



Regional Centers for
Learning on Evaluation and Results

THE REGIONAL CENTERS FOR LEARNING ON EVALUATION AND RESULTS (CLEAR) INITIATIVE

Background

CLEAR is a new global initiative to help developing countries strengthen their capacities in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and performance management (PM). The initiative is being supported by the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, United Kingdom's Department for International Development and the World Bank.

CLEAR responds to increasing government demands for applied M&E and PM capacity-building support and to the current limited availability of relevant services in Latin America, Africa, East Asia, and South Asia. Good quality programs and the pool of local experts are scarce on a wide range of relevant issues. These factors limit countries to depend on international supply, which is expensive, untimely, and not necessarily customized to their specific needs. The CLEAR initiative responds to these needs with two key components: (1) *regional centers* to provide applied in-region training, technical assistance, and evaluation work, and (2) *global learning* to strengthen practical knowledge-sharing on M&E and PM across regions, on what works, what does not work, and why.

Regional Centers

This component focuses on supporting competitively selected regional academic institutions, which will host and develop the centers. CLEAR will support the centers for five years to help them achieve international quality standards and to reach financial self-sufficiency within that period. The centers will provide demand-driven and cost-effective services specific to each region. Government agencies, development institutions, and donor and civil society organizations, among other clients, will be able to access regionally based high-quality knowledge and expertise. The initiative will provide three specific types of knowledge products:

Training. The centers will develop substantive content and resources and deliver core courses on topics relevant to the specific needs of client countries, including design and implementation of M&E systems, impact evaluations, rapid applied evaluations, performance budgeting, and performance information management, among others. The unique aspect of these courses will be their strong focus on actual experience—drawing on cases and good practices in the region. Courses will be customized to meet the knowledge and skills needs of experts (e.g., evaluators, technicians, specialists) and practitioners (e.g., government officials and decision makers). The centers will also design on-demand courses to meet currently unfulfilled needs for “how-to” knowledge on other related topics.

Advisory services. Technical advice and assistance on the most advanced M&E and PM tools, methods, and approaches will be offered through the centers. Services will include on-demand support and on-the-job technical guidance regarding: the design and implementation of M&E and performance budgeting systems and results frameworks, the planning and application of different types of evaluations, and the formulation and implementation of government reforms to strengthen the results-oriented focus.

Evaluation and innovation. A key aim of the CLEAR initiative is to help strengthen the quality of evaluation work and the availability of qualified evaluators in each region. The centers will develop their own technical capacities to conduct evaluations using varied and advanced methodologies and will be able to sell these services. Working with local government officials and professionals to conduct evaluations will also serve to expand the pool of professional evaluators. The centers will work with clients and carry out innovative analytical work, which will increase the pool of region-specific research and development in the field.

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Global Learning

CLEAR promotes the transfer of capacities, learning, and cooperation by building strong multiregional networks through the centers. Countries face similar challenges and increasingly seek their peers' and neighbors' knowledge and experience on how to solve common design, implementation, and institutionalization problems, and they seek good practice standards from advanced countries. CLEAR's global approach aims to help centers in different regions to acquire global technical knowledge and compare and share knowledge on the effectiveness of specific tools and interventions in different settings (e.g., countries, regions, sectors). The initiative tackles these objectives by supporting two sets of activities:

Dissemination and institutionalization of global technical standards. To become successful capacity development and knowledge organizations, the centers need to develop technical capacities and abilities to understand client needs and to help them introduce customized solutions, based on international standards, trends, and practices. CLEAR will serve as a repository and broker of technical know-how. Through cross-regional learning events, workshops, study tours, publications, and a dynamic network among the centers, CLEAR aims to foster learning and to help institutionalize global technical standards.

Strengthening of informal communities of practice. The informal exchange of technical and practical knowledge with peers is essential to a successful knowledge network. CLEAR will support peer-to-peer learning among centers and further development of informal M&E and PM Communities of Practice in each region. It will facilitate the participation of experts and professionals from the different regions at international conferences, regional seminars, and meetings of specialists and professionals in the field.

Selection Process

Institutions that will host the centers will be selected competitively, based on technical and transparent criteria, in a two-stage process. In the first stage, which will be conducted separately for each region, institutions will be invited to submit formal Expressions of Interest, which will include information about the institution's certification, record of academic/training experience in M&E and PM, capacity in the management of multi-country or regional activities, organizational facilities, and financial stability. In the second phase of the process, short-listed institutions will be invited to present full, technical proposals for final selection.

Governance

CLEAR's governance structure includes a Board, currently comprised of representatives from the multilateral and bilateral agencies supporting the program, and a Secretariat, which is housed at the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank Group. The Board will be expanded to include senior representatives from governments and academic institutions in the four regions. The centers will also establish Regional Advisory Councils to provide guidance and support. Council members will be representatives from evaluation associations, civil society organizations, government, and academia. This governance structure ensures participant diversity, country input, and stakeholder support.

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