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**UTILIZATION OF EVALUATION  
FINDINGS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND  
LAND REFORM**

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**By**

**Mmakgomo Anna Tshatsinde**

**A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management,  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Evaluations are a critical element of the South African National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEF). This study evaluates the utilization of the evaluation findings in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). It is based on the three (3) completed evaluation studies undertaken by the department in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency under the NEF. The premise of this study is that evaluations are only useful if they are utilized. Presently, there is very little evidence that the findings from these evaluations completed in 2012 are effectively utilized. The objective of this research was therefore to investigate factors that led to under-utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR. The study also investigated trends in utilization of evaluation findings in the department and suggests strategies to improve utilization for effective governance.

A qualitative strategy was chosen as the research paradigm that would provide the rich in-depth insight into the subject matter. A meta-evaluation using document analysis research design applying Patton's Framework for Utilization Focused Evaluations (UFE) was undertaken. This study is grounded in theory from literature reviewed. A purposive sampling method was utilized as well as focus groups to supplement the meta-evaluation in order to establish the views and perceptions of the evaluation users. In-depth interviews and questionnaire responses were sort from the sample of users who are mostly the management of the department and the programmes' officials who were the target population. This approach provided an opportunity for triangulation for data validation, and improved reliability and validity of the study.

A considerable number of critical factors that led to underutilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR were identified. It emerged that the evaluation function was not institutionalised; there was a lack of ownership and accountability, poor planning, lack of understanding of the usefulness of evaluations, as well as lack of systematic implementation of the evaluation findings. Trends in the utilization of evaluation findings were identified in strategic planning process, policy revisions, budget allocations and re-prioritisation, determining projects and programmes outcomes or impacts as well as in strengthening the department delivery capacity. Various strategies for consideration to further improve utilization were identified as amongst others, institutionalisation of the evaluation function in the department processes, communication of the findings, knowledge transfer, systematic implementation of recommendations, improvement of dissemination and diffusion of evaluation findings.

In conclusion, the study made recommendations to DRDLR, DPME and the evaluation fraternity at large, on how to ensure effective utilization of evaluation findings. It recommends amongst others the professionalization and recognition of M&E. as a profession, evaluations to be formally institutionalized in the institutions governance structures and decision making bodies, stakeholder's participation and role clarification, strengthening capacity of oversight institutions to support effective utilization of evaluations, managerial capacity building and planning evaluations for utilization of results.

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management in the field of Field of Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation (MM M&E) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

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**Mmakgomo Anna Tshatsinde**

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*Ke Ngwaga wa Tshidi 'a Moraswi 'a Phaahla! Ke Maleshidi la Sehleng!  
Ngwana wa Segooa sa Mmanape! Setlogolo sa Dikolobe!*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AFREA	African Evaluation Association
AGSA	Auditor General of South Africa
APP	Annual Performance Plan
CD	Chief Director
CLCC	Chief Land Claim Commissioner
CSS	Corporate Support Services
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
CRLR	Commission of Restitution of Land Rights
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
DG	Director General
DDG	Deputy Director General
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
EMC	Executive Management Committee
GWM&E	Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation
MEC	Member of Executive Council
MIS	Management Information Services
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMS	Middle Management Services
NARYSEC	National Rural Youth Services Corps
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-Operation and Development
PPM	Programme Performance Monitoring
PSSC	Provincial Shared Services Centres
RADP	Recapitalization and Development Programme
RECAP	Recapitalization and Development Programme
RBM	Results-Based Management
SAMEA	South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association
SDC	Service Delivery Co-ordinator
SMC	Strategic Management Committee
SMS	Senior Management Services
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UFE	Utilization Focused Evaluation

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research evaluates the utilization of evaluations in the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) hereinafter referred to as the department, in the Republic of South Africa. A brief background to the department is provided to contextualise the study. A Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation system is introduced, specifically the evaluation practices from the global, regional and the local context. The National Evaluation Framework is outlined as prescribed by the South African government's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system as well as how evaluations are used in the department for decision-making purposes.

This section further outlines the problem statement, the purpose of the research, the research questions and the justification for the study. It concludes with the structure of the report and provides a synopsis of all chapters of the research report.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND**

#### ***1.2.1 The National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR)***

The department was established in 2009 in an effort to accelerate the land reform process and the development of the rural areas. It was established as a National Entity by Act of Parliament. Prior to 2009 but after 1994 the department was known as Land Affairs responsible for land reform, land administration and land restitution. Later, the mandate of Agriculture and

Forestry was added as its responsibility. The current mandate of the department is rural development, land reform and agrarian transformation. This mandate is amongst the five (5) key priorities identified by the South African government for accelerating development (DRDLR, 2010). The vision set by the department is to create future rural areas of Vibrant, Equitable and Sustainable Rural Communities. This vision is also Outcome 7 of the then 12, but now 14, outcomes set to be achieved by the South African Government (DRDLR, 2010).

There are five (5) programmes that constitute the department namely Administration, Geo-Spatial and Cadastral Services, Rural Development, Land Reform, and Restitution. The Minister is the political head and the Director General is the Accounting Officer assisted by nine (9) Deputy Directors General as heads of Branches. The Corporate Support Services (CSS) Branch provides the support functions for the department and is where the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) function resides. The department has offices that mirror the head office in all nine (9) provinces to facilitate service delivery through the rural development programme comprised of the infrastructure development programme and rural enterprise and industrial development, as well as restitution and land reform, development and administration programme (DRDLR, 2011).

### ***1.2.2 Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation***

#### **1.2.2.1 Global Monitoring and Evaluation Best Practices**

From the global perspective, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has spearheaded the development and practice of monitoring and evaluation. The organisation has instilled best practice in evaluations and it has developed norms and standards for evaluators and how the evaluation processes are undertaken. The World Bank's Evaluation Capacity Development assists with the capacity building

for sound governance in many countries through building of monitoring and evaluation systems. According to Schacter (2000), the aim of these institutions is to build a transparent performance management culture that supports management and policy making efforts of governments. The Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank seeks to identify and develop good-practice approaches in countries and share with others (Schacter, 2000).

Internationally there are governments that have built an intensive culture of utilization of monitoring and evaluation systems in both the developed and the developing economies. These include, amongst others, BEST practice in the United Kingdom, Colombia, United States of America, Chile and Australia (Mackey, 2007:15). For consistency, there are common definitions that have been adopted in the field of Monitoring and Evaluation.

What is a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation system? How is it different from other public management systems? According to Kusek and Rist (2004:1) and Shephard (2011:1), results-based monitoring and evaluation can be defined as a specialised public management system, a tool that is used by governments as well as many public entities to measure and track performance in their performance management system. Performance is tracked against set targets during implementation of projects, programmes and various other initiatives, in order to assess the progress made. The system was derived from the Results-Based Management approach that emphasizes the achievement of results which are measured in terms of the results-chain process that consists of outputs (the deliverable), outcomes (being the effect) and impacts representing the consequences of the whole results-chain approach (UNDG, 2010). According to Shephard (2011), this approach is a crucial building block for an efficient and effective performance management system with the aim of



tracking and assessing performance in order to demonstrate outcomes and development impacts.

In order for one to understand the Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation terms monitoring and evaluation need to be defined. Monitoring is defined as a managerial function that tracks performance on a continuous basis. It uses SMART (Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound) indicators as the measuring and tracking devices. It measures efficiency of implementation of the development initiatives and assess of progress. It provides the mechanism that incorporate an early warning system (Briedenhann and Butt, 2005; Kusek and Rist, 2004:227; OECD, 2002 and 2010). An evaluation, on the other hand, is a systematic periodic assessment of an intervention to determine its value or worth and assess the relevance of an initiative (Briedenhann and Butt, 2005; Blake and Ottoson, 2009; Crawford and Bryce, 2003; Kusek and Rist, 2004:225). The main purpose of an evaluation is to inform, assess efficiencies, and influence development initiatives toward achieving intended outcomes and impacts. It also assesses the effectiveness and sustainability of the development initiatives (Morra-Ima and Rist, 2009; Crawford and Bryce, 2003; Patton, 1997).

Utilization is another terminology that features prominently in this Results Based Management philosophy. The term utilization emanates from the words 'use' and 'usefulness'. If something is useful it is an indication that it is of value. Utility or use is crucial in Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation. It indicates the inherent value and usefulness of the approach. In the context of evaluation, there is a multiple understanding of use and it can be qualified in a variety of ways, amongst others as conceptual use, symbolic use and legitimate use (Tochot, Jupeng and Mamee, 2012). Blake and Ottoson (2009) as well as Patton (1997) identify three areas of use: being to judge merit or worth, to improve programmes, and to generate knowledge (Williams, 2010).

In most developed economies, successful governments have institutionalised monitoring and evaluation in their governance processes in order to enhance effectiveness and improve accountability. Utilization of monitoring and evaluation information, including evaluation findings, is central to sound governance, evidence-based policy making, performance budgeting, policy development, management and accountability.

### **1.2.2.2 African Continent Evaluation Practices**

In the African continent, best practice in evaluations is spearheaded by the African Evaluation Association (AFREA). Currently the countries that are known to be involved with impact evaluations are Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, and Congo, Senegal and *Ethiopia* (3ie, 2014). According to Porter (2013) of Center of Learning on Evaluation and Results, monitoring and evaluation in Africa is new and all countries are in a formative stage of the M&E processes. Ten (10) diagnostic evaluations were conducted for 10 countries in 2013 (Porter, 2013). Most countries are involved with monitoring rather than comprehensive Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation. The dominance of monitoring is spearheaded by donor demand-led monitoring and evaluation systems. South Africa, Uganda and Benin are the leaders with increasing demand for evidence generated from monitoring and evaluation systems through the government-led evaluation systems. However, the systems in these countries are not yet conceptualised within comprehensive results-based monitoring and evaluation reforms but have a donor-driven orientation (Porter and Goldman, 2013). Monitoring is still dominant over evaluation being an indication of a weak demand from decision-makers for evidence. According to Porter and Goldman (2013), this seems to be the key issue in African monitoring and evaluation systems because in Africa, the supply

and practice of M&E has been influenced by donor demand rather than respective governments.

Recently there have been changes being experienced in Africa with regard to the need for evidence-based accountability. There are increasing service delivery demands by the citizens and for the governments to account for their performance. Porter and Goldman (2013) cites service delivery protests being experienced in South Africa, changes to the presidency of the government of Senegal as well as new requirements of the Kenyan constitution as examples of civil society demanding accountability from their governments.

Governments can only know the extent of service delivery through information emanating from their monitoring and evaluation systems. Africa has very poorly developed M&E processes to monitor its development initiatives and evaluate success or failure, and thus cannot effectively inform civil society on progress and results of development programmes (Porter and Goldman, 2013).

Lack of capacity to evaluate also impedes African countries in making policies that are supported by evidence. Evidence-based policy development is critical in the developmental stage for improved service delivery. Of significance is that the demand for evidence-based decision-making is increasing in Africa. This has led to the demand for development of monitoring and evaluation systems (Porter and Goldman, 2013).

A study undertaken by Porter and Goldman (2013) on monitoring and evaluation systems of six (6) African governments revealed that government monitoring and evaluation systems in Africa operate in complex terrains. The authors infer that there are different forces at play that influence the monitoring and evaluation results, some to influence benefits appropriations by donors to their governments whilst others

genuinely use these as evidence to support service delivery improvements towards a reformed agenda. In their analysis in most countries there is no single truth and irrespective of who the decision-maker is, the evidence from the monitoring and evaluation system is required for use to assist in decision-making. According to Porter and Goldman (2013), the use and sustainability of the monitoring and evaluation results is dependent on the demand for such evidence and that demand should be endogenous from within the government rather than exogenous from external forces.

In conclusion, from this African monitoring and evaluation monitoring study, it can be deduced that monitoring is dominant and monitoring information in most countries is all that is available to use in decision-making. The danger is that monitoring tends to masquerade as evaluation. The evaluation systems are still in their infancy in Africa with even the leading countries, namely South Africa, Benin and Uganda's national evaluation systems being just three (3) years old. Burundi, Ghana and Senegal together with many other countries not part of the study are yet to develop their national evaluation systems (Porter and Goldman, 2013).

Although there is evidence of emerging demand for evaluations for evidence-based decision-making in South Africa, Benin and Uganda as well as Morocco, according to Porter and Goldman (2013) it is still too early for these countries to determine how seriously the evaluation findings are taken and utilized to influence decision-making processes.

### **1.2.2.3 Sub-Saharan Regional Evaluation Experience**

Regionally in Sub-Saharan Africa, sound governance and capacity building on national and sectoral monitoring and evaluation systems is said to be spearheaded by the Evaluation Capacity Development of the World Bank. According to Schacter (2000), in the past decade there were

no substantial achievements in monitoring and evaluation in the Sub-Saharan region. Key issues that have been identified were related to the nature of the demand for monitoring and evaluation in the region. Amongst others are issues of insufficient supply, donor-driven demand, lack of a learning culture, low level of control and accountability, personalisation of rulers of state institutions, information as well distribution of state benefits (Schacter, 2000:11).

The consequence of this situation was that in many Sub-Saharan African countries the public service is poorly managed and public servants' salaries are very low. This results in the outflow of capable personnel from the government service, leaving the public service administration with minimal capacity to design and implement the public programmes (Schacter, 2000:12).

The lessons learned by the World Bank in the previous two decades in which they provided support was that, "Good governance cannot be installed in African Countries like dams and bridges" (Schacter, 2000 :13) and that there is no blueprint approach to governance reforms. A further lesson learnt is that governance problems in Sub-Saharan countries need to be looked into from a broad perspective, political will for reforms cannot be supply-driven, local institutions should be capacitated and cognisance must be taken of external technical resources which tend to promote the over-centralized tendency of most Sub-Saharan countries (Schacter, 2000).

There are, however, a number of countries in the Sub-Saharan region that have shown positive initiatives with regard to movement towards best practice in public sector administration reforms that include monitoring and evaluation. Amongst others are Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Ghana and South Africa is the latest (Schacter, 2000; Porter and Goldman, 2013). Each country responds differently and there are different activities

incorporated under the label of evaluations; amongst others are on-going performance monitoring, real-time evaluations, ex-post evaluations, performance audits and financial audits (Schacter, 2000).

In recent years much has improved in the Sub-Saharan African region. In terms of evaluations Ethiopia is currently involved with the largest Productive Safety Net Programme, one of the largest in the region whose impact is being evaluated. There are 31 impact evaluations registered with the International Institute of Impact Evaluation (3ie) from Sub-Saharan Africa out of its database of 2,390 (3ie, 2014). The South African government including the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform is amongst those that have impact evaluations being supported by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).

#### **1.2.2.4 South African Evaluation Experience**

South Africa has joined progressive countries that have institutionalised Evaluations in their Results-Based Management systems. As part of the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System the government introduced the National Evaluation Policy Framework that was approved by the Cabinet in 2013. Furthermore, it introduced the National Evaluation Plan that is a three-year rolling plan comprising evaluations that are approved by the Cabinet for implementation. Eight (8) of the twelve (12) completed evaluations have been approved by Cabinet. The government leads and directs public sector evaluations in South Africa. There are, however, professional bodies, research institutes and universities that support the government with the capacity and professionalization of the evaluation function. One such body is the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA).

### ***1.2.3 Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation in South Africa***

In the South African Monitoring and Evaluation System, Monitoring and Evaluation forms part of the most critical performance management system. In pursuance of good governance, South Africa has joined many other countries that have adopted a results-based monitoring and evaluation system as part of its governance system of performance management. There are two major Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks that govern the function, which are explained below.

#### **1.2.3.1 Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation in South Africa**

The Policy Framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation (GWM&E) system was developed and approved by the Cabinet in 2007. This was the first policy framework on Monitoring and Evaluation, apart from various frameworks that were published on performance information management. The reason for the government of South Africa providing these guidelines was to guide the public sector on matters regarding performance monitoring and evaluation (The Presidency, 2007). The government was pursuant of the goal of improving the quality of performance information reported as well as monitoring and evaluation capacity across the country.

Furthermore in 2009, the government established a Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) specifically dealing with issues of M&E and how the function could be institutionalized in all three (3) spheres of government (DPME, 2010). The DPME has now taken over the planning from the National Treasury to align itself with the National Development Plan and it has assumed the name of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

### **1.2.3.2 South African National Evaluation Framework**

The government published the National Evaluation Policy Framework in 2013 together with the National Evaluation Plan with a number of evaluations targeted by the government. The two documents were approved by Cabinet (NEP, 2013). For the Monitoring and Evaluation system to be effective, the findings and information emanating from the evaluations has to be utilized. Utilization is core to successful decision-making, learning and improvement.

### **1.2.3.3 Evaluation Results and Utilization in DRDLR**

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has adopted the DPME frameworks in pursuant of good governance. The department has attempted over the past five years to improve service delivery for the development of the rural population. The department introduced a number of programmes in that regard, some of which have been implemented as pilot projects. As the departmental mandate changed, from that of Land Affairs to Rural Development and Land Reform, it found itself pressurised by the demand for services. It sought to replicate the pilot projects and accelerate service delivery on the older projects such as land reform and restitution. The need arose to assess the successes and challenges of these programmes in relation to service delivery and draw lessons from these experiences. It thus embarked on the evaluation of its major service delivery programmes.

Through the evaluations, the department wished to assess the implementation processes of the programmes in order to understand where it can improve so as to serve the people of South Africa in the best possible way. A programme such as the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme started as a pilot programme in eight sites in eight provinces and was intended for replication due to the demand for



products and services that the programme offered. The same could be said for the Recapitalisation and Development and the NARYSEC programmes. In terms of the Restitution programme the department was due to re-open the new land claim processes and through the implementation evaluation of the first phase of the programme, the department was likely to have learned a number of lessons that would improve the new processes.

To this end, the department undertook a number of evaluation studies of its main service delivery developmental programme, namely the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), the Restitution of Land Rights Programme (Restitution), the Recapitalization and Development programme (RADP) as well as The National Rural Youth Corp Skills Development Programme (NARYSEC). All these service delivery and skills development programmes were in the implementation stages having started from 2009 with the exception of Restitution that started in 1998.

Apart from these evaluations, there were a number of other evaluations undertaken specifically to assess certain elements of the development programmes, for example the Socio-Economic Evaluation of the Comprehensive and Development Programme that assessed the outcomes of the programme in relation to the social and economic aspects of the programme. The Economic Evaluation of the Recapitalisation programme was to assess the value-for-money aspect of the programmes and the Rapid Assessment of the financial aspects of Restitution Programme was to look into the financial aspects of the Restitution Programme. There are various other project evaluations such as the Nelson Mandela Legacy Bridge and Masia evaluation that provided the baseline information of the project before the intervention to ensure evaluability of the project in future.

With the assistance of the DPME, three (3) external evaluations were performed by the DRDLR to add to several of the internal self-evaluations. However, the findings are not effectively utilised.

### **1.3 TOWARDS EVALUATING UTILIZATION OF EVALUATIONS IN DRDLR**

#### ***1.3.1 The problem statement***

There is underutilization of findings generated by the evaluations in DRDLR. Currently there are three (3) evaluations of the major department's programmes that have been undertaken with the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency, as part of the National Evaluation Plan. These evaluations were finalised in 2012, but are not effectively utilised for decision-making in terms of policy reforms, programme improvements, planning, budgeting and accountability.

To this effect, since 2009 the department has not achieved its targets for major programmes such as Restitution and Land Reform because it has run out of budget as contained in the DRDLR Annual Reports of the period 2009-2013 (DRDLR, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013).

The evaluation findings neither effectively inform policy nor provide a communication means to the public and various stakeholders to whom the department must account. This is because to a large extent it is difficult to link performance monitoring approaches of the DPME to programmes that are in the government budget and departmental strategic plans based on the policies of the National Treasury (Porter and Goldman, 2013). Moreover, the results of the evaluation studies are at times contested by management as they have influence on their programmes' performance and allocation of the budgeted funds. Despite these contestations and

misalignments, major policies that affect the livelihoods of South African people such as the land restitution policies under the theme of, “Reversing the Legacy of the 1913 Native land Act “ including the land reform policy on “willing buyer and the willing seller” have been reviewed (DRDLR 2013-14 :5).

### ***1.3.2 The research purpose statement***

The purpose of the research is to evaluate the utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR. The literature review provides insight into the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, as well as methodologies that guided the research. The research provides findings on the utilization of evaluation findings in the department. Furthermore, the purpose of research is to interpret and analyse findings on the utilization and recommend strategies for consideration in the utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR.

### ***1.3.3 The research questions***

The research questions are as follows:

- What are factors leading to the underutilization of evaluation findings in DRDLR?
- What are the trends in the utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR?
- What are the strategies for consideration in the utilization of the evaluation findings in the DRDLR?

## **1.4 RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION**

Research on utilization of evaluation findings has never been conducted in the DRDLR. A literature research does not indicate extensive research in South Africa on the subject although some studies are available on the

use of performance information. This study aims to address such a knowledge gap. It answers the three questions of utilization of evaluations in DRDLR in terms of factors that lead to underutilization, the utilization trends, and recommends strategies on how to improve utilization thereof. Furthermore, it produces insights that will enable the department to plan and execute the evaluations in such a way that the findings are effectively utilised. It will be the first time that a meta-evaluation based on usefulness of evaluations will be performed on DPME-evaluated programmes.

## **1.5 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The research report will be presented as follows:

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter introduces the research setting and the context within which the study takes place. It provides the research conceptualization and outlines the research problem, purpose and questions. It further provides the research justification and delineation and concludes by providing the research outline.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter provides the literature that has been reviewed as an existing body of knowledge on the subject of utilization of evaluation findings. The literature provides the basis and the rationale of the research. It explains what has been researched, past and current studies, by various scholars and identify the gaps in the knowledge base. Furthermore, the literature outlines schools of thoughts and theoretical perspectives underlying the utilization of evaluation. It identified the broad field in which the study fits as well as the explanatory frameworks and models that have emerged over time. This facilitated the identification of the conceptual framework for this research as well as important attributes and variables of the research.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter describes the research methodology to be utilised for this study. It will identify the research strategy to be employed as well as the design of the study. It also describes the research procedure and methods used to collect and process the data. Furthermore, it outlines what was be done to illuminate ethical, reliability and validity issues. Lastly, limitations of this study are explained.

### **Chapter 4: Presentation of Results**

This chapter presents the results of the study. The findings are presented in both statistical and narrative form. Rich text and descriptions are utilized to clarify the in-depth understanding of the factors leading to the underutilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR.

### **Chapter 5: Interpretation and Analysis of the Findings**

This chapter provides the analysis of the findings of the study. Trends of utilization of evaluation findings by the department were identified and analysed. This section will provides an understanding of the issue of underutilization of evaluations in the DRDLR and generate further knowledge on the subject matter.

### **Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter concludes the research by providing recommendations and strategies that should be considered in utilization of evaluation results in the DRDLR. The recommendations add to the body of knowledge on the solutions that could be available to address this problem in the field of monitoring and evaluation.

## **1.6 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion this chapter introduced the study that evaluates the utilization of evaluations in the National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) in South Africa. It provided a context to this research in a brief background to the DRDLR. The section introduced the Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation system, specifically the evaluation practices from the global, regional and local context. It introduced the National Evaluation Framework within the South African Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation (GWM&E) system. It also introduced evaluations in the DRDLR and their utilization and underutilization in decision-making processes of the department.

The section further outlined the problem statement, the statement of the research purpose, research questions and the justification for the study. It concluded by presenting the structure of the research report and provided a synopsis of all the chapters.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section introduces literature reviewed on the use of evaluation information over time. It starts by providing the research setting in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. It then outlines what has been done in the field of evaluation utilization, what the emerging issues are and what is being done about them. It also provides different perspectives and schools of thought on the evaluation utilization as well as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks or models that emerged. Brief examples of applications or studies that have applied those frameworks and the results obtained are outlined.

#### **2.2 HISTORY AND MANDATE OF THE DRDLR**

The DRDLR was established in 2009 by Act of Parliament as a National Entity. It is one of the new departments that are a key priority of the government. The mandate of the department is rural development, land reform and agrarian change with a vision to, “create vibrant, equitable and sustainable Rural Communities” being Outcome 7, one of the twelve (12) outcomes of the government (DRDLR, 2010; DRDLR, 2011). The department discharges its mandate through five (5) major service delivery programmes, namely the Rural Development, Land Restitution, Land Redistribution, Land Development National Geospatial and Cadastral Services under the umbrella of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) (DRDLR, 2014).

The department embarked on organisational renewal strategy which seeks to streamline and align operations to respond to organisational priorities.

New organisational performance capabilities are being developed in anticipation of the envisaged changes in policy direction of the department that seeks to address the land issues. Financial and human capacity to a large extent matches the requirements of the department. The department is performance-driven having developed its strategic plans with outcomes-oriented goals set, implemented, monitored, reviewed and programmes evaluated. The Performance Management System, although not efficient, is utilized to reward and provide incentives to staff that perform beyond expectations.

### **2.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN DRDLR**

The Monitoring and Evaluation function in DRDLR is the responsibility of the Chief Directorate: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. Established in 2010, the function evolved from a land reform information system to a Results-Based Management System. The Minister is the political head and champion for M&E.

The Chief Directorate has a mandate to provide technical support and guidance in planning, monitoring and evaluation across the department (DRDLR PM&E Policy, 2011). It resides within the Corporate Support Services Branch. Its strategic objective is to provide comprehensive results-based planning, monitoring and evaluation that drives the organisational performance and ensures delivery on expected outcomes (DRDLR PM&E Framework, 2011).

### **2.4 BACKGROUND OF THE M&E SYSTEM**

In line with government legislative prescripts, DRDLR has a co-ordinated planning, monitoring and evaluation system that is results-based with outcomes orientation. The PM&E System is aligned to National Treasury policy frameworks and guidelines on Strategic Planning and Management



of Performance Information (National Treasury, 2010 and 2011). It is also aligned to the Policy Framework on the government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (GWM&E) and all other subsequent policies, frameworks and guidelines developed including participation in the National Evaluations as per the PDME National Evaluation Policy Framework approved by the cabinet (The Presidency, 2007; DPME; 2011) This alignment enables the Department through the institutionalization of the results-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system across the department, enabling it to plan and track performance against its planned and set targets as well as evaluate its policies, programmes and projects. The information provided by the PM&E system supports effective policy and strategic decision-making (DRDLR PM&E Policy, 2011; DRDLR PM&E Strategy, 2011).

The department has adopted the results-based planning, monitoring and evaluation approach and its strategic goals and objectives are set in such a way that to a large extent they follow the results chain where outcomes and outputs have measurable indicators to track performance. The challenge that the DRDLR has at the moment is that its M&E system is not automated. With a large department like the DRDLR with nine (9) Branches and five (5) budget programmes, a manual M&E system is highly inefficient. Manual information systems have major challenges with regard to the quality of data as it is subject to ease of manipulation. Such types of information lack credibility and validity may also be suspect.

## **2.5 UTILIZATION OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION INFORMATION IN DECISION-MAKING**

### ***2.5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Information Use and Users-***

In the DRDLR, M&E information is utilized for various purposes. It is used for decision-making processes and accounting through management

meetings and various reports that serve management functions. Information from the M&E system and reports is used for planning purposes, including strategic and annual performance planning, programme and project planning. The information provides baseline information necessary to inform target setting at the planning stage of these initiatives. It informs the budgeting process thus assisting in the rationalization and distribution of resources. It also informs policy and programmes and provides a communication means to the public and various stakeholders to whom the department must account. In general, M&E information facilitates performance improvement by providing a knowledge base of what works and what does not.

The following is a detailed analysis of M&E information used in the DRDLR.

### ***2.5.2 Strategic Planning, Programme Performance Monitoring and Reporting***

Programme Performance Monitoring (PPM) is mandatory in accordance with National Treasury regulations. It tracks performance of indicators as set in the Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan (APP) documents. This is because these are budget programmes as prescribed by the National Treasury. The PPM information is audited by the Internal Audit function and the Auditor General OF South Africa (AGSA). PPM reports are produced quarterly and tabled at the Quarterly Review Assessment Meeting (QRAM) chaired by the Director General (DG). Performance against set targets is reviewed quarterly as well as annually, and corrective measures are taken. There are sometimes extensive debates where programme managers are requested by the DG to account for poor performance and money spent. These reports form the basis for assessing the DG's performance by the Minister and it trickles down to the rest of the department performance management and reward system.

At the end of the financial year these reports form the basis of the mandatory Annual Report that is to be produced and tabled in September each year in Parliament. Annual Reports are public documents that are an account of the Department to the citizens on its performance. If the information that has been used to compile the report is not credible the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA) will raise an opinion as to whether the information in the report can be trusted. In serious situations, where the validity and credibility of the information is questionable, the AGSA can raise a disclaimer as its opinion. This is the most serious opinion the department will receive. The South African government has set a target of clean audits by 2014.

### ***2.5.3 Programme, Project Performance Monitoring and Reporting***

Monitoring takes place continuously and takes place at project level as well as at the programme level. Project monitoring takes place at the service delivery level where projects are implemented. It looks at the efficiency of resource use in producing required outputs. This is a new initiative in the DRDLR introduced by the Minister. Reporting at the project level is a new initiative and is done on a monthly basis cumulatively, while project performance is reported quarterly to coincide with the mandatory programme performance monitoring report and organisational performance reporting at the Executive Management Committee (EMC) meeting that is chaired by the Minister. Using project information has helped the department resolve many problems that accrue at the project level. This has unlocked productivity and the department has made progress in achieving targets in relation to socio-economic conditions that will bring about societal improvements and add public value.

#### ***2.5.4 Policy, Accountability Performance Improvements through Evaluations***

Although the results of the evaluation studies are a contested area for some management and programme managers and are still an area of discomfort, the Minister is committed to their use and thus the Evaluation and Research Directorate is regularly requested to undertake evaluations. According to Boyle and Lemaire (1999:1), evaluations are seen as a tool for public accountability to promote the reconsideration of budget and justifications for existing policies and programmes at the political level of government. Evaluations are seen by politicians as an objective means of assessing the performance of government and can show evidence of the worth of the intervention (Morra-Inas and Rist, 2009). In order to encourage the programme managers to participate and utilize the evaluation findings and information, a three-year rolling evaluation plan has been developed and approved. Currently the Department has three evaluation studies that are on the National Development plan and being undertaken jointly with the DPME. Using information emanating from evaluation will help improve programmes and inform planning and policy making. The Minister chairs the meetings where evaluations are the focus; these are in the form of an Extended EMC and is compulsory for all senior managers to attend.

#### ***2.5.5 Communication to Stakeholders on Service Delivery Information***

The service delivery report is a report that combines information from the above report and compares it with the results of an evaluation study that has been completed. Periodically the Minister calls for consultative forums with various stakeholders with regard to pertinent issues such as the Land issue, as an example. In order to address the constituents of these forums, the minister calls for information through urgent evaluations with

project photographs to better illustrate what has been done. It is during this time that as an evaluator one feels compromised on methodology and the rigor necessary for executing the task under political and time pressures, as alluded to by Bamberger, Rugh and Mabry (2006), and where alternative methodologies, such as the mixed methods explained by Bamberger, Rao and Woolcock (2010) become useful. To a large extent the evaluation information may not be positive because of the backlogs the country is facing in relation to service delivery especially in the rural areas. However, the Minister using evidence is able to inform members of the consultative forums and ask for assistance and ideas on how to address blockages to accelerate service delivery. A similar example relates to the slow Land Reform process, where through these consultative forums the Minister and the Department were able to renegotiate the abolition of the “willing-buyer-willing-seller” policy and suggestions were made on the need for a Valuer General’s office to be created. This is the usefulness of the information that emanates from the M&E system. It is acknowledged that the information is not perfect, but according to various scholars, although M&E information systems are still a work in progress the information is valuable for use (Worthen, Sanders and Fitzpatrick, 1997; Kuzek and Rist, 2004, Patton, 2008).

#### ***2.5.6 Political Accountability: Outcome 7 Monitoring Information***

DRDLR is the co-co-ordinator of outcome 7 reporting. The M&E unit is the custodian of DRDLR information that is reported in Outcome 7. The Outcome 7 report is tabled quarterly to Cabinet and the information is reported to the Technical Implementation Committee consisting of Directors General and programme managers responsible for outcomes as well as to the Executive Implementation Committee consisting of the Ministers, MECs and Mayors responsible for the outcomes. This is where politicians are held to account, as there are performance agreements in

place for Ministers. Results-based M&E systems, according to Kuzek and Rist (2004), will assist greatly.

### ***2.5.7 Supply and Demand for M&E information***

As previously explained, the DRDLR does not have an automated M&E system. The system is paper-based and very labour-intensive regarding the collection, collation and verification of the information from the sources. Over and above this, the department has many dysfunctional information systems that do “not talk to each other” making integration of systems almost impossible. There is no centralized database for the department; thus the M&E team does not have direct access to programme information. From the supply side of M&E information, many improvements are needed and the willingness of the Department to overhaul its Information Communication and Technology systems is a necessity.

When one dipsper analyses the utilization of information as described above, the pattern of use is potentially skewed. It is the Minister who uses that information and to a large extent it is pushed down to the Director General and management. According to Gorgens and Kuzek (2010), there is always a context around the demand and supply of information. The framework for decision-making processes involving data demand, collection and analysis, information availability and information use is not being followed. Decisions are sometime made in the organisation based on the political, cultural and social context from which the problem emanates. The DRDLR at particular times finds itself in that situation when political reasons may cloud the normal decision-making processes.

There are a number of reasons why information is not always used in decision-making, amongst others; the timing is wrong, conflicting priorities, political ideologies, public opinion, disputes over various aspects of data

including its measurement tool, data storage and analysis. Gorgens and Kuzek (2010) provides a results-based systematic approach or framework for a data demand utilization process that includes assessment of the problems, identification and definition of the strategic opportunities, selection of tools and implementation. There are a number of benefits that accrue from using information to improve organisational results; amongst others is the opportunity to resolve organisational problems, and forge relationships through shared understanding of the problems (Gorgens and Kuzek, 2010)

### ***2.5.8 Utilization-driven M&E information***

Using information to improve results is central to the utilization drive. M&E information is useful throughout the whole results chain, from inputs to activities, to outputs that need to be produced, to outcomes to be achieved, to achievement of long term impacts. It is therefore important that during the planning phase of an intervention, data and information flow processes are planned and developed to facilitate information utilization.

### ***2.5.9 Utilization-focused Evaluation***

Utilization-focused Evaluation is a concept introduced by Michael Quinn Patton (UFE) in an effort to ensure that the results from the evaluation studies are utilized effectively. According to Patton (1997:20; 2008:37), "Utilization-Focused Evaluation begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use. From the design to the actual delivery of the evaluation, the focus is on intended use by intended users". Damirez and Brodhead (2013:1) regard UFE as a learning process that facilitates ordinary people to use evaluation findings and experiences in real-life situations. It is based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users who must be clearly

identified and personally engaged at the beginning of the evaluation process. Evaluators must ensure that they are involved in all decisions that are made about the evaluation process.

Evaluations in DRDLR are still conventional and highly supply-driven in nature. The results thereof may be contested and chances are high that they may not be utilised to improve programme performance.

#### ***2.5.10 Evidence-Based Programme Design, Planning and Performance Management***

As has been indicated when the analysis was done on the use of M&E information, there is a strong link between evidence based programme design, planning, performance management reporting and use. Planning is informed by the results of the intervention, while proper planning is essential for the monitoring and tracking of the performance of the intervention. The whole cycle is closed by an evaluation, reporting and use of the information for decision-making purposes. The M&E system in the DRDLR is structured in such a way that these interdependencies form a project or programme cycle that closes with a feedback-loop.

#### ***2.5.11 Quality of M&E Information***

For the M&E information to be useful the quality thereof is very important. According to the UNDP (2010), high quality evaluation is necessary for Results-Based Management, accountability and knowledge management. The information that is generated by the M&E system to be useful should meet the acceptable quality standard. The commonly known criteria of data quality standards are validity, reliability, integrity, precision and timeliness (Gorgens and Kuzek, 2010).



This section analyzed the extent to which information from the DRDLR M&E systems is currently being used, what purpose is it used for and by whom. An analysis was done using the systems approach to utilization-driven M&E in terms of the demand and supply, utilization-focused evaluations, Evidence-Based Programme Design, Planning and Performance Management and quality M&E. Basically, from the above analysis, much of the information that is utilized in DRDLR, comes from the monitoring systems rather than the from the evaluations themselves.

## **2.6 PROBLEM ANALYSIS**

In the DRDLR, information from the evaluation findings is underutilized. Currently, three evaluation studies undertaken with the DPME were completed in 2012 but have not been effectively utilised. The DPME is currently struggling to get the departments to develop action plans that respond to the evaluation findings and recommendations. On the 8th August 2014 the department received an email communiqué issued by the DPME in this regard. On the other hand, the department is pursuing various legislative changes that review how the business of the department is undertaken (DRDLR, 2014).

These evaluations came about as a call by the DPME to assess the implementation processes of the programmes in order to understand where it can improve so as to serve the people of South Africa in the best possible manner. Many programmes started in 2009 when the department was formed.

A programme such as the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme started as a pilot programme in eight (8) sites in eight (8) provinces and was due for replication. With the Restitution Programme the department was due to re-open the new land claim processes and through the implementation evaluation of the first phase of the programme, the

department was likely to have learned a number of lessons that would improve the new processes.

To this end, the department undertook a number of evaluation studies of its main service delivery developmental programmes, namely the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), the Restitution of Land Rights Programme (Restitution), the Recapitalization and Development Programme (RADP) as well as the National Rural Youth Corp Skills Development Programme (NARYSEC). Apart from these evaluations, there were a number of other evaluations undertaken specifically to assess certain elements of the development programmes.

## **2.7 CONSEQUENCES OF THE SITUATION**

There are significant consequences of underutilization of information generated by the evaluations. Evaluations are expensive processes and are undertaken for various reasons, amongst others to inform policy and to determine the merit of interventions. To date the three evaluations undertaken with the DPME cost the department R2 million, R3 million and R3,8 million per evaluation respectively. These are funds that could have been used for service delivery.

The department as a public sector institution is accountable to civil society and it should be able to provide the nation with evidence-based information. By not using evaluations as evidence it becomes difficult to account to the public. Development projects fail because critical findings and lessons learned are not used to give the programme managers insight into what is needed to better manage the programmes.

## **2.8 ROOT CAUSES OF UNDERUTILIZATION**

To a large extent the evaluation information is not positive because of the backlogs the country faces in relation to service delivery, especially in the rural areas. This tends to make management reluctant to make use of them. Management also regards negative feedback as a form of policing. However, the Minister using evidence is able to provide explanations to the citizens and consultative forums and ask for assistance and ideas on how to address any challenges related to service delivery.

## **2.9 REVIEW OF PAST AND CURRENT STUDIES ON UTILIZATION OF EVALUATIONS**

Utilization of evaluation is one of the most researched areas in monitoring and evaluation, although there are no concrete solutions. There are a number of authors who have undertaken research into the literature available on the subject and compiled bibliographies. Johnson, Greenseid, Toal, King and Lawrence's (2010) review of the empirical literature on evaluation used for the period 1986 to 2005 and ITIG's (2012) publication provided the most comprehensive bibliography that was useful in this study. Weiss (1998) reviewed debates as far back as 1988.

At the international level, the utilization of information generated by evaluations has been a major concern of knowledge users, decision-makers, evaluators and many information users over the years in many fields and across sectors (Blake and Ottoson, 2009; Patton, 1997; Williams, 2010; Neuman, Shahor, Shina, Sarid and Saar, 2013). This can be seen by the emergence of frameworks and models that promote utilization, such as the utilization-focused evaluation approach advocated by Patton (1998) that is used by a number of scholars in various fields. The emphasis is on promotion of utilization of performance quality measures of validity and usefulness of performance information in

outcomes-based performance management (De Lancer-Jules and Holzer, 2001; Heinrich, 2002); utilization in knowledge management (Blake and Ottoson, 2009); use in social science research (Landry, Amara and Lamari, 2001) as well as in theory-based evaluations (Rogers, 2009; White, 2009).

Utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) approach has been used in many studies across fields of study, for various purposes with success (Briedenhann and Butt, 2005; William, 2010). William (2010) identified 12 UFE studies that have been done in Canada in the compassionate care benefit area in the last 15 years. For this literature review, a sample of various studies has been reviewed to understand the extent of application and various uses of this framework in enhancing evaluation utilization. The studies that were reviewed include those listed below.

## **2.10 PURPOSES OF THE SAMPLES OF THE UFU STUDIES**

**To determine programme merit, improvements and knowledge generation.**

Canada's Compassionate Care Benefit is a pilot study for a new compassionate care benefit (Williams, 2010) in the health sector to test strategies for implementation of the new compassionate care benefit from the family care giver's perspective. The purpose of the evaluation was threefold: 1) to judge the merit or worth of the programme; 2) to improve the programme; and 3) to generate knowledge. It was a quantitative study, the design having been determined by the intended user. Having applied the UFE, the outcome of the evaluation was threefold: 1) motivated leadership; 2) regular planned communication; and 3) consistent and continued commitment of all parties involved (Williams, 2010).

Of importance in this study was the process followed that led to the success of the study. The prerequisite conditions that led to success were a widely representative 'Evaluation Taskforce' of stakeholders, flexibility of the evaluation to accommodate change, as well as adhering to a pre-determined timeline that is in line with the UFE process.

**To Ensure Programme Quality, Accountability to Funders and Programme merit.**

The University of Hawaii's Business Chinese Programme used UFE to evaluate the attainment of sustainable growth of its Language for Specific Purpose programme. According to Wang (2013), the purpose of using this approach was to ensure quality of the programme, demonstrate the merit of the programme to its stakeholders and for accountability to the funders through reflections. While the programme was growing exponentially, no-one had an insight as to its sustainability.

The research strategy used was mixed methods, balancing both qualitative and quantitative techniques, utilizing Patton's (2008) recommended four phases of planning and design, data collection, data analysis, reporting and utilizing evaluation results. In terms of the evaluation approach and methodology, the findings from this study showed that the integration of measurement and assessment within the evaluation processes addresses the need of a variety of stakeholders and provides a holistic picture of the programme (Wing, 2013:136). The evaluation was planned with use in mind from the planning and design stage influencing the choice of data collection instruments used. Focus groups, survey questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data to cover all stakeholders.

Results were presented in a series of conferences and workshops. The lesson learned from this study is that by focusing on utilization, the

evaluation prioritised the primary users and uses. It presented tangible evidence of both the merits of the programme and accountability to the funders without minimising improvement needs. The evaluation revealed both strengths and weaknesses and facilitated problem-solving and utilization in decision-making (Wang, 2013:131-144). Utilization-focused evaluation is one of the innovative ways of generating useful evaluations for the intended user. It is intended to move away from abstract or possible audiences to real primary users, who have been clearly identified and are participants of the evaluation process (Patton, 2012).

### **Stakeholder Participation and Mapping**

There are number of studies that have used the UFE to ensure stakeholder participation in various evaluations and evaluation use. For the purpose of this research, a study conducted by Daigneault (2014) is used to illustrate the use in participatory approach. Daigneault (2014:173) undertook a desk top study to, “take stock of four (4) decades of quantitative research on stakeholder participation and evaluation use”.

The purpose of the study was to take stock of what is available in literature on stakeholder participation and evaluation to answer the question of whether stakeholder participation fosters evaluation and identify gaps in data on the subject. One of findings was that 86% of the evaluators who responded to the survey believed that stakeholder participation does influence utilization to a large degree and the principle is well accepted in the evaluation fraternity (Daigneault, 2014:173). One major lesson learned from this exercise was that, “evaluation was about answering three questions: What? So what? And now what?” As described by Patton (2008:5) and Daigneault (2014:177), participation of stakeholders is critical for evaluation to answer those questions in order for the information to become useful.

**To compare case studies in Juvenile Fire-setter Intervention Programmes in order to describe the programmes and their limitations in providing intervention services to juvenile offenders.**

Two case studies of Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Programmes were examined and compared utilising the UFE methods in the cities of Portland, Oregon and San Antonio, Texas in the United States of America by the University of Texas (Vega and Hitzfelder, 2003). The purpose of the study was to compare the two programmes and develop strategies for providing juvenile offender services. A quantitative research strategy and a comparative case study research methodology were used. One of the programmes was regarded as the best of all programmes whilst the other was deemed to be the worst. A major limitation to the study was the unavailability of data uniformly collected, thus the use of comparative case studies.

The two programmes were compared in terms of their histories and profiles of their typical clients. Interviews were conducted with key personnel of the programmes and decision-makers and information users were identified. The goals, objectives, outcomes and problems of the programmes were identified as well as recommendations made for solutions to the problems. Mechanisms to test effectiveness of the programmes and potential future research were also presented (Vega and Hitzfelder, 2003).

**Utilization in choice of appropriate Conceptual Framework for an Evaluation.**

Briedenhann and Butt (2005) probe the use of the UFE framework as a tool for managing tourism development. The authors in their attempt to understand various evaluation approaches and gain insight into their potential use in rural tourism examined the various theories that underpin

evaluation. They categorize evaluation into three stages of knowledge utilization that has already been outlined by Blake and Ottoson (2009) below. As a theory based evaluation, the authors' suggest that the approach is appropriate for the evaluation of the rural tourism projects and defend it as the most suitable information source and catalyst of improvement to the rural tourism sector.

## **2.11 LOCATING THE RESEARCH IN THE BROADER FIELD OF STUDY**

In literature the history of utilization of evaluation as a knowledge base is embedded in many disciplines and more so in knowledge management. Knowledge utilization emanates from ancient European societies with positivist views that knowledge is constructed through scientific empirical means. The interest in knowledge utilization stems from the fields of psychology, social work, political science, sociology in the social sciences as well as health sciences and education. Due to the multi-disciplinary nature of knowledge utilization it is a complex concept to define (Blake and Ottoson, 2009).

Historically knowledge utilization has undergone transformation in three phases, which Baker (1991) refers to as the first, second and third waves. The first wave took place between 1920 and 1960 signified by improved technological innovations in agriculture which led to increased productivity and information explosion, diffusion and dissemination after the Second World War (Rogers, 2003). Of significance in this era is the reliance on empirical evidence in the construction of knowledge where scientific-experimental models prioritising impartiality, methodological rigour involving test, objectivity and validity of information were central to strategies of knowledge management and utilization (Briedenhann and Butt, 2005).

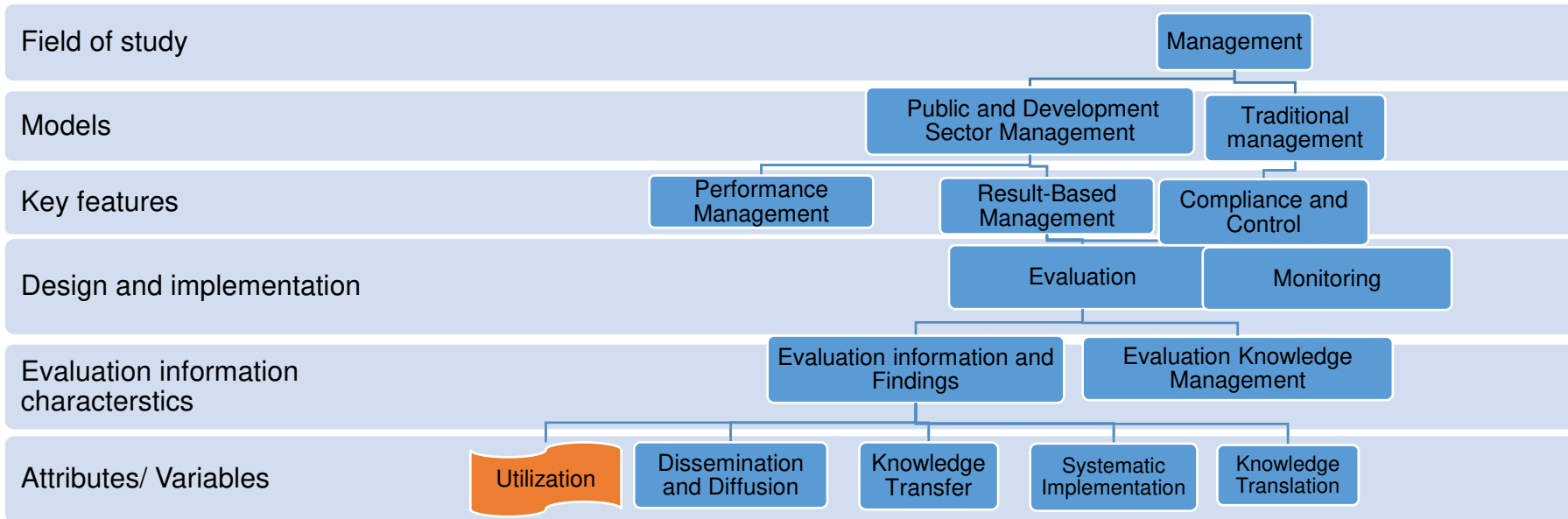


The second phase or the second wave took place between 1960 and 1980, with the adoption of new technological innovations in various fields beyond agriculture such as health, education and research (Blake and Ottoson, 2009). It was during the social betterment optimism era, with measurable outcomes and practical use of research utilization in focus. Programme evaluation was born during this era as a new field of science and prominent evaluation scholars utilized descriptive valuing (Blake and Ottoson, 2009; Briedenhann and Butt, 2005).

The third phase, in Baker's (1991) analogy of the third wave, took place after the 1990s and the emphasis on the utilization of experimental and research started in this era with a number of research findings especially in the health sector deemed to be important to utilize in order to achieve improvements in health, education and human services translational research shared for used in benefiting human health (Blake and Ottoson, 2009; Briedenhann and Butt, 2005). Beyond the millennium, knowledge utilization is focused on evidence-based practices in all disciplines (Blake and Ottoson, 2009). This is more so in performance management where the quality of performance information is critical to meet the criteria reliability, validity and usefulness, amongst others, if it is to be used in evidence-based planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation.

In evaluation the issues of knowledge utilization in terms of diffusion, dissimilation, transfer, systematic implementation and knowledge translation are paramount (Blake and Ottoson, 2009:27-28). Figure 1 represents schematic presentation of this research in any field of study.

**Figure 1: The research's field of study**



### **2.11.1 Important Attributes or Variables of the Research**

The following are key variables that evaluators can utilize in assessing utilization as summarised by Blake and Ottoson (2009, 27-28).

#### **(i) Utilization Coverage “Umbrella”**

Knowledge utilization coverage has been given here and analogy of an “umbrella” because of the extensive coverage of utilization. As has been outlined before, knowledge accrues from many fields and the utilization thereof is also contextualised under those fields. This has a great deal of implication for evaluations because evaluations cut across all fields of study and it is up to the evaluators to familiarize themselves with regard to what variations there are across the board (Blake and Ottoson, 2009).

#### **(ii) Dissemination and Diffusion**

Dissemination and diffusion involves itself with the distribution of information or knowledge to the intended users. It involves the movement of information from one place to the other and these processes have been found to be part of the solution of underutilization by researchers. Diffusion of research including evaluation information that is enlightened is equated to the process of policy making by Blake and Ottoson (2009), and is linked to knowledge utilization.

#### **(iii) Knowledge Transfer**

Unlike technology and a variety of goods and services, according to Blake and Ottoson (2009), knowledge cannot truly be transferable or exchanged; however, it can be negotiated. For it to be transferred, they indicate, it has to be made accessible in such a manner that the users in organisations understand what is being transferred and to whom, and that cannot happen without proper planning that ensures that utilization becomes core and is central to all activities of organisations.

(iv) Systematic Implementation

According to Blake and Ottoson (2009), implementation of knowledge utilization is symbolised to the systematic movement of policy to implementation with all activities related to intended use designed in the manner which will enhance use and result in changed behaviours in organisations. To achieve this, the use needs to be of major consideration in all stages of implementation of research and evaluation.

(v) Knowledge Translation

Knowledge translation includes both the creation and the use thereof. It is an interactive process that involves both the users and the participants. Translation is key for knowledge to be used as policy (Blake and Ottoson, 2009).

## **2.12 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

The theories of evaluation utilization can be classified under three (3) stages of knowledge construction. This section outlines those stages and the influences to the theorists of the era as well as the theories themselves. The theoretical frameworks discussed fall under broad categories of Results-Based Management, Knowledge Management, and Performance Management approaches.

The theoretical frameworks include, amongst others, 1) Utilization-Focused Evaluation advocated by Patton (1997-2012) with a particular focus on utilization; 2) Outcomes-Based Performance Management (De Lancer-Jules and Hozer, 2001; Hein, 2002) with a particular focus on outcomes and impacts analysis; 3) Knowledge Management (Blake-Ottoson, 2009) focusing on knowledge transfer; 4) Theory-Based Evaluation (Rogers, 2008; White, 2009) with a particular emphasis on the theory of change and programme theory; 5) the Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (Shepard, 2011; Kusek and Rist, 2004) focusing on the results of the development intervention namely output, outcomes and

impacts and moving away from activity based management; 6) Evaluating with Validity advocated by House (2014) with a notion that evaluations are useful only when they are truthful, coherent and there is justice; and lastly, 7) the Political Responsive evaluations outlined by Azzam and Levine (2014) suggesting that evaluations are political and have a context that needs to be recognised when one assesses them.

#### **A. The First Stage Theorists' Knowledge Construction**

(Theory-based Evaluations advocated by Rogers (2008))

The first stage knowledge construction took place between 1920 and 1960. It is known as the first wave and is rooted in the theories of evaluation as interaction of philosophy and science (Baker, 1991). It was endorsed by rigorous scientific methods in the 1960. This is the era that did not see value in evaluation but rather in the scientific-experimental models. The evaluation practice advocates outcomes-based practices, and the use of evaluations are numerous, instrumental for decision-making (Baker, 1991; Blake and Ottoson, 2009; Briedenhann and Butt, 2005).

##### ***2.12.1 Results-Based Management***

Results-Based Management (RMB) theoretical framework is used in public management as a management tool that emphasizes achievement of results which are outputs, outcomes and impacts (UNDG, 2010). It uses the programme theory and the theory of change to show how the results have been realized in a systematic manner, indicating the relationships between inputs, activities and the results achieved.

### **2.12.1.1 Programme Theory**

Programme theory falls under Theory-based Evaluations advocated by Rogers (2008). According to Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner and Hacsí (2000), programme theory is an explicit theory or model of assumptions of how things work in development interventions in terms of programmes, projects, strategies, or policies. It provides an indication of how these initiatives contribute to changes in intermediate results or outcomes and finally to the intended impacts. It is an important tool in evaluation that can be used to examine relationships between activities and intended outcomes. It explains how development initiatives are constructed to activate the theories of change (Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner and Hacsí, 2000).

### **2.12.1.2 The Theory of Change**

The theory of change is a central process by which change comes about for individuals, communities derived from formal research-based theory or unstated tacit understanding of how things work. It refers to the central mechanism by which change comes about for individuals, groups and communities. It is the causal or cause-effect logic that links activities to the desired changes in the factors that a project or programme is targeting to change. The theory of change provides a model of how a project or a programme is supposed to work. It is a road map of where the project is trying to reach desired outcomes (Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner and Hacsí, 2000).

According to INSP (2005) components of the theory of change involves conceptualization and operationalization. It includes a situation analysis, focus and scoping and outcome chain. The situational analysis identifies the nature and extent of the problems or opportunities to be addressed. It describes features of the problems, causes and consequences, what evidence is available and identifies the history of the problem and its

pathway as to whether it is a simple, complex or complicated problem (Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner and Hacsí, 2000).

Outcome chain is the centrepiece of all other aspects of programme theory. It shows cause and effect between immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes. It shows how the intended outcomes contribute to addressing the problem. It identifies contingency relationships where high level outcome depends on lower level outcome (Valters, 2014).

A major advantage of the theory of change is that it addresses limitations of programme theory; these include, amongst other attributions, failure to show how the programme activities will contribute to particular outcomes, failure to show expected mechanisms for change and what the programme will actually do to achieve intended outcomes, failure to specify important features of intended outcomes, ignoring unintended outcomes that are beyond programme boundaries, oversimplification and failure to acknowledge complicated or complex aspects (Rogers, Petrosino, Huebner and Hacsí, 2000).

## **B. The Second Stage Theorists' Knowledge Construction**

Participatory Evaluation is advocated by scholars such as Chambers (1997) as an extension to his Rapid Rural Appraisal theories. The second stage knowledge construction saw theorists making arguments about the evaluator's need to foster relationships with the user and that the evaluation information needs to be utilised. This stage relates to Baker's (1991) second wave of knowledge use in the theory of knowledge management that took place during the period 1960 to 1980 (Blake and Ottoson, 2009; Briedenhann and Butt, 2005), where value in evaluation was recognized and stakeholder's participation was sought. Evaluations were used for a range of decisions and the user was central to the evaluation process.

### **2.12.2 Knowledge Utilization Theoretical Framework**

There are a number of influences that shape parameters of knowledge utilization. Among others, Blake and Ottoson (2009) identify the following:

(i) What counts as knowledge:

There are a number of parameters that describe what is regarded as knowledge recognised in literature such as practical knowledge, explicit or formal, tacit or implicit, spiritual, personal knowledge, and intellectual knowledge, amongst others. Even the meaning of what knowledge is differs from one context to the other. What is important is that knowledge is dynamic and not static and all the above parameters influence its use. Therefore, it is important for the evaluator to take cognisance of the context from which knowledge is perceived. The lens from which one views knowledge influences what they count as knowledge and how they use it (Blake and Ottoson, 2009).

(ii) What counts as Use:

There are a number of contextual influences on the use of knowledge and what counts as use. Amongst others are timing, resources, politics, leadership, social conditions and communication (Blake and Ottoson, 2009). The word 'use' has been analysed by a number of scholars such as Edwards (1991), Blake and Ottoson (2009), Patton (2008) and Weiss (1998) to name a few. Patton (1997) went further with the exploration of use by introducing the framework for use in the 1990s of utilization-focused evaluation. In terms of evaluations, the evaluator has to take cognisance of the many contextual influences that are inherent in the assumptions of the evaluators, the evaluand and other multiple stakeholders when it comes to what counts as use.

(iii) Multiple meaning knowledge utilization:

Currently knowledge utilization has been formally contextualized in many fields such as public policy, economics, health and technology, to name a



few (Blake and Ottoson, 2009). In research, knowledge utilization has been classified in terms of problem-solving, tactical knowledge, political, enlightening as well as aspects of being knowledge-driven. There are “push, pull, dissemination and interactive model knowledge” that includes scientific, economic, institutional and social knowledge models mentioned by Blake and Ottoson (2009:25).

In evaluations Blake and Ottoson (2009) has identified from Johnson’s (1998) work variables that are used in various meta-models of evaluation knowledge utilization and grouped into three categories, namely closing the feedback loop for continuous use, multi-stakeholder reflection, and adaptations. These models will further be explored in this literature review as they form the basis of this research.

### ***2.12.3 Evaluation Utilization from the Knowledge Utilization Lens***

A literature review conducted by Blake and Ottoson (2009) identifies various parameters of evaluations utilization that has similarities with knowledge utilization. Looking through the knowledge utilization lens broadly, the issue of use from the planning of the evaluation, execution to dissemination of the information, with the use and the user in mind, comes out clearly. These principles were put forward by scholars such as Weiss in the 1970s and Patton in the 1990s. Of importance is what ties use to the evaluation theory in terms of the following parameters:

(i) Understanding the Evaluand:

In evaluation, just as it has been shown in the knowledge utilization paradigm, it is critical that the evaluator understands what is being evaluated (the evaluand) and the context in which the outcome of the evaluation is going to be used. Evaluations concern themselves with knowledge generated by evaluations rather than research. The process through which knowledge is generated, utilised, disseminated, diffused, transferred and translated differs. It is dependent of the model theory of that evaluation. Knowledge is expressed in terms of policy and technological innovations rather than just as an idea (Blake and Ottoson, 2009).

(ii) Valuing Use:

Utilization is central to all evaluations irrespective of the type of evaluation. Looking through the lens of knowledge utilization, many criteria to assess use were identified, amongst others timing, resource availability, processes, knowledge transferability, implementation, diffusion and translation. What counts as knowledge is also critical due to the complexity and multiple use of knowledge in various fields. It is therefore critical that the participation of all stakeholders be ascertained (Blake and Ottoson, 2009).

(iii) Knowledge Construction:

According to Blake and Ottoson (2009), knowledge changes substantially during utilization and it is critical that there be a tracking method to find where the knowledge or evaluand has been used across contexts and in multiple uses. Quantitative and qualitative methods and designs such as time series, interviews, observations, and focus groups are usually used in evaluation for in-depth exploration of knowledge.

(iv) Facilitating Use:

Facilitation of use is critical to the utilization of the evaluation. As already stated, the evaluation needs to start with use in mind, thus stakeholder engagement in identifying use becomes critical to increase the opportunities for use. Knowledge utilization, if understood, can inform policies, develop theories and various models of evaluation utilization (Blake and Ottoson, 2009).

### **C. The Third Stage Theorists Knowledge Construction**

Theorists in this stage were found to concentrate on the multiple use of various methodologies that would improve biases and improve reliability and validity of information use. According to Briedenhann and Butt (2005), Cronbach approaches to information use became the norm for interpreting information use. In terms of *Values in Evaluation*, in this stage Briedenhann and Butt (2005) found that theorists differ across evaluators and the emphasis was on the evaluator being more of a teacher than a judge. In terms of the evaluation practice, this stage advocated closeness of the evaluator to the evaluand.

## **2.13 NEW EMERGING VIEWS IN EVALUATION UTILIZATION**

### ***2.13.1 Evaluating With Validity Framework***

There are new emerging views in literature on evaluation utilization. The first view is based on the emerging conceptual framework of Evaluating with Validity introduced by House in the 1980s. According to this framework, “evaluation should be true, coherent and just and that the untrue, incoherent and unjust evaluations are invalid” (House, 2014:90). A challenge being faced by evaluators is finding ways of evaluating; facing weak and non-existent government data systems, information gaps and reliability concerns; and the need for evaluators to come with more

innovative and creative ways to help provide credible and reliable information necessary to inform policy and decisions in governments.

House's conceptual framework reflects on an important issue of validity of the evaluation when faced with unreliable information that is used in evaluation. How will people know that the evaluation is just, coherent and true? Tochot, Junpeng and Makmee (2012) have developed a model that measures validity of the model of evaluation utilization with indicators that measure instrument, conceptual, legitimate and symbolic use in external evaluations.

According to Griffith and Monstrosse-Moohead (2014), there are three dimensions that are proposed and need to be taken into account in this framework: the truth, justice and beauty for evaluation validity. These three dimensions need to be balanced in evaluation due to the values inherent in order to achieve evaluation validity. In real-life evaluation value-based dimensions can be difficult to balance due to complexity that comes with diversity (Griffith and Monstrosse-Moorhead, 2014). Context is very important for validity as it is ever-changing and rooted in values, beliefs and norms (Griffith; Monstrosse-Moorhead and Pokorny, 2014).

### ***2.13.2 Politically Responsive Evaluation Framework***

The second emerging new framework is introduced by Azzam and Levine (2014: 57) in their article, "Negotiating Truth, Beauty and Justice: A politically Responsive Approach". The core of this approach rests with the notion that, "evaluation designs and implementation are not technocratic exercises" but are subject to negotiations with various stakeholders (Azzam and Levine, 2014: 57). The Political framework relates well with the Evaluating with Validity framework and identifies three kinds of evaluations, namely bureaucratic evaluations, autocratic evaluations and democratic evaluations. The authors identify unique political and contextual factors that reduce the reliability of this evaluation framework,

being cultural norms and expectations, frequently shifting programme priorities, changing support structures, and differing stakeholder interests.

This literature review provided an insight with regard to the literature that is available on the topic of utilization of evaluation. The literature provided a comprehensive overview of the utilization of evaluations from the historical point of view to the knowledge-based utilization to give a context to how the use evolved in evaluations. It provided context for different disciplines that use evaluation. It outlined the theoretical frameworks that are documented and are used to assess the subject matter. It also indicated probable conceptual frameworks and variables that can be utilised in this research. Methodologies that were used by other researchers were noted as well as the several uses of the evaluations themselves.

The literature reviewed the use of evaluation over time. It explains what has been done in the field of evaluation utilization, what issues are emerging and what is being done about them. It also provided different perspectives and schools of thoughts on the evaluation utilization as well as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and models that emerged.

Brief examples of applications or studies that applied those frameworks and the results obtained were reviewed. It concluded by providing a current perspective on issues that relate to concerns of factors that contribute to both use of evaluations or the lack thereof, amongst others, validity in evaluation. The literature review on the utilization of evaluation provided insight into the theories, models and frameworks that are encapsulated in this field of study. Through past and current research the knowledge gap was identified. The literature assisted in identifying the conceptual framework that was applied in this research.

Based on the literature, Utilization-Focused Evaluation was found to be a more useful conceptual framework for this research. An evaluation methodology utilising Paton's (2013) 17 steps for meta-evaluation of

Utilization-Focused Evaluation was identified as the best methodology to evaluate the utilization and usefulness of the evaluation studies performed in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.

## **2.14 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Having assessed all these theories using the frameworks provided earlier for knowledge utilization, the merits and demerits of all frameworks were evaluated. The framework that would be most suitable to evaluate the use of evaluation in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform is Utilization-Focused Evaluation. This framework will assist to determine whether the evaluations were indeed planned with the user in mind. If not, it will explain why the results are currently not being effectively utilised.

Utilization Focused Evaluation approach is a theory based evaluation approach, and thus appropriate for the evaluation of any initiative. It is the most suitable information source and catalyst for improvement of any form, based on its ability to make judgements based on the worth of the project, improving the evaluation effectiveness as well as informing future decisions (Briedenhann and Butt, 2005).

### ***2.14.1 Utilization Focused Evaluation***

Patton developed the framework that is based on usefulness of evaluation and named it the Utilization Focused-Evaluation. Since its inception, Utilization-Focused Evaluation has been confirmed and its major elements elaborated on by several others, namely: Alkin, Daillak and White (1979); King and Pitchmen (1982); Campbell (1983); Holley and Arboleda-Florez (1988); Ferguson (1989); and Patton (2002). From 1997, literature shows that Patton's writings emphasized the importance of the use of evaluation results (Patton, 1997, 2002, 2008), and Patton (1985) noted that, in evaluation, the utilization of results is critical. This phrase is the driving force behind Patton's Utilization-Focused Evaluation.

In the Utilization-Focused Evaluation approach, usage of evaluation results is critical and that can only happen if it was planned that way, together with all the stakeholders who will be using the results. Patton (2002) suggests that the most important criteria used when judging an evaluation is the extent to which the intended users actually use the findings from the evaluation for decision-making, programme development and improvement. According to Patton (1997), no matter how rigorous the methods of data collection, design and reporting are in evaluation, if it does not get used it is a bad evaluation.

Patton (2012) explains that utilization-focused evaluation does not advocate any particular theory or framework; however, the design and methodology is expected to be rigorous and data collection tools reliable to ensure validity of the results. It is a participatory approach to assist primary intended users to select the best appropriate models, methods, theory and uses for particular situations. It is one of the most innovative ways of generating useful evaluation. It moves away from abstract users to identified real primary users that are participants of the evaluation process (Patton, 2012).

The premises of utilization-focused evaluation is outlined by Patton (2010) as being that no evaluation should go forward unless and until there are primary intended users who will use the information that will be generated. That is why utilization-focused evaluation is said to be highly personal and situational. Evaluators become facilitators and develop a working relationship with intended users to help with the identification of the kind of evaluation they need (Patton, 2002). The outcome of the exercise will be a negotiated. Utilization-Focussed Evaluation is guided by the framework of established evaluation standards and principles (Patton, 2002).

Another premise of utilization-focussed evaluations, as already mentioned, is that the approach does not support any particular evaluation approach,

content, model, method, theory or even the use. It allows the primary intended users to select the most appropriate model, method, theories and uses for their particular situation where situational responsiveness guides the interaction between the intended evaluator and the intended primary users. The UFE can include any form of evaluation design and methodology; it is a collaborative process between the evaluation facilitator and the intended users (Patton, 2010).

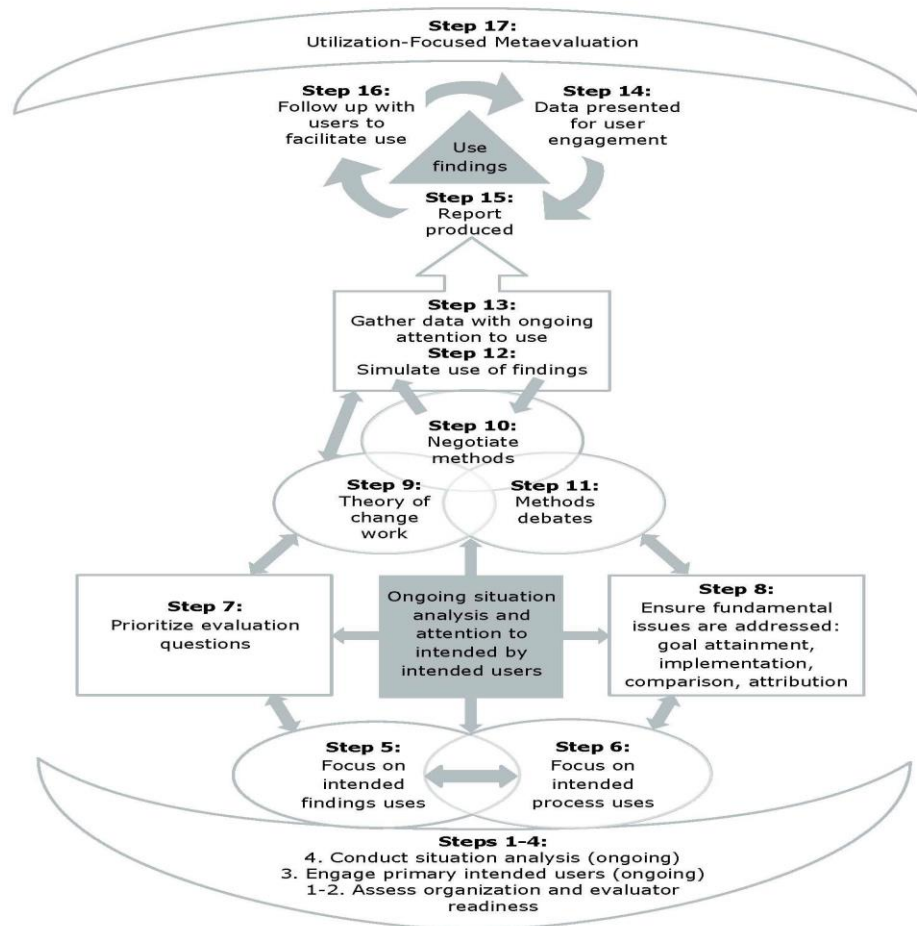
Lastly, according to Patton (2010), the psychology of use underpins utilization-focused evaluation; thus intended users are more likely to use evaluations when they understand and have ownership of the evaluation process and findings and they have been actively involved. Active involvement includes primary intended users, evaluators and facilitators, training of users, preparation of ground work, and enforcing the intended utility of the evaluation every step of the way.

#### ***2.14.2 Theory Measuring Instrument***

Patton (1978) provides criteria for Utilization-Focused Evaluation Questions and a 12-part checklist for facilitation of the utilization-focused evaluation for the users as already stipulated, as well as the 17-steps framework for meta evaluation of utilization-focused evaluations as depicted in Figure 2 below. Meta evaluation is defined by the OECD (year: 27) as an “evaluation of evaluation” that is normally used to assess the quality of the evaluation. Patton (2002) uses meta evaluation as the last step in the framework to determine the extent to which an evaluation achieved the intended use by users’ objective.



**Figure 2: 17 Steps for meta-evaluation of utilization focused evaluations**



Source: Patton (2013: 19) The Evaluation Center: Evaluation Checklists Project

Utilization-Focused Evaluation is concerned about what will happen after the evaluation is completed and focuses on the usage of the evaluation results from the very beginning. Utilization-Focused Evaluation begins with the intended users and what information is important for them. The underlying question of every Utilization-Focused Evaluation should be. "What difference will this study make?" (Patton, 2002).

The utilization focus keeps findings from becoming too abstract, esoteric or theoretical. Utilization-Focused Evaluation requires the evaluation to move from the general to the specific (Patton, 1997). The Achilles' heel of Utilization-Focused Evaluation is the turnover of the primary intended uses (Patton, 1997). The framework of the entire evaluation was geared towards the results that the initial primary users needed; once those users were changed the entire validity of the evaluation become jeopardized.

Serious attention to use involves financial and time costs that are far from trivial. Utilization-Focused Evaluation as developed by Patton is an approach based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users. Therefore evaluations should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance (Patton, 2008).

Utilization-Focused Evaluation has two essential elements. Firstly, the primary intended users of the evaluation must be clearly identified and personally engaged at the beginning of the evaluation process to ensure that their primary intended uses can be identified. Secondly, evaluators must ensure that these intended uses of the evaluation by the primary intended users guide all other decisions that are made about the evaluation process (Patton, 2008).

Rather than a focus on general and abstract users and uses, Utilization-Focused Evaluation is focused on real and specific users and uses. The evaluator's job is not to make decisions independently of the intended users, but rather to facilitate decision-making amongst the people who will use the findings of the evaluation (Patton, 2008).

Patton (2008) argues that research on evaluation demonstrates that, "Intended users are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings [and that] [t]hey are

more likely to understand and feel ownership if they have been actively involved. By actively involving primary intended users, the evaluator is preparing the groundwork for use” (Patton, 2008).

Utilization-Focused Evaluation can be used for different types of evaluation (formative, summative, process, impact) and it can use different research designs and types of data. The framework can be used in a variety of ways depending on the context and the needs of the situation.

### ***2.14.3 Where has the Framework been used?***

According to Patton (2010), the framework has been used by 20 federal health evaluations and 35 years of research, as a research-based evaluation model (Patton, 2002, 2010). In 1975 a team of evaluators, including Patton, became involved in a study sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health. The qualitative study looked at the factors that seemed to explain variations in the actual use of health evaluations. The team interviewed evaluators, funders and programme managers to find out how evaluations findings were used. The results of the study showed that the information gathered was not what was expected or particularly useful. It was discovered that a great deal of time and energy went into an evaluation that did not provide useful information. This was the beginning of the utilization-focused evaluation process (Patton, 1978).

Patton’s original framework consisted of a 5-step process which is explained below. However, there is also a 12-step framework and the latest update is a 17-step framework that will be used in this study. It is a decision-making framework for enhancing the utility taking cognisance of all aspects of evaluation from the beginning to the end. Utilization Focused Evaluation framework can be used for different types of evaluation (formative, summative, process, impact) and it can use different research designs and types of data. The UFE framework can be used in a variety of ways depending on the context and the needs of the situation.

Examples of the study that utilized the 5-step Utilization-Focused Evaluations Framework is depicted from Patton and Horton (2009) in their seminal studies, the Utilization-Focused Evaluation for Agricultural Innovation International Labour Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Brief No. 22, and the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR).

According to Patton and Horton (2009), the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) requested Horton in 2006 to evaluate its programmes that were funded by Dutch Government. The evaluation was supposed to be the end-of-term evaluation. Horton undertook the evaluation utilising the 5-step Utilization-Focused Evaluation framework that evolved as follows:

***Step 1. Identify the purpose, primary users and intended uses***

The identifying the evaluation purpose, uses and users was the initial step taken. This involved meetings with all relevant stakeholders as well as the potential users of the evaluation information. Amongst those met was the Director of the programme as well as the Foreign Affairs officers of the Dutch Ministry. The mission of the evaluation was confirmed as to strengthen the programmes of the INBAR including management.

***Step 2. Gaining the commitment to use the UFE framework and focus the evaluation***

The second step was to ascertain that all stakeholders were committed to the evaluation and they were intending to use it to improve their programme, and thereafter, key issues were identified and various options identified with regard to the methodology. Three options were identified and the evaluation framework agreed.

### ***Step 3. Decisions made on different evaluation options available***

The next step was to agree on the evaluation methodology to be used. That involved the development of the terms of reference of how to interact with various stakeholders on site all the way to report writing. Participation of the evaluator in workshops and field visits were key to the success of the evaluation.

### ***Step 4. Analysing and interpreting evaluation findings and reaching conclusions***

The analysis and interpretation of the evaluation findings were assisted by the debriefings that took place at the end of each field visit. All stakeholders had personal data to contribute to the study and management and project official commented and made additions to the drafted evaluation report.

### ***Step 5. Dissemination and discussion of evaluation findings***

In order to disseminate the evaluation findings, the evaluator had to meet in person with representatives of the donor countries for the purpose of discussing the findings of the evaluation and make the final report available to all stakeholders for use and publication.

### ***Step 6. Utilization of the evaluation findings***

The last step was the utilization of the evaluation results. It was recognised that the evaluation process assisted in exposing a number of issues and options to strengthen the INBAR programme. There were recommendations made that led to increased efficiencies in other areas and expansion in others (Patton and Horton, 2009).

#### ***2.14.4 Influences of Choice of Utilization-Focused Evaluation as Conceptual Framework***

The multi-utility and multi-disciplinary nature of knowledge utilization has presented evaluators with multiple understandings of use as well as choices on how to use it. There are a number of influences on how knowledge is used in the context of different users. It has already been explained that use is dependent on a contextual influence. As indicated, key variables or attributes that evaluators can utilize in assessing utilization, according to Blake and Ottoson (2009:27-28), are, 1) utilization coverage that is dependent on the context of use; 2) dissemination and diffusion being the distribution or movement of information or knowledge and its processes to the intended users found to be the part of the solution of underutilization; 3) knowledge transfer through negotiations to be made accessible to users in organisations; 4) systematic implementation that enhances use and results in changed behaviours in organisations; and 5) knowledge translation as policy (Blake and Ottoson, 2009). Participatory evaluations such as the utilization-focused evaluation framework have long recognised the importance of translation.

#### **2.15 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this chapter outlined the literature reviewed on the utilization of evaluation information over time. It provided the research setting in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. It then explained what has been done in the field of evaluation utilization, what the emerging issues are and what is being done about them. It also provided different perspectives and schools of thoughts on the evaluation utilization as well as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and models that emerged. Brief examples of applications or studies that applied those frameworks and the results obtained were discussed.

The literature that has been reviewed explored an existing body of knowledge on the subject of utilization of evaluation findings. It provided the basis and the rationale of the research. It also explained what has been researched, past and current studies by various scholars and identified the gaps in the knowledge base. Furthermore, the literature outlined schools of thought and theoretical perspectives underlying the utilization of evaluation. It identified the broad field in which the study fits as well as the explanatory frameworks and models that have emerged over time. This facilitated the identification of the conceptual framework for this research as well as important attributes and variables of the research.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The research strategy for this study is qualitative. A distinction is made between quantitative and qualitative research. Bryman (2012) differentiates quantitative and qualitative methods by numbers. Quantitative methods involve numerical values normally used in statistics to determine descriptive statistics, from population and samples associated with empirical positivist research. The qualitative strategy is associated with interpretivism and anti-positivist epistemology and it enjoys rich text and deep explanations of phenomena that cannot be analysed statistically. These are two methods that are commonly used in any research, and can also be used jointly in a single research, a method then referred to as mixed method research.

Mixed method research is commonly defined as the study that uses both quantitative and qualitative research strategies. However, it can also describe a study that combines various methods within any one of the two research strategies (Bryman, 2012:713). In evaluation research this method is advocated by scholars such as Bamberger (2010), mainly when evaluations are undertaken in less than perfect situations. This is because numbers only do not tell the story of underlying factors that affect the variables being researched. Mixed methods research can also be used as a way of triangulating information with the advantage of quantitative methodology being ease of collection and analysis of data, especially in the case where time is a limiting factor. Quantification eases the use of electronic tools that minimize the human error so as to ensure greater accuracy and credibility of the result.



In this chapter a detailed discussion on both these methods will be provided. Reasons will also be forwarded as to why preference is given to qualitative methods of research in this study.

There are a number of research designs that were discovered during the literature review. In the main, there are five major common categories of research design in social research, namely the experimental design, cross-sectional design, longitudinal design, case study and comparative design (Bryman, 2012; 44-75). For purposes of this study a meta-evaluation design of the cross-sectional evaluation studies will be used. A meta-evaluation is defined as an evaluation of an evaluation that determines the merit or worth of an evaluation itself (Patton, 2002:211; Wrotham, Sanders and Fitzpatrick, 1997:519). According to the OECD (2002), a meta-evaluation is described as an evaluation designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. It can be used to judge the quality or to assess the performance of the evaluators (OECD, 2002). Patton (2002: 211) asserts that one can learn a great deal about evaluation design through meta-evaluations.

This meta-evaluation focuses on a few cross-sectional evaluation studies that were conducted and verified as to whether certain processes were followed. A cross-sectional design is defined by Bryman (2012: 58-59) as a collection of data on more than one case study at a single point in time in order to collect a body of both qualitative as well as quantitative data to determine patterns of association. It is often referred to as a survey design (Bryman, 2012:58-59). In the main, the aim is to check whether the results of these evaluations were effectively utilised by the department concerned.

Patton's (2012) framework on utilization-focused evaluations was central to this study. An account of how this framework is critical for this study was provided in the literature review chapter as a conceptual framework, with full description of the framework and the 17 steps that need to be followed for an evaluation to be deemed utilization-focused. A description of

Patton's theoretical premises has also been discussed in the conceptual theory section of this report.

Primary data was collected through interviews and secondary data was obtained from documents, specifically evaluation reports. A purposive sampling method was used since the targeted population was departmental officials available to respond to questions.

Purposive sampling is defined as a non-probability form of sampling where random sampling is not necessarily critical. Its goal is to sample participants in a strategic way to ensure that those sampled should be relevant to the study (Bryman, 2012:418).

## **3.2 RESEARCH STRATEGY**

Bryman (2012:35) defines a research strategy as a general orientation to the conduct of social research. As already indicated, there are three methods that can be utilised for any given research. The discussion that follows will focus mainly on quantitative and qualitative research, since mixed methods research is a combination of the two mentioned strategies.

It was felt that it is necessary to discuss the quantitative research methods here so that it can be distinguished from qualitative while clearly illustrating how it was seen as irrelevant for this research study.

### ***3.2.1 Quantitative research***

Bryman (2012:35) argues that for many writers quantitative and qualitative research differ with respect to their epistemological foundations as well as in other respects. He suggests that quantitative research can be construed as a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data; and by contrast, qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather

than quantification. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:5) argue that answers to quantitative research questions are presented in numerical form. They further emphasise that quantitative (statistical) data analysis is the analysis of numerical data using techniques that include: (1) simply describing the phenomenon of interest; or (2) looking for significant differences between groups or among variables (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009:5). This is true, in that quantitative research is about numbers with brief descriptions of what they mean. Until recently, many research traditionalists maintained the view that quantitative research was the only appropriate approach to follow with any scientific research problem (McNabb, 2013:102). They also held a view that if it cannot be measured, it cannot be studied. These are the first stage theorists' referred to in the literature review above. However, recent developments indicate that qualitative research is as important in social research (Bryman, 2012:19-41).

Quantitative research has its own challenges because it requires that a large sample be utilised to adequately deal with the sample error. According to Wagner *et al.* (2012:87), a precise statistic cannot be provided, because of the effect of the sampling error. The best way to reduce sampling error is by selecting large samples, although this does not guarantee statistics free of errors but is only based on the notion that the larger the sample the more representative it becomes of the population being studied. Bell (2007:77) concedes that the larger the sample, the more representative it is of the population; this increases the generalisability of the results to the population. This is seen as a limitation because researchers most of the time have deadlines to comply with in order to complete the research project and thus have limited time to access larger samples.

The quantitative strategy is not particularly suited to this study. This is because the quantitative techniques tend to be descriptive in nature, describing differences, correlations and variances in dimensions rather

than explaining what the underlying factors are that identify the phenomenon or behaviour explained by the qualitative research method. In this study, the aim is to understand the depth of the issues on utilization, as seen through the eyes of the participants so as to enable one to understand what underpins certain behaviour. This can only be done through conversations with the participants in order to interpret their social world in their own view (Bryman, 2012).

### **3.2.2 Qualitative research**

The research strategy selected in this research study is qualitative in nature. As mentioned, qualitative and quantitative methods are differentiated by the use of numbers where quantitative methods involve numerical values in the form of descriptive statistics, associated with empirical positivist research, while the qualitative strategy is associated with interpretivism anti-positivist epistemology utilizing rich text and in-depth explanations of phenomena that cannot be analysed statistically (Bryman, 2012:62). According to Wagner (2012:88), qualitative research by its very nature is not prescriptive. Methods are often unique to a particular study and/or context. The choice of the qualitative strategy in this research came about due to the need to understand issues underlying the underutilization of the evaluation findings in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and how to resolve those. It is the depth of the issues that one wishes to understand using evaluation research.

According to Bryman (2012:617), qualitative research would seem to have a monopoly on the ability to study meaning. Its proponents essentially claim that it is only through qualitative research that the world can be studied through the eyes of people who are studied.

Qualitative research is based on ethnography. Brewer in Bell (2007:16) defines ethnography as the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating

directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally. This is exactly how the research will progress since the researcher will be administering questionnaires and conducting interviews.

In this study, one wishes to understand the depth of the issues on utilization of evaluations, as seen in the eyes of the participants, to enable one to understand what underpins certain behavioural patterns. This can only be done through conversations with the participants, in order to interpret their social world in their own view (Bryman, 2012:626) Teddlie and Tashakorri (2009:11) concurs that qualitative research questions are generic in nature, involving the description of what actually happened in the field. This study relies on respondents to provide information on evaluations utilization.

The advantages of qualitative methods are that the informant is allowed to provide the necessary context. However, the methodology is labour-intensive and it is subjective if the enumerator is not properly trained. The measurement error creeps easily especially with interpretation, minimizing reliability of the method. There are also a number of assumptions underlying the qualitative research strategy and advantages, as well as the disadvantages thereof. An assumption of qualitative strategy is that it uses inductive reasoning where theory is an outcome of research. The researcher is part of the research and a primary data collection tool, seeing through the lens of the participants and interpretations from their world. It is flexible, content-rich, specific to what is researched and cannot be generalized. The ultimate aim of qualitative strategy is to understand meaning, discover new things and generate hypothesis.

The qualitative research strategy is the most preferred for this research, since it will help answer the main research questions as stipulated in section 1.2.3 above, by providing insights into factors that led to

underutilization of evaluations in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The strategy will enable the study to provide explanations and perceptions of respondents on evaluations and the use thereof. It will assist to explore systems that are best understood by the participants as well as describe the lived experiences of the primary users of the evaluations.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Rugg and Petre (2007:61), research design, as opposed to just research, is about finding things out systematically, a form of mapping as opposed to treasure hunting. If research is properly planned, whatever is identified should be a useful contribution to knowledge. The research design used for this study is a cross-sectional meta-evaluation of the three evaluations that were collaborated on by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluations (DPME) and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). Patton's (2012) framework and seventeen steps of utilization-focused evaluation were used as an assessment tool for this purpose.

According to Patton (2013:19), in the Seventeen Step Utilization-Focused Evaluation Framework, the seventeen steps are:

- Step 1:** Organizational Readiness Assessment: The organisational and Programme evaluated readiness for utilization-focused evaluation must be assessed and built.
- Step 2:** Evaluators Readiness and Competency Assessment: The evaluator readiness and competence must be assessed and enhanced to undertake a utilization-focused evaluation.
- Step 3:** Engage Primary Users: Primary intended users must be identified, organized, and engaged.
- Step 4:** Situation analysis: A situational analysis must be conducted jointly with primary intended users.

- Step 5:** Prioritize Purposes: Identify and prioritize primary intended uses by determining priority purposes.
- Step 6:** Build Processes: Consider and build in process uses if and as appropriate.
- Step 7:** Evaluation Questions: Focus priority evaluation questions.
- Step 8:** Fundamentals for an Evaluation Enquiry: Check that fundamental areas for evaluation inquiry are being adequately addressed: implementation, outcomes, and attribution questions.
- Step 9:** Theory of Change: Determine what intervention model or theory of change is being evaluated.
- Step 10:** Findings: Appropriate methods to generate credible findings that support intended use by intended users must be negotiated.
- Step 11:** Potential Controversies: Make sure intended users understand potential methods controversies and their implications.
- Step 12:** Utilization of Findings: Simulate use of findings: evaluation's equivalent of a dress rehearsal.
- Step 13:** Data gathering: Gather data with on-going attention to use.
- Step 14:** Data Presentation: Organize and present the data for interpretation and use by primary intended users: analysis, interpretation, judgment, and recommendations.
- Step 15:** Reporting and Dissemination: Prepare an evaluation report to facilitate use and disseminate significant findings to expand influence.
- Step 16:** Enhance use: Follow up with primary intended users to facilitate and enhance use.

**Step 17:** Meta-evaluation of use: Be accountable, learn, and improve.'

Meta-evaluation is an evaluation of an evaluation(s) from which, according to Patton (2002:211), a lot can be learned about evaluation designs when it is conducted. The information generated by meta-evaluations is used for decision-making despite the threats to internal and external validity of the evaluations themselves.

The meta-evaluation in this research was mainly a document search supplemented by interviews and sample survey using semi-structured questionnaires. Three major evaluations, namely the Implementation Evaluation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, the Implementation Evaluation of the Recapitalisation and Development Programme, and the Implementation Evaluation of the Restitution Programme were evaluated for their usefulness.

There are two qualitative research approaches that can be used for this study, namely the basic interpretive qualitative study and the action research. Basic interpretive study is research for the sake of knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon and how the world works in order to generate theories or test existing ones. According to Patton (2002:215), qualitative enquiry such as this study contributes to basic interpretive research through inductive theory development such as the grounded theory approach that is an interactive approach to the analysis of qualitative data that aims to generate theory out of research (Bryman, 2012:712) and an inductive strategy for generating and confirming theory that emerges from close involvement and direct contact with the empirical world (Patton, 2002:215-216).

Action research includes evaluation research work on human and societal problems and has implications for people's everyday lives (Patton, 2002:218; Bryman, 2012:7). Action research is defined by Bryan (2012:709) as an approach the researcher and the participant collaborate



on regarding the diagnosis of the problem and the development of the solution to the problem. Evaluation research, on the other hand, concerns itself with the real life interventions in the social world(Bryan, 2012:711) and it examines as well as judges the processes and outcomes aimed at attempted solutions (Patton, 2002:218).

These two designs facilitate the research to bring about in-depth interpreted understanding of the environment in which decision-making takes place. The data collection methods provide the opportunity for the researcher to be in close contact with the participants for detailed rich information collection. Action research is participatory and will need a considerable amount of time and resources, which was not available to the researcher.

For this study a basic interpretative research design was undertaken. It is exploratory in nature, providing the participants an opportunity to bring out their own views and insights on the subject of evaluations and their utilization or lack thereof in decision-making processes of the department. This is one of the reasons why a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was utilised. It also allows the researcher to probe further.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection involves gaining permissions, conducting a good qualitative sampling strategy, developing means of recording information both digitally and on paper, storing the data, and anticipating ethical issues that may arise (Cresswell, 2013:145). Deciding what to record is an integral part of collecting qualitative data. Moreover, to improve their completeness and accuracy, the initial notes taken during the actual fieldwork need to be reviewed and refined on a regular basis (Yin, 2011:155). These recordings are important in that they can be a qualitative

study's main data collection technique and therefore deserve careful handling (Merriam, 2002:194). Data collection is a continuous process that involves a number of activities like gaining access, purposefully sampling, collecting data, recording information, and storing that information. Data collection is the most important and critical part of any research, since any research study is dependent on data. Recommendations and findings are based on the data that was collected. Different methods and practices are used to collect data, in the case of this study, both primary and secondary data

### ***3.4 1 Data Collection Instrument***

Different methods were used to collect the same kind of data for this study. These included the following instruments:

#### **3.4.1.1 Documents Content Analysis**

Document content analysis of three (3) external evaluation studies undertaken with the Department of Performance Evaluation and Evaluation in the Presidency that has been conducted, including tracking reports of outcomes of action plans that were developed with remedial actions to improve the programmes. There are other self-evaluations that were completed by the monitoring and evaluation unit of the department that was included in the documents to be reviewed.

Silverman (2004:66) argues that documents do not stand alone. They do not construct systems or domains of documentary reality as individual, separate activities. In all instances documents refer to realities that occurred and mostly they also refer to many others. It is important to understand the intertextuality of these documents, how they relate to the topic under investigation and how much value they will add. This will guide the researcher as to which documents should enjoy greater attention. Document content analysis of the three (3) external evaluations of the

major programmes of the department including improvement plans and outcome reports thereof were included in the document content analysis. Various evaluation studies previously concluded, including internal self-evaluations that were completed by the monitoring and evaluation unit of the department were also be included to track how they were used.

In this study the researcher is the main instrument of research and an official in that environment. It was therefore easy to have access to the main source of information coming from the monitoring and evaluation unit as well as the evaluation reports of the programmes and their action plans. Various departmental records and reports were used as the main information sources. Care was taken in the handling and storage of the research information. The department has archives where physical documents are locked away as well as electronic document archives where electronic information can be securely stored.

The main issue in qualitative research regarding the researcher being the main instrument of research is reflexivity. Reflexivity, according to Ryman (2012:393), carries a connotation that social researchers should be reflective about the implications of their methods, their values, biases and decisions. They must be sensitive to their cultural, political and social context as these can influence the outcome of the study.

#### **3.4.1.2 Interviews**

Interviews were a major tools used for collecting primary data in this study. The main purpose of interviewing is to allow the researcher to enter into the other person's perspective in order to find out what is in and on someone else's mind (Patton, 2002:340). A qualitative interview according to Patton (2002:341) begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowledgeable and explicit.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994:205), challenges in qualitative interviewing often focus on the mechanics of conducting an interview. These challenges relate to unexpected participant behaviours and the researcher's ability to create good instructions, phrase and negotiate questions, deal with sensitive issues, and develop transcriptions. Interviews are technical and they always determine the quality of data that will be collected. Gray (2007) in Bell (2007:23) contends that interviews are time-consuming and require the researcher to allow the storytellers to recount their experience in their own way. These respondents need to have confidence in the researcher so that they can open up. This on its own takes time, more especially when dealing with sensitive issues. If not handled properly they may prove disastrous, as the quality of the responses is dependent on the interviewer's ability to conduct interviews. They may not be taken lightly.

In this study interviews were conducted with various stakeholders, amongst others senior and middle management of the department, project officials and programme managers responsible for implementation of evaluated programmes and supposedly the main prospective users of the evaluation studies. Semi-structured questionnaires were used. The questions in the questionnaires and interview schedule were derived from the main evaluation questions. Questions were both closed and open ended and the questionnaires were tested adequately before interviews were conducted. The use of the electronic mailing system was explored to reach the respondents outside National Office who reside and work in other provinces.

For the interviews to be effective, the types of questions asked are critical. An exploratory research that needs a lot of rich text and explanations will use a number of open ended questionnaires and probing. There are different kinds of questions that were captured in an interview schedule, namely standardized, semi-standardized and non-standardized questions. The standardized questions provided an opportunity to probe for a

conversation guided by probes from the interviewer. Non-standardized questions can come as a list of topics for discussion. This provides flexibility in an interview (Bryman, 2012).

In every interview guide there were different types of questions that were asked. Introductory questions are used as ice breakers in the interview. These are normally biographical questions. There is always a follow-up question that seeks clarity on an issue. Questions can be specific, direct and indirect, depending on the responses obtained from the interviewee. Questions can be structuring, interpreting as well as probing. All these facilitate communication taking place. Silence can also be an important question that allows reflection to take place (Bryman, 2012).

Probing and prompting are other important components of interviews. These are used to clarify matters where there is ambiguity or confusion due to terminology or language. Standard probes such as silence or a question such as “what else?” are used mainly to probe; phrases such as please “tell me about” and “You mentioned...”are prompting (Bryman, 2012).

#### **3.4.1.3 Focus Groups**

A focus group is defined by Bryan (2012:712) as a form of a group interview in which there are several participants and the emphasis in the questioning is around a particular topic and participation of the group. It is designed to yield information that results from guided interaction among group members producing different information from that provided by structured one-to one or structured group interviews (Worthen, Sanders and Fitzpatrick, 1997:518).

Focus groups are generally groups of people who share the same interest. Groups of officials who work directly with the beneficiaries of the interventions were interviewed to understand the changes that were

experienced after the programmes were evaluated, if any. Focus groups were constituted in terms of different programmes, for example, a focus group for the Restitution Programme, Comprehensive Rural Development Programme and that of the Recapitalization and Development programme. An interview guide was drawn up to guide interviews that were conducted. A tape recorder was used to record the responses of the respondents and the information downloaded and stored in the computer.

### **3.5 SAMPLING**

The sampling method utilised for this research is purposive sampling. The population in this study is the officials of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The management echelon of the department is the targeted population for this study and a sample was drawn from them. Purposive sampling is typically associated with qualitative research and may be defined as selecting a relatively small number of units because they can provide particularly valuable information related to the research questions under examination (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:1115). The goal or purpose for selecting the specific study units is to have those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data (Yin, 2011:88). Of particular interest was the management of the department within the programmes that have been evaluated. The department has a staff complement of 5,812, of which 11 are executives, 253 are senior managers and 1,889 are in middle management (DRDLR, 2014). In total, 12 executive managers of the department were to be interviewed and other managers and officials were asked to complete questionnaires of which 35 responded.

Purposeful sampling has a number of advantages. It provided the researcher with the opportunity to select a sample where it can provide more learning and insight. The researcher is also able to choose cases or sights that are rich in information from which the study will benefit substantially. Cases with rich information strengthen the validity and

credibility of the research. The disadvantage of this sampling method is that it is flexible and thus subject to human bias

It is important to realize that because of the qualitative nature of this study, the sample size is smaller because it is not meant to be representative of the population under study. It is the richness of the text coming from the interviewees that is of importance. The qualitative research uses a non-probability sampling method. The non-probability sampling does not involve random sampling. Random samples are utilized in quantitative sampling. They are probability sampling methods and in research they are highly regarded and used, as it is assumed that they are more accurate than non-probability methodologies. With probability sampling the tool provides each member of the population with the same chance of, or a probability of, being selected as part of the sample. This sampling technique is used in quantitative methods (Bryman, 2012).

### **3.6 DATA VALIDATION**

In this research, much consideration was given to issues of ethics, validity and reliability. Validity and reliability are important in qualitative research. Because of the nature of qualitative research, generalization of results is not acceptable. The concepts come from qualitative methods, and for the qualitative study to be valid and credible the research must meet the requirements for both external and internal validity and reliability (Bryman, 2012). Thus, the data triangulation method was utilised.

The terms are derived from the quantitative and empirical side of research. They are underpinned by standardization, measurability and empirical data. The emphasis is on methodological rigour and replicability. Qualitative research method is always criticized on these aspects. It is challenged because of the small samples that cannot generalize; two researches may not arrive at the same results and the human factor brings

in bias. The researcher as the main instrument of research may not be deemed a reliable data collection instrument (Bryman, 2012).

### **3.6.1 Reliability**

Reliability, according to Cook and Beckman (2006), is truthfulness, steadfast, consistent to ensure reproducibility of scores. It refers to the degree of stability, consistency and accuracy such that repeatability of scores is ensured (Groth-Marnat, 1990). The main issue about reliability is how to convince the reader and the users of the research that it is trustworthy. The trustworthiness of the research is critical if the results of research are to be used. In qualitative research the social setting cannot be frozen and thus reliability becomes a difficult criterion to meet. Strategies to improve or enhance reliability are reflexive statements for investigators' position, triangulation, and audit trails. Qualitative research uses all of the above to respond to the criticism with regard to issues of validity and reliability

### **3.6.2 Validity**

Validity is the degree to which conclusions can be derived from results of any assessment and be justified as being relevant and meaningful. Validity relates more to the methodology whilst reliability is more related to the data collection tool. Construct validity is the main validity that is being looked out for, as it measures what it is supposed to measure (Groth-Marnat, 1990). The lens that is used to establish validity is the researcher, the participant's reflection of reality and the external review of the study that is very strong. The internal validity in this study is very weak or not applicable, whilst the external validity is very strong. Validity can also be looked at in terms of working hypotheses that investigate what is already determined by the quantitative techniques. In that way it will be providing concrete detail of a phenomenon that is researched in a way that strengthens validity of the study. The researcher can also look at patterns



and experiences to validate the outcomes of the research. Strategies to strengthen internal validity included, amongst others, triangulation, member check of data, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory modes of research as well as researchers' reflexivity. In this study data triangulation was the most used.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

The overall process of data analysis began by identifying segments in the data set that are responsive to the research questions (Merriam 2009:176). All data that were obtained from interviews, questionnaires and document studies were reviewed with a purpose of identifying parts which are basically responding to the research questions. The questions contained in the interview guide are linked to the research question and if answered adequately, will respond to the research question. The study utilized both primary data collected directly from the informants and secondary data from the three external evaluations already concluded by the Department of Rural Development and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. That includes the extensive collection of data from its monitoring and reporting activities.

Data quality is critical in the process of conducting research. This is why planning for research is so important, because once the quality of data is compromised at any stage in the process that will threaten the validity and reliability of the findings. This can render the study as not credible and the results would not be used. According to Cook and Beckman (2006), it does not matter what research method one uses, the issue of data quality, more so validity of approach and research, must always be thought through to ensure that the study is accurate, meaningful and credible.

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Before commencing with the research consent was sought from the management of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. This is because the information of the department is utilized and permission is required for such information to be published.

The same was applicable for interviews and discussions with participants. As a researcher, the respondents need to provide their consent to involve them in the study and they should sign an informed consent form. According to Bryman (2012), the principle of informed consent, assumes that people are informed about the process of the research.

It was also important to assure the participants of the confidentiality of the research and that their names would not be used in the final analysis and results of the study. This ensured better participation on their side. Obtaining informed consent was critical to the researcher. If it is neglected, there are possibilities that the respondents may not agree to publish the results and thus the whole research would be null and void and will be wasted.

### **3.9 DEMOGRAPHIC OF THE SAMPLE**

The sample of this research consisted of officials of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The sample consisted of management at all levels as well as officials that are working in the programmes that have been evaluated. The sample consisted of males and females of all ages, and the youth and people with disabilities were also being represented.

### **3.10 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

Although the subject of utilization of evaluation in decision-making is well researched, this study is only applicable to the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.

The findings and results of this study are being specific to the context and environment of the department. The study uses the non-probability purposive sampling methods, thus the results cannot be generalised.

It should be noted that the sample was more biased towards management and excluded completely the beneficiaries of the programmes that were evaluated. The study also used a lot of secondary information in the form of evaluation studies that had been completed. The evaluations were done for different reasons to what they were used for in the study.

### **3.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study makes a valuable contribution in the current public management reforms that are taking place in the area of Results-Based Management. Utilization of the results of various studies and information from the evaluation systems has been a matter of concern, more so in many developing countries. South Africa as one of the countries that recently introduced evaluations in its government-wide monitoring and evaluation system will benefit from this study to ensure that findings from its evaluation studies are utilized.

There are a number of potential users of the results of this study. Firstly, it will be used by the management of the department who will be empowered on how to utilize the results of evaluations performed. Secondly, the evaluation fraternity will benefit from the study as it will provide them with more insight into the subject matter. The reach will add to the body of knowledge in evaluations and their use. Politicians and

government officials across all levels of government, the private sector and non-governmental organisations that benefit from the services, as well as the civil society at large will also benefit. Furthermore, it will benefit all the beneficiaries and the programme managers and their teams.

The results of the study will empower each one of these groupings for the purpose of supporting the use of evaluations in informing decisions. Therefore, dissemination and communication of the results of the study need to be planned for to ensure that the results are used. Patton (2008) is an advocate for utilization-focused evaluation. The ethos of this principle is that demand-led evaluations are more useful and the results better used than the supply-led evaluation.

### **3.12 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this section provided a framework on which the study was premised. It introduced the research setting and context and outlined the research problem statement, the purpose of the research and the research question as well as the rationale for undertaking the study.

The research methodology that was followed was described. It identified the research strategy and the design of the study. A brief outline of the procedures and methods that were followed in the execution of the study and presentation of results, including a discussion on how critical issues regarding ethics, reliability, validity and the identified reach limitations were dealt with.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The following chapter presents data and the findings of this study. It is premised on three implementation evaluations of the DRDLR programmes that were undertaken in collaboration with the DPME, namely the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), the Recapitalization and Development Programme (RADP) as well as the Restitution of Land Rights Programme, that is referred here as Restitution. There were also questionnaires administered to departmental officials and interviews with focus groups. All findings from these three categories of information are presented below.

The three evaluations conducted are evaluated since this research design is a meta-evaluation, or an evaluation of the evaluation and it is based on document search and content analysis. An evaluation methodology utilising Patton's (2013:19) 17 steps for meta-evaluation of utilization-focused evaluations was identified as the best methodology to evaluate the utilization and usefulness of the evaluation studies. Patton used this method to assess the evaluators as to whether they have followed the utilization-focused evaluation methodology when undertaking their evaluations. In this study, what is evaluated are not the evaluators themselves but the evaluations and all the processes that took place and ultimately how the findings are being utilised. According to Patton (1997), no matter how rigorous the methods of data collection, design and reporting are in an evaluation, if it does not get used it is not a good but a bad evaluation. The abovementioned evaluations are evaluated in terms of their utilization, namely whether the results and recommendations thereof were used by the department to inform its decision-making or not.

In order to strengthen the internal and external validity of the study, a triangulation process was followed. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with 12 Executive Managers who oversee the programme both at the policy and implementation levels, as well as 35 responses from questionnaires administered to middle and senior managers. As indicated, secondary data was then obtained from the three evaluation studies themselves through an internal departmental documents search of reports and formal submissions outlining the evaluation process undertaken from beginning to end.

Below is a brief summary of three evaluations that were conducted to provide context to the findings of each, namely implementation evaluation of the CRDP, the Recapitalization and Development Programme (RADP), and the Restitution of Land Rights Programme.

## **4.2. IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CRDP)**

### ***4.2.1. Background***

The extract of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation of CRDP was obtained from the Impact Economix (2013) report prepared for DPME and DRDLR. The implementation evaluation of the CRDP was undertaken by the evaluator Impact Economix, in collaboration with the DPME and the DRDLR in 2012. All the information on the evaluation study itself is obtained from both the main evaluation document and the summarized policy documents compiled by Impact Economix (2014). Management responses were extracted from management action plans and a variety of reports produced by the DRDLR.

The CRDP is a government-wide rural development programme that was launched by DRDLR at its inception in July 2009. It substituted all the rural development strategies that were implemented at that time for one

common three-pronged strategy of agrarian transformation, rural development, and land reform (Impact Economix, 2013). The CRDP brings together a number of departments in the three spheres of government providing services in the rural areas with the aim being to achieve social cohesion and development, through improved access to basic services, enterprise development and village industrialisation (Impact Economix, 2013).

The purpose of the CRDP implementation evaluation was to assess:

- The effectiveness of the CRDP institutional arrangements for implementation in terms of provision of support as well as clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- Achievement of its policy goals; and
- Strengthening of the programme for up-scaling through lessons learned (Impact Economix, 2013).

#### ***4.2.2 Key Policy Findings from the CRDP implementation evaluation***

There are several findings that emanated from the CRDP implementation study. The following are the main broad policy findings:

There is mixed evidence regarding the various CRDP institutional mechanisms and how well these are working and delivering benefits. Most success has been achieved with meeting basic needs, and only limited success has been achieved with community empowerment and job creation;

Furthermore, the major challenges in ensuring that meaningful and sustainable benefits are achieved centre around improving planning and implementation processes of all three spheres of government, strengthening the roles of provincial and local governments, and strengthening partnerships with NGOs and business so that the various initiatives support and complement each other at a site or local level

The issue of value for money became paramount in this evaluation. It has been found that value for money is not being achieved in the CRDP. A rough estimate of the cost to implement the CRDP to all +/- 2,920 rural wards in South Africa over the next 18 years is a minimum of R61.6 billion. It is therefore imperative that a range of measures are put in place to address the underlying causes behind this value for money challenge so that future up-scaling of the CRDP achieves better value for money (Impact Economix, 2013).

#### ***4.2.3 Key recommended strategies for CRDP improvement***

The evaluation study conducted by Impact Economix (2013) made the following recommendations:

Firstly, the department need to strengthen the CRDP's institutional arrangements and integrated planning processes, including strengthening local level institutions and the Council of Stakeholders operating in each site. Secondly to improve the CRDP's attainment of policy goals through improved CRDP strategy for mobilising and empowering communities; improved CRDP rural job creation models and support provided for the economic livelihoods; and lastly improve CRDP targeting of key groups.

Thirdly, to up-scaling the CRDP and improving value for money and sustainability through a range of measures, including developing an improved theory of change for the CRDP job model, finalising the development of national norms and standards for the delivery of infrastructure in rural areas in partnership with national departments and key stakeholders, developing a CRDP procurement strategy, and embracing the use of cost-effective technologies in rural areas that are simple to maintain. Recommended improved monitoring systems will also improve Value for Money if implemented effectively (Impact Economix, 2013).



## **4.3 IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF THE RECAPITALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (RADP)**

### ***4.3.1 Background***

The implementation evaluation of the Recapitalization and Development Programme (RADP) was undertaken by the University of Pretoria's Business Enterprise as the external evaluator in 2012 in collaboration with the DPME and the DRDLR. The extract of this evaluation that included the findings and recommendations are obtained from the evaluation reports themselves. Responses from the management remedial action plan are obtained from the management improvement plan action plans drawn up by DRDLR executive management in response to the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. All the information on the evaluation study itself was obtained from both the main evaluation document and the summarized policy documents compiled by Pretoria University Business Enterprise (2014).

The Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RADP) was launched in 2010 by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). This was a year after the department was created and new strategies were being put together to accelerate land reform in South Africa, in particular the support to previously disadvantaged aspirant farmers who through various Land Reform strategies acquired land but were unable to maintain it being fully productive. Many farms purchased and redistributed by government to Black farmers were going bankrupt and left abandoned and vandalised. This situation was becoming a threat to the country's food security and an intervention by the government was sought, hence the introduction of the RADP (Pretoria University Business Enterprise, 2014).

According to Business Enterprise (2014), the RADP has five objectives, namely:

- To increase agricultural production;
- To guarantee food security;
- To graduate small farmers into commercial farmers;
- To create employment opportunities in the agricultural sector; and
- To establish rural development monitors (rangers).

As already mentioned, the programme focused on assisting struggling farms who were identified since 1994 as part of the land reform programme. Most of these farms were bought and redistributed to emerging black farmers as going concerns with high potential. However, subsequent to that they received very little or no support. Under this programme, when distressed farms are recapitalised they receive technical and financial support from the department. Two strategic interventions, namely strategic partnership and mentorship, have been adopted under the RADP to ensure sustainability of assisted farms (Pretoria University Business Enterprise, 2014).

An implementation evaluation of the programme was undertaken during November 2012 to July 2013 in six provinces with a sample of 98 farms in Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and North West. Data were gathered from land reform beneficiaries, government officials in all three (3) spheres of government, strategic partners and mentors (Pretoria University Business Enterprise, 2014).

#### ***4.3.2 Key Findings***

The evaluation studies by Pretoria University Business Enterprise (2014) found the following:

The degree of understanding of the programme varies among different RADP stakeholders. The beneficiaries knew it as a funding model that injects capital into struggling farms to recapitalize and revitalise them. The component of capacity-building and establishing market linkages seems not to have received much attention. There is lack of common understanding even among DRDLR officials as to what the RADP entails, its objectives and how it operates. The RADP policy and procedures have been constantly changing.

It was also found that the RADP was not an appropriately designed to achieve the department's intended objectives. The objectives were too ambitious, with most of them not directly linked to the programme. Appropriate structures and procedures were not put in place in the provinces to ensure proper implementation of the programme. Furthermore, RADP did not have a well-defined organisational structure and a structured monitoring and evaluation system. In addition, there are no clear selection criteria for projects, beneficiaries and strategic partners and mentors.

The strategic interventions were not resulting in a broad-based capacitating of the beneficiaries. The effectiveness of strategic interventions seems to vary from province to province. The evaluation revealed that there appears to be serious problems with the transfer of management and technical skills to beneficiaries and establishment of market linkages as well as management of RECAP funds did not result in empowerment with beneficiaries having little control over the fund.

RADP has made progress towards achieving its intended objectives, but there is room for a significant improvement in the areas of market access for farmers and beneficiaries, employment creation, while capacitating of farmer's remains low as skills transfer by strategic partners is not effective. The economic situation of the farmers or beneficiaries is considered to

have improved, although the improvements remain small in absolute terms (Pretoria University Business Enterprise, 2014).

### ***4.3.3 Key Policy Recommendation and Strategies for RADP improvement***

According to Pretoria University Business Enterprise (2014), the best solution proposed was to redesign and overhaul all public agricultural support programmes and dispense with existing silos of funding agricultural support services, including post-settlement support. This would entail the establishment of an all-inclusive fund to support land acquisition, extension and mentorship, agricultural finance and market access. Implementing the proposed 'best solution' would render RADP redundant as they would be subsumed under a single programme for agricultural support.

With the realisation that the provision of adequate agricultural support services for land reform beneficiaries is not possible in the foreseeable future without programmes such as RADP, there is an argument that there is justification for the programme to continue in the interim whilst a lasting solution is sought. The following recommendations are meant to strengthen RADP:

- 1) Review the objectives of RADP to make them more clear and specific. This should include defining the meanings of key terms used in the programme.
- 2) Ensure a common understanding of RADP among its stakeholders by engaging in an all-inclusive process to discuss the nature, operation, purpose and objectives of the programme.
- 3) Establish a separate organizational structure for RADP and ensure that the programme has its own full-time staff and do away with the current arrangement of seconding staff from other units of DRDLR to work for RADP part-time.

- 4) Provide additional and appropriately qualified personnel dedicated to RADP to improve its administrative and functional efficiency. This will address the problem of understaffing in RADP and lack of skills, especially among project officers.
- 5) Develop clear and specific selection criteria for beneficiaries and land reform farms for recapitalization and development in line with the objectives of RADP. The criteria should be developed to ensure that only deserving land reform farms and beneficiaries are selected for participation in RADP.
- 6) Review selection criteria for strategic partners and mentors to ensure that only those that are competent and committed to RADP objectives are selected.
- 7) The requirement to have a strategic partner or mentor to qualify for participation in RADP should be applied selectively to exempt beneficiaries with adequate experience and capacity to manage their farms. This will require conducting skills and needs assessments to determine the readiness of beneficiaries to carry out farming activities without a mentor and/or strategic partner (Pretoria University Business Enterprise, 2014).

## **4.4 IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF THE RESTITUTION PROGRAMME**

### ***4.4.1 Background***

The summarized extract of the findings and recommendations of the implementation evaluation of the Restitution Programme was obtained from the Genesis Analytics (2014) evaluation report. The evaluator undertook the study in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) in 2013. All the information used in this meta-evaluation is taken from the Restitution Evaluation study

itself, from both the main evaluation document and the summarized policy documents compiled by Genesis Analytics (2014).

The Restitution Programme is housed in the Commission of the Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) within the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). The historical, political and policy context to land restitution and the complex legal and institutional arrangements that underpin it make for an extremely demanding and difficult operating framework for the Programme's implementation. For it to work requires a clearly defined and rigorously managed business process supported by a dedicated human resource function, and strong information and performance management systems (Genesis Analytics, 2014).

The evaluation study took place in the following five provinces: Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and the Free State, purposively selected for a particular reason. Objectives of the implementation evaluation were to assess the following:

- Whether the set outputs of the Restitution Programme were being achieved?
- Is the Restitution Programme implemented efficiently and effectively?
- What has made this intervention difficult to implement and are there examples of good practice that we can learn from?
- How can the process of the Restitution Programme be strengthened for future phases of restitution?
- How can the Restitution Programme be implemented more cost effectively?

#### ***4.4.2 Key Policy Findings for the Restitution Programme***

The programme has managed to settle approximately 85% of the claims lodged since its inception. However, the findings of this evaluation reveal a range of serious systemic and operational weaknesses which compromise

its efficiency and effectiveness, and have undermined the achievement of its developmental purpose.

The overall picture that emerges is one of inadequate and incomplete project, filing, performance and information management systems, and the proliferation of decision-making and accountability structures within the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). These have been aggravated by continual processes of restructuring and business process re-engineering which has seen claim settlement shift from a predominantly legal process to an administrative one; from restitution research being managed in-house to being outsourced and then brought in-house again.

The absence of consistent and clearly defined operating procedures has resulted in variations in the processes and approaches to claim settlement across different provinces, as well as inconsistencies in the process over time. The disjointed architecture of the CRLR's information management systems is compounded by the absence of any current Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which define in precise detail the operating requirements and components of every stage of the restitution process. A paper-based system of approval still prevails which results in delays, loss of documentation and the proliferation of decision-making milestones and authorisations.

The absence of an effective Management Information System (MIS) undermines the CRLR's ability to monitor and manage the performance of its staff, to identify and remedy bottlenecks in the system and to guide its training and support functions. It similarly undermines the scope for effectively monitoring and evaluating progress, and for capturing and communicating the learning (from both good and bad practice) that should be a core feature of the process.

The development of the requisite institutional and managerial capacity within the Programme has been undermined by an extremely weak human resources function, de-linked from the CRLR. This has resulted in a rate of high turnover and redeployment of staff, poor systems of induction, and inadequate training and mentoring.

It was revealed that many of these problems have been comprehensively identified in the past, but remain unresolved. This raises serious questions about the efficacy of the Programme's management and the extent to which it is able to fulfil its constitutional mandate and to realise its developmental purpose.

#### ***4.4.3 Key Policy Recommendations and Strategies for Restitution improvement***

*The focus and function of the Commission and the Restitution Programme must be more clearly defined and better communicated – Internally, politically across different departments that comprise the rural development cluster, and to the public at large.*

The CRLR's role must be clarified to be concerned exclusively with administering the legal process associated with the lodgement, review and settlement of restitution claims. The process thus defined must in all cases adhere to a clearly defined logical sequence, and must have a precise beginning and end point (the formal lodgement of a claim and its final settlement). The clear definition and communication of the CRLR's core mandate and function will help to screen its staff from involvement in activities beyond the mandate of the CRLR.

*The Restitution Programme's business and decision-making process must be reviewed, finalised and documented in terms of a strict rules-based approach.*

This should include a careful review of best practice, and must be documented in a detailed SOPs Manual covering every aspect of the



agreed business process. It should be widely distributed and training provided to all relevant staff. Derogations from the SOPs Manual should require the formal authorisation of the CLCC.

*The different management information systems currently in operation or development should be rationalised into a single, web-based management information system. This should provide for the electronic management and oversight of every step in the business process, including documentation.*

## **4.5 RESPONSES FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

### ***4.5.1 Demographic Information***

A purposive sample of 35 respondents was drawn from the target population of managers and other officials who work directly with the programmes that were evaluated. Table 1 below depicts the demographic information.

A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to them with open ended questionnaires to allow respondents to express themselves freely. In qualitative research a purposive sampling method is used when the researcher is selecting a relatively small number of units because they can provide particularly valuable information related to the research questions under examination (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:115). The goal of purposive sampling is to select the specific study units that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data (Yin, 2011:88). This method actually reduces to a minimum spoilt and non-responses.

**Table I: Demographic Information**

Management Category			Gender		Programme				Age Category						
SMS	MMS	Other	M	F	CRDP	Resti tution	RAD P	Other	>30	30- 35	36- 40	41- 45	46- 50	52- 55	56- 60
21	10	4	19	16	10	13	8	4	2	3	9	7	6	5	3
60%	28,6%	11,4%	54,3%	45,7%	29,6%	37,1%	22,8%	11,2%	5,7%	8,6%	25,7%	20%	17%	14,3%	8,6%

Total Number of respondents =35

*Legend:*

SMS =Senior Management Services

MMS=Middle Management Service

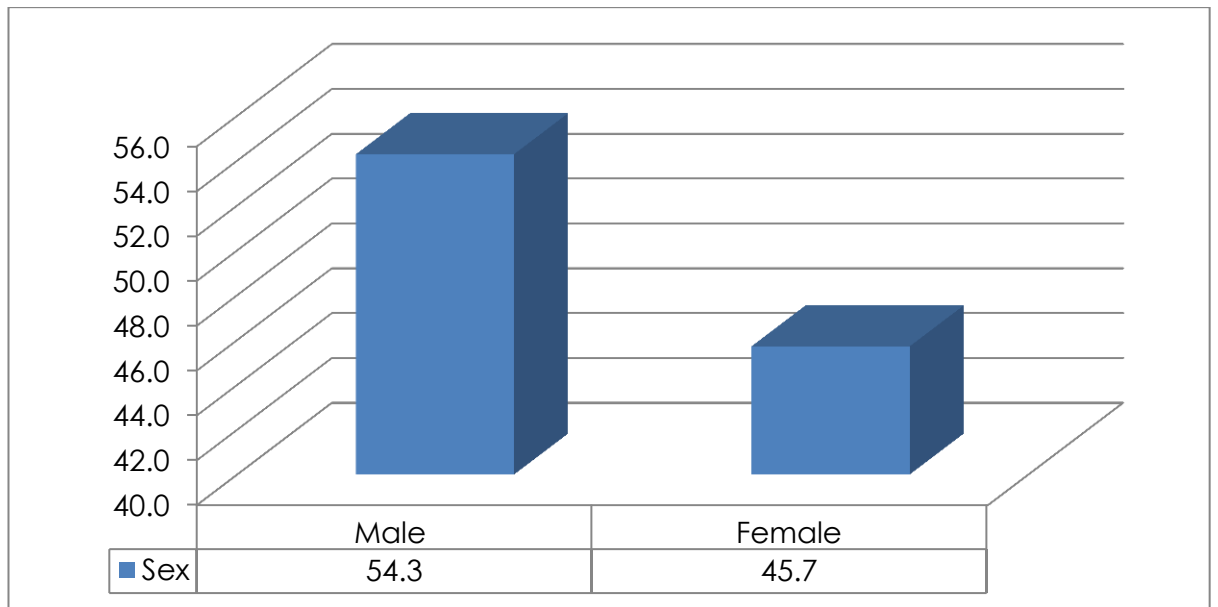
Other =Specialist and Project Officers

F=Female

M=Male

There were more male than female respondents. Figure 3 below indicates the percentage of respondents per gender category. The figure further indicates that 54.3% of respondents are males and 45.7% are females.

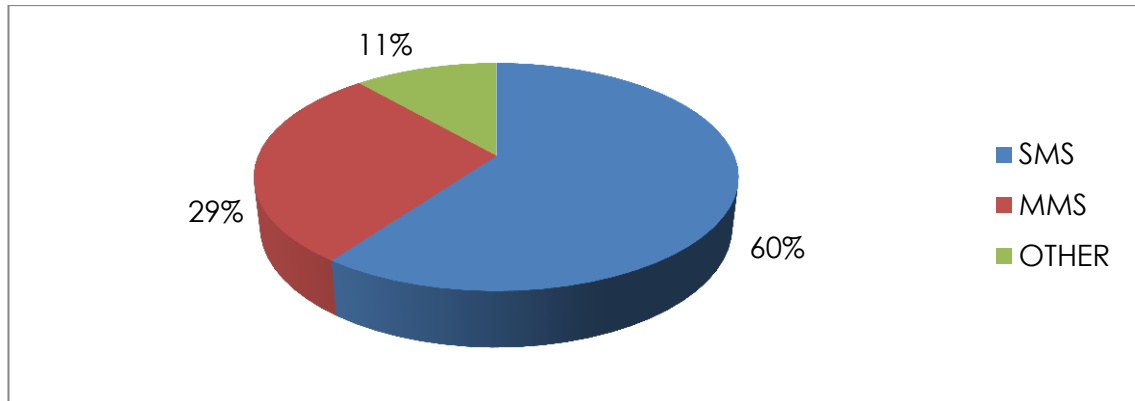
**Figure 3: Percentage of respondents per gender category**



In terms of management echelon, the majority of respondents were senior managers. This is significant for the study as these are the policy and decision-makers and thus users of the evaluation information.

Figure 4 below depicts percentage of respondents per managerial category. Most of the respondents who responded to the questionnaire are on the senior management services which accounts for 60%, followed by middle management services which accounts for 29%, and the least of the respondents being other which accounts for 11%.

**Figure 4: Percentages of respondents per managerial category**



NB: SMS (senior management services), MMS (middle management services), Other (Specialist and project officers)

Figure 5 below depicts number of respondents per age category who responded to the questionnaire. Nine (9) respondents who responded to the questionnaire are aged 36-40 years followed by seven (7) respondents aged 41-45 years. Only two (2) respondents are aged less than 30 years.

**Figure 5: Number of respondents per age category**

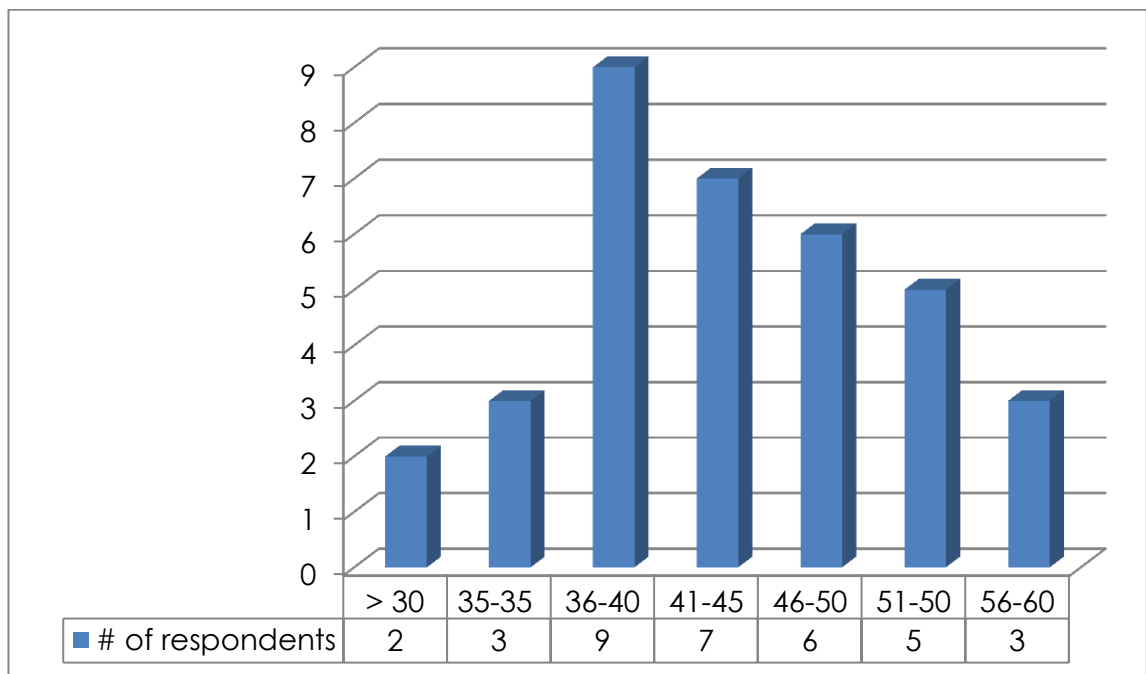
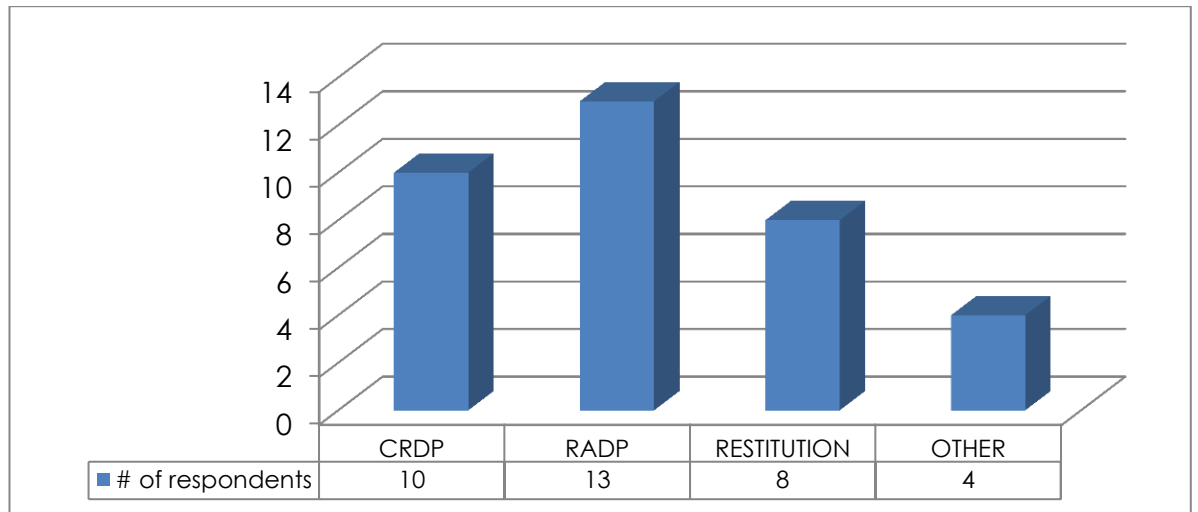


Figure 6 below indicates the number of respondents who were involved in different programmes. Thirteen of the respondents were involved within the RADP, followed by 10 within the CRDP and eight (8) involved within the Restitution. Only 4 respondents were involved in other programmes.

**Figure 6: Number of respondents per programme**



The data that was collected for these respondents is captured under different questions in the section below. The questions and responses were organised under particular themes for ease of analysis and interpretation. Because of the qualitative nature of the study, rich text in terms of information was encouraged to ensure that the area of research is adequately covered and the voice of the participants can be heard clearly in the research.

#### ***4.5.2. Awareness and Participation***

The question on awareness and participation is very important to ascertain that the respondents have the understanding of the subject matter that is being researched and that they participated in the activity one way or the other.

**What is your understanding of evaluations and their use?**

The majority of the respondents or 77% have a good understanding of what evaluations are and what they are used for, while 78% of the respondents identified evaluation as an assessment tool used to assess project or programme progress for decision-making. About 20% had some knowledge of what an evaluation is. Only one (1) person, 0, 4% of the respondents indicated not having any knowledge of what an evaluation is. About 8, 57% of respondents identified evaluation as a learning tool whilst 11, 43% knew evaluations to be undertaken for compliance purposes.

**Were you at any stage involved and/or affected by an evaluation and how?**

It was interesting to find out that 88,6% of the respondents participated in one way or the other in the evaluation process, where 51,4% were the participants of the evaluation, 11,7% were members of the evaluation team, 14,3% participated as their own evaluation was evaluated, 2,7% only provided the information to the evaluations, and lastly 14,3% were not involved with one person or 2,7% who had been affected negatively because the outcome thereof was not achieved.

**Do you regard evaluations as important for the organisation to be undertaken and why?**

In terms of the perceptions of the importance of evaluation for the department to undertake, 91, 4% of the respondents indicated that the evaluations were important for the department with 8, 6% who saw no importance of evaluation. The reasons given by 71, 8% of those who find the evaluation useful for the department were that the information is utilized for planning, organising, directing, budgeting and decision-making purposes. About 17, 1% regards the evaluations as an important method

of closing the feedback loop and providing opportunities for learning while 11, 4% regard them as meant for compliance.

#### ***4.5.3 Utilization Trends and Factors affecting Utilization***

Utilization of the evaluation findings is core to the purpose of this research. Evaluations results should be used to benefit the department in its various initiatives. The responses below are with regard to utilization trends and factors affecting utilization.

##### ***Are these evaluations benefiting the Department? If yes, in what way? If no, why do you say so?***

The majority of the respondents, 77, 1%, indicated that the evaluations were beneficial to the department whilst only 22,9% regarded evaluations as not beneficial to the department. The reasons put forward for non-beneficial were that there was no change in programme implementation and thus they have not seen any evidence that evaluations undertaken have been beneficial for the beneficiaries. The status quo remains even after the reports are presented. Reports end in the boardrooms and they gather dust after that and recommendations are not implemented. The process of reviewing policy based on the evaluation recommendations has not been witnessed by these respondents. There is a perception that the department's culture is not mature enough to handle the results of the evaluations and that decision-makers have a negative attitude towards evaluations. Commitment from programme managers is said to be just for compliance due to "Blanket Approach Evaluation".

**Were the findings of these evaluations effectively utilized? If no, what could be the reasons for underutilization or non-use? If yes, how were they utilized?**

From the previous section it has been determined that the majority of the respondents find the evaluations very beneficial to the department as an organisation and how they benefited the department. This section attempts to determine if the findings were effectively utilized and for what purpose. It was established that 65, 7% believe that the findings of these evaluations were not effectively utilised and thus underutilised whilst only 34, 3% believe the evaluation findings are utilized effectively. The reasons given for underutilization were as follows:

- Lack of ownership of results and no clarity of purpose. It was felt the evaluation has been imposed on the people.
- Ignorance and lack of focus in terms of the intervention by the Senior Management and also introduction of new Programmes after every 5 years.
- Lack of understanding of the evaluation usefulness.
- Findings were ignored because the feedback took too long to be provided resulting in lack of interest in the findings.
- The evaluation function is not treated as one of the functions that will improve the performance of the department, such as auditing so there is a lack of ownership of the results.
- In most cases when evaluation results challenge institutional practice, they are either ignored or selectively implemented. Furthermore, when executive management or policy makers are often not aware of the recommendations and do not take any interest.
- In most cases the reasons for underutilization or non-use of the evaluation findings are that the programme managers or programme developers do not have a clear understanding of the importance of the evaluations because if the programme managers or programme developers use the information from



the evaluation findings and recommendations, it would be expected that they would understand the reasons for the findings and recommendations that have been made to support their programmes.

- The evaluation function is not treated as one of the functions that will improve the performance of the department, like any other functions such as auditing where there will be audit committee meetings to address the audit findings and an action management plan to address the findings. It therefore hard to know whether the evaluations have ever been utilized effectively as there are no meetings to discuss the evaluation findings and the action management plan to mitigate the risks.
- It becomes business as usual as the job is tick-boxed and then ignored. Officials become preoccupied with the next assignment or duties as they are always busy and under pressure to start new approaches in implementing various new projects. There is no time to look back on projects that are not in the Annual Performance Plan (APP) or Operational Plan.

The areas where evaluation findings are set to be utilized effectively were mentioned as:

- For the planning process;
- Budget allocation and re-prioritizing of financial management;
- Policy revision (RACP) where mostly evaluation reports are used for motivation on policy review/programmes review. Hence Recap and development programmes were reviewed.
- National implementation of the CRDP;
- Providing management with valuable information to be able to determine if projects and programmes being implemented are worth implementing. Managers are able to get a sense of whether their interventions are making a difference in the lives of the people.

#### ***4.5.4: Usefulness of evaluation findings in management practices and Decision Making***

##### **How have these evaluations benefited you and DRDLR in your management practices? If Yes, in what way? If No, why not?**

Overall the evaluation findings seem to have proved to be useful to the department. About 82, 8% of the respondents believe the evaluations were useful and have benefited from them in their management practices. The following are ways in which evaluation findings can improve management practices:

- Assisted the participant to understand what the department was doing for the country and has positive impact for the society. “I have realized that the department can develop good programmes but the implementation of the programmes is another dilemma to be taken care of for the programme to yield the expected objectives” indicated Respondent (R) 17. “It was very interesting to see the outcome of this evaluation. Management derived new ways of appointing strategic partners and mentors and fiscal allocation was also reviewed in the RADP”.
- Improved revised policy and assisted in understanding of the programme and challenges. Policies such as RADP have been revised based on evaluations.
- Re-design of projects and programmes, since the evaluation led to initiatives in designing new projects/programmes.
- DRDLR benefited from evaluation in such a way that managers were able to review their programmes, e.g. the implementation of CRDP was reviewed to ensure that no-one is working in silos, hence the virtuous circle was introduced.

- Increased Capacity for Departmental Implementation structure for Women's Land Rights and other empowerment processes resulted.
- Realization by the Department of the importance of addressing the development and land needs interests and priorities of the designated groups.
- Information and reporting of a good audit report was considered a top achievement and equal to a bonus of the executive managers.

About 17, 1% of the respondents derived no benefit from the evaluation findings. The reasons given were as follows:

- It is always business as usual. I am at the lower management level thus I take orders from my supervisors. I can't change the way things are done.
- I was not involved in the evaluations.
- DRDLR does not demonstrate the improvements based on the recommendations made in the evaluations. Management practices have not improved.

**Are these evaluations addressing the needs of the department (relevance, effectiveness)?**

In terms of whether the evaluations are addressing the needs of the department, an overwhelming majority, 91, 4%, responded positively whilst only 8, 6% did not see the evaluations addressing the needs of the department. In terms of relevancy and effectiveness, the evaluations are seen to be adding value as follows:

- Identified loopholes in the financial usage, time management, ensuring the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of project/programmes. Through data gathered and triangulation one is able to check and verify the information for relevancy and effectiveness of the programme.

- It determined the impact of the programmes and their relevancy.
- Evaluations are presented to the highest authorities in the department as well as Parliament that makes decisions that not only benefit the department but the country as a whole.
- They focus on issues of sustainability, impact, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. These evaluations were addressing the needs of the department regarding and effectiveness but it depends on the department whether they accept the findings to implement the recommendations for the sake of accountability by the responsible Branch Managers.
- It helps to strengthen the delivery capability of the department and the utilization of its resources. It highlights potential pitfalls for projects of a similar nature.
- It informed changed in policy (RADP). The Minister formed a task team ensuring that relevant stakeholders consulted in order to deal with the programme (RADP).
- In certain cases policies that are used within the department are not evaluated, hence there are no improvements especially in corporate services.
- Only if they can be used by managers concerned, more especially the recommendation made in each evaluation. The unfortunate part is that some feel that these evaluations are watchdogs that monitor their performance.
- Evaluations are addressing the needs of the department in terms of relevancy and effectiveness. However, the results do not have any impact on management decision-making.
- They helped and will continue to help the department to improve on planning, rendering services effectively and efficiently, as well as reviewing existing policies for the sake of improving the programmes.
- One gets to interview beneficiaries and programme managers and through data triangulation one is able to understand, check the relevancy and effectiveness, and verify the data as well.

Only three reasons were given that suggested that the evaluation did not address the needs of the department, mainly because they are not taken seriously, ignorance, and that they are meant for the department to account to DPME.

**Were these evaluation results utilized effectively for managerial decision-making? Kindly elaborate areas of improvements made as a result of evaluation findings and recommendations.**

In terms of evaluation findings being utilized effectively for decision-making, 65, 7% of the respondents believe that the evaluation findings are being utilised but not that effectively for decision-making. About 34, 6% of respondents did not agree that findings are being effectively utilized in decision-making. The reasons given are as follows:

- There is still a wide gap with regard to addressing the human rights and enjoyment of freedoms of the designated group. There is still a silo approach to matters of the human rights of women. Each programme in the department has its own focus which is not necessarily complementary to other initiatives.
- There are no notable improvements made as the results of evaluations are concluded as a formality in a process of management and not to inform decisions.
- There are no improvement plans that one has come across as an evaluator based on the recommendations made in the evaluation report.
- If they were utilized effectively there would not be the same problems and challenges that there were a few years ago. RADP, for instance, did not address the needs that it was designed for.

Improvements in utilization of evaluation findings were said to be noticed in areas of programme redesign, policy reforms, planning, and

identification of training needs, improved information management, strengthening communication, and mobilization of stakeholders

**What will you recommend to be considered in future by the department to ensure effective utilization of evaluations? Kindly elaborate on the areas that need improvement.**

The following recommendations were made by the respondents for the department to consider in future to ensure effective utilization of evaluation findings:

- Conduct a needs assessment in order to identify the relevant project or programmes that need to be evaluated to facilitate utilization of findings; this can be easily done.
- The programmes to be evaluated must be consulted first prior to the evaluation taking place to get their commitment.
- The need for evaluations should be determined by the programme managers themselves so that they can take responsibility for the evaluations and use the recommendations.
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is only valuable if the information is used.
- The department needs to plan evaluations well.
- It also needs to do a feasibility study prior to establishment of programmes to ensure that programmes are being implemented correctly and benefits are going to the right people at the right time and place.

## **4.6 RESPONSES FROM INTERVIEWS WITH EXECUTIVE MANAGERS**

This section provides responses from in-depth interviews with the top 12 Executive Managers of the department who are responsible for the three (3) programmes at both the policy formulation and implementation levels. This group of managers consists of two (2) Deputy Directors General (DDG), Chief Land Claims Commissioner (CLCC) who is at the level of the Deputy Director General, two (2) Acting Deputy Directors General, three (3) Provincial Chief Directors: Heads of Provincial Offices (PSSC) and four (4) Chief Directors: Service Delivery Co-ordinators responsible for managing the information of the Programmes in their respective Branches.

Due to the limited time these executives had, only a few questions were asked regarding their perceptions, experiences, participation and utilization of evaluation findings after the conclusion of the evaluation studies. Recommendations were also requested as to the remedies they consider necessary to eliminate future underutilization of evaluation findings. The findings have been organised under thematic areas for ease of analysis and interpretation.

### ***4.6.1 Awareness and Participation***

***You are one of the Programme Managers whose programme was included in the DPME evaluation process. Could you kindly elaborate on your experience of the evaluation process including both positive aspects and challenges you experienced?***

All 10 executive managers except for two (2) indicated that it was the first time that they were engaged with an evaluation process. Although DPME explained the process to them, they did not actually grasp it and the implications that came with the evaluation. Three (3) of the executive managers indicated that they were involved with evaluations before,

however, not as participants but as the people whose projects were going to be evaluated.

Of interest is the positive aspects that were raised by these managers. Although they had thought the evaluations were similar to Audits, they soon realized when they were expected to lead the workshops for developing the theories of change; they said they found themselves in a learning environment. Learning from these evaluations, they indicated, made them realize how the planning in the departments of the government as a whole is flawed. One of the DDGs explained that she immediately saw herself as a change agent rather than a manager and that with the information and exposure received from the evaluations, her view of the development challenges has changed.

A major negative point that was raised by the majority of the executive managers was that they were not given the opportunity to choose the evaluations they needed to do. The request for evaluations came from DPME and with a few meetings held they were expected to provide their own programmes for evaluation to comply. The expectation was that the external evaluator would be commissioned and they will receive the report after the study was completed. The issue of their expected participation except in a few steering committee meetings was not raised. It became apparent when the evaluations were under way that a lot was required and expected from them and they did not factor that time into their busy schedule.

The executive managers for the Restitution programme had a very different experience. The evaluation was the third to be executed in the department and as such, some knowledge of the process was already permeating. The Restitution programme evaluation was initiated by the Commission itself. It was thus an enjoyable evaluation because the commission knew what it wanted to do and where the evaluation findings were going to be used. The experience was enjoyable although the impact



evaluation they had asked for had to be scaled down to an implementation evaluation because of lack of credible information to undertake an impact study.

All the managers indicated that the workshops that were provided by DPME were very useful. Although in some instances they did not know what they were supposed to do, especially with the responses to the evaluations, they expected to write to DPME and evaluation improvement plans, and these exercises gave them the opportunity to think about, and entrust themselves with what will really work and what would not work in their programmes.

**Have you since the completion of the evaluations effectively used the findings thereof? In your experience as an executive manager do you regard evaluations findings being effectively utilized in the department? If so, could you please elaborate on the main areas where evaluation results are being utilized in the DRDLR for decision-making? If not, what are factors leading to underutilization of evaluation results in the decision-making processes of the DRDLR? Kindly elaborate with examples.**

All executive managers indicated that they have used the evaluation findings since the completion of the evaluation exercises. The issue of effectiveness was questionable in other areas because they did not agree 100% with the findings.

#### **4.6.2 Utilization of Evaluation Findings**

How the evaluation findings were used is explained below.

#### **4.6.2.1 The Implementation Evaluation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP)**

The executive management of the CRDP indicated that the findings of the evaluation of the implementation evaluation of the CRDP were controversial to some extent. The evaluators approached the CRDP as a programme rather than the transformation system or model that it was. The debate around whether the CRDP is a programme, a plan or a model came late in the process when the evaluation had already taken a different shape and the findings did not make sense. In a way, by using the programme evaluation approach and methodology for evaluation, it was felt that the whole aspect of a transformation system or model of the rural areas through all Programmes of the DRDLR was misunderstood.

The findings of the evaluation were seen as not being too useful. However, it was confirmed what the management of the programme knew before and affirmed certain aspects of the model that needed to be firmed up. The evaluation in itself enlightened the department about the confusion with regard to what the CRDP is and what it was not. Through this process the Virtuous Cycle Model developed as a systematic approach of the CRDP from planning up to implementation across all spheres of government. The process has been endorsed and is now documented.

#### **4.6.2.2 The Implementation Evaluation of the Recapitalization and Development Programme (RADP)**

With the RADP, the executive management of the programme indicated that the findings were profound. The findings lead to an almost total overhaul of the programme and its deliverables. They influenced policy changes both in DRDLR and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and The two departments are starting to work together sharing

the same Medium Term Strategic Framework. The two departments have since forged relationships and are working together to support the rural farming communities. The evaluation recommended an overhaul of all Policies on Agricultural Support. Currently it was indicated that DRDLR, DAFF and DPME are involved in the evaluation of all emerging farmer support policies.

In the DRDLR this evaluation led to the separation of Land Reform and Development as well as the Land Administration and Tenure Reform to bring about efficiencies in the department. The RADP policy is in the process of being changed and various models are being put forward and debated as to how to support and finance the programme. The structure of the component with regard to staffing, resources and expertise is being strengthened. There are major positive changes in the RADP, influenced by the findings of the evaluation. One important element that came through was the learning that took place by the staff and management of the programme through the hands-on capacity building and direct participation in all aspects of the evaluation process by the evaluators from the University of Pretoria. It was mentioned that the evaluation participants were taken into the university to work with the evaluators to analyse the data and go back to the participants of the evaluation to discuss the results and together with the beneficiaries develop recommendations for how to resolve the matter. Although it was indicated that the study took the whole year, it was also confirmed that it was an informative experience and very worthwhile.

#### **4.6.2.3 The Implementation Evaluation of the Restitution Programme**

The executive management of the Restitution programme indicated that the evaluation findings were very useful to them. According to the CLCC, they agreed with all of them except two. The main finding that was of great impact was the realisation that, according to the Restitution Act, the Commission was supposed to be autonomous and not be incorporated in

the DRDLR. The Commission is said to be now preparing for separation from the DRDLR to go back to its status of autonomy. According to the executive managers, the finding of the evaluation pointed out much inefficiency in the systems by virtue of the Commission being dependent to the DRDLR. It could not exercise its constitutional mandate. The Commission is using every finding tabulated to address the issues of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

When asked the question of factors that lead to underutilization of evaluation findings, the programmes executives mention the following:

- The evaluations are new to the government institutionalised by DPME in 2013. The three evaluations were among the first and thus very little was known and is still not known about the use of evaluation.
- The department functions in silos and thus everyone is on their own. Managers do not learn from each other's programmes and programme matters are rarely discussed in the management meetings where policy decisions are made. Programme issues are discussed in Branch meetings or if it is a policy matter in the "war room". Evaluation findings never cross anyone's mind in such meetings. They have been seen as an M&E responsibility until recently.
- Evaluations, unlike Strategic Planning, Programme Performance Monitoring, Performance Management, MPAT, and Audits are not institutionalised. As managers there is not enough understanding about what its role is. Institutionalization in the government and the department can be helpful.
- Most of the Evaluations findings are too academic. They are not functional for managers to know what to do with the information. Without guidance only the information that makes sense to one get used.

**What do you believe needs to be done or put in place to ensure that findings of the evaluation studies are effectively utilized in the DRDLR?**

The following recommendations were given by the executive management:

- Evaluations must be institutionalized and independent with oversight committees set up to deal even with internal evaluations and follow-ups on improvement plans just like the Audit Committee and the QRAM. Currently it is DPME and the Cabinet and these are too far removed.
- DPME must properly provide guidance on how effectively the evaluation process must be run. Capacity building on management of the process, including identification of probable evaluations and funding models, is important. It cannot be left to the M&E units, more so if the Programmes initiating evaluations have to budget for them as they are expensive exercises.
- Sharing of evaluation findings and experiences is necessary across the department, even more so for staff who are left out of these processes. A learning forum might be necessary to be initiated or a “brown bag lunch” sharing session.
- Policies including legislative changes as well as new programmes or programme reviews must not be approved if not informed by evaluations. The issue of evidence-supported policy decision-making is key.
- Management must be involved upfront when evaluations are planned so that they can guide the evaluation studies properly to the problem at hand for effective utilization of findings and recommendation.
- Knowledge Management requires that knowledge should be published widely and its use institutionalised.

## 4.7 FOCUS GROUPS INTERVIEWS

The strength of qualitative methods lies in the ability of the researcher to utilize a number of research tools to collect reliable and valid information. Triangulation of information is important to increase the internal and external reliability of the information. Focus groups were used to triangulate the information that was collected using semi-structured interviews. The group of officials working with the same programme were interviewed. The groups consisted of five (5) officials from the Restitution programme and another five (5) from the Recapitalization and Development Programme.

The results of the focus group sessions were similar to the information collected with the questionnaires. The difference was that when one is having a face-to-face conversation the depth of issues surfaces better. The discussions that took place during those sessions assisted in providing the insight, which supported the analysis of the overall results, conclusions and recommendations made. In short, the issues that emerged included, amongst others, the following:

- Participation and involvement of the officials or the users of the information in the study from beginning to the end;
- Institutionalization and professionalization of evaluations;
- Evaluation forum and opportunities for sharing;
- Knowledge management and learning opportunities needed;
- Formalized utilization of result as well;
- Communicating, disseminating findings and closing the feedback loop; as well as
- Making follow-ups on implementation improvement plans.

## **4.8 CONCLUSION**

The findings of the research have revealed a number of issues and perceptions about the utilization of evaluation findings in decision-making in the DRDLR. Of importance is a different view with regard to executive and senior management who definitely gave an indication that evaluation findings have been utilized to influence policy and various adjustments made to their programme. Unlike the executive management, middle managers who are the implementers of the policies are not aware of major influences that evaluation findings had on the programmes that they are implementing.

In conclusion, factors that influence utilization of evaluations in decision-making in the DRDLR have been identified in broad terms as the institutional arrangements with regard to how evaluations have been institutionalised in the department. Although most of the respondents believe that evaluations are important, a majority of the respondents indicated that the main factors that lead to underutilization of evaluation findings was the lack of knowledge of the importance of evaluations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an analysis and the interpretation of the research findings. The data from all three data collection tools, namely the in-depth interviews, document analysis, and the questionnaires supplemented by the outcomes of the focus group discussions is triangulated in an attempt to strengthen the interpretation of the findings.

#### **5.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK**

##### ***5.2.1 Utilization-Focused Evaluation***

Patton's (2002) Utilization-Focused Evaluation is used as the conceptual framework for analysis and interpretation. In the Utilization-Focused Evaluation approach the usage of evaluation results is key to any evaluation and that can only happen if it was planned that way, together with all the stakeholders who will be using the results. Patton (2002) believes that the most important criteria used when judging an evaluation is the extent to which the intended users actually use the findings from the evaluation for decision-making, programme development, and improvement (Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002), the value of the evaluation is judged by the extent to which the findings will be used for decision-making by intended users. Patton (1997) further says that no matter how rigorous the methods of data collection, design and reporting are in evaluation, if it does not get used it is a bad evaluation (Patton, 1997).

How then does one actually ensure that evaluation findings are used? According to Patton (2010), the psychology of use underpins utilization-




focused evaluation, thus intended users are more likely to use evaluations, when they understand and have ownership of the evaluation process and findings and they have been actively involved. Active involvement includes primary intended users, evaluators and facilitators, training of users, preparation of ground work and enforcing the intended utility of the evaluation every step of the way. All aspects leading to effective utilization are framed in Patton's (2012:19) 17 steps for meta-evaluation of utilization-focused evaluation. This framework has been used to assess if the three evaluations under study have been undertaken in such a way that they fit the principles of utilization-focussed evaluation.

Table 2 below summarises the meta-evaluation of the Implementation Evaluation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, the Implementation Evaluation of the Recapitalization and Development Programme and the Implementation Evaluation of the Restitution Programme in accordance with Paton's 17 steps of Utilization-Focused Evaluation. The smiley face icons are used in the analysis to denote the experiences as follows:

### **Smiley Face Icons Legend**

 Unacceptable performance










 New Insight /Learning Experience













 Neutral
















 Good Performance










 Excellent







**Table 2: Conceptual Framework: 17 Steps of Utilization-Focused Evaluation Framework**

UFE 17 Steps	Analysis of findings	Meta –Evaluation Results		
		CRDP	RADP	Resti-tution
<b>1.Organisational Readiness Assessment</b>	DRDLR and the 3 programmes evaluated were not assessed for readiness nor capacity building for UFE. However the 1st two evaluations were an eye opener for the Restitution Programme that saw the opportunity to request evaluation of its programme. The restitution evaluation fared better and faster because it was demand-led and the use of findings were planned upfront.			
<b>2.Evaluators Readiness and Competence Assessment</b>	The RADP evaluators were the only ones that were open to the participation and involvement of the primary users of the evaluations in the evaluation processes. To this end the evaluation was rated the best on participation and capacity building and knowledge sharing with the participants. The evaluators of restitution were confused by that requirement in the terms of reference stating that it will interfere with their independence and objectivity.			
<b>3.Engage Primary Users</b>	RADP primary users were the most satisfied with the outcomes of the evaluation of their programme. Although their programme fared the worst, the learning through participation in the evaluation was worth the bad results of their programme evaluation. This has made it easier for management to take a radical decision of overhauling RADP Policy based on the evidence from the evaluation.			

<p><b>4.Situation analysis</b></p>	<p>RADP evaluators were the only ones who tried to perform a situational analysis with various users. For example, they made time to meet with the programme officials and the M&amp;E unit, to clarify and understand the status of the programme and the methodology requested prior to the evaluation process starting. Restitution evaluators wrote a lot about the M&amp;E even though they had never met the unit management or officials.</p>			
<p><b>5.Prioritize Purposes</b></p>	<p>The purposes of the evaluations were determined by the DRDLR. However, the DPME changed it. This brought confusion to the intended users because the intended use was changed. The issue of ownership and accountability of the evaluation became a problem as the evaluations were now disowned by the programme managers.This perpetuated to the point where DRDLR managers were not involved.</p>			
<p><b>6.Build Processes</b></p>	<p>There are no use processes that were built into the evaluation processes themselves. This is why identifying specific uses of the evaluation is difficult. Respondents indicated many uses of evaluations in general but not necessarily what the intended use was for each one of the three evaluations.</p>			
<p><b>7.Evaluation Questions</b></p>	<p>Identifying and creating evaluation questions were an eye opener for the respondents who represented the intended users of the evaluations. Due to the change in focus of the evaluations the evaluation questions were changed. However, the questions were not necessarily priority questions as per the expectations of the primary user.This is why some of the respondents did not see the usefulness of these evaluations.</p>			

<p><b>8.Fundamental for an Evaluation Enquiry</b></p>	<p>The three evaluations were implementation evaluations. With the assistance of the evaluation clinics offered by DPME, all fundamentals areas for the evaluation enquiry were addressed.</p>			
<p><b>9.Theory of Change</b></p>	<p>All programmes did not have a theory of change. However, the theory of change was reconstructed to determine what intervention model is being evaluated. From the findings of the evaluation, a number of respondents recommended that DPME must build its internal capacity to enable it to assist the departments with the development of the theory of change for every new programme in the Government.</p>			
<p><b>10.Findings</b></p>	<p>There was actually no negotiation entered into to find appropriate methods to generate credible findings. Because some of the findings are seen as not being a true reflection of the situation and were not made easy for the intended users to use, respondents did see evaluations being for compliance rather than for learning. When one assesses the management responses there are a number of findings that are disputed by management.</p>			
<p><b>11.Potential Controversies</b></p>	<p>There was no preparation made for anyone to understand possible controversies with regard to methodologies utilized. In the case of the evaluation the debate on methodology was robust up to the Cabinet meetings in Parliament.</p>			
<p><b>12.Utilization of Findings</b></p>	<p>Utilization of findings is still a challenge in DRDLR, except for Restitution that had planned to utilize the findings of their evaluation to inform Policy development on the re-opening of lodgement of claims. With the other two evaluations, the utilization</p>			

	<p>of the evaluation findings was not planned. It became a shock to RADP when the programme had to be overhauled. The restitution programme was happy with the findings and they are using them to support the independence of the Commission from the DRDLR.</p>			
<p><b>13.Data Gathering</b></p>	<p>Gathering data was a huge challenge for the CRDP evaluation. The evaluator's approach to the choice of what data to gather and how was alarming. The problem started when no one could identify CRDP sites except for the pilot sites. RADP used the participation of the DRDLR in the evaluation to its advantage as they shares expertise and experiences.</p>			
<p><b>14.Data Presentation</b></p>	<p>The analysis, interpretation and presentation of data was done professionally for all evaluations. There were a number of workshops that were held for various stakeholders to provide feedback on the evaluation findings.</p>			
<p><b>15.Reporting and Dissemination</b></p>	<p>All the evaluations and their action plans were presented and discussed in the Strategic Management Meeting. There were a lot of lessons that were learnt in those discussions. They were further debated in various workshops with both the users and beneficiaries of the programmes. Currently, after serving in Cabinet, the three evaluations have been posted on the intranet of the DPME for sharing with the public This include management action plans and also progress on implementation of findings. The DRDLR M&amp;E unit has produced a booklet on lessons learned on the three evaluations in an effort to disseminate the findings and share knowledge. Creating a feedback</p>			

	loop is of great importance for continuous use of evaluation findings.			
<b>16.Enhance use</b>	Follow-up is made on action plans that were drawn in response to the evaluation findings. These action plans are reported on a quarterly basis by the DPME. These progress reports are sent to Parliament at their request. The process has become similar to the Programme Performance Management. Reporting against the Annual Performance Plans of the National Treasury and the DPME. It is similar to reporting against the Audit management plans and some of the repondents have rightfully said that it has become a compliance issue rather than a learning issue.			
<b>17.Meta-evaluation of use</b>	This reserch is a meta-evaluation for use of this three evaluation. The programmes still have to look into the lessons learned for these evaluations.To date there are lots of programme and policy changes as the DRDLR tries to respond to the findings. It would be suggested that a meta-evaluation of this evaluations must be undertaken.			

Basically the Utilization-Focused Evaluation has two essential elements that summarises the framework, as explained below.

### 5.2.1.1 Identification of intended uses and primary users

According to Patton (2013), identification of the primary uses of the evaluation is critical to facilitate future uses of the findings of that evaluation. This must be done upfront at the planning stages of the evaluation. The primary intended users must also be identified and

personally engaged at the beginning of the evaluation process to ensure that their primary intended uses are taken into consideration.

When an assessment was made, of the process that was followed by DPME and DRDLR to secure evaluations that would feed the National Evaluation Plan, it was found that it was not to be ideal. Although DPME did not really prescribe evaluations for the departments, it still after the call for evaluation has been concluded, decides on which evaluations get approved and which do not. The departments had no influence in that regard. Moreover the DPME further adjusted and adapted the focus of the evaluation irrespective of what the needs were of the department that suggested the evaluation. All the three evaluations that are the basis of this research had their titles and focus changed by the DPME during the evaluation preparation clinic.

When one looks at Patton's 17 steps, the steps from 1 to 6 were not done properly with the user and the uses in mind. After DPME received the evaluation topics it requested from the departments, the terms of reference, there after the focus of the evaluation were changed unilaterally. Primary users were no longer engaged but only members of the steering committees. This lead to the whole evaluation exercise becoming an academic exercise instead of a useful one for a particular purpose.

The frustration of the respondents can be picked up when they indicated that although they participated in the evaluation in one way or the other they do not know what happened to the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Some believe the reports are sitting in the boardrooms gathering dust. A number of respondents also indicated that since the evaluations were concluded they have not seen any evidence of things

being done differently to show that the department was using and learning from the evaluation findings.

In terms of the Utilization-Focused Evaluation framework it would have been ideal for the DPME firstly, to have undertaken a diagnostic assessment to assess if the DRDLR was ready for the evaluation of its major programmes and the use for the evaluation findings.

#### **5.2.1.2 Intended Uses of the Evaluation Guide: all Evaluation Process Decisions**

The second element of the Utilization-Focused Evaluation is that the evaluators must ensure that the intended uses of the evaluations guide all other decisions that are made about the evaluation process. The findings of this research revealed that the uses of the evaluation have not been identified, more so with the intended users at the beginning of the process. This was the biggest flaw of the evaluation process.

The evaluations were identified in terms of the type of evaluation, in this case an implementation evaluation of a programme, rather than the uses of the evaluation. According to Patton (2008), it is the uses of the evaluations by the intended primary users that are of utmost importance to guide all processes of the evaluation in order to maximise its utility. Patton (2008) further indicates that research on this subject has revealed and confirmed that if the primary users of an evaluation understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings, they are more likely to use the evaluation findings. By actively involving primary intended users, the evaluator is preparing the groundwork for the use thereof.



## **5.2.2 Knowledge Utilization Framework**

The other framework that relates closely to utilization-focused evaluation is knowledge utilization framework as advocated by Blake and Ottoson (2009:27-28). This framework assesses utilization of evaluation findings through five (5) variables, namely utilization coverage; dissemination and diffusion; knowledge transfer; systematic implementation; and knowledge translation. In this research these variables permeated across all elements of the findings.

### **5.2.2.1 Utilization Coverage**

Knowledge utilization coverage is the extensive coverage of utilization (Blake and Ottoson; 2009). In this study the issue of coverage was researched and the findings indicated that where evaluation findings are utilized the areas of use are in planning, budgeting and resource allocation, policy review decisions and programme or project improvement. It also became very clear that the use is intermittent and could mainly be articulated by executive management rather than middle management who are the officials responsible for implementation. The study reveals that the use of evaluation findings does not come naturally in the day-to-day operations of the department. The evaluation findings are used to comply with the requirements of the institutions such as the DPME, the National Treasury and the Auditor General. As argued by Blake and Ottoson (2009), knowledge accrues from many fields and the utilization thereof is also contextualised under those fields, thus these institutions effectively push the department to use the findings in their fields. Therefore, it is imperative that the DRDLR finds in itself greater areas of use of evaluation findings in its management practices. Lack of the strategy of knowledge utilization in the department is one of those factors that lead to underutilization. The department tends to be a reactive user rather than a proactive user.

### **5.2.2.2 Dissemination and Diffusion**

Lack of dissemination and diffusion strategy came out strongly as one of the factors that lead to underutilization of evaluation findings. Dissemination and diffusion involves itself with the distribution and communication of information. It involves the movement of information from one place to the other and these processes have been found to be part of the solution of underutilization by researchers. Diffusion of research including evaluation information that is enlightened and is equated to the process of policy making by Blake and Ottoson (2009) is linked to knowledge utilization. In this research the issue of lack of communication of the findings and demonstration of outcomes thereof led to a perception that the evaluation reports and their findings are not utilized. According to Respondent (R) 38 he has not seen any evidence that evaluations undertaken have been beneficial for the organisation or even beneficiaries. "In my experience everything remains as it was even after the reports are completed. Reports remain with management and we are not even sure if they ever get discussed and they end up gathering dust, recommendations not implemented." He has not seen any process of reviewing policy or legislation for that matter, based on evidence from the evaluation findings or recommendations.

### **5.2.2.3 Knowledge Transfer**

According to Blake and Ottoson (2009), knowledge cannot truly be transferable or exchanged, but it can be negotiated. For it to be transferred, they argue, it has to be made accessible in such a manner that the users in organisations understand what is being transferred and to whom. This cannot happen without proper planning that ensures that utilization becomes core and is central to all activities of organisations. This is true for the DRDLR. The action plans that accrue from the

evaluation processes are developed as a response to the requirements of the DPME and those plans tabled in parliament. Otherwise they are seen as an extra responsibility and an obligation, or an added, “burden of reporting bestowed to us by M&E” as indicated by one senior manager, the Service Delivery Co-ordinator. Lack of ownership and accountability has been identified as one of the factors that lead to underutilization of evaluation findings in the department.

#### **5.2.2.4 Systematic Implementation**

According to Blake and Ottoson (2009), implementation of knowledge utilization is symbolised by the systematic movement of policy to implementation with all activities related to intended use designed in the manner which will enhance use and result in changed behaviours in organisations. To achieve this, the use needs to be of major consideration in all stages of implementation of research and evaluation. This was true for this study. The respondents who were positive about the beneficial effects of evaluation cited various ways that evaluations benefited the department in terms of financial management forecasting and re-channelling of budgeting, improving and reviewing projects and programmes. They determined impacts and for the CRDP and Restitution programmes, decisions were made that changed the way the programmes were implemented as the evaluations informed policy changes. The evaluation reports were used to motivate policy and programme reviews. Hence, the Recapitalization and Development Programme was reviewed. Evaluations provided an independent assessment to the managers on where things were going wrong and also where things have been over-delivered. Where the findings of these evaluations were effectively utilized are in Planning, Budget allocations and reprioritization, Policy revisions such as in RADP and national roll-out of CRDP.

Respondent (R) 31 indicated that evaluations also, “offered beneficiaries and ordinary members of the community an opportunity to speak about

their experiences about the project. Beneficiaries often made their suggestions on how things should be done, their aspirations and expectations, including frustrations about slow service delivery. Furthermore, evaluations helped management to focus on being effective, efficient and relevant at all times in terms of planning, programme and projects implementation. For example, CRDP was introduced in 2009 but the impact it made on the targeted rural space revealed that there was room for improvement; hence the virtuous cycle was introduced to ensure that no-one is working in a silo when it comes to development of the rural space.

However, Respondent (R) 31 asserts that, “as far as one is concerned, when it comes to our Department as a co-ordinating department I still think we need to stick to our mandate which is pure co-ordination without being technical and allow relevant departments to deal with implementation of projects. Maybe one might be tempted to propose that DPME should evaluate if Rural Development is still fit to carry the mandate of being the co-ordinating department or not. From my point of view since I have joined the department I cannot say these findings are utilized except on reporting with them on the performance reports of the department, but further than that I cannot say the recommendations are implemented”.

#### **5.2.2.5 Knowledge Translation**

Knowledge translation includes both the creation of knowledge and the use thereof. It is an interactive process that involves both the users and the participants. Translation is a key for knowledge to be used as policy (Blake and Ottoson, 2009). This study has also revealed a number of areas where evaluation findings are translated into various uses.

Evaluations are presented to the highest authorities in the department as well as Parliament that makes decisions that not only benefit the department but the country as a whole. They focus on aspects of

sustainability, impact, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. These evaluations were addressing the needs of the department as regards relevancy and effectiveness but it depends on the department whether they accept the findings to implement the recommendations for the sake of accountability by the responsible Branch Managers. The Evaluations finding explains the impact of the programmes and their relevance. Evaluations assist in strengthening the delivery capability of the department and the utilization of its resources, and highlights potential pitfalls for projects of a similar nature.

According to the respondents in this study, in DRDLR evaluation findings informed changed in policy of the RADP. The Minister of the DRDLR formed a task team ensuring that relevant stakeholders are consulted in order to deal with the RADP programme based on the evaluation findings of the programme. There is some flexibility as to whether the managers concerned are expected to utilise the findings and recommendations made in each evaluation. The unfortunate part is that some personnel feel that these evaluations are watchdogs and monitor their performance.

Evaluations are addressing the needs of the department in terms of relevancy and effectiveness. However, the results sometimes seem to not have any impact on management decision-making. They helped and will continue to help the department to improve on planning, rendering services effectively and efficiently, as well as reviewing existing policies for the sake of improving the programmes.

One of the respondents indicated that they interviewed beneficiaries and programme managers, and through data triangulation they are able to understand, check the relevancy and effectiveness of the programme as well as verify data.

### **5.3 FACTORS LEADING TO UNDERUTILIZATION OF EVALUATION FINDINGS IN DRDLR**

There are a number of factors that were identified by the study that lead to underutilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR. Amongst others the following emerged prominently:

#### ***5.3.1 Lack of Ownership and Accountability***

Lack of ownership of the evaluation where management of the department has the perception that an evaluation has been imposed on them leads to lack of accountability and underutilization of the results of the study. As has already been discussed, the intended primary uses and users of the evaluations must be identified to improve the utilization of the findings.

#### ***5.3.2 Evaluation function not institutionalised***

The evaluation function is a new discipline in the Government of South Africa, having been established in 2012. Therefore, in many government departments the evaluation function has not yet been institutionalised. The DRDLR Evaluation and Research unit has been in existence for quite some time but the evaluation function is still not institutionalized, similarly to the Programme Performance Monitoring whose reports are tabled and discussed on a quarterly basis. Unlike the Audit function that has the Audit Committee overseeing its initiatives, evaluations serve in the Strategic Management Committee on an *ad hoc* basis. This makes it difficult for evaluation findings to be taken seriously and hence to be utilized.

#### ***5.3.3 Poor Planning***

Evaluations must be properly planned if their findings are to be used. Poorly planned evaluations being the evaluations that are planned without thinking what they are going to be used for, who wants the information and

who is the primary user, are likely not to be used effectively. Evaluations have to be initiated by the primary users and the process and methodology that incorporates learning must be planned with the primary users.

#### ***5.3.4 Lack of understanding of the usefulness of Evaluations***

The evaluation function is not treated as one of the functions that will improve the performance of the department, like any other function such as auditing where there will be Audit Committee meetings to address the audit findings and an action management plan to address the concerns. Therefore there is follow-up. In most cases the reasons for underutilization or non-use of the evaluation findings are because the programme managers or programme officials do not have a clear understanding of the importance of the evaluations and thus cannot express explicit views about the findings and recommendations that have been made to improve their programmes.

#### ***5.3.5 Lack of systematic implementation of Evaluation findings***

A lack of a systematic approach to implementation of evaluation findings leads to recommendations not being implemented. It becomes business as usual as the job is ticked off and then left. Officials become occupied with the next assignment or duties as they are under pressure to start new approaches in implementing other new projects. There is no time to look back on projects that are not in the strategic and operational plans of the department.

### **5.4 TRENDS IN UTILIZATION OF EVALUATION FINDINGS IN DRDLR**

Although the study does confirm that the evaluation findings were not utilized effectively in the DRDLR, there is a lot of improvement with regard to use. The study has revealed that there are trends emerging in some

areas that show constant use of evaluation findings. This is very encouraging especially because of the necessity that has arisen for evidence-based decision-making to demonstrate accountability of government to its constituencies.

From this research the following trends were identified on utilization of evaluation findings.

#### ***5.4.1 Inform Strategic and Annual Performance Planning***

Strategic, Annual and Operational plans are very important documents of the department that guide the department towards meeting its strategic objectives, goals and ultimately fulfilling its mandate. From this study one of the trends emerging is the use of evaluation in the planning processes to reflect on the areas that were performing well and challenges that were experienced during the implementation of the projects or programmes. Recently, evaluation findings have been used to reflect the status of the programme in the situational analysis of the strategic plan. This has assisted to a large extent in the department being geared towards resolving its challenges in order to unlock service delivery.

#### ***5.4.2 Budget Allocations and Re-prioritization***

As government, the budgeting processes are very important in prioritising where scarce financial resources can be spent to maximise return on investment. Evaluation findings, especially of the RADP and the CRDP, identified inefficiencies in the system and consequent loss of revenue. Through these evaluations the department is re-prioritising and reallocating funding away from inefficient activities in the quest to realize improved value for money. Without evaluation findings the department would have no evidence-based knowledge of areas of wastage and direct losses.



### ***5.4.3 Policy Revisions***

It has been established that since the conclusion of these evaluations a lot of activity has been taking place with regard to the revision of policy. Evaluation findings influence the revision of the departmental policies such as the Recapitalisation and Development Programme where currently there is a major overhaul of the programme being envisaged. The influence was not only in the DRDLR but on the whole agricultural sector. The same can be said for the Restitution programme. Through the findings and recommendations accruing from the evaluation of the Implementation of Restitution, the Commission of Land Rights is preparing to become autonomous to ensure that it runs efficiently, effectively and in a sustainable manner, more so when the Department is dealing with the re-opening of the lodgement of land claims for those who were excluded in 1998.

### ***5.4.4 National Roll-out of the CRDP***

The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme started as a pilot project of eight (8) sites in 2009. In order to implement the programme in all rural wards there was a need for assurances that this rural transformation model does work and where there are challenges and loopholes they needed to be identified and closed. The implementation evaluation of the Comprehensive rural development programme provided findings that informed decision-makers on what works and what does not before a full roll-out was implemented.

The findings of the CRDP have been used to validate certain aspects of the CRDP which management was cautious about. It also gave the department and the government as a whole an idea of the cost implications and issues of value for money in developmental initiatives.

#### ***5.4.5 Determine Project and Programme Outcomes and Impact***

The aspect of determining the worth of the project and/or the programme in terms of project/programme outcomes and impact is the one which a well-known evaluation provided. Evaluation findings were utilized in the DRDLR to provide management with valuable information that enabled them to determine if projects and programmes being implemented are worth implementing. They determined the impact of the programmes and their relevancy. These enabled management to get a sense of whether their interventions are making a difference in the lives of the people. One also interviewed beneficiaries and programme managers, and through data triangulation was able to understand, check the relevancy and effectiveness, and verify the data as well.

Evaluations are presented to the highest authorities in the department as well as Parliament that makes decisions that not only benefit the department but the country as a whole. They focus on issues of sustainability, impact, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. They helped and will continue to help the department to improve on planning, rendering services effectively and efficiently, as well as review of existing policies for the sake of improving the programmes. It depends on the department whether they accept the findings to implement the recommendations for the sake of accountability by the responsible Programme Managers.

#### ***5.4.6 Strengthen the delivery capability***

Evaluations help to strengthen the delivery capability of the department and the utilization of its resources. This highlights potential pitfalls for projects of a similar nature. In the case of the DRDLR it informed changes to the policy of the RADP. The Minister formed a task team to ensure that relevant stakeholders are consulted in order to deal with this programme. In certain cases policies that are used within the department are not

evaluated, hence there are no improvements that take place, especially in corporate services, only if they can be used by managers concerned, more especially the recommendations made in each evaluation. The unfortunate part is that some people feel that these evaluations are watchdogs and monitor their performance.

#### ***5.4.7 Programme redesign***

The department has adopted the virtuous cycle approach to bridge the gap between project implementation by municipalities and the department and ensure alignment and re-channelling of resources to maximize the impact. The CRDP which started as a pilot has now been rolled out nationally. Programme structures, implementation modalities; during and after conceptualisation have been reviewed. Business process maps and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been developed as well as many other areas of use. Evidence is through quality of the improvement plans.

### **5.5 STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT ON UTILIZATION OF EVALUATION FINDINGS IN DRDLR**

The recommendations that we provided by the respondents in terms of the department making sure that evaluation are used to support management practices and decision-making were as follows:

#### ***5.5.1. Communicate the Findings: Knowledge Transfer***

Close the feedback loop through discussions in management meetings. This can be done by developing a thoughtful communication and advocacy plan that will compel the department to make amends and ensure that there is an effective utilization of evaluations. This will assist to improve public policies, adjust projects or programmes and change the processes for increased efficiency and effectiveness. Immediate feedback

needs to be provided about the findings of the evaluation. There is currently a lack of a feedback loop on evaluation study findings to implementers. This gap means that issues that have been identified will not be addressed. Evaluation reports and feedback must be done in provinces with all the affected parties present.

Thorough communication amongst all parties is crucial for successful utilization of evaluation findings. Evaluation findings should be discussed and followed up in the management meetings and implementation of the recommendations monitored as is done with QRAM and AG reports. There should be a vigorous introduction of a Change Management Programme and dissemination of information on a regular basis on the importance of transformation for the promotion of human rights and enjoyment of freedoms by the designated groups in the context of rural development and land reform. Deliberate on a plan and matters that affect and take into account the development and land needs of the designated group. The department must treat the evaluation function as an important function and give it the necessary attention. Regular meetings should be attended to promote the effectiveness of the evaluation functions.

Evaluations should form part of the regular management meetings such as the QRAM, SMC, BMM, EMC, MCM and implementation of the results and recommendations must be monitored and reported during the meetings. They should form part of the management meetings (EMC, SMC, and BMM) and implementation of the recommendations should be monitored during the meetings with monitoring tools to be discussed and agreed upon.

Programmes affected by the evaluations must develop recommendation implementation plans. These must be monitored by the programme managers through reporting progress in management meetings by service delivery co-ordinators. Make evidence-based recommendations which are clear action items that programme managers are able to implement.

### ***5.5.2 Dissemination and diffusion: Develop the Dissemination Strategy***

Dissemination of evaluations needs to be improved. A dissemination strategy or plan should be developed. Findings should be made available and accessible through a number of channels such as websites, libraries and publications. Evaluation reports must be made available on intranet for all staff members to have access. Awareness campaigns should be conducted. Consultations with both internal and external stakeholders should be undertaken prior to a decision being taken to evaluate programmes/projects, the purpose of the consultation being to ensure that the evaluation focuses on where there is a need.

The M&E unit should follow up with the programme managers to check and validate their information report recommendations and ensure that corrective measures are taken where necessary and complement their reports with a portfolio of evidence (PoE). Senior management must carefully study the evaluation reports and implement recommendations.

One of the strategies that can improve effective utilization will be to introduce evaluation tools for each of the programmes during the planning phase. Outcomes reports from these evaluations must be shared with everyone and where implementation plans are needed they must be put in place and monitored at appropriate intervals.

### ***5.5.3. Institutionalization of Evaluation: Establishment of the Evaluation Committee***

Evaluation function should be institutionalized so as to have committees and forums to address the resolutions and identify any impediments to implementation. The institutionalization of evaluations as one of the important functions of the department must include the establishment of

the Evaluation Committee similar to the Audit Committee as a formal management structure where evaluations imperatives will be served. Management needs to be open-minded and make a commitment to institutionalize transformation.

The results of each evaluation should be discussed in these formal structures of the department. An action plan for each evaluation must be developed in order to ensure that the recommendations are implemented by the programmes involved. The Evaluation function should be institutionalized in order for the department to treat it as an important function. It must have a steering committee and forums through which to formalize it. The forums will also assist in information sharing and building understanding of evaluations across the department. Evaluations must form part of the agenda in regular management meetings to ensure the effectiveness of the evaluation function.

Alignment of external evaluations to be conducted by the department with the DPME for the sake of accountability and service delivery will assist with the alignment of strategizing with other departments.

#### ***5.5.4 Implement Recommendations Systematically***

The departments need to implement the recommendations of the evaluation and support evaluations to be done by the programmes themselves and not external providers. There must be improvement plans to implement the recommendations. The plans should have roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals, and tasks to be executed with deadlines. Evaluations must outline how the recommendations are to be implemented.

Service Delivery Improvement Plans as well as other reports from Senior Management Committees must be considered when choosing programmes that need to be evaluated. The strategies for ensuring that

the programme managers do implement the recommendations based on the evaluation plan is for the manager to develop an improvement plan based on the evaluation findings, together with the evaluators, and ensure that the evaluators monitor the implementation of the improvement plan

#### ***5.5.5 Align internal evaluation with those of DPME***

By aligning their external evaluations to be conducted by the department with the DPME for the sake of accountability and service delivery at least, that will assist with the alignment of strategizing with other departments. Automation of the data gathering process would significantly improve the turnaround of evaluations. Develop recommendation implementation plans and them implement, monitor and report against them.

Branches affected by the evaluation findings must develop recommendation implementation plans to be monitored by the branch heads by providing progress reports during Branch Management Meetings. The plans must be consolidated and presented by Service Delivery Co-ordinators during Branch Management Meetings. They should form part of the management meetings (EMC, SMC, and BMM) and implementation of the recommendations should be monitored during the meetings. Monitoring tools are to be discussed and agreed upon at these meetings.

### **5.6 CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter critically analysed research findings on the utilization of evaluation in the DRDLR. Using the Patton (2013) utilization-focused evaluation as a framework, gaps were identified where the evaluation processes fell short of the suggested framework thus making evaluation findings unsuited for utilization. The framework on knowledge utilization as advocated by Blake and Ottoson (2009) was also used to supplement the Utilization-Focused Evaluation due to its similarities. The use was

assessed in terms of coverage, dissimilation, distribution, transfer and translation. The analysis of the data revealed those factors that led to underutilization of evaluation and well as to trends that are developing in the use of findings in the DRDLR. In conclusion, the chapter identified strategies that will improve the utilization of evaluation findings in DRDLR.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter draws conclusions from the research findings and makes recommendations on the strategies that could be considered to improve utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR. This research evaluated the utilization of evaluation findings in the department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The research moved from the premise that the evaluation findings were not utilized effectively in decision-making processes of the department. Based on the literature reviewed, the findings of this study provided an insight into the challenges faced by the department with regard to underutilization of evaluation findings in decision-making. This section attempts to summarize all the findings and provide recommendations on the matter, based on the research findings, analysis and interpretation thereof.

Three (3) completed evaluations, undertaken by the DRDLR in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency, have been used as a reference point for the study. The manner in which the findings of these evaluations are underutilized was the subject of research. This research will contribute to address the knowledge gap that still exists with regard to utilization of evaluation findings in decision-making processes of organisations in particular in relation to the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. To a certain extent the evaluation fraternity will also benefit from the results of the research, mainly to improve utilization and build best practice in evaluation knowledge management.

## 6.2 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR. What has been observed is that evaluations of three (3) of the major programmes of the department that have been commissioned and the studies were completed. However, the findings of these studies did not appear to be used effectively to inform management decisions. The research intended to investigate the factors that lead to underutilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR, and make findings and analyse the underlying reasons of underutilization so that strategies that could improve effectiveness in the utilization of these findings can be identified and recommended. The research questions that this research attempted to answer were as follows:

- What are factors leading to underutilization of evaluation findings in DRDLR?
- What are the trends in the utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR?
- What are the strategies for consideration in the utilization of the evaluation findings in the DRDLR?

It must be said that there are pockets of best practice emerging in the utilization of evaluations in DRDLR. This research also investigated those emerging trends in utilization of evaluation findings.

This type of research has never been conducted in the DRDLR or in South Africa from a meta-evaluation perspective. This study will address that knowledge gap. The study answered the questions of utilization of evaluations in DRDLR and identified recommendations on how to improve the use thereof. It produced the insights that will enable the department to plan and execute the evaluations in such a way that the findings are effectively utilised. It is the first time that a meta-evaluation based on

usefulness of evaluations was performed on the DPME-evaluated programmes.

### **6.3 SUMMARY OF FACTORS LEADING TO UNDERUTILIZATION OF EVALUATION FINDINGS**

There are a number of factors identified by the research that lead to underutilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR. Amongst others, lack of institutionalisation of the evaluation function is identified as a major challenge. Although the department has had the evaluation unit for a long time, evaluations are an event, not necessarily part of the project cycle nor the performance management system of the department. Unlike programme performance monitoring that undergoes audits of performance information on a regular basis; evaluations do not have any institutional mechanism such as an evaluation committee that serves as an oversight body to regulate the evaluation function in a professional and consistent manner.

Evaluations, unlike Performance Information Management, Risk Management and the Audit functions which have the Quarterly Review meetings (QRAM), Risk Committee and Audit Committee respectively, to oversee their initiatives, they get tabled in the Strategic Management Committee (SMC) on an ad hoc basis. This makes it difficult for evaluation findings to be taken seriously and implemented since a follow-up is not made. The evaluation function is thus not treated as one of the important functions for performance improvement in the department, such as the way auditing is handled, where there will be audit committee meetings to address the audit findings and action management plans to ensure the implementation thereof.

Lack of ownership and accountability over evaluations was also identified as a factor for underutilization of evaluation. Management of the department has the perception that evaluations are imposed on them and

this leads to lack of accountability and underutilization of the results of the studies. The importance of who identifies the evaluation studies and who participates in the evaluations is paramount. Identifying the uses and users of the evaluation proactively is a critical facilitation of use.

Poorly planned evaluations that are undertaken without identifying the uses and users are not going to be utilised. Evaluations have to be initiated by the primary users and the process and methodology that incorporates learning must be planned with the primary users. Lack of a systematic approach to implementation of evaluations led to recommendations not being implemented. Officials become occupied with the next assignment or duties as they are under pressure to start new approaches in implementing other new projects.

#### **6.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research is grounded in theory. The literature reviewed provided the theoretical basis and the rationale for the research from the scholarly perspective, outlining what has been researched, past and current studies, and identifying the knowledge gap which a study such as this can fulfil. The literature was reviewed on utilization of evaluations in decision-making processes of the organisations. The literature revealed a number of theoretical frameworks on utilization of evaluation findings. Through literature review it was revealed that while this topic has been well researched, there are no solutions that are available to suit all environments. This is because evaluation studies are new research areas that do not necessarily always use empirical data as typically known in the fields of quantitative techniques, thus the validity and reliability of the research become suspect. Furthermore, no two studies can yield the same findings and reach the same conclusions.

In this study a lesson was learned about three (3) transformation phases that knowledge utilization has gone through from 1920 to date, described

by Baker (1991). Currently we are in the third wave where knowledge utilization is focused on evidence-based methodologies of planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation (Blake and Ottoson, 2009). Utilization is paramount in evidence-based monitoring and evaluation, and issues of knowledge utilization are measured in terms of variables such as utilization coverage, dissemination and diffusion, transfer, systematic implementation and knowledge translation. In this research these variables were used to determine the extent of use.

The theoretical frameworks that were looked into can be categorised into Results-Based Management, Knowledge Utilization Management, Theory-Based Evaluation and Outcomes Based Performance Management approaches as advocated by scholars such as De Lancer-Jules and Hozer (2001); Hein (2002); Blake-Ottoson (2009); Rogers (2009); White (2009); Kusek and Rist (2004); and Shephard (2011). The conceptual framework used in this study is Utilization-Focused Evaluation as advocated by Patton (1997-2013) with an emphasis on the utilization of the evaluation findings. The premise of this framework is that evaluations should not be undertaken unless they are going to be used. Utilization-Focused Evaluation Framework was developed by Patton (1997) and has been used in 20 federal evaluations over 35 years. It is based on usefulness of evaluations, meaning that the value of evaluations should be judged by the extent of their use.

Utilization of evaluation findings is essential in evidence-based management for decision-making and can only happen if it has been planned that way with various stakeholders. The framework does not advocate any particular theory; however, it emphasises participatory approaches centred on intended users being participants. Evaluations have successfully been used by many governments to inform policy reforms in both developed and developing countries such as Canada, Australia, Chile, Colombia, United Kingdom, United States of America and those affiliated to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD) (Mackey, 2007). This is becoming best practice that South Africa is now adopting.

## **6.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative research strategy was utilised for this evaluation to bring forth the voices of the participants. The benefit and strength of qualitative research is found in the richness of the text that emerges through the voices of the participants through their lived experiences (Bryman; 2012; Cresswell, 2009). The research design used was a meta-evaluation using Patton's 17 steps of Utilization-Focused Evaluation based on the three (3) evaluations of the major programmes of the department that were completed.

In order to improve internal and external validity and reliability of the data, that are major concerns in qualitative research, a triangulation method was utilised. To triangulate information, a number of data collection tools and sources were used. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with 12 DRDLR executive managers, questionnaires administered to 35 respondents consisting of senior managers, middle management and other officials of the DRDLR as well as two (2) focus groups from the Restitution and the Land Reform and Administration programmes. A documents content analysis on the implementation evaluations of restitution, CRDP and Recapitalization and development programme was used as a secondary data source.

The targeted population was DRDLR management, from whom a purposive sample of 12 was drawn. Semi-structured questionnaires were also administered to 35 respondents. Two (2) focus group sessions were held with officials serving in the programmes that were evaluated. The document search and content analysis on the three (3) programme evaluations became an exceptional source of secondary data. The data was processed and analysed with the assistance of interview transcripts,

and information was presented thematically for ease of presentation. The evaluator consistently took cognisance of issues of data reliability to ensure a truthful and trustworthy outcome of the research as well as internal and external validity, ensuring that the research was measuring what was supposed to be measured. Prior informed consent was sought in all cases when data was collected for ethical consideration.

A major limitation to this study is that the results are only applicable to the DRDLR in the context of the current National Evaluation Policy Framework in South Africa. As a non-probability sample study, the results cannot be generalised but are only applicable to the context in which the research was undertaken.

## **6.6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The findings of this research are premised from the meta-evaluation of the three (3) implementation evaluations of the major programmes of the department, namely the CRDP, RADP and the Restitution programme utilising Patton's 17 steps of meta-evaluation, supplemented by interviews to executive management and data from questionnaires administered to the management echelon of the department and two focus groups, rich qualitative data was collected and analysed.

Throughout the study it emerged that almost every one of the participants of the study has been involved in one way or another with an evaluation process. This in itself is a major finding as evaluations are not in the mainstream of the day-to-day operations of the department yet all respondents were aware and had participated in an evaluation. It was interesting to realize that they had some understanding of evaluations and their uses. The sample that was drawn had the capabilities to inform the study on the subject that was not foreign to them. That increased the reliability of the study although the triangulation process of analysing the data strengthened the validity.

The findings of this study can be summarized into three categories, according to the three evaluation questions that are the basis of this research, namely, 1) the factors that lead to underutilization of the evaluation findings, 2) the trends in utilization as well as 3) the strategies that could be considered to improve utilization, juxtaposing the data collected against the 17 Steps of Patton's Utilization-Focused Evaluation framework. It was found that the majority of the steps that were supposed to be carried through in the evaluation to ensure that the evaluations are useful were not done. From the beginning, steps 1-6 were not included in the planning of the three (3) evaluations under study, contravening the very basic requirement of prior identification of the evaluation uses and the primary users.

### ***Factors Leading to Underutilization of Evaluation Findings***

The factors leading to underutilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR have already been summarised above. It was interesting to note that the perceptions and experienced of the executive management and those of other levels of management of the department were very different. Executive management had some expectations of how evaluation findings could be used and thus had something concrete to say with regard to factors that led to underutilization of evaluations. However, other lower ranking management struggled to identify the factors. The following factors were the top five factors (5) identified:

1. Evaluation function not institutionalised.
2. Lack of ownership and accountability.
3. Poor planning.
4. Lack of understanding of the usefulness of Evaluations.
5. Lack of systematic implementation of Evaluation findings.



### ***Trends in Utilization of Evaluation Results***

In terms of trends in the utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR this research also identified the trends listed below, on utilization of evaluation findings. The findings on these factors were much different when one moves up in the ranks of management. The research found out that the majority of the respondents who were aware of changes that were happening in the department subsequent to the finalization of the evaluation were top management. The message had not yet been conveyed to the rest of the management of the department.

The evaluation findings are being used to inform the department's plans that guide the department towards meeting its strategic objectives, goals and ultimately fulfilling its mandate. Evaluation findings have in the recent past been used to reflect the status of the programme in the situational analysis of the strategic plan. This has assisted to a large extent in the department being geared towards resolving its challenges in order to improve service delivery.

Evaluation findings, especially of the RADP and the CRDP, did pick up a lot of inefficiencies in the system and loss of revenue. Through these evaluations the department is re-prioritising and reallocating funding away from inefficient activities in the quest to improve return on investment.

Evaluation findings have been used to influence the revision of the departmental policies such as the Recapitalisation and Development Programme where currently there is a major overhaul of the programme being envisaged. Through the findings and recommendations emanating from the evaluation of the implementation of Restitution, the Commission Of Restitution of Land Rights is preparing to become autonomous to ensure that it runs efficiently, effectively and in a sustainable manner.

The implementation evaluation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme provided findings that informed decision-makers on what

works and what does not before a full implementation of the CRDP. The findings of the CRDP have been used to validate certain aspects of the CRDP which management was cautious about including cost implications.

Evaluation findings were utilized in the DRDLR to provide management with valuable information that enabled them to determine if projects and programmes being implemented are worth implementing. They also determined the impact of the programmes and their relevancy. These enable management to get a sense of whether their interventions are making a difference in the lives of the citizens. Evaluations helped to strengthen the delivery capability of the department and the utilization of its resources. This also highlights potential pitfalls for projects of a similar nature. In the case of the DRDLR it informed changes in the policy of the RADP.

In summary, the following are the trends in evaluation use:

1. To inform Strategic and Annual Performance Planning;
2. Budget allocations and re-prioritization;
3. Knowledge translation through policy revision;
4. Determining project and programme outcomes and Impact; and
5. Strengthening the delivery capability.

## **6.7 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

The interpretation of the research indicated that to a large extent the evaluations findings are underutilized in the decision-making processes of the DRDLR. There are many reasons that have been given but the main challenge is with regard to the institutionalization of the evaluation function in the department. The evaluations are seen as an 'add-on' and *ad hoc* activity, more so an unnecessary inconvenience brought by the Monitoring and Evaluation unit together with the DPME in the Presidency. Value for money, opportunity for improvement and the learning that is embedded in the evaluations is not recognised.

The research has also depicted that there are pockets of best practice starting to emerge in utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR. This was seen mainly with the evaluation of the Recapitalisation and Development programme, and the results thereof have influenced a change in the policy of the programme. A similar experience has been seen in the case of the Restitution programme where the evaluation study has influenced the direction that is leading to a probable separation of the Commission of Land Rights from the DRDLR in order to increase the efficiencies, effectiveness and sustainability of the Restitution programme. This is of importance since the department has recently opened the second phase of restitution claims.

### ***Strategies for Improvements on Utilization of Evaluations Findings in DRDLR***

Strategies that are to be considered for improving utilization have been discussed in full in the previous chapter. Below is the summary of those strategies.

Communication of evaluation findings closes the feedback loop from planning to implementation and back to planning. A thoughtful communication and advocacy plan is needed to improve communication in the department to ensure effective utilization of evaluations for improved public policies, adjusting projects or programmes and changing the processes. Immediate feedback needs to be provided about findings of the evaluation.

Dissemination of evaluation needs to be improved. A dissemination strategy or plan should be developed. Findings should be made available and accessible through a number of channels such as websites and libraries. Publications Evaluation reports must be made available on intranet for all staff members to have access. Awareness campaigns must be

conducted. Consultations must be done with both internal and external stakeholder prior to a decision being taken to evaluate programmes/projects. The purpose of the consultation is to ensure that evaluation focuses on where there is a need.

Evaluation function should be institutionalized and have committees and forums to address the impediments and provide solutions. The institutionalization of evaluations as one of the important functions of the department must include the establishment of the Evaluation Committee similar to the Audit Committee as a formal management structure where evaluations will be served. Management needs to be open-minded and make a commitment to institutionalize transformation.

The departments need to implement the recommendations of the evaluation and support evaluations to be done by the programmes themselves and not external providers. There must be improvement plans to implement the recommendations. The plans must have roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals, and tasks to be executed with deadlines. Evaluations must explain how the recommendations are to be implemented. Service Delivery Improvement Plans as well as other reports from Senior Management Committees must also be considered when choosing programmes that need to be evaluated.

Aligning internal evaluation with those that are to be conducted by the department with the DPME will ensure that the department plans its external evaluations proactively and ahead of time. This will assist with the alignment with the objective of other related DPME evaluations to increase the opportunity for use.

In summary the following are strategies for improvements on **utilization**:

1. Communicate the finding: knowledge transfer
2. Disseminations and diffusion: dissemination strategy developed

3. Institutionalization of evaluation: establishment of the evaluation committee
4. Implement recommendations systematically
5. Align internal evaluation with those of DPME

## **6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***6.8.1 Recommendations to DRDLR***

The following recommendations were made by the respondents for the department to consider in future ensuring effective utilization of evaluation findings.

#### **6.8.1.1 Identify and Plan Evaluation with Use in mind**

The department needs to plan evaluation well. It needs to do a feasibility study prior to the establishment of programmes to ensure that programmes are being implemented correctly and benefits are going to the right people at the right time and place. It should conduct a needs assessment in order to identify the relevant project/programmes that need to be evaluated to facilitate utilization of findings, and this can be easily done.

The programmes to be evaluated must be consulted first prior to the evaluation taking place so as to get the buy-in. The need for evaluations should be determined by the programme managers themselves so that they can take responsibility for the evaluations and use the recommendations. The M&E unit should not suggest evaluation topics but it is important that they be determined by the programme managers themselves so that they can take ownership and responsibility to action the recommendations. These are the officials that have those powers and M&E is only valuable if the information is used.

Involve middle, junior management and project staff as well in evaluation processes. Middle management and officials in other levels should be involved in all stages of evaluation from the planning to the implementation of the study for the sake of exposure and development. If DPME is about to conduct an evaluation in collaboration with the DRDLR they must engage even the assistant director level and not only engage the senior manager's level upwards because even the assistant directors are being affected by the evaluation. Middle management staff from the Assistant Director level should be involved in all stages of evaluation meetings from the planning to the Implementation of the study for the sake of exposure and development.

#### **6.8.1.2 Implementation of Recommendations must be initiated by the Users**

Recommendations should be implemented by the programme managers who are the users of the findings, and the evaluation team should monitor the implementation of the recommendations frequently. Action plans based on evaluation findings must be developed and presented by service delivery co-ordinators in management meetings. Follow-up on recommendations made internally as proposed by internal evaluators remains a challenge. Therefore there is a need for a committee within the department that will oversee the implementation of recommendations, development and action plans and progress reports thereof. Even follow-up recommendations by external evaluations remain a challenge.

The programme managers must send the evaluation proposals to the M&E unit so that they are able to work and plan at ease as often the unit requests project/programme managers who may not be available and this delays the evaluation study and/or preparation thereof. The department must consider utilizing the evaluation tool especially in Rural

Development. Evaluating these programmes must result in a reduction in rural poverty.

### **6.8.1 3 Establish an Evaluation Forum**

Evaluation Forum is essential to facilitate the discussion of the evaluation criteria well in advance and capacitate management on evaluations and the importance thereof. Capacitate the evaluation unit so that it can monitor progress or recommendations. An evaluation forum can play an important role in sharing ideas on how findings and recommendations should be implemented by the programme managers. The role of the evaluation team should be to monitor the implementation of the recommendations and report frequently in the evaluation forum. The forum can also suggest the evaluation topics to be determined by the programme managers themselves so that they take responsibility for the recommendations. The department must implement the recommendations of the evaluation as requested because departmental funds have been used to appoint an external evaluator for the benefit of progress in the organisation.

#### **6.8.1.4 Develop an Evaluation Communication Strategy**

Communication should be strengthened amongst all parties including mentors and strategic partners. A thoughtful communication and advocacy plan is needed for the departments to ensure effective communication and utilization of evaluation findings in order to improve public policies, adjust projects or programmes and change processes. Relevant skills should be prioritised in order to make the participants competent and allocation of resources should be relevant to the need for communication. Introduce mechanisms or a plan that would be monitored to ensure that there is effective utilization of evaluations. Have champions within the Department that will facilitate and monitor the effectiveness of those evaluations.

Conduct awareness campaigns on the importance of evaluation processes as well as the evaluation results. This will change the attitude of managers towards evaluation. Project evaluation should be done on a quarterly basis as well as annually. Release of Funds for projects should be linked to the evaluation outcomes. Communication should be strengthened amongst all parties. The department needs to plan or do a feasibility study prior to the establishment of programmes to ensure that programmes are being implemented with the right people at the right time and place. Furthermore, relevant skills should be prioritised in order to make the participants employable and allocation of skills should be relevant to the needs of the community.

There is currently a lack of a feedback loop on evaluation study findings to implementers. This gap means that issues that have been identified will not be addressed. Evaluation reports and feedback must be done in provinces with all affected parties present.

#### **6.8.1.5 Institutionalize Evaluation Function**

There is a need for the evaluation function to be institutionalised to provide a governance structure that will facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation, and follow-up corrective measures in support of evaluations to be undertaken. To ensure that there is ownership and effective utilization of the evaluations, the programme managers or programme developers need to be involved in the planning stage of the evaluations so that they can clarify to the evaluators the programme goals and objectives, programme activities that will produce outputs and programme outcomes.

The stakeholders' engagement should be in the evaluation design, evaluation implementation and the use of the evaluation results so as to ensure that there is accountability in achieving the departmental outcomes and targets, as well as best practice in relation to good governance.



To ensure effective utilization of evaluation the department must implement the recommendations of the service provider as requested because the departmental funds have been used to appoint an external evaluator for the benefit of progress in the organisation. Action plans based on evaluation findings must be developed and presented by service delivery co-ordinators in BMMs, SMC and EMC.

Recommendations should be implemented by the programme managers and the evaluation team should monitor the implementation of the recommendations frequently. The department must treat the evaluation function as an important function and give it the necessary attention. The evaluation function should be institutionalized through committees and forums and regular meetings should be attended to promote the effectiveness of the evaluation functions.

The departments need to implement the recommendations of the evaluations and also support evaluations to be done in the programmes, understanding that the purpose of the evaluation is not to undermine the implementation of their programmes.

### ***6.8.2 Recommendations to DPME and the Evaluation Fraternity***

The following are recommendations to the DPME and the evaluation fraternity at large for the improvement of utilization of evaluation findings.

#### **6.8.2.1 Oversight role and awareness**

DPME must play an oversight role to ensure that decision-makers and authorities understand the importance of the evaluation. The DPME must create awareness about M&E to the general public, politicians and authorities. The DPME must ensure that M&E units should not have to suggest Evaluation topics but it is important that they be determined by the programme managers themselves so that they can take ownership and

responsibility to action the recommendations. These are the officials that have such powers.

#### **6.8.2.2 Management Capacity Building and Recognition of M&E as a Profession**

Conduct capacity building for management in government departments regarding evaluations. Funding must be set aside by the DPME to fund Evaluation studies that the department intends implementing. The DPME must recognise evaluations as a profession so that evaluators are registered like auditors, nurses or social workers to ensure control and accountability.

#### **6.8.2.3 Clarify Roles and Responsibilities of various stakeholders**

The DPME needs to document all the steps involved in the National Evaluation System (NES) and indicate the responsibility of various stakeholders in order to avoid finger pointing when its timer to deliver/develop some of the deliverables or requirements of the National Evaluation System such as improvement plans development cabinet submissions.

#### **6.8.2.4 Programme Design: Theory of Change in all new programmes**

In future when new programmes are designed, the department should liaise with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) to ensure that theory of change is incorporated in the programmes from the beginning and not as an afterthought at the evaluation stage. The DPME needs to be part of the team of experts who plan the development programmes and assist with the research prior to the implementation to ensure the programme evaluability based on a clear theory of change. The DPME must assist with the research prior to implementation of the

programmes so that programmes are evaluated based on a clear theory of change.

#### **6.8.2.5 Build and Increase DPME Capacity to assist Departments in Evaluations**

There is a lack of evaluation capacity in DPME yet it is expected to assist other departments across government to carry out evaluations. DPME evaluations are not audits - they are for learning therefore this department must be capacitated to be able to assist. Assistance should not only be financial but the DPME should build evaluation capacity across government through educating programme managers about the importance of evaluation and the utilization evaluation findings.

The DPME needs to develop the evaluation utilization plan, circulate the plan to government departments and agencies and monitor how the utilization plan has been applied. They should employ more people to increase their capacity and allocate them to the provinces to educate and empower programme managers about the importance of evaluation and how to use evaluations better.

#### **6.8.2.6 DPME must ensure Departments develop a Plan for Utilization of Results**

To ensure effective utilization of evaluation results, the DPME must implement the recommendations of the service provider as requested because the departmental funds have been used to appoint an external evaluator for the benefit of progress in the organisation. The department should liaise with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation on what the evaluations are to be used for. In the future, when new programmes are designed there must be a plan for evaluations and how they are to be used together with the theory of change to be incorporated into the programmes.

### ***6.8.3 Recommendations for future Research***

It is recommended that further research be undertaken in the area of institutionalization of evaluation functions to facilitate optimal utilization of results.

## **6.9 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the issue of utilization of evaluation findings in decision-making is complex but of major importance in evidence-based management decision-making processes. The literature review provided insight into the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, as well as methodologies that guided the research. The research provides findings on the utilization of evaluation findings in the department. Furthermore, the research provided an interpretation and analysis of the findings in relation to trends in utilization of findings in the DRDLR, factors leading to the underutilization of findings, and concludes by providing recommended strategies for consideration in the improvement of utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR.

The research provided an insight into utilization of evaluation findings in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. Such insight will bring about debates and new suggestions and improvements on how the utilization of evaluation findings could be effectively institutionalized in government decision-making processes for the benefit of the developing economies, and the improvement of learning.

The study answered the three questions with regard to factors that led to underutilization of evaluation in the DRDLR. It provided insights with regard to utilization trends and strategies that can be employed to improve utilization of evaluation findings in the DRDLR. The study concludes by providing recommendations to the DRDLR, the DPME or the government of South Africa and the evaluation fraternity at large.

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## **ANNEXURE**

### **Questionnaire**

#### **UTILIZATION OF EVALUATION FINDINGS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND REFORM (DRDLR)**

Dear Colleagues

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) has undertaken three (3) external evaluations in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) on three of our major Service Delivery Programme namely:

1. Implementation Evaluation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) June 2009-2012 dated 24 October 2013
2. Implementation Evaluation of Recapitalization and Development Programme 2010-2012 dated 18 October 2013
3. Implementation Evaluation of the Restitution Programme dated 28 February 2014)

These evaluations have been completed together with the management responses and implementation plans. This enquiry is about the utilization of evaluation findings in the department. The information will assist in ensuring that processes are put in place to ensure that evaluations undertaken by the department are structured in such a way that they are effectively utilized to support management practices.

Partaking in this exercise is completely voluntary and anonymous and by responding to this enquiry it will assume that you are giving us consent to

utilize the information and your ideas. This questionnaire consists of 5 questions and will take you 15-20 minutes to respond to it. Enquiries and responses should be directed to CD: M&E Mmakgomo Tshatsinde Tel (012)3128408 email [mmakgomo.tshatsinde@drdlr.gov.za](mailto:mmakgomo.tshatsinde@drdlr.gov.za) Anonymous printed responses to be sent to The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform 184 Jeff Masemola Street, Office 527 South Block.

Thank you so much for your participation

Kind Regards

Mmakgomo Tshatsinde

Chief Director: Monitoring and Evaluation

Department of Rural Development and Land Reform

**Question 1 Demographic Information**

Please indicate by X what best describes you

**Male:** [M]                      **Female:** [F]

**Managerial Category:** [SMS member] [MMS Member] [Other]

**Age:** [below 30][ 30-35][36-40][41-45][46-50][51-55][56-60][60+]

**Programme:** 1. [CRDP] 2. [RADP] 3. [Restitution] 4. [Other]

**Question 2: Awareness and Participation**

2.1 What is your understanding of evaluations and their use?

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2.2 Were you in any stage involved/ affected by an evaluation and how?  
(Please elaborate)

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2.3 Do you regard evaluations as important for the organisation to  
undertaken and why?

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**Question 3 Utilization**

3.1 Are these evaluations benefiting the Department? If yes, in what way? If no, why do you say so? (Please elaborate)

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3.2 Were the findings of these evaluations effectively utilized?

3.2.1 If yes, how were they utilized? For what purpose? (Please elaborate broadly the areas of utilization.)

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3.2.2 If no, what could be the reasons for underutilization or non-use? (Please elaborate)

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**Question 4: Usefulness**

4.1 How have these evaluations benefited you and DRDLR in your management practices? If Yes, in what way? If No, why not?

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4.2 Are these evaluations addressing the needs of the department (relevancy, effectiveness)?

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4.3 Where these evaluation results utilized effectively for managerial decision making (elaborate areas of improvements made as a result of evaluation findings and recommendations)

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**Question 5: Areas and strategies for Improvements on Utilization**

5.1 How best can the department make sure that evaluations are used to support management practices? (please suggested strategies for effective utilization)

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5.2 What will you recommend to be considered in future by the department to ensure effective utilization of evaluations (Kindly elaborate on the areas that need improvement)?

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5.3 Do you have any recommendations to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency (DPME)?

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Thank you very much for taking part in this enquiry

**The End**