Enhancing Demand for and Use of Evaluation in Development through Management Response to Evaluation: Experiences and Learning from South Asia

Submitted to:

EvalPartners

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COMMUNITY OF EVALUATORS
Bangladesh
Promoting quality of evaluation

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Community of Evaluators South Asia
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Acknowledgement

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Abbreviation

%	Percent
EP	EvalPartner
EvalYear	Evaluation Year
Govt	Government
I/NGO	International and National Non-Governmental Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOCE	International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFI	Micro-Finance Institute
MRE	Management Response to Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
No.	Number
PKSF	Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation
SRG	Study Reference Group
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VOPE	Voluntary Organisations of Professional Evaluators

Executive Summary

Management response to evaluation (MRE) is a tool to assess the post-evaluation process deployed by commissioners or managers of evaluation to use evaluation findings and recommendations in decision-making process. This tool, therefore, is catalyst to promote the use of evaluation for evidence-based decision-making. MRE is gaining popularity among the development partners that make decisions based on the evidence. However, the level of MRE use varies by countries and by type of organisations within the country. To assess the status of MRE, a survey was conducted in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal as a joint venture of three Voluntary Organisations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs) namely the Community of Evaluators-Bangladesh, Evaluation Association of Bhutan, and Community of Evaluators-Nepal with technical support of EvalPartners and financial support of the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) from February 2014 to February 2015.

The study has a twin objective, to: (i) assess the status of MRE use in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, and (ii) develop MRE index which could be used to monitor the status of the demand for and use of evaluation in overall development of countries.

The study was conducted with 108 organisations from the government, UN agencies, donor community and civil society organisations in the afore-mentioned three countries. The main instrument used to conduct the study was a 16-item questionnaire which was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were collected for five years from 2009 to 2013, in most of the cases. Orientation to the methodology, review of inception report and draft study report by study reference group, country level workshops to validate the findings, and frequent communications between the study coordinator and country focal persons were the main activities carried out to ensure the quality of the study. Each country team prepared respective country report and this consolidated report is the gist of the three country study reports. In terms of MRE index, a model was proposed in the beginning of the study which was refined through a workshop organised upon the completion of the country studies.

Major findings

The UN agencies and donors have evaluation policy and standard procedures to respond to the evaluation findings and recommendations, whereas government agencies do have certain guidelines/framework to conduct evaluation in many cases, but not all. As far as management response is concerned, it is a new concept for the government agencies. I/NGOs generally conduct evaluation as per the donor policy and they are not particular in responding to evaluation.

Countries differed sharply in terms of conducting number of evaluations in the last five years ranging from 64 in Bangladesh to 1,366 in Nepal with 292 in Bhutan. As far as review of accepted evaluations is concerned, UN agencies were found reviewing more than 80%, donors more than 60% and I/NGO more than 25% in an average. Regarding review by government, it was none in Bhutan to 94% in Bangladesh and it was around 3% in Nepal. The major reason of high percent of evaluation reviewed in Bangladesh was that it was made almost mandatory arrangement, whereas in Nepal and Bhutan it was not the case. In terms of preparing the action plan for implementation of recommendations, about 43% of the respondents reported that they made the action plan. The reasons of the agencies not preparing the action plan were inadequate technical skills, inadequate understanding of the

leadership about the importance of MRE action plan, financial constraints, less relevant recommendations to make decisions and evaluation conducted as donor requirements.

Fund for preparing the MRE action plan was either inadequate or not available at all for two third of the respondents. The fund for implementation of evaluation recommendation was reported to have adequate with donors and not with others including UN agencies. Sharing of evaluation and MRE plan was done mostly with donor, partner agencies and government but it was done minimally with grassroots level beneficiaries. The grassroots beneficiaries were found neglected by all the agencies in terms of sharing the evaluation and MRE plan. This denotes that these organisations do not practice the human rights approach to development wherein the participation of grassroots beneficiaries, especially the vulnerable groups, are kept away from the decision making process by the so called promoters of human right approach.

Use of evaluation findings for decision making is done more by UN agencies followed by donors, then by I/NGOs and least by government agencies. In the use of evaluations, the countries varied sharply by agencies from country to country. What have been common are that there is a need for creating evaluative culture, developing capacity of users on evaluation, and promoting activities for organisational ownership in addition to mandatory provision in evaluation policy. Likewise, participatory approach to evaluation, unbiased and quality evaluation report written in non-technical language, orientation to policy makers on the integration of evaluation finding into forthcoming project and sharing evaluation and MRE plan to different stakeholders are other factors promoting evaluation use.

Regarding the MRE index, a three-dimensions and 11 indicators index is prepared as given below.

MRE index

Dimension	Indicator	Score
1. Enabling Environment (Score: 0.333)	i) Presence of evaluation policy	0.00 to 0.167
	ii) Presence of MRE policy	0.00 to 0.167
2. Managerial capacity (Score: 0.333)	i) Focal point for evaluation	0.00 to 0.111
	ii) Fund allocation for MRE	0.00 to 0.111
	iii) Tracking system on the MRE action plan	0.00 to 0.111
3. Technical parameter (Score: 0.333)	i) No. of evaluation reviewed/ No. of evaluation conducted (N)	0.00 to 0.056
	ii) No. of action plan made/N	0.00 to 0.056
	iii) No. of action plan implemented/N	0.00 to 0.056
	iv) No. of evaluation shared with different type of stakeholders/N	0.00 to 0.056
	v) No. of MRE plan shared with different type of stakeholders/N	0.00 to 0.056
	vi) No. of evaluations used for decision-making/N	0.00 to 0.056

Using this index, MRE value of three countries were calculated which were found 0.375 for Nepal, 0.301 for Bhutan and 0.381 for Bangladesh. Agency-wise, donors and UN agencies were found having relatively higher scores than I/NGOs and government, in general. However, in Bangladesh the

government had higher score than UN agencies and I/NGOs mainly because of the mandatory provision of the government to review and take action on the evaluations conducted.

The study has identified three good practices which include steps taken by the government to create enabling environment through the development of National M&E guidelines in Nepal and evaluation policy in Bhutan; the mandatory role of UN agencies and donors to review the completed evaluation, prepare management response plan and follow up activities have been a learning tool for government agencies; and emphasis on the review of conducted evaluations by related government agency which has been supportive to prepare MRE plan and follow up actions in Bangladesh.

In conclusion, there has been enabling environment gradually developing in the three countries through the formation of evaluationpolicy and M&E guidelines which have included MRE as an integral part of evaluation. Capacity of agencies to prepare and implement MRE plan has been a challenge to all stakeholders studied. More crucial is the financial constraints for governments and local NGOs to prepare and implement MRE. Grassroots beneficiaries are neglected stakeholders of almost all agencies under study, in terms of sharing the evaluation and the MRE plan that indicates the violation of their human rights.

In light of the above findings, good practices, and conclusion, the study has made five recommendations as follows:

- VOPEs should facilitate government to prepare evaluation policy with MRE as an integral part. There should be guidelines/frameworks to support the implementation of evaluation policy once it is approved.
- MRE plan and implementation should be tailored with the evaluation funds which should be allocated at the time of project formulation.
- VOPEs should carry out activities for more awareness, education, training, and advocacy as well as lobbying so that planners can use actionable recommendations for project/programme planning.
- Since government agencies are constraint with technical capacity to prepare and implement MRE action plan, VOPEs should actively be engaged in facilitating these agencies in encouraging them towards building their capacity.
- MRE index developed here serves as the base for further work on it. Therefore, action research should further be carried out considering the rigor of the methodology including sample size, parameters, and dimensions with an aim of refining the MRE index for global application.

Background

1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND

The two fundamental purposes why we conduct evaluation are (1) enhanced accountability and (2) learning for planning and delivery, and decision making. This requires evaluation commissioning or managing agency to critically look at the quality of the evaluation in terms of the process, approaches, findings and recommendations. In other words, the evaluation requires response from the managing agency. The management response is a crucial step to improve the timely and effective use of evaluations. It helps trace record of implementation of evaluation recommendation, contributes to accountability and organisational learning and promotes use of evaluation findings. Management Response to Evaluation (MRE) can also serve as a tool that guides evaluators to conduct quality evaluation. MRE promotes evaluation use, provides benefits to users and helps create more demand as well.

More specifically, it is a post evaluation plan which addresses the evaluation findings, particularly recommendations, for the state and non-state stakeholders, the demand side of the evaluation, such as government ministries and planning bodies, UN agencies, donors, INGOs, and NGOs as well as grassroots beneficiaries. It also provides guidance to evaluators, the supply side, to make practical, specific, clear and meaningful actionable recommendations. This can, therefore, serve as a tool that guides evaluators to conduct quality evaluation. It is thus expected to contribute to quality evaluation that leads to better use of evaluation and to improve accountability and organizational learning. This motivates users to demand quality evaluation as a result of which they get more benefits including improved governance. MRE therefore, promotes evaluation use, provides benefits to users and helps create more demand of quality inputs for decision making.

MRE, therefore, is a concern of all development stakeholders. However, quality of evaluation and non-use of evaluation findings in policy and programme design are two major issues related to demand and use of evaluation in South Asian countries. VOPEs of Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan in collaboration and support from the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE)/EvalPartners (EP) have launched this study "Enhancing Demand for and Use of Evaluation in Development through Management Response to Evaluation: Experiences and Learning from South Asia" from February 2014 to February 2015.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study is to strengthen an enabling environment for evaluation by assessing evidences on the demand for and use of evaluations through the use of MRE tool in South Asia.

The specific objectives are to: (i) assess the status of MRE use in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, and (ii) develop MRE index which could be used to monitor the status of the demand for and use of evaluation in overall development of the country.

1.3 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The prime purpose of this study was to enhance demand for and use of evaluation explicitly through promotion of MRE in South Asia. A user-friendly MRE index that indicates status of evaluation use at project/programme as well as national, sub-national and regional level has been developed. The evidence-based findings of this study in South Asia would be an encouraging agendum for debate in EvalYear 2015 to extend it in other parts of the world to strengthen demand for and use of evaluation.

Quality of evaluation and non-use of evaluation findings in policy and programme design are two major issues related to demand and use of evaluation in South Asian countries. This study identifies the governing factors of both use and non-use of evaluation wherein quality and equity dimensions are expected to emerge as a major factor.

The study is limited to three South Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal out of a total of eight countries in the region. Similarly, the study was limited to 108 organisations in three countries with less involvement of the local NGOs, other civil society organisations and grassroots beneficiaries due to budgetary constraints to reach them. This issue must be taken into consideration while designing the second phase of this study.

2. Methodology

2.1 DESK REVIEWS, QUESTIONNAIRES, INTERVIEWS

The main tools used for this study included document reviews, questionnaires, interviews with identified stakeholders in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Document review was done throughout the study, where most key documents have been thoroughly familiarised with, especially the ones related to MRE index development.

To explore the extent of evaluation use, MRE study was conducted with state and non-state actors of development including government ministries and planning bodies, (International)/ Non-Governmental Organisations (I/NGOs) and private sector, UN agencies and donors in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, respectively. The study deployed the following methodology:

2.1.1 Literature Review: Review of MRE templates of agencies, system of incorporating recommendations in program/project cycle by agencies, system of documentation and follow up on MRE plan was carried out.

2.1.2 Development of Research Protocol: The study had twin purpose, viz. to assess status of MRE in three countries under the study and to develop MRE index.

- *Assessing the MRE status*: A semi-structured interview guideline, formats and a checklists common to all three countries were prepared by the study coordinator and shared with country teams. The country teams reviewed the guidelines and provided inputs. Incorporating the feedbacks, the final questionnaire and checklist was prepared. (Annex-1)

- *Developing MRE index*: A MRE index is prepared with in-depth discussion in a workshop specifically organised for this purpose.

2.1.3 Selecting Categories of Respondents and Number of Respondents: Purposive sampling technique was used to select the categories of respondents. Government ministries/agencies were selected based on the amount of development budget, in general, priority was given to higher budget. However, these selection criteria were changed, in some

case as the Ministries under these criteria did not show interest to be included into the sample. I/NGOs wereselected on the basis of their presence and scale of involvement in all three countries under study. In case of UN systems, interested agencies were selected. Similarly, major donors, other than UN agencies, in the study countries were other respondents. Relevant private agencies and civil society organisations were also included as respondents. Where appropriate, similar agencies were selected in all three countries to make the inter-country comparison possible.

2.1.4   Respondents of the Study**:** This study included different types of stakeholders wherein practice of development evaluation exists. They were finalised with inputs from SRG in each country. The number of organisations are given below. Though it was originally planned to have 36 respondents from each country making a total of 108 respondents, in practice, the total number is maintained as per plan but the number by agencies has been changed as some selected respondents did not cooperate to provide information on time.

Table 1. Type and number of respondents				
	No. of Organizations			
Sector/Type of Organization	Bangladesh	Bhutan	Nepal	Total
International and National NGO/private agencies	15	12	10	37
Donor	7	5	5	17
Government	12	11	15	38
UN Agency	6	5	5	16
Total	**40**	**33**	**35**	**108**

2.2   DATA

2.2.1 Type of data

1. The following data were gathered:
   - Existence of evaluation policy and MRE policy, guidelines, frameworks.
   - Number of evaluation reviewed and evaluation conducted during the last five years from 2009 to 2013.
   - Number of MRE or similar plans prepared during the period said above of the projects/ programmes against the number of projects/programs evaluated. Reason for preparing and not preparing MRE plan.
   - Practice of interconnectedness (linkages) between evaluation plan and MRE.
   - Funds allocation and availability for preparing and implementing MRE.
   - Sharing evaluation findings and MRE plan with stakeholders (including the field/grassroots level staff and beneficiaries).
   - Use of evaluation
   - Suggestions for promoting MRE to enhance effective use of evaluation in decision making.
   - Challenges in preparing MRE plan and implementing and keeping track records.
   - Existing capacity and skills (and gaps) within the organizations to implement this tool.

These data also helped construct the MRE index.

2.2.2 Data analysis: All qualitative data were analyzed through process of content analysis and following the analytical induction methods. Information for qualitative analysis was taken

from interviews with participants and document reviews. For developing MRE index, the following process was used.

2.3 MRE INDEX

The MRE index has a scale ranging from 0 to 1. The "0",for example,indicates no review of evaluation, no sharing of evaluation with stakeholders and no evaluation findings used for decision-making. Index score "1" informs that all evaluations conducted are reviewed, action plan is made of every evaluation reviewed, 100% implementation of action plan, 100% sharing of evaluation and MRE plan with all types of concerned stakeholders and every evaluation is used for decision-making. Each country team has made the index of respective different stakeholders in the country and finally a country MRE index. The MRE situation in the study countries is compared while using this index.

Originally, the index was proposed to have five indicators as given in Table 2.

Table 2. Planned MRE index

Elements of MRE Index	Score distribution
No. of evaluation reviewed/No. of evaluation conducted	0.2
No. of action plan made for implementation of recommendation/ No. of evaluation reviewed	0.2
No. of action plan implemented/ No. of action plan made	0.2
No. of evaluation shared with stakeholders/No. of evaluation conducted	0.2
No. of evaluation used for decision-making/No. of evaluation conducted	0.2

Learning lessons from the single dimensional MRE index with five indicators above, partially piloted in three countries, the MRE index workshop, conducted after the three country studies were completed, came up with below given three-dimensional MRE index.

Table 3. Finalised MRE index

Dimension	Indicator	Score
4. Enabling Environment (Score: 0.333)	iii) Presence of evaluation policy	0.00 to 0.167
	iv) Presence of MRE policy	0.00 to 0.167
5. Managerial capacity (Score: 0.333)	vii) Focal point for evaluation	0.00 to 0.111
	viii) Fund allocation for MRE	0.00 to 0.111
	ix) Tracking system on the MRE action plan	0.00 to 0.111
6. Technical parameter (Score: 0.333)	iv) No. of evaluation reviewed/ No. of evaluation conducted (N)	0.00 to 0.056
	v) No. of action plan made/N	0.00 to 0.056
	vi) No. of action plan implemented/N	0.00 to 0.056
	x) No. of evaluation shared with different type of stakeholders/N	0.00 to 0.056
	xi) No. of evaluation with MRE plan shared with different type of stakeholders/N	0.00 to 0.056

xii) No. of evaluations used for decision-making/N	0.00 to 0.056

The three dimensions include enabling environment with two indicators (evaluation policy and MRE policy), managerial capacity with three indicators (focal person for evaluation, adequacy of fund for MRE, tracking system on the MRE action plan) and technical parameter with six indicators related to review of evaluations conducted, MRE action plan, implementation of MRE action plan, sharing of evaluation with stakeholders, sharing of MRE action plan with stakeholders, and use of evaluation. Technical notes to calculate and use the MRE index is provided in annex—1.

2.4 REPORTS

2.4.1 Draft Report Preparation: Respective country team led by the focal person prepared the draft report in each country which was shared with the respective SRG. This was then shared with the study coordinator. The country team prepared second draft of report by incorporating inputs of SRG and study coordinator and made a presentation to the country level workshop. These reports were also presented in the MRE index workshop and finalised after incorporating suggestions from workshop participants.

2.4.2 Comprehensive/Consolidated Report: This consolidated report is a synthesis report of all three countries. This was shared with study teams. Second draft was prepared by incorporating inputs of the study members. The final report will be prepared by integrating EP comments. The country reports are placed as annexes.

2.5 STUDY TEAM:

The team has an overall study coordinator. In addition, there are three country teams, one team each in the three countries. The team members were 4 in Bhutan to 6 in Bangladesh; and Nepal had a 5-member team. The composition of the team is given in the annexure. The study coordinator and country focal persons were as follows:

Overall Study Coordinator: Dr.Gana Pati Ojha

Bangladesh Focal Person: Mr.BhabatoshNath

Bhutan Focal Person: Mr.Kezang

Nepal Focal Person: Dr.Ramesh Tuladhar

2.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISM

The study used the following mechanisms to ensure its quality:

2.6.1 Formation of Study Reference Group in each country

Three SRGs were formed, one in each country. Each SRG comprised members from different stakeholders. There were the following major tasks of the SRG:

- Review of inception report
- Assist the study team to select stakeholders for study within the categories already identified
- Review of country study draft report
- Providing guidance to study team as and when needed basis.

2.6.2 Communication among the Study Coordinator and Respective Focal Points

Different low cost methods of communications were used between and among the study coordinator and the country focal persons to ensure quality and smooth operation of the project. E-mails/internet was frequently used for communication. Regular internal reviews were also carried out among researchers to further assure timely operation and quality.

2.6.3 Participation in methodological research protocol/workshop by the Study Coordinator

The study coordinator participated in the methodological orientation workshop in Dhaka, Thimphu and Kathmandu to ensure that the country teams fully understood how to carry out the study and prepare their respective reports.

2.6.4 Participation in Regional MRE index finalization workshop

Focal persons from all three participating countries together with the study coordinator participated besides other invitees including SRGs to discuss during the regional MRE workshop held on 7th February 2015 in Kathmandu. Outcome of the workshop was the finalization of MRE index.

3. Findings and Discussions

3.1 EVALUATION POLICY

Majority of the respondents said that they have evaluation policy/framework/guidelines that provide direction for carrying out and managing evaluation. UN agencies, INGOs and donors have their international network with their headquarters, so in many cases, their head office develop and circulate a policy for evaluation to their offices in member countries where they work. Some national NGOs maintain a policy or guideline generally in the name of M&E manual or guideline. Those documents mainly address on implementation of monitoring issues with a very little coverage of evaluation.

In this study, the respondents of UN agencies in Nepal and Bhutan and donors in Nepal were undivided in saying presence of evaluation policy in their organisations. Other agencies stakeholders such as government and NGO/INGO/private sectors were divided in terms of having evaluation policy in their organisations. This indicates that respondents were not fully aware of presence or the absence of the evaluation policy. Donors and UN agencies do have evaluation policy. Some NGOs do have independent evaluation policy but majority of the NGOs, as the funds come from the donors, use the donor policy to conduct evaluation. As far as national evaluation policy is concerned, none of the countries under study does have evaluation policy but they have certain guidelines to conduct evaluation. In case of Nepal, there is a National Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines[1] which guides development ministries and related departments and projects the process and techniques of carrying out and managing M&E through number of templates. As the government of Nepal has laid emphasis on the use of the guidelines, many respondents referred this guideline as evaluation policy guidelines. This might have been the major reason that higher percentage of respondents from the government agencies indicated the presence of evaluation policy. Their responses can be considered the right response as the question under study was presence of any document, be it in the form of policy, framework or the guidelines.

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[1]National monitoring and evaluation guideline, July 2014

Table 4. Presence of evaluation policy/guidelines/framework

Country	No. of respondents	Government	UN	Donor	I/NGO	Overall
		Percent				
Nepal	35	80.00	100.00	100.00	90.00	89.00
Bhutan	33	0.00	100.00	60.00	25.00	33.00
Bangladesh	40	66.67	83.33	85.71	60.00	70.00
Overall	108					64.8

In Bhutan, only one-third of respondents mentioned the presence of evaluation policy/ framework/ guidelines. All respondents under UN agencies rightly said that they have evaluation policy. The donors in Bhutan that participated in the research do have evaluation policy, but it is not known why some participants in this category responded differently. It is expected that all participants from government agencies responding the absence of the evaluation policy as the Bhutan government was developing the draft evaluation policy during this research period which is yet to be endorsed. As there were more number of national NGOs and private agencies in Bhutan under I/NGO group and these agencies obviously do not have evaluation policy/framework/guidelines. In general, the agencies that conducted evaluation have had some document guiding evaluation and those who did not conduct evaluation did not have such document.

In case of Bangladesh, National Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Department have issued evaluation guidelines which are followed by government agencies for carrying out evaluation of the government implemented project funded even by donors. This is but subject to availability of funds. Therefore, some government agencies that have commissioned the evaluation responded applying the guidelines of the government, those that did not conduct evaluation responded differently. Most donor and UN agencies have affirmed the presence of evaluation policy but 1 respondent each from these categories responded negatively. The reason being that the agencies included under the donor category were also some INGOs and private donors. Among them, some might not have evaluation policy. For example, PKSF is a government financed/controlled Micro-Finance Institute (MFI) which acts as a donor agency for the local NGOs. "PKSF evaluates the projects as and when required as per project design" means that the organization does not follow any specific evaluation framework or guideline. Similarly, under the UN agencies, one M&E specialist of one UNDP programme (UNDP Bangladesh-Early Recovery Program) was included. The programme might not have the policy in practice.

In general, UN agencies, bilateral or multilateral donors do have evaluation policy. Governments do have some framework or guidelines but no specific evaluation policy in practice in all three countries. Some big international NGOs like Oxfam do have evaluation policy and smaller NGOs depend on the policy of the donor which may differ from project to project as different projects are funded by different donors.

3.2 POLICY ON MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO EVALUATION

MRE policy guides agencies commissioning or managing evaluation about the process and procedures for preparing management response plan of evaluation, follow up action plan recommendation and their use in decision-making. This study tried to uncover the presence of MRE policy/framework/guidelines in the organisations of participating respondents. In total 56 out of 108 responding participants of the three countries responded to this question. Almost 52% of those participants affirmed that their agencies do have MRE policy. As expected, the agencies that they

had evaluation policy also, to a large extent, have MRE policy. It is specifically true with Bangladesh that the percentage of presence of MRE policy and evaluation policy is exactly the same. It is suspected in country report that the responses might have not come with complete understanding of MRE specifically from the government agencies. With UN and donors, they have mandated policy for preparing management response plan of evaluation recommendations. For others, it is a new concept. That is why, MRE score is lower than the evaluation policy score for Nepal and Bhutan in the MRE index. It is expected that after the enactment of the recently developed the new National Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines which has also specific template and guidelines for preparing management response plan, all government agencies are expected to prepare the MRE plan. In the case of Bhutan, once the evaluation policy is enacted, all government bodies in the country will mandatorily have evaluation policy including the guidelines for preparing MRE plan.

Table 5. Presence of policy/guidelines/framework for management response to evaluation

MRE Policy	No. of agencies	Government	UN	Donor	I/NGO	Average
Nepal	20	46.67	80.00	100.00	40.00	57.00
Bhutan	8	0.00	60.00	60.00	16.67	24.00
Bangladesh	28	66.67	83.33	85.71	60.00	70.00
Overall						51.85

3.3 PROCESS OF REVIEWING THE COMPLETED EVALUATION

The study attempted to know what activities are carried out by the evaluation commissioning or managing agencies after they accept the final report of the evaluation. Agencies were found to have their own specific procedure of reviewing the accepted evaluation. Some are more specific that develop a concrete plan with time frame for implementing the recommendations; while others limit their response to quality of evaluation and with broad statement of its usefulness; for some agencies MRE is still a new terminology yet to bring into practice. Those that concretise the MRE plan, they prepare MRE plan by identifying key actions with a timeframe and responsibility. Once the evaluation report is received the management reviews the evaluation generally through a consultative process involving most critical stakeholders to whom the recommendations are targeted. UN systems fall under this criteria. The UN system review the accepted evaluation by a group of related units within the UN agency together with the related staff of the project. They make overall comments on the evaluation as a whole but pay more attention to the recommendations. They review each recommendation and assess whether the recommendation is relevant or not to them. They either accept fully or partially or reject. For the recommendation they accept, they prepare action plan for the implementation of the recommendation using specific template that includes the key action, timeframe and responsible person/unit. Donors do also review the report of the evaluation that they have commissioned. Some agencies including some bilateral agencies review the evaluation report by the M&E unit and provides remarks indicating its level of acceptability, usefulness to particular context and make their remarks but do not provide a timeframe, responsible unit, and implementation status of the recommendations as is done by UN agencies. Some agencies, specifically the government systems, they do review the reports generally by the M&E unit but do not document their response in general. In Nepal, all responding donors were found to have used standard MRE process, whereas 43% of the donors said this in Bangladesh.

In Nepal and Bhutan, almost 80% of the UN agencies responded positively to use standard process following the template; whereas it was only one-third in Bangladesh. In case of I/NGOs, they have almost similar process as of the donors. All I/NGOs in Nepal told that they used MRE process as outlined by the respective donor. Though percentage of telling that they use the concrete MRE process was low, but they also told that they use the donor process in Bangladesh and Bhutan. As indicate above, the state mechanism do review the accepted evaluation but do not use any standard template. Governments are now more aware of importance of MRE and are laying emphasis on the development and use of MRE template as shown in the M&E guidelines developed recently in Nepal and Evaluation Policy developed in Bhutan.

3.4 CONDUCTING AND REVIEWING OF EVALUATION

The study endeavoured to collect empirical data evaluation conducted and reviewed by different agencies for the last five years from 2009 to 2013 disintegrating them into three categories as mid-term, final and impact evaluation. In an average, one-fourth of the evaluations conducted were reviewed. Country-wise, Bangladesh was found to have reviewed high percentage of evaluations conducted, followed by Bhutan and Nepal was the least. The cases were just reverse in terms of number of evaluation conducted. There existed an inverse relationship between the number of evaluation conducted and number of evaluation reviewed. The number of evaluation conducted in five years differed significantly by countries. The maximum number of evaluation were carried out in Nepal as many as 1366 followed by Bhutan with 292 evaluations and least in Bangladesh which reported to have conducted only 64 evaluations. It should be noted that these are not the national figures but limited to those agencies that took part in this evaluation as respondents. In Nepal, one of the respondents happened to be the one that administered all NGOs and INGOs including their local evaluations which are abundant in number as many as 90 evaluations for some year.

Table 6. Type of evaluation conducted and reviewed (2009 to 2013)

Country	Indicator	Mid-term	Final	Impact	Total
Nepal	No. of evaluation conducted	596	715	55	1366
	% of evaluation reviewed	11.07	14.08	85.71	15.00
Bhutan	No. of evaluation conducted	148	104	40	292
	% of evaluation reviewed	53.38	60.58	70	58.22
Bangladesh	No. of evaluation conducted	27	32	5	64
	% of evaluation reviewed	85.19	93.75	80.00	89.06
	Average % reviewed	49.88	56.14	78.57	60.50
	Overall % of evaluation reviewed				25.36

Despite that Nepal conducted 1366 evaluations in last five years, only 232 of them were reviewed which made about 17% of the total evaluations done. This means that 83% of the evaluations were done just for evaluation sake and were not even reviewed whether they were useful or not. This indicates that the evaluation were conducted because it was made mandatory, the review of the evaluation was not made mandatory; that is why, they were not reviewed. Only 45 (4.14%) out of 1086 evaluations conducted by the government including the national evaluation of INGOs done by the Social Welfare Council were reviewed. The UN system has made review of evaluation a mandatory provision; that is why, all 38 evaluations conducted respondent agencies in five year

period were reviewed (except one in Nepal), 83% in Bangladesh and 80% in Bhutan. This was followed by donors wherein emphasis is on reviewing of evaluation, though it may not be mandatory for them. The review is mandatory also for the INGOs in many cases. This made them reviewed evaluation, to some extent. But for the government, except in Bangladesh, the review is desired but not mandatory. It depends on the interest of the M&E manager and leadership as is the case in Nepal. This might be a reason that review of completed evaluations are minimally done by the government, in general, where it is not made mandatory.

The case is similar with Bhutan that government agencies have done review minimally whereas UN agencies and donors have reviewed a large number of evaluation as they have mandatory arrangement for management response. However, the case was different in Bangladesh where almost all evaluation carried out were reviewed. This might have been because the IMED has made it mandatory and also that number of evaluation carried out was significantly lower than in Bhutan and Nepal.

FIGURE 1: REVIEW OF EVALUATION REPORT (%)
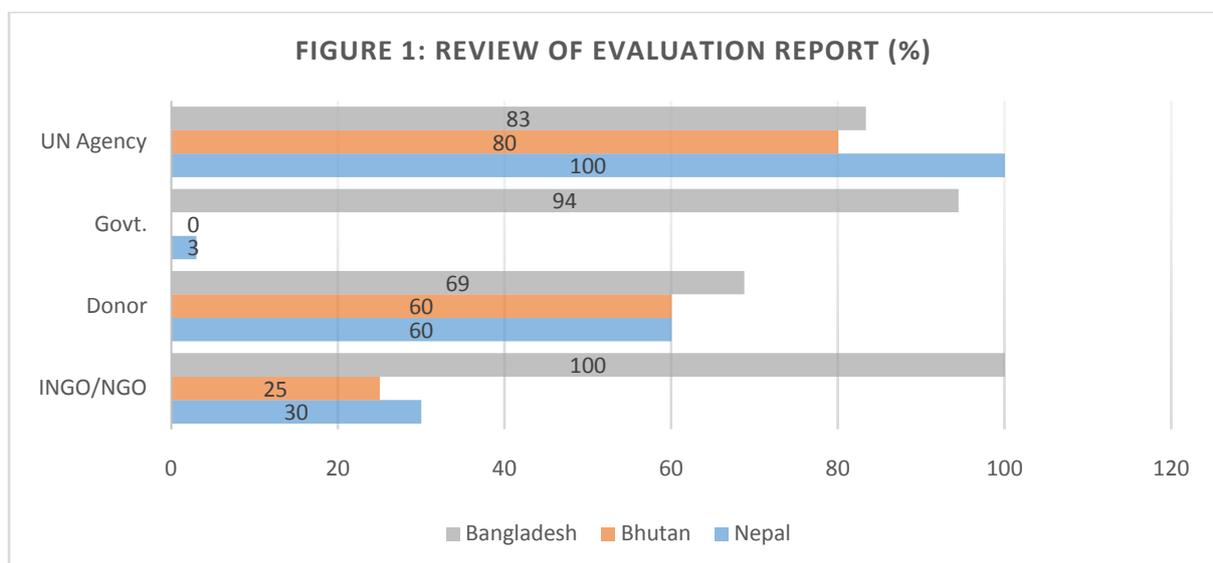
In addition to mandatory arrangement, other reasons for low number of evaluations reviewed can be attributed to the lack of evaluation policy/strategy/guidelines in the government system and local NGOs/private sector who constituted about half of the respondents. Other reasons include:
- No system or requirement or standards for reviewing evaluation reports in Bhutan and Nepal
- Focus on monitoring of plans, programmes and projects rather than reviewing them
- Evaluations are normally conducted jointly by donors and recipients agencies, and the recipient agencies think it the job of donors
- Resource (human and financial) constraints
- Not a core mandate – third party or another department's mandate

2.5 ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

About 44% of the respondents reported that they did have some sort of arrangement to implement the recommendations. The highest % in this regard comes from Bhutan with almost 70% responding positively, followed by 43% in Nepal and 25% in Bangladesh.

Figure 2: Action Plan Preparation (% of the agency)

Agency	%
Overall	43.5
Bangladesh	25
Bhutan	70
Nepal	40
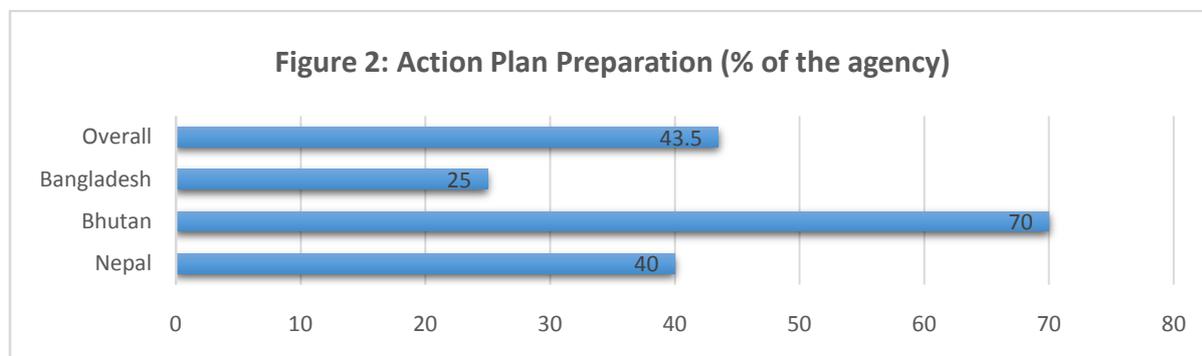
The reasons for preparing less number of action plan being prepared are related to technical, financial, managerial, and attitudinal issues on the part of demand side; and quality of evaluation and recommendations on the part of supply side. These are listed below. Among the listed reasons, high importance given by all countries are inadequate technical skills, financial constraints to prepare the action plan and follow up, inadequate understanding of evaluation by leadership, perception of evaluation as requirement of donors (not of theirs), and less relevant recommendations. In addition to the ones listed in the Table 7, absence of any evaluation policies / strategies / guidelines is also a reason cited by the respondents.

Table 7. Reason for not having action plan of evaluation recommendations

Reasons	Frequency by reason			
	Nepal	Bhutan	BD	Total
Inadequate technical skills	11	4	9	24
Financial constraints	8	4	5	17
No importance given to evaluation	11	1	3	15
Evaluation conducted as donor requirement	6	1	7	14
Inadequate understanding of evaluation by leadership	5	2	6	13
Less relevant to make decisions	2	3	7	12
Management resistant to evaluation findings/recommendations	2	0	1	3
Impractical evaluation recommendations	2	0		2

Agency-wise analysis reveals that the reasons are more applicable to the governments as distinctly more number of respondents from the government agencies mentioned the given reason than other agencies. Particularly important to government were inadequate technical skills, inadequate understanding of the leadership about the importance of MRE action plan, financial constraints, less relevant recommendations to make decisions and evaluation conducted as donor requirement.

2.6 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MRE

Respondents were asked to list down the advantages and disadvantages of MRE. The responses that were common to all countries under study are listed below. The advantages are related to increased accountability, organisational performance, gap identification that is helpful for planning and remedial action, programme effectiveness and efficiency, useful for sustainability, and learning and improvement. The disadvantages, on the other hand, are requirement of additional resources, cumbersome process, duplication of work, coordination and time consuming. These are listed below in the Table 8.

Table 8. Advantages and disadvantages of MRE as perceived by the respondents

Advantages of MRE	Disadvantages
1. **Help identify problems, spotting various opportunities and gaps in the programme**	1. Require additional human resources unnecessarily
2. **Support to further planning and take remedial actions**	2. Require additional financial resources resulting in the substantial increase in the project cost
3. **Helped to improve organizational performance thus leading to growth of the organization**	3. Cumbersome process thereby increasing the workload to the organization
4. **Increase efficiency in budget allocation and resource mobilization**	4. Duplication of works and decrease efficiency
5. **Increase accountability**	5. Recommendations provided may not be relevant
6. **Path of learning and improvement and future planning**	6. Coordination challenges
7. **Monitor the performance of the managers in taking evidence-based decisions**	7. Time consuming, especially under the context leadership have little time to pay attention to MRE
8. **Ensure continuity of the project and help design next phase and/or other similar project in future**	
9. **Help to overcome the limitations in future program**	

2.7 FUNDING SITUATION FOR PREPARING THE MRE PLAN

Resource constraint was one of the reasons pointed out by respondents for low number of participants preparing MRE action plan. Table 9 supports this claim that even the donor and UN agencies do not have adequate fund to prepare MRE plan. In Nepal, in an aggregate 29% of respondents, including 3% government agencies and 26% others, reported having adequate funds for MRE plan preparation; whereas, 34% informed that they often do not have funds at all to prepare the MRE plan. Those having funds partially available were 31%. The Bhutan report indicates that donors, UN bodies and INGOs do not face problem of fund for preparing MRE plan but local NGOs and the government do have such problem. Not having the fund to prepare the MRE plan could serve as one of the biggest challenges for organizations to have an MRE system in place. Around 20% respondents in Bangladesh agreed that they have funds fully available whereas those telling that they had funds partially available were about 43%. Almost 38% of respondents disclosed of not having funds at all for MRE plan in Bangladesh.

Table 9. Funding situation for preparation of MRE Plan in Bangladesh (% by given indicator)[2]

Country	Indicator	INGO	Donor	Govt.	UN Agency	Average	No./indicator
Bangladesh	1 : Fully adequate	6.7	42.9	33.3	0	20	8
	2 : Partially adequate	53.3	42.9	41.7	16.7	42.5	17
	3 : Not available	40	14.3	25	83.3	37.5	15
	Number of respondents	**15**	**7**	**12**	**6**		

2.8 FUNDING SITUATION FOR IMPLEMENTING THE MRE PLAN

Funding availability for implementation of the MRE plan was a great challenge for the government agencies and INGOs in Nepal though it was not a big issue for many of the donors and UN agencies. About 57% of government agencies and 50% of the I/NGOs told that they did not have fund at all to implement the MRE plan. In Bhutan, many government agencies reported of inadequacy of funds for MRE plan implementation. There almost 64% of the government agencies told the unavailability of funds at all, followed by NGO/INGO/Private agencies, and donor and UN agencies. However, the case was different in Bangladesh where availability of fund to implement MRE plan does not seem to be a problem even for many government agencies as 33% reported to have fully adequate and 42% partially adequate in terms of availability of fund for MRE plan implementation. It was rather a challenge for UN agencies and INGOs (Figure-3) who reported fund not being available by 83% and 40%, respectably.

FIGURE 3: FUND AVAILABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MRE PLAN (%)
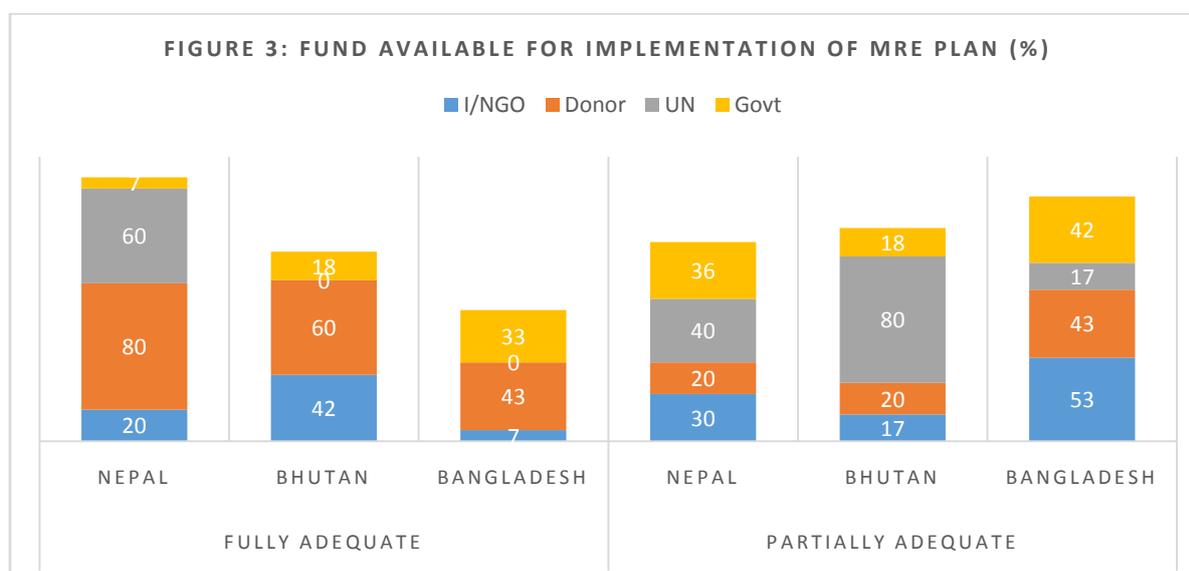
2.9 SHARING OF EVALUATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

In general, sharing of evaluation was done with related government agencies, donors and partner organisations almost equally. Sharing evaluation with grassroots beneficiaries is unacceptably low particularly in Bhutan and Bangladesh (Table 10) compared to Nepal, though sharing in Nepal is also substantially low.

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[2] Though aggregate data were available with all three countries under study, disintegrated data by agencies were available with Bangladesh only. Therefore, the Table is constructed only with data from Bangladesh.

Table 10. Sharing of evaluation with stakeholders (%)

Stakeholder	Nepal	Bhutan	Bangladesh	
	N= 432	N= 292	N=64	Overall
Donor	19.44	22.26	31.25	21.45
Partner Organization	30.32	8.56	15.6	21.07
Grassroots Beneficiaries	13.66	1.37	1.6	8.12
Related Govt. line Agencies	33.56	6.16	18.7	22.21
Others	3.01	0.34		1.78

Sharing of evaluation with grassroots beneficiaries was found low by government and even by UN agencies. It was, however, found relatively high by donors and I/NGOs. The I/NGOs did share completed evaluation largely with partner organisations and donors, also with grassroots organisation, to some extent. They do not share much with the government agencies, particularly in Bangladesh. In Nepal, since I/NGOs are monitored by the Social Welfare Council, which is under the government, I/NGOs need to share the evaluation with them. This has made their sharing of evaluation with government agency relatively high. The donors, in contrast, share largely with governmentagencies as well as with partner organisations. The sharing of evaluation by government agencies is done largely with other agencies of the government, partner organisations and donors; their sharing with grassroots beneficiaries is low, though some of the evaluations are shared with them.

Table 11. Sharing of evaluation with stakeholders by agencies (%)

Stakeholder	I/NGO			Donor			Govt			UN		
	Nep	BD	Bhu	Nep	BD	Bhu	Nep	BD	Bhu	Nep	BD	Bhu
Donor	28	24	29	0	0	13	23	18	41	33	6	25
Partner Organization	33	38	23	29	38	25	30	17	18	30	33	38
Grassroots Beneficiaries	17	21	6	19	6	13	16	6	12	3	17	0
Govt. Agencies	21	4	31	42	38	38	30	31	29	34	30	38
Other	1	13	11	10	18	13	1	28	0	1	14	0
No. of evaluation shared	31	24	35	13	16	8	40	18	17	84	6	8

2.10 SHARING OF MRE PLAN WITH STAKEHOLDER

Sharing of MRE plan with other agencies is not a general practice as shown by the Table below. The maximum percentage of MRE plan shared is less than one-fifth which is with donors followed by with partner organisations and government agencies. Less than 4% MRE

plan is shared with grassroots level beneficiaries, in general which ranges from 0 (Bangladesh) to 6.25% (Nepal).

Table 12. Sharing of MRE Plan to stakeholders (%)

Stakeholder	Nepal	Bhutan	Bangladesh	Overall
	N= 432	N= 292	N=64	
Donor	10.19	18.84	14.06	13.31
Partner Organization	16.67	7.53	4.69	12.31
Grassroots Beneficiaries	6.25	1.37	0.00	3.93
Related Govt. line Agencies	13.89	3.08	4.69	9.14

Those who share the MRE plan, they are largely the UN agencies, donors and INGOs. It is not surprising to see that none of the MRE plans is shared by the government in Nepal and only one in Bangladesh as they prepare less number of MRE plan and keep within their own use, if they prepare. The I/NGOs share largely with donors and related government agencies but in Nepal they also share with partner organisations. Donors share with partner organisations and government agencies and to some extent with grassroots beneficiaries also. UN agency sharing goes equally to donors, partner organisations and related government line agencies. This shows that MRE plan is not generally shared with grassroots beneficiaries by any of the agencies under study with an exception that some donors do in Nepal. This indicates that grassroots beneficiaries are not considered by these agencies as an important partner in terms of sharing the MRE plan. This also denotes that these organisations do not practice the human rights approach to development wherein the participation of grassroots beneficiaries, especially the vulnerable groups, are kept away from the decision making process by the so called promoters of human right approach.

Table 13. Sharing of MRE Plan with stakeholders by agencies (%)

Agency	I/NGO			Donor			Govt.			UN Agency		
Stakeholder	NP	BD	BHU	NP	BD	BHU	NP	BD	BHU	NP	BD	BHU
Donor	40	67	33	0	57	25	0	0	50	31	100	0
Partner Organization	43	0	17	31	29	25	0	100	0	31	0	0
Grassroots Beneficiaries	0	0	8	31	0	25	0		0	0	0	0
Govt. Agencies	17	33	29	26	14	25	0		50	31	0	0
Others	0		13	11		0	0		0	6		0
Total Number	30	6	24	87	7	4	0	1	2	102	1	0

The reasons provided by respondents not sharing the evaluation and MRE plan included lack of MRE plan, not mandatory to share report, and considered by some I/NGO as donor mandate. Thus it is observed that evaluations and more importantly the ones with MRE plan are conducted more for internal use by most agencies. It is found that sharing is mostly done via e-mails followed by

meetings. Circulation of hard and soft copies was another mode of sharing the reports whereby many agencies prefer to share hard copies. Few agencies also conduct stakeholders meetings to share the findings. Very few agencies posted the reports on their website and some have bilateral discussions with the concerned partners. One organization reported that site visits are also done to share the findings. Similar ways of sharing the evaluation reports and findings even with MRE was noted, especially in Bhutan.

3.8 ENSURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Ideas were sought from the participants regarding how to ensure the implementation of evaluation recommendations. They were expected to agree or disagree on the given four options. In addition, they were invited to put new options. The most prominently chosen option was the development of evaluative culture including learning at organisation level. All three countries rated it the highest. The second highest was promoting activities for enhancing organizational ownership, which was placed second by Bhutan but third by Nepal and fourth by Bangladesh respondents. The third was the improving technical capacity of the staff, whereas the fourth was mandatory provision in policy.

Figure 4: Suggested measures to ensure implementation of recommendations (%)
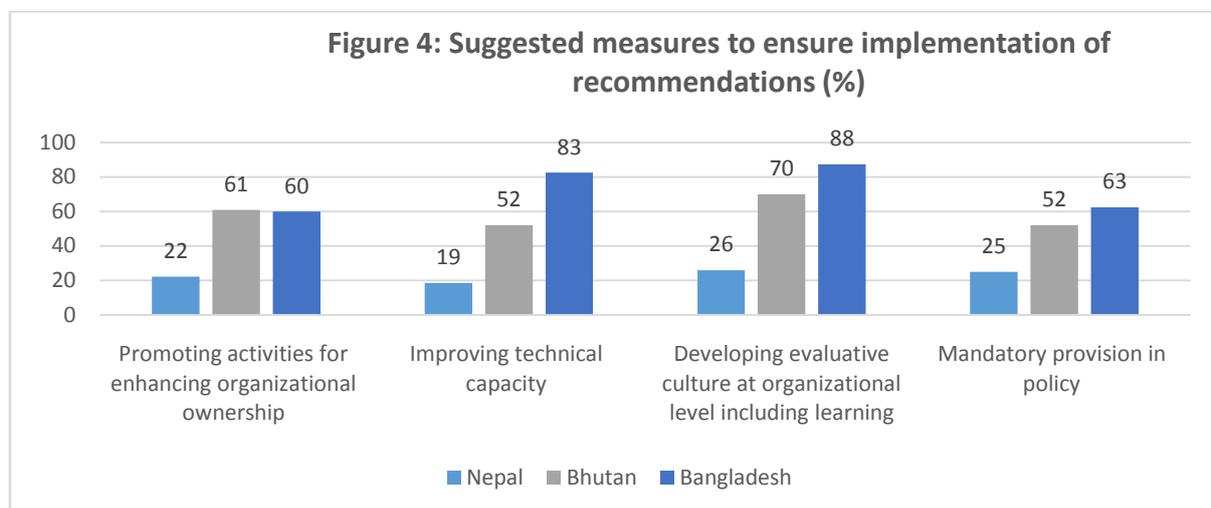
Developing the evaluative culture is emphasised by I/NGOs, donors and government as most important attributes that enhances the implementation of recommendations. For UN, it is important but more important is improving technical capacity, especially in Bangladesh. Policy mandate is number one attributes for government in both Nepal and Bangladesh. This was also kept number one by the donors in Nepal but for others it is not as important as evaluative culture and technical capacity as well as the ownership. Promoting activities for organisational ownership is third important areas considered by respondents as an important area for ensuring implementation of recommendation in Nepal and Bangladesh by many sectors. In addition to the above, a suggestion also came that programme people should be informed of evaluations that is being conducted which clearly indicated miscommunication and gaps between valuations that are conducted/commissioned in silos.

Figure 5: Ensuring Implementation of Recommendations (%)
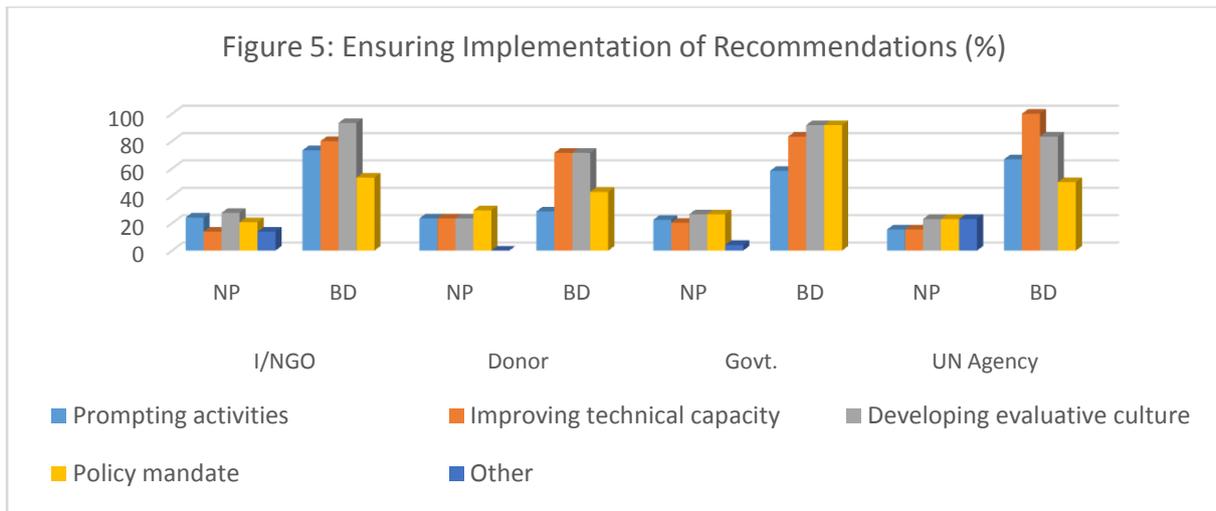
The above information call for more awareness and advocacy of commissioning or conducting high quality evaluations with standardized MRE system in place, given all options mentioned in the questionnaire as well as specified by respondents are very critical to ensure that evaluation recommendations are implemented.

3.9 USE OF EVALUATION IN DECISION-MAKING

In Nepal, only 14.86% of the evaluations were reported to have used in decision making when all evaluations conducted and all evaluation used in decision-making including the evaluations by government, I/NGOs, donor and UN agencies were considered. The significant difference is found with the government between the number of evaluations conducted and used for decision-making. The government has conducted as many as 1086 evaluations in the five year period from 2009 to 2013 but only 40 (3.68%) were used in decision-making. The main reason, as already explained, was that conducting evaluation of INGOs was made mandatory by the Social Welfare Council under the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, whereas reviewing the evaluation, making MRE plan, follow up actin plan and use of evaluation in decision making were not made mandatory. When the things are not made mandatory, government agencies rarely execute. Other agencies made use of about 54% of the evaluation ranging from 47.37% by UN agencies and almost 67% by I/NGOs.

In Bhutan, in general, 53% of the evaluations were used in some sort of decision-making ranging from 45% by INGO/NGO/Private Sector to almost 85% by donors. Similarly, UN agencies use 79% of the evaluation in making decision and government did so in the last five year for about 48% of the evaluation. Why agencies in Bhutan, including the government used more percentage of evaluation in decision-making compared to Nepal is the area of further investigation.

In case of Bangladesh, it was found that 47% of the evaluations were used in decision making ranging from 31% by donors to 61% by UN agencies. Government is found to have used them at 50% and I/NGOs 46%. Of the total responding organizations/ departments, 25% did not use any evaluation report for decision-making process.

FIGURE 6: USE OF EVALAUTIONS IN DECISION-MAKING (%)
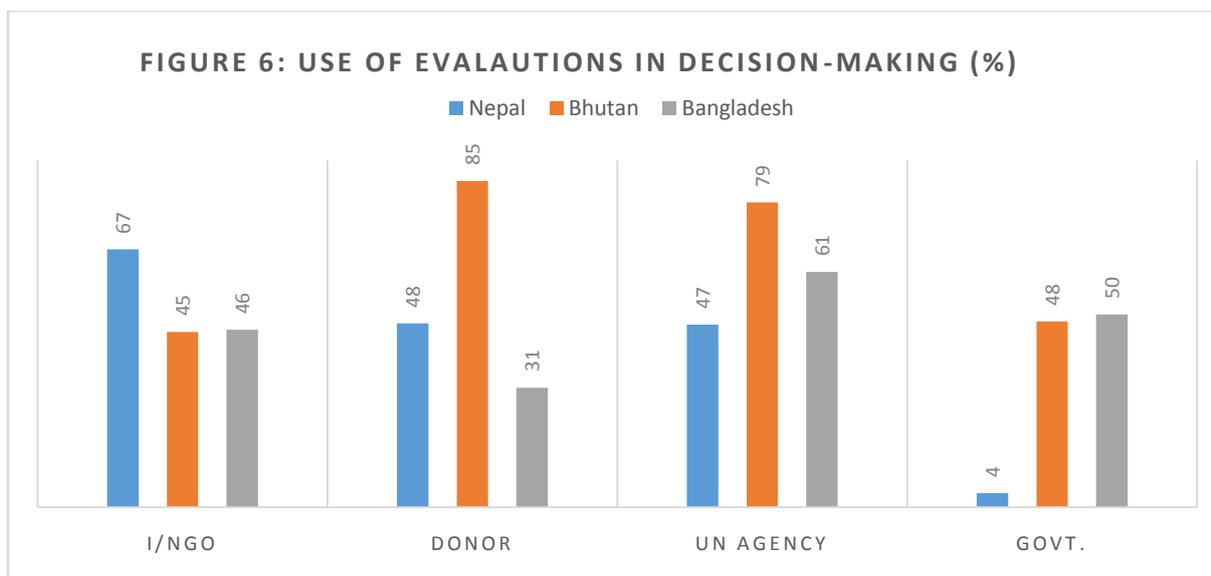
One of the distinct findings in the use of evaluation in these three countries is that nearly one-half of the evaluation conducted are used even by the government whereas, in case of Nepal it is only 3.68%. The reason being the mandatory arrangement for conducting evaluation made by the Social Welfare Council whereas no mandatory arrangement for using them for decision making.

The reasons for use of evaluation were cited as creating evaluative culture, developing capacity of users on evaluation, and promoting activities for organisational ownership in addition to mandatory provision in evaluation policy. Likewise, participatory approach to evaluation, unbiased and quality evaluation report written in non-technical language, orientation to policy makers on the integration of evaluation finding into forthcoming project and sharing evaluation and MRE plan to different stakeholders are other factors promoting evaluation use.

3.10 INTEGRATING EVALUATION FINDINGS IN DECISION MAKING AND NEW PROJECT DESIGN

Respondents were asked to cite examples of integration of evaluation findings in the decision making process including the use of the findings in new project design.

The Nepal respondents told that the integration is done during the project appraisal stage of the new project. In some cases, terminal evaluation findings were used to improve in project design. For instance, in health sector NHSP- III used evaluation recommendations of NHSP- II. In infrastructure, integration was done through consultation with stakeholders involved in the project design. For instance, Eastern section's Mid-term Evaluation recommendations used for Western section of Mid-hill highways in Nepal.

In Bhutan, integration is usually done at the implementation stage through prescribed protocol specified in the project document. It is done through consultation with stakeholders involved in the project design. The findings from the mid-term evaluation were used in the design of the projects for 2014-2018.

In Bangladesh, IMED evaluation report is essential for preparing the same nature of project. All recommendations from IMED evaluations are strictly followed for constructing same nature of new projects. It is made mandatory that recommendations from MTR are addressed in restructuring of the programme or project; whereas, findings of end evaluation are considered in designing a new project. Government had done only one end evaluation and the lesson learned from this project were addressed in new three on-going projects.

3.11 MRE INDEX

Based on the information provided above, MRE index of three countries is constructed. As said earlier, the MRE index has three dimensions and 11 indicators. The three dimensions are given equal weight. The value of each dimension is then divided equally to the respective indicators under the dimension. For example highest value of the index is 1.000. Each dimension thus has value of 0.333. This value is distributed equally to 2 indicators for dimension 1 (enabling environment), 3 indicators for dimension 2 (managerial capacity) and 6 indicators for dimension 3 (technical parameter). Some indicators have sub-indicators. In such a case, the related sub-indicators are weighted either equally such as sharing of evaluation report and MRE plan with stakeholders (donor, partners, grassroots beneficiaries and government agencies) or given full value when it has fully adequate fund. If the fund is partially adequate, the one-half of the value is given to that sub-indicator.

The MRE index of different stakeholders in the respective countries is provided below in Table[3]. It shows that donors and UN agencies have relatively higher MRE index value compared to I/NGOs and government. However, the case is different in case of Bangladesh where government has higher index value than the UN. It is because the IMED there has a mandate for reviewing the conducted evaluation, whereas in other countries, it is yet to be made mandatory within the government system.

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[3] There are 3 rows kept empty as these indicators were added by the MRE index workshop which was held after the data collection and country reports were completed.

Table 14. MRE index of agencies and countries

Dimension	Indicator	Score	Nepal				Bhutan				Bangladesh			
			I/NGO	Donor	UN	Government	I/NGO	Donor	UN	Government	I/NGO	Donor	UN	Government
1. Enabling Environment (Score = 0.333)	i) Presence of evaluation policy	0.00 to 0.167	0.15	0.167	0.167	0.134	0.042	0.1	0.167	0	0.122	0.143	0.056	0.07
	ii) Presence of MRE policy	0.00 to 0.167	0.067	0.167	0.134	0.078	0.028	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0.143	0.139	0.111
2. Managerial capacity (Score = 0.333)	i) Focal point for evaluation	0.00 to 0.111												
	ii) Fund allocation for MRE	0.00 to 0.111	0.004	0.006	0.012	0	0.056	0.078	0.045	0.03	0.023	0.072	0.009	0.06
	iii) Tracking system on the MRE action plan	0.00 to 0.111												
3. Technical parameter (Score = 0.333)	i) No. of evaluation reviewed/ No. of evaluation conducted (N)	0.00 to 0.056	0.033	0.038	0.055	0.002	0.03	0.022	0.04	0.046	0.056	0.039	0.047	0.053
	ii) No. of action plan made/N	0.00 to 0.056	0.009	0.029	0.031	0.001	0.039	0.047	0.043	0.012	0.009	0.018	0.028	0.034
	iii) No. of action plan implemented/N	0.00 to 0.056												
	iv) No. of evaluation shared with different type of stakeholders/N	0.00 to 0.056	0.001	0.005	0.021	0.045	0.002	0.008	0.009	0.003	0.014	0.03	0.011	0.009
	v) No. of MRE plan shared with different type of stakeholders/N	0.00 to 0.056	0.003	0.012	0.038	0	0.001	0.004	0.001	0	0.006	0.014	0.001	0.002
	vi) No. of evaluation with MRE plan shared with different type of stakeholders/N	0.00 to 0.056	0.037	0.027	0.027	0.002	0.025	0.056	0.044	0.027	0.026	0.018	0.028	0.034
MRE Index			0.304	0.451	0.485	0.262	0.223	0.415	0.449	0.118	0.356	0.477	0.319	0.373
MRE Index--country level			0.375				0.301				0.381			

4. Good Practices and Lessons Learnt

4.1 Good Practices

Countries are in the process of creating enabling environment through the development of M&E guidelines in Nepal by the National Planning Commission; evaluation policy in Bhutan by the Grass National Happiness Commission; and review of evaluation findings in Bangladesh by the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Department. These initiatives are found helpful in bringing MRE into practice as they included MRE as a part of the overall M&E system.

The donors and UN agencies and to some extent the INGOs have mandatory role to review the completed evaluation, prepare management response plan and follow up activities. They have developed and used specific template. The procedures used by these agencies have been the learning tools for government agencies. The national M&E guidelines of Nepal, for example, has developed almost the similar procedures and made it mandatory.

IMED in Bangladesh has laid emphasis on the review of conducted evaluations which could be a step toward preparing MRE plan.

4.2 Lessons Learnt

Limited capacity to conduct evaluations both in terms of human as well as financial resources is also one of the reasons that hinder the conduct of evaluations.

Having evaluation policies and guidelines within agencies are critical to ensuring that agencies conduct evaluations as well as have MRE systems in place. This is also directly linked to developing action plan to follow up on the evaluation recommendations.

It was found that there was large gap in understanding the importance of using evaluations for development. As rightly reported by the respondents, a lot needs to be done to close the gaps in demand and supply of the evaluation functions within the country and across the agencies.

In course of this MRE study it was realized that many respondents particularly from the government ministries could not quite understand the questionnaire despite efforts made through mandatory pre-survey briefing largely due to low level of awareness and their concerns on evaluation use.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 CONCLUSION

Though MRE has been an area of practice with donors and UN system and, to some extent, with INGOs, it is a new concept for government and local NGOs. The M&E leaderships in these countries have recently realised the importance of MRE in decision-making process and have accordingly incorporated it in their new national M&E framework/guidelines and policies. These policies and framework/guidelines are important elements for creating enabling environment for MRE and use of evaluation information in decision-making.

Capacity of agencies to prepare MRE plan and implement has been a challenge to all stakeholders studied. More crucial is the financial constraints for governments and local NGOs to prepare and implement MRE. There is rarely any fund allocated for the implementation of MRE plan with any of

these agencies. Not only the financial resources, the government agencies and local NGOs are also constrained with the human resources, though it is not a case with UN agencies, donor and INGOs.

Grassroots beneficiaries are neglected stakeholders of almost all agencies under study, in terms of sharing the evaluation and the MRE plan. Some stakeholders belonging to I/NGO/private sectors, however, do share such information with them but insignificantly. Not sharing evaluation and MRE plan can be considered as violation of the human rights issues, particularly the right to information of these beneficiaries.

The MRE index developed during the course of this study has been found useful in indicating the MRE status of agencies and countries. The three dimensional index with 11 indicators has created a base for discussion and multi-location testing in other countries for further improvement.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

As the agencies respond to the clauses that are mandatory than the clauses that are optional, it is important that evaluation policy, which also include MRE as an integral part, must be developed and enforced. This should be supported with proper guidelines that include also the necessary formats and templates and procedure for filling it.VOPEs in the respective countries should facilitate government to prepare evaluation policies and guidelines making MRE as an integral part of evaluation.

As resources are pre-requisites for the implementation MRE plan, provision for fund allocation for making the MRE plan and implementation should be tailored with the evaluation funds. This should be done during the planning for evaluations, where respective agencies need to ensure that evaluations are properly planned and budgeted for. Evaluability assessment must be done to ensure that evaluations are of high quality and adequately financed.

The study found that the biggest challenge was the use of evaluation for evidence-based planning and advocacy. This calls in for more awareness and educational campaigns, training and advocacy as well as lobbying activities by VOPEs so that planners can use it for evaluations and that evaluation recommendations and findings are practical and based only on the evidence collected during the study.

Since government agencies are constraint with technical capacity to prepare and implement MRE action plan, VOPEs should actively be engaged in facilitating these agencies in encouraging them on the way to building their capacity, advocating for creating enabling environment, and promoting MRE in order to enhance the use of evaluation in decision-making.

MRE index developed here serves as the base for further work on it. Therefore, action research should further be carried out by VOPEs considering the rigor of the methodology including sample size, parameters, and dimensions with an aim of refining the MRE index for global application.

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Annex-1: Method to Calculate MRE Index

1.1.   Presence of evaluation policy: Divide total number of agencies having evaluation policy by total number of agencies and multiply by 0.167.

1.2.   Divide total number of agencies having MRE policy by total number of agencies and multiply by 0.167.

2.1   Focal point for evaluation: Give full score of 0.111, if the focal person is given only the work related to evaluation; give 0.056 (half marks of 0.111), if the focal person is assigned duties also for other activities in addition to evaluation; give '0' score if no focal person is assigned for evaluation.

2.2   Fund allocation for MRE: Give full score (0.111), if allocated fund is fully adequate; give 0.056 if the allocated fund is partially adequate; give '0', if no fund is allocated for MRE.

2.3   Tracking system on the MRE action plan: Give full score (0.111) if tracking system is there and it is brought into operation; give 0.056, if tracking system is developed but no tracking is done; give '0', if no tracking system is developed.

3.1   Divide number of evaluation reviewed by number of evaluation conducted and multiply by 0.056

3.2   Divide number of action plan made for reviewed evaluation by number of evaluation conducted and multiply by 0.056

3.3   Divide number of action plan implemented by number of evaluation conducted and multiply by 0.056

3.4   Get average score of four types of stakeholders (donor, partner, grassroots beneficiaries and government) to whom the evaluation was shared and divide it by number of evaluation conducted and multiply by 0.056

3.5   Get average score of four types of stakeholders (donor, partner, grassroots beneficiaries and government) to whom the MRE plan was shared and divide it by number of evaluation conducted and multiply by 0.056

3.6   Divide number of evaluation used for decision making by number of evaluation conducted and multiply by 0.056

MRE index: Sum values from 1.1 to 3.6 of each column for the MRE index of particular category of stakeholders; get average score of all four types of stakeholders (I/NGO, donor, UN agencies and government) for country MRE index.

Annex-2: Questionnaire

Community of Evaluators-Nepal

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO EVALUATION (MRE) STUDY
2014QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of the organization:

Name of the informant: Designation:

Email and phone:

Sector: Government/ Civil Society/ UN agency/ Donor   Date:

1. Does your organization conduct/commission evaluations?
   (a) Yes/No
   (b) If no, provide reasons

2. Does your organization have evaluation policy/framework/guidelines?   Yes/No
   (a) If yes, please describe and share the evaluation policy/framework/guidelines
   (b) If no, provide reasons for not having these

3. Does your organization have policy/strategy/guidelines for management response to evaluation (MRE)?   Yes/No
   (a) If yes, please describe the process
   (b) If no, provide reasons

4. Does your organization review evaluations that have been completed?   Yes/No
   (a) If yes, please describe the process of review
   (b) If no, provide reasons

5. Does your organisation have a specific template to review the evaluation?   Yes/No
   (a) If yes, provide the template
   (b) If no, give reason

6. How many evaluations has your organisation conducted/commissioned in the last 5 years (2009-2013)?Provide information as per the following table:

Type of evaluation	No. of evaluations conducted/commissioned, from 2009 to 2013
Mid-term	
Final/Terminal/End	
Impact	

7. How many of those evaluations completed (final report received) have been reviewed in the last 5 years (2009-2013)?Provide information as per the following table:

Type of evaluation	No. of completed evaluation reviewed, from 2009 to 2013
Mid-term	
Final/Terminal/End	
Impact	

8. Is there any process for implementing the accepted findings/recommendations of the completed evaluations?
Yes / No

If yes, do you make an action plan for implementing the accepted recommendation? Please provide the template for the action plan and respond to question 8(a)?

If you don't make action plans, please go to question 8(b)?

8(a)If you have action plans to implement recommendations, please fill the following table:

Type of evaluation	No. of evaluations, from 2009 to 2013	No. of evaluations with Action Plans , from 2009 to 2013
Mid-term		
Final/Terminal/End		
Impact		

If particular type of evaluation has more percentage of action plan made than other type of evaluation, please provide reasons:
  i.
  ii.

8(b) If there is no action plan; please provide reasons.Please tick all that applies to you.
  (i)   Inadequate technical skills
  (ii)   Financial constraints
  (iii)   Impractical evaluation recommendations
  (iv)   No importance given to evaluation
  (v)   Inadequate understanding of evaluation by leadership
  (vi)   Evaluation conducted as donor requirement
  (vii) Less relevant to make decisions
  (viii) Management resistant to evaluation findings/recommendations
  (ix)   Other reasons (Specify)
  (x)   Other reasons (Specify)
  (xi)   Other reasons (Specify)

9. What 3 valueMRE may add to your organization?

  (i)
  (ii)
  (iii)

10. What 3 disadvantages will make your organization avoiding MRE?

  (i)
  (ii)
  (iii)

11. Do you have fund allocation system and/or adequate funds for implementation of MRE action plan?
   (a) Fully adequate
   (b) Partially adequate
   (c) Not available

12. (a) Please provide information as per the following table:

Type of stakeholder	No. of completed evaluation (reports) shared with stakeholders in last 5 years (2009-2013)	No. of MRE plan shared with stakeholders in last 5 years (2009-2013)
Donor		
Partner organisation		
Grassroots beneficiaries		
Related government line agencies		
Other (Specify)		

   (b) What are the mechanisms used to share evaluation recommendations and MRE plan with stakeholders? Example could be workshop/meeting, sharing through email, etc

	Mechanisms (Process) used to share evaluation recommendations with stakeholders	Mechanisms (Process) used to share MRE plan with stakeholders
1		
2		
3		

   i. Please provide reasons for not sharing evaluation recommendations with particular type of stakeholders, if applicable
   ii. Please provide reasons for not sharing MRE plans with particular type of stakeholders, if applicable

13. What should be done to ensure the implementation of evaluation recommendations?You can choose multiple options.
   (a) Promoting activities for enhancing organizational ownership
   (b) Improving technical capacity
   (c) Developing evaluative culture at organizational level including learning
   (d) Mandatory provision in policy
   (e) Other (Specify)
   (f) Other (Specify)
   (g) Other (Specify)

14. How many evaluations have been used for decision-making in the last five years (2009-2013)? Please provide some examples.

15. How do you integrate evaluation findings in new project design/phase? Please describe briefly.

16. What suggestions do you provide to improve the use of evaluation findings/ recommendations?
    (a) Demand side suggestions
         (i)
         (ii)
         (iii)

    (b) Supply side suggestion
         (i)
         (ii)
         (iii)