

SESSION PLAN

4th NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (NCMEL) 2026

SN	SESSION BRIEF	SPEAKERS
DAY 1		
1.	<p>Session 1: Advancing Evaluation Frameworks and Methods: Global Lessons on bridging Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence.</p>	<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Emmanuel Jimenez, Director General, Independent Evaluation Department at Asian Development Bank • Ms. Shobhini Mukerji, Executive Director, J-PAL South Asia • Mr. Ashwani K. Muthoo, Director General, Independent Evaluation Office, New Development Bank • Ms. Megan Grace Kennedy-Chouane, Head of Evaluation Unit, OECD Development Co-operation Directorate • Ms. Ashley Wax, Regional Evaluation Advisor, UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office <p>Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Nidhi Chhibber, CEO, NITI Aayog & DG DMEQ
	<p>Session Outline: This session will delve into global experiences and cross-country practices in strengthening evaluation systems, with a focus on their relevance to diverse national contexts. The session aims to explore how evaluation can be better aligned with policy and decision-making cycles, ensuring that evidence is timely, relevant, and actionable. It will further examine the institutional mechanisms required to embed evaluation within governance structures, including national evaluation frameworks, dedicated units, and integrated data systems. Building on this, the discussion will highlight approaches to strengthening data ecosystems and promoting the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to generate context-rich insights. The session will also seek to identify practical strategies for enhancing the uptake of evaluation findings to support mid-course corrections, improve accountability, and drive policy effectiveness. In doing so, it will facilitate cross-country learning on institutionalising evaluation within decision-making processes and fostering a culture of evidence based policy making.</p>	

2.

Session 2: Integrating AI and Data Sciences in Evaluation Design

Session Outline: As digital ecosystems grow and governments collect more data than ever before, evaluation is entering a new phase that is being shaped by artificial intelligence and advanced data science. This session will look at how tools like machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics are being used to improve evidence generation and policy learning. It will look at how using real-time administrative data, and automated text analysis can make monitoring and impact assessment better. The conversation will also cover data governance, algorithmic bias, and ethical safeguards to make sure that new technologies help people do evaluations in a responsible way.

Speakers:

- **Dr. Prachi Karkhanis**, Associate Director of the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) vertical, Wadhvani AI
- **Ms. Astha Kapoor**, Co-Founder, Aapti Institute
- **Dr. G Suresh Reddy**, Lead, Strategic Information, I-Tech India
- **Mr. Gaurav Godhwani**, Founder - CivicDataLab

Moderator:

- **Dr. Abinash Dash**, Director, DMEO, NITI Aayog

3

Session 3: Innovations in M&E and Adaptive M&E Systems

Session Outline: In an era marked by climate change, economic instability, health emergencies, and geopolitical conflicts, the traditional monitoring and evaluation approaches often struggle to keep pace with the rapidly changing contexts. Governments and Institutions around the world now require innovative and adaptive M&E systems that can produce timely evidence to guide responsive decision-making in unforeseen circumstances. This session will explore how innovation in M&E such as real-time data systems, adaptive evaluation systems, and predictive analytics can reshape governance during a polycrisis situation. By bringing together policymakers, development partners, and academic experts, the discussion will highlight how these tools enhance institutional capacity to improve the turn-around-time (TAT) in policy response. Ultimately, the session will demonstrate how adaptive M&E can transform crisis management into a platform for innovation and adaptation in M&E approaches.

Speaker:

- **Ms. Megan Grace Kennedy-Chouane**, Head of Evaluation Unit, OECD Development Co-operation Directorate
- **Mr. Rajib Nandi**, Co-founder, ECOI
- **Mr. Shyam Singh**, Professor, Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA), Tribhuvan Sahkari University
- **Mr. Amil Epa, President**, Sri Lanka Evaluation Association (SLEVA)
- **Mr. Sanjay Kumar**, Population Dynamics and Research Specialist, UNFPA

Moderator:

- **Shri. Antony Cyriac**, Economic Adviser, MoSPI

DAY 2

4. **Session 4: Global Perspectives on M&E**

Session Outline: The session on Global Perspectives on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will feature brief presentation(s) from all the speakers followed by an interactive Q&A with the audience. This session comprises representatives from Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and country representatives from M&E offices of select countries. It will provide insights into diverse evaluation systems, processes, and institutional practices across counties and regions. The discussion will highlight common challenges, innovations, and lessons learned in strengthening evidence-based policymaking.

Speakers:

- **Sh. Dhrijesh Kumar Tiwari**, Joint Secretary, DMEO, NITI Aayog
- **Dr. Emmanuel Jimenez**, Director General, Independent Evaluation Department at Asian Development Bank
- **Ms. Andrea M. Wojnar**, Resident Representative, India and Country Director, Bhutan, UNFPA.
- **Ms. Esther Kagawa**, Regional Evaluation Advisor, UNICEF South Asia

Chair:

- **Sh. Dhrijesh Kumar Tiwari**, Joint Secretary, DMEO, NITI Aayog

5. **Session 5 : Bridging Borders through Evaluation: NDB and its Partners Advancing Cross-Country Learning and Collaboration**

Session Outline: As countries navigate increasingly complex development challenges, the need for effective cross-country learning has become more critical. Governments and development institutions are seeking to adapt proven approaches, replicate successful interventions, and strengthen policy frameworks by learning from international experience. However, translating lessons across contexts remains a challenge due to differences in institutional capacities, governance systems, and socio-economic conditions.

Speakers:

- **Mr. Henrique Pissaia**, Principal Professional, Independent Evaluation Office, New Development Bank
- **Mr. Eskender Zeleke**, Head of Independent Evaluation at Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Complaints-resolution, Evaluation, and Integrity Unit (CEIU)

Evaluation plays a central role in addressing this challenge by generating credible, evidence-based insights that can inform decision-making beyond national boundaries. Multilateral development banks, including the NDB and its partners, have accumulated substantial evaluation knowledge across sectors and geographies. These insights provide a strong foundation for cross-country learning, South-South cooperation, and the strengthening of national evaluation systems.

By bringing together perspectives from MDBs, government institutions, and academia, this session will explore how evaluation can serve as a bridge for knowledge exchange, enabling countries to learn from each other while adapting solutions to their local contexts. It will also examine how institutional partnerships can be strengthened to promote systematic learning and collaboration across borders.

- **Ms. Mona Fetouh Saleh**, Deputy Director, Independent Office of Evaluation, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- **Ms. Edeshri Moodley**, Head of Evaluations, Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)

Moderator:

- **Ms. Fariha Ahmed**, Evaluation Partnerships Specialist, Independent Evaluation Office, NDB

6.

Session 6: Monitoring & Evaluation in Indian States/UTs – Widening and Deepening Engagement

Session Outline: DMEO, NITI Aayog under State Support Mission (SSM) supports various state governments in establishing NITI like body at the State level including M&E units housed in such bodies. The session will highlight existing and potential Centre-State collaboration that can be deepened by institutionalizing such M&E wings and a structured and regular engagement plan between Central and State level M&E bodies to continue the bi-directional flow of learnings in this sphere. The session will also discuss initiatives taken by the DMEO to collaborate with Central and State Universities across Indian states and UTs in conducting short term capacity building exercises. This session will reflect on lessons from recent rounds in which quick assessment of some of the GoI schemes were undertaken and discuss the transition toward a decentralized evaluation. The session will explore how robust state and academic institutions can anchor evidence generation, capacity building, and policy learning within States/UTs. Ultimately, the conversation will explore how widening and deepening engagement of central and state-level ecosystems can contribute to a more evidence-driven pathway toward Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

Speakers:

- **Shri Rajshekhar Joshi**, Former Vice Chairman of the SETU Aayog
- **Dr. Sampath Kumar**, Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner, Government of Meghalaya
- **Dr. K Subramaniam**, Member – State Institution for Transformation, Chhattisgarh
- **Prof. Vinod Mishra**, Associate Professor, School of Public Policy and Governance, TISS, Hyderabad
- **Shri Ashish Sahu**, Director & Head, Manav Rachna Center for Capacity Building & Consultancy

Moderator:

- **Dr. Radha Ashrit**, Deputy Director General, MoSPI



NITI Aayog



DEVELOPMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION OFFICE