

EVALUATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation of Government Performance and Public Policies in Spain

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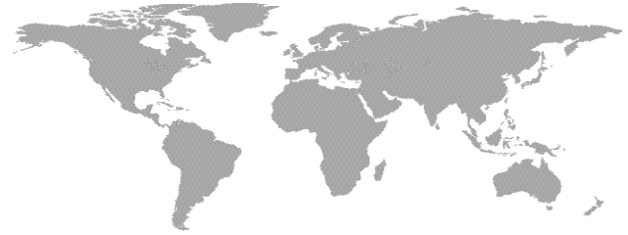
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Evaluation of Government Performance and Public Policies in Spain

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Building monitoring and evaluation systems helps strengthen governance in countries—by improving transparency, by strengthening accountability relationships, and by building a performance culture within governments to support better policymaking, budget decisionmaking, and management. A related area of focus is civil society, which can play a catalytic role through provision of assessments of government performance. IEG aims to identify and help develop good-practice approaches in countries, and to share the growing body of experience with such work.

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Abbreviations

AECID	<i>Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional y Desarrollo</i> Spanish Agency for International Cooperation
AEVAL	<i>Agencia Estatal de Evaluación de Políticas Públicas y Calidad de los Servicios Públicos</i> Spanish Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services
ANECA	<i>Agencia Nacional Evaluación y Acreditación de la Calidad</i> National Agency for Quality Evaluation and Accreditation
CAP	<i>Comisión de Análisis de Programas</i> Program Analysis Commissions
CCAA	<i>Comunidades Autónomas</i> Regional governments
DG	<i>Dirección General</i> Directorate General
DGFC	<i>Dirección General de Fondos Comunitarios</i> Directorate General of European Community Funds
DGP	<i>Dirección General de Presupuestos</i> Directorate General Budget
DGPOLDE	<i>Dirección General de Planificación y Evaluación de Políticas de Desarrollo</i> Directorate General of Planning and Evaluation of Development Policies
EVAM	<i>Modelo de Evaluación para el Aprendizaje y Mejora</i> Evaluation Model for Learning and Improvement
IEF	<i>Instituto de Estudios Fiscales</i> Institute for Fiscal Studies
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IGAE	<i>Intervención General de la Administración del Estado</i> General Comptroller of the State Administration
INECSE	<i>Instituto Nacional de Evaluación y Calidad del Sistema de Educación</i> National Institute for the Evaluation and Quality of the Education System (replaced in 2006 by the Institute of Education)

INEM	<i>Instituto Nacional de Empleo</i> National Institute for Employment
INSERSO	<i>Instituto Nacional de Servicios Sociales</i> National Institute for Social Services
INTOSAI	<i>Organización Internacional de las Entidades Fiscalizadoras Superiores</i> International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions
LAE	<i>Ley de Agencias Estatales</i> Law of State Agencies
MEH	<i>Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda</i> Ministry of Economy and Finance
PNR	<i>Plan Nacional de Reformas</i> National Reform Program
TCE	<i>Tribunal de Cuentas de España</i> Court of Audit

Foreword

As part of its activities, the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) provides technical assistance to member developing countries for designing and implementing effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and for strengthening government evaluation capacities as an important part of sound governance. IEG prepares resource materials with case studies, demonstrating good or promising practices, which other countries can refer to or adapt to suit their own particular circumstances (<http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/eed>).

World Bank support to strengthen M&E systems in different countries has grown substantially in the past decade. There is intense activity on M&E issues in most regions, and IEG has provided support to governments and World Bank units, particularly since 1997, on ways to further strengthen M&E systems, with the objective of fully institutionalizing countries' efforts.

While several World Bank assessments have been done on the strengths and weaknesses of developing countries' M&E systems, fewer analyses have looked at OECD country experiences with a view to help identify and document approaches, methods, and "good practices," and to promote knowledge sharing of such cases as key references for developing country systems in the process of design and implementation. This Evaluation Capacity Development paper seeks to integrate an analytical case study on the evolution and current state of development of M&E in Spain, with an emphasis on the success factors and institutional aspects of the recently created State Agency for Public Policy Evaluation (AEVAL). It is hoped that the lessons and practices identified here will benefit officials undertaking similar tasks in other countries.

The orientations and comments from Manuel Fernando Castro, and the comments from Nidhi Kattri (IEG) and AEVAL staff, including María Bustelo, Ana Ruíz Martínez and Verónica Viñas are gratefully acknowledged. This paper was peer reviewed by Pedro Arizti and Keith Mackay, whose comments and suggestions were very useful. Helen Chin edited the paper for publication.

The views expressed in this document are solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the World Bank or of the government of Spain.

Executive Summary

This paper covers selective aspects of Spain's experience in evaluating government performance and public policies. Rather than a cohesive "evaluation system," there is instead a constellation of organizations, with evaluation mandates and/or practices, which are not interrelated. These organizations and their respective practices have been evolving without coordination over the past three decades. An evaluation culture is slowly emerging, amid different conceptual approaches used by different organizations that are managing and/or conducting evaluations.

Evaluation activity has been taking place in Spain for years, with a marked acceleration and qualitative shift since 2005. Despite Spain's standing as an OECD country as well as an EU country, it still has not developed a consolidated evaluation system. This fact points out how long-term and complex is the task of institutionalizing an evaluation system.

The creation of the Spanish Evaluation Agency, AEVAL, did much to advance the goal of institutionalizing evaluation. A section of this paper, therefore, focuses on AEVAL, with a review of its strengths and weaknesses. The hope is that an examination of Spain's experience will be useful to developing and transition countries in the process of building their own evaluation capacities. The following 11 lessons are drawn from the AEVAL experience, which may be valuable to other countries:

1. Derive inspiration from other experiences but do not attempt to copy them.
2. Take into account that the institutionalization of evaluation requires significant time.
3. Establish advisory bodies as mechanisms for support and legitimation.
4. Incorporate representatives from academic institutions and from the public sector.
5. Involve different levels of government, including sectors and regions.
6. Establish quality control assurance of the evaluations, practices, and systems.
7. Link policy evaluation with the assessment of the quality of services.
8. Use different methods and approaches according to context, needs, and capacities.
9. Institutional location should optimize coordination, accountability, and learning.
10. Develop procedures to link policy evaluation with programming and budgeting.
11. Disseminating evaluations should go beyond simply posting them on the Internet.

Finally, this paper contains several website addresses where readers can obtain additional information on aspects of the paper that most interest them and to follow the Spanish experience as it unfolds.¹

¹ Furthermore, it should be noted that the 2010 European crisis has created in Spain an environment of uncertainty, which affects practically all public and private sector institutions, generating new challenges and opportunities for the evaluation of government performance.

1. Historical Background

When analyzing the Spanish evaluation experience, it is important to take into account two major historical events: the political transition of the 1970s and Spain's membership into the European Community in 1986.

The political transition in the mid-1970s led to the 1978 Constitution, which strengthened accountability in the public sector, but it was Spain's entry into the European Union (EU) in 1986 that was the turning point and represented a great challenge and opportunity in several areas, including the evaluation of public programs and policies. In 1988 structural funds regulations were amended to include mandatory evaluation, by the European Commission and the member states, of European structural policies, and in 1999 reform strengthened evaluation requirements.²

The interest of the Spanish government in improving public services led to the establishment of some sector-oriented institutions aimed at, first, assessing levels of demand and types of service provision and, then, evaluating the effects of public policies on their target populations.³ Regional governments also undertook, in the early 1990s, some initiatives on program evaluation and public service assessment, especially in the field of social services. Most evaluation efforts were descriptive and mainly focused on measurement of objectives and performance; in some cases, they were assessments of citizens' opinions and needs.

Spain was one of the greatest recipients of European funds, and the evaluation of these funds was one of the most important factors for launching evaluation practices and infrastructure. The European Commission therefore had a significant influence on the initial development of evaluation in Spain. The perception and practice of program evaluation evolved from a measurement of effects to a broader approach, where the aim became analysis of many aspects of the often huge set of factors that structural programs contain (for example, internal coordination, coherence of the actions with the objectives, reasonability of funds allocation, etc.).

After a lag, Spain followed the international trend on program evaluation, including some ad-hoc experiences since the 1980s, particularly in the area of social services, health programs, etc. Today there is widespread and growing concern for the improvement of policy making and the emergence of policy and program evaluation in Spain, as best evidenced by the creation of the Spanish Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services (*Agencia Estatal de Evaluación de Políticas Públicas y Calidad de los Servicios Públicos*, or AEVAL) at the end of 2006. The agency's recent experience is one focus of discussion in this paper, along with a set of

² See Viñas (2009).

³ For example, in 1992 the National Institute for Social Services (*Instituto Nacional de Servicios Sociales*, or INSERSO) established the "Service for Attention to the Citizen," followed in 1993 by the National Institute for the Evaluation and Quality of the Education System (*Instituto Nacional de Evaluación y Calidad del Sistema de Educación*, or INCESE), created by the Ministry of Education. See García Sánchez (2004) for evaluations of non-university educational programs during the 1980s and 1990s.

other initiatives to support Spain's new emphasis, as well as a description and assessment of the country's diversified evaluation landscape.⁴

2. Overview of Evaluation in Spain

In Spain, rather than a cohesive "evaluation system," there exists a constellation of organizations with evaluation mandates and/or practices, which are not interrelated.⁵ These organizations and their respective practices have been evolving without coordination over the past three decades. An evaluation culture is slowly emerging but with a diversity of conceptual approaches used by different organizations that are managing and/or conducting evaluations. Also, organizational learning has been sparse and there is no active dissemination of results from evaluations.

Spain's various organizations involved in evaluation, performance measurement, and/or audit of government performance include the following:

- AEVAL, under the Office of the First Vice President
- Council of Ministers
- Court of Auditors (TCE)
- Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEH)
 - Directorate General Budget (DGP)
 - General Comptroller of the State Administration (IGAE)
 - Directorate General of European Community Funds (DGFC)
 - Institute for Fiscal Studies (IEF)
- Parliament (*Las Cortes*)
- Regional governments (*Comunidades Autónomas*, or CCAA)
- Sector ministries
- Sectoral evaluation units
- State agencies
- Other public entities

Evaluation activities and competencies are scattered among different actors, including sector ministry units and internal and external auditing bodies at the central and regional levels (annex 4 contains brief descriptions of the main organizations, other than AEVAL, involved in evaluation in Spain). It is important to address the confusion, which can be found in discussions and in the literature concerning evaluation in Spain, about which organizations are actually involved in the evaluation of government performance and public policies. To clarify this issue it is important to distinguish between organizations that have a mandate to manage or conduct evaluations and those organizations that are actually involved in evaluation. This is particularly the case for auditing institutions, which are entitled (and expected) to conduct performance audits, but have not been doing so in either a relevant or transparent way. It is therefore helpful to classify the evaluation entities into categories (see table 1).

⁴ The Spanish policy framework is described in annex 2.

⁵ On the conditions that evaluation systems should fulfil; see Leeuw and Furubo (2008).

Table 1. Producers and Users of Evaluations and/or Performance Audits

Producers of evaluations:

- (i) Central multisector evaluation unit: AEVAL
- (ii) Program/sector evaluation units: DGPOLDE, ANECA, IEF
- (iii) Regional evaluation units: operating at the CCAA level (regional governments)

Producers of performance audits:

- (i) IGAE
- (ii) TCE
- (iii) Regional auditing bodies operating at the CCAA level

Users (potential and actual) of evaluations and performance audits:

- (i) Parliament (*Las Cortes*) / civil society
- (ii) Council of Ministers
- (iii) MEH
- (iv) Sector ministries and state agencies

Evaluation in Spain, until 2007, was based on two main pillars: the evaluation of European Union cofunded programs and the evaluation of development cooperation programs. The former are coordinated by different entities, depending on the policy sector; for example, regional development by the MEH,⁶ social policy by the Labor Ministry, etc. For many years, Spain was a passive participant in the OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation, a situation that changed in the twenty-first century when Spain became an active participant in this network (it recently occupied the Vice Presidency position).⁷ Evaluation of development cooperation programs are carried out by the Directorate General of Planning and Evaluation of Development Policies (*Dirección General de Planificación y Evaluación de Políticas de Desarrollo*, or DGPOLDE), which is a unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.⁸ DGPOLDE evaluations are contracted out through public bids, and the work of the external teams is supervised by DGPOLDE, which operates without links to either AEVAL or the Budget Directorate of the MEH.

Evaluations are also conducted in other areas (particularly in education, health, and employment), generally by the agencies in charge of the policies evaluated or by specialized organizations, such as the Ministry of Education's Evaluation Institute⁹

⁶ However, it should be observed that a significant proportion of the work done by one of this ministry's "evaluation" units, the Subdirección General de Programación Territorial y Evaluación de Programas Comunitarios (DGFC), is monitoring rather than evaluation. See, for example, Rodríguez Nuño & Kaiser Moreiras (2009)

⁷ Osvaldo Feinstein, one of the authors of this paper, participated in meetings of this Network (and at the Working Party on Aid Evaluation, which was its predecessor) for several years and, therefore, had an opportunity to witness the evolution of Spain's involvement in the Network's activities, which included, among others, joint evaluations, methodological work, and evaluation knowledge sharing. For critical observations on Spanish international cooperation and its evaluation, from a results-oriented approach, see Larrú Ramos (2009).

⁸ See

http://www.maec.es/es/MenuPpal/CooperacionInternacional/Evaluacion/Paginas/evaluacion_cooperacion.aspx.

⁹ <http://www.institutodeevaluacion.mec.es>.

(formerly the National Institute for the Evaluation and Quality of the Education System, or INECSE), and the National Agency for Quality Evaluation and Accreditation (ANECA).¹⁰ There are also public sector institutions involved in evaluation (or evaluation-related activities) as well as evaluations of public policies or programs conducted by individual researchers and research institutions, which are not commissioned by “public clients.” The evaluation efforts of these entities and researchers are unrelated to one another and are not linked to the work of any central department or agency. However, they do contribute through their work to developing the stock of evaluations (and, as a by-product, their evaluation capacities are developed through learning by doing).¹¹

At the sector level, evaluation initiatives are spread among different policies. This is due to the influence of some important factors: mainly the effect of the European integration, regional devolution, and increasing demands for effective public services with fewer resources (trying to achieve “more with less”). Traditionally, main efforts to develop evaluation and analysis in Spain have started within government, but the recent role played by universities and regional and local governments has been essential for developing evaluation supply. The external pressure from the European Commission triggered momentum for program monitoring and evaluation.¹² Another factor that has brought attention to policy evaluation is regulation policies, which generated demand—as in the EU (with the Impact Assessment initiative) and in some member states (for example, the U.K., Finland)—for ex-ante policy evaluation in order to implement better regulations, and ex-post analysis to assess their cost-benefit.¹³

Extensive evaluation activity has been taking place in Spain for years, with a marked acceleration and qualitative shift since 2005. Despite Spain’s standing as an OECD country as well as an EU country, it still has not developed a consolidated evaluation system. This fact points out how long-term and complex is the task of institutionalizing an evaluation system. The creation of the Spanish Evaluation Agency, AEVAL, opened up an opportunity to make further progress in this direction. As the remainder of this paper will show, promising steps have been taken in the institutionalization of evaluation, but there exists scope for improvement.

3. The Experience of the Spanish Evaluation Agency

The Spanish Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services (*Agencia Estatal de Evaluación de las Políticas Públicas y la Calidad de los Servicios*, or AEVAL) was created at the end of 2006 (and started its operations in January 2007). The creation of AEVAL signals the importance that the current government attaches to public policy evaluation as a pillar of good governance and as a way to strengthen the democratic process. At the time AEVAL was created it was said that the state could not only be legitimated based on compliance with the law, but that it also required legitimation through performance, through the tangible results it offered to its

¹⁰ The accreditation work of ANECA, and the work that involves teachers’ appraisal actually cannot be considered as evaluation.

¹¹ Examples of these evaluations are provided in Viñas (2009) and Larrú (2009).

¹² See Viñas (2009).

¹³ For some examples, see AEVAL (2007); AEVAL (2008); and Costas (2006).

citizens. The formalization of AEVAL's legal framework¹⁴ was preceded by the work of a commission of experts, which analyzed international experiences in evaluation, and prepared a diagnosis and recommendations for institutionalization of the agency within the specific context and for the needs of Spain.¹⁵

The mission of the agency is to promote evaluation, to evaluate public policies and programs, and, with the support of management, to enhance the quality of services in order to improve the use of public resources and accountability. More specifically, there are two main objectives the agency seeks to achieve: (i) better use of public resources, and (ii) stronger accountability for the general public, including transparency and participation.

A complete list of AEVAL's stated objectives follows:

- i. To promote an evaluation culture and quality within the public sector.
- ii. To develop and propose methodologies for the implementation of quality indicators and standards for public services.
- iii. To assess agencies' activities related to their commitment to improve public services and to report annually to Congress.
- iv. To improve the transparency of the impact of public services on society and to increase the accountability of public servants to citizens.
- v. To promote increased rationality in the use of public resources.
- vi. To favor economic productivity and competitiveness by reducing excessive levels of government bureaucracy.

The agency has chosen to add value in three main areas of work: in carrying out strategic evaluations, supporting better quality of public services, and promoting a culture of evaluation and quality. This last area of work has included contributions to the development of evaluation capacities in Spain's government at the central and regional levels, and, more widely, in the Latin America and Spanish Caribbean region—through evaluation training and awareness-raising on the importance and role of evaluation.

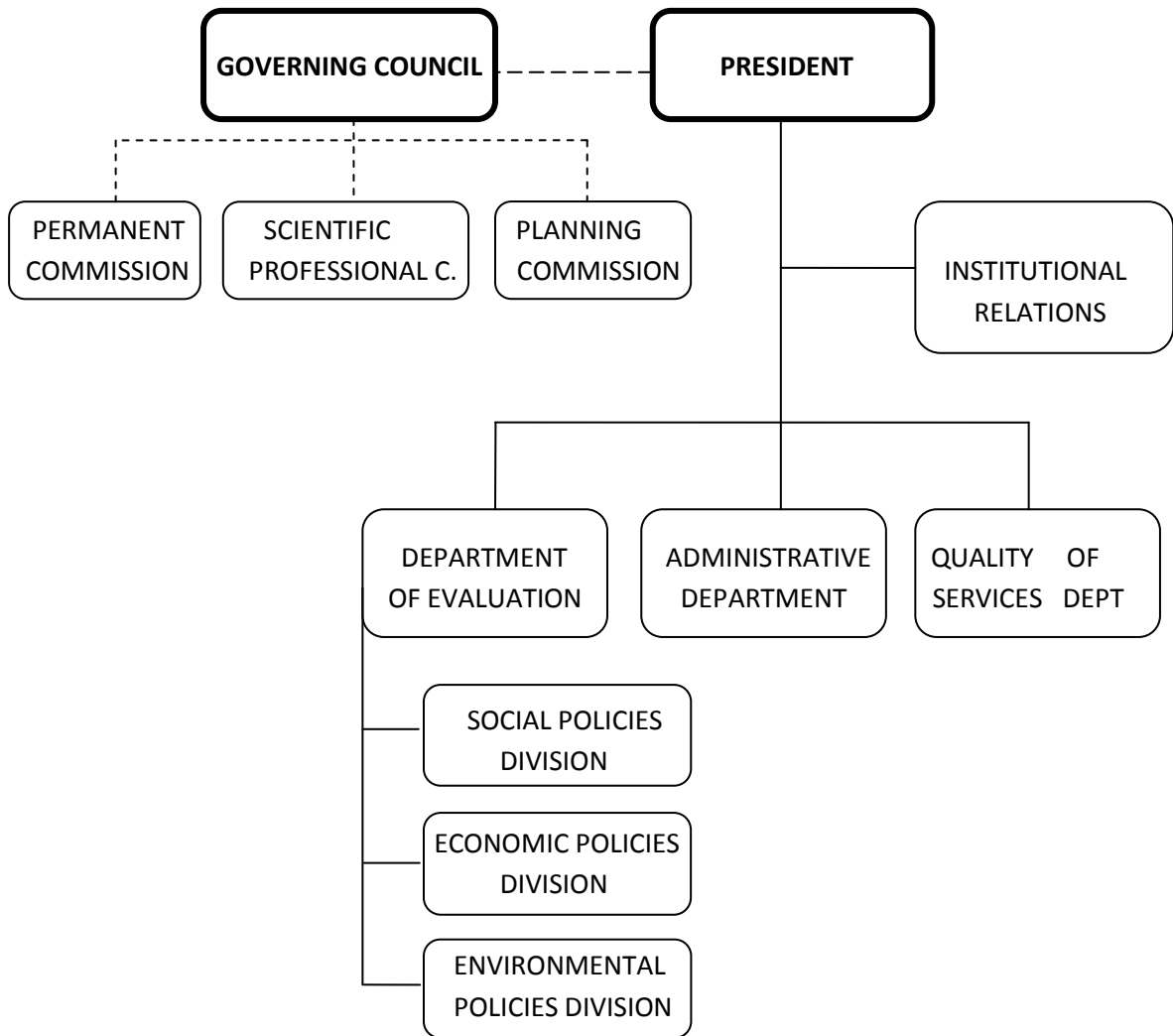
AEVAL introduced innovation into Spain's public sector not only in terms of its functions but also in the way it organizes its structure. AEVAL was the first organization created under a new institutional arrangement—a state agency with a new structure that is more flexible, autonomous, and incorporates an operational culture of performance at its core. AEVAL started its operations as a unit within the Ministry of Public Administration, and since 2009 it has been located within the Office of the President. AEVAL has an independent budget and legal status. Most of its new staff came from the *Dirección General de Inspección, Evaluación, y Calidad de los Servicios*, which has significant experience in the area of service quality (and much less experience in evaluation). The president of AEVAL is appointed (for an undefined period) by the Council of Ministers, which also approves AEVAL's evaluation program. AEVAL is an autonomous entity within the Office of the President, and is headed by the First Vice President. (Spain has two other Vice Presidents—the second

¹⁴ The legal framework consists of Ley 28/2006 de 18 de Julio, de Agencias Estatales para la mejora de los servicios publicos (BOE 19/07/2006); also see annex 3 of this paper; Real Decreto 1418/2006 de 1 de diciembre and Estatuto de la Agencia (BOE 14/12/2006).

¹⁵ See Garde Roca (2005).

is the Finance Minister and the third works mostly on territorial issues.) It should be noted that AEVAL does not appear in the organization chart of the President's Office (which does show the other autonomous entities) because the agency has not been officially placed yet.¹⁶ In fact, one of the pending issues for AEVAL's consolidation is its institutional anchoring. The following organization chart presents the structure of AEVAL, showing the three divisions of the Evaluation Department.¹⁷

Figure 1. Organization Chart of the Spanish Evaluation Agency



Note: This organization chart focuses on the evaluation units of AEVAL and does not show the divisions of the Administrative Department or the Quality of Services Department. The full organization chart is available at http://www.aeval.es/es/la_agencia/organigrama.

¹⁶ See <http://www.mpr.es/Ministerio+de+la+Presidencia/ministerio.htm> and <http://www.mpr.es/Ministerio+de+la+Presidencia/Organigrama/Organigrama.htm>. AEVAL is mentioned on the Executive Branch's website, in the last paragraph describing the office's functions but it is not listed separately, as are the other autonomous entities (see <http://www.mpr.es/OrganismosAutonomos/default.htm>).

¹⁷ See http://www.aeval.es/es/la_agencia/organigrama, where the full organization chart is shown.

The governing body of AEVAL is called a Governing Council (*Consejo Rector*), with representatives from the Ministry of Economy and Finance (the Budget Office's Secretary General), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the President's Office, as well as representatives of unions, and recognized experts in specific policy areas. Additionally, representatives of the regional governments (*Comunidades Autónomas*) can participate under partnership arrangements.

The agency's structure contains three technical departments, and one administrative department. AEVAL's Department of Evaluation (technical) is in charge of performing program and policy evaluations, and, in turn, is composed of three divisions dealing with economic policies, social policies, and environmental policies. A second technical department is in charge of the quality of public services, and a third department is in charge of planning and institutional relations.

There are two main elements driving the functioning of AEVAL: a management contract (*Contrato de Gestión*) and the Governing Council. The management contract is for a period of four years and sets out the objectives and expected performance, which have implications on future resource allocations for the agency. For 2008–2011 the management contract outlines four areas of work: institutionalization of the agency, promotion of an evaluation culture, evaluation of programs and policies, and improvement in the quality of management of public organizations.

So far, AEVAL's evaluations are not actually linked to current budget allocation decisions. The link to future allocations of resources will likely be tighter as the dissemination and outreach of evaluations is enhanced, and their planning becomes more connected to decision making. During its initial years of operations, AEVAL focused on conducting evaluations without paying much attention to dissemination, which will be given increased importance in the future.

Evaluation priorities are decided by the Council of Ministers, taking into account the National Reform Plan (*Plan Nacional de Reformas*, or PNR). The PNR has been Spain's response to the relaunched Lisbon Strategy, and was approved by the European Spring Council in 2005. Presented to the European Commission in October 2005, the PNR is at the core of the midterm Spanish economic policy and establishes, as a strategic goal for 2010, full convergence with the European Union in terms of per capita incomes, employment rates, and science, technology, and knowledge policies.

AEVAL is expected to carry out an independent evaluation of the PNR, which will be made public and sent to Parliament, the CCAA, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, and others. Evaluations corresponding to the PNR that have already been completed are listed in annex 1. Furthermore, some evaluations demanded by ministers are focused on critical issues that require evidence for decision making and/or to clarify the way in which policies are being implemented or entities are functioning (for example, policies concerning the collective management of intellectual property). AEVAL also has a mandate to evaluate, jointly with the Sustainability Observatory, the Spanish Strategy for Sustainable Development.

The policies and programs to be evaluated, and the scope of the evaluations, are mainly defined by AEVAL's Governing Council, based on a performance contract

signed every year with the First Vice President's Office, the Office of the President, and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The specific terms of reference for the evaluations are coordinated with the corresponding ministry or public entity, with regard to initial work plans, timeframe, procedures, the recipients of the evaluation, etc. AEVAL conducted nine evaluations in 2007 and six in 2008. These evaluations are published on the agency's website.¹⁸

In its first set of evaluations, AEVAL used different methodologies and approaches, taking into account the specific needs of each particular evaluation. Its evaluations are conducted mainly by its own staff, and quality control is done by its management team, with the support of an external consultant. For its evaluations, AEVAL applies flexible criteria, taking into account traditional ones but also supplementing them with criteria that correspond to Spain's sociopolitical reality, including, for example, "equity" as an evaluation criterion.

During its first two years, AEVAL had no structured methodological framework for its evaluations. In fact, during that period the agency explicitly stated its intent to not use standard methodological approaches during its initial phase. Instead, it combined quantitative and qualitative tools from the social sciences, using a pragmatic approach. The methodology employed thus acknowledged the underlying complexities of policy evaluation. AEVAL's development of a standard methodology for evaluation is still a "work in progress."¹⁹ Finally, it is worth noting that AEVAL published in 2009 a document that provides an evaluation framework, and defines AEVAL's guiding principles for the evaluation of policies and programs. This document also makes explicit the commitments AEVAL undertakes when it conducts evaluations.²⁰

AEVAL covers, in principle, the whole policy intervention cycle, from the planning process (ex-ante evaluation or appraisal), through implementation (interim evaluation) and ex-post evaluation. So far, most of the evaluations have corresponded to interventions under implementation. Furthermore, differentiation has been made for "microquality," or evaluation of an organization's quality; "mesoquality," the external assessment of service quality, combining subjective and objective elements; and "macroquality," the evaluation of public policies focused on the degree of social legitimation of the public intervention and its alignment with the principles of good government.

In all cases, evaluations are managed by AEVAL staff, and rely on occasional outside technical support when needed. While AEVAL is entitled to carry out ex-ante and ex-post evaluations, until now it has focused on interim or concurrent evaluations, which are mostly process evaluations. An example is presented in box 1.

¹⁸ http://www.aeval.es/es/evaluacion_de_politicas_publicas/evaluaciones_de_la_agencia.

¹⁹ This paragraph is based on Ruíz Martínez (2009), which provides updated information on AEVAL's approach to evaluation.

²⁰ See "*La función evaluadora: principios orientadores y directrices de actuación en la evaluación de políticas y programas*," available at http://www.aeval.es/comun/pdf/actualidad/Funcion_evaluadora.pdf.

Box 1. Example of an AEVAL Evaluation Focused on the Quality of Public Services

An “Evaluation of the Quality of Services in State Museums”^a was carried out by AEVAL in 2007. The evaluation team was composed of AEVAL staff, and the team leader was AEVAL’s Director of the Quality of Services Department. An external consultant provided quality assurance of the evaluation.

The evaluation was done from a double perspective: quality of service from an organizational perspective and from the users’ perspective. The former was focused on the quality of management, the degree of implementation of the general framework of quality improvement, and the citizens’ charter, using the Evaluation Model for Learning and Improvement (EVAM). The second perspective involved client interviews, a survey, and direct observation following a protocol. Results obtained were benchmarked with comparable organizations from other countries.

One of the conclusions of the evaluation is that whereas the users’ perception was positive and similar to that of comparable organizations, objective quality was low, with significant scope for improvement. Furthermore, and connected to the latter finding, the evaluation also concluded that there was no self-assessment by the service providers.

Detailed recommendations were offered to improve the quality of services, indicating the processes to be followed, which entities should participate in those processes, and aspects that should be taken into account (for example, definition of quality of service standards and their inclusion in museum citizen charters). These recommendations were taken into account by the Ministry of Culture.

^a <http://www.aeval.es/comun/pdf/evaluaciones/E08-2007.pdf>.

At the beginning of 2010, AEVAL had a staff of 60, most with training in economics or law, and the rest in disciplines such as political science and sociology, among others. AEVAL’s budget for 2010 is € 4,927,750 (approximately \$7 million), of which 68 percent is for personnel expenditures.

AEVAL is developing links with regional evaluation initiatives, a critical component in a highly decentralized political setting such as Spain. As mentioned earlier, development of evaluation at the subnational level has been very limited to date. This is an important future challenge, particularly since sectors such as health or education are primarily being implemented at the regional level, including responsibility for their evaluation, with the central government relegated to coordination functions.

Partnership arrangements can be highly effective when institutionalizing evaluation across territories and regions. Therefore, though AEVAL is neither coordinating nor regulating evaluation functions at the regional or sector level, through its establishment of partnership agreements with emerging regional evaluation units—and as the agency consolidates its own credibility within the public administration and with civil society—AEVAL could be promoting harmonization of evaluation approaches and developing an evaluation culture and quality within the public sector (in line with the agency’s stated objectives).

Evaluation of the Quality of Public Services

AEVAL's approach to the evaluation of the quality of public services has been developed, taking into account the model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). This new approach is called EVAM, which stands for Evaluation Model for Learning and Improvement (*Modelo de Evaluación para el Aprendizaje y Mejora*). It integrates citizens' perceptions of the quality of public services and an organizational perspective of public services, using several practical tools.²¹

Observatory for the Quality of Public Services

Though this unit preceded the creation of AEVAL it is now part of the agency. The Observatory includes, among its objectives, periodic analysis of the quality of public services, as well as the coordination of information and citizen participation. It is responsible for informing periodically on the quality of the provision of public services through an annual report. The 2009 survey of citizens' perceptions included, for the first time, a sample that is representative at the level of the regional governments (CCAA) and includes several public policies and services.²²

Strengths and Weaknesses

As a new organization, AEVAL is still very much in a learning mode, developing its own approaches and procedures. At the beginning, AEVAL lacked clear evaluation guidelines, and evaluations were launched without terms of references. Furthermore, some of the priority programs and policies that AEVAL was asked to evaluate had very limited "evaluability." However, AEVAL fills an evaluation gap without attempting to monopolize the evaluation function. On the contrary, it promotes partnering with regional bodies, which supports the development of an evaluation culture in Spain (further discussed in section 5). Finally, there are some emerging lessons from AEVAL's experience, which may be relevant for countries in Latin America and, eventually, in other regions. These lessons are summarized in box 2.²³

²¹ AEVAL's quality assessment approach is presented in Ruíz López (2009).

²² See van Ryzin and Del Pino (2009). The surveys are conducted by the autonomous Center for Sociological Research (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*) on behalf of the Observatory. It should be mentioned that there are also regional Observatories of the Quality of Services (independent of AEVAL) in Madrid, Cantabria, Extremadura, and Andalucía.

²³ See Feinstein (2008).

Box 2. Emerging Lessons from the Spanish Evaluation Agency

1. Derive inspiration from other experiences but do not attempt to copy them.
2. Take into account that the institutionalization of evaluation requires significant time.
3. Establish advisory bodies as mechanisms for support and legitimation.
4. Incorporate representatives from academic institutions and from the public sector.
5. Involve different levels of government, including sectors and regions.
6. Establish quality control assurance of the evaluations, practices, and systems.
7. Link policy evaluation with the assessment of the quality of services.
8. Use different methods and approaches according to context, needs, and capacities.
9. Institutional location should optimize coordination, accountability, and learning.
10. Develop procedures to link policy evaluation with programming and budgeting.
11. Disseminating evaluations should go beyond posting them on the Internet.

4. Opportunities to Enhance the Use of Performance and Evaluation Information

Evaluation and the Public Budget

As in other countries, the preparation of the annual government budget is a process of negotiation between the Ministry of Finance (MEH) and sector ministries. The process includes several instances in which information from formal evaluations, assessments, and audits—such as those conducted by AEVAL, IGAE, and other organizations mentioned in section 2—*could* be used, and would enrich the quality of the debate and analysis of budget proposals. The following commissions play a key role in the preparation and discussion of the budget and are, or may be, appropriate forums for using evaluative information.

Expenditure Policy Commission: chaired by the MEH and composed of all the other ministers. This commission discusses the likely consequences of the main public policies the government seeks to implement, and their overall alignment with the resources estimated for the next year. An agreement should be reached on an initial overall allocation of these resources in accordance with the macroeconomic and fiscal scenario. The commission establishes the guidelines that must subsequently be followed for allocating budgetary resources and proposing the functional allocation of the appropriations, which serve as the budget ceiling for the ministries when they prepare their respective proposals.

Revenue Commission: chaired by the Secretary of State for Finance and Budgeting. This commission is responsible for coordinating preparation of the revenue forecasts.

Departmental Budget Commissions: composed of representatives of the various expenditure units, chaired by the Deputy Secretary of the department. Their task is to

make proposals for the preliminary draft budget, formulate priority criteria, review existing programs, and monitor their implementation.²⁴

Program Analysis Commissions: at least one per department, chaired by the Secretary of State for Finance and Budget. The commissions' functions include analysis of the adequacy and validity of the expenditure programs, relative to the objectives pursued, and deciding the corresponding financial allocations within the ceilings and priorities defined by the Expenditure Policy Commission. Functions also include analysis of expenditure program impact on gender equality and assessment of the degree of compliance with the objectives sought the year before.²⁵ The debate at the commissions is the stage at which evaluative information *could* provide evidence-based arguments for resource allocations, based on evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

Opportunities for Better Integration of Evaluation Results in the Budgetary Process

In response to the opportunity offered by new legislation for developing performance budgeting in Spain, the Secretary of State for Finance and Budgeting had, by the end of 2004, organized several working groups to study possible measures for improving the functioning of the Directorate General Budget (DGP). One of the working groups focused on the functioning of the Program Analysis Commissions (CAPs) and the quality of information presented in budget programs. The key limitations identified by this working group (and consequently the opportunities for improvement, which provide room for more and better use of evaluative information) were the following:

- (i) There is an imbalance between the volume of information requested by the DGP and what is actually received from the expenditure management units. The capacity to process and analyze that information is limited. Most of the information is financial in nature, and the indicators for monitoring objectives still have significant weaknesses. Similarly, the analysis lacks sufficient depth. Most budget commitments are considered unavoidable, without adequate attention to the possibility of analysis and revision over a medium- or long-term horizon, which would make it possible to release sizable volumes of resources. In the short run, the possible use of evaluation for annual budgeting is limited, given the budget's rigidities. In fact, about 90 percent of the budget is committed (public debt, salaries, transfers to CCAA, and entitlements). Furthermore, evaluation reports rarely recommend elimination of programs or direct cuts in line items. Program modifications are often subject to preconditions (need for approval of new legislation, reallocation of personnel, rewriting contracts or agreements with third parties). However, the possibility of using evaluation for budgeting is increased when a longer time frame is considered, because it can be used to change perceptions concerning policy issues and to identify benefits and opportunity costs of policy options, going beyond the annual process of resource allocation.

²⁴ Article 2 of Royal Decree 2855/1979.

²⁵ With regard to the functioning of these Program Analysis Commissions, see Zapico (2005). Also on this theme, and on themes related to the budget reform, see Ballart and Zapico (2010).

- (ii) The expenditure management units do not have enough accurate information about the budgetary implications of the departmental plans, reform programs, or legislative proposals, thus complicating oversight of the adaptation of annual plans to the medium-term budget scenarios.
- (iii) The time for debate is insufficient. In general, discussions in the CAPs are incremental and, frequently, focused on the maximum percentage increases authorized for budget chapters. There is scarcely any systematic debate about spending policies or ministerial priorities and performance. There is no debate about interdepartmental programs since CAPs are bilateral meetings between MEH and each sector ministry.

Another working group focused on suggesting ways to improve the quality of information presented in budget documents with regard to expenditure programs.²⁶ Six “pilot programs” were analyzed, with a view toward assessing the consistency among their objectives, activities, and indicators, and, where appropriate, to propose changes in their substance and structure.²⁷

The main (and recurring) weaknesses identified were: the overly broad nature of the programs; limited definition of objectives (excessively general strategic objectives, not strongly linked to operational objectives, operational objectives not always related to activities, and limited quantification); and the predominance of indicators based on resources (without reflecting outcomes). All these weaknesses revealed the scarce involvement of managers in the procedure.

Based on the appraisals of the working groups, the following principal areas of action were identified:²⁸ reviewing the inconsistencies found between indicators and objectives; improving the program information system; identification of the department responsible for program evaluation (to achieve greater involvement of managers); and conducting full quality appraisals (including options and management risks of programs, adequacy of organizational structures, human resources, performance incentives, and information collection systems).²⁹

Following up on its recommendations, the working group prepared guidelines for expenditure management, covering the basic requirements that must be met during the preparation of budgetary programs in order to achieve the proposed aims, provide adequate follow-up and evaluation on program achievements, and provide the information necessary for adoption of performance-based decisions during the process of preparing the Annual Budget Laws.³⁰ The aim of these guidelines is to exploit the potential of the General Budgetary Law of 2003 regarding the functional classification of expenditure, which links each program with the main expenditure policies, and also continues to move forward on alignment with international classifications.³¹ In particular, strong emphasis is placed on the need to determine, for each program, various “areas of activity,” objectives, and indicators, thus increasing the “evaluability” of the programs.

²⁶ See Ministry of Economy and Finance (2004), pp. 3–5.

²⁷ These six programs are Highway Safety; State Actions Abroad; Creation of Road Infrastructure; Coastal Activities; Energy, Environmental, and Technological Research; and Promotion of Labor Insertion and Stability. See Espadas (2005).

²⁸ Espadas (2005).

²⁹ Directorate-General of the Budget (2006).

³⁰ Ministry of Economy and Finance (2004, pp. 3-5), Ministry of Economy and Finance (2005, p. 3).

³¹ See Ministry of Economy and Finance (2005), p 6.

In 2005, several other recommendations were made to improve budgeting, which would increase the probability of using information produced by evaluations in the budgeting process. Recommendations included organizing more strategic and participatory debates; using incentives and criteria of success that encourage efficiency and interdepartmental collaboration; flexible and regular efforts for integrating budgeting, audits, and evaluations; and proactive participation of DGB in the early stages of preparation of sector ministries' plans.³²

There is a general perception among budget actors that program evaluation and performance audit reports are not useful, and, thus far, they have not been used for budgeting. The Departmental Budget Commissions in ministries may use, directly or indirectly, the findings of sectoral evaluations, but they do not support their budget requests with evaluation results. A cooperative approach between DGB and AEVAL, and eventually with other government organizations, might be conducive to the use of evaluative information in budget decisions.

Furthermore, since 2007, developments of government performance evaluation at AEVAL and in sectoral units, such as ANECA and DGPOLDE, provide an opportunity for additional improvements of performance-based resource allocations. To transform this opportunity into reality the links between producers and users of evaluations and audits should be strengthened.

Evaluation and Devolved Management

The Law of State Agencies for the Improvement of Public Services (LAE, 2006)³³ was approved with the aim of providing a new general organizational model for central government, based on a high degree of managerial autonomy for state agencies and, simultaneously, on strengthened mechanisms for evaluation focused on results. The first of such agencies created was the Spanish Evaluation Agency (AEVAL).

According to this law, managers of state agencies have the authority to make decisions regarding their own resources, and managers will be held accountable for achieving their objectives. To this end, the law introduces a system of Transparent Management by Objectives, based on the notion of multiyear management contracts (LAE, article 13). These contracts must present, among other elements:

- (a) The objectives to be pursued, outcomes to be obtained, and, in general, the activity to be carried out;
- (b) The plans necessary for achieving the objectives, specifying the corresponding timeframes, the projects associated with each strategy, and its duration, as well as the indicators for evaluating the results;
- (c) The staffing, material, and budgetary resources to be provided to achieve the objectives;
- (d) The effects associated with the degree of compliance with established objectives;

³² See Zapico-Goñi (2005).

³³ Ley 28/2006, de 18 de julio, de Agencias estatales para la mejora de los servicios públicos (BOE 19 de julio), http://www.map.es/iniciativas/mejora_de_la_administracion_general_del_estado/servicios_publicos/ley_agencias_estatales/parrafo/00/document_es/ley_de_agencias.pdf.

- (e) The procedure to be followed for covering whatever annual deficits may arise, owing to a shortage in real revenue from the estimated levels, and the consequences, in terms of accountability for management, which may result from such deficits; and
- (f) The procedure for introducing annual changes or adaptations which may occur, as appropriate.

The management contract should determine the responsibilities for failing to achieve the objectives. Agencies are required to prepare an annual action plan, an activity report on the preceding fiscal year, and annual accounts, which are to be made available to the public (LAE, article 15).³⁴ With respect to their financial management regime, the law created new freedom for agencies to shift estimates between types of inputs (line items), with the exception of personnel costs.³⁵ Agencies are subject to the accounting principles and system established for public entities and to external auditing by the Court of Auditors as well as oversight by the IGAE.

This reorganization of central government and the introduction of the management contract are in an initial phase of development, but the definition and distribution of roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms among the departments responsible for the agencies (Office of the Vice President, the sector ministry under which each agency functions, and the MEH) are well established. However, the speed of implementation of the new model is slow and some decision-making processes and functional links are still being developed. Coordination of the creation of the agencies and their follow-up processes were first established in the Ministry of Public Administration (MAP) and the MEH. Since mid-2009, with a restructuring of the government's organization, the MAP was eliminated and its responsibilities concerning the Law of State Agencies were transferred to the First Vice President. Seven agencies have been created to date, the first one being AEVAL. The first stage of the reform has been completed—setting a legal framework, designing interinstitutional relationships and creating a group of agencies. Even with the partial implementation of the LAE, there is now a more enabling environment for evaluations within the central government, which may increase both the demand and supply of evaluative and performance information.

It should be acknowledged, however, that evaluation and performance management reforms and institutionalization in Spain have been slow in achieving actual changes. Most performance-related reforms have focused on legal and technical aspects (for example, new norms, methodologies, data, formats, and working procedures). Lack of emphasis on other reform drivers may explain a delay in the actual initiation of effective performance reforms and the institutionalization of evaluation in Spain: discontinuous political support and interest for performance management and related reforms (such as policy and program evaluation and performance budgeting); weak integration among departments responsible for reform; and limited participation in the diagnosis, design, and development of the reform model. Finally, not much attention has been paid to identifying and introducing incentives for adapting cultural values and behavior related to management by results (for example, performance reporting and

³⁴ For more details about the LAE and its implementation, including the agencies involved, see below, annex 3.

³⁵ Preamble and Article 27 LSA.

accountability for results). This last aspect is directly related to Spain's evaluation culture, the topic of the next section.

5. Development of an Evaluation Culture in Spain

The development of an evaluation culture facilitates the evaluation of government performance and policies by strengthening both demand and supply of evaluations as well as the links between supply and demand. Therefore, it is worthwhile to review developments in Spain that have nurtured its evaluation culture.

To begin with, the Spanish Society for Evaluation (*Sociedad Española de Evaluación*) was established in 2001, with the aim of contributing to the development of a culture of public policy evaluation and as a tool for improving the efficacy, efficiency, and usefulness for society of public administration intervention. The society has approximately 150 members; it has organized four national conferences and worked with others to prepare the European Evaluation Society Conference, which was held in Seville in October 2002. The society issues a periodic bulletin, contributes to promoting awareness of the role that evaluation can play in public policy decisions, and helps establish a network of Spanish evaluators.³⁶

Furthermore, in Spain there has been a significant increase in the number of professionals, researchers, and private sector enterprises specializing in the evaluation of public policies and programs, generating demand for specialized training for both graduate and undergraduate students.³⁷ Universities began to offer this type of specialized training, nearly at the same time as the Spanish Society for Evaluation (*Sociedad Española de Evaluación*) was created. The first Master's degree program in evaluation was started at the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM)³⁸ and 2010 is the program's eighth year. There are two other Master's programs in evaluation of public policy and programs: one is at the International University of Andalucía, which started three years ago and is focused on Latin America;³⁹ the other program is at Alcalá de Henares University, which started in 2009.⁴⁰ In addition, since 1994, the journal, *Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas*, has given special attention to government performance evaluation. During the last four years, several Spanish economic journals, such as *Ekonomiaz*, *Información Comercial Española*, and *Moneda y Crédito*, have devoted monographic issues to evaluation, and some Spanish evaluators are publishing in mainstream evaluation journals. Furthermore, some Spanish foundations have also started to sponsor evaluation work, thus contributing to an enabling environment for evaluation in Spain.⁴¹

A survey of the Spanish community of evaluators was conducted in 2009 and it has been submitted for publication. A preliminary presentation of the survey results shows

³⁶ See <http://www.sociedadevaluacion.org/website>.

³⁷ On evaluation culture in Spain, see Fernández-Ramírez and Reboloso (2006), though since the article was written, several developments have taken place in Spain, as mentioned in this section.

³⁸ www.magisterevaluacion.es/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=30.

³⁹ http://www.unia.es/component/option,com_hotproperty/task,view/id,374/Itemid,445.

⁴⁰ www.emagister.com.mx/shared/uploads_courses/files_project_51/382-

[master_evaluacion_politicas_publicas_.pdf](#).

⁴¹ García Montalvo (2008).

that 59 percent of evaluation community members were working in Madrid, while 88 percent travelled to Madrid, Andalucía, and Cataluña. Sixty-one percent of respondents were women. Twenty-three percent of the sample population that answered the questionnaire were working for private consulting firms, 22 percent for central government, and 19 percent for subnational governments. Finally, most of the evaluators were involved in two areas: international development cooperation (18 percent) and employment (17 percent).⁴²

It is also worth mentioning that the creation of evaluation standards or norms has been considered an important way to advance development of an evaluation culture in Spain.⁴³ Furthermore, the creation of AEVAL and its operation for three consecutive years is another important step forward.

Finally, the pressure from the conditions set by the EU for cofunding projects and of performance budget reforms may also have had an influence in building acceptance, awareness, and an interest among public managers in performance measurement, monitoring, and evaluation.

6. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The preceding sections highlighted both the achievements of and opportunities for strengthening evaluation of government performance and public policies in Spain. This final section draws some lessons from the Spanish experience, with the main purpose of building a set of relevant experiences, which developing and transition countries can take into account for institutionalizing evaluation.

Organizations traditionally oriented toward control and legal compliance, and that have a new mandate to perform evaluations, have difficulty adopting their directives. Adherence to old ways has proven to be very strong. However, Spain's creation of a *new* agency with an evaluation mandate, such as AEVAL, has created the opportunity to move away from traditional paths and to adopt new approaches to deal with the evaluation of complex programs and policies. It is worth emphasizing that the process of creating the new evaluation agency took several years, during which experiences of other countries were considered and consultations were made with a variety of public and private experts, which led to the formation of a Commission of Experts to advise on what process to follow and on the characteristics that the new agency should have, given the Spanish institutional framework.

Another aspect of the AEVAL experience that is remarkable, and which may be considered by other countries, is the combination of the evaluation of public policies with quality assessment of public services in a single organization. There are significant synergies that can be exploited through this combination of responsibilities and activities.

The use of evaluation results and recommendations for decision making and policy development in Spain is weak. Links between the results from evaluations and

⁴² See Bustelo and Fitzpatrick (2009).

⁴³ See Bustelo (2006).

budgeting decisions are, to date, very limited. The lack of such links reduces the influence that evaluations can have on the budgeting process, and on the quality of public expenditure. Therefore, it is important to develop formal and pragmatic integrating procedures between evaluation and budgeting. An important step in this direction is facilitating public access to audits and evaluations, so that citizens are informed about the results of government policies and programs. This is done in Spain by AEVAL, by posting evaluations on its website. However, to date, very few steps have been taken for a more active dissemination of evaluations, such as the use of mass media and seminars in which evaluation results and recommendations are presented and discussed with policy makers and citizens. This type of practice would also contribute to the development of an evaluation culture.

Given the worldwide and growing importance of the devolution of government expenditure, it is important to promote evaluation not only at the central government level but also at the subnational level and at autonomous state agencies. This is one of the tasks on AEVAL's agenda (and one with which evaluation agencies can and should try to get involved); sections 2 and 5 make reference to the limited, though promising, progress made so far in this area.

The use of diverse evaluation methods and approaches is one of the hallmarks of the Spanish evaluation experience, where the "fit for purpose" (and context) principle has been applied. This is worth highlighting given that, in the evaluation field, there have been attempts to apply a single approach to all contexts, without adequately acknowledging the need for a variety of approaches, according to circumstances.⁴⁴

This paper has shown some of the remaining challenges as well as the achievements and lessons emerging from the new experiences in Spain concerning the evaluation of government performance and policies. The institutionalization of evaluation and having the system function well requires time, commitment, and knowledge of relevant experiences. The main purpose of this paper is to contribute to the knowledge base, so that other countries in the process of enhancing their evaluation systems can benefit from Spain's experience.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The case for using a mixed-methods approach, showing that different methodologies have comparative advantages in addressing particular concerns and needs, and the advantages of combining different methods, is well presented in Leeuw and Vaessen (2009).

⁴⁵ Furthermore, it should be noted that the 2010 European crisis has created in Spain an environment of uncertainty, which affects practically all public and private sector institutions, generating new challenges and opportunities for the evaluation of government performance.

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Annex 1: Evaluations Carried Out by the Spanish Evaluation Agency⁴⁶

Evaluations of the National Reform Program

- E01/2007. Evaluation of the National Reform Program of Spain 2007. Main conclusions and recommendations.
- E02/2007. Evaluation of the National Reform Program of Spain 2007. Effects of measures taken to rationalize pharmaceutical spending.
- E03/2007. Evaluation of the National Reform Program of Spain 2007. Effectiveness of energy security policies.
- E04/2007. Evaluation of the National Reform Program of Spain 2007. Programs to foster research, development, and innovation—INGENIO 2010.
- E05/2007. Evaluation of the National Reform Program of Spain 2007. Lines of credit for the promotion of entrepreneurial activity.
- E06/2007. Evaluation of the National Reform Program of Spain 2007. Administrative procedures for business creation in Spain.

Evaluations conducted by the Spanish Evaluation Agency in 2007 that do not correspond to the PNR but were requested by ministers

- E07/2007. The national registry of greenhouse gas emission allowances.
- E08/2007. Evaluation of the quality of services in state museums.
- E09/2007. Social security and employment promotion in Ceuta and Melilla.

Evaluations conducted and finalized during 2008

- Evaluation of policy for improvement of the system of technology transfer to enterprises.
- Evaluation of the general system of educational scholarships. Diagnosis of the present situation and main options to improve effectiveness.
- Evaluation of the system of collective management of copyright and related rights.
- The role of central government in the system for autonomy and care for dependent persons.
- Evaluation of actions funded by the Spanish National Budget in the areas of social and economic influence of the network of national parks.

⁴⁶ For more information see http://www.aeval.es/es/evaluacion_de_politicas_publicas/evaluaciones_de_la_agencia/index.html. Most of these evaluations are process evaluations.

Annex 2: Spain's Policy Framework⁴⁷

- (a) Spain is a constitutional monarchy, with a bicameral parliament (*Las Cortes Generales*). The executive branch consists of a council of ministers and is run by a president that is selected by the National Assembly following legislative elections.
- (b) The President is the equivalent of the Prime Minister in other parliamentary systems. He has significant powers, which makes him the major policy maker. The President selects the leaders of the House of Representatives and Senate, and proposes nomination of heads of important state institutions. With regard to the Legislature, the President can propose the dissolution of Parliament, and request a parliamentary vote of confidence.
- (c) The Council of Ministers is the other main body involved in policymaking at the center of government. Its main function is to formulate and approve national policies for all of the ministries, especially in preparing draft bills, which are usually drawn up in ministries or departmental committees, and then sent to Parliament.
- (d) To support policy formulation at the center of government, the President and Council of Ministers depend on particular entities to provide different levels of technical advice.
- (e) The First Vice President is in charge of running the Office of the President (there are two other Vice Presidents; the second is the Finance Minister and the third one works mostly on territorial issues). The First Vice President is also in charge of providing political and technical advice to the President, coordinating the agenda of the Council of Ministers, and presiding over the meeting of secretaries and undersecretaries, where decisions are made about what issues should go before the Council. The President's Office also functions as a liaison with Congress.
- (f) The Economics Office of the President (*Oficina Económica del Presidente*) provides the President with information on the economy and related advice on policy proposals. In addition to periodic reports on Spain's economic situation, this office also works on the government's Economic Development Strategy and the President's Economic Report.
- (g) Spain's government also has an advisory institution, the State Council (*Consejo de Estado*), which was created in the sixteenth century. The council provides advice on general policies—with an emphasis on legal compliance—to the President, ministers, and the presidents of the regional governments. Advice from the State Council is not mandatory, except when indicated by a particular law. The State Council has members that provide advice on different issues, such as health, credit institutions, public education careers, regional budget structures, and private insurance, among others. However, because the council's advice is centered on the legal and administrative issues of newly proposed legislation, its role in policymaking is mostly a formal one.

⁴⁷ This annex draws from a note prepared for a World Bank study on Chile.

- (h) In practice, the actual ability of different parts of the Executive Office to have influence depends more on things like budget availability, capacity for political mobilization, access to information, or technical resources available, than on formal attributions granted through the normative framework. The formal distribution of responsibilities between levels of governments has influenced decision making conflicts about competencies and debates, particularly for policies with shared competencies. The cooperation and coordination dynamics end up being more the result of complex processes of interaction and bargaining within government.
- (i) Within the ministries, an important position in relation to specific area policies is the General Technical Secretariat (*Secretario General Técnico*), which is involved in drafting the ministry's general plans and programs, providing technical and administrative assistance (including statistics), and recommending reforms to improve services and organizational reforms. Each minister has his or her own cabinet of political appointments, and the opinions of the technical secretariat and DGs dealing with planning and/or investment programming are very likely to carry greater weight in ministerial decisions. However, not all ministries have an exclusive source for advice on forming policy.

Annex 3: The Law of State Agencies

Normative Framework

The 2006 Law of State Agencies (*Ley de Agencias Estatales*, or LAE) for the improvement of public services was approved with the aim of providing a new organizational and management model for central government, based on a high degree of autonomy for state agencies and, simultaneously, on strengthened mechanisms for evaluation and accountability that were focused on results. In principle, this law was another line of potential development for AEVAL. However, the new model is not being implemented with the expected speed.

According to this law, managers of state agencies have the authority to make decisions regarding their own resources, and managers will be held accountable for achieving their objectives. To this end, the law introduces a system of “Transparent Management by Objectives,” based on the idea of multiyear management contracts. As a reference for evaluating results, these contracts must present, among other things, the following: (a) the objectives to be pursued, outcomes to be obtained, and, in general, the activity to be carried out; (b) the plans necessary for achieving the objectives, specifying the corresponding timeframes, the projects associated with each strategy, and its duration, as well as the indicators for evaluating the results; (c) the staffing, material, and budgetary resources to be provided for achieving the objectives; (d) the effects associated with the degree of compliance with established objectives; (e) the procedure to be followed for covering whatever annual deficits may arise owing to a shortage in real revenue from the estimated levels, and the consequences in terms of accountability for management which may result from such deficits; and (f) the procedure for introducing annual changes or adaptations which may occur, as appropriate, etc.

The management contract should determine the mechanisms of accountability for failing to achieve the objectives. By law, state agencies are required to prepare an annual action plan, an activity report on the preceding fiscal year, and annual accounts, which are to be made available to the public (LAE, article 15).

Regarding the financial management regime, the law created new freedom for agencies to shift estimates between types of inputs (budget line items), with the exception of personnel costs.⁴⁸ Agencies are subject to the accounting principles and system established for public entities. Agencies are also subject to external auditing by the Court of Auditors and oversight by the IGAE. This reorganization of central government is complementary with the Performance Budget. Both are based on the same rational decision-making model.

Actual Achievements

The basic functional framework is well designed. The definitions and distribution of roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms are established among the departments responsible for the agencies (the Office of the Vice President, the sector ministry under which the agency functions, and the MEH.). But the speed of implementation of the model is slowed down and some functional links are still in the development or implementation phase.

⁴⁸ Preamble and article 27 of LAE.

Coordination of the creation of the agencies, and the follow-up process, was first established in the Ministry of Public Administration (MAP). Since mid-2009, after a change in the composition and structure of the government, these responsibilities are now within the Office of the Vice President (the MAP was abolished). The policy settlement and evaluation of the agencies' operative framework (four-year management contracts) are done by the agencies' authorities and the sector ministry, with the participation of the Vice President's Office. Finally, the MEF plays two essential roles: issuing a compulsory opinion (*informe vinculante*) on the creation of the agency, and following up and negotiating the financial consequences of the signing and implementation of the management contracts. Working groups, led by the Vice President's Office, and with the participation of other stakeholders mentioned above, facilitate coordination among them. The MEF is usually represented by the DGCP (*DG de Costes de Personal*). One of the current works of the Vice President's Office and the working groups is the preparation of a guide on designing management contracts.

An early assessment of the DGCP (MEH) concluded that the creation of agencies increases spending mainly due to variations in personnel costs. Since this report was published, the MEH has limited the creation of new agencies.

The government had two years to transform all public entities with the characteristics set out in article 2 of the Law of State Agencies (LAE, 2006) into agencies. However, not everyone understands this article in the same way. The criteria of the MEF are clear but strict. At the end of the two years it was considered necessary to extend the deadline for the creation of agencies by one more year. Later, successive Annual Budget Laws included the possibility of creating a limited number of new agencies. In 2009 no agencies were created. The limit for 2010 is the creation of no more than three agencies, and with the approval of both the Vice President's Office and the MEF.

The actual number of agencies created from 2006 to 2009 is seven, belonging to five sector ministries:

Ministry of External Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish International Development Cooperation Agency
Ministry of Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Agency for Air Safety
Ministry of Science and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Research Council
Ministry of Environmental, Rural, and Marine Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Meteorological Agency
Office of the President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Agency Gazette • Spanish Evaluation Agency • State Anti-Drug Agency

Source: Annual Budget for 2010.

It is too soon to assess the impact of this ambitious initiative. Up until now the main effects have been the design of the system and achievement of the first stage of the reform: setting a legal framework, designing interinstitutional relations, creating a group of agencies that is now in a phase of development, and building capacity in the center (Vice President's Office and related ministries). It is too early for advanced impacts, such as evaluation of the functioning of management contracts and the consideration of results during the budget process.

Annex 4: Other Spanish Evaluation Organizations

Brief descriptions of the main evaluation organizations in Spain, other than AEVAL, are given below. At the outset, it is important to address the confusion, which can be found in discussions and in the evaluation literature in Spain, about which organizations are actually involved in the evaluation of government performance and public policies. To clarify this issue it is important to distinguish between organizations that have a mandate to manage or conduct evaluations and those that are actually involved in evaluation. This is particularly the case for auditing institutions, which are entitled (and expected) to conduct performance audits, but have not been doing so in either a relevant or transparent way. This annex takes into account the distinction between the organizations' potential role in evaluation and their actual evaluation function.

General Comptroller of the State Administration (*Intervención General de la Administración del Estado*, or IGAE)

IGAE⁴⁹ is located within the Secretary of the State Finance and Budgets, in the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEH). IGAE is the internal control unit of economic and financial management of the state's public sector, and the executive and management center of public accounts. As an internal control unit, it is in charge of verifying that the economic and financial activities of the public sector follow the principles of legality, economy, efficiency, and efficacy. As the managing and executive center of the public accounts, it is responsible for providing reliable, comprehensive, professional, and independent information on public finance management and for issuing the necessary norms and procedures for its proper development.⁵⁰

IGAE has traditionally carried out the function of an ex-ante control, to guarantee compliance with financial rules of every spending decision in all departments. The work of IGAE is based on an extensive network of delegated auditors (*Interventores Delegados*). Since 1987, IGAE has been mandated to conduct the follow-up of the achievement of objectives by selected budgetary programs, within the context of the program budget. It is also responsible for assessing the appropriateness of the resources used relative to the objectives of each department. One of the tasks of IGAE is to identify the difficulties and limitations inherent in the current system for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of public managers. This mainly involves identifying ambiguities in the objectives defined, the extent to which the performance measures proposed are relevant, the weaknesses of information systems, etc.

The innovations proposed since 1987 also implied that IGAE should participate in the meetings of the Directorate-General for the Budget with spending ministries during the formulation of the draft budget. One main aim for this effort of selective follow-up and evaluation of budget programs by IGAE is to provide information useful for

⁴⁹ This is IGAE's official translation into English. Sometimes IGAE's name has been translated into English as "General Auditor," and this may have been one of the sources of confusion concerning IGAE's actual role.

⁵⁰ See <http://www.igae.pap.meh.es/sitios/igae/en-GB/Paginas/Inicio.aspx>.

reallocating resources. However, this has proved to be more difficult in practice than expected. IGAE staff participated in meetings with the Directorate-General for the Budget for a few years during the formulation of the budget, but audit reports did not provide relevant information for budgetary negotiations. Currently such participation is rare. IGAE also participates at OECD meetings on issues related to auditing and evaluation, and publishes a periodic journal, “Revista Cuenta con IGAE,” which includes brief notes about these meetings, and its articles are mainly about accounting and auditing, with almost no reference to evaluation.⁵¹

Spanish Court of Audit (*Tribunal de Cuentas de España*, or TCE)

In pursuance of the powers vested in the Spanish Constitution, TCE performs the external audit of the General State Account, which integrates the accounts of the entire state public sector. These accounts are sent by the government, at the end of each financial year, to the court to issue a statement about it. Similarly, the court receives the accounts of public institutions of regional and local public sectors, about which the court also issues an annual report. Moreover, from these examinations of the accounts, the court carries out special audits on entities or actions, which *may* be compliance audits (verifying legal compliance and financial and assets representation) and performance audits (economy and efficiency, programs, and systems and procedures results). The latter type of audits has been encouraged by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), but the former are what prevail in the TCE’s work. The time taken for its reports to be delivered and considered in Parliament has often led to a view of its work as being more of historical value rather than providing inputs for decision making. Therefore, the TCE is mainly devoted to ex-post compliance audits, which play an important role in fighting corruption. In doing so, the TCE may request and use internal reports from IGAE. Finally, it should be noted that all reports issued by the court are submitted to Parliament and debated by a Joint Committee of the Congress and the Senate.

While the Court does not participate in the process of preparing the General State Budget and, therefore, has no direct influence on it, the recommendations contained in its reports may determine management decisions with budgetary significance, especially if its recommendations and relevant resolutions are adopted by MPs who are members of the Congress-Senate Joint Committee for Relations with the Court of Audit. There are also other interesting aspects of the court’s work with potential to enhance the role of evaluation in Spain and elsewhere:

- (i) Joint work with the Regional Audit Institutions of the regional governments (CCAA), which are a sort of regional court of audit, is promising because, in a country with a high degree of devolution, it facilitates access to information, promotes ownership of results, and contributes to capacity building at the regional level.
- (ii) Part of the TCE’s work program corresponds to demands from Parliament. Those demands are frequently very specific, concerning institutions or organizations

⁵¹ See <http://www.igae.pap.meh.es/sitios/igae/es-ES/ClnPublicaciones/ClnRevista/Paginas/revistacuentaconigae.aspx>. Since 2007, not one single article about evaluation was published in this journal. For more information on IGAE, see Pérez (2005), keeping in mind the distinction mentioned at the beginning of this section.

whose functioning or performance received strong criticism. However, the procedure of incorporating Parliament's demands in the organization's agenda could be used by other organizations to channel (and, ultimately, to encourage or induce) demands for evaluations that may contribute to improving the quality of budgetary decisions.

Institute for Fiscal Studies (IEF)

IEF, which is within the MEH, includes among its research and training activities some that correspond to economic evaluation of fiscal policy initiatives, both ex-ante (particularly through microsimulation using econometric models) and ex-post evaluations.⁵² The IEF plans to enhance its evaluation work and training. It is also worth pointing out that, although there are four IEF branches located outside of Madrid, evaluation activities are only conducted by the central IEF, which is based in Madrid. The following table shows the ways in which evaluation features in the IEF's research program and it also provides examples of evaluations funded and published by the IEF. It should be noted that the IEF does not conduct public expenditure reviews, although it does review fiscal policies and programs.

Examples of IEF Evaluations and Research Areas

Selected research areas

- Evaluation of public sector efficiency
- Impact of budgetary policies on productivity and growth
- Economic effects of public sector programs

Selected evaluations

- Active fiscal rules: The case of Spain (1981–2007)
- Evaluating the regulator: Winners and losers in the regulation of Spanish electricity distribution (1988–2002).
- Fiscal devolution and the quality of government: Evidence from panel data

Evaluation in Sector Policy Organizations

The evaluation of European Union cofunded programs, such as the structural funds, requires evaluations that involve different DGs before they go to the European Commission (for example, regional funds by the DG of the EU Community Funds in the MEH; social funds by the corresponding DG in the Ministry of Labor, etc.); the evaluation of development cooperation programs are carried out by the Directorate General of Planning and Evaluation of Development Policies (*Dirección General de Planificación y Evaluación de Políticas de Desarrollo*, or DGPOLDE), which is a unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Other sector evaluations are also carried out in different areas (particularly in education, health, and employment), generally by the agencies in charge of the policies evaluated, or by specialized organizations, such as the Ministry of Education's Evaluation Institute⁵³ (formerly the

⁵² <http://www.ief.es>.

⁵³ <http://www.institutodeevaluacion.mec.es>.

National Institute for the Evaluation and Quality of the Education System, or INECSE) and the National Agency for Quality Evaluation and Accreditation (ANECA).⁵⁴

Parliament

Once the Draft Budget is approved by the Council of Ministers, it is sent to Parliament (*Las Cortes*). Formal parliamentary debate is clear and well structured. The Plenary of the Congress of Deputies (one of the two parliamentary chambers) discusses the amendments to the entire Draft Budget. If these amendments are accepted, the draft is sent back to government. If the amendments are rejected, the Budget Commission examines budgetary documentation. A small committee of the Commission (called *Ponencia*) prepares a report on the amendments to the Draft Budget. The Commission then debates the Draft Budget on the basis of this report. At this point, there are hearings, which high officials are asked to attend. Finally, the Plenary debates the Draft Budget, section by section, according to no programmed structure. Regulations of the Congress require discussion or debate by section, which corresponds to the structure by departments. All amendments that imply an increase in expenditure on one budgetary line-item must be presented in combination with a parallel decrease in another expenditure in the same section or department.

The formality of the process guarantees maintenance of control by parliamentary groups over their members, the centralization of power within the Group of Speakers (*Junta de Portavoces*), and the concentration of jurisdiction relating to the management of the process within the Board of the Congress (*Mesa*). The rules serve to assist the majority in maintaining power and also to bar any possible concrete debate in Parliament, and even within individual parties. Since 1978 Spain has been in a process of political devolution. Relevant extra-parliamentary budget debate and agreements are also held and achieved by central and regional governments. All of these factors may have been preventing the development of debate about performance in Parliament.

Every year on November 30, the Draft Budget is sent to the Senate (the second chamber of Parliament), where it is debated by special urgent procedure for 20 days. Even before this date, the members of the Senate study the budget and hear from top-level officials. The process is very similar to that in the Congress, although much shorter.⁵⁵ Budget discussions in both chambers of Parliament are not focused on performance information, though this information, as well as information from evaluations, would enrich the quality of these discussions. Therefore, “potential or latent demand” exists for performance and evaluative information for the budget debate in Parliament. So far, though there is no actual demand, and there are no mechanisms in place to facilitate timely access to this type of information during the budget debate, it should be noted that some parliamentarians have expressed interest in the creation of a Parliament Budget Office and/or an evaluation department.

⁵⁴ The accreditation work of ANECA, and the work that involves teachers’ appraisal actually cannot be considered as evaluation.

⁵⁵ See a detailed discussion of this process in Zapico Goñi (2004) and in the preceding section.

Subnational Regional Government

Evaluation initiatives are emerging at the level of the regional governments (*Comunidades Autónomas*, or CCAA), and the Spanish Evaluation Agency, AEVAL, is playing a catalytic role in supporting them. So far, the most developed of these initiatives is in Catalunya, where an Institute for the Evaluation of Public Policies, Ivalua, was recently created, with representatives from the regional and local governments, a private and independent foundation, and a regional university.⁵⁶ This institute published in 2009 five practical evaluation guides and is currently working on a set of evaluation reports, on evaluation training, and on developing a website containing evaluation resource materials to be launched in 2010.

Another initiative at the regional level worth mentioning is that of Navarra, where a law establishing an Evaluation Commission (*Comisión Foral de Evaluación*), anchored in the Public Administration Institute of Navarra (INAP), was passed in December 2005, one year before the AEVAL decree. Like AEVAL, this Evaluation Commission combines evaluation and quality in a single organization.⁵⁷ Two remarkable aspects of the experience in Navarra, which is still in its initial phase, is the emphasis given to the process of managing (rather than conducting) evaluations, and the development of a registry of external evaluations.⁵⁸

To put these emerging regional evaluation initiatives into perspective,⁵⁹ it should be noted that Spain's regional governments have their own authorities and parliaments, and are endowed with their own resources (expenditures correspond to about 35 percent of the total public sector budget). Regional governments have constitutional competencies—some are exclusive, such as education and health, while others are shared with the central government, such as environment and employment.⁶⁰ Finally, some local governments of the bigger cities, such as Madrid, have been making progress in the assessment of service quality.

⁵⁶ See <http://www.ivalua.cat>.

⁵⁷ <http://www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/F9CAF233-8692-41BE-B21D-A5BEAB43CD7A/119869/Memoria20062007.doc> (and) <http://www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/F9CAF233-8692-41BE-B21D-A5BEAB43CD7A/135513/Memoria2008.doc> (and)

http://www.navarra.es/home_es/Gobierno+de+Navarra/Organigrama/Los+departamentos/Presidencia+justicia+e+interior/Organigrama/Estructura+Organica/INAP/Acciones/Evaluacion+y+Calidad/Guias+y+material+de+soporte.

⁵⁸ See

http://www.navarra.es/home_es/Temas/Administracion+Publica/Entidades+publicas/Evaluacion+y+calidad/Evaluacion+y+Calidad/Registro+de+Evaluacion. So far, this structure for an inventory of evaluations is potentially useful, but it is still practically unused.

⁵⁹ In addition to those mentioned above, it is also worthwhile to consider the case of Andalucía. For early developments in that region, see Vélez (2000).

⁶⁰ Additional information on regional evaluation initiatives in Spain, as well as on other organizations involved in evaluation, can be found in Fernández-Ramírez and Reboloso (2006).

Other Recommended Reading

Annual Report on Evaluation Capacity Development. IEG, 2002.

Conducting Quality Impact Evaluations under Budget, Time, and Data Constraints. IEG, 2006.

Developing African Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation. Development Bank of Southern Africa, African Development Bank, and World Bank, 2000.

Evaluation Capacity Development: OED Self-Evaluation. IEG, 2004.

Evaluation Capacity in Africa: Selected Proceedings from a Seminar in Abidjan. African Development Bank and World Bank, 1998.

Evaluation Capacity in Asia: Selected Proceedings from the International Conference, Beijing, 1999. United Nations Development Programme, Chinese National Center for Science and Technology Evaluation, and World Bank, 2000.

Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. Development Assistance Committee, OECD, 2002.

How to Build M&E Systems to Support Better Government, K. MacKay, 2007.

Impact Evaluation — The Experience of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank. IEG, 2006.

Influential Evaluations: Detailed Case Studies. IEG, 2005.

Influential Evaluations: Evaluations that Improved Performance and Impacts of Development Programs. IEG, 2004.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods and Approaches, 2nd Edition. IEG. 2004.

OED: The First 30 Years. P. Grasso, S. Westy, and R. Weaving (eds.), IEG, 2003.

Public Sector Performance—the Critical Role of Evaluation. K. Mackay (ed.), IEG, 1998.

The Role of Civil Society in Assessing Public Sector Performance in Ghana. K. Mackay and S. Gariba (eds.) 2000.

Toward the Institutionalization of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean: Proceedings of a World Bank / Inter-American Development Bank Conference. E. May, D. Shand, K. Mackay, F. Rojas, and J. Saavedra (eds.), 2006.

Other relevant publications can be downloaded from the ECD website at <http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/eecd>.

Other Titles in the ECD Working Paper Series

- #1: *Lessons from National Experience*, by Keith Mackay, 1998.
- #2: *Zimbabwe: Issues and Opportunities*, by Stephen Brushett, 1998.
- #3: *Indonesia's National Evaluation System*, by Alain Barberie, 1998.
- #4: *The Development of Australia's Evaluation System*, by Keith Mackay, 1998.
- #5: *Comparative Insights from Colombia, China and Indonesia*, by R. Pablo and O. Guerrero, 1999.
- #6: *Evaluation Capacity Development: A Diagnostic Guide and Action Framework*, by Keith Mackay, 1999.
- #7: *Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons from Experience in Supporting Sound Governance*, by Mark Schacter, 2000.
- #8: *Strengthening Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation in Uganda: A Results-Based Management Perspective*, by Arild Hauge, 2001.
- #9: *Guide to Conducting Reviews of Organizations Supplying M&E Training*, by Marie-Hélène Adrien, 2003.
- #10: *The Development of Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities to Improve Government Performance in Uganda*, by Arild Hauge, 2003.
- #11: *Two Generations of Performance Evaluation and Management System in Australia*, by Keith Mackay, 2004.
- #12: *An Assessment of the Impact of Bangalore Citizen Report Cards on the Performance of Public Agencies*, by Adikeshavalu Ravindra, 2004.
- #13: *Building Country Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation in the Public Sector: Selected Lessons of International Experience*, by Salvatore Schiavo-Campo, 2005.
- #14: *Evaluation Capacity Development in the Republic of Ireland*, by Richard Boyle, 2005.
- #15: *Institutionalization of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems to Improve Public Sector Management*, by Keith Mackay, 2006.
- #16: *Experience with Institutionalizing Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in Five Latin American Countries: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Uruguay*, by Ariel Zaltsman, 2006.
- #17: *A Diagnosis of Colombia's National M&E System, SINERGIA*, by Keith MacKay, 2007.

- #18: ***Insider Insights: Building a Results-Based Management and Evaluation System in Colombia***, by Manuel Fernando Castro, 2009.
- #19: ***Implementing a Subnational Results-Oriented Management and Budgeting System: Lessons from Medellin Colombia***, by Rafael Gómez, Mauricio Olivera, and Mario A. Velasco, 2009.
- #20: ***Mexico's M&E System: Scaling Up from the Sectoral to the National Level***, by Manuel Fernando Castro, Gladys Lopez-Acevedo, Gita Beker Busjeet, and Ximena Fernandez Ordonez.