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**Formative Evaluation on the Implementation of  
Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting,  
Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework  
(GRPBMEAF)**

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**Summary Report**

**Submitted to the Department of Women, Youth, and  
Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD)**

**30 June 2023**

## Acronyms

APP	Annual Performance Plan
CGIF	Country Gender Indicator Framework
COGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DWYPD	Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities
GFP	Gender Focal Person
GRPBMEAF	Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
KII	Key Informant Interviews
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTSF	Medium Terms Strategic Framework
NDHS	National Department of Human Settlements
NEPF	National Evaluation Policy Framework
NT	National Treasury
SOEs	State-Owned Enterprises
SP	Strategic Plan
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
ToC	Theory of Change
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAT	Value-added tax
WYPD	Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities

## Table of Contents

Acronyms .....	ii
Executive Summary .....	v
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Evaluation Objectives.....	1
1.2.1 Overall Purpose.....	1
1.2.2 Specific Objectives .....	1
1.3 Evaluation Questions .....	2
1.3.1 Key evaluation questions.....	2
1.3.2 Sub-questions.....	2
1.4 Evaluation Scope .....	2
2. Evaluation methodology .....	3
2.1 Evaluation Design .....	3
2.2 Evaluation criteria and questions .....	3
2.3 Evaluation Methodology.....	3
3. Evaluation findings.....	5
3.1 Characteristics of Respondents .....	5
3.2 What is the theory of change underlying the intervention, and is it working? .....	5
3.3 Testing the components of the theory of change .....	8
3.4 What interventions have been implemented effectively? .....	12
3.5 How many departments have institutionalised the Framework? .....	13
3.6 What results have been achieved? .....	15
3.6.1 Outputs.....	15
3.6.2 Early Outcomes .....	16
3.7 What lessons are learnt (obstacles, challenges, successes, innovations, and good practices) in implementing the GRPBMEAF?.....	17
3.8 How can the evaluability of the GRPBMEAF be strengthened.....	18
3.8.1 Programme Design.....	18
3.8.2 Information Availability.....	19
4. Discussions of the results .....	19
4.1 Relevance and coherence of the GRPBMEAF.....	19
4.2 Effectiveness and efficiency of GRPBMEAF implementation.....	22

4.3	Early impacts and sustainability .....	23
5.	How can the GRPBMEAF be strengthened [Recommendations]? .....	24
6.	Conclusion.....	24
7.	Limitations of the evaluation .....	25

## **Executive Summary**

The Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD), in partnership with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), conducted the formative evaluation on the implementation of the Gender-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework (GRPBMEAF). The purpose of the formative evaluation was to assess the implementation progress of the GRPBMEAF and enhance knowledge to contribute to the design and implementation of the Framework in South Africa. The objectives of the evaluation were to develop the Framework's theory of change with a detailed programme theory to inform the design, implementation, and adaptation of the programme; test the components of the theory of change; conduct an evaluability assessment to determine and improve evaluability going forward; assess the implementation of the GRPBMEAF and determine the effectiveness and relevance of implementation to date.

The formative evaluation assessed the implementation of GRPBMEAF by focusing on six evaluation criteria (i.e., relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact [early outcomes], and sustainability). A theory-based mixed methods approach was applied, combining qualitative and quantitative methods for triangulation. The specific methods used included document analysis, key informant interviews, a survey of officials, focus group discussions and a theory of change workshop. A total of 53 knowledgeable participants were interviewed as key informants. The survey targeted gender-focal persons, planning and finance units across government departments and entities. A total of 117 respondents completed the self-administered online questionnaire. Eighteen (18) community-level focus group discussions were conducted across the nine provinces. The community-level engagements were aimed at providing community members and grassroots organisations an opportunity to provide personal views, experiences and observations on the implementation and results of the GRPBMEAF interventions.

Amongst other key objectives of the formative evaluation was a participatory development of the GRPBMEAF's theory of change. Currently, the GRPBMEAF presents a less detailed theory of change, which shows elements that explain how the GRPBMEAF is expected to lead to better outcomes for women and girls and greater levels of gender equality. A more detailed theory of change was developed in

collaboration with critical actors who participated in a theory of change workshop. The theory of change was coherent, with a clear and logical pathway from inputs, interventions, outputs, outcomes, and impact. The data analysis indicated that the GRPBMEAF is relevant to all three sectors, i.e. Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (WYPD). However, youth and persons with disabilities were not included in the initial design of the Framework. The objectives of the GRPBMEAF remain relevant to the current socioeconomic climate, and activities and outputs were considered consistent with the desired impact.

The implementation of the GRPBMEAF has commenced across most national and provincial departments, and the implementation progress varies across the departments and pillars. The implementation of the GRPBMEAF includes coordination activities led by the centre of government departments and department-specific activities. Significant progress has been made at the coordination level, and several policies and systems have been engendered, guidelines developed, awareness raised, and capacity-building efforts implemented. While awareness levels on the GRPBMEAF are high among the officials interviewed, this has yet to translate to adequate understanding beyond the gender-focal persons.

The results show that progress has been made on pillars related to policy priorities and plans (Pillars 1, 2, 3), which have been implemented effectively across departments. An analysis of the latest strategic plans for 123 departments/ entities found that 23.6% were not WYPD responsive, while 76.4% were at varying levels of WYPD responsiveness. Similar trends apply to annual performance plans, where 15.7% of the assessed 134 annual performance plans were not responsive, and 84.3% were at different responsiveness levels. However, these priorities have yet to translate to specific interventions that remain non-WYPD responsive. The evaluation found that, of the 123 strategic plans that were assessed, less than half (49.6%, n=61) have precise interventions in their major programmes in the strategic plans that are aimed at the empowerment of WYPD, including in cases where targets are disaggregated according to these three sectors. Capacity gaps were highlighted, suggesting an urgent need for further capacity building to improve efficiency and effectiveness in implementing the Framework.

Even though it is too early to make firm conclusions or to attribute these to the Framework, the results have shown that the outcomes of the GRPBMEAF are progressing in the right direction, with evidence of improvements in the outcomes for marginalised groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities. However, challenges remain in ensuring that the Framework achieves the intended objectives.

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the following recommendations are made:

- Further communication and awareness initiatives should continue, targeting officials at the provincial levels and other departmental units, such as finance. These awareness initiatives should target actors outside government, who are important players in ensuring that government departments deliver on targets for women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
- Targeted capacity-building activities should be implemented. While many officials indicated their commitment to the cause of the marginalised actors, there needed to be more capacity gaps in translating some GRPBMEAF proposals into concrete interventions that can benefit the marginalised groups.
- Targets for the implementation of the GRPBMEAF should form part of key performance areas for all levels of government officials. This will ensure that all officials are obligated to implement the GRPBMEAF interventions.
- Existing legislative tools should be used to find ways of making compliance in GRPBMEAF implementation to be enforceable.

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

The Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) appointed the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to conduct a formative evaluation on the implementation of the Gender-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (GRPBMEAF). The GRPBMEAF, approved by the Cabinet in 2019, aimed to catalyse gender mainstreaming across the state machinery to improve women's empowerment and gender equality in pursuing the country's constitutional vision of a non-sexist society (DWYPD, 2019). To deepen understanding of the GRPBMEAF, the DWYPD developed guidelines on how the Framework should be applied in practice (DWYPD, 2020a). The Country Gender Indicator Framework (CGIF) was developed to supplement the GRPBMEAF to strengthen the government's ability to plan for and measure progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women (DWYPD, 2020b). This evaluation aims to conduct a comprehensive formative evaluation to provide evidence of the Framework's implementation progress and early outcomes.

## **1.2 Evaluation objectives**

### **1.2.1 Overall purpose**

The purpose of this formative evaluation is to assess the implementation progress of the GRPBMEAF and enhance knowledge to contribute to the design and implementation of the Framework in South Africa going forward.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of this formative evaluation are as follows:

1. To develop the theory of change with a detailed programme theory to inform the programme's design, implementation, and adaptation.
2. Test the components of the theory of change.
3. To conduct an evaluability assessment to determine and improve evaluability going forward.



4. To assess the implementation of the GRPBMEAF and determine the effectiveness and relevance of implementation to date.

### **1.3 Evaluation questions**

#### **1.3.1 Key evaluation questions**

- How effective is the GRPBMEAF implementation in South Africa?
- How can the Framework be improved to yield the desired outcomes?

#### **1.3.2 Sub-questions**

The proposed evaluation questions are as follows:

- What is the theory of change underlying the intervention, and is it working? If not, why?
- What has the implementation process entailed?
- To what extent has the GRPBMEAF been implemented as planned and institutionalised?
- What interventions have been implemented effectively?
- How many departments have institutionalised the Framework?
- What results have been achieved? (Effectiveness, outputs, early outcomes)?
- What lessons are learnt (obstacles, challenges, successes, innovations, and good practices) in implementing the GRPBMEAF?
- How can the GRPBMEAF be strengthened?
- How can the evaluability of the GRPBMEAF be strengthened?

### **1.4 Evaluation scope**

The scope of the evaluation included the following:

1. All ten pillars of the GRPBMEAF.
2. All national and provincial government departments.
3. Selected relevant institutions and bodies such as parliament.
4. Implementation in the period from 01 April 2019 to date.

## **2. Evaluation methodology**

### **2.1 Evaluation design**

The formative evaluation of the GRPBMEAF is undertaken as an implementation evaluation. A combination of a case study approach and a theory-based approach was utilised. The explanatory case study and theory-based approaches can explain the relationships among programme components, investigate programme implementation and operations, often at several sites, and examine programme effects (assessing causality usually involving multi-site and multi-method assessments).

### **2.2 Evaluation criteria and questions**

Evaluation criteria are broad guidelines that help evaluators think about and explain changes due to an intervention (DPME, 2019). The evaluation team relied on the six criteria per the NEPF (DPME), based on the revised Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) benchmark evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria are (1) Relevance, (2) Coherence, (3) Effectiveness, (4) Efficiency, (5) Impact, and (6) Sustainability.

### **2.3 Evaluation methodology**

The formative evaluation of the implementation of the GRPBMEAF was conducted using a mixed-method approach. A mixed method approach applies qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyse data, integrate findings, and draw inferences in a single inquiry programme. Specifically, the evaluation involved the following techniques: document analysis, key informant interviews, a survey, focus group discussions, and a theory of change workshop.

**Document analysis:** Relevant strategic documents were identified and reviewed to understand the proposed objectives, interventions, theory of change (availability and adequacy) assumptions, proposed indicators, etc., of the Framework. Previous review efforts were also reviewed. The different planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation documents (e.g., Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans, etc.) from national and provincial departments were assessed to understand the extent to which the Framework has been institutionalised, whether it is being implemented as planned; and whether these strategic documents were gender-responsive.

**Key informant interviews (KIIs)** were conducted with 53 purposefully selected participants, who commented comprehensively on the various aspects concerning the implementation progress and achievements to date of the GRPBMEAF.

**Survey:** A total of 116 respondents, representing 70 departments and agencies, completed the survey. The response rate for the national government was 56.3%, while that of provincial government departments was 41.9%. Five per cent of the targeted national public agencies were represented, whereas none of the targeted provincial public entities were represented in the sample. The overall response rate was 33.8%. Given the poor response rate for public entities, the results presented in this report focus on national and provincial departments.

**Focus group discussions:** Community-level focus group discussions (FDGs) were done with groups of 6 to 12 participants across all nine provinces [2 FDGs per province]. The targeted participants were community members and grassroots organisations to provide personal views, experiences and observations regarding the implementation and results of the interventions aimed at women's empowerment, youth development and the rights of persons with disabilities. A focus group discussion was conducted with senior officials from the DWYPD.

**Theory of change workshop:** A participatory workshop was conducted on 03 November 2022 aimed at developing a Theory of Change (ToC) for the GRPBMEAF. The ToC that underpins the GRPBMEAF was not explicitly stated when the Cabinet developed and approved the Framework in 2019. The ToC workshop was therefore aimed at the retrospective development of a detailed ToC for the Framework through a participatory process involving key stakeholders.

**Data analysis:** The quantitative data from both secondary sources and the survey were captured on Stata and analysed using descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, t-tests, chi-square tests, correlations, etc.). Thematic analysis was done to analyse qualitative data. Themes and specific questions were derived from the review criteria and key evaluation questions. Content analysis was used to analyse various documents linked with implementing the Framework in the provincial and national departments and public entities/agencies.

### 3. Evaluation findings

#### 3.1 Characteristics of respondents

Table 2 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample of 116 respondents. The table shows that most of the respondents were female (61.4%), African (91.3%), and aged between 45 and 54 years (55.4%). Significantly fewer participants (2.6%) were youth (i.e., below the age of 35 years). Among the respondents, only 4.4% reported having a disability. Most participants had a post-graduate education qualification (58.6%) as the highest qualification. Concerning the type of participant, 53.5% were from the gender focal points, 26.3% worked in strategic planning units, and 20.2% worked in the financial units of the respective departments.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of survey respondents**

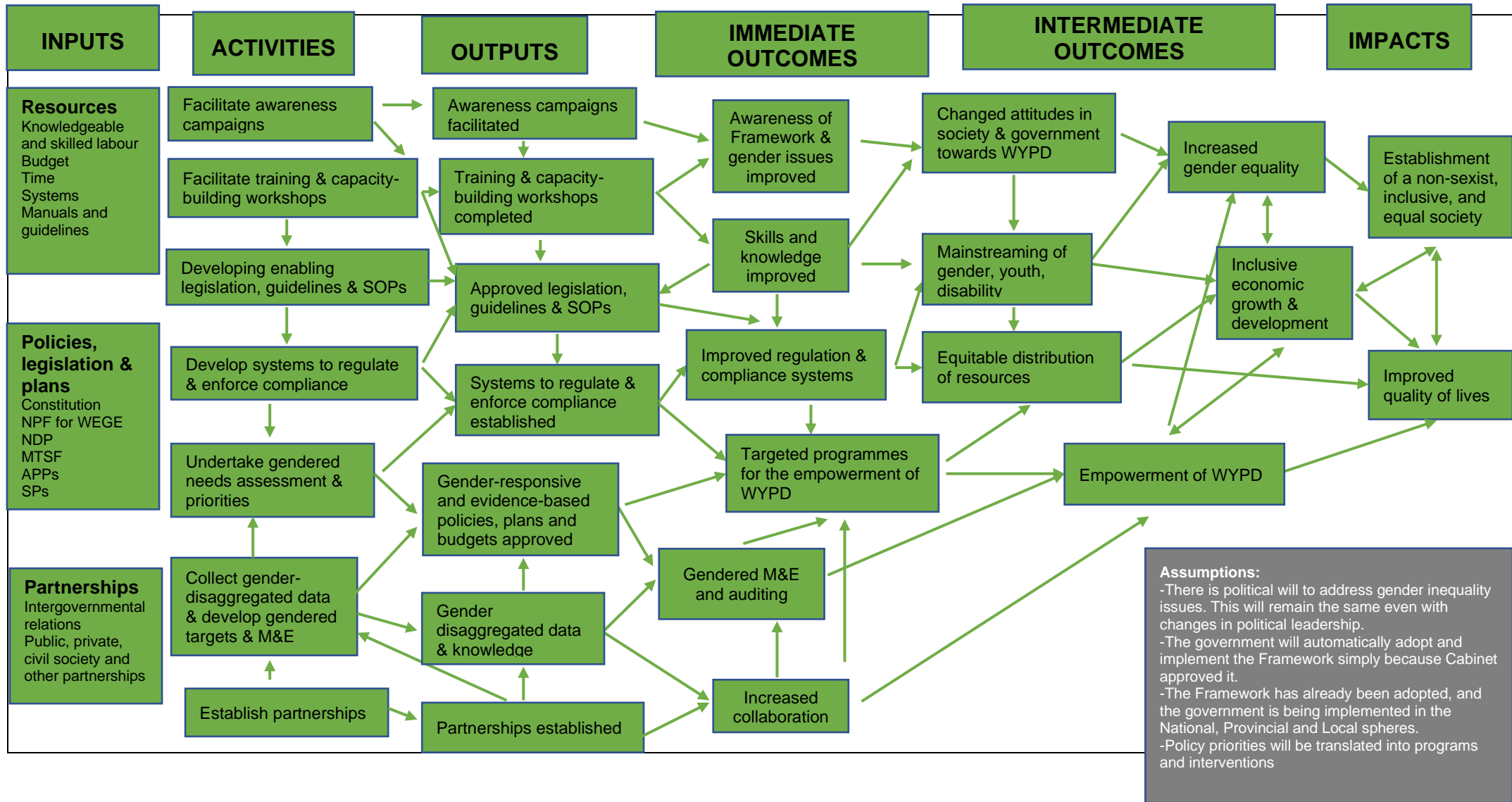
Variable	Categories	Freq	%	Variable	Categories	Freq	%
Gender				Disability status			
	Female	70	61.4		Yes	5	4.4
	Male	44	38.6		No	110	95.6
		114	100			115	100
Age (years)				Population group			
	25-34	3	2.6		African	105	91.3
	35-44	27	24.1		White	1	0.8
	45-54	62	55.4		Coloured	5	4.4
	55-64	20	17.9		Indian/Asian	4	3.5
		112	100			115	100
Education level				Type of respondent			
	Matric	1	0.9		Gender focal person	61	53.5
	Diploma	14	12.1		Planning Unit	30	26.3
	Undergraduate	33	28.4		Financial Unit	23	20.2
	Post-graduate	68	58.6			114	100
		116	100				

#### 3.2 What is the theory of change underlying the intervention, and is it working?

A ToC workshop was conducted with stakeholders, who provided inputs in developing a theory of change for the GRPBMEAF. The GRPBMEAF aims to contribute to achieving South Africa's Constitutional vision of a non-sexist, inclusive and equal society by ensuring that the three marginalised groups (WYPD) are empowered and that there is equality across gender, age and disability. To achieve this goal, the

GRPBMEAF seeks to ensure that a women, youth, and disability perspective is at the centre of how policy priorities are crafted, plans are designed and implemented, and budgets are allocated. Among key activities include communication and advocacy to increase awareness and influence attitudes in government and society towards WYPDs. The shifts in attitudes and mindsets are expected to lead to behaviour change. One identified challenge with gender mainstreaming implementation is the lack of knowledge and skills among implementers. As such, the GRPBMEAF seeks to improve actors' knowledge, capacity, and skills to design, implement and monitor gender, youth, and disability empowerment initiatives. Improved capacity and skills are expected to improve implementation and results. To improve the institutionalisation of the GRPBMEAF across government departments and institutions, it is crucial that enabling legislation, SOPs, and systems to regulate compliance are established. Another key activity is building partnerships within and without the government to strengthen collaboration and a whole society approach to gender, youth, and disability mainstreaming. These interventions are expected to improve WYPD responsiveness and performance of targeted programmes implemented by government and departments, empowerment of WYPDs, equitable distribution of resources and services, and inclusive economic growth and development.

## GRPBMEAF Theory of Change



### **3.3 Testing the components of the theory of change**

The components of the theory of change were tested based on literature review and key informant interviews. Raising the awareness levels of officials at all levels, and beyond the gender focal points, is emphasised in the Framework. The assumption is that increasing awareness levels is crucial in shifting the mindsets and, ultimately, behaviour change of the officials. This is consistent with the literature, highlighting information advocacy and awareness campaigns as a key strategy in ensuring the buy-in and ownership of mainstreaming initiatives among programme implementers. The results showed that 84.2% of the respondents were familiar with the GRPBMEAF, and 15.8% indicated a lack of familiarity with the GRPBMEAF. The respondents became aware of the Framework at different times and in various ways. For example, many respondents indicated that they became aware of the Framework during its development in 2018, having participated in various workshops and engagements facilitated by the DWYPD. Some reported becoming familiar after its approval in 2019 through the premiers' offices, whereas others became familiar through capacity-building workshops facilitated by the National School of Government. The gender-focal persons were more likely to be more familiar with the GRPBMEAF than the other units due to participation in several relevant events and meetings where it is discussed.

The respondents were asked to reflect on the communication received when the GRPBMEAF was introduced. The results showed that most (77.1%) of the respondents were satisfied, 17.7% were not satisfied with the communication received, and 5.2% had not received any communication. These results suggest that most of the officials had received communications, indicating that awareness efforts to publicise the GRPBMEAF had reached most of the officials. According to some respondents, the awareness-building process needed to be improved, and the implementation was started without sufficient assessment of the readiness of departments. The development of the Framework was viewed as having encapsulated some elements of public consultation rather than others.

The interviewed officials were asked to reflect on the extent to which the GRPBMEAF objectives were relevant and consistent with the need for empowerment and equality for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. An overwhelming majority believed that the GRPBMEAF's objectives were consistent with the need for empowerment and

equality across the three sectors. Specifically, 91.6% were of the view that the objectives of the GRPBMEAF are consistent with the needs for empowerment and equality for women; 91.7% were of the view that the objectives of the GRPBMEAF are consistent with the needs for empowerment and equality for youth; and 86.2% were of the view that the objectives of the GRPBMEAF are consistent with the needs for empowerment and equality for persons with disabilities. According to the respondents, while the GRPBMEAF was developed to achieve women's empowerment, its objectives respond to the needs of all three marginalised groups.

The GRPBMEAF proposes several interventions to meet its objectives' overall goal and attainments. Most respondents (87.9%) thought that the activities and interventions of the GRPBMEAF are consistent with its objectives' overall goals and attainments (Figure 15). A tiny proportion (1.1%) felt there needed to be more consistency between the GRPBMEAF's interventions and overall goals and objectives, while 11.0% did not give an opinion.

The interviewed officials were asked to reflect on the coherence of the results chain from outputs to the achievement of the Framework's outcomes, and the results are presented in Figure 16. The figures show that most respondents (75.3%) felt that the logical flow was coherent, and only 8.6% of the respondents believed that the results chain from outputs to outcomes could have been more coherent. These figures suggest that most respondents believed there was a clear, logical flow from outputs to outcomes of the GRPBMEAF.

More than three-quarters (76.4%) of the respondents thought that key assumptions, risks, and mitigation strategies had been well identified and specified in the GRPBMEAF. In contrast, 6.7% believed that key assumptions, risks, and mitigation strategies must be well-identified.

The implementation of the GRPBMEAF involves coordination activities led by the centre of government departments such as the DWYPD, DPME, National Treasury, DPSA, and all departments/entities. Therefore, the centre of government departments implements the Framework at two levels: activities to coordinate implementation across institutions and department-specific activities. At the coordination level, implementation has mainly focused on engendering policies and systems, developing guidelines, raising awareness, and capacity-building efforts. Among the achievements



in influencing policies and systems include the inclusion of WYPD priorities and indicators in the 2019-2024 MTSF, department mandate papers, revised guidelines for strategic plans and annual performance plans, revised evaluation Framework, etc. The DWYPD has produced several outputs listed as targets in the Framework's implementation plan (DWYPD, 2019), which include developing the Country Gender Indicator Framework (CGIF) and completing a 25-year review. A guideline aimed at assisting departments in implementing the Framework was developed.

Department-specific interventions have entailed raising awareness across units, capacity building, and mainstreaming women, youth, and disability issues in policies, plans and indicators. This has happened at both the national and provincial levels. Despite being familiar with the Framework, some officials needed to clarify how it aligns with specific departments' work. Although stakeholder workshops had created awareness regarding the GRPBMEAF, some participants needed to become more familiar with the relevance of the pillars for their specific departments and required further clarity. Thus, creating awareness among stakeholders should be viewed not as a once-off event but as a continuous process to ensure that different departments and their officials internalise and understand what is required to implement the GRPBMEAF.

Regarding capacity-building activities, the National School of Government facilitated relevant training for officials. While the training had focused on gender mainstreaming since 2008, the curriculum was updated in 2020, with inputs from the DWYPD, to address the needs of the GRPBMEAF. Among other themes, the officials were introduced to gender-related concepts, the history of women's movements, an overview of the relevant international and national normative and legislative Frameworks, theories, and approaches, etc. The training was offered to the departments that requested capacity building.

At the provincial level, training in the provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal contributed to developing a gender equality strategy. Training on GRPBMEAF was also done to ensure gender mainstreaming in the provincial programmes for different departments. Training of the women's forum in the Eastern Cape also contributed to creating awareness about the GRPBMEAF among the men. Training on the GRPBMEAF targeted women and brought on board the men's forum, the youth and persons with

disabilities as key stakeholders in ensuring the success of implementing and institutionalising the Framework.

Stakeholders noted that government-wide planning systems such as the APPs, strategic plans and budgets were in place to support GRPBMEAF. When the GRPBMEAF was introduced in the planning phase, it became much more effective in implementing other elements of the Framework, such as monitoring and auditing. The Implementation of GRPBMEAF entailed completing monitoring reports, with gender focal points playing a coordinating role. The role of the gender focal points was to consolidate reports on GRPBMEA from different provincial departments into one provincial report that was then submitted to the national department of WYPD. Provinces were required to report on the implementation of the GRPBMEAF every six months through a self-assessment tool coordinated by the Office of the Premier. Part of the role of the gender focal points was to check and ensure that provincial departments were implementing the Framework in line with its objectives and pillars. Support to provinces was provided by partners such as the European Union (EU).

Stakeholders indicated that some departments had implemented relevant gender, youth, and disability mainstreaming interventions before the GRPBMEAF was approved. Some of the key elements and principles of the Framework were already being implemented. The elements implemented were gender budgeting, which was already in place before the GRPBMEA Framework was rolled out in all government departments and provinces. For such participants, prior experience with implementing gender-responsive programs contributed to including the GRPBMEAF pillars in the interventions and pillars of their departments.

In a province like Gauteng, gender-responsive budgeting was already in place before the design of GRPBMEAF. Gauteng province had already developed booklets to create awareness about what gender-responsiveness entailed in the different programmes and departments in the province. Furthermore, gender issues were mainstreamed during the budget votes in the province.

The mainstreaming of gender issues in Gauteng was done in different departments. Gender mainstreaming in health focused on maternal and child health; in economic development, the focus was on procurement by SMMEs; in education, the focus was on Early Childhood Development ECD and in disaggregating the data into gender to

understand how funding into the sector was benefiting both boys and girls. However, aspects such as auditing were yet to be implemented. The challenge with auditing was that attempting to conduct any form of audit without implementing the Framework was futile.

Stakeholders involved in city planning noted that even without referring to GRPBMEA, planning for providing services in the city is underlain by inclusivity and universal access principles. Some groups identified as requiring to be included were those categorised as vulnerable, such as people living with disabilities, the poor and marginalised, children, and women. Planning for vulnerable and marginalised groups was not necessarily informed by the GRPBMEA but rather by the other government Frameworks such as the Spatial Planning Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA). Although implementation of the Framework had not started in some departments, processes initiated for implementation had been put in place.

While supporting the Framework, some stakeholders noted that the implementation at the department level would require practical interventions. The implementation had focused on the strategic planning pillars (such as Pillar 1 – 3) but less on budgets or specific programmes. The phased implementation of GRPBMEAF meant that elements such as auditing were yet to be addressed by some of the departments.

### **3.4 What interventions have been implemented effectively?**

The results show that GRPBMEAF awareness levels among officials were high, suggesting that the awareness-building initiatives have been implemented effectively. While there is room for improvement in terms of ensuring that awareness across departmental units, as well as across stakeholders outside government, the discussions indicated that most of the officials and stakeholders were aware of the various GRPBMEAF interventions even in cases they might not be familiar with the specific details of the Framework. The championing and coordinating of the Framework by the DWYPD across the government was considered a success. However, the response of government departments could have been more below expectation, with few government departments, for example, regularly completing the quarterly self-assessments. Despite this, the regular events organised by the DWYPD have kept officials conscious of the WYPD mainstreaming need and, in the long run, should help challenge the mindsets of key actors and make WYPD prioritisation in

policy formulation, implementation and evaluation routinised. The capacity-building initiatives needed to be considered adequate in reaching more officials beyond the gender-focal persons and subject matter. The capacity-building initiatives have not yet included YPD mainstreaming, which has limited the knowledge and skills of officials to drive the YPD mainstreaming agenda beyond gender mainstreaming.

A critical success in implementing the Framework has been the development of guidelines that assist departments in implementing specific interventions. Among the achievements in influencing policies and systems include the inclusion of WYPD priorities and indicators in the 2019-2024 MTSF, department mandate papers, revised guidelines for strategic plans and annual performance plans, revised evaluation Framework, etc.

The level of detail in these plans makes it easier for officials to implement the Framework interventions in the departments. Significant progress has been made on pillars that relate to policy priorities and plans (i.e., Pillars 1, 2, 3) across departments. The results showed that most respondents believed WYPD had been prioritised in strategic documents such as the SPs and APPs. The assessment of the latest versions of these documents supported these views, indicating that WYPD is mentioned in various sub-sections (e.g., situational analysis, significant programmes, etc.) of these strategic documents. However, these priorities have yet to translate to specific interventions for WYPD. The results showed that only some departments have precise interventions to empower WYPD, including in cases where targets are disaggregated according to these three sectors.

### **3.5 How many departments have institutionalised the Framework?**

According to the GRPBMEAF, institutionalisation occurs when the officials understand gender-responsiveness concerning the programmes (DWYPD, 2019). It emphasises that this understanding should not be restricted to a few officials in institutions (such as GFPs) but should be institution-wide (DWYPD, 2019). Further, this should not translate into assigning responsibility for GRPBMEAF to gender focal points but embedding it across all programmes and management responsibilities (DWYPD, 2019).

The respondents believed that understanding gender mainstreaming and gender-responsiveness was still limited. While capacity-building activities have been implemented, these have yet to reach many officials beyond the GFPs. The results showed that most respondents believe that there is some level of understanding of the objectives of the GRPBMEAF among all staff (including managers and implementers) in the department to a limited extent (56.7%). Very few respondents felt the understanding was to a large extent (11.1%), while 30.0% thought there needed to be more understanding of the GRPBMEAF objectives. Regarding capacity to implement the GRPBMEAF activities, most respondents (66.3%) felt capacitated to a limited extent, while a relatively few (17.9%) indicated to have been capacitated to a large extent. A few participants (15.8%) felt they needed to be capacitated. These results indicate the need for further capacity-building activities to improve the implementation of the GRPBMEAF activities across departments.

The GRPBMEAF is directly linked to the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. The UN Women describes the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in organisations as occurring when gender mainstreaming becomes a regular, sustained part of established organisational processes and procedures (UN Women, 2022). Below half of the participants (47.0%) reported that a gender, youth and disability perspective had become part of routine practices in the department to a limited extent, whilst 37.3% reported that it had become part of routine practices at the department to a large extent. A few (10.8%) respondents indicated that a gender, youth and disability perspective is not part of routine practices in the department, whilst 4.9% did not know. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents reported that there is either some level of buy-in (47.2%) or a high level of buy-in (14.3%) on the objectives and importance of the GRPBMEAF at the high level in the department. Almost a third (33%) reported insufficient buy-in on the GRPBMEAF at a high level in the department, whilst 5.5% needed to learn.

On the other hand, the GRPBMEAF document notes that the effective development and institutionalisation of GRPBMEAF requires the development of appropriate institutional arrangements and mechanisms for consultation, coordination and to drive implementation and provide the necessary support at an administrative level. Three quarters (75.8%) reported that the department/entity had established a formal

structure/division/unit/task team that is leading mainstreaming programs/initiatives for gender, youth and disability, whilst 20.9% indicated that there was no structure in place and 3.3% did not know.

Overall, most respondents reported that the GRPBMEAF has been institutionalised in the department, where 48.0% reported that this was to a limited extent and 30% to a large extent. An assessment of the SPs, APPs, evaluation plans, TORs, data collection and analysis approaches was done to gauge the WYPD responsiveness of the departments/ entities. The assessment was done for 143 departments/ entities where some of these documents were successfully sourced, and the results showed that most of the departments (58.7%, 84) were considered to be overall at low levels of WYPD responsiveness. In comparison, 9.8% (14) of departments/entities needed more responsiveness. Few departments (7.7%, 11) were highly responsive, while 23.4% (34) were moderately responsive.

The importance of incentives and disincentives to change behaviour and ensure that Accounting Officers and managers across the government system regard to gender mainstreaming in general and GRPBMEAF as part of the core responsibilities and mandate is acknowledged in the GRPBMEAF document. However, according to the respondents, there need to be adequate incentives that have been introduced to ensure the institutionalisation of the Framework. Further, whilst the Framework argued against simply assigning responsibility for GRPBMEA to gender focal points but embedding it across all programs and management responsibilities, respondents noted that GRPBMEAF is often thought of as the responsibility of the gender focal points in many departments.

### **3.6 What results have been achieved?**

#### **3.6.1 Outputs**

The DWYPD has produced several outputs listed as targets in the Framework's implementation plan (DWYPD, 2019), which include the development of the Country Gender Indicator Framework (CGIF), GRPBMEAF implementation guideline (with templates on how to implement interventions per pillar) and completing a 25-year review. A guideline aimed at assisting departments in implementing the Framework was developed. The National School of Government have developed a revised

curriculum to assist in capacitating officials in gender mainstreaming. The departments have developed APPs and SPs following the guidelines, which set the tone regarding WYPD mainstreaming in departments.

### **3.6.2 Early outcomes**

It is too early to assess the impact of the GRPBMEAF on targeted beneficiaries (i.e., WYPD) and to causal attribute the observed changes to the GRPBMEAF. This sub-section assesses the respondents' view on whether the outcomes are trending towards the empowerment of the WYPD but does not undertake attribution analyses. As such, the results presented in this sub-section should be interpreted as indicative, not as evidence of the causal impact of the GRPBMEAF. The majority of participants were of the view that since the implementation of the GRPBMEAF began, there has been an increase in access to services such as health access, education, information, and training for women (81.5%, youth (81.4%) and persons with disabilities (76.5%). When asked how the current access to services for women and girls compares to that of men and boys, 25.3% believed it is the same. The proportion of respondents who thought that access to services for women and girls was higher than that of men and boys was 27.4%, whereas the converse view was shared by 22.1% of respondents. A quarter of the respondents did not know.

In terms of improvements in access to and control over resources by the marginalised groups, most respondents reported that since the implementation of the GRPBMEAF began, there has been a relative increase in access to or control over productive resources, services, or assets for each of women (67.7%), youth (66.3%) and persons with disabilities (61.8%). According to the respondents (35.4%), women's and girls' access to and control over productive resources and assets remains lower than that of men and boys. Only a tiny proportion (11.1%) felt that women and girls have higher access to and control over productive resources and assets than men and boys. At the same time, 29.3 believed that there is gender equality in access to and control over productive resources and assets. Just below a quarter of the respondents (24.2%) did offer an opinion on this matter. Most respondents believed that all the marginalised actors had been sufficiently empowered to assert their rights in public and private spheres. This was the case for especially women (81.2%) and youth (79.4%), and less so for persons with disabilities (66.7%).

Most of the respondents felt that due to the GRPBMEAFs interventions, participation of women (78.4%), youth (77.5%) and persons with disabilities (60.8%) in programs/ interventions, including in decision-making and leadership, has become more equitable. Overall, most respondents felt that GRPBMEAF implementation has challenged or changed attitudes on the rights of WYPD. About three-quarters of the respondents thought implementing the GRPBMEAF fostered a greater understanding of WYPD rights. Further, the GRPBMEAF has enhanced the understanding of WYPD among men and boys. According to most respondents (82.2%), there has been a more significant understanding of WYPD across society due to GRPBMEAF implementation. Over two-thirds of the respondents (67.6%) thought the GRPBMEAF interventions have strengthened the capacity to develop, implement, and monitor strategies for WYPD among stakeholders. Over four-fifths of the respondents believed that the GRPBMEAF has the potential to address barriers to WYPD's economic empowerment.

### **3.7 What are the lessons learnt (obstacles, challenges, successes, innovations, and good practices) in implementing the GRPBMEAF?**

The challenges or obstacles in implementing the GRPBMEAF included the following:

1. Lack of budget allocation for the implementation of the Framework, resulting in human resource constraints
2. Lack of capacity to implement the GRPBMEAF
3. The moratorium on employment in the public sector meant that key personnel to oversee the implementation of GRPBMEAF were not appointed.
4. The moratorium on appointing personnel in the public sector resulted in partial implementation of the GRPBMEAF due to the limited capacity of departments.
5. The lack of resources was compounded by the fact that people with disabilities are not homogenous. The types of disability differ, but the common denominator among all the disabled groups is the lack of resources to implement GRPBMEAF and the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disability (WPRPD).
6. There needed to be clarity on where the GRPBMEAF should be located in each department.



The GRPBMEAF needed to be strengthened at the provincial level with sufficient budgets. In a province such as KwaZulu-Natal, with 900 wards where the GFPs were required to work, limited budgets were a constraint to effectively implementing the GRPBMEAF. There was a need to ensure the coherence of the GRPBMEAF with public policies such as the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) to ensure that officials did not use the PFMA as an excuse to avoid implementing the GRPBMEAF. Implementing certain aspects of the Framework has been slow because of a lack of capacity.

### **3.8 How can the evaluability of the GRPBMEAF be strengthened?**

Given that the overall aim of the formative evaluation is to improve implementation (i.e., the form that the formative evaluation takes is as an implementation evaluation), the evaluability of the GRPBMEAF was assessed using the TOC as the organising evaluation structure. Evaluability assessment focuses on assessing the extent to which there is clarity of outcomes and impacts, the relevance of objectives, the plausibility of the interventions, how coherent and testable is the causal chain, the existence of baseline data, etc. Following guidance from several authors (e.g., Craig & Campbell, 2015; Davies & Payne, 2015; Davies, 2013) and guided by the TOR, the evaluability assessment focused on programme design (Theory of Change) and information availability. The evaluation did not focus on practical issues, such as whether there is a budget or coordination of stakeholders, as these become relevant when a particular evaluation is being considered.

#### **3.8.1 Programme design**

As described in the preceding sub-sections, the long-term impact and outcomes were clearly and adequately identified, including the proposed steps towards achieving these targets. The objectives of the GRPBMEAF are relevant to the needs of the three sectors, even though the initial target was only women. While the initial documents focused on the challenges affecting women, the issues identified are relevant to those affecting other marginalised groups, such as youths and persons with disabilities. However, other participants believed that the Framework needed to be revised to include youth and persons with disabilities since the title of the Framework was gender-focused/biased. The stakeholders argued that it was problematic to bring on board the youth and persons with disabilities into a framework that did not consider

them in the design phase. Adding youth and persons with disabilities to the GRPBMEAF was equivalent to co-opting these groups as they were not part of the initial conceptualisation of the Framework. The inclusion of more social categories into the GRPBMEAF was making the process of implementation and institutionalisation much more problematic, complex and much less achievable.

While the Framework did not present clear and valid indicators for outputs, outcomes and impacts, the Country Indicator Framework identified these indicators at national and programme levels. The clarity of these indicators was such that different observers would make similar observations, suggesting that the indicators were reliable and valid. The assumptions that informed the Framework were clearly articulated, and the DWYPD developed several checklists and tools for monitoring the implementation of the GRPBMEAF.

### **3.8.2 Information availability**

Some information from the rapid evaluation and progress reports can be used as a baseline to track the responsiveness of policies and plans. However, the limited responses by many departments and the focus on mainly national departments is such that this information is only partially useful. As specified in the CGIF, most indicators can be populated by administrative and survey data from surveys such as those conducted by Stats SA.

## **4. Discussions of the results**

This sub-section discusses the main findings of the evaluation. The evaluation criteria are used as an organising framework for the discussions.

### **4.1 Relevance and coherence of the GRPBMEAF**

The results have shown that the GRPBMEAF interventions were formulated based on an adequate understanding of issues that affect women. A detailed discussion of the problems that have limited the empowerment of women and perpetuated gender inequality is presented in the Framework. As highlighted by several researchers (e.g., Motala et al., 2018; Murugani et al., 2014), the main drivers of women's disadvantages include patriarchy, women's unpaid care work, unequal access to productive issues, etc., which factors were discussed in-depth in the Framework. Given its initial focus

on gender inequality, the Framework did not identify or discuss the core problems and root causes of Youth and Persons with Disabilities (YPDs) exclusion and/or disadvantages. While some of the issues discussed in the context of women are generally relevant for all marginalised groups, the discussion cannot be inferred to apply to YPDs. This means that the implementation of the Framework to include the YPD, while noble, was not informed by a deeper understanding of the root causes of the marginalisation of YPD. Therefore, the extent to which the Framework addresses the root causes of YPD marginalisation is doubtful. For example, whereas the issue of unequal access to productive resources among the marginalised groups extends to all three sectors, the issue of patriarchy or unpaid care work affects mainly women. As the literature has shown, African, young or disabled women are the worst affected. According to some participants, it might be necessary to revise the Framework so that the issues of YPD are also given adequate attention and reflection.

Despite not reflecting on the root causes of YPD marginalisation, most respondents believed that the GRPBMEAF's interventions were relevant to all three sectors. This would suggest that the interventions address the root causes of marginalisation, which extends to the other two sectors. The discussion in the Framework, while noting the issue of heterogeneity, does not adequately reflect on specific interventions that take the heterogeneity of the women. A clear understanding is needed to adequately translate to direct interventions targeted at the most disadvantaged women (e.g., rural or poor). Including the two sectors allows for implementing the Framework to address this critical gap in the programme's initial design.

An essential consideration in problem identification and solution design is the participation of the targeted groups. To what extent did the targeted women participate in developing the Framework? To what extent were the government officials expected to lead in implementing the key interventions to contribute to the Framework's development? What about the role of civil society? The discussions with women, civil society and government officials suggest limited participation at the ground level. The Framework lists the 'extensive consultations' made, including presentations to various civil society stakeholders in March 2018 and deliberations during a Women's Dialogue with stakeholders, including researchers and young women in tertiary institutions. While it is clear that the latter group made inputs into the Framework, it is not clear

what the presentations to civil society entailed – whether they involved the participants deliberating and providing inputs. It is unclear what their role was – was it fine-tuning the Framework, or did they assist in understanding the underlying problems? As the literature has shown (Arnstein, 1969; Cornwall, 2008; Mohan, 2007), it is crucial that participation goes beyond tokenism to levels where targeted beneficiaries make significant contributions in influencing programmes and policies meant for them.

While the centre of government departments (such as DPME, NT, DPSA, etc) were involved, the participation focused on high-ranking officials, with limited participation of the low-level officials, according to participants. The participation of officials was limited even among the centre of government officials, with one official noting that the Framework remained a ‘closely guarded secret’ for a long time and that the drivers of the process were afraid of criticism and thus preferred to work on the document less transparently until the document was completed. Officials were expected to familiarise themselves with the Framework and commit to its implementation, even though they had limited say in its formulation. Similarly, the other key stakeholders were expected to support the implementation despite their limited input in its formulation. A top-down approach to institutionalisation of a practice, according to participants, has limited the buy-in and commitment of low-level officials. The literature has raised this point. Women were generally unaware of the Framework, even though they noted some benefits emanating from the interventions it informed.

Despite their limited participation, the actors believed that the Framework identified the key problems and that the proposed interventions were relevant and coherent. Currently, the GRPBMEAF presents a less detailed theory of change, which shows elements that explain how the GRPBMEAF is expected to lead to better outcomes for women and girls and greater levels of gender equality. Participants in a theory of change workshop provided inputs to develop a theory of change diagram. Reflections during interventions and focus group discussions were that the theory of change was coherent and had a clear and logical pathway from inputs, interventions, outputs, outcomes, and impact. The analysis of the data indicated that the GRPBMEAF is relevant to all three sectors, i.e., WYPD. However, youth and persons with disabilities were not included in the initial design of the Framework. The objectives of the

GRPBMEAF remain relevant to the current socioeconomic climate, and activities and outputs were considered consistent with the desired impact.

In terms of coherence, the participants believed that the GRPBMEAF's objectives aligned with the equity mandates of departments' service delivery commitments. The guidelines and capacity interventions have assisted in ensuring that the officials are clear on what is expected of them. However, a few indicated a desire for clear explanations of this synergy so that these objectives are not considered add-ons to their responsibilities but rather an approach to service delivery.

#### **4.2 Effectiveness and efficiency of GRPBMEAF implementation**

The results have shown progress in implementing the Framework, with varying levels across interventions. Compared to previous evaluations by the DWYPD (DWYPD, GRPBMEAF Rapid Evaluation, 2020) and CGE (CGE, 2021), this evaluation has shown that there has been significant progress in the implementation of the GRPBMEAF, especially with regard to policy prioritisation. As discussed in the previous sections, there has been effective implementation of the pillars that speak to policy priorities (Pillars 1, 2 and 3). However, more progress must be made in developing and implementing interventions to empower WYPD. The pillars that speak to the actual translation of plans and priorities into interventions have yet to show more progress. For example, as the respondents noted, the implementation of preferential procurement needs to be revised, with some departments showing better progress than others. The same applies to the implementation of incentives for WYPD mainstreaming.

Evidence from previous studies has widely noted that the challenge in South Africa and many developing countries needs to be an adequate understanding of the key problems and formulation of inappropriate interventions but implementation. The country has produced world-class policies and strategies, and the Framework puts South Africa in a leading position. While other countries have implemented relevant programmes under gender-responsive budgeting (e.g., Sweden), South Africa is leading the way in expanding the vocabulary to ensure that the focus is not just on budgets. While the design of gender responsiveness is crucial, a narrow focus on the budgets, which are not informed by a gendered understanding of the problems, plans, etc, limits the impact. Some countries have successfully ensured this gendered

perspective across the policy cycle without presenting a long name to their documents. However, expanding the name ensures clarity among all actors that budgets are only one lever for promoting WYPD targets. The extended focus of GRPBMEAF implementation to include other marginalised groups (i.e., YPD) presents complexity. For example, the abbreviation remains about gender, with no reference to YPD. If the title sets the tone, then there is a case for expanding the title to include YPDs.

### **4.3 Early impacts and sustainability**

Even though it is too early to make firm conclusions or to attribute these to the Framework, the overall results have shown that the outcomes of the GRPBMEAF are progressing in the right direction, with evidence of improvements in the outcomes for marginalised groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities. According to the respondents, the GRPBMEAF has resulted in access to WYPD's services, productive resources, empowerment, and equitable implementation of interventions. There has been a better understanding of the rights of WYPD among stakeholders and society, changing attitudes and a better capacity to implement WYPD-responsive interventions. However, the results have yet to be homogenous across the three sectors. Overall, women have achieved better outcomes, followed by youth and persons with disabilities. The fact that women are considered to be benefiting the most from the implementation of the GRPBMEAF is not surprising, given that they were the initial target of the Framework.

The increase in access to essential social services such as health and education among women and girls is such that most respondents felt that this put women and girls in an overall better position than men and boys. However, access to productive resources remains firmly in the hands of men and boys, with increased access to and control of women not yet at a level of gender quality. The changed attitudes towards the rights of marginalised groups such as WYPD augurs well with addressing the underlying root causes of marginalisation and discrimination (such as culture and patriarchy). However, the Framework needs to have precise interventions to deal with cultural issues, thus limiting the potential transformative impact of the Framework. The inputs received during the theory of change workshop suggest the need for developing interventions aimed at influencing the attitudes and mindsets of not only government

officials but the whole of society if the impacts of the Framework are to be sustainable in the long term.

## **5. How can the GRPBMEAF be strengthened [Recommendations]?**

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the following recommendations are made:

- Further communication and awareness initiatives should continue, targeting officials at the provincial levels and other departmental units, such as finance. Further, awareness initiatives should target actors outside government, who are important players in ensuring that government departments deliver on targets for women, youth and persons with disabilities.
- Targeted capacity-building activities should be implemented. While many officials indicated their commitment to the cause of the marginalised actors, there were apparent capacity gaps in translating some GRPBMEAF proposals into concrete interventions that can benefit the marginalised groups.
- Incentives for implementing the GRPBMEAF should target all levels of government officials, including front-level officials.
- The GRPBMEAF should be developed into an Act so that compliance is enforceable. While the Framework identified the need for strong legal requirements for GRB integration into budgets to support implementation and institutionalisation across government, its suggested approach is voluntary, limiting compliance enforcement.
- Maintain the focus of the GRPBMEAF to ensure effective implementation.

## **6. Conclusion**

This formative evaluation aimed to assess the implementation progress of the GRPBMEAF and enhance knowledge to contribute to the design and implementation of the Framework in South Africa. The evaluation used a theory-based mixed method approach and included techniques such as document analysis, key informant interviews, surveys, focus group discussions and a workshop. The analysis of the data indicated that the GRPBMEAF is relevant to all three sectors (WYPD). This is the case even though youths and persons with disabilities were not included in the initial design of the Framework. The theory of change was coherent, with a clear and logical

pathway from inputs, interventions, outputs, outcomes, and impact. The implementation of the GRPBMEAF has started across most national and provincial departments, and the progress, efficiency and effectiveness vary across the departments and pillars. While awareness levels on the GRPBMEAF are high among the officials interviewed, there are capacity gaps, suggesting the urgent need for further capacity building to improve efficiency in implementing the Framework. Even though it is too early to make firm conclusions, the results have shown that the outcomes of the GRPBMEAF are trending in the right direction, with evidence of improvements in the outcomes for marginalised groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities. However, challenges remain in ensuring that the Framework achieves its noble objectives.

## **7. Limitations of the evaluation**

- Poor response rate: Few officials responded to the self-administered questionnaire. Efforts to increase the number of responses could have been more successful.
- Subjective views: The evaluation depends on the subjective views of the respondents on various aspects. These views may not be representative of the department concerned.
- Attributing early outcomes to the GRPBMEAF: The report has highlighted progress towards achieving better outcomes for women, youth and persons with disabilities. However, the extent to which this trend can be attributed to the GRPBMEAF has yet to be causally analysed.