

Two main soil types are prevalent: laterite and savannah ochrosols. Additionally, clay soil is found in the Charia community, renowned for pottery, and sand is abundant in Nakore. Laterite soil is widespread across the Municipality and is commonly excavated for road and housing construction purposes. On the other hand, savannah ochrosols, although shallow, support the cultivation of various crops including millet, sorghum, soybeans, groundnuts, rice, and yams.

3.2.5 Economic Activities

According to Barclay (2018), agriculture remains the dominant sector in the municipality's economy, comprising approximately 70% of economic activity, followed by commerce at around 9% and industry at about 3%. Other notable sectors include transport, tourism, communication, and energy. Livelihoods and income sources for residents depend on their engagement in various economic activities, the degree of economic diversification, and the level of technological expertise utilized. However, the economic landscape of the municipality exhibits limited diversity, with agriculture overwhelmingly dominating and lacking significant diversification.

The municipality falls within the Savannah Zone, where poverty rates have consistently exceeded the national average. Presently, it is reported that nine out of every ten individuals are living in poverty. Household incomes are notably low, with few breadwinners. Analysis of household expenditure reveals that approximately 80% of income is allocated to food expenses, leaving only 20% for other necessities such as rent, education, healthcare, utilities, and funeral expenses.

The high prevalence of poverty is attributed to the underdevelopment of social overhead capital. Social overhead capital refers to the infrastructure and services (e.g., power, transportation, storage, communication, education) essential for modern industrial activities, which are inadequately developed in the municipality. This underdevelopment serves as a constraint or bottleneck to economic growth and overall development within the area.

3.2.6 Decentralised Departments

There are 13 departments in the WMA which includes Central Administration Department, Education, Youth and Sports Department, Works Department, Physical Planning Department, Trade, Industry and Tourism, Agriculture, Social Welfare and Community Development Department, Disaster Prevention Department, Health Department, Natural Resource Conservation Department, Natural Resource Department and Finance Departments. The heads of these departments have been engaged for empirical data on how monitoring and evaluation is done at the Assembly.

The organogram of the Municipal Assembly is based on the Institutional Framework for District Assemblies (Act 936) by the Local Government Act, 2016. The organogram of the Assembly is presented in Figure 3.2 (WMA, 2018).

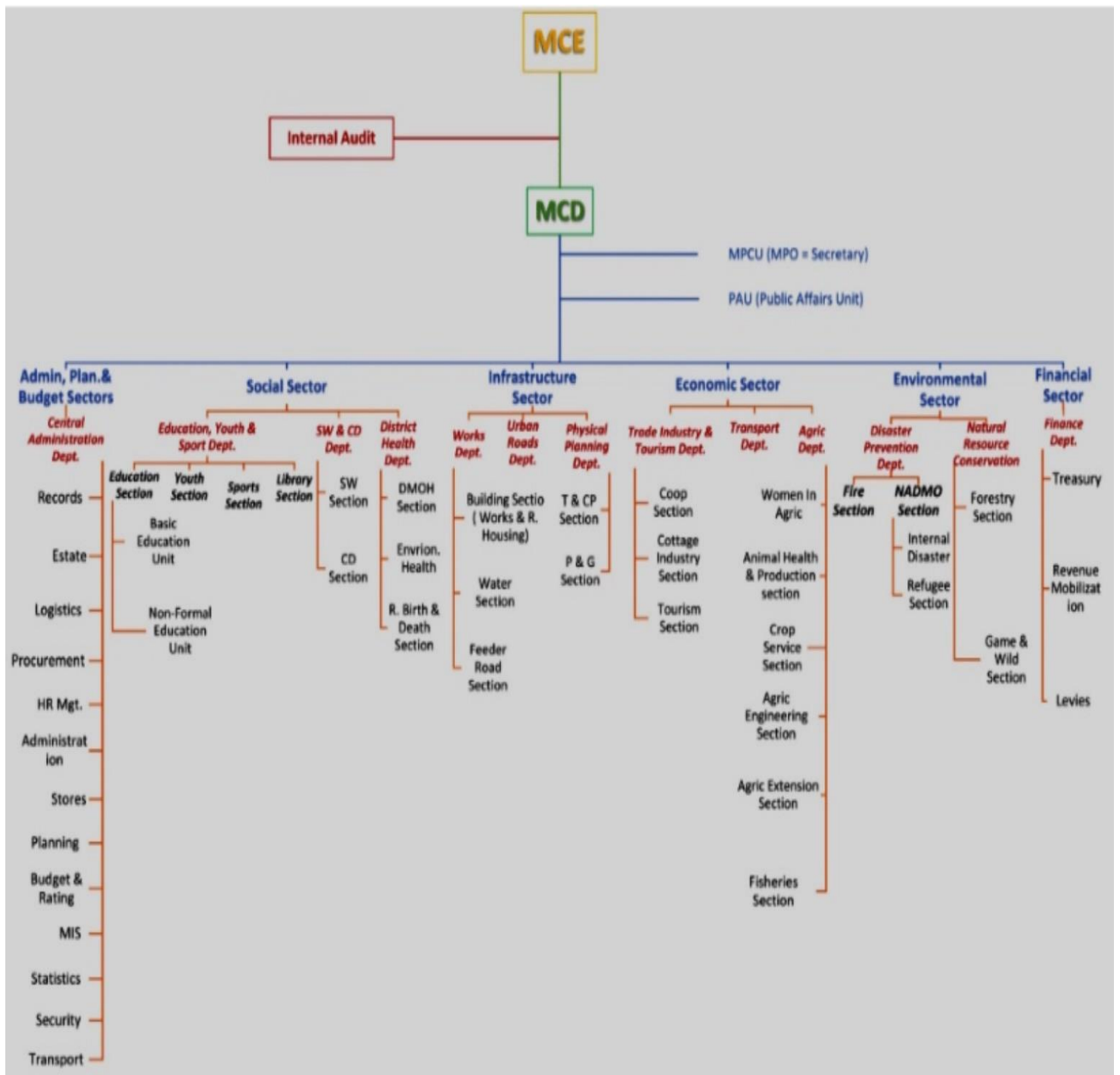


Figure 3.1: Wa Municipal Map Showing the Administrative Boundaries of the Municipality

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2021

3.3 Philosophical Underpinning

A philosophy or paradigm represents a set of shared beliefs, values, and methodologies that guide a scientific community in determining which problems to investigate and the criteria for acceptable explanations (Anand et al., 2020). This study adopts a social constructivist philosophy, rooted in the seminal work of Vygotsky (1934/1986). Vygotsky challenged the separation of learning from its social context, proposing that knowledge arises from the interaction of social and cognitive functions. He argued that individuals actively construct their understanding of the world through dynamic social interactions. Accordingly, this research employs social constructivism to examine how departments in the Wa Municipal Assembly and other stakeholders engage in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices, identifying barriers and enablers affecting development initiatives.

Social constructivism, often aligned with interpretivism, emphasizes individuals' efforts to make sense of their world based on personal experiences (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2010; Schwandt, 2003). It posits that individuals inhabit subjective realities shaped by their interpretations of lived experiences. Consequently, the researcher constructs a complex social narrative that reflects collective experiences, including individual knowledge, behaviors, beliefs, and personal encounters, rather than striving to uncover universal truths.

Schwandt (2003) argues that knowledge creation involves the mind actively constructing both knowledge and truth. This aligns with Berger and Luckmann's (1966/1975/1991) assertion that knowledge emerges through interpersonal interactions, emphasizing the mutual influence people exert on one another. Similarly, Hammersley (1990) contended that reality is socially constructed, rooted in subjective, everyday experiences. This perspective shifts the focus from objective, external realities to understanding how individuals perceive and interpret their surroundings.

Cottone (2001) further expanded on this idea by rejecting the notion of an objective reality, advocating instead for a relational reality formed through biological and social connections. He argued that reality is shaped by interpersonal engagements, with consensus determining what is perceived as factual. Under this framework, individual realities are replaced by shared realities constructed through social interactions.

Critics of social constructivism highlight its susceptibility to subjectivity, resistance to critique, and potential to avoid addressing conflict (Ratner, 2005). However, Gergen (1999/2009) refuted these critiques, emphasizing the framework's practical utility rather than its objectivity. Gergen advocated for critically examining widely accepted knowledge, prioritizing understanding people's lived experiences and struggles. He asserted that by encouraging individuals to narrate their experiences, social constructivism captures nuanced, real-life stories reflective of their daily realities over time.

Romanyshyn (2010) argued that researchers cannot fully detach themselves from the interpretive process, as they inevitably bring preconceived notions to their research. These biases, rather than being obstacles, serve as entry points for deeper understanding. By confronting and revising these

preconceptions during research, new insights and interpretations emerge, creating an iterative process of knowledge construction.

Marton and Booth (1997) and Sandberg (1996) emphasized the importance of interpretive awareness in research. They argued that researchers must consciously bracket their personal experiences to avoid projecting biases onto their analysis. Instead, the focus should remain on identifying unique patterns of meaning within a specific social context. This approach ensures that participant sampling captures the most valid and comprehensive data, fostering a holistic understanding of individual realities.

Adopting a social constructivist philosophy in this research underscores the significance of exploring the lived experiences and social interactions that shape M&E practices in the Wa Municipality. This approach allows the study to delve deeply into the subjective realities of stakeholders such as Heads of Departments, Field Officers, Chiefs, Assembly Members, Contractors, and donor partners. By prioritizing these perspectives, the study aims to uncover meaningful insights into the enablers and barriers to effective M&E Practices, Contributing To A Richer Understanding Of Development Processes Within Their Sociocultural And Institutional Contexts.

3.4 Research Design

A research design is a systematic framework for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting data in research studies (Creswell et al., 2007). It acts as a blueprint linking theoretical concepts to empirical investigations, detailing the strategy for acquiring necessary data, the methods for data collection and analysis, and the means by which these components collectively address the research questions (Grey, 2014).

Research designs are broadly categorized into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, each tailored to specific research goals and inquiries. This study adopts a qualitative research design, aligning with the exploratory nature of the objectives, particularly the examination of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices within the Wa Municipality. Qualitative research is an inquiry method that delves into understanding phenomena by engaging participants within their natural contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). It focuses on constructing meaning from participants' lived experiences and contextual realities, contrasting with quantitative approaches that often aim to test hypotheses or establish universal laws (Newman & Benz, 1998).

This qualitative approach is particularly apt for this study as it facilitates an in-depth exploration of the enablers and barriers influencing effective M&E practices in the Wa Municipality. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) highlight that qualitative methodologies allow researchers to study phenomena authentically within their real-world settings, leading to a rich interpretation of participants' perspectives. Interviews with Heads of Departments, Field Officers, Assembly Members, Chiefs, Contractors, and donor partners provided firsthand insights into the practical challenges and dynamics of M&E processes.

Qualitative research offers several advantages aligned with this study's objectives. Creswell (2003) notes that it provides detailed descriptions of participants' thought processes and explores the reasons behind observed phenomena, which is critical for understanding the nuanced, context-specific factors shaping M&E practices. Additionally, qualitative research is suited for exploring complex issues, allowing participants to share their experiences authentically and addressing variables that are challenging to quantify. It also empowers participants by reducing power imbalances between them and the researcher while interpreting their perspectives within historical and cultural contexts (Creswell, 2007).

By employing a qualitative research design, this study gains the ability to capture detailed, context-rich insights into M&E practices. Through direct engagement with stakeholders in their natural environments, the research provides actionable findings that reflect the lived experiences of those involved in M&E processes. This design ensures the findings contribute meaningfully to understanding and improving M&E practices within the Wa Municipality, highlighting opportunities for addressing challenges and leveraging existing strengths.

3.5 Study Population and Sampling

The population of this study comprises key stakeholders involved in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes of public development projects within the Wa Municipality. Creswell (2017) describes a population as a group of individuals sharing a common characteristic, while a study population refers to a subset of this group that is the focus of a specific investigation. Given the practical challenges of engaging every member of a population, sampling becomes a crucial process. Zikmund (1991) emphasizes that sampling allows researchers to gather data efficiently and make generalizable conclusions. Turner (2020) elaborates that sampling involves the deliberate selection of a portion of the population, enabling studies to focus on individuals or entities with direct relevance to the research question. This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique widely recognized for its applicability in qualitative research contexts.

The selected population included Heads of Departments, Field Officers, Assembly Members, Chiefs, Contractors, and donor partners, representing diverse stakeholder groups integral to M&E processes. These stakeholders were purposefully chosen for their direct roles in planning, implementation, and evaluation activities, as well as their ability to provide in-depth perspectives on the challenges and opportunities within the M&E landscape. Heads of Departments, for

instance, lead decentralized units within the Wa Municipal Assembly, making them essential sources for understanding strategic alignment, resource allocation, and inter-departmental collaboration. Field Officers, responsible for operational monitoring and reporting, contribute practical insights into ground-level implementation dynamics, highlighting the realities of project execution.

Assembly Members, as elected representatives of electoral areas, provide a critical bridge between community needs and municipal policies. Their involvement ensures that the study captures grassroots perspectives and evaluates the responsiveness of M&E frameworks to local development priorities. Chiefs, representing traditional authority, contribute a socio-cultural dimension that enriches the understanding of how cultural values and community structures influence M&E processes. Contractors, tasked with executing development initiatives, provide firsthand accounts of challenges related to timelines, resource utilization, and quality control. Finally, donor partners, including NGOs and international organizations such as Star Ghana Foundation, UNDP, and ActionAid Ghana, play an indispensable role by offering insights into funding mechanisms, technical assistance, and compliance with accountability frameworks.

The sampling process was meticulously designed to ensure the inclusion of participants with diverse but relevant expertise. Heads of Departments and Field Officers were drawn from the 13 decentralized departments within the Wa Municipal Assembly, with specific emphasis on individuals actively engaged in M&E practices. Assembly Members were selected based on their involvement in electoral areas with significant development projects, ensuring their contributions reflected regions where M&E activities were particularly impactful. Chiefs from communities directly affected by development initiatives were engaged to capture culturally specific perspectives on M&E outcomes. Contractors with substantial project portfolios in the municipality

were included to reflect varied experiences in project implementation. Similarly, donor partners were chosen for their strategic influence on resource mobilization, project design, and performance monitoring.

Purposive sampling was justified as the most appropriate method for this study due to its effectiveness in selecting information-rich cases. Creswell and Poth (2018) assert that purposive sampling allows qualitative researchers to intentionally target individuals or groups that can provide meaningful insights into the research problem. This is echoed by Palinkas et al. (2015), who argue that purposive sampling is particularly valuable for studies requiring a deep understanding of complex systems or processes. Additionally, Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) contend that purposive sampling ensures that participants possess the specific expertise or experience needed to address nuanced research questions effectively. The ability to deliberately choose participants with relevant knowledge enhances the quality of data collected, allowing for more robust analysis and conclusions.

In recent years, qualitative research methodologies have increasingly emphasized the importance of strategic sampling in ensuring data quality. Bryman (2021) highlights that non-probability sampling techniques, particularly purposive sampling, align well with the objectives of qualitative studies, as they prioritize depth and richness over breadth. Similarly, Flick (2018) underscores the role of sampling in enhancing the validity and reliability of findings by focusing on participants with lived experiences or specialized knowledge. For this study, purposive sampling enabled a targeted approach to understanding the dynamics of M&E practices, capturing perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders critical to the effective planning, monitoring, and evaluation of development projects.

In conclusion, the sampling approach adopted for this research facilitated a comprehensive exploration of M&E practices within the Wa Municipality. By focusing on Heads of Departments, Field Officers, Assembly Members, Chiefs, Contractors, and donor partners, the study gained access to a diverse array of perspectives and experiences. This method ensured that the data collected was rich, relevant, and reflective of the complexities inherent in M&E processes. As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2023), selecting participants based on their ability to contribute unique and valuable insights is a hallmark of qualitative research, enabling studies to generate findings that are both meaningful and actionable. The strategic inclusion of these stakeholders provided the foundation for a nuanced analysis of M&E practices and their implications for development outcomes in Wa Municipality.

3.6 Target Population

The target population for this study comprises all individuals and entities engaged in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes within the Wa Municipality. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), a target population refers to the entire set of individuals or entities relevant to a research topic, determined by the scope of the study, geographical boundaries, and accessibility. Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2023) emphasize that selecting an appropriate target population is critical for ensuring the relevance and applicability of research findings. This study focuses on a diverse group of stakeholders who contribute uniquely to M&E processes, including administrative officials, operational staff, traditional leaders, contractors, and donor partners, capturing a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

The Heads of Departments from the thirteen decentralized units of the Wa Municipal Assembly (WMA) represent a significant segment of the target population. These departments are central to policy implementation, planning, and evaluation of development initiatives. The departments

included are the Central Administration, Education, Youth, and Sports, Works, Physical Planning, Trade, Industry, and Tourism, Agriculture, Social Welfare and Community Development, Disaster Prevention, Health, Natural Resource Conservation, Natural Resource, and Finance departments. According to Bryson, Edwards, and Van Slyke (2021), involving heads of departments in M&E research provides insights into the decision-making processes and institutional factors that influence project outcomes. These leaders play an instrumental role in ensuring that M&E processes align with broader policy objectives and organizational goals.

Field Officers are another critical segment of the population, consisting of operational personnel directly involved in the implementation and monitoring of projects and programs. These officers provide ground-level insights into the practical challenges and successes of M&E processes. As suggested by Gaventa and Cornwall (2020), field officers often bridge the gap between policy and practice, making their inclusion vital for understanding real-world applications of M&E frameworks.

Assembly Members, elected representatives from the Wa Municipality's electoral areas, are integral to the local governance structure. These members act as intermediaries between the Municipal Assembly and local communities. Representatives from electoral areas such as Dondoli, Kabanye, Jingbeyiri, Tagariyiri, Nayiri Tikpangmari, and Kubehi were included to capture diverse community-specific insights into M&E practices. According to Mansuri and Rao (2022), assembly members play a pivotal role in ensuring that local development projects address community needs and priorities, making their input essential for a comprehensive understanding of M&E dynamics.

Traditional Leaders or Chiefs also form an essential part of the target population. As custodians of community values and cultural heritage, chiefs provide critical socio-cultural perspectives that influence the implementation and monitoring of development projects. Chiefs from areas such as

Kperisi, Guli, Gusaa, Behi, and Janga were included in this study. According to Gyekye (2021), the involvement of traditional leaders in development projects enhances cultural sensitivity and community acceptance, which are crucial for the success of M&E processes.

Contractors executing infrastructure and development projects within the Wa Municipality are another significant group. Representatives from firms such as Wa Construction Company Ltd., A.R. Construction Works, Ghana Highway Authority, Horizon Builders, and Western Region Builders contribute insights into project execution, timelines, resource allocation, and adherence to evaluation standards. As highlighted by Weng et al. (2023), contractors' perspectives are vital for understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with project implementation, especially in resource-constrained environments.

Finally, Donor Partners are indispensable stakeholders in M&E processes, providing funding, technical support, and strategic guidance for development initiatives. Key informants from organizations such as Star Ghana Foundation, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ActionAid Ghana, USAID, and World Vision were included in the study. According to Garcia and Zazueta (2020), donor partners' involvement in M&E research ensures accountability and alignment with global development goals, offering critical insights into the effectiveness of funding models and program design.

By targeting this diverse group of stakeholders, the study captures a holistic understanding of M&E practices within the Wa Municipality. The inclusion of administrative, operational, traditional, and developmental perspectives ensures a comprehensive analysis of the multi-faceted nature of M&E processes. This approach aligns with the recommendations of Creswell and Poth (2018), who emphasize the importance of diverse representation in qualitative research to enhance the depth and applicability of findings. The broad representation strengthens the study's conclusions,

providing valuable insights into the systemic, cultural, and contextual factors influencing effective monitoring and evaluation practices in local governance and development.

3.7 Sample Size Determination

The sample size for this study, consisting of 50 participants, was determined through purposive sampling, a method widely regarded as appropriate for qualitative research. This sampling strategy emphasizes the deliberate selection of participants with specific knowledge, experience, or roles relevant to the research objectives. Creswell and Creswell (2023) highlight that purposive sampling allows researchers to identify individuals who can provide in-depth and meaningful insights into the phenomenon under investigation, prioritizing the quality and depth of data over statistical representativeness. Patton (2015) also underscores that qualitative research prioritizes information-rich cases that illuminate the research problem comprehensively.

The distribution of participants was meticulously planned to ensure diverse perspectives from key stakeholders directly involved in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes in the Wa Municipality. These stakeholders include 13 Heads of Departments, 15 Field Officers, 7 Assembly Members, 5 Chiefs, 5 Contractors, and 5 Donor Partners. The selection criteria aimed to capture a holistic understanding of M&E practices, considering the unique contributions of each stakeholder group to governance, development, and project implementation.

To validate the adequacy of this sample size, the study adhered to the principle of data saturation, a critical concept in qualitative research. Data saturation occurs when further interviews or data collection no longer yield new information or emergent themes. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) argue that data saturation is often achieved with 12 to 15 in-depth interviews within relatively homogeneous groups, affirming the adequacy of this study's sample size. Hennink, Kaiser, and Marconi (2021) further note that data saturation is not solely about the number of participants but

also about the richness and relevance of the data collected, aligning with the purposive sampling approach adopted here.

The participant distribution was designed to reflect the diverse roles and responsibilities associated with M&E practices, ensuring representation from all critical stakeholder categories. This diversity enhances the study's capacity to generate nuanced insights and explore the multifaceted nature of M&E processes in local governance and development. The summary of the participant distribution is presented below:

Table 3.1 summary of the participant distribution

Stakeholder Group	Number of Participants
Heads of Departments	13
Field Officers	15
Assembly Members	7
Chiefs	5
Contractors	5
Donor Partners	5
Total	50

Each stakeholder group was chosen based on its unique contribution to M&E activities. Heads of Departments provide insights into policy and decision-making processes, while Field Officers contribute ground-level perspectives on project implementation. Assembly Members offer a community-centric view of M&E practices, acting as intermediaries between the local government and residents. Chiefs provide culturally grounded perspectives that are crucial for understanding the socio-cultural dimensions of development projects. Contractors share practical experiences

related to project execution, and Donor Partners bring valuable insights into the alignment of M&E activities with funding requirements and strategic goals.

This sampling approach ensures that the study captures a comprehensive understanding of M&E practices across administrative, operational, cultural, and developmental dimensions. As Flick (2022) asserts, qualitative research thrives on the depth and diversity of perspectives, making purposive sampling and targeted participant distribution key to producing meaningful and actionable findings. By focusing on the stakeholders most relevant to the study's objectives, this research contributes robust, contextually grounded insights into the complexities of M&E processes within the Wa Municipality.

3.8 Sampling Methods and Techniques

Sampling methods are essential in research design, as they determine how participants are selected and, subsequently, the quality and applicability of the findings. Researchers commonly employ two broad categories of sampling methods: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. According to Bryman (2021), probability sampling ensures that every member of the target population has an equal chance of selection, enabling generalization to the entire population. This approach is often used in quantitative research to test hypotheses or generate statistically representative results. Conversely, non-probability sampling focuses on the researcher's judgment in selecting participants based on specific criteria, which is particularly valuable in exploratory or qualitative research (Mujere, 2016).

In this study, non-probability sampling methods were utilized because the research aimed to gain in-depth insights into a specific and relatively less-studied group involved in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices within the Wa Municipality. Non-probability sampling is widely regarded as appropriate for qualitative research, as it emphasizes depth and detail over

generalizability. As emphasized by Flick (2022), qualitative research often investigates complex social phenomena requiring nuanced and contextualized data, making non-probability sampling techniques such as purposive sampling ideal.

The study specifically employed purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, which involves selecting participants based on their expertise, relevance, and potential to contribute meaningful insights to the research objectives. This method is particularly effective when the study focuses on a well-defined population with specific characteristics or experiences. As Creswell and Creswell (2023) explain, purposive sampling is advantageous for qualitative research because it ensures that participants with the most relevant knowledge and experiences are included, maximizing the quality and depth of the data collected.

Purposive sampling was chosen for this research due to its alignment with the study's goal of exploring M&E practices comprehensively. The method allowed the researcher to strategically select stakeholders directly involved in M&E processes, such as Heads of Departments, Field Officers, Assembly Members, Chiefs, Contractors, and Donor Partners. These participants were identified as key informants capable of providing rich, detailed perspectives on M&E practices within the local governance and development context of the Wa Municipality. Recent studies, such as those by Palinkas et al. (2022), highlight that purposive sampling is particularly effective in studies that require the inclusion of individuals with specific expertise, ensuring a targeted approach to data collection.

One of the significant advantages of purposive sampling lies in its ability to facilitate the exploration of complex and sensitive topics. In this study, the focus on M&E practices—an area often tied to accountability and governance—necessitated a sampling method that could foster trust and rapport with participants. Maxwell (2021) notes that purposive sampling enhances

researcher-participant interactions, making it particularly useful when exploring topics requiring open dialogue and detailed accounts. Additionally, the method's efficiency and cost-effectiveness were critical, as it enabled the study to achieve depth without the logistical and financial challenges associated with larger, randomized samples (Bryman, 2021).

Another notable benefit of purposive sampling is its flexibility, which allows researchers to adapt their sampling strategies as the study evolves. This adaptability was crucial in ensuring that the study could include diverse and even unexpected perspectives that enriched the findings. For example, the inclusion of chiefs and donor partners provided cultural and strategic dimensions to the understanding of M&E practices, perspectives that might have been overlooked in a purely random sampling approach. As Patton (2015) underscores, the ability to discover and explore unique viewpoints is a hallmark of purposive sampling, making it invaluable in qualitative research.

In conclusion, purposive sampling was employed in this study to ensure that participants were selected based on their expertise, relevance, and potential to contribute valuable insights into M&E practices within the Wa Municipality. This method not only facilitated a focused and in-depth exploration of the research topic but also allowed for the inclusion of diverse perspectives critical to understanding the multifaceted nature of M&E processes. By prioritizing depth, efficiency, and adaptability, purposive sampling aligned seamlessly with the study's qualitative research design and objectives, ensuring the generation of rich, meaningful data.

3.9 Types/Sources of Data

Research data can broadly be categorized into primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to original information collected directly by the researcher, while secondary data involves pre-existing data compiled by other entities for different purposes (Mesly, 2015). The integration of

both types is critical to ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Recent studies, such as those by Creswell and Creswell (2023), emphasize that combining primary and secondary data allows researchers to triangulate findings, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the research.

Primary data is essential for generating first-hand, context-specific insights. It enables researchers to directly address the research questions and objectives. In this study, primary data was obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted with key stakeholders involved in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) processes within the Wa Municipality. These stakeholders included heads of decentralized departments, field officers, assembly members, chiefs, contractors, and donor or development partners. The interviews were designed to elicit detailed information on the stakeholders' experiences, challenges, and perspectives regarding M&E practices. As noted by Bryman (2021), interviews are particularly effective in qualitative research as they allow for flexibility and the exploration of emergent themes during data collection. Additionally, Maxwell (2021) highlights that primary data collected through interviews provides rich, nuanced insights, especially when exploring complex governance and development issues like M&E.

Secondary data played a complementary role in this study by offering a contextual and historical foundation for analyzing the primary data. It was sourced from documents and reports that provided insights into the broader M&E landscape in the Wa Municipality, including municipal medium-term development plans with M&E components, annual progress reports from the Wa Municipal Assembly, national M&E guidelines and frameworks, and project performance and evaluation reports from 2018 to 2022. These documents were invaluable for understanding the policy environment, institutional frameworks, and trends in M&E practices. As Flick (2022) underscores, secondary data provides depth and context, allowing researchers to situate their

primary data within broader systemic and institutional settings. Furthermore, secondary data helps identify gaps and inconsistencies in the literature, which can inform more targeted primary data collection.

Combining primary and secondary data allowed for a triangulation of findings, enhancing the study's robustness and credibility. According to Yin (2022), triangulation reduces the potential biases inherent in relying on a single data source and ensures a more holistic analysis. For instance, insights from interviews were cross-referenced with findings from municipal development plans and project reports to validate stakeholders' accounts and identify systemic patterns or discrepancies in M&E practices.

This dual-source approach also supported a deeper exploration of the research objectives. While primary data provided real-time insights into the lived experiences of stakeholders, secondary data added historical and institutional dimensions, enriching the analysis and ensuring a well-rounded perspective on M&E practices in the Wa Municipality.

In conclusion, the strategic integration of primary and secondary data in this study not only enhanced the comprehensiveness of the findings but also underscored the importance of using diverse data sources to address complex research problems. Recent methodological contributions, such as those by Patton (2022), reaffirm the value of this mixed approach in generating credible, actionable insights for academic and practical application.

3.10 Data Collection Methods

The study adopted the interview method as the primary means of data collection, aligning with the qualitative research approach that emphasizes exploring and understanding phenomena through in-depth inquiry (Adhabi, 2017). Unlike quantitative methodologies, which focus on measuring

variables, qualitative research seeks to uncover the reasons, meanings, and lived experiences behind particular phenomena (Stewart et al., 2008). Interviews, as a central tool in qualitative research, provide a means to understand the world from the participant's perspective, capturing their experiences and interpretations prior to scientific analysis (Sewell, n.d.). Gill et al. (2008) highlight the ability of interviews to delve into individuals' perspectives, beliefs, motivations, and experiences, making them a powerful tool for qualitative exploration.

Interviews are categorized based on their purpose and implementation style (Edwards and Holland, 2013). Formal interviews, conducted in structured professional settings, are well-suited for capturing comprehensive data from institutional stakeholders. In contrast, informal interviews, which occur during casual interactions, provide valuable but limited insights due to their unstructured nature. Given the formal nature of the Wa Municipal Assembly and its stakeholders, the study employed formal interviews to ensure a professional and systematic approach to data collection.

Additionally, interviews can be classified based on their structure into three types: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Gill et al., 2008; Edwards and Holland, 2013; Stuckey, 2013; Jamshed, 2014; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Structured interviews use a fixed set of questions, ensuring consistency across responses but limiting flexibility. Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, allow open-ended and conversational interactions, offering depth but often resulting in varied data that can be challenging to analyze. Semi-structured interviews combine the strengths of both approaches, providing a guiding framework of questions while allowing the flexibility to probe deeper into emergent topics.

The choice of semi-structured interviews for this study was driven by their ability to balance structure and adaptability, enabling the collection of rich, detailed insights while maintaining focus

on the research objectives (Alshenqeeti, 2014). This method facilitated an in-depth exploration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices by engaging stakeholders such as heads of decentralized departments, field officers, and other key players with extensive experience in M&E. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to address predetermined questions while providing the opportunity for participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives.

The flexibility inherent in semi-structured interviews proved essential for exploring the complex and context-specific nature of M&E practices within the Wa Municipality. Recent literature underscores the value of this approach in qualitative research, with Creswell and Creswell (2023) affirming its effectiveness in capturing diverse and nuanced perspectives. Similarly, Yin (2022) emphasizes the adaptability of semi-structured interviews in addressing emergent themes, making them particularly suited for dynamic research environments.

By employing semi-structured interviews, the study ensured a methodical yet responsive approach to data collection. This facilitated the gathering of comprehensive and contextually relevant data, which is crucial for understanding the intricacies of M&E practices and addressing the research objectives effectively.

3.11 Data Analysis and Presentation

LeCompte and Schensul (1999) describe data analysis as the systematic process of condensing raw data into a coherent narrative, coupled with interpretation. This process involves organizing large datasets to extract meaningful insights. Patton (1987) further outlines three core processes in data analysis: organizing the data, summarizing and categorizing it, and identifying patterns and themes. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) emphasize the importance of beginning analysis concurrently with data collection, categorizing in-field analysis into inscription, description, and transcription to ensure a thorough understanding of the collected data.

Given the qualitative nature of this study, thematic analysis was employed as the primary method for analyzing the data. Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), is a systematic approach that identifies, organizes, and interprets themes within qualitative data. Its flexibility makes it particularly suitable for diverse research contexts, enabling researchers to extract and interpret patterns with precision. Braun and Clarke also highlight the accessibility and adaptability of thematic analysis, which enhances the transparency and validity of qualitative studies. Chamberlain (2015) reinforces its utility, noting that thematic analysis can be effectively integrated into various epistemological frameworks, providing a robust foundation for qualitative research.

The study followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework. In the first phase, familiarization with the data was achieved through an in-depth review of transcribed interviews and oral diaries. This immersion allowed the researcher to gain a nuanced understanding of the content and identify relevant elements. Transcriptions were imported into NVivo software, a tool that facilitated efficient data organization and management.

The second phase involved generating initial codes using NVivo's coding functionality. This process entailed systematically assigning codes to significant phrases, sentences, or paragraphs after multiple readings of the transcripts to ensure accuracy and relevance. The coding process captured essential data elements, creating a comprehensive foundation for further analysis.

In the third phase, the focus shifted to identifying themes that encapsulated key patterns and meanings within the dataset. Themes were developed by grouping related codes and aligning them with the research questions. By the end of this phase, a detailed table was prepared, listing all themes alongside corresponding data extracts.

The fourth phase involved reviewing themes to ensure consistency and alignment with the entire dataset. Each theme was meticulously assessed to verify its relevance and coherence. Any themes that did not accurately represent the data were refined or discarded to maintain analytical rigor.

The fifth phase focused on defining and naming themes. Each theme underwent detailed analysis to ensure clarity and precision, with an emphasis on capturing the essence of the data. The refinement process involved articulating the scope and focus of each theme to ensure they addressed the research objectives comprehensively.

In the final phase, the findings were integrated into the study's results and discussion sections. Themes were presented alongside relevant data extracts and interpretations, providing a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the dataset.

NVivo software played a pivotal role in the analysis, offering tools for efficient coding, theme identification, and data management. Its ability to handle large datasets systematically ensured a rigorous and organized thematic analysis process.

The results of the thematic analysis are presented in subsequent chapters, detailing key insights and aligning them with the study's objectives. This methodological approach ensured the integrity and depth of the findings, contributing to a robust and well-founded analysis.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are the principles or guidelines that govern moral decisions regarding conduct and interactions with others (Salkind, 2003). Adherence to ethical principles is essential in research to protect the dignity, rights, and welfare of participants. Consequently, ethical considerations were central to the formulation and implementation of the study's data collection methodologies to prevent any potential harm, distress, or infringement on participant rights.

To ensure the ethical integrity of the research process, the data collection tools were reviewed and approved by the researcher's supervisor to confirm their appropriateness and harmlessness for administration. An introductory letter was obtained from the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS). This letter was submitted to the Wa Municipal Assembly and all target stakeholders to formally seek permission for data collection activities.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. This was facilitated through formal letters and phone calls, ensuring that participants were fully aware of the nature and purpose of the research. Confidentiality was assured, with participants guaranteed that the information provided would be used solely for academic purposes. Additionally, participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason, thereby safeguarding their autonomy.

The researcher also prioritized participant engagement by clearly outlining the potential benefits of the study. This transparency fostered trust and encouraged active participation. Throughout the study, every effort was made to uphold ethical standards, ensuring that the research process was conducted with respect, integrity, and accountability.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

The study encountered several limitations that posed challenges to its execution. One significant limitation was the difficulty in scheduling interviews with respondents due to their busy professional commitments. This often delayed data collection and required adjustments to the planned timelines. Additionally, the study's focus on a single municipality—Wa Municipal Assembly—posed constraints in terms of generalizability. While the findings provide valuable insights into monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices in the specific context of the Wa

Municipality, they may not fully represent the dynamics of M&E practices across all public sector institutions in Ghana.

Another notable limitation was the constraint of inadequate time and financial resources, which added pressure to complete the research within the stipulated period. Despite these challenges, measures were taken to mitigate their impact. For instance, respondents who were unavailable for face-to-face interviews were instead engaged through alternative means such as phone or Zoom calls, ensuring that their insights were still captured.

To address the limitation of focusing solely on the Wa Municipality, the study incorporated a review of national M&E guidelines, municipal medium-term development plans with M&E components, annual progress reports, and other M&E reports from other assemblies. This supplementary data helped to strengthen the rigor and contextual relevance of the study's findings.

Finally, the researcher adjusted personal schedules and successfully applied for bursary support to alleviate resource constraints and ensure timely completion of the research. These proactive measures enhanced the quality and reliability of the study, despite the limitations encountered.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study conducted in the Wa Municipal Assembly (WMA), addressing the core objectives of the research. It explores how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices are implemented within the municipality, identifies the factors that facilitate these practices, and examines the barriers that impede their effectiveness. The results are analyzed to provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of M&E processes as experienced by key stakeholders, including Heads of Departments, Field Officers, Assembly Members, Chiefs, Contractors, and donor partners. These findings aim to shed light on the operational realities of M&E in the Wa Municipality and offer insights into areas for improvement to enhance public development projects.

4.2 Understanding and Importance of M&E Practices

The study revealed a widespread recognition among stakeholders in the Wa Municipal Assembly (WMA) of the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in development projects. Across different groups, M&E was perceived as a critical tool for ensuring accountability, improving decision-making, enhancing project quality, fostering community participation, and optimizing resource use. However, despite this general appreciation, variations in understanding and practical application of M&E emerged, with some stakeholders demonstrating deep familiarity with its processes while others exhibited significant gaps in knowledge.

Heads of Departments (HODs) within the Assembly emphasized M&E as a central oversight mechanism for ensuring project alignment with institutional objectives. One HOD described monitoring as *"the eyes of the Assembly; without it, we would lack direction and fail to measure*

progress." Another respondent highlighted the importance of data collection in decision-making, stating, *"Without data from monitoring, we are navigating in the dark."* These perspectives illustrate the strong institutional belief in M&E as a management tool for evidence-based decision-making and transparency. However, some HODs also acknowledged challenges in implementation, particularly in translating data into actionable insights. As one respondent admitted, *"We collect a lot of data, but sometimes we struggle to use it effectively in decision-making."*

Field Officers, who engage directly in project implementation, viewed M&E as a practical tool for tracking progress and identifying challenges. One Field Officer noted, *"Our role is to ensure that we provide accurate and timely reports from the field. This helps the Assembly address challenges before they escalate."* However, some officers expressed concerns about the follow-up process, with one stating, *"Sometimes we report issues, but they don't receive the necessary attention. If monitoring does not lead to corrective action, it loses its purpose."* This sentiment highlights a gap between data collection and response mechanisms, raising questions about the effectiveness of feedback loops within the M&E system.

Assembly Members recognized M&E as a mechanism for promoting accountability and strengthening public trust. One Assembly Member stated, *"When we monitor projects, it reassures the people we serve that their resources are being used responsibly."* Another emphasized the role of participatory evaluation, noting, *"Through evaluation meetings, we involve community members in assessing the outcomes of projects."* However, there were also indications of limited technical understanding of M&E principles. Some Assembly Members equated monitoring solely with site visits, with one remarking, *"As long as we visit the project site, we are monitoring."* This

interpretation suggests a narrower view of M&E that focuses more on physical inspections rather than a comprehensive assessment of outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Traditional leaders, or Chiefs, expressed a strong interest in M&E as a tool for ensuring that development projects align with community priorities and cultural values. One Chief explained, *"Monitoring allows us to ensure that projects reflect the real needs of our people and respect our traditions."* Another added, *"Our involvement in the evaluation process ensures that the community's voice is heard."* However, some Chiefs indicated a limited role in formal M&E processes, with one stating, *"We are often consulted only after decisions are made. True monitoring should involve us from the beginning."* This points to a gap in participatory approaches, where traditional authorities are engaged reactively rather than proactively.

Contractors acknowledged the role of M&E in quality assurance and adherence to project specifications. One contractor remarked, *"When monitoring teams visit the site regularly, it keeps us on our toes to deliver quality work on schedule."* Another emphasized the constructive role of evaluations, stating, *"Evaluation reports help us identify areas where we can improve in future projects."* However, there were also concerns about inconsistent monitoring, with one contractor noting, *"Some projects receive frequent visits, while others are barely checked. A structured monitoring system would ensure uniform quality control."* This observation suggests disparities in monitoring coverage, which could impact project outcomes.

Donor partners highlighted M&E as an essential tool for accountability and resource optimization. One donor representative stated, *"We invest in M&E to guarantee that our resources are being used for their intended purpose and achieving the desired impact."* Another noted, *"Comprehensive monitoring reports strengthen our relationship with the Assembly by*

demonstrating transparency and results." However, some donors raised concerns about the quality of reporting, with one remarking, *"Sometimes reports focus more on activities rather than actual impact. We need more outcome-based evaluations."* This critique suggests a need for improved M&E frameworks that go beyond activity tracking to assess tangible development impacts.

While there is a general consensus on the importance of M&E within the Wa Municipal Assembly, the study highlights disparities in understanding and application among stakeholders. While HODs and donors largely frame M&E in terms of accountability and evidence-based decision-making, Field Officers and contractors view it as a tool for real-time problem-solving and quality assurance. Assembly Members and Chiefs see M&E as a transparency mechanism but sometimes lack a technical grasp of its full scope. These variations in perspectives suggest the need for capacity-building initiatives to enhance M&E literacy across all stakeholder groups. Strengthening participatory M&E processes, improving data utilization, and ensuring consistent monitoring across projects could significantly enhance the effectiveness of M&E practices within the municipality.

4.3 Enablers of Effective Monitoring and Evaluation Practice

Effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices are influenced by several enabling factors, which play a critical role in ensuring that M&E activities are well-integrated into the lifecycle of development projects. These enablers include leadership, financial resources, community engagement, use of technology, and cultural sensitivity.

Political will and strong leadership are foundational enablers for the success of M&E systems.

When political leaders and senior management are committed to M&E, they provide the necessary resources, institutional support, and policy backing to make M&E a priority in all sectors. This commitment is vital for ensuring that M&E is fully integrated into development planning, project implementation, and decision-making. Leadership support ensures that M&E practices are not only well-funded but also respected and institutionalized within government and organizational structures. It can also pave the way for creating a culture of accountability and transparency, where performance is regularly assessed, and results are used to inform future interventions.

"Political will is critical for ensuring that M&E efforts are not only seen as a technical function but as a strategic tool for achieving development goals." - Head of Department

"Leadership support empowers the M&E team to operate effectively. When senior leaders prioritize M&E, it makes our work more relevant and ensures that our findings reach the right people." - Field Officer

"Strong political backing ensures that M&E is not just an afterthought but a core part of project and policy implementation." - NGO Representative

"Management support creates an environment where M&E can thrive, and it helps to create accountability within the system." - Development Partner

Political will and leadership support are essential for creating an enabling environment where M&E practices are taken seriously and integrated into the wider governance and development processes.

Another crucial enabler for successful M&E practice is the availability of adequate financial resources. Projects that have specific budget allocations for M&E activities are better positioned to carry out rigorous monitoring and evaluations. Adequate funding ensures that necessary M&E tools are acquired, skilled personnel are employed, and data collection and analysis can be done effectively. Participants emphasized that projects supported by international donors often have well-established M&E frameworks because of dedicated funding for these activities. Without proper funding, M&E activities are often neglected or underfunded, leading to compromised data collection and incomplete evaluations.

"When we have dedicated funds for M&E, we can afford to do more thorough checks, hire experts, and even use better technology. It's not just about monitoring; it's about doing it right."

- Development Partner

"Funding is crucial. Without it, we can't carry out site visits regularly, and that means we miss important details. M&E needs to be seen as an essential part of the project, not an optional extra." - Field Officer

"Adequate funding means we can deploy more advanced tools, conduct more frequent surveys, and even provide training for our staff. It all translates to better data and better decision-making." - Contractor

These observations underline the importance of having sufficient resources for M&E, ensuring that the necessary tools and expertise are available to maintain the quality and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation processes.

The integration of technology and digital tools has revolutionized M&E practices, making data collection, analysis, and reporting faster, more efficient, and more accurate. The shift from traditional paper-based methods to digital tools, such as mobile data collection apps and Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, has significantly enhanced the reliability and timeliness of data. Technology also enables real-time monitoring, allowing project managers to make data-driven decisions and identify issues early, thereby improving project outcomes. Digital tools have not only streamlined the process but also improved transparency, as stakeholders can access real-time data and track progress more effectively.

"We used to collect data on paper, which was slow and prone to errors. Now, with mobile apps, we get real-time data, and it's much easier to track progress. It saves us a lot of time, and the data is more reliable." - Contractor

"Technology has transformed the way we do M&E. With GIS mapping, we can visually see where our projects are having an impact and where more resources are needed. It's an incredibly powerful tool." - Development Partner Representative

"Digital tools allow us to streamline data collection. Before, we had to wait for field officers to come back with reports. Now, we can monitor activities as they happen, and it helps us respond faster to any issues that arise." - Head of Department

The adoption of digital tools is not only a significant time-saver but also enhances the overall quality and transparency of M&E activities, reinforcing the credibility of project outcomes.

Capacity building, particularly through regular training programs, has been recognized as an important enabler of effective M&E practices. Many participants emphasized the role of continuous professional development for M&E staff, field officers, and other stakeholders involved in project monitoring. Training ensures that personnel are equipped with the necessary

skills and knowledge to carry out high-quality evaluations. This includes training in areas such as data collection methods, statistical analysis, and reporting techniques. Additionally, exposure to international best practices and new trends in M&E allows staff to implement up-to-date and relevant strategies. Regular training enhances the competency of M&E personnel, leading to more accurate and reliable data collection, analysis, and reporting.

"Regular training helps us stay updated with new tools and techniques in M&E. It makes us more effective in our work." - Head of Department

"We have seen significant improvements in our M&E practices after providing training for our field officers. They are now more confident in using digital tools for data collection." - NGO Representative

"Capacity building is key. Without proper training, our staff wouldn't be able to carry out the necessary M&E activities effectively." - Development Partner

"I think that more targeted training for project staff helps in both understanding the M&E framework and executing it to meet the project's objectives." - Field Officer

The consistent investment in building M&E capacity ensures that project teams are not only proficient but also able to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of development initiatives. Well-trained staff can identify challenges early, recommend corrective actions, and ensure that evaluation methodologies are adhered to with precision.

Defining clear roles and responsibilities for M&E activities within an organization ensures that everyone knows their responsibilities and can be held accountable. This clarity reduces the risk of tasks being neglected or overlapping, leading to a more streamlined and efficient M&E process. Clearly defined roles also help in identifying any gaps in skills or knowledge, enabling targeted training and development efforts.

“Clearly defined roles and responsibilities prevent overlap and ensure that M&E activities are carried out effectively and efficiently.” – M&E Officer

“When roles are clear, everyone knows their responsibilities, and M&E systems run more smoothly.” – Program Manager

“Defining roles ensures accountability in the M&E process, making it easier to identify areas that need improvement.” – HR Specialist

“Clear roles and responsibilities allow us to allocate tasks appropriately and prevent bottlenecks in the M&E process.” – Development Partner

A clear M&E framework, including well-defined objectives, indicators, and targets, was repeatedly identified as an enabler of effective monitoring and evaluation practices. The design of the M&E framework is essential to guide data collection, analysis, and reporting. It ensures that all involved parties understand the expectations, outcomes, and the methodology to be used. Additionally, selecting appropriate and measurable indicators helps to assess progress accurately and provides concrete data for decision-making. When the M&E framework is structured around realistic and relevant indicators, it enhances the overall effectiveness of the monitoring process and allows for timely adjustments if necessary.

“Having clear and measurable indicators makes it much easier to track progress and identify where things are going wrong.” – Field Officer

“A well-defined M&E framework serves as a roadmap. It tells us what we should focus on and how to measure it effectively.” – Head of Department

“When we have strong indicators and clear goals, we can quickly see if the project is on track or if we need to make adjustments.” – NGO Representative

“Clear indicators guide our work and make the evaluation process more systematic. It’s not just about counting outputs; it’s about measuring the real impact of the project.” – Development Partner

The availability of high-quality, reliable, and timely data is a crucial enabler of effective M&E practices. For M&E to be successful, it requires access to accurate, comprehensive, and relevant data. Poor data quality, whether due to inconsistencies, outdated information, or inaccuracies, undermines the entire monitoring and evaluation process. Establishing data quality standards, ensuring consistent data collection practices, and maintaining robust data management systems are necessary steps to guarantee that the data used in M&E is valid and useful. The availability of up-to-date and accurate data is essential for making informed decisions and assessing the progress and impact of projects.

“Good quality data is the cornerstone of any effective M&E system. Without it, our analysis and decision-making would be based on unreliable information.” – Head of Department

“Accurate and timely data allows us to track project progress and make necessary adjustments before problems escalate.” – Field Officer

“We prioritize data quality by ensuring that we use standardized methods and regularly verify the accuracy of the information we collect.” – Project Manager

“Access to high-quality data ensures that our M&E system is not just tracking activities, but also measuring real outcomes and impacts.” – NGO Representative

Data quality is a cornerstone of effective M&E. Ensuring that data is accurate, reliable, and valid is essential for making informed decisions. High-quality data not only supports the monitoring of ongoing activities but also informs evaluations, which assess the impact and effectiveness of interventions. Data integrity involves ensuring that the information is trustworthy, free from bias or manipulation, and protected from unauthorized access. Data quality controls, regular audits, and strict protocols for data management and analysis are key elements of ensuring data integrity.

“High-quality data is essential for making evidence-based decisions, ensuring that interventions are on track and achieving their desired outcomes.” – M&E Officer

“Data integrity is non-negotiable for us—without it, the entire M&E system loses credibility, and the findings can't be trusted.” – Project Manager

“Ensuring data quality helps us to make informed, accurate, and timely decisions that directly impact project success.” – Field Officer

“We implement rigorous data quality checks at every stage of the M&E process to maintain accuracy and prevent errors that could undermine our findings.” – NGO Representative

M&E systems should be designed to ensure that the data collected is accessible, organized, and easy to use for all stakeholders. Complex data systems that are difficult to navigate or require specialized knowledge can hinder the effective use of M&E findings. A user-friendly approach ensures that key decision-makers, including those with limited technical expertise, can access and interpret data. Ensuring that data is presented in a clear and understandable manner promotes transparency and enables informed decisions at all levels of the program.

“Making M&E data accessible and easy to use allows stakeholders to make informed decisions quickly, ensuring that the program stays on track.” – M&E Officer

“Data should be accessible to everyone involved, from field officers to senior management, in formats that are easy to interpret and act upon.” – Project Manager

“User-friendly M&E systems enable timely decision-making by ensuring that everyone, regardless of technical expertise, can understand the data.” – Development Partner

“We design our M&E tools to ensure that data is accessible to non-technical stakeholders, allowing for informed and transparent decision-making.” – M&E Analyst

Strong legal and policy frameworks are essential for the institutionalization and effectiveness of M&E systems. National, regional, and local policies that prioritize M&E in development planning provide the legal backing needed for the establishment of formal M&E systems. These frameworks help standardize M&E practices, establish clear roles and responsibilities, and create a mechanism for accountability. A clear policy framework also promotes consistency and continuity in M&E processes, ensuring that projects and programs are regularly monitored and evaluated.

“A clear legal and policy framework gives legitimacy to the M&E process and ensures that all stakeholders are committed to monitoring and evaluating progress.” – Development Partner

“We have seen the importance of legal backing in institutionalizing M&E, making it a non-negotiable part of the project cycle.” – Head of Department

“A strong legal framework ensures that M&E results are not only collected but also acted upon by decision-makers.” – NGO Representative

“Legal and policy frameworks provide the structure needed for robust M&E systems to function and ensure compliance with national standards.” – Field Officer

Incorporating enablers such as political will, leadership support, gender considerations, financial and human resources, data quality, and legal frameworks ensures that M&E systems are effective, inclusive, and sustainable. Political will and leadership are particularly important for setting the tone and ensuring M&E practices are prioritized at the national and local levels. Gender-responsive and inclusive M&E practices ensure that the needs and perspectives of all groups are considered, leading to more equitable outcomes. Finally, the availability of resources, quality data, and strong policy frameworks underpins the success and sustainability of M&E systems, enabling them to drive evidence-based decision-making and foster long-term development outcomes in the Wa Municipality and beyond. By leveraging these enablers, M&E systems can more effectively track progress, measure impact, and contribute to informed policy development.

4.4 Barriers to Effective Monitoring and Evaluation Practice

Barriers to effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices can severely undermine the quality and outcomes of interventions, affecting their long-term sustainability and impact. These barriers include a wide range of issues such as inadequate budget allocation, lack of qualified M&E experts, insufficient stakeholder involvement, failure to select appropriate indicators, poor evaluation designs, and inadequate technological tools. Additionally, gender disparities, religious and socio-cultural resistance, seasonal and geographical challenges, poor coordination, and political interference also significantly hinder the efficacy of M&E processes. This section provides a detailed examination of these barriers, based on insights from the field.

M&E activities often face budget constraints, with limited funding allocated to data collection, analysis, reporting, and staffing. Without sufficient financial resources, M&E systems cannot be implemented effectively, leading to incomplete data, missed evaluations, or underdeveloped monitoring frameworks. This financial gap can undermine the quality of M&E processes. *"There*

is always a struggle to secure adequate funding for M&E activities, which limits what we can accomplish." – Field Officer. *"We often have to compromise on the quality of data collection or analysis because of a lack of funding."* – NGO Representative. *"The budget allocated for M&E is usually insufficient to cover all the necessary activities, leading to gaps in the process."* – Head of Department. *"Lack of funding for M&E undermines the overall effectiveness of the program."* – Development Partner. Securing adequate funding for M&E requires prioritizing it in project budgets and seeking external funding or partnerships dedicated to monitoring and evaluation. Advocating for M&E funding early in the project cycle and demonstrating its value in achieving project goals can help secure necessary resources. Additionally, developing cost-effective M&E methods that make the best use of available resources can improve sustainability.

Another major barrier identified is the lack of commitment from management towards M&E. Successful M&E systems require strong leadership and active involvement from top-level management to be truly effective. However, when leadership is disengaged or prioritizes other aspects of project implementation, M&E processes are often neglected. This lack of commitment can result in insufficient resources, a lack of focus on data collection, and limited follow-through on recommendations from evaluations. Without management's commitment, M&E practices often become isolated, with little influence on the broader project or organizational decision-making. *"It's hard to prioritize M&E when the senior management team isn't fully committed to it. Without buy-in from the top, it's difficult to get the necessary resources or attention."* – NGO Representative. *"Management often views M&E as an administrative burden rather than a tool for improving project outcomes. This leads to a lack of support and involvement from the leadership."* – Development Partner. *"Without management commitment, M&E results are ignored or forgotten. The leadership needs to show that they value M&E by acting on*

recommendations." – Field Officer. *"If management doesn't set the tone for how M&E is to be integrated into the project, it becomes an afterthought and doesn't contribute meaningfully to project success."* – Head of Department. The lack of commitment from management reflects a broader issue of how M&E is perceived within an organization or project. When management fails to prioritize M&E, it weakens its integration into the project's design and implementation, undermining its potential to drive learning, improvement, and accountability. Ensuring that M&E is championed at the highest levels of leadership is essential for creating a culture of monitoring, learning, and adaptive management.

Political interference is a significant barrier that can undermine the impartiality and reliability of M&E processes. Local politicians and influential individuals may exert pressure on M&E officers to skew reports in favor of projects that enhance their political visibility rather than focusing on community needs. This can distort data, misallocate resources, and erode public trust in M&E processes. *"Politicians sometimes use project outcomes as part of their campaign messages, which pushes us to highlight certain results and overlook others. It makes our work challenging because it takes away from an honest assessment."* – Development Partner Representative. *"Our role is to evaluate projects impartially, but when political figures get involved, they often want to control what is shown to the public. It compromises the reliability of our reports."* – Field Officer. *"There are times when certain communities are prioritized for M&E resources, not because they are most in need, but because a politician has a vested interest there. This leaves other areas neglected, which isn't fair to the people relying on us."* – NGO Representative. Political interference disrupts the objectivity of M&E activities, compromising transparency and leading to skewed results that fail to reflect actual community needs.

A common barrier to effective M&E is the limited capacity of M&E staff. In many organizations, M&E professionals lack the necessary skills, experience, or knowledge to carry out high-quality monitoring and evaluation. This lack of capacity can result in poor data collection practices, inaccurate analysis, and ultimately weak M&E systems that fail to provide valuable insights. *"Our M&E team lacks the necessary skills to perform evaluations effectively, and this leads to poor-quality results."* – Field Officer. *"There is a gap in the technical expertise needed for M&E. We need more training for our staff to improve the quality of our work."* – NGO Representative. *"M&E staff are not always equipped with the right tools or knowledge, and this can hinder the overall effectiveness of the evaluation."* – Head of Department. *"Sometimes, the lack of M&E capacity leads to data being collected poorly, which undermines the evaluation process."* – Development Partner. Building the capacity of M&E staff is critical to ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation. This can be done by offering training programs, providing mentorship opportunities, and encouraging professional development. Organizations should also ensure that M&E staff are equipped with the right tools and resources to carry out their work effectively. Investing in human resources for M&E is an essential step toward improving the quality and impact of M&E systems.

Inadequate training for M&E personnel has been identified as another significant barrier to the effective practice of M&E. M&E staff often lack the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise to conduct thorough and accurate assessments of projects. This is particularly true in remote or rural areas, where training opportunities may be scarce. Inadequately trained staff may struggle with developing and implementing M&E frameworks, collecting and analyzing data, and interpreting evaluation results. Moreover, the dynamic nature of M&E requires continuous learning to stay updated with new methodologies and tools, which is often not prioritized in

many organizations. *"M&E staff often do not have the necessary skills to conduct evaluations properly, which leads to gaps in data collection and analysis."* – Development Partner. *"Without proper training, M&E staff may fail to collect relevant data or may misunderstand the methodologies, which compromises the quality of the results."* – NGO Representative. *"We need more workshops and training programs for M&E personnel. It's not just about collecting data but knowing how to analyze it and make it useful."* – Field Officer. *"Investing in training is crucial. If M&E personnel are not equipped with the right skills, it impacts the entire project."* – Head of Department.

In some organizations, unclear roles and responsibilities in the M&E process can hinder the smooth implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities. When it is not clear who is responsible for specific aspects of M&E, tasks may be overlooked, duplicated, or not executed to the required standard. This lack of clarity can lead to inefficiencies, missed opportunities for learning, and difficulties in tracking progress. *"There's often confusion about who is responsible for what within the M&E process. Some people assume others are handling certain tasks, leading to gaps."* – Head of Department. *"When roles are not well defined, it leads to delays in data collection and analysis. This can affect the quality and timeliness of M&E results."* – Field Officer. *"Lack of clear roles creates problems when trying to track progress or follow up on recommendations from previous evaluations."* – NGO Representative. *"Without a clear understanding of roles, M&E processes can become disorganized, leading to incomplete or inconsistent data."* – Development Partner. Establishing clear lines of responsibility for each component of the M&E system can improve efficiency, coordination, and overall effectiveness.

Engaging key stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes is crucial for ensuring that activities are relevant, effective, and widely accepted. However, many organizations fail to

actively involve community members, beneficiaries, local authorities, and partners in M&E activities. This lack of engagement creates a disconnect between the M&E process and the needs of stakeholders, reducing the overall effectiveness of these efforts.

“Stakeholders are often not involved in the M&E process, which makes it hard for the results to be relevant to their needs.” - NGO Representative

“We need to ensure that those affected by the project are part of the evaluation process, but this isn’t always the case.” - Head of Department

“There is little participation from beneficiaries in our M&E activities. Their perspectives could significantly improve the findings.” - Field Officer

“Engaging stakeholders in M&E from the start can improve the project’s relevance, but this is often overlooked.” - Development Partner

Involving beneficiaries, local authorities, and community representatives in the design, implementation, and evaluation of projects ensures that M&E processes align with their needs and priorities. Participatory approaches, where stakeholders contribute to data collection and analysis, can increase the legitimacy and utility of the results.

Another challenge is the limited use of technology, which hinders the effectiveness of M&E systems, particularly in remote areas. Manual data collection methods and outdated software can lead to inefficiencies, errors, and delays in data processing. Despite the potential benefits of digital tools in streamlining data collection, analysis, and reporting, many organizations lack the resources or awareness to implement them.

“Without the right technology, data collection becomes cumbersome and prone to errors.” - Field Officer

“Many M&E teams still rely on paper-based systems, which slows down the entire process.” -

NGO Representative

“In remote areas, the lack of access to digital tools makes it challenging to implement effective M&E.” - Head of Department

“Technology can significantly enhance M&E processes, but many organizations don’t have the resources to implement it.” - Development Partner

Gender disparities present another significant barrier, as cultural norms and traditional roles often limit women’s participation in public meetings and decision-making processes. In many communities, women—who play key roles in household and community development—are underrepresented in M&E activities, leading to gender-biased data collection and analysis. This lack of representation results in incomplete evaluations, particularly on issues such as healthcare, education, and nutrition.

“Men are usually the ones we see during project meetings and monitoring activities. We miss the women’s perspective, and that’s a gap we need to fill.” - NGO Representative

“There’s an assumption that men speak for their households, but that’s not always true. Women have different experiences and insights, especially when it comes to issues like healthcare and education, but they are often not heard.” - Development Partner

“In many communities, cultural norms discourage women from participating in public gatherings. This makes it difficult to get their views during M&E activities, and we end up with an incomplete picture.” - Field Officer

The lack of female representation in M&E leads to data that does not fully capture the realities of all community members.

Resistance to M&E activities is also common in some communities due to religious beliefs and socio-cultural norms, particularly in projects related to health, education, and social behavior change. Traditional values may conflict with project objectives, leading to skepticism or outright opposition.

“In some areas, people are skeptical about monitoring activities because they associate them with external control. It's important to involve local leaders who can bridge this gap.” - Field Officer

“We’ve had instances where people refused to participate in health surveys because they believed it was against their religious practices. It took a lot of dialogue with community leaders to explain the benefits and gain their cooperation.” - NGO Representative

“There are communities where the idea of modern education conflicts with traditional values, and that affects how willing people are to engage in M&E activities for education projects.” - Development Partner

Geographic isolation and seasonal changes also create significant challenges, particularly in rural areas. During the rainy season, roads often become impassable, making it difficult for field officers to reach project sites. Limited transportation options and unreliable communication networks further complicate monitoring efforts.

“During the rainy season, some communities are cut off, and we can’t get there to monitor projects. It disrupts our schedules.” - Contractor

“Roads in some areas become muddy and difficult to navigate when it rains. This means that we either have to reschedule or find alternative ways to reach the sites, which is not always feasible.” - Field Officer

“Projects in remote areas are particularly challenging because of the distance and poor

infrastructure. Even when we plan well, unexpected weather changes can disrupt everything.” -

Development Partner

Cultural sensitivity is another crucial aspect of M&E. When M&E approaches do not account for local norms and practices, the findings may be misrepresented or fail to capture the true experiences of communities.

“Sometimes the M&E process doesn’t take into account local cultural norms, which can affect the relevance of the findings.” - Field Officer

“Cultural sensitivity is often overlooked in M&E, leading to findings that do not reflect the true experiences of the communities we work in.” - NGO Representative

“Our M&E activities need to be more attuned to the cultural context to ensure we are collecting meaningful data.” - Head of Department

Resistance to change also hinders the adoption of new M&E practices. Many organizations and individuals prefer to stick to traditional approaches, often due to fear of accountability or unfamiliarity with new methodologies.

“People often don’t want to change how they’ve always done things. The introduction of new M&E practices is often met with skepticism.” - Field Officer

“There’s a lot of inertia in the system. Everyone is comfortable with how things are, and implementing something new feels like an unnecessary burden.” - Development Partner

A significant barrier is the fear of accountability, which discourages honest reporting and data collection. Staff may be hesitant to highlight challenges or inefficiencies due to concerns about blame or negative consequences.

“There’s often a fear of being blamed for poor results, which makes staff hesitant to engage in honest reporting or data collection.” - Field Officer

“M&E should be seen as a tool for improvement, not a way to point fingers or assign blame.” - Head of Department

Weak data management systems further impact M&E effectiveness. Many organizations lack structured data storage and retrieval systems, leading to inefficiencies and unreliable reporting.

“Data management is often chaotic. We have so many different sources and formats, and it’s hard to keep track of what’s happening across the project.” - Head of Department

“The lack of centralized data storage systems means that data is scattered across multiple platforms, making it difficult to get a clear picture of the project's progress.” - NGO Representative

Finally, inadequate capacity in data analysis limits the ability to draw meaningful conclusions from collected data.

“We often collect data, but there is not enough capacity to analyze and interpret it properly, which affects our decision-making.” - Field Officer

“Lack of data analysis skills within the team limits our ability to draw actionable insights from the data.” - NGO Representative

These barriers to effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) significantly impact the success and sustainability of development interventions. Budget constraints, lack of management commitment, political interference, limited staff capacity, inadequate training, and unclear roles all contribute to weak M&E systems that fail to provide accurate, timely, and actionable insights.

Addressing these challenges requires strong leadership, sufficient funding, capacity-building

initiatives, and a commitment to transparency and accountability. By overcoming these barriers, organizations can enhance their M&E practices, leading to better decision-making, improved project outcomes, and greater long-term impact.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study reveals that participants possess a varied understanding of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices, with disparities in knowledge and application across different stakeholder groups. Heads of departments and field officers generally exhibit a stronger grasp of M&E principles due to their direct involvement in project planning, implementation, and reporting. Their understanding often extends to key M&E functions such as tracking performance indicators, measuring project outcomes, and ensuring accountability. However, assembly members, traditional authorities, and contractors demonstrate a more practical but less structured comprehension of M&E. These stakeholders often view M&E through the lens of project supervision and compliance rather than as a systematic process for learning and evidence-based decision-making. Among donor partners and NGOs, a more advanced understanding of M&E is observed, largely influenced by external funding requirements and international best practices. Many donor-funded projects require rigorous reporting and evaluation mechanisms, which have contributed to a more structured approach to M&E within these organizations.

The findings also highlight the presence of several enablers that facilitate effective monitoring in Wa Municipality. One of the most significant enablers is the existence of institutional frameworks and policies that provide guidelines for structured M&E implementation. These frameworks, particularly within government agencies and donor-supported initiatives, create an enabling environment for standardized monitoring processes. Another crucial enabler is the collaboration among stakeholders, including government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and local community representatives. Effective partnerships enhance coordination, improve

information sharing, and facilitate joint monitoring efforts. Furthermore, capacity-building initiatives have played a role in strengthening M&E competencies among some stakeholders, especially those involved in externally funded projects. Training programs, workshops, and technical assistance have contributed to the improved understanding and application of M&E concepts among select groups of participants.

Technology has also emerged as a key enabler in monitoring activities. The use of digital tools such as mobile-based data collection systems, geographic information system (GIS) mapping, and real-time reporting platforms has enhanced the efficiency and accuracy of data collection. These technological innovations have enabled some stakeholders to conduct field assessments more effectively, thereby improving the reliability of monitoring processes. Additionally, community engagement and participation have been identified as another enabler, particularly in areas where local leaders and residents play an active role in project monitoring. The involvement of chiefs, assembly members, and grassroots organizations ensures that monitoring efforts are grounded in local realities and that project beneficiaries contribute to the assessment of interventions.

Despite these enabling factors, several barriers continue to hinder effective monitoring practices in Wa Municipality. One of the most prominent challenges is inadequate resources, including financial constraints, logistical limitations, and insufficient personnel to support M&E activities. Many government agencies and local organizations struggle with limited budgets for monitoring exercises, which affects their ability to conduct field visits, collect quality data, and analyze findings effectively. This lack of resources often results in irregular monitoring activities and a reliance on incomplete or outdated information. Additionally, weak institutional commitment to M&E further exacerbates the challenge. Some departments and agencies lack dedicated M&E

units, leading to inconsistencies in monitoring efforts and, in some cases, a lack of follow-through on findings and recommendations.

Limited technical capacity among some stakeholders also presents a major barrier. While certain groups, particularly within donor-funded projects, have benefited from training in M&E methodologies, many government officials, contractors, and community representatives still struggle with fundamental aspects of monitoring and evaluation. The absence of advanced skills in data collection, analysis, and reporting weakens the overall effectiveness of M&E systems. Political interference has also emerged as a significant constraint, with some M&E activities being influenced by political considerations. In some cases, political actors exert pressure on monitoring processes to align findings with political interests, which affects objectivity and undermines transparency. This challenge is particularly evident in projects linked to government funding, where M&E outcomes can be shaped by political agendas rather than empirical evidence.

Another major barrier is the limited availability and utilization of data. Inconsistent data collection practices, coupled with poor data management systems, hinder the ability of institutions to make informed decisions based on evidence. Many monitoring reports are not systematically archived, making it difficult to track progress over time or conduct comparative analyses. The absence of real-time data further limits the responsiveness of monitoring efforts, as stakeholders often rely on outdated information to assess project performance. Additionally, stakeholder apathy towards M&E has been identified as a challenge, particularly among contractors and some community members. Some individuals view M&E as a bureaucratic exercise rather than a strategic tool for improving project outcomes. This perception leads to non-cooperation in data collection efforts, reluctance to provide feedback, and, in some cases, resistance to external monitoring interventions.

In essence, while there is a general awareness of M&E practices among stakeholders in Wa Municipality, significant gaps remain in technical expertise, institutional commitment, and resource availability. The presence of enabling factors such as institutional policies, stakeholder collaboration, capacity-building initiatives, technological innovations, and community engagement demonstrates the potential for strengthening M&E practices. However, addressing barriers related to resource constraints, weak institutional structures, limited technical capacity, political interference, poor data management, and stakeholder apathy will be critical in enhancing the effectiveness of M&E systems. Strengthening institutional frameworks, investing in training and development, and ensuring sustained funding for monitoring activities are essential steps towards improving the overall M&E landscape in the municipality.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has critically examined the enablers and barriers to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices in Wa Municipality, situating the findings within broader theoretical and practical discussions on M&E in governance and development. Drawing from the literature, the study reaffirmed that M&E is a crucial mechanism for ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in development planning and implementation. The literature review highlighted key themes such as the role of stakeholder engagement, the need for robust data collection and management systems, the significance of technological advancements, and the necessity of aligning M&E practices with national policies and international best practices. These themes were further explored through the study's empirical findings, which provided valuable insights into the local realities of M&E implementation in Wa Municipality.

The study found that while stakeholders generally acknowledge the importance of M&E, there are critical gaps in knowledge, technical expertise, and institutional capacity that hinder its effective practice. Government officials, field officers, traditional authorities, and community representatives often lack the requisite skills and resources to conduct systematic M&E activities. This results in inconsistencies in data collection, weak reporting mechanisms, and a failure to fully utilize M&E outcomes in decision-making. Furthermore, despite national guidelines emphasizing participatory M&E, community involvement in monitoring processes remains minimal, leading to limited local ownership of development interventions. This aligns with literature findings that stress the importance of stakeholder participation in enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of M&E systems.

Another major challenge identified is the inadequate coordination among key actors involved in M&E. The study revealed that fragmented institutional structures, weak communication channels, and a lack of standardized M&E frameworks create inefficiencies in monitoring government and donor-funded projects. These findings are consistent with broader concerns in the literature that emphasize the need for harmonized M&E frameworks, inter-agency collaboration, and integrated data systems to ensure consistency and reliability in tracking development progress.

The study also examined the role of technology in strengthening M&E systems. Digital tools such as mobile data collection applications, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and real-time dashboards have been identified in the literature as transformative tools that can enhance efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness in M&E processes. However, findings from Wa Municipality indicate that the adoption of these digital solutions remains limited due to infrastructural deficits, financial constraints, and low digital literacy among key stakeholders. In addition, unreliable internet connectivity and inadequate power supply in some areas pose further barriers to the full

utilization of technology in M&E processes. These technological challenges reflect broader digital divides in developing regions, as highlighted in global M&E discussions.

Financial sustainability remains another critical barrier to effective M&E in Wa Municipality. The study found that M&E activities are often underfunded, leading to inadequate logistical support, delayed reporting, and an over-reliance on external funding. Literature on M&E financing underscores the importance of sustainable funding mechanisms, yet many local government structures continue to struggle with limited budget allocations for M&E. This lack of financial commitment weakens the ability of local authorities to conduct systematic evaluations, maintain accurate records, and implement evidence-based decision-making processes.

Furthermore, gender sensitivity and inclusivity in M&E remain areas of concern. The study established that M&E frameworks in Wa Municipality do not sufficiently incorporate gender-disaggregated data, which limits the ability to assess the differential impact of development programs on men, women, and marginalized groups. The literature emphasizes the importance of gender-responsive M&E, as it ensures that development interventions address the specific needs of all segments of the population. The absence of such an approach in Wa Municipality means that certain groups may be underserved or excluded from benefiting equitably from development initiatives.

Despite these challenges, the study identified several enablers that can be leveraged to strengthen M&E practices in Wa Municipality. The willingness of local authorities and stakeholders to engage in M&E provides a strong foundation for improvement. Additionally, national M&E policies and guidelines offer a framework for standardizing practices, and there is growing recognition of the need to integrate technology into monitoring systems. If these enablers are

properly harnessed, they can contribute to more effective M&E systems that drive better governance and development outcomes.

In conclusion, this study has provided an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing M&E practices in Wa Municipality, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. While significant progress has been made in recognizing the importance of M&E, structural, financial, technological, and capacity-related barriers continue to hinder its full realization. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that involves strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing stakeholder engagement, investing in technology, ensuring sustainable financing, and integrating gender-sensitive and inclusive methodologies into M&E frameworks. By implementing these strategies, Wa Municipality can improve its M&E systems, leading to more informed decision-making, enhanced service delivery, and ultimately, better development outcomes for its communities.

5.3 Recommendations

In light of the findings from this study, several recommendations have been made to strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices in Wa Municipality. This study situates the recommendations within the specific setting of Wa Municipality, taking into account the local stakeholders such as government officials, donor partners, assembly members, contractors, traditional authorities, and community members, while aligning with national M&E guidelines and frameworks.

First, adoption of Digital M&E Platforms for Real-Time Data Collection and Analysis. Given the resource constraints and logistical challenges identified in Wa Municipality, one of the most effective solutions is the adoption of mobile-based M&E platforms that can facilitate real-time

data collection, management, and analysis. These platforms are especially relevant in the context of Wa, where accessibility to remote areas can be difficult, and local M&E practices often rely on manual data entry and reporting. By introducing platforms like ODK (Open Data Kit) or CommCare, local government agencies and donor partners can ensure that field officers and assembly members collect accurate and timely data. These tools can also support national M&E guidelines on data quality and consistency, helping ensure that Wa Municipality aligns with the national standards for monitoring. Real-time dashboards would enable stakeholders, including the District Assembly and community leaders, to track project progress instantly and address issues promptly.

To facilitate this adoption, training workshops should be organized for local stakeholders, such as field officers, contractors, and assembly members, to build their capacity in using digital tools for data collection. This would align with the national M&E framework's emphasis on building the capacity of local stakeholders to use data-driven decision-making processes.

Blockchain for Transparency and Accountability in Public Projects. Blockchain technology has the potential to address issues of transparency and accountability in the M&E process, especially for public and donor-funded projects in Wa Municipality. As Wa Municipality continues to receive funding from both the government and international donors, blockchain can ensure that data related to project funds, outputs, and outcomes remains secure, transparent, and tamper-proof. This would help to safeguard against mismanagement of funds and foster greater trust between local stakeholders (government officials, community leaders, and citizens) and donors.

Integrating blockchain into local M&E systems would ensure compliance with national guidelines on financial accountability and governance. The Ghanaian government's national M&E framework includes mechanisms for ensuring transparency in public sector projects, and blockchain could be

a powerful tool for fulfilling these requirements, especially in areas where there may be concerns about corruption or misuse of resources. Local governments in Wa Municipality could work with technology partners to explore pilot blockchain projects that track the flow of project funds and provide stakeholders with real-time, immutable records of financial transactions and project outcomes.

AI and Predictive Analytics for Proactive Decision-Making. In Wa Municipality, where the capacity to conduct in-depth analysis is often limited, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning can help local stakeholders, including government departments, NGOs, and donor partners, forecast potential risks and trends that could impact project success. For example, AI can analyze historical data from past projects in Wa and predict the likelihood of delays, resource shortages, or underperformance in ongoing projects. This would allow project managers and decision-makers to take proactive steps in addressing potential issues before they escalate.

National M&E guidelines emphasize the importance of evidence-based decision-making, and AI can support this by providing data-driven insights that inform local governance and project management. The use of predictive analytics could also support the Wa District Assembly and donor partners in making more informed decisions regarding resource allocation, ensuring that interventions are better tailored to local needs and conditions.

Internet of Things (IoT) for Real-Time Monitoring of Infrastructure and Environment. Given the nature of development projects in Wa, such as those related to agriculture, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability, the Internet of Things (IoT) can offer a robust solution for monitoring real-time conditions. For instance, IoT devices can be deployed in agricultural projects to monitor soil moisture, temperature, or water usage, which would provide continuous, data-driven insights

into project progress. Similarly, in infrastructure projects, IoT sensors could track the condition of roads, bridges, or buildings in the municipality.

The use of IoT can align with national guidelines on environmental monitoring and infrastructure development, as it allows local stakeholders such as the Municipal Assembly, contractors, and traditional authorities to track the success of these projects in real-time. IoT technology could also enable more efficient resource management, reducing waste and improving project sustainability. To implement this, training on IoT tools should be provided to local contractors and project managers to ensure that they are equipped to use this technology effectively.

Capacity Building through Digital Learning Platforms and E-Learning. One of the most significant barriers to effective M&E in Wa Municipality is the limited technical capacity of local stakeholders. To address this, the municipality can take advantage of the expanding digital learning opportunities that align with national M&E capacity-building initiatives. E-learning platforms can be developed to offer on-demand training for stakeholders, such as field officers, assembly members, contractors, and local community leaders. These platforms can provide courses on M&E methodologies, digital tools for data collection, and the application of national M&E guidelines.

As digital literacy continues to grow in Wa, these learning platforms can support stakeholders in improving their technical skills in M&E, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle the demands of modern, digital M&E practices. Furthermore, these online platforms could be linked to national M&E systems, ensuring that Wa Municipality's local stakeholders are up-to-date with the latest trends and practices in M&E across Ghana.

Use of Social Media and Crowd-Sourced Data for Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement. In Wa Municipality, traditional communication methods may not always engage the wider community

effectively. However, the rise of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter presents an opportunity to gather real-time feedback, engage with beneficiaries, and solicit crowd-sourced data for project monitoring. By using these platforms, the Wa District Assembly and donor partners can enhance communication with local residents and allow them to report issues, suggest improvements, and provide feedback on project implementation.

National M&E guidelines emphasize the importance of community participation in the monitoring process, and social media can serve as an accessible and inclusive tool for engaging marginalized groups in Wa. Local stakeholders, including traditional authorities and assembly members, can use these platforms to ensure that monitoring is more participatory, transparent, and responsive to the concerns of the community.

Drone Technology for Monitoring Remote Areas and Infrastructure Projects. Given the challenges of monitoring remote areas in Wa Municipality, drone technology presents a promising solution. Drones can be deployed to monitor the progress of infrastructure projects, including roads, bridges, and buildings, especially in rural or hard-to-reach areas. By providing aerial imagery and videos, drones can offer a comprehensive view of project sites, allowing local authorities, contractors, and stakeholders to monitor progress more effectively.

This technology aligns with national M&E guidelines, particularly in terms of ensuring accurate and timely reporting of large-scale projects. The introduction of drones in the municipality would require capacity-building for local stakeholders to handle drone operations and interpret the data collected. Once implemented, drone technology could significantly improve the efficiency and coverage of M&E efforts in Wa.

The capacity of local stakeholders must be strengthened. While the adoption of new technologies such as digital M&E tools is critical, it is equally important to invest in ongoing training programs for stakeholders. These programs should focus not only on the technical aspects of M&E but also on building an understanding of its strategic role in improving governance, policy-making, and project management. Stakeholders such as government officials, contractors, community leaders, and field officers should be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to engage with M&E systems effectively, ensuring that the benefits of these systems are fully realized.

Improved coordination among stakeholders is also crucial. The study revealed a lack of alignment between various actors involved in the M&E process, which often leads to delays, inefficiencies, and confusion. To address this, regular coordination meetings should be established, bringing together government agencies, donors, contractors, and community representatives. This will foster a shared understanding of roles, expectations, and methods, leading to better collaboration and more accurate, timely data collection. Additionally, joint planning and evaluation workshops can help streamline the M&E process, ensuring that all parties work towards common goals and adhere to the same standards.

Community engagement in M&E practices must be significantly enhanced. The participation of local communities, especially in rural areas, is often insufficient, which undermines the relevance and effectiveness of development projects. A more participatory approach to M&E is needed, where community members are actively involved in every stage of the process, from planning and data collection to analysis and reporting. This could be achieved through the establishment of local M&E committees composed of representatives from various community groups, such as women, youth, and traditional leaders. By involving these groups, the M&E process becomes more inclusive, ensuring that the needs and concerns of the local population are addressed.

Data availability and use are also key challenges. In Wa Municipality, data collection has often been inconsistent and unreliable, hindering effective project evaluation. To address this, local authorities should establish robust and standardized data collection systems, in line with national M&E guidelines. Training for local stakeholders on basic data management skills is essential to ensure that data is collected accurately, reported consistently, and stored securely. Moreover, technology should be leveraged to streamline data collection and reporting, ensuring that it is accessible and usable for decision-making.

Financial resources allocated to M&E activities need to be increased. Limited funding for M&E systems has been a recurring issue in the study, hindering the implementation of effective monitoring and evaluation practices. Local authorities should prioritize M&E in their budgets and seek additional funding from external sources, including development partners, NGOs, and the private sector. This would enable the municipality to invest in necessary infrastructure, such as digital tools and capacity-building programs, and ensure that M&E is integrated into all development projects.

Lastly, gender-sensitive approaches must be incorporated into M&E practices. The study highlighted the importance of ensuring that M&E systems capture gender-specific data and address the needs of women, youth, and other marginalized groups. Gender mainstreaming in M&E is essential for ensuring that development interventions are equitable and that the voices of all community members are heard. Local stakeholders should receive training on gender-sensitive M&E, and gender-focused indicators should be integrated into the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

These recommendations underscore the importance of combining technological innovations such as digital M&E platforms, blockchain, AI, IoT, and drones, with a comprehensive strategy that

strengthens local capacity, promotes stakeholder coordination, enhances community participation, and ensures financial sustainability. While the 4th Industrial Revolution offers powerful tools to improve M&E practices, their success depends on addressing the broader contextual challenges. By investing in capacity-building, fostering collaboration, improving data quality, and ensuring inclusivity, Wa Municipality can create a robust M&E system that not only adheres to national guidelines but also delivers tangible benefits for local communities. Through these efforts, M&E can become a transformative tool for driving sustainable development and improving the quality of life for the residents of Wa.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Studies

Several areas for further study on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices in the context of Wa Municipality and beyond can help deepen understanding and address gaps identified in this research. These areas of study would contribute to enhancing M&E systems and practices, while considering the local context, national guidelines, and emerging trends in the digital age.

One area for further study could focus on **the impact of digital technologies on M&E effectiveness in local governance**. While this study touched on the importance of digital tools, there is limited research on how technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) can specifically enhance M&E practices in local government contexts, particularly in the Wa Municipality. A deeper examination of the integration of these technologies in real-time data collection, monitoring, and reporting could provide insights into their practical application and the barriers to their adoption in rural and under-resourced areas. This study could also explore the ways in which these tools contribute to improving transparency, accountability, and data accuracy in public sector projects.

Another valuable area for exploration is **the role of community involvement in enhancing M&E outcomes**. While the study acknowledged the importance of community participation, more research is needed to understand the specific mechanisms through which local communities can contribute to M&E processes in meaningful ways. Further studies could explore how participatory M&E systems, such as community-led data collection or feedback loops, can increase the ownership and relevance of projects. This could include examining how various community groups (e.g., women, youth, marginalized populations) perceive and engage with M&E activities, as well as how their involvement influences project outcomes.

Additionally, a study on **the effectiveness of training programs for M&E stakeholders** would be beneficial. This research could assess the impact of different capacity-building models on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of M&E stakeholders at the local level. It could investigate whether training programs that combine technical knowledge with a deeper understanding of the role of M&E in governance lead to better outcomes in terms of data quality, stakeholder engagement, and decision-making. Furthermore, it could explore how different training delivery methods (e.g., in-person workshops, e-learning, peer learning) affect the learning experience and knowledge retention among M&E practitioners.

Another interesting area for future research is **the financial sustainability of M&E systems in local government projects**. This study could explore innovative ways to fund M&E activities, particularly in resource-constrained settings. Research could focus on identifying alternative funding sources, such as public-private partnerships, international development grants, or community-based financing models, that can support the implementation of M&E activities in Wa Municipality and similar local contexts. Additionally, it could examine the cost-benefit of integrating M&E systems into development projects from the outset, highlighting how long-term

investment in M&E can result in improved project outcomes and greater efficiency in resource allocation.

A further promising area of research would be **the impact of gender-sensitive M&E practices on the inclusiveness of development projects**. This study could explore how gender-responsive M&E frameworks can better capture the diverse needs of women, youth, and marginalized groups in Wa Municipality, particularly in relation to how these groups are impacted by development interventions. Research could also examine how gender-disaggregated data is utilized in M&E processes and decision-making, and whether it leads to more equitable outcomes. The study could consider the role of gender-sensitive indicators, tools, and methodologies in ensuring that all community members benefit from development programs.

Finally, **the role of local governance structures in supporting M&E processes** offers an important avenue for further research. A study could examine how local government structures, including district assemblies, traditional authorities, and community-based organizations, can facilitate or hinder the implementation of effective M&E systems. Understanding the political and institutional factors that support or challenge M&E activities at the local level could provide valuable insights into how governance structures can be improved to enable more effective monitoring and evaluation of development programs.

In summary, further research in these areas would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to M&E in local governance, particularly in Wa Municipality. Such studies would not only contribute to academic knowledge but also provide practical insights that could inform policy-making, enhance the effectiveness of development projects, and ensure that M&E systems are more inclusive, accountable, and sustainable in the context of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

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APPENDIX

**SIMON DIEDONG BOMBO UNIVERSITY OF BUSINESS AND
INTEGRATED BUSINESS STUDIES (SDD-UBIDS)
FACULTY OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**

INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

Introduction

Good [morning/afternoon], and thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. My name is Sulemana Ishawu, a student of Simon Diedong Dombo University for Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) pursuing an MPhil in Monitoring and Evaluation, and I am conducting a study on the enablers and barriers to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices in Wa Municipality.

The purpose of this interview is to gather insights into the factors that facilitate or hinder M&E activities within the Municipality. Your responses will be treated confidentially, and the data collected will be used strictly for academic purposes.

You are free to withdraw from this interview at any time or decline to answer any questions you are not comfortable with. If you agree, I would like to record this session for accuracy. Do you consent to proceed with the interview?

Section 1: Background Information

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your role in your organization?
 2. How long have you been involved in monitoring and evaluation activities?
 3. What type of projects or programs do you typically monitor and evaluate?
-

Section 2: Understanding of M&E Practices

4. How does your organization define and implement M&E?
 5. What specific M&E frameworks or approaches does your organization use?
 6. How often do you conduct M&E activities (e.g., weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually)?
 7. Who are the key stakeholders involved in your M&E processes?
-

Section 3: Enablers of Effective M&E Practices

8. What factors contribute to the successful implementation of M&E in your organization?
9. How does leadership or management support M&E activities?
10. What role does stakeholder involvement (e.g., community members, donors, government agencies) play in strengthening M&E?
11. How does the availability of financial and human resources impact M&E implementation?

12. Are there any policies or regulations that positively influence M&E practices in your organization?

Section 4: Barriers to M&E Practices

13. What are the main challenges you face in conducting M&E activities?

14. How do financial constraints affect your ability to implement M&E effectively?

15. Are there any technical or capacity-related issues (e.g., lack of skilled personnel, inadequate training) that hinder M&E?

16. How does data availability and quality affect M&E efforts?

17. Are there any cultural or political factors that influence M&E implementation?

18. How does coordination among different stakeholders impact M&E effectiveness?

Section 5: Capacity and Training Needs

19. What types of training or capacity-building programs have you received on M&E?

20. What additional skills or knowledge do you think are needed to improve M&E practices in your organization?

21. What recommendations would you make for strengthening M&E capacity at the municipal level?

Section 6: Use of M&E Results in Decision-Making

22. How are M&E findings used in decision-making within your organization?
 23. Can you provide an example of how M&E findings have influenced a project or policy?
 24. What challenges do you face in ensuring that M&E results are effectively used for learning and improvement?
-

Section 7: Recommendations for Strengthening M&E Practices

25. What strategies would you suggest to improve M&E practices in Wa Municipality?
 26. How can the government, donor agencies, and other stakeholders contribute to strengthening M&E systems?
 27. Are there any innovative approaches you think should be adopted to improve M&E practices?
-

Closing Remarks

28. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding M&E practices in Wa Municipality?
29. Do you have any questions for me about this research?

Thank you for your time and valuable insights. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and will help improve M&E practices in Wa Municipality. If you have any further thoughts or wish to provide additional information later, please feel free to contact me.

**SIMON DIEDONG BOMBO UNIVERSITY OF BUSINESS AND
INTEGRATED BUSINESS STUDIES (SDD-UBIDS)
FACULTY OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Sulemana Ishawu, a student of Simon Diedong Dombo University for Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) pursuing an MPhil in Monitoring and Evaluation. I am currently conducting a study on: “assessment of the enablers and barriers to monitoring and evaluation practice, a case study of the Wa Municipality” as part of my study requirements. I will be glad if you could spare some time (at least 20 minutes) for an interview on this topic. Your responses are very important in the success of this study. The information provided will only be used for academic purpose and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Consent given

Consent not given (Terminate the interview thank respondent)

B. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICE

How are monitoring and evaluation practiced by your department?

What are the types of monitoring practiced by your department?

What are the types of evaluation practiced by your department?

What are the steps involved in conducting your monitoring and evaluation?

How does your department plan for the monitoring and evaluation of its projects and programmes?

How do you develop your monitoring and evaluation indicators?

What tools do you use to conduct monitoring and evaluation?

How do you develop these monitoring and evaluation tools?

How do you fund your monitoring and evaluation?

How do you engage stakeholders in your monitoring and evaluation?

How do you undertake data collection?

How do you manage data collected?

How do you analyse data collected?

How do you disseminate your monitoring and evaluation results?

How are your monitoring and evaluation results used for future monitoring and evaluation?

What technology do you employ in your monitoring and evaluation practice?

What are some of the innovations adopted in your monitoring and evaluation practice?

How are lessons and feedback documented?

How do you normally effect lessons and feedback on future project planning?

What planning activities can be performed to promote the sustainability of the monitoring and evaluation process?

C. ENABLING FACTORS TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICE

How does the structure of your department support monitoring and evaluation practice?

How does your leadership support monitoring and evaluation practice?

How does your human resource capacity promote M&E practice?

What role do your partnerships with other departments play in planning, coordinating and managing M&E practice?

How do M&E frameworks or logical frameworks do you use to conduct monitoring and evaluation?

How do M&E tools like frameworks or logical frameworks help promote the conduct monitoring and evaluation?

What role do M&E work plans and budgets play in ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation?

How do your communication, advocacy and culture promote monitoring and evaluation practice?

How does routine programme monitoring promote monitoring and evaluation practice?

How do surveys and surveillances promote effective monitoring and evaluation practice?

Describe how evaluation and research data dissemination is done and how it promotes monitoring and evaluation practice?

How is technology employed and how does it promote monitoring and evaluation practice in your department?

What is the role of stakeholders in ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation practice?

What other factors can help promote effective monitoring and evaluation practice?.....

D. BARRIERS TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICE

What challenges do you face in your monitoring and evaluation practice?

How does your leadership affect the monitoring and evaluation process?

How is your monitoring and evaluation process affected by the tools used?

How do indicators affect your monitoring and evaluation process?

How does your financial capacity affect your monitoring and evaluation practice?

How does your human resource capacity affect your monitoring and evaluation practice?

What challenges do you face in the involvement of stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process?

What internal and external factors affect your monitoring and evaluation practice?

What negative effect does technology have on your monitoring and evaluation practice?

What challenges do you face during data collection?

What challenges do you face when managing data?

What challenges do you face when processing and analysing data?

What are the challenges experienced in the dissemination of monitoring and evaluation results?

What problems do you encounter in utilizing monitoring and evaluation results?

What challenges do you face in inputting monitoring and evaluation lessons and feedback into future plans?

What challenges do you face in sustaining the monitoring and evaluation process?

What other challenges do you face in your practice of monitoring and evaluation?.....

Thank you very much for your time.

**SIMON DIEDONG BOMBO UNIVERSITY OF BUSINESS AND INTEGRATED
BUSINESS STUDIES (SDD-UBIDS)**

FACULTY OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

CHECKLIST

A. INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Sulemana Ishawu, a student of Simon Diedong Dombo University for Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) pursuing an MPhil in Monitoring and Evaluation. I am currently conducting a study on: “assessment of the enablers and barriers to monitoring and evaluation practice, a case study of the Wa Municipality” as part of my study requirements. I will be glad if you could spare some time (at least 20 minutes) for an interview on this topic. Your responses are very important in the success of this study. The information provided will only be used for academic purpose and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Consent given

Consent not given (Terminate the interview thank respondent)

B. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICE

How do you practice monitoring and evaluation? Please scale the following monitoring and evaluation practices where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

Monitoring and Evaluation Practice	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Monitoring and evaluation plan					
Coherent framework					
Monitoring and evaluation budget					
Schedule of monitoring and evaluation					
Individuals roles for monitoring and evaluation activities are clearly defined					
Specification of the frequency of data collection					
Stakeholder involvement					
Availability of adequate Inputs (financial resources)					
Availability of adequate Inputs (human resources)					
Output (qualitative Indicators) are clearly defined					
Output (quantitative Indicators) are clearly defined					
Capture and Documentation of Lessons Learned					
Dissemination of monitoring and evaluation findings					
Reporting and follow up of monitoring and evaluation					
Feedback and sustainability mechanism					

Monitoring and Evaluation Steps and Processes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Conducting a Readiness Assessment					
Agreeing on performance outcomes to monitor and evaluate					
Selecting key indicators to monitor outcomes					
Gathering baseline data on indicators					
Planning for improvements: selecting realistic targets					
Monitoring for results					
Using evaluation information					
Reporting Findings					
Using the Findings					
Sustaining the M&E Process within the institution					

C. ENABLERS OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICE

Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following possible enabling factors for M&E practice in your Department. Where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

No.	Enabling Factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Adequate financial resources					
2	Employ M&E experts					
3	Management should be committed to M&E					
4	Active involvement of stakeholders					
5	Select right indicators					
6	Proper evaluation design					
7	Provide appropriate technology					
8	The Wa Municipal Assembly support M&E					
9	Regular capacity building and training of the people who undertake M&E in your department					
10	M&E partnership with other organizations					
11	M&E work plans					
12	M&E budget					
13	M&E frameworks					
14	M&E surveys and surveillances					
15	M&E data dissemination					
16	Technology					
	Others specify.....					
No.	Availability of funds	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

1	The Wa Municipal Assembly provides sufficient funds for monitoring and evaluation activities [about 5%-10% of projects budget]					
2	There is a separate budget allocation for M&E					
3	There is independence in the budgetary decision for the monitoring and evaluation unit					
4	The Wa Municipal Assembly ensures there is timely provision of funds for M&E					
5	Funds allocated are used for M&E activities only					
No.	Stakeholder Involvement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Stakeholders are adequately involved in designing and planning M&E Systems and activities					
2	Stakeholders participate in the department's planning of formal meetings for M&E					
3	Stakeholders' feedback is sought during M&E processes					
4	Stakeholders are involved in M&E decision making process					
5	Stakeholders are involved in M&E data collection process					
6	The organization involves stakeholders in the identification of indicators					
7	Stakeholders are allowed to participate in preparing the timetable for M&E activities.					
8	The organization assigns clear responsibilities to stakeholders during M&E process					
9	M&E results and findings are communicated to the stakeholder					

Organization Leadership						
1	The organization uses M&E findings in decision making					
2	Leaders always and clearly communicate M&E results					
3	Leaders take an active part in designing the M&E systems					
4	Management ensures sufficient resources are allocated to M&E					
5	Leaders ensure that staff are trained on M&E regularly					
6	Organization's policy supports M&E					
7	Senior management recognizes and supports the role of M&E					
8	The management takes part in some of the M&E activities					
9	There is supportive supervision and guidance from leaders					
M&E Tools		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Logical/Results framework					
2	Gantt Charts					
3	PERT Charts					
4	Performance indicators					
5	Impact evaluation					
6	Data collection plan					

7	Management Information System (MIS)/ Database					
8	Indicator matrix					
9	Feedback and review plan					
10	Implementation schedule					
11	Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)					
12	Budget					
13	Others Specify.....					
M&E data collection and analysis tools		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Global positioning system (GPS)					
	Survey Money					
	Google Surveys					
	Open Data Kit					
	Survey Share					
	Kobo Toolbox					
	Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS)					
	Others Specify.....					

D. BARRIERS TO MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICE

Kindly indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following possible challenges of M&E practice in your department or the assembly in general. Where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

No.	M&E Barriers/challenges	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Inadequate budget allocation					
2	Inadequate M&E experts					
3	Uncommitted management					
4	Less involvement of stakeholders					
5	Failure in selecting the correct indicators					
6	Failure in evaluation design					
4	Lack of appropriate technology for storage					
7	Inadequate support for M&E					
8	Lack of capacity building and training of M&E Personnel					
9	Lack of M&E partnership with other organizations					
10	Lack of M&E work plans					
11	Lack of M&E budget					
12	Lack of M&E frameworks					
13	Lack of M&E surveys and surveillance					
14	Lack of M&E data dissemination					
15	Lack of Technology					

16	Corruption					
17	Political interference					
18	Others Specify.....					

Thank you very much for your attention.