

# Institutionalizing evidence through the South Africa's National Evaluation System (NES) 'findings from an evaluation'

## GEIS 2018



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# This Session

- 1 South Africa's National Evaluation System
- 2 Evaluation of the National Evaluation System
- 3 Key Findings of Evaluation of National Evaluation System
- 4 Case Study Western Cape: Key findings on sub-national level
- 5 Conclusions of the Evaluation of National Evaluation System



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# What is a National Evaluation System?

“...one in which **evaluation is a regular part of the life cycle of public policies and programmes**, it is conducted in a **Evaluation systems**; are a function of values, practices and institutions as outlined below. (Lazaro, 2015, p. 16)

## Characteristics of a NES

- **Presence** of Evaluation: political, administrative, social
- **Consensus** of **what** evaluation is what **type** of knowledge is produced, and **how** evaluations should be conducted
- **Organisational responsibility**
- **Permanency**

## The Building Blocks

- **Individuals**
- **Institutions**
- **Environments**

## A NES Needs:

- **Political will for change:** Vision of leadership; Creating an enabling environment
- The **development of M&E infrastructure:** Capacity to **demand and use** evaluation information; technical capacity to **supply** evaluation

# Timeline of development of the SA's NES

2007

- ✓ **Policy Framework** for Government-Wide M&E System

2010

- ✓ **DPME established** in the Presidency

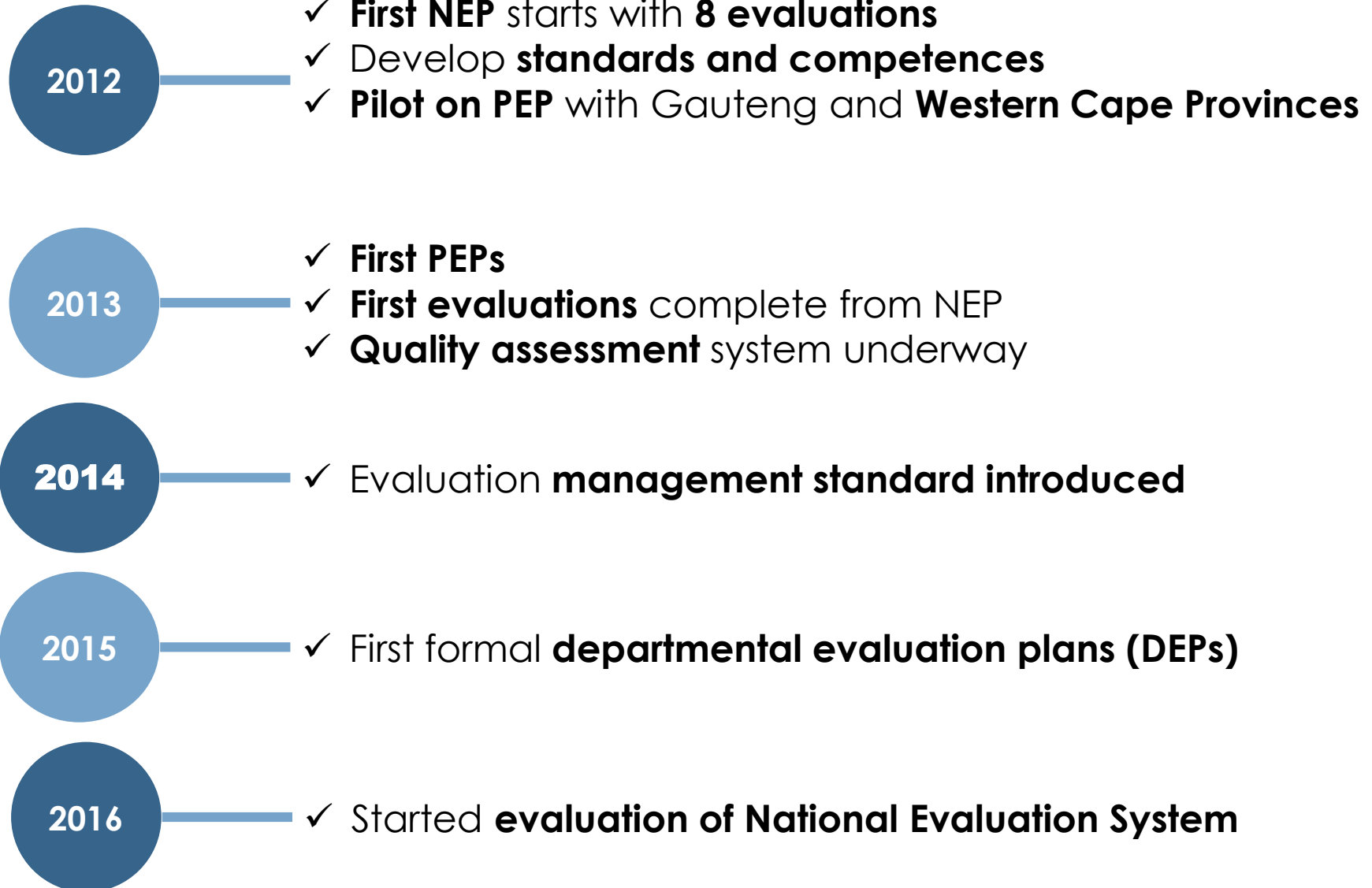
2011

- ✓ **DPME focus on evaluation**
- ✓ **Study tour** to Mexico, Colombia and the USA
- ✓ **National Evaluation Policy Framework**
- ✓ The Evaluation Research Unit is established

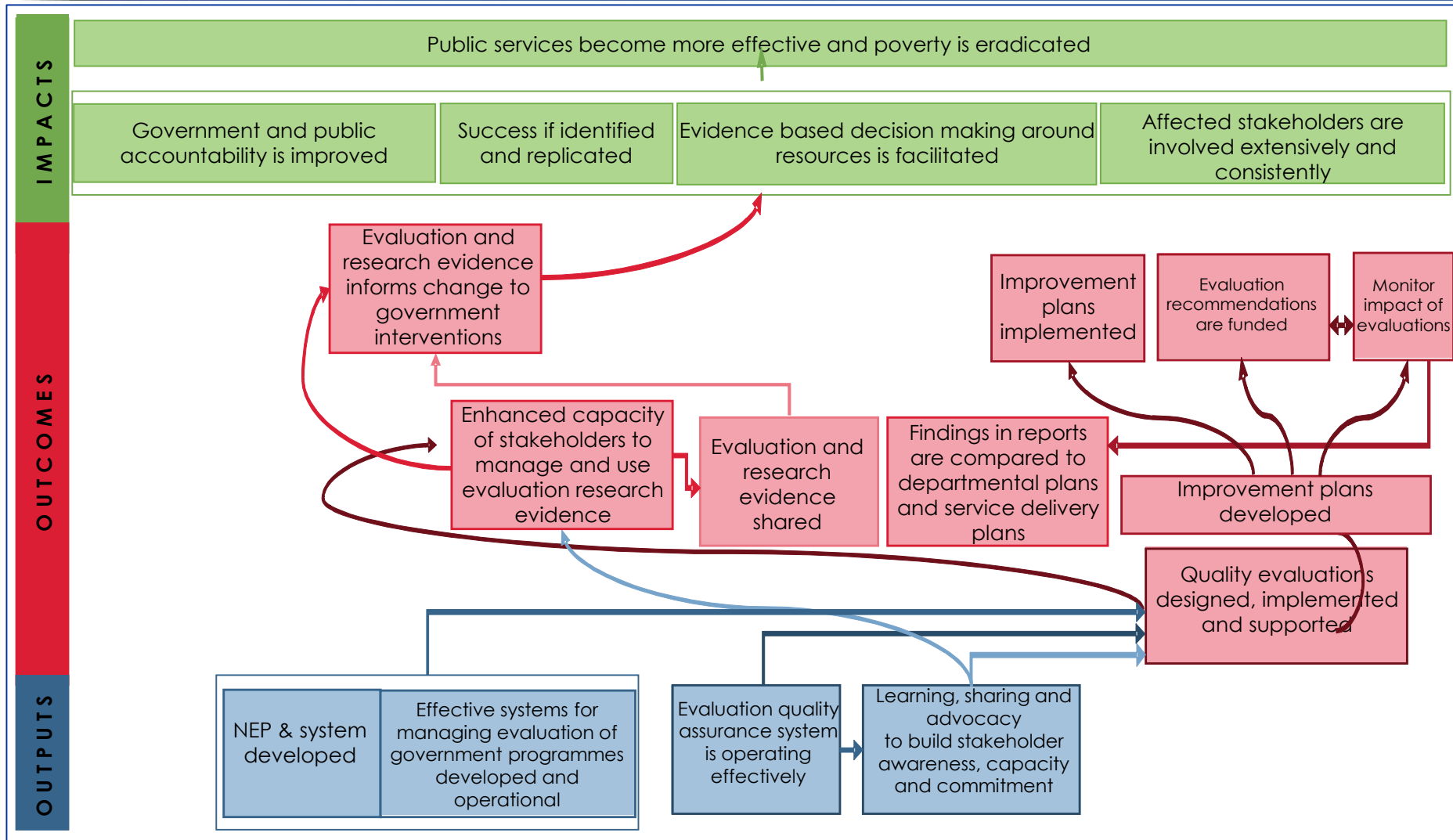
2011/  
12

- ✓ **Pilot evaluation** on Early Childhood Development
- ✓ **First National Evaluation Plan (NEP)** developed/approved

# Timeline of development of the SA's NES



# Scope of the NES



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## EVALUATION QUESTIONS

### RELEVANCE | EFFECTIVENESS | EFFICIENCY

How is the system **working as a whole**, who is involved and what are the implications of this?

How are the **specific components** of the system (e.g. procurement, quality assurance process, steering committees, training, guidelines, quality assessment system, communication) working nationally and provincially and how can they be strengthened?

Are there **other evaluative mechanisms** which need to be included to maximise the benefits for government (e.g. rapid methodologies, promotion of evaluative thinking)?

What appears to be the **cost-benefit or value-for-money** of establishing an evaluation system?

### IMPACT

Is there **initial evidence of symbolic, conceptual or instrumental outcomes** from evaluations? If evaluation findings are not being used, why are they not?

What evidence is there of **evaluations contributing to planning, budgeting, improved accountability, decision-making** and knowledge?

Is there evidence of other **unintended outcomes or benefits** from the evaluation system, e.g. in raising the importance of evidence within departments?

### SUSTAINABILITY AND UPSCALING

How should the **internally-initiated (demand-driven and voluntary) approach** used evolve in future to strengthen its impact on government priorities (NDP, gender etc.)?

How should the balance be managed going forward of **internal / outsourced**, use of a government department as custodian of the system (DPME), in terms of independence, learning, credibility of evaluations and the system going forward?

What are the **implications for expanding the system**, e.g. to all departments, metros and public entities and how should intergovernmental links around evaluation be strengthened?

# Approach to Analysis

1	<b>Policy</b>	The evaluation plan	M vs. E	Autonomy & impartiality	Feedback	Alignment planning & budgeting
2	<b>Methodology</b>	Selection of results areas to be evaluated	Priority setting	Causality chain	Methodologies used	Data collection
3	<b>Organisation</b>	Coordination & oversight	Statistical office	Line ministries	Decentralised levels	Link with interventions
4	<b>Capacity</b>	Problem acknowledged	Capacity building plan			
5	<b>Participation of Other Actors</b>	Parliament	Civil society	Donors	Private sector	
6	<b>Use</b>	Effective use of evaluation	Internal usage of evaluation findings			

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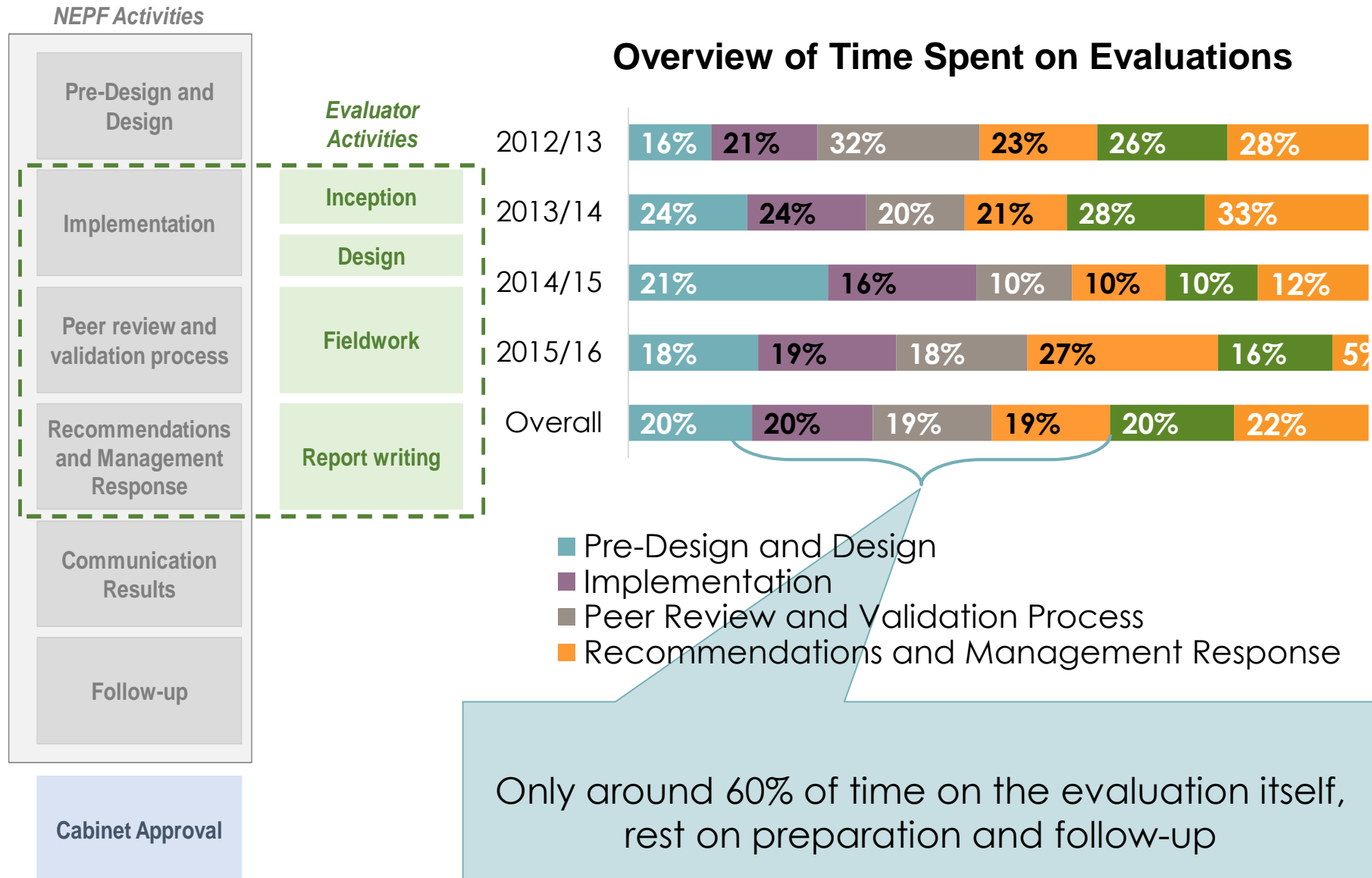


# How is the NES Working? NEPs, DEPs and PEPs

- Use of NEPs/PEPs/DEPs to identify strategic evaluations
- There are eight provincial PEPs and 68 provincial and departmental DEPs.
- Shift from demand driven to more DPME/NT proposed
- Of the evaluations in the NEP, the evaluation of NES reported 22 served at Cabinet (now 26)
- **Evaluations in the NEP (updated figures as at 11 June 2018)**

Active Evaluations	Approved reports	Improvement plans	Served at Cabinet	Research underway	TORs (Design)	Prep Stage (Concept)
65	44	34	26	12	6	4

# How is the NES Working? Time spent on evaluations



# How is the NES Working? Capacity development

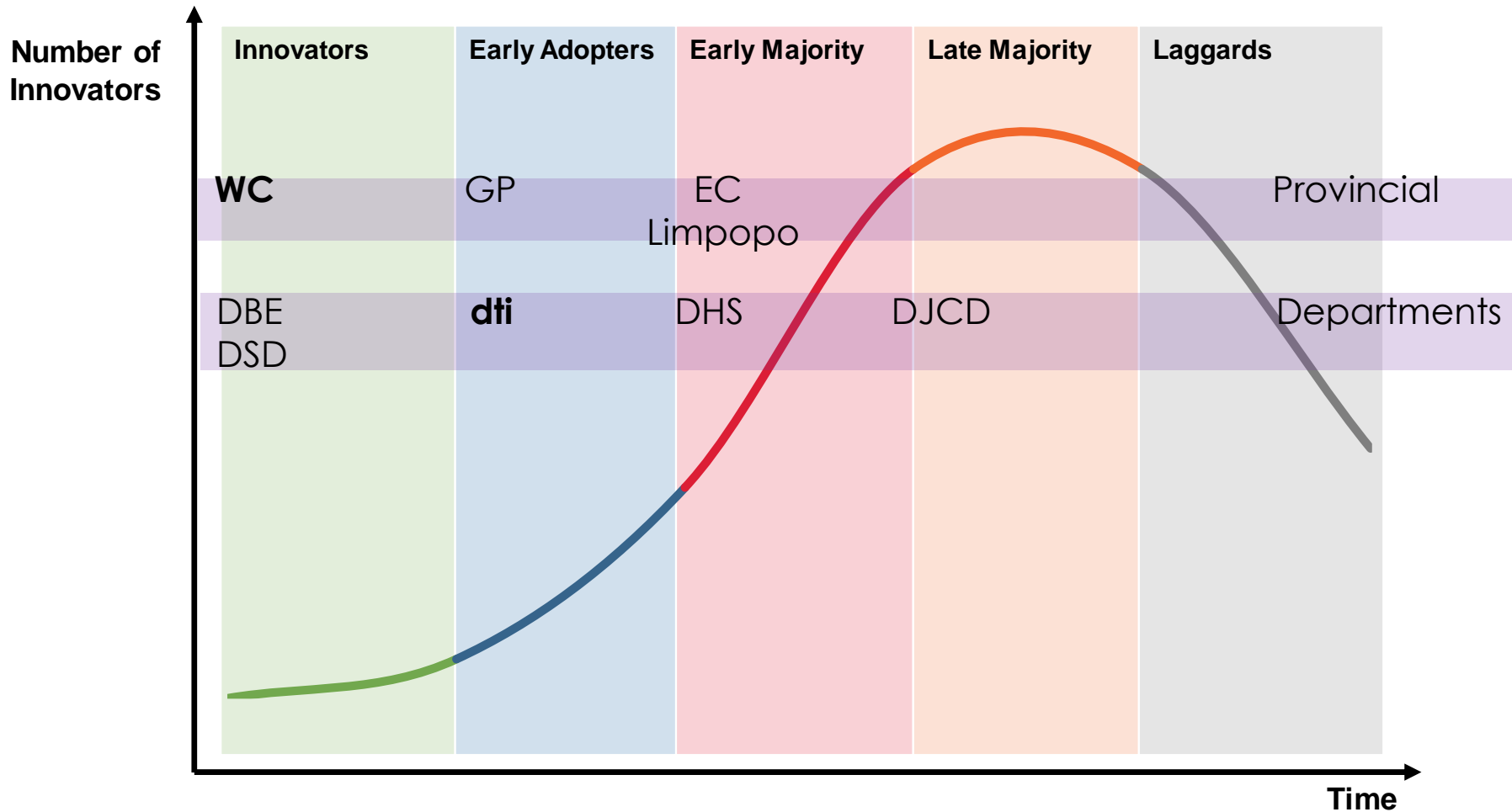
- **NES capacity building plan broad**, and included:
  - guidelines (18) and templates (9)
  - learning networks and forums
  - Training (1989 participants)
  - Management Performance Assessment Tool
- **Guidelines and templates useful**; adapt to context and capabilities of departments or province
- **Training** between 2012/13 and 2016/17; respondents found significant progress arising from training, deepening knowledge of public officials.
- **Capacity** remains a priority area of development in the NES; need to build on the momentum achieved

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# Case Study Selection – Innovation Curve





# PES – Case Study for NES

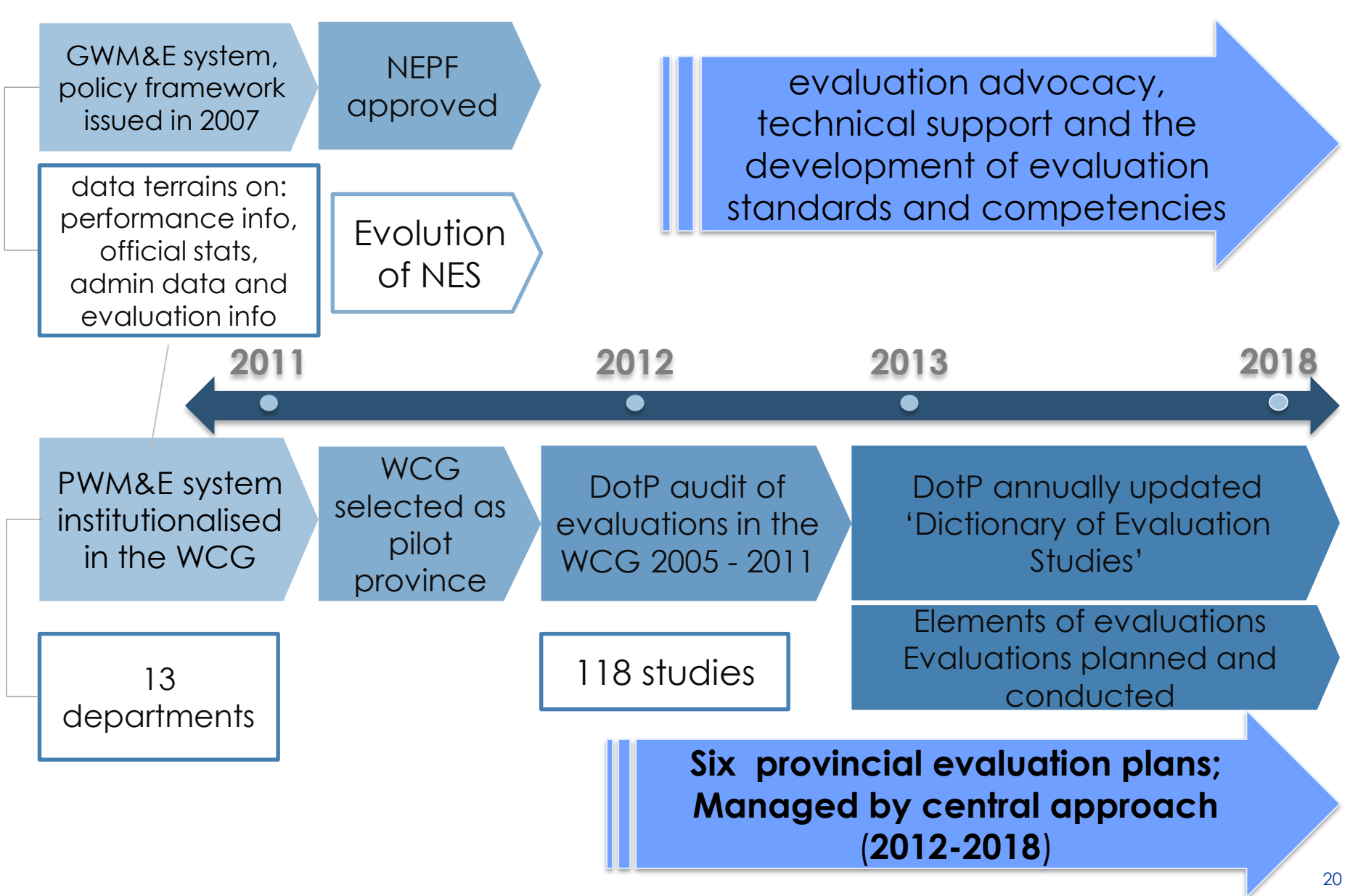


- Service delivery complexities
- 28 Evaluations conducted



13 Departments in Western Cape Government

# Timelines of Provincial Evaluation System(PES)



# Policy

- **NES: Development of NEPF**
  - **Evaluation plans on three levels**
  - DPME coordinates the NES across the government
  - Offices of the Premier playing similar role in provinces
  - **2016 evaluation results used for the first time in the national budget process**
- **PES: WC institutionalised the NEPF;**
  - **Evaluation plans exist on two levels**
  - Provincial Evaluation Plan, focus on Provincial Strategic Goals (PSGs) and the National Objectives (NOs)
  - Departmental Evaluation Plan (DEPs), focus on departmental mandates
  - **2016; linking evaluation planning and use to planning, budget cycle**
  - Evaluation Evidence starting to inform the budget allocations

# Methodology

- **NES: Methods applied are appropriate for unit of analysis**
- Mix of bottom up and strategic proposals
- **Evaluations evidence have a rapid feedback into policy**
- Guidelines are utilised for observation.
- **PES : Demand for evidence linked to types of evaluation;**
- **Demand linked to policy/ budget policy priorities**
- **Evidence feedback loop**
- Period 2012-2016; impact and implementation evaluations were favoured.
- Period 2016-2018; spread across five types of evaluations. predominately impact and implementation (16) but also diagnostic, design and economic.
- **Availability of quality data; documentation (unit of analysis) key to ensure the methodological soundness**

# Organization

- **Presidency- Centrally located** unit in to manage the evaluations.
- Centralized M&E units in departments and agencies.
- **Premier's Office serves as the coordination and oversight** structure for evaluations evidence in the Province;
- Evaluation Technical Working Group (ETWG).
- Technical advice to departments
- **Coordinates progress reporting to Presidency;**
- **Improvement plans and provincial evaluation capacity building.**



# Capacity

- **Capacity weaknesses**

- No skills assessment of technical staff
- Competencies for evaluators and government staff

- **Capacity emerged through practice**

- Evaluation courses developed and rolled out
- **Advocacy campaigns**

- **Capacity** constraints in the WC;

- Concern for **generating evidence through evaluation practice**
- Initiatives undertaken by DotP to provide capacity building to policy and programme managers; and Evaluation officials
- **Supported by Provincial Training Institute (PTI)**
- **ETWG acts as a community of practice for peer learning**



# Participation of other actors

- **SAMEA and CLEAR** in Steering Committee
- Systematic engagement with **Parliament on the results of evaluations**
- **Universities** deliver capacity development
- Needed to bring evidence brokers; think tanks on board
- Academic institutions play learning function in the development of evaluation culture and practices
- Universities service providers of evaluation and evidence based courses
- **Universities serve as peer reviewers; co-funding evaluations.**
- **Private sectors part of steercom;** early adopter departments



# Quality and Use

- Focus on ensuring the use
  - Findings discussed with stakeholders and senior management
  - Dissemination through policy briefs and thematic workshops
  - Results presented to cabinet; gives weight to NES
  - Formal follow up process through improvement plans
  - Evaluation evidence is starting to be used to inform the budget process
- Focus on creating an enabling environment for evaluative process for evidence
  - Quality assurance (QA)
  - Evaluations Evidence profiled
  - Dictionary of evaluations
  - Completed evaluations accessed on the 'evaluation tile' in the **Central Repository**
  - Evidence supported with **evaluation update, dictionary and guidelines.**
  - **Showcase evidence** generated; benefits, successes and lessons learnt.



# How is the PES Working? DEPs and PEPs

- Strategic evaluations are identified by the PESC, and funded by Provincial Treasury. In 2018/19 6 evaluations enjoyed strategic funding.
- WCG is currently concluding its 2<sup>nd</sup> 3 year PEP and to date 11 DEPs have been developed.

## Evaluations in the PEP (updated figures as at October 2018)

No. of evaluations in the PEP	Approved Concept notes	Approved ToRs	Active Evaluations	Approved Reports	Evaluations Quality Assessed	Improvement Plans being implemented
52	52	52	18	30	14	20

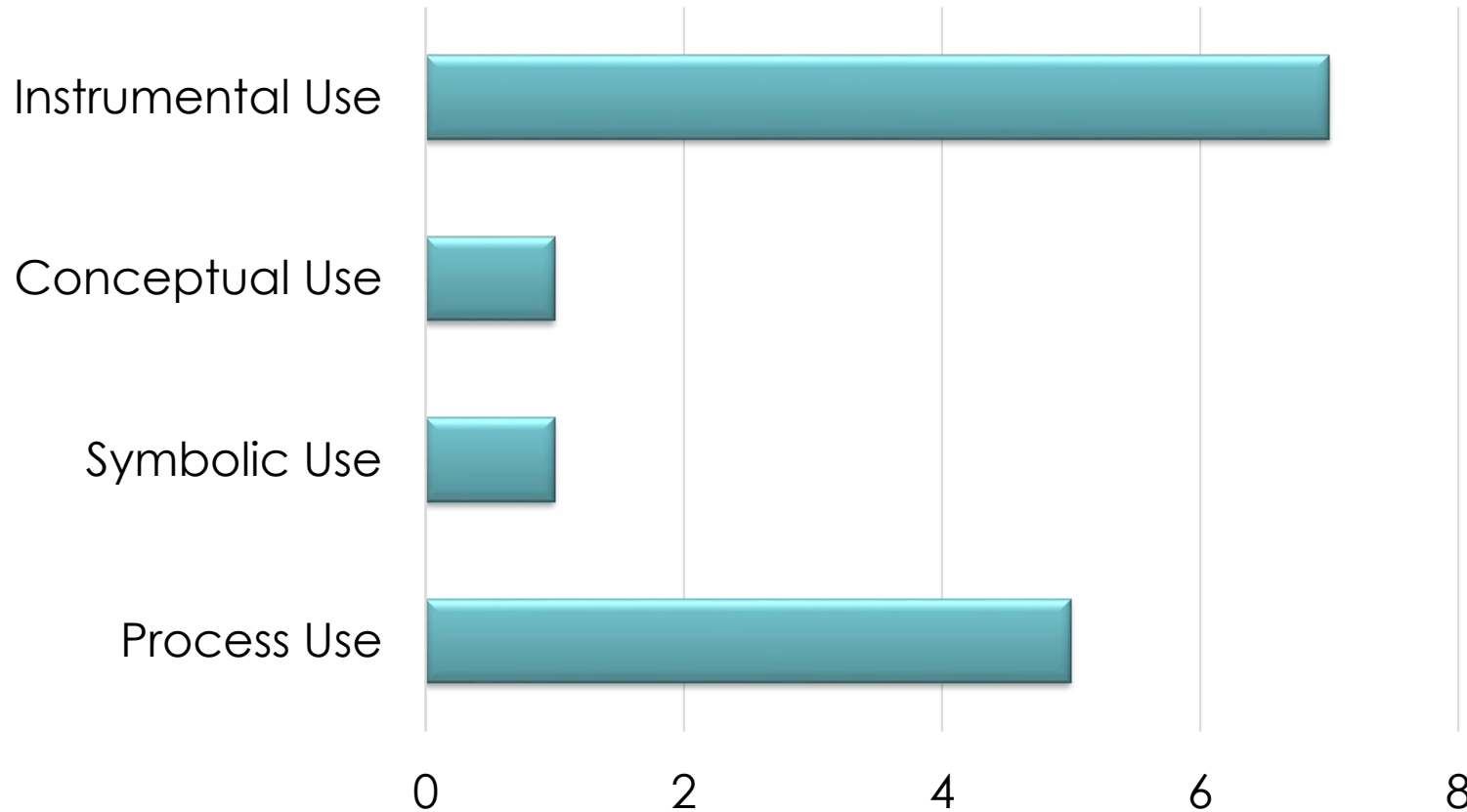
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# Impact - Use of results in the Case Studies

## Number of Evaluations



# Impact of the evaluation system

- **Improvement plan** seen as **key element in enhancing use** and a key benefits of NES
- **Need for a better mechanism to track evaluation improvement plans.** Note currently no mechanism to mandate the creation or funding of an improvement plan
- **Preliminary evidence for use of evaluations is encouraging.** Departments and provinces understand the value of evaluations to use to inform decisions, despite many challenges
- **Budgetary considerations arising from evaluations.** Evaluations concerned with the broader economy more actively considering budgetary implications; majority of cases little conscious consideration of budget implications.
- **Key challenge is capacity needed to use evaluations.** Capacity (in terms of number of people, time and level of skill) is a challenge when implementing evaluation recommendations.
- **Cost Benefit.** Tracking of costs and benefits of system needs to be done more systematically

# Improving the NES

## Improvement Objective 1

- The PM&E Bill incorporates **evaluations as a mandatory component of the public administration system.**
- Enable institutionalisation of evaluations in the public sector and SOEs
- Linking evaluations with planning and budgeting cycle. National Evaluation Policy Framework to be revised

## Improvement Objective 2

- **Improved quality and range of evaluations through consistent application of strengthened processes**
- guidelines and tools to support evaluations

## Improvement Objective 3

- **Diversity of evaluation service providers.** Capacity in government to manage and undertake evaluations with a wider pool

## Improvement Objective 4

- **Evaluation reports used as reliable sources of evidence and communication to inform planning and decision making in and outside of government.**
- Evaluation improvement plans are implemented and tracked.

# Contact Us



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