OECD Public Governance Reviews

Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategic Plan of Nuevo León 2015-2030

USING EVIDENCE TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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Foreword

Pursuing sustainable development requires a whole-of-society effort, where government engages with the private sector, civil society organisations and citizens. It is with this goal in mind that the Nuevo León government created, in 2014, the Council for Strategic Planning, a consultative multi-stakeholder body mandated to provide advice in key areas for sustainable development and to elaborate the Strategic Plan of the State of Nuevo León 2015-2030. Five years after the elaboration of the Strategic Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented challenge to governments' capacities to deliver on their policy objectives. In this context, close monitoring and credible evaluation remain as relevant as ever to sustaining the implementation of long-term objectives and the delivery of results.

This report draws on the OECD's expertise on public governance, including its work on centres of government and insights on monitoring and evaluation, as a critical tool to achieve results. It contributes to the OECD's programme of work on evidence informed policy and on the strategic functions of the centre of government.

This review provides an assessment of Nuevo León's monitoring and evaluation system for the Strategic Plan 2015-2030, as well as of the general role of the council in providing policy advice. The report identifies some structural limitations in the current institutional set up and recommends clarifying the respective responsibilities of the council and of the state public administration with regards to monitoring and evaluation. To that end, this Review recommends strengthening the advisory function of the council, by focusing its mandate on the evaluation of the Strategic Plan and on providing the government with credible evidence. The report also suggests strengthening of the capacities of the government to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The analysis of the report draws on a wealth of comparative international experiences to promote sustainable development through long-term planning, as well as monitoring and evaluation of policy priorities through inclusive and participatory processes involving citizens and businesses. It also provides a concrete plan of action to help Nuevo León address the methodological, institutional, and systemic issues identified in this report. The recommendations of this report seek to promote an evidence informed approach to public governance, and, ultimately, help Nuevo León deliver better results for citizens and promote trust in government, paving the way for an inclusive recovery.

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The report was prepared under the strategic direction of Stephane Jacobzone, Head of Unit for Evidence, Monitoring and Policy Evaluation, as part of a project managed by Iván Stola, policy analyst. Iván Stola and Claire Salama, policy analysts, co-ordinated the drafting of the report.

Iván Stola drafted the first chapter on the institutional set-up for planning, monitoring and evaluation. Claire Salama and Iván Stola drafted the second chapter on identifying clear and sound policy priorities, and benefited from the advice of Adam Knelman Ostry, Head of Unit for Public Governance Reviews. Claire Salama is the author of the third chapter on monitoring the results of the strategic plan. Iván Stola and Claire Salama prepared the fourth chapter on policy evaluation, with inputs from Anne-Pauline de Cler. Claire Salama and Lizeth Fuquene drafted chapter five on promoting evidence-informed policy making in Nuevo León. The action plan to implement the recommendations of this Review was drafted by Claire Salama. General support was provided by Diego Millan, Shashwat Koirala, Léa Druet, Chloé Bridier, Lorena Figueiredo, Federico Manolio and Teresa Lazzaroni Andina.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ASM	Areas for improvement (Aspectos Susceptibles de Mejora)
CEPAL	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's (*Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe*)
CNL	Council of Nuevo León (*Consejo Nuevo León*)
CoG	Centre of Government
CONAC	National Council for Accounting Harmonisation (*Consejo Nacional de Armonización Contable)*
CONEVAL	National Council for Evaluation of Social Policy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EOG	Executive Office of the Governor
EIF	Early Intervention Foundation, United Kingdom
EU	European Union
GPRAMA	Government Performance and Results Modernization Act, United States
INEGI	National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Mexico (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía*)
MAF	Management Accountability Framework, Canada
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIDE	Monitoring System of Jalisco
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NL	Nuevo León
OGP	Open Government Partnership
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAE	Annual Evaluation Programme
PAMGE	Management Improvement Action Plan
PG	Government Program
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
RBB	Result-Based Budgeting
SAM	Scientific Advice Mechanism, European Union
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	State Development Plan
SHCP	Secretariat of Finance and Public Funds
SNG	Subnational Government
SP	Strategic Plan of the State of Nuevo León 2015-2030

Executive summary

This report provides an assessment of Nuevo León's monitoring and evaluation system for the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 "*Nuevo León Mañana*". After reviewing Nuevo León's planning system, the report focuses on four main areas: improving the plan's methodology and structure; monitoring to promote its delivery; creating a sound evaluation system; and promoting evidence-informed policy making in Nuevo León.

Building a sound planning system

Both the Nuevo León's Council and the state public administration play a central role in planning. According to the Strategic Planning Law, the council is a consultative body with responsibilities in monitoring and evaluation. However, the council progressively expanded its actions to policy formulation, design and implementation. Moreover, the centre of government (CoG) of the public administration lacks resources and mechanisms dedicated to coordinate and monitor the Plan's implementation. This situation has resulted in overlaps between the state public administration and the council, and in the latter losing focus on its main role of long-term planning.

Nuevo León should consider clarifying the respective responsibilities of the council and of the CoG for strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. First, this will entail strengthening the role of the CoG in integrating long-term objectives of the Strategic Plan in the State Development Plan, as well as in co-ordinating their implementation and monitoring. Second, the council should strengthen its role in evaluating the Strategic Plan and performing advisory functions, moving away from implementation and monitoring.

Improving the strategic plan's methodology

The Strategic Plan 2015-2030, "Nuevo León Mañana" is the first integrated long-term planning instrument jointly designed by government and civil society in a Mexican sub-national government. This has been widely perceived as an important initiative for the state. Yet, the methodology did not leave enough space for prioritisation of long-term policy objectives. As a result, the document is deemed too complex. There is no clear methodological framework to articulate the elements of the Strategic Plan with the objectives of other planning instruments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the State Development Plan or the state budget.

The council should consider the following elements in revising the Plan. First, the council could simplify the Plan and reduce the number of priority areas, in order to refocus it around impact and outcome objectives. Second, this revision should suggest a methodology that clarifies how the State Development Plan contributes to the Strategic Plan's goals and to the Sustainable Development Goals more broadly. The Strategic Plan's objectives also need to be better aligned with the state budget.

Monitoring the strategic plan to promote its delivery

The Strategic Planning Law does not distinguish between monitoring and evaluation, two distinct, yet complementary, practices. While the law establishes that the results of the Strategic Plan should be evaluated on an annual basis, it does not provide guidance on when or how to monitor and evaluate it.

This creates overlaps and gaps in the mandates of the council and the state public administration, resulting in unnecessary complexity and a lack of incentive to collaborate in the monitoring exercise. Nuevo León would gain from greater clarity, allocating the monitoring function to the state public administration. In order to improve the overall quality of monitoring, the council will also need to make the indicators of the Strategic Plan more robust and clarify how they align with each objective. Explicit quality assurance and control mechanisms are also needed, such as developing guidelines for data collection. It will be important in this regard to increase the state public administration's competences and resources for monitoring. Finally, the results of monitoring can be further communicated to citizens through the *Avanza Nuevo León* platform and incorporated into decision-making, through performance management and budgeting.

Creating a sound evaluation system of the strategic plan

Nuevo León has shown a clear interest in using policy evaluation. The state has embedded evaluation across government in legal instruments, and ministries conduct evaluations as part of their performance management system. Yet, there is a lack of macro-level guidance on who carries out the evaluation of the Strategic Plan and when. Mechanisms to ensure the quality of evaluations remain embryonic. The council does not have the technical competences to conduct in-house evaluations at this stage. In spite of the significant progress in the evaluation of budgetary programmes and federal government resources, the use of evaluation remains a challenge in Nuevo León.

In order to lay the foundations for a sound evaluation system for the Plan, the council could consider developing a policy framework, co-ordinated with the evaluation programme of the Secretariat of Finance, which specifies what programmes and policies are going to be evaluated, who will evaluate, and what resources will be necessary. The council can promote the credibility of its evaluations by developing mechanisms to ensure their quality, such as guidelines or peer reviews. Promoting the use of evaluation will entail strengthening stakeholder engagement, developing a communication strategy to promote the uptake of evaluation results, and discussing evaluation results at the highest political level or embedding them in the budgetary-cycle.

Promoting evidence-informed policy making in Nuevo León

Evidence-informed policymaking is a critical element in the setting out good public governance to achieve broad societal goals, such as those set out in the Strategic Plan 2015-2030. Justifying the use of public resources with accurate evidence is becoming increasingly important, making the consultation of multiple sources in decision-making essential. Nuevo León, like many national and sub-national governments, has created a policy advisory body, the council, to support policy-making with the best possible evidence.

However, the activities of the council across all stages of the policy cycle has resulted in divergence between the council and state public administration, decreasing the relevance and impact of its advice. A perception may also exist that the private sector is overrepresented in the composition of the council, while citizens and experts appear to have a limited voice. As a result, part of the challenge for the council will be to expand its technical capacities and skills, as well as to strive for greater inclusiveness, to ensure that its membership is neutral and represents the socioeconomic diversity of Nuevo León's community. The state public administration will also benefit from establishing strategic units that enable the effective use of evidence in policy-making.

Assessment and Recommendations

Toward a sound institutional system for planning, monitoring and evaluation

Formally established in 2014, the Nuevo León Council for Strategic Planning is an advisory body of the state executive for strategic planning and its evaluation. It aims to promote the sustainable development of Nuevo León through the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the State of Nuevo León 2015-2030. According to the Strategic Planning Law, the council is responsible for elaborating the Plan as well as for monitoring and evaluating the Plan's implementation. The council also seeks to foster stakeholder engagement, as its members are representatives of the public and private sectors, academia and civil society.

The council is part of a broader planning system in Nuevo León. It includes the centre of government of Nuevo León's state public administration, composed of the Head of the Executive, the Executive Office of the Governor and the Secretariat of Finance and General Treasury. The CoG plays a central role in the whole-of-government planning system. In particular, the Executive Office of the Governor (EOG) is responsible for conducting strategic planning activities and ensuring their execution and compliance. According to the Strategic Planning Law (Article 18) and its Guidelines (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 Section 5), the council and the CoG's responsibilities are complementary. However, in practice, the council has progressively expanded its actions to policy formulation, design and implementation. On the other hand, there are insufficient resources and mechanisms within the CoG dedicated to coordinating and monitoring the Plan's objectives and projects.

This situation has resulted in political tensions between the state public administration and the council, and the latter losing focus of its main role of long-term planning. To strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system in Nuevo León, the Government could:

- Clarify the respective responsibilities on strategic planning of the council and of the centre of government. In particular:
    - The CoG should have a clear mandate to coordinate the implementation and monitoring activities of the Strategic Plan and of the State Development Plan. The CoG should be given the responsibilities and resources to ensure effective whole-of-government coordination, to carry out objective setting and prioritisation exercises, monitor policy priorities and conduct strategic internal and external communication. This can be done, in the short term, through revising the Internal Guidelines of the Executive Office of the Governor.
    - The council should strengthen its role as an advisory body and strategic knowledge broker, moving it away from implementation and monitoring. This requires building technical capacities in the council to provide objective and timely policy advice to the government in key priority areas and the selection of a limited number of policy priorities that require the concerted action of the state government, civil society and the private sector, for which the council would prepare focused evaluations with clear recommendations.
- The council should pursue efforts to implement a coherent strategy for strategic planning and evaluation, drawing on the respective strengths of the council, the Executive Office of the Governor

and of the Ministry of Finance. Overall, the new apparatus requires a conceptual framework on monitoring and evaluation for the government, the inclusion of specific capacities and provisions to monitor and evaluate the Plans and a clarification of the function of the council in terms of planning, policy advice and evaluation, including a modification of the currently existing regulatory framework.

Identifying clear policy priorities and setting pathways for implementation

The main planning instrument of Nuevo León's council is the Strategic Plan for the State of Nuevo León 2015-2030. It is the first integrated long-term planning instrument that has been jointly designed by government and civil society in a Mexican subnational government. It is perceived as an important initiative for the state, reflecting on its long-term development goals and offering the possibility to plan beyond the electoral cycle.

Yet, the methodology used to design the Plan in 2015 was not sufficiently robust. The diagnoses established for each commission did not systematically include a thorough assessment of previous reform initiatives and the methodology has omitted how different opportunity areas link to each other. Moreover, there is no clear methodological framework to articulate the elements of the Strategic Plan with the objectives of other planning instruments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the State Development Plan. In practice, the alignment between the Plan's objectives and the state budget is limited and the implementation of performance-based budgeting remains an area for improvement.

Moreover, the structure of the document is complex and not fully coherent, challenging its use as a planning and implementation tool. Indeed, the Plan has too many layers and does not rest on a clear logical framework, which makes it difficult to link opportunity areas to outcome level objectives. Therefore, the following recommendations are made to increase the coherence of planning and aligning policy priorities:

- Clarify the ways in which the State Development Plan contributes to pursuing the goals of the longer term Strategic Plan. There is a possibility for greater alignment of some of the opportunity areas (Strategic Plan) with the objectives (State Development Plan). In this scenario, the SDP would focus on medium-term outcome level objectives and below (objectives), while the Strategic Plan focuses on longer-term outcome level objectives (prioritised opportunity areas). In particular, the manual for the elaboration of the future SDP should contain a methodology to relate the medium term objectives of the SDP with the long-term objectives of the Strategic Plan. Nuevo León could consider using a theory of change to make this link explicit.
- Clarify and communicate the coherence between the Strategic Plan and the SDGs. It would be possible to include a table showing the alignment of the Plan's opportunity areas with the SDGs and to ensure that the prioritised opportunity areas refer to SDGs at least once.
- Clarify the responsibilities of the commissions in regard to overseeing the implementation of the SDGs. The council could consider systematically including a section on how the opportunity areas have contributed to the achievement of the SDGs at a local level, in the evaluation reports for each thematic area.

Moreover, to improve the overall coherence and robustness of the plan, Nuevo León could:

- Simplify the Strategic Plan in order to refocus it around impact and outcome level objectives. Only priority opportunity areas, their targets and indicators should be kept in the Plan while strategic lines, initiatives and projects should be included in the action plan, if relevant.
- Strengthen the problem analysis phase by integrating in each commission's diagnosis the conclusions of a systematic review of the evaluation of previous plans in the relevant thematic, as well as considering the strategic use of reliable data for objective/target setting.

- Reduce the number of priority opportunity areas in the Plan to ensure greater harmonisation of the number and nature of prioritised opportunity areas assigned to each commission. To this end, Nuevo León could consider complementing the existing prioritisation methodology with an analysis and comparison of the opportunity areas under a logic model and/or theory of change or by prioritising only the areas that can be measured by an indicator.
- Clearly communicate, in the Plan itself, the reasons behind the selection of the priority opportunity areas in order to ensure support within and outside the administration.

Monitoring the Strategic Plan as a tool for results

Sound monitoring can facilitate planning and operational decision-making by providing evidence to measure performance and help raise specific questions to identify implementation delays and bottlenecks.

Yet, the monitoring set-up in Nuevo León, whether for the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 or the State Development Plan lacks clarity for its actors and legibility for citizens. Indeed, while a whole-of-government legal framework exists for monitoring the Strategic Plan 2015-2030, the definition of monitoring contained in the Strategic Planning Law is not comprehensive and may lead to confusion about its purpose. Furthermore, the monitoring methodology and tools for the Strategic Plan are not well defined. In order to establish a sound monitoring set-up for the Strategic Plan, the state public administration will need to increase its competences and resources for monitoring, and establish mechanisms that promote the use of performance results in decision-making.

In order to do so, Nuevo León could consider the following recommendations:

- Clarify the monitoring set-up to better support the delivery of the Plan by adopting a comprehensive definition of monitoring to establish a shared understanding of its objectives and modalities within the public sector and to clarify the roles of key actors. This requires updating the strategic planning regulation, and giving an explicit legal mandate to each of the actors in order to redefine their respective responsibilities. In particular, it will require setting-up a performance dialogue within the state public administration in order to improve operational decision-making at the level of line ministries and of the centre of government (CoG), regarding both the SP and the SDP simultaneously. Moreover, Nuevo Léon may wish to conduct an annual joint review of the SDP and SP' objectives between the council's thematic commissions and the secretariats. Finally, the state public administration could produce a communication leaflet on the Strategic Plan. This communication leaflet, which could be updated every three years by the state public administration, would replace the current monitoring/evaluation report conducted by the council and be designed first and foremost as a communication tool.
- Promote the quality of monitoring by strengthening the robustness of the Plan's indicators, for instance by clarifying the coherence between the indicators and the Strategic Plan's layers, as well as by providing fit-for-purpose and user-friendly analysis in its monitoring dashboards. Improving the quality of monitoring will also require the state public administration to invest in increasing its competences in this regard, and to allocate specific resources to this function. Finally, it will require the development of assurance mechanisms in order to ensure quality throughout the monitoring process, as well as strengthening control mechanisms currently in place to ensure the quality of the end-product meets certain pre-determined criteria.
- Strengthen communication and the use of the monitoring results. For this to be achieved, the state public administration could consider producing a communications leaflet –as mentioned above-, regularly updating the *Avanza Nuevo León* platform with indicators from the Plan, as well as feeding monitoring evidence into the budget-cycle.

Creating capacities for the evaluation of the Plan

Evaluation is critical to understand if policies are improving and sustaining the wellbeing of citizens and the prosperity of their state. Providing an understanding of what policies work, why, for whom, and under what circumstances, can contribute to generating feedback loops in the policy-making process. Particularly in the case of Nuevo León, policy evaluation and its strategic use throughout the policy cycle can support strategic planning by improving the links between policy interventions and their outcomes and impact. Indeed, the state shows a clear interest in ensuring government effectiveness and efficiency, as well as public accountability, through evaluation, in particular of the Strategic Plan.

Nevertheless, the State of Nuevo León currently fails to display a sound and robust evaluation system as is commonly understood among OECD countries, both from a whole-of-government perspective and for its Strategic Plan. Similarly to a majority of OECD countries, Nuevo León has embedded the evaluation of its Strategic Plan in a legal framework. Still, macro-level guidance on who carries out the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 and when is lacking. Quality assurance and quality control mechanisms remain embryonic. In particular, the council does not have the capacities to conduct in-house evaluations at this stage. Finally, use of evaluations remains a challenge in Nuevo León and can be addressed both internally by the council and by promoting use in the policy-cycle overall.

Therefore, in order to build a sound evaluation system for the Strategic Plan, Nuevo León may wish to consider the following recommendations:

- Establish a sound policy framework for evaluating the Strategic Plan, which should specify what programmes and policies are going to be evaluated, who will be the evaluator, and with what means.
- Promote the credibility of evaluations by developing explicit and systematic mechanisms within the council to ensure the quality of the evaluation process, as well as quality control mechanisms. This can entail developing guidelines or standards for evaluations that can build on the existing guidelines for the Consolidation of a Results-Based Budget and the Performance Evaluation System. It may also require developing appropriate evaluation competencies within the council. In any instance, quality assurance and control mechanisms should go hand in hand to ensure that the evaluation design, planning, delivery and report are properly conducted to meet pre-determined quality criteria. These can take the form of peer reviews by experts, meta-evaluations or self-evaluation checklists. They can also entail greater collaboration with actors outside the executive to strengthen internal quality assurance and control mechanisms, such as the audit institution for assessing the evaluation function and the evaluation system.
- Promote the use of evaluations by strengthening the role of internal stakeholders (within the commissions) and external stakeholders throughout the whole evaluation process and elaborating a communication strategy to adapt the way in which research findings are presented to their potential users. More importantly, promoting the use of evaluations may entail incorporating evaluation results in the policy-cycle in a more systematic way, for instance in the budgetary cycle or by discussing evaluation results at the highest political level by systematically holding discussions within the state public administration.

Promoting evidence-informed policy-making in Nuevo León

Increasing governments' capacity for an evidence informed approach to policy making is a critical part of fostering good public governance to achieve broad societal goals, such as those set out in the Strategic Plan 2015-2030. The goal of evidence-informed policy-making is to enable agile and responsive governments, which are well equipped to address complex and at times "wicked" policy challenges. Despite the potential for policies to be based on evidence, an effective connection between the supply and

the demand for evidence in the policy making process often remains elusive, insofar as many governments lack the necessary infrastructure, organisations and skills to build such effective connections.

Moreover, in a context in which justifying the use of public resources with accurate evidence is becoming increasingly important, the consultation of multiple sources of information and actors before the implementation of a public policy, programme or public service has become essential. As a result, many OECD countries have set up policy advisory systems to support evidence informed policy making with the best possible evidence. In many ways, the functions of the Nuevo Léon council can be analysed within this framework of policy advisory bodies.

However, the activity of the council across all stages of the policy cycle has exacerbated political tensions between the council and the state public administration, moving the council from its main mandate of long-term planning and decreasing the relevance and impact of its advice. Moreover, some stakeholders believe that the private sector is overrepresented in the composition of the council, while citizens and experts appear to have a limited voice. As a result, part of the challenge for the council in the future will be to expand its technical capacities and skills, as well as to ensure that its membership is neutral and represents the socioeconomic diversity of Nuevo León's community, in order to continue providing relevant and credible advice.

In order to achieve a more responsive policy advisory system, as well as to reinforce council's independence and technical legitimacy, in view of promoting a government-wide evidence-informed policy-making system, Nuevo León could consider:

- Strengthening its policy advisory system. This requires mapping advisory bodies in Nuevo León to determine technical gaps in the system, ensuring representativeness of different disciplines, and clarifying the role and functions of each actor in the process.
- Focusing the council's mandate on evaluation and evidence provision. In particular, the council could leverage its status as a relatively autonomous body that represents the views of a wide range of stakeholders, at arm's length from the government, to provide credible evidence in Nuevo León. On the other hand, bodies that are closer to the government and therefore more closely linked to the administrative mandate would be in a better position to contribute to policy implementation and monitoring; while the council could focus solely on evidence and evaluation and be supported by research institutes or think thanks in the field. This may alleviate political tensions and enable the council to focus on its main role of long-term planning.
- Fostering inclusiveness and expertise in the council's decision-making process to provide relevant advice. This requires the council to consider a multitude of interdependent factors to provide advice, such as: making a calendar with the timing of its publications available; ensuring board members are neutral, that they provide expertise, and that they represent the sociodemographic and economic diversity of the state; and requiring professional qualifications and training from the members of the council.
- Implementing knowledge brokering methods to promote the impact and use of the council's advice. The council should consider adopting knowledge-brokering approaches, to provide critical, independent and reliable evidence in a timely and attractive manner. This could imply using evidence synthesis methods to appraise the available evidence base and identify knowledge gaps. Lastly, the council has a role to play in translating evidence, to build an organisational culture for the effective adoption of evidence and to strengthen networks between knowledge producers and knowledge users.
- Developing capacities for evidence-informed policy-making in the state public administration, by expanding the skills for evidence, for instance by having the council offer trainings to civil servants, and more generally by establishing the appropriate infrastructure to generate and use evidence.

1 Toward a Sound Institutional System for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in Nuevo León

This chapter analyses Nuevo León's current institutional system related to strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. It calls for clarification on the respective responsibilities of strategic planning of the Nuevo León Council for Strategic Planning and of the centre of government (notably the Executive Office of the Governor and the Secretariat of Finance). In particular, it recommends strengthening Nuevo León Council's role as an advisory body and strategic knowledge broker, focusing on planning and evaluation, and moving it away from implementation and monitoring. Furthermore, it calls for strengthening the centre of government mandate and capacities for policy coordination and monitoring. Finally, it suggests that a whole-of-government strategy for policy monitoring and evaluation could contribute to better policy coherence.

Introduction

There is increasing interest in long term planning (Máttar and Cuervo, 2017[1]), whether in national, supra-national or sub-national governments. This demand is driven by two main factors:

- at the international level, governments are pursuing the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.
- at the national level, governments have realised the need to ensure continuity in public policies beyond electoral cycles (see Box 1.1).

Box 1.1. Comparative approaches to long term strategic planning

A survey of international practices reveals a wide selection of long-term strategic planning tools. Below are some examples of these long-term plans and their structure.

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all the United Nations members, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The agenda is composed of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals framing a path to achieve the associated targets. Moreover, each target has one or several indicators to monitor its performance at local, national and global level. Given the nature of the SDGs, the goals that the Agenda includes could be considered impact or outcome level objectives.
- The Europe 2020 Strategy is the European Union's agenda for growth and jobs for the current decade, used as a reference framework for activities at EU, national and regional levels. The Strategy proposes a set of targets for the EU countries to consider. The targets, which are set at the outcome level, are monitored through the annual reports of the national reform programmes.
- In Colombia, the 1991 Constitution provides the framework for strategic planning at the national and subnational level. It requires the enactment of a National Development Plan (NDP) and of subnational development plans. At the subnational level, the most important planning tool is the Department Development Plan, which is the blueprint for the Governor's term. Strategic planning in Colombia is also supported by various vertical and horizontal co-ordination mechanisms, such as the "Pactos Territoriales" used to carry out multi-level initiatives that contribute to the objectives of the NDP.

Sources: (United Nations, 2020[2]), Sustainable Development Goals, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/; (European Commission, 2010[3]), Europe2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, https://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf; (Scottish Government, 2020[4]), National Performance Framework, https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/

Strategic planning helps governments to cluster policy initiatives, prioritise areas of interest, and define a small number of integrated policy priorities (OECD, 2018[4]). The development of these priorities should be driven by an anticipation of, and preparation for, future needs and trends, considering the future costs of present-day actions and managing current and future risks (OECD, 2010[5]). Furthermore, strategic planning can help align governance structures in such a way that governments can effectively implement and deliver their policy priorities. This alignment includes ensuring coherence across time-horizons by linking short, medium and long-term priorities, as well as guiding government entities and units in policy

implementation (OECD, 2018[4]). Finally, strategic planning, can facilitate the measurement and communication of progress, both internally and externally (OECD, 2018[4]).

A sound strategic planning system requires the presence of multiple elements, such as a thorough review of problems based on evidence, consultation and engagement with relevant stakeholders, development of objectives and definition of relevant indicators, as well as the elaboration of an action plan and calculation of costs. Those tasked with strategic planning as well as external stakeholders involved in the process need sufficient time to comprehensively tackle these elements (Vági and Rimkute, 2018[6]).

A robust M&E system is key to ensuring effective planning

A robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is essential to the success of middle and long-term objectives. A sound M&E system generates evidence on what has worked, why, and for whom. When the information generated by M&E efforts is fed back into the decision-making and planning process, it can help to improve the design of public policies and programmes. Furthermore, sound M&E can help identify challenges to policy implementation and ways to address them, based on lessons learned (OECD, 2019[7]). In addition to policy learning, M&E can foster transparency and accountability by providing performance information to citizens on progress in achieving government objectives (Vági and Rimkute, 2018[6]).This is particularly relevant for subnational governments, who given their proximity to their constituents, are considered the 'coal-face' of public service delivery (Masuku and Ijeoma, 2015[8]).

Though interconnected, monitoring and evaluation are distinct practices (as outlined in Table 1.1). Monitoring corresponds to a routinized process of evidence gathering and reporting to ensure that resources are adequately spent, outputs are successfully delivered, and milestones and targets are met (OECD, 2020[9]). Policy evaluation, on the other hand, is a structured and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed initiative, its design, implementation and results. The goal of policy evaluation is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, as well as the worth or significance of a policy (OECD, 2020[9]).

Table 1.1. Comparing policy monitoring and policy evaluation

Policy monitoring	Policy evaluation
Ongoing (leading to operational decision-making)	Episodic (leading to strategic decision-making)
Monitoring systems are generally suitable for the broad issues/questions that were anticipated in the policy design	Issue-specific
Measures are developed and data is usually gathered through routinized processes	Measures are usually customized for each policy evaluation
Attribution is generally assumed	Attribution of observed outcomes is usually a key question
Because it is ongoing, resources are usually a part of the programme or organisational infrastructure	Targeted resources are needed for each policy evaluation
The use of the information can evolve over time to reflect changing information needs and priorities	The intended purposes of a policy evaluation are usually negotiated upfront

Source: Adapted from McDavid, J.C. and Hawthorn, L.R.L. (2016[10]), Programme evaluation and performance measurement, an introduction to practice, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, in (OECD, 2019[7]), *Open Government in Biscay*, https://doi.org/10.1787/e4e1a40c-en.

Nuevo León's M&E system ranks just above average in comparison with other Mexican states.

Mexico is one of the pioneers of monitoring and evaluation in Latin America, having transitioned from limited and scattered practices of M&E to a whole-of-government M&E system. While the history of M&E in the country dates back to the mid-1970s, M&E and performance-based management reforms began to be integrated into the federal public administration in the late 1990s (Castro, Lopez-Acevedo and Busjeet,

2009[11]). For example, in 1997, the government of Mexico carried out its first rigorously planned programme evaluation of the country's social assistance programme (Progresa/Oportunidades). In 1998, congress began requiring government programmes providing subsidies to prepare rules of operations (ROPs), which outlined the programmes' design, objectives, performance indicators and operations, thereby improving the quality and quantity of performance data. Finally, in 1999, congress required all programmes with ROPs to be evaluated annually by external evaluators.

This push towards the institutionalisation of M&E received impetus from the two financial crises. These crises, in conjunction with an extreme poverty rate of 20%, led to questions regarding the effectiveness of social spending (Castro, Lopez-Acevedo and Busjeet, 2009[11]). Answering these questions required a sound monitoring and evaluation system. The main outcome was the creation of the National Council for Evaluation of Social Policy (CONEVAL) in 2005 (see Box 1.2). This body, given its independence, technical capacities, and mandate, spearheaded the development of an M&E system in Mexico's social sector, as well as the federal government, in general (Castro, Lopez-Acevedo and Busjeet, 2009[11]).

Box 1.2. The National Council for Evaluation of Social Policy (CONEVAL)

The CONEVAL was created in 2005 as a decentralised body of the federal administration with the mission of evaluating social development policy, its programmes, funds and actions, and of measuring poverty at national, state and municipal level. CONEVAL's mandate encompasses between 100 to 130 federal programmes from year to year, all of which are required to execute internal evaluations governed by CONEVAL's guidelines. The organisation also directly oversees over a dozen evaluations per year. Results from the evaluations are influential. In 2013-2014, half of the evaluated programmes were substantially refocused and 41% of programmes underwent corrections regarding activities or operational aspects (Lázaro, 2015[12]).

CONEVAL is the main vehicle towards the institutionalisation of policy evaluation within Mexico through initiatives that clarify, cement, and advance M&E processes. The 2007 issuance of the mandatory General Guidelines for federal programme evaluations provided definitions, regulations, principles, and requirements for components of the monitoring and evaluation system. In 2008, a tracking system for evaluations was implemented and subsequent efforts were made to develop digital platforms for this system to make it accessible to the wider public. Training seminars were also organised for programme managers (Gaarder and Briceño, 2010[13]). These efforts may have the long-term effects of structuring evaluation practices and increasing capacity, even outside of CONEVAL affiliated entities— fostering an evaluation culture (Lázaro, 2015[12]).

Sources: (Lázaro, 2015[12]), Comparative study on the institutionalisation of evaluation in Europe and Latin America, http://sia.eurosocial-ii.eu/files/docs/1456851768-E_15_ENfin.pdf ; (Gaarder and Briceño, 2010[13]), Institutionalisation of government evaluation: balancing trade-offs, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19439342.2010.505027

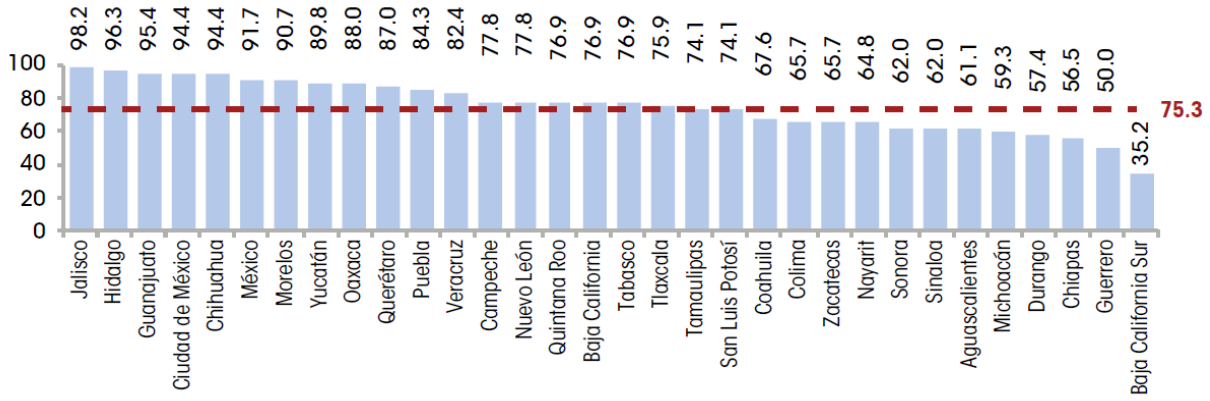
CONEVAL also advises subnational governments on the implementation of their M&E systems and generates guidance on successfully conducted, good-quality programme evaluations. Since 2011, it has prepared an assessment of the M&E systems of Mexican states with an aggregated index (see results Figure 1.1. Monitoring and Evaluation Index by state (2017). This index is composed of two principal dimensions. The first dimension covers the 'normative' instruments; these refer to the regulations issued by the states to govern their M&E practices. The second dimension (i.e. the 'practical' dimension) focuses on how M&E practices are effectively implemented (CONEVAL, 2017[14]). Thus, to construct the index, CONEVAL gathers relevant information from the states and assigns them a score (based on pre-

established criteria and good practices) for each of these two dimensions, the sum of which reflects the overall performance of the state's M&E system.

Over the last decade, this assessment has identified an across-the-board improvement in subnational governments' M&E systems in Mexico. For example, in 2017, 21 states were classified as "medium-high" or "high" in terms of their level of advancement, compared to 10 in 2011 (CONEVAL, 2017[14]). In 2017, Nuevo León was classified as slightly above average with a combined index score of 77.8 (see Figure 1.1), which corresponds to the medium-high category. Despite its advanced socio-economic standing and strong performance in the "practical" dimension of the index (ranked 6th among 32 Mexican states), Nuevo León's middling position in the combined index is explained by the fact that it performs poorly on the 'normative' dimension (ranked 23rd among 32 Mexican states). Some examples of criteria for which CONEVAL has given Nuevo León a low score are:

- State regulations establish that evaluation results should be published.
- State regulations establish performance and management indicators for social development policy and programmes.
- State regulations establish the responsibilities of those responsible for co-ordinating and carrying out the evaluation of social development policy in the state.

Figure 1.1. Monitoring and Evaluation Index by state (2017)



Note: Red dashed line represents the average
Source: (CONEVAL, 2017[14]), *Diagnóstico del avance en monitoreo y evaluación en las entidades federativas [Diagnosis of the progress of monitoring and evaluation in Mexican states]*, https://www.coneval.org.mx/InformesPublicaciones/Documents/Diagnostico_mye_estados_2017.pdf

Building a sound long-term planning system in Nuevo León

The Nuevo León Council reflects a whole-of-society effort towards the long term development of the state

In 2010, Hurricane Alex hit numerous cities of Nuevo León including the state capital Monterrey, destroying infrastructure, water and electricity facilities, and homes. Facing the most important natural disaster in its history, the state needed to launch reconstruction and development initiatives, which resulted in the creation of the State Council for the Rebuilding of Nuevo León (2010-2013). The creation of this intersectoral forum of exchange, and the innovative collaboration with the private sector which resulted

from its functions, led state authorities to identify the need to improve the quality of life of citizens. This created the impetus for the government and private sector to establish the Nuevo León Council for Strategic Planning (the council, hereafter). Formally established in 2014, this state consultative body aims to support the executive in developing a long-term vision through the Strategic Plan for the State of Nuevo León 2015-2030 "Nuevo León Mañana" (SP) (State of Nuevo Leon, 2019[15]).

The council was created and is governed by the Strategic Planning Law for the State of Nuevo León (*Ley de Planeación Estratégica del Estado de Nuevo León*) and its corresponding guidelines (*Reglamento De La Ley De Planeación Estratégica Del Estado De Nuevo León*). It is an advisory/consultative body of the state executive on strategic planning and its evaluation (article 7 of the State Strategic Planning Law). By design, the council is a non-partisan public body with a 'trans-sexennial' mandate; thus, while it advises the executive branch, it is intended to be guided by a long-term strategy beyond electoral cycles (OECD, 2018[16]).

The Nuevo León Council's mission is to promote a long-term vision for the sustainable development of Nuevo León and the well-being of all its citizens, in particular through the planning and evaluation of public policies. To this end, the council also seeks to encourage a performance culture inside the state and across its administration. According to the Strategic Planning Law, the council is responsible, *inter alia*, for the development of the Plan, for defining strategies to include society in the efforts for its implementation, for defining criteria to develop indicators (article 9), as well as for monitoring and evaluating the Plan's implementation and results (article 19) (see Box 1.3). The mandated responsibilities reiterate the council's intended commitment to a whole-of-society approach to long term development, as they include elements pertaining to effective stakeholder engagement (e.g. citizen engagement, dialogue across levels of government, etc.) and policy and strategic coherence (e.g. alignment between planning instruments, sectoral alignment, etc.)

In addition, the council has to "know, propose and give an opinion on the State Development Plan". As explained in chapter 2, the State Development Plan (SDP) is a strategic planning document that each state administration must elaborate upon entering office. Therefore, the Nuevo León administration elaborated an SDP in 2016, specifying its long-term objectives until 2021. The public policy priorities of the Federal Government are established in a National Development Plan, which sets-out the national goals and objectives over a planning horizon of six years (NDP 2019-2024). All SDPs must be designed in accordance with the NDP.

Box 1.3. . Mandated responsibilities of the council

The council is legally mandated to have the following responsibilities and powers:

- draw up the Strategic Plan
- promote a culture of honesty in medium and long term planning, performance measurement and accountability
- outline strategies that will enable the different sectors of society to align their efforts with the set goals and objectives
- know, propose and give an opinion on the State Development Plan and its strategic projects and priority programmes, including any revisions, all in accordance with the guidelines of the Strategic Plan
- establish criteria for the elaboration of quantifiable indicators in the economic, social, environmental and other relevant areas, in order to measure and evaluate progress towards the objectives and goals of the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan

- communicate to citizens the objectives, indicators, and progress of the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan
- promote dialogue and the necessary agreements among the three levels of government, companies, social organizations and educational institutions, in order to jointly carry out actions aimed at achieving the established objectives
- be aware of the progress in relation to strategic projects and priority programmes, as well as the progress in the indicators measuring the economic and social development of the State
- prepare a long-term forecast of the evolution of the state's income, current and investment expenditure, and debt, in order to have a reference for the objectives of the Strategic Plan
- issue procedural manuals for the development of the Strategic Plan
- be aware of the budget allocations pertaining to the development of the Strategic Plan
- approve the creation of commissions to deal with specific policy issues

Source: Adapted from Article 9 of (Council of Nuevo León, 2016[17]) Ley de Planeación Estratégica del Estado de Nuevo León [Strategic Planning Law for the State of Nuevo León]

The council also seeks to foster transparency and stakeholder engagement by virtue of its composition; its members represent the public and private sectors, academia and civil society. This is in line with OECD standards on open government, which recommend that stakeholders should be engaged "in all phases of the policy cycle, service design and delivery, contributing to source ideas and co-create solutions" (OECD, 2017[18]). Effective stakeholder participation and public engagement enlarges the range of inputs provided at every stage of policy design and delivery, which results in a better understanding of nuanced public needs (OECD, 2019[19]). This, in turn, can lead to more robust evidence-informed decision-making and more effective public policies (OECD, 2009[20]). Furthermore, since public understanding and support is essential to policy implementation, public engagement is an important component of effective policy implementation and of reducing non-compliance (OECD, 2019[19]). Box 1.4 illustrates examples of meaningful government-citizen partnership and stakeholder engagement.

Box 1.4. Fostering a government-citizen relationship

Citizen participation has long been acknowledged as a powerful tool to enhance public policies, especially at the subnational level. It can improve the quality of policies and their responsiveness to the population's needs and citizens' proposals can solve development challenges.

The experience of Alberta in Canada and the "What we heard" report

In Canada, the province of Alberta offers an interesting example of stakeholder involvement at the early stages of policy-making. In order to ensure a needs-tailored design and implementation of its "Health Policy Framework", the government sought the opinion of health system stakeholders, health care professionals, unions, municipal leaders, educators and community organisations through letters, meetings, online expression of opinions etc. The results of this consultation process were subsequently used to further improve approaches to integrate citizens' opinions in policy-making.

Involving citizens in the definition and monitoring of State Development Plans in Mexico

In Mexico, the state of Aguascalientes created a Citizen's Consultative Committee in charge of participating in the preparation of the state's plans and programmes as well as monitoring and evaluating

the state planning system. It is composed of representatives from the public, private, social and academic sectors.

In the state of Jalisco, there are four sectorial citizen councils for planning, measurement and evaluation. The goal of the councils is, amongst other things, to promote citizen participation in the monitoring of the State Development Plan's indicators. The councils are composed of representatives from civil society and public institutions, selected according to their professional expertise along four thematic areas: social development, economic development, territorial development and security.

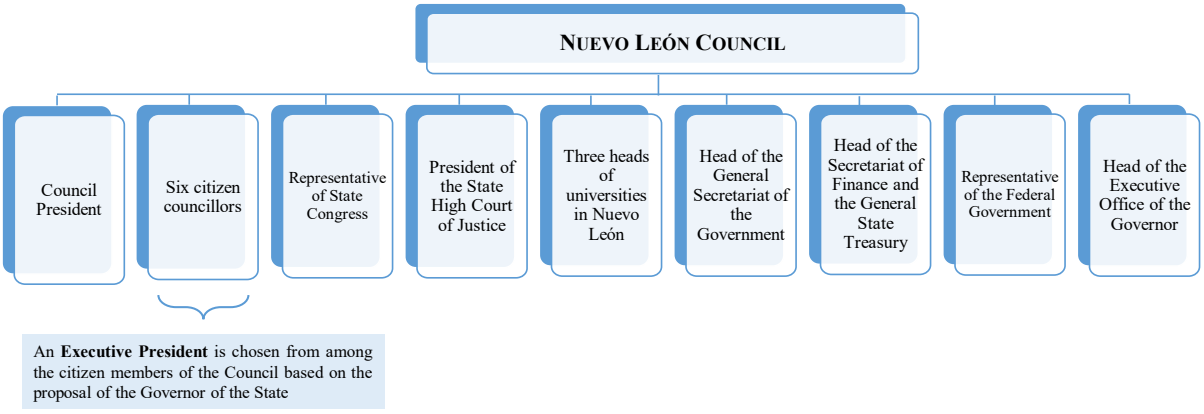
A multi-sectorial commission to monitor the OGP in Peru

In Peru, a permanent multi-sectorial commission is in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Open Government Partnership National Action Plans. Participants in this commission include several government ministries, the judiciary as well as several CSO and private sector organizations. Civil society representatives were highly involved in the preparation of the OGP, they reviewed the commitments, offered suggestions and participated in the consultations.

Sources : Based on (OECD, 2016[21]), Open Government: The Global context and the Way Forward; https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264268104-en.pdf?expires=1583850456&id=id&accname=ocid84004878&checksum=E6A7AD508FAABD7F84466B00395192D4; Open Government Partnership, (2019[22]), Designing and Managing an OGP Multistakeholder Forum, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Multistakeholder-Forum-Handbook.pdf; Secotrial citizen councils for planning, measurement and evaluation website (https://seplan.app.jalisco.ob.mx/evalua/consejo-evalua/consejo-ciudadano)

In addition to its multi-stakeholder nature, the council also reaches across levels of government. As shown in Figure 1.2, the council includes a representative from the federal government. Furthermore, the council can also include, as special guest advisors, public servants from federal, state and municipal government entities as well as national and international experts to contribute to the analysis of specific issues (article 7 of the Strategic Planning Law).

Figure 1.2. Breakdown of the Nuevo León council



Notes: The representative of state congress is preferably the president or a member of the State Finance Committee
Source: Adapted from Article 7 of (Council of Nuevo León, 2016[17]), *Ley de Planeación Estratégica del Estado de Nuevo León [Strategic Planning Law for the State of Nuevo León]*

The council is composed of 16 members and a technical secretary, as illustrated in Table 1.2. It is led by the president of the council, who is the Governor of the state. Meanwhile, the executive president is chosen

from among the six citizen councillors of the council, while the remaining five eventually serve as the presidents of its five thematic commissions. Each commission also includes a technical secretary, a member of the executive branch entity whose area of expertise corresponds to that of the commission. Among the six commissions, there are five thematic commissions, which correspond to the main themes of the Strategic Plan 2015-2030. These themes include economic development, human development, sustainable development, effective government and transparency, and security and justice. Other commissions can be created as well. For instance, in 2018, a public finance commission was also created in order to ensure greater alignment between the Plan and the state budget. The council is funded in equal parts by the government of the state and the private sector.

Table 1.2. Mandated roles and responsibilities of the council members

Role	Responsibility
President of the council(State Governor)	Direct, promote and coordinate the actions of the council
	Represent the council and exercise corresponding actions
	Convene and preside over meetings, set the agenda and review the minutes of the meetings
	Carry out actions to adopt consensuses during the council's decision-making
	Comply with and enforce applicable law and regulations
Executive president(Representative of civil society)	Replace the president of the council in cases of absence
	Request from federal, state and municipal bodies or from civil society the information necessary for the studies and evaluations that the council will carry out
	Call meetings of commissions and special groups created by the council and advise the president to call extraordinary meetings, when needed
	Ensure compliance with the council's resolutions and those made by the president of the council
Citizen councillors/commissions' presidents	Participate in commission meetings with speaking and voting privileges
	Participate in citizen consultation forums for the integration and updating of the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan
	Attend other commission meetings with speaking privileges following prior authorization from the relevant commission president
	Have adequate access to the council's knowledge base
	Obtain, through the president of the council or the executive president, necessary information
	Present proposals for adoption by the council or for study by the relevant commissions
Technical secretary	Keep records of resolutions adopted during council meetings
	Convene council meetings at the instruction of the president of the council
	Prepare minutes of council meetings with signatures of each of the commission presidents
	Prepare calls for meetings and convey them to the commission presidents
	Additional tasks as requested by the president of the council and council members

Source: Adapted from Article 10 of (Council of Nuevo León, 2016[17]) Ley de Planeación Estratégica del Estado de Nuevo León [Strategic Planning Law for the State of Nuevo León]

The fact that citizen councillors chair both the council and the commissions reinforces citizens' engagement in the work of the council. In particular, as shown in Table 1.2 in the case of the executive presidency, citizens are involved in overseeing the overall functioning of the council by calling and presiding over (when needed) meetings, requesting relevant information from government entities, and ensuring internal compliance. Likewise, in the case of commission presidencies, citizens have voting and speaking privileges, the ability to present substantive proposals, and carry out citizen consultations.

However, there are no clear rules/procedures to decide on membership/participation in the council and commissions. This is echoed in the assessment of the Nuevo León council by GESOC (*Gestión Social y Cooperación*), a civil society organisation focused on governance issues, which acknowledges the lack of a competitive process for the appointment of management positions (GESOC, 2017[23]). When interviewed

by the OECD, several stakeholders also expressed that its representativeness is perceived as unbalanced across sectors of civil society. In particular, citizens appear to have limited voice/influence, in contrast to the influence of the private sector. In addition, several stakeholders stressed the need to involve universities more actively in the council's work.

Clear methods for stakeholder engagement are important, *inter alia*, to incorporate underrepresented or vulnerable populations and their needs into the council decision making process. This element will be further addressed in chapter 5.

The council offers an inclusive platform to reflect on key policy initiatives

The council offers a space to discuss new initiatives that were not explicitly set out in the Strategic Plan. There appears to be a strong commitment on the part of many stakeholders, both to the plan and to dialogue and debate within the council. The members of the council (the chairperson, president, commissions' presidents, state representatives, academics, the federal government representative and the secretary general) each have a voice and a vote. This enables engagement and dialogue between civil society and the executive (Council of Nuevo Leon, 2019[24])

In particular, the creation of sectoral commissions has stimulated strategic thinking in specific policy areas. This is the case of the *Hambre Cero Nuevo León* initiative (see Box 1.5), an inter-institutional effort derived from the Strategic Plan to eradicate extreme food poverty and food waste in the state. This initiative requires the concerted and co-ordinated action of the government, the private sector, the civil society and the public.

Box 1.5. Hambre Cero / Zero Hunger initiative

The Hambre Cero is a multi-stakeholder initiative with the objective of eradicating hunger in Nuevo León by reducing food loss and waste, as well as by developing capacities for food self-sufficiency of its target population. The initiative reflects the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 2: Zero Hunger) and the Strategic Plan 2030 (thematic area of Human Development). The target population of the initiative is the share of the population living below the minimum welfare line (as determined by CONEVAL), which is the segment of the population whose entire income is less than the cost of a basic food basket. The objectives are organised around three strategic pillars, as outlined below:

- Food aid and counselling: Provide food aid and guidance to contribute to food security; improve the nutritional health of poor and vulnerable populations; and periodically assess progress in reducing food shortages.
- Reduction of food loss and waste: Establish policies and mechanisms to reduce the food waste in the food supply chain with a focus on identifying, capturing, transforming and distributing potential food waste to target populations.
- Food and family self-sufficiency: Develop individual, family and community capacities for self-management and self-improvement, and enable complete social inclusion – through inter-institutional co-ordination and collaboration.

In addition to the strategic pillars, the initiative is also informed by four transversal axes that further specify its aims and modalities, as described below:

- Social innovation: Generate innovative practices to meet social needs, create collaborative schemes to enable desired transformation, and employ a scientifically supported process to replicate experiences of a community elsewhere.

- Communication: Use participatory processes to motivate all members of the society to contribute to the initiative's objectives, for example, by highlighting the contributions of key stakeholders involved in the initiative.
- Regulations/rules: Address legal gaps through the creation of regulations and other legal instruments to help achieve the initiative's goals and objectives.
- Evaluation: Institute a scientifically and methodologically rigorous process that monitors each stage of the initiative so that timely adjustments can be made to improve implementation, optimise use of resources and maximise the impact and durability of the initiative.

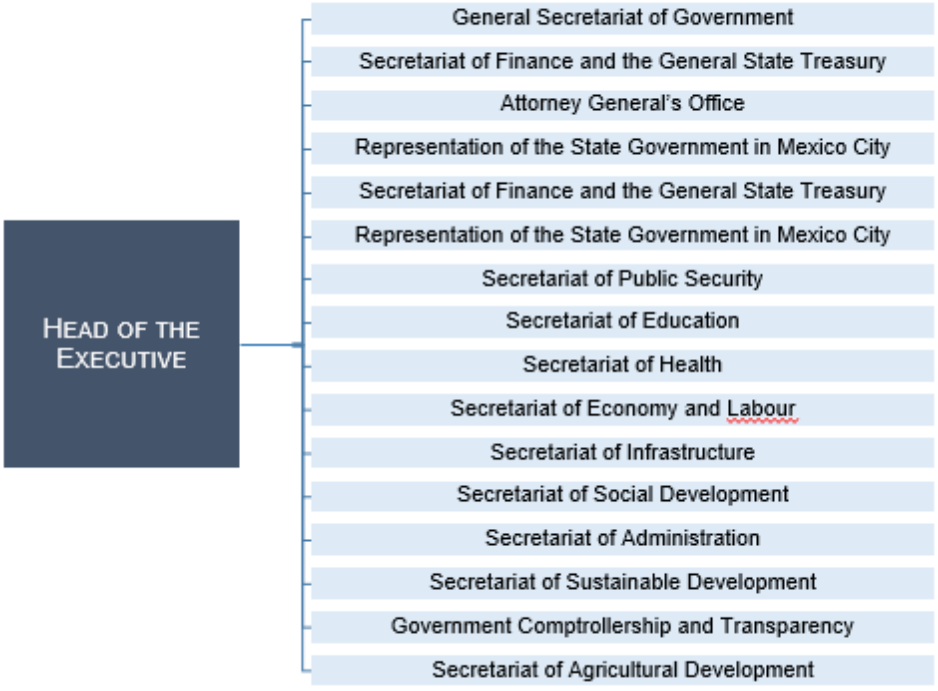
Source: Adapted from Hambre Cero Nuevo León, (2020[25]), Hambre Cero Nuevo León, https://www.hambreceronl.mx/index

The overall planning system in Nuevo León

The Organisational Law of the Public Administration for the State of Nuevo León (*Ley Orgánica de la Administración Pública para el Estado De Nuevo León*) organises and regulates the functioning of the public administration of the state (OECD, 2018[26]). The chief of the public administration and the principle holder of executive power in the state of Nuevo León is the Governor of the state (article 2), who is elected every six years (article 84 of the Nuevo León constitution). The head of the executive is supported by agencies and administrative units of the state public administration, as outlined in article 18 of the Organisational Law (see Figure 1.3).

Among these entities, the centre of government's (CoG) institutions play a central role in whole-of-government planning. The CoG is "the body or group of bodies that provide direct support and advice to Heads of Government and the Council of Ministers, or Cabinet" (OECD, 2014[27]). The strategic role of CoG has been expanding over the course of the last decade due to the increasing complexity of policy-making; the emergence of whole-of-government strategy-setting and implementation; strategic monitoring of government performance over the medium term; and strategic issues management (Alessandro, Lafuente and Santiso, 2013[28]). The CoG is mandated "to ensure the consistency and prudency of government decisions and to promote evidence-based, strategic and consistent policies" (OECD, 2020[9]).

Figure 1.3. Actors in the state public administration



Source: Adapted from (Secretary of the State, 2009[29]), Ley Orgánica de la Administración Pública para el Estado De Nuevo León [Organisational Law for the State of Nuevo León]

CoG institutions vary from one country to another, depending on the constitutional order, the political system, the administrative structure of the country, contextual and historical actors. Expanded definitions of the CoG can include institutions or agencies that perform core cross-cutting governmental functions, such as finance or planning ministries. In Nuevo León, the CoG capacity (in the broad sense) is mainly distributed across the following institutions:

- *The Executive Office of the Governor.* This administrative unit is in charge of planning, coordinating and reporting to the Head of the Executive on the execution of plans and programmes by public agencies and entities, in accordance with the State Development Plan. It also aims at facilitating communication between public entities and the Governor.
- *The Secretariat of Finance and General Treasury* is in charge of the financial, fiscal and tax administration of the state's public treasury. It prepares the yearly budgeting process.
- In addition, *the Government's General Secretary* is in charge of conducting the state internal affairs and of coordinating the relationships between the executive and the federal government.

Additional secretariats play an important role in supporting cross-government policy co-ordination, such as the Secretariat of Economy and Labour and the Secretariat of Social Development.

In regard to strategic planning functions, article 5 of the Strategic Planning Law states that the council and the head of the executive are the main actors in the strategic planning of Nuevo León. The responsibilities of the two (as they pertain to the strategic planning instruments) are outlined, as follows: whereas the Executive Office of the Governor is responsible for issuing the manual for the development of the State

Development Plan and its derived programmes, as well as integrating them (Article 16, Strategic Planning Law), the council is tasked with consultation and advice on matters of strategic planning, as well as evaluation (article 7). This means that their functions are complementary.

The regulations for the Strategic Planning Law outline the strategic planning responsibilities of the heads of specific entities within the state public administration. Article 14.V of the regulations defines the responsibilities for the heads of all dependencies of the state public administration. In addition to this, article 14.I to article 14.IV (inclusively) pinpoint specific and specialised roles for the following entities:

- *Head of the Executive Office of the Governor:* They coordinate the strategic planning process, and monitor the implementation of the initiatives of the State Development Plan. This office also absorbed, *de facto*, most of the functions of the former *Technical Coordination, Planning Evaluation and Government Innovation Cabinet,* dissolved in 2020. The technical coordination was responsible for monitoring the tasks of the planning process, as well as the implementation of the State Development Plan. It was responsible for preparing procedural manuals for the elaboration of the State Development Plan and its initiatives. It also had a monitoring function, as it collaborated with the Secretariat of Finance to measure the achievement of annual operational programmes and with the Secretariat of Finance, State General Treasury and Office of Government Comptrollership Transparency to supervise the assessment of planning instruments. Finally, it used to coordinate research and training activities (related to strategic planning) for entities of the state public administration.
- *The Secretariat of Finance and the General State Treasury:* It is responsible for preparing and proposing to the head of the executive a financial plan, as well as the initiatives pertaining to the state's expenditure law and its revenue law; it does so in accordance with the State Development Plan. Likewise, the Secretariat coordinates with the head of the executive the planning and organisation of the governments' budget, respecting the State Development Plan. Finally, in conjunction with the Government Comptrollership and Transparency, the Secretariat monitors the use of financial resources in accordance with the State Development Plan and its programmes.
- *Heads of the entities and dependencies of the state public administration:* In accordance with the guidance of the executive branch, they participate in the strategic planning and process, and subsequently elaborate and execute the programmes and projects of the Strategic Plan and State Development Plan within the scope of its purview (Article 14 v.b.). They also have M&E functions, as they are tasked with proposing indicators for the monitoring of public policies and the compliance of their programmes and budget, and local actions with the State Development Plan. Lastly, they act as the technical secretaries of the council's commissions that deal with their area of expertise.

Evidently, the scope of these functions sometimes pertains to the 'planning process' as a whole, which can be understood as both the Strategic Plan and State Development Plan (article 15 of the regulations of the Strategic Planning Law). For example, the head of the Executive Office of the Governor is responsible for coordinating the tasks of the planning process. In other cases, the functions are specific to the State Development Plan. For example, the head of the Executive Office of the Governor is responsible for monitoring the execution of the State Development Plan. The only explicit mention of the Strategic Plan is in article 14.V.b, which mandates dependencies of the state public administration to elaborate and execute the programmes and projects of the Strategic Plan and State Development Plan within the scope of their purview (Article 14, v.b.). Article 14 v.e. also mandates the monitoring of programmes and budget, in compliance with the objectives and guidelines of the State Plan and the applicable legislature, in order to favour the attainment of the greatest social and economic benefits.

In addition to the Strategic Planning Law and its regulations, the internal regulations of the entities of the state public administration are part of the legal framework governing the strategic planning system in Nuevo León. These regulations define the goals and functions of the secretariat, the legal provisions to which it must adhere, and its organisational structure. For example, the Secretariat of Sustainable Development is

governed by *Reglamento Interior De La Secretaría De Desarrollo Sustentable*. Other line ministries and dependencies of the executive have analogous legal documents.

A complex interaction between the council and the state public administration

The interaction between the council and the state public administration manifests in several ways. For example, the work of each of the council's commissions is supported by the staff and public servants from the relevant state public administration entities and departments (article 9 of the regulations of the Strategic Planning Law). To that end, the technical secretary for each commission is a representative from an entity in the executive branch, whose area of expertise is relevant to the commission.

Likewise, in preparing its studies and reports, the executive president of the council has the legally mandated ability to request relevant information from the state public administration of Nuevo León (as well as other levels of government) so that the council may carry out its evaluations/policy studies (article 10 of the Strategic Planning Law). This mutual dependence means that the coordination between the council and the executive is paramount to a sound strategic planning system in Nuevo León. To date, the Executive Office of the Governor carries out this function.

Beyond the executive, the legislative branch has a role in the strategic planning system of Nuevo León. As dictated by article 22 of the Strategic Planning Law, the council is required to deliver the evaluation results of the Strategic Plan and the State Plan to the state congress. The executive is correspondingly mandated to inform the state congress of its decisions in response to the evaluation results of the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan. However, the legal framework does not dictate how or if the legislative branch should follow up once it receives the evaluation results of the Strategic Plan. The state congress also has a role in monitoring the public expenditure directed towards the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan (article 3.XV of the Strategic Planning Law). Furthermore, through the inclusion of a representative from the state congress in the council, the legislative branch of Nuevo León is incorporated in the strategic planning system.

While the council is an advisory/consultative body of the state executive on strategic planning and its evaluation, it works, de facto, as a body operating at arm's-length from the executive. Its composition includes representation from the legislative branch of government, the state's judicial branch, academia, civil society, the federal government and the private sector. In addition, it benefits from a funding mix, which gives it certain operational autonomy from the core state public centre of government has limited capacities for strategic planning, coordination and monitoring in Nuevo administration.

Responsibilities for strategic planning are blurred between the Executive Office of the Governor and council

The strategic planning law contains several articles that have led to some conceptual confusions regarding the council's responsibilities on monitoring and evaluation. While article 7 gives the council responsibilities only on planning and evaluation, article 18 of the same law states that the council is also in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Plan. In addition, it does not specify how this monitoring function should be carried out.

Moreover, the council is currently bound by law to produce a yearly report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, which is officially described as an "evaluation", but in reality is a monitoring report. The publication of this yearly report tends to create tension with the government, first, as it highlights implementation gaps in achieving-long term objectives; this is because the strategic plan is in essence long-term and ambitious, and in several areas progress cannot be perceived within a given year. In fact, international good practice suggests that evaluation should be selective and targeted, and not necessarily a yearly requirement and, more importantly, that it needs to go more in depth than just a monitoring exercise to understand what works or not and why, to suggest helpful corrective action (Vági and Rimkute,

2018[6]). Second, the monitoring report seems to focus mostly on the strategic projects, which are output objectives rather than the long term outcome and impact goals that correspond to the Council's mandate.

This situation has generated a slightly misplaced perception of the council as a sort of independent "watchdog" of the government, whereas it is in fact a forward-looking part of the state governance apparatus. The perception by the state public administration is that the council is a body that controls their performance instead of supporting them in the achievement of long-term goals, which does not help. This situation is partly fuelled by the lack of clarity concerning the council's role in strategy setting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Since its creation, the council has seen some expansion of its actions from a policy standpoint. This has created tensions with the state public administration and resulted in the council devoting comparatively less attention to long term planning – a function which is also intrinsically linked to foresight and evaluation. Moreover, this situation has created an incompatible mix of functions: some require strong political influence and commitment (e.g. monitoring the implementation of plans) while others benefit from increased independence and technical legitimacy (e.g. evaluation).

In order to resolve this discrepancy, the council could consider focusing on its strategic and policy advisory role and moving away from implementation and monitoring. OECD research has found that clearly distinguishing the roles of policy advisory bodies from those of policy decision makers is essential to an effective policy advisory system (OECD, 2017[30]). This delineation involves allowing advisory bodies to develop different policy options and to argue in favour of certain among them, but ensuring that the task of ultimately deciding on policy choices is given to policy makers. To do so, international good practice suggests halting the policy advisory process once the policy advice is given (OECD, 2017[30]). The Australian Productivity Commission provides a good illustration of this delineation (see Box 1.6).

Box 1.6. Australia's Productivity Commission: an autonomous government body

Australia's Productivity Commission, located in the Government's treasury portfolio, serves as an independent research and advisory body to the country's government; it covers an array of economic, social and environmental policy issues affecting the welfare of Australian citizens. At the request of the Australian Government, it provides independent and quality advice, and information on key policy and regulatory issues. It also conducts self-initiated research to support the Government in its performance reporting and annual reporting, and acts as a secretariat under the council of Australian government for the inter-governmental review of government service provision.

The policy advisory function of the Commission is well defined and clearly demarcated from policy decision making. It does not have executive power and does not administer government programmes; rather, its core contribution is centred on informing policy formulation and public debate by providing high quality, independent advice to government entities. Specifically, the Commission exhibits the following characteristics:

- Independence: it operates under its own legislation, and its independence is formalised through the Productivity Commission Act. Moreover, it has its own budget allocation and permanent staff working at arm's length from government agencies. Even if the commission's work programme is largely defined by the government, its results and advice are always derived from its own analyses.
- Transparent processes: all advice, information and analysis produced and provided to the government is subject to public scrutiny through consultative forums and release of preliminary findings and draft reports.

- Community-wide perspective: under its statutory guidelines, the commission is required to take a view that encompasses the interests of the entire Australian community rather than particular stakeholders.

Source: Adapted from Australian Government, (2020[31]), About the Commission, https://www.pc.gov.au/about

Another interesting example is France Stratégie, which is a strategic office attached to the Prime Minister's office, but operating at arms' length from day to day decision making and the rest of the French CoG (see Box 1.7).

Box 1.7. The relationship between advisory bodies and CoG : the example of France Stratégie

Created in 2013, France Stratégie is an independent advisory body affiliated with the French Prime Minister's Office. It conducts studies shedding light on medium and long-term policy issues that fall within its fields of competence (economics, social policy, labour, employment and skills, sustainable development and digital technology).

While the Prime Minister's Office and line ministries are in charge of implementing and monitoring public policies, France Stratégie coordinates ex post policy evaluation. It also fosters dialogue on policy-making with various stakeholders (academia, government bodies, unions, international organizations and civil society) and recommends policy orientations and reforms. Finally, it oversees a network of seven specialized public bodies that conduct studies, such as the Council of Economic Analysis (CAE) and the Centre for Forecasting and International Studies (CEPII).

To carry out its research, France Stratégie draws on a team of multidisciplinary experts, analysts and scientific advisers. Its autonomy is guaranteed as it is solely responsible for its publications and communicates independently. It also carries out its work in a non-partisan manner, in interaction with different political parties, unions as well as social and regional entities.

Each year, France Stratégie defines its programme of work in accordance with policy priorities. For instance, sustainable development was a common theme to all studies launched in 2019. At the request of the Prime Minister, it can also provide forecasts and recommendations on major government reforms.

Sources: Adapted from France Stratégie, (2018[32]), France Stratégie 2018, https://www.strategie.gouv.fr/

Deciding the distribution of functions is in itself a political choice but ought to be done in a way that ensures policy coherence and efficiency. Giving the council a strategic function in long-term planning, focusing on generation of evidence and planned evaluation rather than the yearly monitoring would serve such a purpose. This will also provide institutional space for the development of high-level policy documents. Additionally, it would reinforce the council's role as a knowledge broker and policy advisor (see chapter 5).

Meanwhile, the implementation and monitoring functions are best suited to governance structures close to power. This is well-supported by OECD analysis, which has found that the centre of government (CoG) is ideally placed to monitor the implementation of government-wide policies and programmes, to remove obstacles and implementation bottlenecks when performance is hindered, and to manage political considerations to facilitate the approval and implementation of government policies (OECD, 2017[30]). Finally, the current situation has been exacerbated by a conceptual confusion between monitoring and

evaluation that has affected the organisation and the dynamics of the whole M&E ecosystem. Again, article 18 of the Strategic Planning Law gives a single definition for both monitoring and evaluation, while the two practices are distinct and require different kinds of professional background and expertise (Table 1.1). This has led to several misunderstandings. For example, the council's annual reports have been called "evaluation reports" although in reality these are monitoring reports (see chapters 3 and 4).

The centre of government has limited capacities for strategic planning, coordination and monitoring in Nuevo Leon.

From an OECD perspective, the emergence of cross-cutting, multi-dimensional policy issues requires the set-up of appropriate structures, to overcome silos, ensure policy coherence and provide functions for policy coordination both horizontally across administrative units and vertically across levels of government. Such functions are traditionally located within the centre of government. Although the institutional peculiarities of CoG structures vary across OECD countries, they share common functions in spearheading whole-of-government coordination. This includes driving evidence-informed, inclusive and timely decision-making; policy coordination across government; medium-term strategic planning; monitoring and evaluating the implementation of government policy; strategic communication; and leading transition planning (OECD, 2020[33]).

In Nuevo León, there is currently no body with the explicit mandate of co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan across government as the council has a responsibility limited to monitoring but not to coordination. Article 3 of the Strategic Planning Law does indicate that the state has to coordinate with municipal and federal governments in order to implement joint actions and programmes that promote the attainment of objectives that are included in different planning instruments. However, this lacks clarity in terms of who should coordinate the implementation of the Plan and the way in which it shall be done.

Another challenge is that there are insufficient resources and mechanisms within the administration dedicated to implementing the Plan's objectives and projects. OECD research suggests that planning processes should always include "the proper calculation of the costs of resources needed for its implementation. In addition, steps must be taken to ensure that the identified resources are budgeted, that is, they are set aside in the annual and medium-term budget(s)…" (Vági and Rimkute, 2018[6]).

Although the Strategic Plan's opportunity areas were broken into strategic lines and initiatives, these were not directly linked to the use of inputs (human, financial or material resources) with clear responsibility for their implementation (OECD, 2018[34]). For instance, implementing a Strategic Plan requires some form of costing exercise and alignment to a budget and short-term objectives, which is lacking in the case of Nuevo León. In addition, this Strategic Plan has not been properly articulated with the State Development Plan, which itself should be linked to the budget process.

To address the need for strategic coordination, the state of Nuevo León first created the state public administration's Executive Coordination in 2015, whose main function was to coordinate the integration and operation of the government cabinet, liaise with civil society and guide the policies, plans, programmes and actions of the public administration. Nevertheless, this unit had limited mandate and capacities to align and co-ordinate the implementation of the different planning mechanisms (Strategic Plan, State Development Plan, and budget) across the administration and was ultimately dissolved in 2020.

The Executive Office of the Governor (EOG) absorbed the responsibilities of the former Executive Coordination. These recent changes represent an opportunity to strengthen the mandate and capacities of this office to further align them to OECD practices on centre of government, in particular fulfilling the full functions of planning and monitoring. In order to strengthen the CoG functions on strategic planning, Nuevo León could consider formally transferring the former functions of the Executive Coordination office to the Executive Office of the Governor. This can be done, in the short term, through revising the Internal

Guidelines of the EOG. “OECD country experience also suggests that the centre is relatively more involved in assuring funding for overall national strategies and assessing whether the overall programme respects the boundaries of the country’s fiscal framework; just over half (54%) of respondents claimed overall responsibility for this” (OECD, 2018[34]). This could surely apply to the case of Nuevo León. Based on OECD country experiences, “most monitoring regimes are based on requirements for departments to report on progress against their own individual departmental plans – including financial, human resources and administrative performance - which the centre then collates” (OECD, 2018[35]).

Recommendations

In light of the above analysis, and taking into account the results of international experiences and good practices, this report recommends for Nuevo León public authorities to:

- Clarify the council and the centre of government’s respective responsibilities on strategic planning (notably the Executive Office of the Governor and the Secretariat of Finance) with a view to strengthening capacities for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy priorities.
  - In particular, the centre of government should be coordinating the various implementation and monitoring activities of the Strategic Plan and of the State Development Plan. To this end, the CoG has to guarantee that the elaboration manual of the SDP include a link to the Strategic Plan This should be coordinated with the Secretariat of Finance, as stated in the current legal framework, to ensure coherence with financial resources. The release of a communication leaflet on the monitoring of the Strategic Plan, coordinated by the Executive Office of the Governor, should be done at mid-political term and at the end of the *mandate*, that is, every 3 years. Chapter 3 will further analyse the monitoring process and the role of the different actors, including the council.
- Strengthen Nuevo León council’s role as an advisory body and strategic knowledge broker (see chapter 5), moving it away from implementation and monitoring (see chapter 4). This requires building technical capacities within the council to:
  - Provide objective and timely policy advice to the government in key priority areas, based on the collection, analysis and facilitation of evidence. This can include practices such as strategic foresight (long-term), identifying knowledge gaps, conducting evidence synthesis, etc.
  - Select and discuss a limited number of policy priorities that require the concerted action of the state government, civil society and the private sector, for which the council would prepare focused evaluations with clear recommendations. One specific example is the “Hambre Cero” initiative.
  - Promote policy evaluations in various areas.
- Strengthen the Nuevo León’s centre of government, with a specific mandate and resources to enable its function in terms of coordination, monitoring as well as the evaluation of the programmes derived from the State Development Plan. In order to strengthen the CoG functions, Nuevo León could consider formally transferring the former functions of the Executive Coordination office to the Executive Office of the Governor. This can be done, in the short term, through revising the Internal Guidelines of the EOG. The centre of government should be given the functions, mandate, responsibilities and resources to:
  - Ensure effective whole-of-government coordination, such as the creation of specific roundtables and follow up instruments.
  - Carry out objective setting and prioritization exercises, which is the ability to translate political commitments into clear and measurable policy objectives and actions plans. This includes

practices such as strategic design, logic modelling and challenges and prices, and should not be limited to the implementation of the State Development Plan.

- Publish regular monitoring results. Instead of a yearly report, this could be done on a biannual basis for the strategic plan. It could include the definition of key performance indicators and in particular the capacity to strategically integrate and manage performance information for the development, coordination and implementation of key policy priorities.
- Conduct strategic internal and external communication, particularly through use of social media to outline key progress, success stories, bottlenecks and possible areas for improvement.
- Equip the administration with the tools, human and financial resources, and institutional structures/arrangements to disclose and share key performance information with relevant stakeholders.; and

- Pursue efforts to implement a coherent strategy for monitoring and evaluation policy for Nuevo León, drawing on the respective strengths of the council, the Executive Office of the Governor and of the Secretariat of Finance. Realigning the functions will strengthen the monitoring and evaluation apparatus as a whole. Overall, the apparatus requires:
  - A clear definition of the concepts “monitoring” and “evaluation” for the entire state government (including the council).
  - Specific capacities and provisions to monitor and evaluate both the Strategic and the State Development Plan.
  - Clarification of the council’s functions in terms of planning, policy advice and evaluation.

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2 The Strategic Plan's Methodology and Structure: Identifying Clear and Sound Policy Priorities for Nuevo León

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the methodology used to develop Nuevo León's main long-term planning tool, the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 "Nuevo León Mañana", as well as its consequent structure. OECD findings suggest that the joint effort by government and civil society to design the strategy has resulted in the widespread perception that it is an important initiative for the state. Yet, the methodology suffered from some technical shortcomings and did not leave enough space for prioritisation of long-term policy objectives. As a result, the structure of the document is not coherent, which makes it difficult to use as a planning tool.

Introduction

The Strategic Plan reflects a high-level commitment to long-term policies in Nuevo León

The main planning instrument of Nuevo León's council is the Strategic Plan for the state of Nuevo León 2015-2030 "Nuevo León Mañana" (SP). The Plan is widely perceived as an important initiative, especially as it is the first integrated long-term planning instrument designed jointly by government and civil society in a Mexican subnational government. The Strategic Plan also brings value as it offers the possibility to plan beyond the electoral cycle, which offers opportunities to bring greater stability to policy making.

The Strategic Plan was published in 2016, following almost a year of events, meetings, public consultations with citizens and experts from the council's commissions (Council of Nuevo Leon, 2019[1]). These stakeholders worked with the state government to define key indicators for monitoring the plan and aligning the visions of each commission. Article 3 of the Strategic Planning Law states that in addition to contributing to the sustainable development of the state, the Plan aims to consolidate democracy, promote government integrity, accountability, efficiency and productivity.

The Plan's development started with a comprehensive diagnosis of the economic, environmental and social conditions of the state of Nuevo León. The data was collected by a consulting firm through benchmarking exercises, interviews with experts, and different sources such as the different secretaries of the state government and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). The diagnosis exercise aimed to be consensual, with an element of civic participation through the organisation of expert and public consultations.

This analysis led the commissions to identify many "opportunity areas" for the state of Nuevo León. These opportunity areas were then prioritised according to their degree of feasibility and impact. The Strategic Plan is organised into 11 thematic areas (each one associated with a sub-commission or commission of the council) with 47 opportunity areas, divided into 101 strategic lines and accompanied by 45 projects (see Figure 2.1). Moreover, the Plan has 8 transversal central themes.

Figure 2.1. Pyramid of the main layers of the Strategic Plan



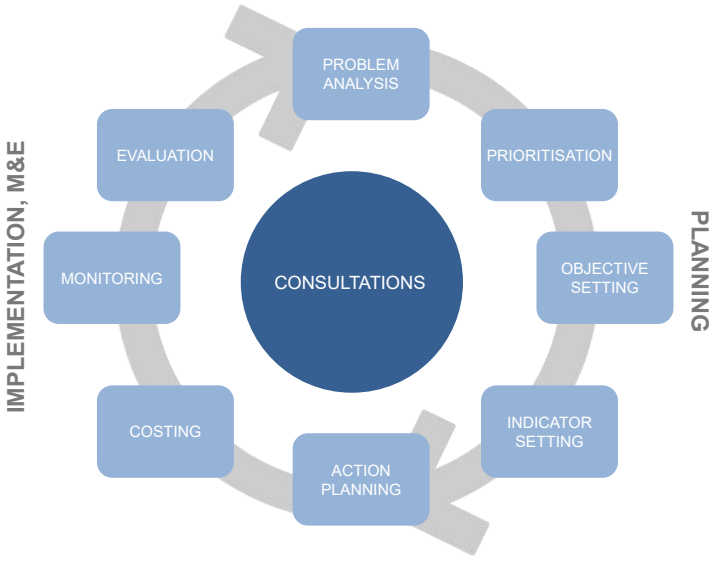
Note: This figure represents the main layers of the Plan and their hierarchical structure in general terms. However, it should be noted that certain sub-commissions have chosen to use a slightly different structure as is further explained in this chapter.
Source: Authors

Developing a robust planning methodology in Nuevo León

Strategy setting can be defined as a dynamic, complex, iterative and interactive process, by which a government identifies problems; defines and prioritises its objectives; plans activities to achieve those objectives; and sets a measurement framework to validate progress (OECD, 2018[2]). The strategy setting process can be divided into two main phases: the planning phase, and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phase.

In line with the observed methodology in most OECD countries (see the strategy setting cycle in Figure 2.2), Nuevo León's 2030 planning phase began by conducting a diagnosis of the current situation in five chosen thematic areas (problem analysis phase): Human and Social Development, Sustainable Development, Economic Development, Security and Justice, and Effective Government and Transparency. Subsequently, Nuevo León went through a prioritisation phase and defined several layers of objectives (opportunity areas, strategic lines and actions).

Figure 2.2. Strategy setting process



Note: The cycle approach is just one way of presenting the complex process of strategy development and implementation; however, the phases of the process are not necessarily consecutive. For instance, action planning can be done at the same time as objective setting.
Source: OECD (2018)

The problem analysis phase did not build on lessons learned from previous reforms

Problem analysis, which is the analysis of the current state of affairs (achievements, challenges and opportunities) based on lessons learned from previous reforms and development plans, is an essential step for strategic planning (OECD, 2018[2]). It provides lessons on why previous policies were successful or not, as well as the evidence base for prioritisation and objective setting (steps 2 and 3 of the strategy setting process).

In Nuevo León, the data for the diagnosis in each thematic area was collected by a consulting firm through benchmarking exercises, interviews with experts, and different sources such as the different secretaries of the state government and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) (Council of Nuevo

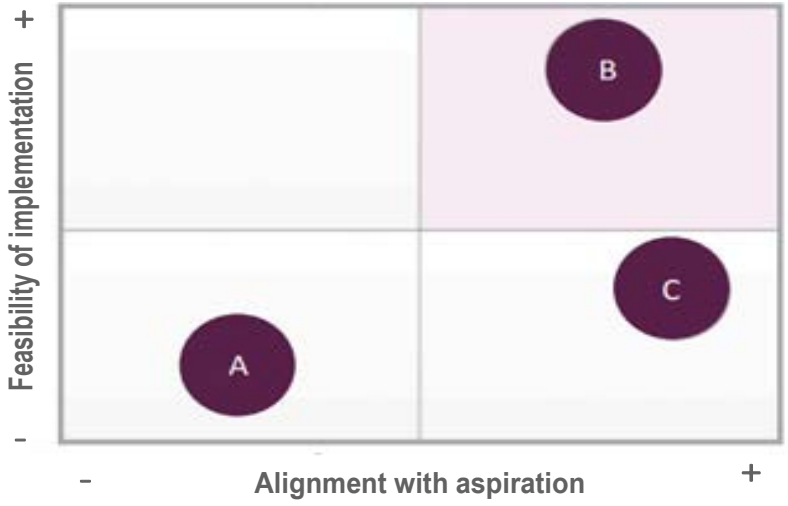
León, 2016[3]).The diagnosis aimed to be consensual, with an element of civic participation through the organisation of expert and public consultations (Council of Nuevo León, 2016[3]). Therefore, the diagnosis has been context-specific, shared by the major stakeholders and based on sound international and national sources – thus laying a credible evidence-base for the rest of the strategic planning.

Nevertheless, the diagnosis established for each commission/sub-commission (section on "*Diagnóstico de la situación actual*") did not systematically include a thorough assessment of previous reform initiatives in Nuevo León. In order for strategic planning to be truly effective, it should draw lessons from previous reforms and evaluate why previous plans or reforms have succeeded (or failed).

The prioritisation process omitted factors such as sequencing and trade-off between opportunity areas

These diagnoses led the commissions to identify many opportunity areas for the state of Nuevo León. As Figure 2.3 shows, these opportunity areas were then prioritised according to their degree of feasibility and impact: In the end, 47 opportunity areas were retained.

Figure 2.3 Methodology for prioritising opportunity areas



Source: Adapted from Council of Nuevo León (2016[3]). *Plan Estratégico para el Estado de Nuevo León 2015-2030 [Strategic Plan for the State of Nuevo León 2015-2030],* http://www.nl.gob.mx/publicaciones/plan-estrategico-para-el-estado-de-nuevo-leon-2015-2030

This type of prioritisation is crucial to ensure that the designed plan is realistic and can be implemented (OECD, 2018[2]). In Nuevo León, the general perception from stakeholders is that the Strategic Plan accurately reflects the general priorities of the state from the point of view of civil society, suggesting that the prioritisation exercise led by the commissions and the consultancy firm was effective in identifying most important long-term issues for the state.

However, the methodology did not take into account how the different opportunity areas link to each other, and specifically how some opportunity areas may actually contribute to the achievement of others. Likewise, the methodology does not offer an analysis of potential trade-offs between opportunity areas.

For instance, the "Effective Government and Transparency" commission left aside opportunity areas such as "Access to information" or "Open and Transparent State" to favour much broader objectives such as "Accountability in Public Institutions". Nevertheless, OECD experiences show that both access to information and open and transparent government, like integrity, can be key elements to achieving accountability in public institutions (OECD, 2017[4]).

Similarly, the "Effective Government and Transparency" axis mostly includes opportunity areas related to anti-corruption and control. Including further opportunity areas on the topic of good governance, state modernisation and public spending efficiency may be a way to support the implementation of the Plan. Most other states in Mexico have chosen to select opportunity areas or strategic lines related to these topics (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. Public governance objectives in the states of Jalisco and Guanajuato

The State Development Plan of Jalisco ("Plan Estatal de Desarrollo 2013-2033") mentions that government transparency, accountability and modernisation are some of the state's main objectives. Therefore, the Plan aims at strengthening public management, with particular focuses on topics such as anticorruption, open government, efficient resource allocation, civil service skillset, communication and planning. Opportunity areas include strengthening public access to information, involving civil society organisations and academia in policy-making, reinforcing the role of the monitoring and evaluation institutions, etc.

In the same vein, the State Development Plan of Guanajuato ("Guanajuato 2040") has a strategic line for public governance, which seeks to improve the efficiency and efficacy of the public sector, open government and planning. The state's main challenges for the coming years are to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system in line with the municipalities, to increase citizen participation, to ensure public budgeting efficiency as well as to increase government transparency and accountability.

Source: Adapted from Gobierno de Jalisco (2013[5]), Plan Estatal de Desarollo Jalisco 2013-2033 [Jalisco State Development Plan 2013-2033], https://sepaf.jalisco.gob.mx/sites/sepaf.jalisco.gob.mx/files/ped-2013-2033_0.pdf. Gobierno de Guanajuato (2018[6]) , Plan Estatal de Desarollo Guanajuato 2040 [Guanajuato State Development Plan 2040], https://www.guanajuato.gob.mx/pdf/Gto2040_WEB.pdf

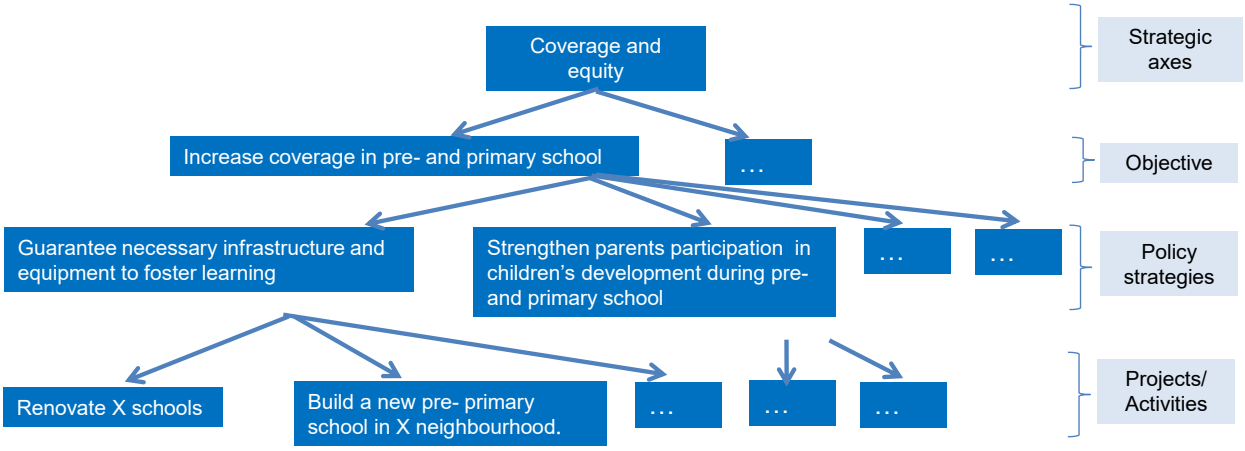
Objective setting did not rely on a clear logic model and some objectives are difficult to measure or to understand

Objective setting is the process by which policy-makers define the level of ambition of change compared to the current state of affairs, in relation to the selected problems to be addressed (OECD, 2018[2]). In the case of the Strategic Plan, the objective setting stage was key to breaking down the vision into aspirations; opportunity areas, strategic lines and initiatives, as well as projects (see also Figure 2.1 for a schematic representation of the Plan's layers).

Objective setting for the Strategic Plan did not consistently rely on a clear logic model (or theory of change see Box 2.2) or even a shared methodology amongst commissions ensuring consistency between the level of objective (outcome or output objective for example) defined for opportunity areas throughout the Plan. It lacks an explicit or consistent framework to define how a downstream layer, for example a strategic line, can influence an upstream layer, for example, an opportunity area across the various commissions. As a result, the Plan does not demonstrate how the state government should and can mobilise its resources in order to reach the intended policy results – making buy-in for the Plan more difficult.

A more consistent framework would entail some coherent links for how inputs and processes can be geared towards outputs and achieving outcomes, along the policy value chain, as is demonstrated in Figure 2.4. Reliable data is also required to inform the setting of objectives, targets and eventually performance indicators.

Figure 2.4. Moving from objectives to impact



Source: adapted from (Schumann, 2016[7])

This lack of a consistent framework and reliable data affects the adaptability of the Plan in the face of changing political, economic and social circumstances. Indeed, having a clear understanding of the conditions for change would allow decision-makers to make corrections if the selected approach is not working or if anticipated risks materialise (see Box 2.2).

Box 2.2. Theory of change

Theory of change is a method to trace the way in which an intervention (understood as plan, programme, project, etc.) or set of interventions is going to lead to specific changes, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. Developing a theory of change method helps identify effective solutions to the factors hindering the progress of the intervention and direct the decision maker on what approach to take, after analysing the resources in hand and the current and future context where the intervention is developed. Moreover, it also helps identify the underlying assumptions and risks that will be vital to understand and revisit throughout the process to ensure the approach will contribute to the desired change.

Using theory of change can be instrumental in a scenario where multiple interactions between many factors create complex challenges. It is the case for example, when governments embark on a structural reform of the executive in order to improve efficiency in the provision of public services. Although the design of the reform is well suited, elements such as political priorities, budgeting constraints and institutional culture come into play and the reform may not lead to the expected results. A theory of change can help a government systematically think through the many underlying and root causes of

the challenges, and how they influence each other, when determining what should be addressed as a priority.

Additionally, a theory of change provides a framework for learning both within and between cycles of the intervention. By structuring the causes of the challenges, proposing a strategy to reach the expected results supported by concrete assumptions, and testing these assumptions against evidence, theory of change promotes a solid logic for achieving change. This allows the decision maker to make corrections if the selected approach is not working or if anticipated risks materialise.

Finally, theory of change promotes agreement among stakeholders by having a participatory approach on the planning process where their insights explicitly contribute to long-term impact.

Source: Adapted from United Nations Development Group – UNDG (2017[8]), Theory of Change: UNDAF Companion Guidance. https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-7-Theory-of-Change.pdf

The objectives should be formulated in simple language, avoid the use of abbreviations, professional jargon and long and complex sentences (OECD, 2018[2]), if they are to be clearly understood by stakeholders and the public. In order to ensure that objectives set out a realistic and clear pathway for policy reform, the suitability of objectives can be tested against the so-called SMART model, explained in detail in Box 2.3.

In the case of the Strategic Plan, opportunity areas do not consistently hold up to this framework. Opportunity areas such as "Promote the prevention of high frequency crime" do not appear to be concrete concerning the intentional impacts for society, as the concept to "Promote" is not necessarily linked with better outcomes. Another example are the areas of opportunity of the Effective Governance and Transparency Commission. Under their current format, opportunity areas such as "Vulnerable procedures, services and operations" or "*Canales de detección*" are neither measurable nor action-oriented. Moreover, the Human Development's priority opportunity area "Prevent family and community violence" would benefit from being more specific and containing measurable goals.

Box 2.3. The SMART model

Objectives should be:

- **S**pecific: an objective must be concrete, describing the result to be achieved, and focused, contributing to the solution of the problem;
- **M**easurable: an objective should be expressed numerically and quantitatively in relation to a specific benchmark, and should allow the progress of implementation to be tracked;
- **A**ction-oriented/ Attainable/ Achievable: an objective should motivate action, and it should state what is to be improved, increased, strengthened, etc., but it should also be reachable;
- **R**ealistic: an objective should be realistic in terms of time and available resources;
- **T**ime-bound: the achievement of the objective should be specified in terms of a time-period.

In many cases it is the associated indicators with their baselines and targets that make an objective measurable and time-bound. However, it is important to keep this model in mind in order to set simple, clear and easy-to-read objectives.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2018[2]), "Toolkit for the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of public administration reform and sector strategies: Guidance for SIGMA partners", SIGMA Papers, No. 57, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Simplifying the Plan's structure

This section takes a closer look at the internal structure of the Strategic Plan by looking at the major elements comprising the layers (i.e., vision, aspirations, prioritised opportunity areas, strategic lines and initiatives, strategic projects) of the strategy. During the first fact-finding mission, the vast majority of interviewed stakeholders described the Plan as too complex.

The Plan has been broken down into too many layers

Practice-based evidence suggests that the Strategic Plan has too many layers. The Strategic Plan has five main layers that break down the vision and aspirations (which are intentions more than objectives), into prioritised opportunity areas, strategic lines, strategic initiatives and strategic projects (see figure 3.3). International good practice recommends that each layer of a development plan should correspond to a level of the policy value chain (see Figure 2.5) (Máttar and Cuervo, 2017[9]). It also suggests that long term strategic planning should be focused on impacts and long-term outcome objectives (Schumann, 2016[7]) along the policy value chain. Figure 2.5 offers a schematic representation of the policy value chain.

Figure 2.5. Policy value chain



Source: Authors

In the case of Nuevo León, this would suggest that prioritised opportunity areas are meant to be long-term outcome/impact level objectives, while strategic lines, initiatives and projects should be respectively output, process and input level objectives. Nevertheless, the Strategic Plan of Nuevo León does not rest on a clear logical framework, as seen in section 3.1. Therefore, it is difficult to identify all opportunity areas to outcome level objectives, or strategic lines to output level objectives.

Fewer layers, and therefore greater clarity, would allow the Plan to be more readily understood and used by the public. This also enables greater adaptability in development planning as inputs and outputs may change depending on fiscal, economic, political and social circumstances, while policy impacts remain more stable in the longer-term. In that sense, the Strategic Plan would benefit from being refocused on the long-term impact/outcome levels, as is common practice in long-term strategic planning. As a result, the Strategic Plan should only retain one of its layers, specifically the priority opportunity areas, which would correspond to long-term outcome level objectives. Output-level objectives, process and inputs, should be reserved for the State Development Plan and, until the achievement of this alignment between both plans, to the action plan (see section 4.3 on the latter).

Opportunity areas have been insufficiently prioritised

The current Strategic Plan for Nuevo León contains prioritised opportunity areas and projects that go beyond the state's financial capacities, which reduces its credibility and effectiveness as a tool for policy implementation. Good international practices suggest that there should only be a limited number of objectives in order to focus and mobilise resources for their achievement. Conversely, too many objectives will scatter scarce resources and lead to unfocused delivery of policies and reforms (OECD, 2018[2]).

Yet, the Strategic Plan is organised into 11 thematic areas (each one associated with a sub-commission or commission of the council) with 47 opportunity areas, divided into 101 strategic lines and accompanied by 45 projects. The Plan also has eight transversal central themes. A gap analysis shows that at least five opportunity areas of the Strategic Plan remain completely unlinked to objectives of the State Development

Plan (see Annex 2.B), suggesting that these opportunity areas have not been costed in the budget of the state administration. This plethora of objectives can reduce the policy impact of the Plan.

As underlined by several key stakeholders during the first OECD fact-finding mission, greater prioritisation will be crucial in rendering the Plan more realistic in light of the state's limited fiscal and budgetary margins of manoeuvre (Council of Nuevo León, 2017[10]). Prioritisation is necessary to ensuring that the strategy is realistic and can be implemented with the state's existing resources. It will therefore be important that the plan be thoroughly examined by the Public Finance Commission to ensure credible pathways for implementation in the future, so that resources can be clearly identified.

The coherence between thematic areas can be improved

A closer look at the Plan shows that there are important disparities in the number of prioritised opportunity areas attributed to each commission. For instance, the Human Development Commission monitors 53% (28 of the 47) of the prioritised opportunity areas (for the sub-commissions on Education, Social Development, Health, Art and Culture, Sports, Citizenship, and Citizen's participation), whilst the commission on Security and Justice is in charge of 9% (5 prioritised opportunity areas).

Because each commission is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the opportunity areas that fall under its thematic area, having important disparities in the number and type of prioritised opportunity areas monitored by each commission has made their work more difficult. In particular, the Human Development Commission monitors a large number of prioritised opportunity areas through its sub-commissions, potentially hindering greater internal coordination and homogeneity in the work of the commissions.

The number of layers varies between thematic areas, with some commissions, such as the economic development commission who chose to forgo the strategic lines (only retaining prioritised opportunity areas and strategic initiatives). Moreover, the prioritisation criteria of the opportunity areas might not be clear for all the commissions or sub-commissions. In fact, some commissions developed strategic lines and initiatives for opportunity areas that were not a priority according to the feasibility/impact matrix. This is the case for the sub-commission on Health with the opportunity areas "*Acceso y atención inmediata en caso de infarto de miocardio*" and "*Detección temprana y atención inmediata de diabetes, hipertensión y depresión*". This scenario is also found in the sub-commission on Sport and the commission on Economic Development. This creates confusion about the exact number of priority opportunity areas in each commission and for the Plan over all, when the priority opportunity areas are meant to be the cornerstones of the Strategic Plan.

Given the importance of communicating objectives and priorities in order to ensure political support for the reform, the lack of standardisation between thematic areas may lead to diminished legibility within and outside the administration. The lack of clarity around the priority opportunity areas may also affect the buy-in for the Plan.

Planning coherence: aligning policy priorities and identifying pathways for their implementation

Despite the fact that Mexico is a federal country, policy and budgetary decisions remain highly centralised. Most policies are designed at the national level and are implemented at the state or local level (OECD, 2017[11]). Therefore, strategic planning at the state level needs to involve both horizontal (cross-government/inter-ministerial/inter-agency) and vertical (within government/a ministry/a sectoral policy issue) approaches to better allow the political and administrative levels to identify priority objectives, and allocate resources and decision-making authorities accordingly (OECD, 2012[12]).

Formal instruments for co-operation between the federal government and the state governments include the National Development Plan 2019-2024 NDP), which is intended to prioritise and promote policy alignment across levels of government. Each State Development Plan must be designed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the NDP. The NDP also includes inputs from the different federal departments and agencies as well as those of the state governments and civil society (OECD, 2017[11]).

The current administration of Nuevo León devised a State Development Plan (SDP) upon entering into office, as required by Mexican legislation. To do so, the state created the 2016 Strategic Planning Law, which is the legal framework for planning in the state. According to article 16 of the Strategic Planning law, the SDP identifies medium-term priorities for state development, as well as guidance in results-based management and results-based budgeting. It also defines its strategic projects and priority programs, consistently with the Strategic Plan.

Other planning instruments include guidelines and calls for actions like the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, adopted in 2015. Although the 2030 Agenda is not binding, countries are expected to take action, involving the regional and local levels of government, civil society and the business sector. Bearing in mind this commitment, the government of Mexico has aligned the five strategic axes of the National Development Plan 2013-2018 with the SDGs. States also have to promote such alignment, hence both the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan of Nuevo León should contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

A first look at the structure of the Strategic Plan of Nuevo León shows that it seeks to address the same major policy areas as the SDGs, the National Development Plan 2013-2018 and the State Development Plan 2016-2021 (see Figure 4.1), suggesting that the council's intention was to ensure alignment, or at the very least coherence, between these instruments.

While there is some broad coherence at a higher level, the challenge is the lack of articulation from a methodological and practical perspective, in particular with the State Development Plan and the budget.

Figure 2.6. Thematic alignment between the SDGs, the National Development Plan, the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan of Nuevo Léon.



Note: the council of Nuevo Léon created a finance commission post-2016, which is not shown in this figure.
Source: Adapted from state of Nuevo Léon (2018[13]), *Guía Metodológica para la formulación del Plan Estatal de Desarrollo 2016-2021 [Methodological guide for the formulation of the State Development Plan 2016-2021]*

There are some inconsistencies in aligning the methodological framework of the Strategic Plan with the SDGs

The council of Nuevo León was mandated to oversee the implementation of the SDGs (Nuevo León Council, 2017[14]). The fact that the timeline of the Strategic Plan (2015-2030) is aligned to that of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development shows the commitment of the council and the state of Nuevo León to pursue this international agenda of social inclusion, poverty reduction, gender equality, environmental sustainability and just and peaceful societies. In fact, 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are reflected in their substance in one or several opportunity areas of the Plan (see Table 2.1 for an example of this alignment and Annex A for a more detailed analysis of the alignment between the SDGs and the SP).

Table 2.1. Alignment of the SDGs with the Strategic Plan (selected)

SDG Goals (Agenda 2030)	Priority opportunity areas of the Strategic Plan (2015-2030)
GOAL 1: No Poverty	10. Eradicate extreme poverty with special emphasis on food security.
	11. Reduce urban poverty.
GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being .	6. Education and early detection to prevent overweight, obesity and diabetes.
	7. Ensure coverage and effective access of the population for priority health conditions
	8. Guarantee quality through an independent health commission that monitors standardized indicators and a professionalized health management.
	9. Early detection and immediate attention for breast cancer and pelvic-uterine cancer.
	20. Foster physical activity in schools.

GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	N/A

Note: The table does not aim to be exhaustive, see Annex A for a thorough analysis of the coherence between the SP and the SDP.
Source: Authors

However, the OECD has found that there is no clear methodological framework to link the Strategic Plan with the SDGs (OECD, 2018[2]). For instance, some SDGs are reflected in a single opportunity area, while others are reflected in several or none at all. This lack of systematic linkage, both in terms of substance (as three SDGs are not reflected in the Plan) and language (the opportunity areas do not use the same key words as the SDGs) will make monitoring the progress of the SDGs in Nuevo León, and how the Strategic Plan contributes to the process, difficult. Moreover, the lack of a clear methodological framework is somewhat reflected in the institutional arrangements, as the exact manner in which each commission is to oversee the implementation of the SDGs relevant for their theme of work is yet to be determined.

There is no clear methodological framework for articulating the elements of the Strategic Plan with the elements of the State Development Plan (SDP)

Strategic planning in the state of Nuevo León rests on a nested hierarchy across levels of government, as the Federal Planning Law of 5 January 1983 suggests that the state's plans be aligned with the National Development Plan (2013-2018), while the state planning law dictates that the Strategic Plan (2015-2030) and the State Development Plan (2016-2021) be aligned to one another[1]

In spite of these legal provisions, there is no clear methodological framework to articulate the elements of the Strategic Plan with the elements of the State Development Plan (SDP), as can be seen in Table 2.2. While many of the opportunity areas of the Strategic Plan resonate with the objectives or lines of action of the Development Plan, their alignment is not systematic. Firstly, links between the two Plans do not follow a consistent pattern (for example, the substance and language of prioritised opportunity areas – SP – and objectives – SDP – being coherent). Instead, a detailed analysis of both Plans shows that opportunity areas sometimes find resonance in objectives, strategies or lines of actions indifferently. Conversely, five opportunity areas[2] do not find any resonance in the State Development Plan.

Table 2.2. Examples of the current coherence between the Strategic Plan and State Development Plan

Opportunity areas of the Strategic Plan	State Development Plan
Human Development Commission	Human and Social Development chapter
Prioritised opportunity area 1. Increase coverage in early childhood and preschool education	Objective 6. Achieve total coverage in education.
Prioritised opportunity area 2. Increase coverage and graduation efficiency rate in upper secondary education	Objective 6. Achieve total coverage in education.
Prioritised opportunity area 3. Ensuring mastery of basic education skills	Objective 7. Raise educational quality in the state. Objective 8. Achieve full satisfaction in school life.

Note: The table does not aim to be exhaustive, see Annex B for a thorough analysis of the coherence between the SP and the SDP.
Source: Authors

Furthermore, the timeline given to opportunity areas and objectives may even be seen as contradictory in some cases. For instance, as it can be observed in Table 2.3, objective 6 of the Human and Social Development theme of the SDP requires the state of Nuevo León to achieve total coverage in education by 2021 ("*Alcanzar la cobertura total en materia de educación*"), while a prioritised opportunity area of the Strategic Plan only aims to increase coverage in elementary and pre-schools by 2030 ("*Incrementar la cobertura en educación inicial y preescolar*").

In order to increase the coherence between the long-term Strategic Plan and the medium-term State Development Plan, Nuevo León could consider aligning the two plans in one single point or layer. For instance, the SDP's objectives could be explicitly aligned to the SP's prioritised opportunity areas or even fully harmonised, when relevant, as can be seen for example in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3. Example of coherence between the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan

Opportunity areas of the Strategic Plan	State Development Plan
Human Development Commission	Human and Social Development chapter
Increase total coverage in education (ex-prioritised opportunity areas 1 and 2)	Objective 6. Achieve total coverage in education
Strengthen the scope and coordination of the third sector (CSOs, foundations and governmental actions).	Not relevant
Raise educational quality in the state	Raise educational quality in the state

Source: Authors

This practice can be seen clearly in other Mexican states. In Guanajuato, for example, strategic planning involves both horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms to align the timelines and objectives of all planning instruments, from the national level (with the National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goal), to the state level (with the State Development Plan and the State Government Program), as is explored in Box 2.4. In order to make this alignment possible, Nuevo León could consider adopting methodological guidelines for the preparation of the next State Development Plan for 2022-2027, that require a clear theory of change to align the SDP's objectives and indicators, to that of the Strategic Plan. Until the renewal of the State Development Plan, however, Nuevo León could consider relying on action plans to establish this link, as further explained in the following section.

Box 2.4. Alignment between different state programmes in Guanajuato

In Guanajuato, the State Government Programme ("PG 2018-2024") is an important strategic tool guiding the executive's actions. This document also aims at aligning the state's development strategy with other national and international planning instruments, such as the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

For instance, all the 17 SDGs correspond to one or several objectives of the PG 2018-2024. In order to facilitate coordination with the federal government, the PG 2018-2024's structure is also consistent with Mexico's National Development Plan. Finally, the Program's objectives are aligned with those in the State Development Plan "Guanajuato 2040" which is another major planning instrument aimed at promoting the long-term development of the state. The two planning instruments have similar strategic areas and objectives. For instance, one of the SDP's long-term objectives is to fight poverty while the government programme has three related midterm objectives: improve poor families' situations, increase food safety and strengthen social links.

Therefore, strategic planning in Guanajuato involves both horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms by aligning the timelines and objectives of the different planning instruments. Such coherence can help the state executive to ensure that spending and implementation efforts are focused on well-defined policy objectives with greater impact.

Source: Adapted from Estado de Guanajuato (2019[15]), Programa de Gobierno 2018-2024 [State Government Program 2018-2024], https://guanajuato.gob.mx/PDGv23.pdf.

The Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan can be articulated with an action plan

Although breaking the Strategic Plan's opportunity areas into strategic lines and initiatives suggests that the council has identified actions to implement their long-term goals, neither strategic lines nor initiatives are directly linked to the use of inputs (human, financial or material resources) with clear responsibility for their implementation. Moreover, there is no clear methodology for designing strategic projects, priority programmes or assessing their progress. As such, the Strategic Plan does not contain a clear action plan for its implementation as is consistent with long-term strategic planning.

International good practice recommends that an action plan be prepared together with the development of any strategy, in order to clarify and identify the inputs and processes that will be used for its implementation (OECD, 2018[2]). In fact, the Strategic Plan itself (chapter 5 "Implementation and monitoring") suggests that, in order to be implemented, the Plan should be associated with a detailed action plan clarifying deliverables, deadlines, resources and lines of responsibility; an action plan is a means to achieve change.

The development of such an action plan, which is crucial to assessing the feasibility of a Plan, could potentially be the responsibility of the state public administration, as is usually the practice in OECD countries. As such, the action plan would be a list of activities and measures, linked to the use of inputs (human, financial or material resources), that will be mobilised to produce certain outputs (OECD, 2018[2]). This implies that the action plan does not need to propose new actions, but rather explain how, and by when, government activity and resources will achieve the output objectives of the State Development Plan and how they will ultimately contribute to the achievement of the Strategic Plan.

As such, the action plan would serve to detail the implementation pathways for the overlapping objectives/priority opportunities areas of the SDP and the SP. This would facilitate the monitoring of these pathways by the state public administration and their evaluation by the council. Therefore, it would be useful for the council to consider evaluating the implementation of the action plan, in order to collect evidence on how the government is endeavouring to mobilise resources in pursuit of the Strategic Plan's objectives.

Furthermore, as an action plan can easily be updated, it would enhance the adaptability of the Strategic Plan to political and economic developments. This would therefore address another concern raised by several stakeholders, namely that the implementation of the Plan's long-term goals has been impacted by short-term political circumstances (budgetary restrictions, changes in the political agenda).

Put differently, devising an action plan – in conjunction with the alignment of the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan – would allow Nuevo León to ensure that its actions and priorities across the different analysis and time horizons are harmonious (see Table 2.4). In particular, the action plan, would enable short-term decision-making in Nuevo León (for e.g. executive actions) to reflect the priorities of its long and medium-term planning instruments.

Table 2.4. Analysis horizons: strategic and decision-making needs by planning timeframe

Analytical needs	Characteristics	Requirements	Examples
Foresight (long term: > 10 years)	Anticipation of, and preparation for, both foreseeable and disruptive/discontinuous trends, including future costs in today's decisions	Continuous scanning and consultation; pattern recognition; analysis of "weak signals"; future studies; consensual views	Future reporting (e.g. on climate change); horizon scanning; long-term budget estimates; scenario planning
Strategic planning (medium term: 3-10 years)	Anticipation of, and preparation for, foreseeable trends; prioritisation; including	Analysis of historical and trend data; comparable information and analysis across government;	Government Programme; medium-term budget frameworks; workforce planning; spatial and

Analytical needs	Characteristics	Requirements	Examples
	future costs in today's decisions; risk management	consultation on values and choices	capital investment planning; innovation strategies
Decision making (short term: 1-2 years)	Responsiveness; rapidity; accountability; ability to determine at what level decisions need to be taken	Quick access to relevant information and analysis; capacity for reallocation; overview of stakeholder preferences	Executive action; annual and mid-term budgets; crisis response

Source: Adapted from (OECD, 2010[16]), Finland: Working Together to Sustain Success, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264086081-en.

The articulation of the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan with an action plan can support a coherent whole-of-government framework to manage strategic planning and development priorities in Nuevo León. In this regard, OECD country experiences are quite instructive. For example, as detailed in Box 2.5, Poland's national development management framework is a good case study for eliminating redundancies and ensuring coherence between instruments across the different analysis horizons.

Box 2.5. Poland's strategic whole-of-government development management framework

The Act on Development Policy (2006) was the first step in the evolution of Poland's development management framework. This legislation not only established an institution to define and co-ordinate the country's development policy, but also used a series of interconnected action plans to deliver sustained and balanced national development, as well as to ensure regional socio-economic cohesion.

This legislation – and the entire development management framework – was informed by a stocktaking exercise of Poland's development strategies and programmes between 1989 and 2006. The government determined that over this period, the country's Council of Ministers had adopted no less than 406 national strategies (with varying scopes and degrees of implementation), of which only 120 strategies remained relevant. Thus, in 2009, the country passed the Development Strategy Rearrangement Plan, which reduced and rearranged the number of binding strategies. All strategic initiatives developed since 2010 adhere to this new system.

Currently, Poland's long-term development strategy and vision is detailed in "Poland 2030: The Third Wave of Modernity – A Long-Term National Development Strategy". The implementation of this long-term vision is guided by its medium-term strategic framework (Medium-Term National Development Strategy 2020), which outlines nine integrated strategies and the corresponding actions and activities.

Poland's experience in managing its development and strategic planning showcases how shifting from a limited sector-based approach to strategy-setting to an integrated approach can help harness synergies and optimise public policies.

Source: Source: Adapted from OECD (2016[17]), OECD Public Governance Reviews: Peru Integrated Governance for Inclusive Growth, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264265172-en.

A clear need to link strategic planning with budgeting

In addition to the aforementioned planning instruments, the state budget is a vital consideration for identifying pathways for implementation, as well as ensuring policy coherence. First, since the

implementation of a strategy relies on the proper calculation of the required resources, as well as appropriate budgeting and allocation of such resources, the strategic objectives should be well-reflected in annual and medium-term budgeting documents (Vági and Rimkute, 2018[18]). Second, as per OECD recommendations, budgeting processes ought to be governed by principles like performance-based budgeting. Integrating these principles with strategic planning instruments (and their initiatives) is crucial for the mainstreaming of these practices, and thus, ensuring policy coherence across government.

The 2015 OECD Recommendation on Budgetary Governance (see Box 2.6) indicates that budgets should be closely aligned with the medium-term strategic priorities of government. Structuring and organising budget allocations with medium-term considerations in mind ensures that the budget extends beyond the traditional annual cycle (OECD, 2018[19]). Thus, effective medium-term budgeting helps create clearer links between budgets, plans and policies, and is a vital part of reducing uncertainty for policy-making (OECD, 2018[19]). Notably, medium-term budgeting can promote the following:

- greater assurance to policy planners about multi-year availability of resources
- identification of appropriate medium-term goals against which resources should be aligned (OECD, 2018[19]).

Box 2.6. Principle 2 of the OECD Recommendation on Budgetary Governance

Closely align budgets with the medium-term strategic priorities of government, through:

- Developing a stronger medium-term dimension in the budgeting process, beyond the traditional annual cycle
- Organising and structuring the budget allocations in a way that corresponds readily with national objectives
- Recognising the potential usefulness of a medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) in setting a basis for the annual budget, in an effective manner which:
  - has real force in setting boundaries for the main categories of expenditure for each year of the medium-term horizon
  - is fully aligned with the top-down budgetary constraints agreed by government
  - is grounded upon realistic forecasts for baseline expenditure (i.e. using existing policies), including a clear outline of key assumptions used
  - shows the correspondence with expenditure objectives and deliverables from national strategic plans
  - includes sufficient institutional incentives and flexibility to ensure that expenditure boundaries are respected
- Nurturing a close working relationship between the Central Budget Authority (CBA) and the other institutions at the centre of government (e.g. prime minister's office, cabinet office or planning ministry), given the inter-dependencies between the budget process and the achievement of government-wide policies
- Considering how to devise and implement regular processes for reviewing existing expenditure policies, including tax expenditures, in a manner that facilitates the alignment of budgetary expectations with government-wide developments.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2015[20]), Principles of Budgetary Governance.

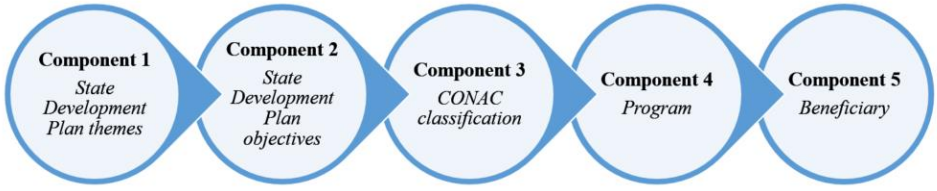
In Nuevo León, public expenditure is governed by the Expenditures Law for the State of Nuevo León (*Ley de Egresos del Estado de Nuevo León*). This legal document aims to regulate the allocation, execution, control and evaluation of public spending on an annual basis (OECD, 2018[21]). The 2020 Expenditures Law was signed into effect on December 20, 2019. Furthermore, the Law for the Financial Management of the State of Nuevo León (*Ley de Administración Financiera para el Estado de Nuevo León*) regulates financial management and financial planning of state and parastatal entities in Nuevo León (OECD, 2018[21]).

The link between government expenditure and strategic planning in Nuevo León is governed by article 3.XIV of the Strategic Planning Law, which dictates that strategic planning shall be based on, among other factors, the link with the expenditure budget so that government expenditure is related to the fulfilment of the Strategic Plan and the State Plan. To do so, article 28 of the regulations of the Strategic Planning Law declares that annual public expenditure should be linked to strategic planning using a programmatic budgetary structure. This necessitates the inclusion of classification categories that explicitly link the instruments of the strategic planning process (understood to be both the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan as per article 15 of the regulations of the Strategic Planning Law) with public resources.

In practice, budgetary programmes follow a classification framework that specifies their relationship to the State Development Plan; this framework does not map each budget programme to a component of the Strategic Plan (see Figure 2.7). Whilst it is often challenging for long-term plans to contain precise budgetary envelopes as they focus on the end of the policy-value chain (OECD, 2018[2]), and while it is not necessarily wrong that in a specific year a long-term objective is not explicitly financed, the conceptual framework linking objectives to the budgetary programmes should be clearer.

Furthermore, article 25 of the regulations of the Strategic Planning Law states that entities of the state public administration must prepare annual operational programmes. These programmes serve as the basis of the preliminary draft of the annual budget for each entity. They contain the activities to be carried out during the year by the state public administration to achieve the objectives of the State Development Plan, as well as sectoral, special programmes (Article 21 of the regulations of the Strategic Planning Law). It is clear, however, that these operational programmes are not currently mapped to the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

Figure 2.7. Classification code components of budgetary programmes



Note: CONAC stands for Consejo Nacional de Armonization Contable
Source: OECD questionnaire I (2019[22]).

Performance budgeting is in its very early stages in Nuevo León

Performance budgeting is defined as “the systematic use of performance information to inform budget decisions, either as a direct input to budget allocation decisions or as contextual information to inform budget planning, and to instil greater transparency and accountability throughout the budget process, by providing information to legislators and the public on the purposes of spending and the results achieved”

(OECD, 2018[23]). This concept is ingrained in the 2015 Recommendation on Budgetary Governance (Principle 8, see Box 2.7), which states that countries should "ensure that performance, evaluation and value for money are integral to the budget process."

Box 2.7. Principle 8 of the OECD Recommendation on Budgetary Governance

Ensure that performance, evaluation and value for money are integral to the budget process, in particular through:

- helping the parliament and citizens to understand not just what is being spent, but what is being bought on behalf of citizens – i.e. what public services are actually being delivered, to what quality standards and with what levels of efficiency;
- routinely presenting performance information in a way which informs, and provides useful context for, the financial allocations in the budget report; noting that such information should clarify, and not obscure or impede, accountability and oversight;
- sing performance information, therefore, which is (i) limited to a small number of relevant indicators for each policy programme or area; (ii) clear and easily understood; (iii) allows for tracking of results against targets and for comparison with international and other benchmarks (iv) makes clear the link with government-wide strategic objectives;
- evaluating and reviewing expenditure programmes (including associated staffing resources as well as tax expenditures) in a manner that is objective, routine and regular, to inform resource allocation and re-prioritisation both within line ministries and across government as a whole;
- ensuring the availability of high-quality (i.e. relevant, consistent, comprehensive and comparable) performance and evaluation information to facilitate an evidence-based review;
- conducting routine and open ex ante evaluations of all substantive new policy proposals to assess coherence with national priorities, clarity of objectives, and anticipated costs and benefits;
- taking stock, periodically, of overall expenditure (including tax expenditure) and reassessing its alignment with fiscal objectives and national priorities, taking into account the evaluation results; noting that for such a comprehensive review to be effective, it must be responsive to the practical needs of government as a whole (see also recommendation 2 above).

Source: Adapted from the OECD (2015[20]), OECD Recommendation on Budgetary Governance, http://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/principles-budgetary-governance.htm.

In Mexico, performance-based budgeting was introduced in 2006, through the Fiscal Responsibility Law, which outlined the gradual implementation of a performance-based budgeting system (*Presupuesto basado en Resultados, PbR),* aimed at defining, for each budgetary programme, clear objectives to be achieved. In 2007, this system was also complemented by a system of monitoring and evaluation of the social impact of programmes (*Sistema de Evalución del Desempeño,* SED*).* The federal performance-based budgeting system was also extended to the state level in 2008. See Box 2.8 for more information on the performance-based budgeting system in Mexico.

In Nuevo León, performance-based budgeting is reflected in several normative instruments. Specifically, the executive branch of the state of Nuevo León issued the *General Guidelines for the Consolidation of*

Results-Based Budget and the Performance Evaluation System in 2017. The intent of these guidelines is to institutionalise a results-based budgeting system with tools such as performance indicators linked to budgetary programmes, logical framework methodology to organise objectives in a causal way, etc.

The concept of performance-based budgeting is reflected in the strategic planning instruments of Nuevo León, notably the State Development Plan. To that end, article 16 of the Strategic Planning Law defines the State Development Plan as not only a medium-term planning instrument, but also a source of guidance on results-based management and results-based budgeting. The State Development Plan is also cited in the *General Guidelines for the Consolidation of Results-Based Budget and the Performance Evaluation System*. In fact, the preamble of the guidelines recalls theme 2 of the State Development Plan, Effective and Efficient Government, which notes the need to implement innovative mechanisms to ensure that services are provided with high quality standards, in the shortest time and with the least amount of resources possible.

Box 2.8. Result-based budgeting in Mexico

Result-based budgeting (RBB) attempts to link allocations to the achievement of specific results, such as outputs and outcomes of government services. In Mexico, the 2007 fiscal reform helped the government transition from an input-driven budget model to a result-based budget model. The law also stressed the need to develop a Performance Evaluation System (SED), defined as a set of methodological elements that allow an objective evaluation of programs performance. The main coordinating actors of this RBB system include the CONEVAL and the Secretary of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP).

Several elements contribute to the implementation of a RBB process in Mexico. Firstly, budget programmes are linked to the achievement of the National Development Plan and the sectoral plans objectives. This is to ensure that public spending identifies the contribution to national priorities. The structure of the Plan and Results-based Budget policies have also facilitated the identification of the strategies that drive the achievement of the SDGs, both at the level of sectoral and budgetary programs (OECD, 2018[56]).

Moreover, the federal government has an online Budget Transparency Portal which presents performance information in a way that can easily be interpreted by users. It also provides several open datasets that can be used by analysts and researchers. This contributes to greater transparency in the execution of public programmes.

However, the articulation of performance results and actual budgeting remains an area of improvement. Indeed, performance information is mostly used as a tool for performance management and accountability, rather than as a tool for resource allocation. The 2019 OECD report on Budgeting and Public Expenditures highlights that “not having a formal mechanism to consider evaluation findings in the resource allocation process is a key limitation for using evaluation evidence in the budget process” (OECD, 2019[57]).

Source: Adapted from OECD (2018[23]), OECD Best practices for performance budgeting, https://one.oecd.org/document/GOV/PGC/SBO(2018)7/en/pdf ; OECD (2019[24]), Budgeting and Public Expenditures in OECD countries 2019 https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/budgeting-and-public-expenditures-in-oecd-countries-2018_9789264307957-en ; Government of Mexico, www.transparenciapresupuestaria.gob.mx/.

Furthermore, the Strategic Planning Law also alludes to a performance budgeting approach in the evaluation of the State Development Plan and the Strategic Plan. In particular, the Law mandates that an annual report be sent to the state congress that assesses the relationship between public expenditure and the impact on economic and social development indicators pertaining to the objectives of both the State Development and the Strategic Plan (Article 26).

However, in practice, implementing performance-based budgeting to produce evidence on how the state's funds contribute to achieving policy goals set out in the Strategic Plan (as well as the State Development Plan) is currently infeasible. In addition to the absence of classification codes connecting budgetary programmes with the objectives of the Strategic Plan, the performance indicators used in the *General Guidelines for the Consolidation of Results-Based Budget and the Performance Evaluation System* are not necessarily the same as the indicators identified in the State Development Plan and the Strategic Plan. In fact, the latest 2020 comparative data on Mexican states shows that Nuevo León went from being below to above the national average in the implementation of a performance-based budgeting system[3]

The implementation of the Strategic Plan is also constrained by historic fiscal limitations of subnational governments

Linking the budget to strategic planning may also be hindered by the limited budgetary autonomy of subnational governments (SNG). According to OECD literature, this limited autonomy can be explained by three main factors. Firstly, subnational governments have a smaller revenue base and a high reliance on transfers from central governments; this is compounded by the fact that SNGs have less autonomy in changing tax rates or tax bases. Secondly, a substantial share of SNG expenditure is mandatory under federal regulations. Finally, SNGs are constrained by more stringent fiscal rules; they have less flexibility in using debt to adjust their budgets. As such, any decrease in their revenue base is followed by a decrease in expenditure (OECD, 2015[25]).

Whilst it is often challenging for long-term plans to contain precise budgetary envelopes as they focus on the end of the policy-value chain (Máttar and Cuervo, 2017[9]), and while it is not necessarily wrong that in a specific year a long-term objective is not explicitly financed, the conceptual framework linking objectives to the budgetary programmes should be clearer. In the case of the Strategic Plan, prioritised opportunity areas / strategic objectives can be clearly linked to the budget through the State Development Plan), when relevant.

Recommendations

This assessment of the Strategic Plan methodology has led to the following recommendations, which are offered for consideration by the government authorities and the council, who are invited to:

- Simplify the Strategic Plan in order to recentre it around impact and outcome level objectives.
  - Remove strategic lines, initiatives and strategic projects from the Plan. In order to simplify the plan and recentre it around impact/outcome level objectives, keep only priority opportunity areas, their targets (including medium-term milestones when relevant, and systematic long-term targets) and indicators. For each thematic area, these elements should follow the diagnosis and prioritisation exercises set out by each commission.
  - Conversely, consider including some of the elements previously mentioned in the Strategic Plan (strategic lines, initiatives and projects) in the action plan, if relevant (see section 4.3 for further discussion on the action plan).
  - Review prioritised opportunity areas so that they consistently correspond to long-term outcome/impact level objectives. Consider also using the SMART model in undertaking this exercise.

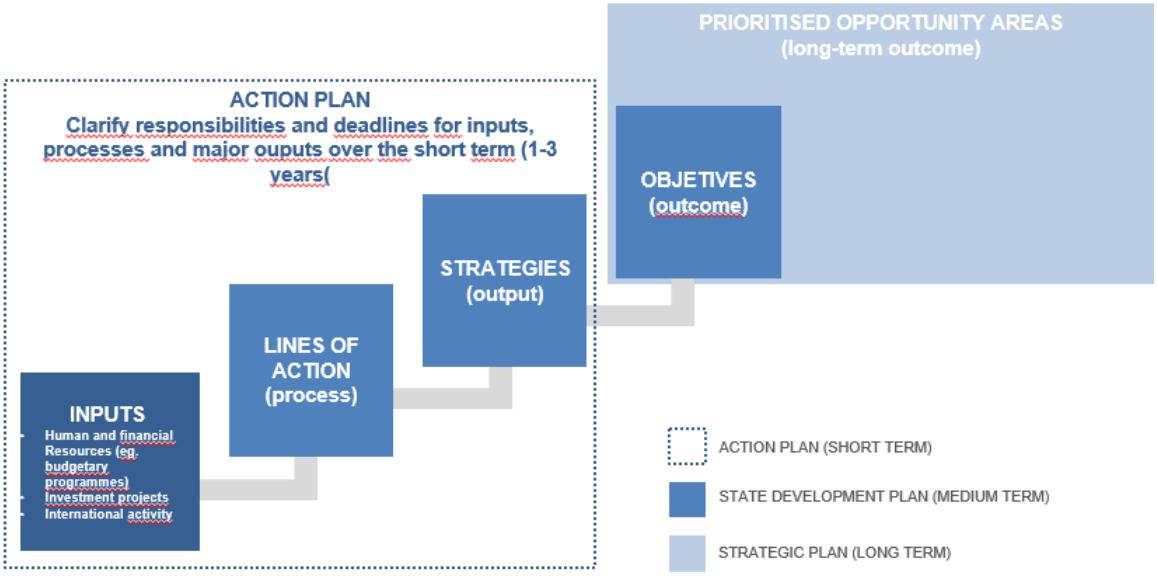
- Strengthen the problem analysis/diagnosis phase: integrate in each commission's diagnosis phase the conclusions of a systematic review of the evaluation of previous plans and/or key policies in the relevant thematic, and consider a more strategic use of reliable data for objective/target setting.
- Reduce the number of priority opportunity areas in the Plan: This would help ensure greater harmonisation of the number and nature of prioritised opportunity areas assigned to each commission of the council and attribute a range of priority opportunity areas to each commission (e.g. no more than three), if the government and the council consider splitting the Human Development Commission (HDC) into three commissions. To this end, Nuevo León can consider:
  - Complementing the existing prioritisation methodology (impact and feasibility) with an analysis and comparison of the opportunity areas under a logic model and/or theory of change, in order to explore existing sequencing and trade-off among them. This idea will be further explored in the following section on the structure of the Plan (section 3.2). This prioritisation process should also be based on the revised diagnosis, as well as the results of the latest citizen consultation process. This prioritisation exercise could also be developed with the support of the Finance Commission of the council, the Executive Office of the Governor, and possibly the Investments Unit of the Government to ensure credible pathways for implementation in the future, so that resources can be clearly identified.
  - Prioritising only the opportunity areas that can be measured by an indicator (see section 5).
  - Identifying other priority opportunity areas on the topic of good and effective governance in order to improve the performance of the council and the public administration.
- Clearly communicate, in the Plan itself, the reasons behind the selection of the priority opportunity areas in order to ensure support within and outside the administration. This could include relabelling the "Priority Opportunity Areas" as "Strategic Objectives".
- Clarify the priority opportunity areas under each commission, for instance by including, at the end of the Plan, a table summarising the priority opportunity areas monitored by each commission.

The following four recommendations are put forward to increase the coherence of planning, aligning, policy priorities and identifying pathways for their implementation

- Clarify and communicate the coherence between the Strategic Plan and the SDGs. Possibly consider communicating, near the vision statement, that the goal of the Plan is to translate the forward-looking vision of the Sustainable Development Goals into the specific circumstances of the state of Nuevo León. It would be possible to clarify the ways in which the Strategic Plan contributes to the SDGs by:
  - including a table demonstrating the alignment of the Plan's opportunity areas with the SDGs targets
  - ensuring that the prioritised opportunity areas refer to SDGs at least once, as recommended by the Presidency.[4]
- Clarify the responsibilities of the commissions in regard to overseeing the implementation of the SDGs. The council could consider systematically including a section on how the opportunity areas have contributed to the achievement of the SDGs at a local level, in the evaluation reports for each thematic area.
- Clarify the ways in which the State Development Plan contributes to pursuing the goals of the longer term Strategic Plan. There is a possibility for greater alignment, or even harmonisation, of some of the opportunity areas (Strategic Plan) with the objectives (State Development Plan). In this scenario, the State Development Plan would focus on medium-term outcome level objectives and below (objectives), while the Strategic Plan is focused on longer-term outcome level objectives (prioritised opportunity areas).

- The manual for the elaboration of the SDP should contain a methodology to relate the medium term objectives of the SDP with the long-term objectives of the Strategic Plan. Nuevo León could consider using a theory of change to make this link explicit.
- This would benefit from rephrasing both priority opportunity areas and objectives to fit a SMART framework.
- For each linked/ harmonised prioritised opportunity area and objective, it would be good to set a long-term (2030) target and a medium term (2021) target (or milestone). Figure 2.8 highlights how the objectives and indicators of the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan could be linked. In the end, Nuevo León would follow the example of many other Latin American and Caribbean countries, as of the 20 long-term plans present in the region, more than half were articulated through medium-term plans, as shown by CEPAL (Máttar and Cuervo, 2017[9]).

Figure 2.8. Proposed alignment between the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan



Source: Authors based on government of Nuevo León input

- Until a new State Development Plan can be developed, create an action plan for each opportunity area of the Strategic Plan, taking into consideration the objectives, strategies and lines of action of the State Development Plan.

The state of Nuevo León could therefore consider developing an action plan at the same time as it revises its Strategic Plan, in order to assess the feasibility of prioritised opportunity areas in light of existing and foreseen resources and available tools. The action plan should be cohesive with the Strategic Plan (which focuses on long-term outcomes), as well as the State Development Plan (which focuses on medium-term outcomes and outputs).

- The action plan could serve to clarify how the government's existing budgetary programmes and investment projects, as well as institutional activity, will contribute to the achievement of the State Development Plan and the Strategic Plan's objectives (when relevant) by setting clear deadlines and deliverables. The action plan should therefore not propose new instruments, resources or institutions but rather focus the existing instruments around the objectives of the State Development Plan (SDP) and the opportunity areas of the Strategic Plan (SP). The action plan would benefit from being short term (1 to 3 years).

Each commission's action plans should be devised by the executive in coordination with the council's technical bodies, the Finance Commission and the body in charge of coordinating the implementation of the Plan within the executive (for instance the Executive Office of the Governor). These three bodies (the council's technical staff, the government and the Finance Commission) should play a strategic role in providing guidance to the commissions for the elaboration of the action plans. The council and the government could agree, for instance, on a common structure or format for these Actions Plans, and each commission could engage in a constructive dialogue with the Secretariats to flesh out the action plan for each priority opportunity area. This could include identifying a main interlocutor within the administration responsible for preparing the monitoring reports for each priority opportunity area.

- Government reporting on the implementation Action Plan should contribute to producing evidence for the commissions' monitoring and evaluation exercises. In fact, given the nature of the action plan, this reporting should produce input, process and output evidence that could contribute to better monitoring the achievement of the outcome objectives set out in the Strategic Plan. As such, each commission of the council would monitor the action plan for its thematic area.
- Create greater alignment between the Strategic Plan and the state budget, through ensuring coherence with the State Development Plan (See Table 2.5). This could be addressed by including a methodology to relate the medium term objectives of the SDP with the long-term objectives of the Strategic Plan, in the manual for the elaboration of the SDP. Nuevo León could also consider using a theory of change to make this link explicit.

Table 2.5. Example of alignment between priority opportunity areas (SP)/Objectives (SDP) and budgetary programmes

Priority opportunity area/ Objective	Strategy (State Development Plan)	Budgetary programme
Incrementar la cobertura en educación inicial y preescolar.	Mejorar la infraestructura, el equipamiento y la conectividad en las escuelas	207. Infraestructura física para el sector educativo.

Source: Authors based on the document "Matriz Alineación PED ODS"

Notes

[1] This alignment is mandatory between strategic projects and priority programmes. Article 15 and 16 of Strategic planning law.

[2] The opportunity areas referred to are: "Guarantee quality through an independent health commission that monitors standardised indicators and a professionalized health management; Strengthening programs that promote universal values, attitudes and rules of coexistence; Promote a program to influence the improvement of collective consciousness; Strengthen citizen participation programs at the municipal level; Reduce the time for judicialised and non-judicialised cases."

[3] Secretaria de Hacienda, 2018[58]
www.transparenciapresupuestaria.gob.mx/es/PTP/EntidadesFederativas#DiagnosticoPbR-SED.

[4] Oficina de la Presidencia of Mexico (2017), *Guía para incorporar el enfoque de la Agenda 2030 en la Elaboración de Planes Estatales y Municipales de Desarrollo.*

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Annex 2.A. Alignment between the Sustainable Development Goals and the Strategic Plan

Annex Table 2.A.1. Alignment between the SDGs and the Strategic Plan's priority opportunity areas

SDG Goals (Agenda 2030)	Priority opportunity areas of the Strategic Plan (2015-2030)
GOAL 1: No Poverty	10. Eradicate extreme poverty with special emphasis on food security. (also on Goal 2) 11. Reduce urban poverty. (also on Goal 10)
GOAL 2: Zero Hunger	10. Eradicate extreme poverty with special emphasis on food security. (also on Goal 1)
GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being	6. Education and early detection to prevent overweight, obesity and diabetes. 7. Ensure coverage and effective access of the population for priority health conditions. 8. Guarantee quality through an independent health commission that monitors standardized indicators and a professionalized health management. 9. Early detection and immediate attention for breast cancer and pelvic-uterine cancer. 20. Foster physical activity in schools.
GOAL 4: Quality Education	1. Increase coverage in early childhood and preschool education 2. Increase coverage and graduate efficiency rates in upper secondary education 3. Ensure mastery of basic education skills. 5. Implement programs for the professional development of teachers and administrators. 18. Incorporate quality artistic training in public basic education 19. Create programmes for reading, writing and artistic skills.
GOAL 5: Gender Equality	12. Prevention of family and community violence. 13. Achieve women's labour and social equality. 24. Promote the gender perspective in government programmes, in educational programmes and in the labour market.
GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	32. Ensure water supply that guarantees the economic and social development of the state.
GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	33. Promote energy security and transition to low-carbon fuels
GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	4. Ensure the employability of youth. 36. Align the skills demanded by the productive sectors with those offered by educational institutions. 37. Promote employment formalization 38. Review the institutional framework to facilitate business creation and operation.
GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	34. Strengthen the integration of productive chains. 35. Promote the competitiveness and integration of MSMEs.
GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality	11. Reduce urban poverty (also on Goal 1)
GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	17. Strengthen community and neighbourhood culture to generate social cohesion and citizen coexistence. 21. Increase public spaces for social physical activities. 30. Foster urban densification in the metropolitan area of Monterrey. 31. Increase the use of public transport and non-motorized means. (also on Goal 13)

SDG Goals (Agenda 2030)	Priority opportunity areas of the Strategic Plan (2015-2030)
GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	N/A
GOAL 13: Climate Action	29. Improve air quality 31. Increase the use of public transport and non-motorized means. (also on Goal 11)
GOAL 14: Life Below Water	N/A
GOAL 15: Life on Land	N/A
GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions	39. Strengthen technology and intelligence systems. 40. Promote the prevention of high frequency and high impact crimes. 41. Improve technical training and equipment of the police force 42. Reduce the time for judicialised and non-judicialised cases 43 Ensure control in prisons
GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal	14. Strengthen the scope and coordination of the third sector (CSO, foundations and governmental actions). 26. Promote citizen empowerment 27. Strengthen state programmes for citizen participation programmes 28. Strengthen citizen participation programmes at the municipal level

Source: Authors based on the Strategic Plan 2016-2021 and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030

Annex 2.B. Linkages between the State Development Plan and the Strategic Plan's opportunity areas

Annex Table 2.B.1. Alignment between the Strategic Plan's priority opportunity areas and the State Development plan

Opportunity areas of the strategic plan	State development plan
1 Increase coverage in early childhood and preschool education	Human and Social Development Objective 6. Achieve total coverage in education.
2 Increase coverage and terminal efficiency in upper secondary education	Human and Social Development Objective 6. Achieve total coverage in education.
3 Ensuring mastery of basic education skills	Human and Social Development (also on 18 and 19) Objective 7. Raise educational quality in the state. Objective 8. Achieve full satisfaction in school life.
4 Ensure the employability of youth	Human and Social Development Objective 4. Promote the integral development of youth Strategy 4.1 Improve the opportunities for educational training and access to the labour market Objective 7. Raise educational quality in the state. Strategy 7.4 Form students aware of their potential to participate in the labour market Line of Action 7.4.3 Improve linkage between the education sector and the productive sector to increase employability, especially in technical and technological education.
5 Implement programmes for the professional development of teachers and administrators	Human and Social Development Objective 7. Raise educational quality in the state. Strategy 7.2 Count on competent teachers that know pedagogic methods Line of Action 7.2.1 Strengthen the systems of continuous training of teachers with basis on the Law of Professional Teaching
6 Education and early detection to prevent overweight, obesity and diabetes	Human and Social Development Objective 5. Promote among the population of Nuevo León the co-responsibility for creating a new culture of healthy life, facilitating timely and equitable access to public health services, medical care and protection against health risks, under standards of efficiency and quality. Strategy 5.1 Prevent and control diseases. Line of action 5.1.3 Identify and prevent overweight, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular risk to treat, control and avoid complications.
7 Ensure coverage and effective access of the population for priority health conditions	Objective 5 (as above) Strategy 5.2 Improve the availability of resources and the access to health services
8 Guarantee quality through an independent health commission that monitors standardized indicators and a professionalized health management.	N/A
9 Early detection and immediate attention for breast cancer and pelvic-uterine cancer	Objective 5 (as above) Strategy 5.1 Prevent and control diseases. Line of action 5.1.7 Secure early detection, follow-up and treatment of cases of breast cancer and pelvic-uterine cancer, to reduce mortality rates.
10 Eradicate extreme poverty with special emphasis on food security	Human and Social Development Objective 2. Strengthen the integral development of the family and promote the

Opportunity areas of the strategic plan	State development plan
	multidisciplinary care of priority groups. (also on 12) Strategy 2.1 Offer food support and nutrition guidance to vulnerable groups and/or assistance to people in emergency situations who are unable to satisfy their immediate needs.
11 Reduce urban poverty	Human and Social Development (also on 13 and 24) Objective 1. Promote the social inclusion and integral development of the Nuevo León population, guaranteeing their social rights, gender equality and social co-responsibility.
12 Prevention of family and community violence	Human and Social Development Objective 2. Strengthen the integral development of the family and promote the multidisciplinary care of priority groups. (also on 10) Objective 3. Build a decent environment with access to better housing conditions and social infrastructure with the aim of engendering social participation and community cohesion.
13 Promote women's labour and social equality	Human and Social Development (also on 11 and 24) Objective 1. Promote the social inclusion and integral development of the Nuevo León population, guaranteeing their social rights, gender equality and social co-responsibility.
14 Strengthen the scope and coordination of the third sector (CSO, foundations and governmental actions)	Efficient and Transparent Government Under Objective 5. And Strategy 5.2 Line of Action 5.2.5 Support the professionalization, functioning, operational and co-ordination of civil society organizations so that they contribute to the priority objectives of the state.
15 Reorganize the CONARTE and create an inter-ministerial body	Human Development Objective 11. To promote culture and the arts as key elements for human, social and economic development, through transparent, responsible, comprehensive and innovative management.
16 Revalorise culture and assign larger budget to CONARTE	
17 Strengthen community and neighbourhood culture to generate social cohesion and citizen coexistence	
18 Incorporate quality artistic training in public basic education	Human and Social Development (also on 3) Objective 7. Raise educational quality in the state. Objective 8. Achieve full satisfaction in school life. Strategy 8.7 Foster the physical well-being and intellectual and cultural enrichment of students.
19 Create programmes for reading, writing and artistic skills	
20 Encourage physical activity in schools	Human and Social Development Objective 9. Promote universal access to sports activities under a comprehensive and inclusive vision.
21 Increase public spaces for social physical activities	
22 Improve the attractiveness and resource management to support the development of high performance sport and adapted sport	Human and Social Development Objective 10. Obtain national leadership in the training and development of high performance athletes
23 Strengthening programmes that promote universal values, attitudes and rules of coexistence	Efficient and Transparent Government Objective 1 Promote the social inclusion and integral development of the Nuevo León population, guaranteeing their social rights, gender equality and social co-responsibility. Strategy 1.1, line of action 1.1.4. Promote the development of democratic mechanisms, social participation and civic values (p.58).
24 Promote the gender perspective in government programmes, in	Human and Social Development (also on 11 and 13) Objective 1. Promote the social inclusion and integral development of the Nuevo León population, guaranteeing their social rights, gender equality and social co-

Opportunity areas of the strategic plan	State development plan
educational programmes and in the labour market	responsibility.
25 Promote a programme to influence the improvement of collective consciousness	Efficient and Transparent Government Objective 5 Promote citizen participation as a means towards the common good and good government. Strategy 5.1, line of action 5.1.1. Facilitate citizens to acquire knowledge and skills to exercise their citizenship (p.64).
26 Promote citizen empowerment	Efficient and Transparent Government Objective 5. Promote citizen participation as a means towards the common good and good government Strategy 5.1 Facilitate the education of co-responsible, proactive and committed citizens.
27 Strengthen state programmes of citizen participation	Efficient and Transparent Government Objective 5. Promote citizen participation as a means towards the common good and good government Strategy 5.2 Strengthen and improve the mechanisms of citizen participation in the state.
28 Strengthen citizen participation programmes at the municipal level	Efficient and Transparent Government Objective 5. Promote citizen participation as a means towards the common good and good government Strategy 5.1 Facilitate the education of co-responsible, proactive and committed citizens.
29 Improve air quality	Sustainable Development Objective 10. Reduce air pollution emissions
30 Foster urban densification in the metropolitan area of Monterrey	Sustainable Development Objective 1. Achieve a balanced and sustainable urban development throughout the entity. Objective 2. Improve the quality of urban spaces and ensure an inclusive social approach.
31 Increase the use of public transport and non-motorized means (also on 13)	Sustainable Development Objective 5. Strengthen and expand the Integrated Metropolitan Transport System (SITME). Objective 6. Promote sustainable mobility and urban development oriented to transport.
32 Ensure water supply that guarantees the economic and social development of the state	Sustainable Development Objective 11. Ensure the availability of water in the medium and long term.
33 Promote energy security and transition to low-carbon fuels	Sustainable Development Objective 14. Promote sustainable energy consumption through its efficient use and new technologies of renewable sources.
34 Strengthen the integration of productive chains	Inclusive Economy Objective 2. Develop and strengthen sectors with economic potential for the state. Strategy 2.1. Promote links among sectors to increase productivity.
35 Promote the competitiveness and integration of MSMEs	Inclusive Economy Objective 7. Train, develop and strengthen MSMEs and entrepreneurs. Objective 8. Integrate the products and services of MSMEs into productive chains.
36 Align the skills demanded by the productive sectors with those offered by educational institutions	Inclusive Economy Objective 1. Strengthen employment in the productive sectors of Nuevo León. Strategy 1.1 Develop human capital in connection with the demands of the productive sector, towards higher competitiveness and productivity.
37 Promote employment formalization	Inclusive Economy Objective 1. Strengthen employment in the productive sectors of Nuevo León. Strategy 1.2 Secure compliance with labour law and protection of workers' rights, reinforcing the state's economic development.
38 Facilitate businesses creation and operation.	Inclusive Economy Under Objective 7 and Strategy 7.2: Line of action 7.2.1 Favour deregulation, simplification and approval for the opening

Opportunity areas of the strategic plan	State development plan
	and operation of businesses.
39 Strengthen technology and intelligence systems	Security and Justice Under Objective 5: Strategy 5.2 Strengthen the human, material and technological capacities of the justice system, especially in the accusatory penal system. Line of action 5.2.5 Implement technologies for investigation. Line of action 5.2.6 Acquire and renew tactical, forensic and transportation equipment for investigation.

Note: The coherence between the SP's opportunity areas and the State Development Plan can be found at varying levels (objective, strategy, line of action). When the coherence is found at a lower layer, the authors have purposefully kept the higher layers in order to contextualise the strategy or line of action (e.g. when the coherence happens at the level of the line of action, the strategy and objective are also included).
Source: Authors

3 Monitoring the Results of the Strategic Plan of Nuevo León

This chapter discusses the respective roles of the Council of Nuevo León and the state public administration in regards to monitoring the Strategic Plan 2015-2030. It draws on comparative approaches to recommend the clarification of the institutional monitoring set-up and the reinforcement of the state public administration's mandate in this regard. It highlights the need to increase quality assurance and quality control mechanisms for the monitoring process. The chapter also analyses the opportunity for monitoring results to provide the appropriate users timely performance feedback, so as to better public decision-making, accountability and information.

Introduction

Sound monitoring means that monitoring is part and parcel of the policy cycle; that it is carried out systematically and rigorously; that decision makers use its results; and that information is readily available to the public (Lázaro, 2015[1]). It offers policy makers the tools and evidence to detect policy challenges, to adapt or adjust policy implementation, as well as to communicate policy results in a timely and accessible manner.

In Nuevo León, sound monitoring can facilitate planning and operational decision-making by providing evidence to measure performance and help raise specific questions to identify implementation delays and bottlenecks. It can also strengthen accountability and public information in regard to the implementation of the Plan, as information regarding the use of resources is measured and made public. Yet, the monitoring set-up in Nuevo León, whether for the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 or the State Development Plan lacks clarity for its actors and legibility for citizens.

This chapter discusses the respective roles of the Council of Nuevo León and the state public administration in regard to monitoring the results of the Strategic Plan. It includes a detailed description of the current institutional set-up for monitoring the Plan, from the data collection process all the way to communication of results. It draws on comparative approaches to recommend a clarification of this set-up and a reinforcement of the state public administration's mandate in this regard.

The chapter analyses this institutional set-up and suggests diversifying the Plan's indicators and strengthening their robustness, in order to improve the overall quality of the monitoring exercise. The chapter adopts a forward-looking approach that recommends the development of quality assurance and quality control mechanisms to strengthen the overall credibility of the monitoring set-up.

Finally, the chapter examines how these monitoring results can provide the appropriate users timely performance feedback, to improve decision-making, accountability and information.

Clarifying the monitoring set-up to better support the delivery of the Plan

The definition of monitoring contained in the Strategic Planning Law is not comprehensive and may lead to confusion about its purpose

In Nuevo León, article 18 of the Strategic Planning law defines monitoring, as well as evaluation, as "the measurement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning instruments and their execution" (State of Nuevo León, 2014[2]). This definition, therefore, does not provide information on the objectives of monitoring or the manner in which it should be conducted, in terms of methodology and quality attributes. As mentioned in chapter 1, this definition does not distinguish between monitoring and evaluation. This confusion is also present in article 37 of the "*Reglamento de la Ley de Planeación*".

Monitoring differs from evaluation in substantive ways. The objectives of monitoring are to facilitate planning and operational decision-making by providing evidence to measure performance and help raise specific questions to identify implementation delays and bottlenecks. It can also strengthen accountability and public information, as information regarding the use of resources, efficiency of internal management processes and outputs of policy initiatives is measured and publicised. Unlike evaluation, monitoring is driven by routines and ongoing processes of data collection. Thus, it requires resources to be integrated into an organisational infrastructure. Whereas policy evaluation studies the extent to which the observed outcome can be attributed to the policy intervention, monitoring provides descriptive information and does not offer evidence to analyse and understand cause-effect links between a policy initiative and its results (OECD, 2019[3]).

A clear and comprehensive definition of monitoring would contribute to a shared understanding of its objectives and modalities among the main actors in Nuevo León. This would facilitate greater cooperation between relevant actors by not only eliminating confusion regarding the role of monitoring vis-à-vis other tools to measure government performance, but also by making stakeholders more aware of the mutual benefit of monitoring exercises (e.g. more informed decision-making processes, ongoing supply of performance indicators, etc.). Such a definition could be included in the regulatory framework.

Clarifying responsibilities for the monitoring of the Plan may allow for greater synergy and improved coordination between the council and the executive

A robust monitoring system first and foremost implies the presence of an institutional framework for monitoring that provides: (a) the legal basis to undertake monitoring; (b) macro-level guidance on when and how to carry out monitoring and (c) clearly mandated institutional actors with allocated resources to oversee or carry out monitoring (OECD, 2019[3]).

A whole-of-government legal framework exists for monitoring the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 and the State Development Plan

There is a solid legal basis for monitoring the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 (SP) and the State Development Plan (SDP) in Nuevo León. Article 18 of the Strategic Planning Law mandates monitoring and evaluation to be carried out for both planning instruments (State of Nuevo León, 2014[2]). Moreover, monitoring of the SDP is also embedded in the guidelines. The "General Guidelines of the Executive Power of the state of Nuevo León for the Consolidation of the Results-based Budget and Performance Assessment System" stipulate that "the agencies, entities and administrative tribunals, shall send quarterly reports to the Secretariat, in accordance with the provisions issued by the latter, reports on the performance of the budgetary exercise and programmatic progress." (State of Nuevo Leon, 2017[4]), which have to be aligned to the objectives of the SDP (article 9 of the guidelines). However, the quality of these quarterly reports is not always high enough to help dependencies track spending decisions along budgetary programmes.

Some OECD countries have similarly adopted clear legal frameworks for performance monitoring. In the United States, for example, the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 mandates the government to define government-wide performance goals, as well as each agency to define sectoral goals. In Canada, the Management Accountability Framework was implemented in 2003 to hold heads of departments and agencies accountable for performance management, and to continuously improve performance management (see Box 3.1).

Box 3.1. The Canadian Management Accountability Framework

The Management Accountability Framework (MAF) is an annual assessment of management practices and performances of most Government of Canada organisations. It was introduced in 2003 to clarify management expectations and strengthen deputy heads of departments and agencies' accountability.

The MAF sets out expectations for sound public sector management, and in doing so aims to support management accountability of deputy heads and improve management practices across government departments and agencies. The MAF is accompanied by an annual assessment of management practices and performance in most departments and agencies of the Government of Canada against the criteria of the framework. Since, 2014, the assessments use a mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence, and results are presented within a comparative context to allow benchmarking across federal organisations.

Today, there are 7 areas of management, or criteria, against which federal organisations are evaluated (see Table 3.1). In 2017-2018, for example, the MAF report looked at 36 large and 25 small departments and agencies along the four core areas of management. Results in this performance show that only a minority of large departments and agencies systematically used both evaluation and performance measurement information in resource allocation decisions.

Table 3.1. Areas of Management (AoM) and teams assessed as part of the MAF

AOM Type	Areas of Management
Core AoMs	Financial Management
	People Management
	Information Management and Information Technology (IM/IT)
	Results management
Department-specific AoMs	Management of acquired services and assets
	Service management
	Security management

The Management Accountability Framework itself is evaluated every 5 years by the Internal Audit and Evaluation Bureau as part of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's (TBS) five-year evaluation plan. The evaluation looks at relevance, performance, design, and delivery of MAF 2.0.

Sources: Adapted from Government of Canada (2020[5]), Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, www.tbs-sct.gc.ca; OECD (2014[6]), Kazakhstan: Review of the Central Administration, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Having a clear legal framework, in the form of a primary law accompanied by guidelines, would be useful in order to underline the importance that the state of Nuevo León attributes to this practice, within the council and across government. Nevertheless, the presence of a legal-basis for monitoring alone is not enough. A robust monitoring system needs to specify the actors involved, their mandates, the timeline, the methodology and tools for monitoring. In the case of Nuevo León, such a monitoring system would need to clarify the articulation of the monitoring for the SP and the SDP, as was done in the US for the 2010 Government Performance and Results Modernisation Act for instance (see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2. The United States Government Performance and Results Modernization Act

The United States undertook reforms to improve the central government's performance management system, to foster a dialogue on performance across government, and to deliver targeted improvements on high-priority cross-government initiatives. In 2010, the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act (GPRAMA) was adopted to strengthen the efficiency of the system for government agencies to report their progress. The GPRAMA provides enhanced performance planning, management and reporting tools that can help decision makers to address current challenges.

A main objective of this act is to demonstrate the value of performance information and its usefulness in management decisions. A key element to drive such an effort has been to establish leadership roles and

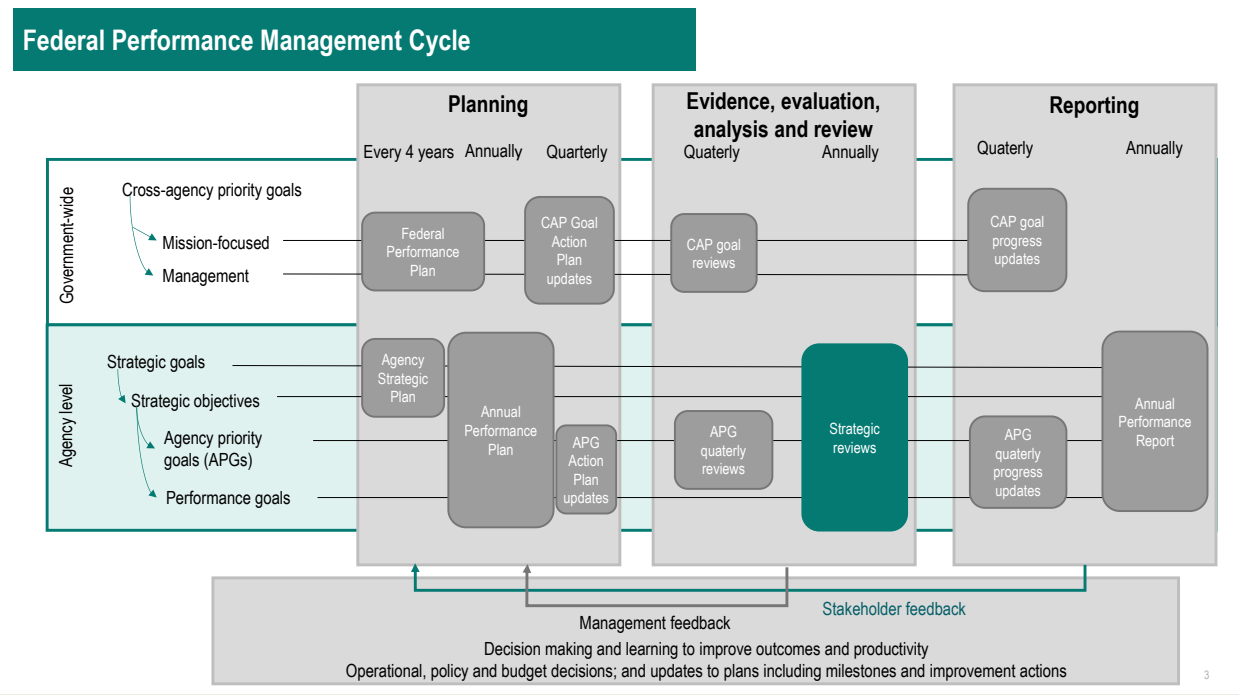
performance improvement responsibilities for senior management, making it their job to engage the workforce in a performance-based discussion as well as assuming accountability for agency performance and results.

The Modernisation Act requires every agency to identify two to eight (usually about five) Agency Priority Goals (APGs), which inform the setting of the APG Action Plan. The AGPs are set every two years and are subject to quarterly performance reviews by the chief operating officer (COO) (usually deputy) and the performance improvement officer (PIO).

In addition to agency-level priority goals, federal cross-agency priority goals are set every four years, with performance assessed via quarterly reviews by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director and a Performance Improvement Council. Finally, agency-level strategic goals and objectives, which inform the setting of the AGPs, are subject to annual strategic reviews by agencies and the OMB (see figure below).

Strategic reviews are annual assessments that synthesise the available performance information and evidence to inform budget, legislative and management decisions. Initial results of the first round of reviews are promising. Many agencies were able to identify strategic objectives with relatively weak evidence and thus identify areas for improving metrics. Moreover, agencies reported that the strategic reviews reduced inconsistencies by bringing programmes together to discuss cross-cutting, strategic issues. Agencies also reported new initiatives to begin directly aligning activities with strategic goals and objectives. Furthermore, according to the agencies, the majority of agencies' performance staff were interested and engaged in finding value from strategic reviews.

Figure 3.1. United States' performance framework



Sources: Based on information from the United States Office of Management and Budget; Implementing Strategic Reviews: A component of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Mark Bussow, Performance Team Lead at U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), presented at the 10th Annual meeting of the OECD Senior Budget Officials Performance and Results Network

There are numerous actors involved in the monitoring of the Plans and their mandates are not always explicit

The Strategic Planning Law assigns responsibility for monitoring the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan to the council, with the collaboration of "the dependencies and entities of the state public administration" (State of Nuevo León, 2014[2]). However, a careful analysis of the Law and its regulations, suggests that the role of the various actors and units within the centre of government is not clear in terms of their responsibilities for the monitoring of the SP and the SDP. Regarding the Strategic Plan, the council is responsible for the coordination and promotion of its monitoring, as laid out in article 18 of the Strategic Planning Law. The council is also mandated to establish criteria for the identification of indicators to monitor the SP, to monitor their progress by collecting the data and documents necessary and to communicate the monitoring results to citizens (State of Nuevo León, 2014[2]).

However, it is unclear how the council is intended to collect this data, as it does not actually implement the policies outlined by the Strategic Plan. In practice, the CoG has played a facilitating role between the council and the line ministries in order to gather the aforementioned data. However, neither the CoG nor the line ministries have an explicit (i.e. included in their legal regulations) mandate to cooperate with the council in this regard and they do not have specific human or financial resources allocated to this task. Adapting the internal regulations of the line ministries to include data collection and analysis for the SP would greatly facilitate the cooperation between these actors.

Regarding the monitoring of the State Development Plan, on the other hand, the role of the state public administration and its dependencies is explicitly laid out. The centre of government is in charge of coordinating and promoting the monitoring of the SDP (article 14.I and 14.IV of the Strategic Planning Law regulation), while the line ministries monitor the budget and programmes of their own entities and report to the CoG (article 14.V.e of the Strategic Planning Law regulation).

This practice of attributing the monitoring of strategic priorities to the CoG can also be found in different forms in many OECD countries (see Box 3.3). This monitoring can either be done by the CoG itself, like in Finland, or by units within the CoG with a special mandate to do so, as is the case for the Results and Delivery Unit of Canada.

Box 3.3. Monitoring government-wide policy priorities at the level of the centre of government

The Prime minister's office (PMO) in Finland is in charge of monitoring the government programme. Specifically, the strategy unit in the PMO monitors the implementation of 5 key policy objectives of horizontal nature and wide structural reform of social and health care services that are part of Finland's government-wide strategy. Together with the 26 key projects, the key policy areas are monitored weekly at the level of the CoG in government strategy sessions reserved for situation awareness and analysis based on evidence and foresight. Milestones for each policy area and project are clearly defined and indicators for each strategy target are updated two to four times a year.

The Results Delivery Unit of the Privy Council of Canada is a centre of government institution in Canada, providing support to the Prime Minister on public service delivery. It was created in 2015 to support efforts to monitor delivery, address implementation obstacles to key priorities and report on progress to the Prime Minister. The RDU also facilitates the work of government by developing tools, guidance and learning activities on implementing an outcome-focused approach. The results and delivery approach in Canada is based on three main activities: (i) defining programme and policy objectives clearly (i.e., what are we trying to achieve?); (ii) focusing increased resources on planning and implementation (i.e., how

will we achieve our goals?); and (iii) systematically measuring progress toward these desired outcomes (i.e., are we achieving our desired results and how will we adjust if we are not?).

Source: https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/services/results-delivery-unit.html#toc2;/ https://valtioneuvosto.fi/hallitusohjelman-toteutus/karkihankkeiden-toimintasuunnitelma

This division of labour is also supported by the fact that certain line ministries are also explicitly mandated, through their organisational decree, to report on the implementation of the SDP. For example, the Secretary of Economy is responsible for preparing monitoring reports for the implementation of the State Development Plan (article 14.VIII of the regulations for the Ministry of Economy and Labour). There is no such provision regarding the Strategic Plan for any of the ministries.

Rather, the role of the council regarding the monitoring of the SDP is ambiguous. Indeed, the council is also mandated (article 18 of the Strategic Planning Law) to monitor the SDP, seemingly creating a duplication of this function between the council and the CoG (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Mandates of the main actors in the monitoring system of the SP and the SDP

	Coordinate and promote monitoring	Collect data	Analyse data	Report data	Use data
STRATEGIC PLAN					
Nuevo León council	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Centre of government	No	No	No	No	Yes
Line ministries	No	No	No	No	No
STATE DEVELOPMENT PLAN					
Nuevo León council	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Centre of government	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Line ministries	No	No	No	No	No

Source: (State of Nuevo León, 2014[2]); (State of Nuevo León, 2014[7]); (La Secretaría de Economía y Trabajo, 2016[8]); (La Secretaría de Educación, 2017[9]); (La Coordinación Ejecutiva De La Administración Pública Del Estado, 2018[10])

The overlaps and potential gaps in the mandates of the main actors of the monitoring system result in unnecessary complexity and a lack of incentives to collaborate. Monitoring and the resulting data collection processes often involve complex chains of command shared across stakeholders who do not always see the immediate benefits of the monitoring exercise. Clarifying mandates through formal mechanisms, such as laws or regulations, can therefore be an important tool for governments to create incentives for these stakeholders to participate in such an exercise.

In the case of Nuevo León, neither the CoG nor the line ministries have an explicit mandate to report to the council on the Strategic Plan's programmes nor do they have the allocated resources to do so. As such, without an official delineation of the roles and the scope of the monitoring system (i.e. SP and SDP) in Nuevo León, the monitoring exercise becomes complex, potentially less effective and can generate unnecessary tensions.

It may therefore be useful to clarify the different roles of each actor by updating the regulatory framework, giving an explicit legal mandate to each of the actors and specifying their respective responsibilities (collecting data, analysing data, using data, coordinating and promoting monitoring, designing guidelines for monitoring, etc.). The internal regulations of the secretariats and their dependencies could also be updated to clarify their role in monitoring the plans. In doing so, it is important to clearly separate the

coordination and promotion role of the CoG from that of data collection, analysis and use performed by line ministries, in order to avoid blurring incentives between actors.

The monitoring methodology and tools for the SP are not well-defined

Moreover, Nuevo León does not have macro-level guidance (document, policy) in place on when and how to carry out monitoring, despite the fact that article 19 of the law stipulates that the monitoring and evaluation report should be produced annually. For example, it does not elaborate on how this report ought to be practically prepared. By creating clear obligations without proper guidance, this blurs the institutional framework.

More importantly, the law and its supporting regulation do not outline the existence of a monitoring set-up beyond the production of an annual report. In particular, the following elements are missing:

- the expected frequency of data collection for each level of indicator (SP impact/ outcome indicators or SDP outcome/output indicators);
- the governance and calendar of the performance dialogue between line ministries, the CoG and the council, that is what actors meet to discuss what issues at what frequency and with what intent;
- and the criteria according to which certain issues need to be escalated to a higher level of decision-making (for instance, from line ministry level to CoG level), as well as how to follow-up on decisions.

Despite the lack of a legally defined monitoring process, an informal process has been developed, both for the preparation of the annual report and for the infra-annual performance dialogue between the council and the state public administration. This process has been carried out in full once since the adoption of the Strategic Plan.

The council spearheads the monitoring report process; the commissions receive and review the relevant information from relevant ministries and generate recommendations accordingly. The CoG coordinates the relationship between different ministries and the council (and its commissions) by requesting and collecting information from the ministries on behalf of the council. The ministries respond to the council's recommendations in an official document delivered to the legislative branch.

Figure 3.2 outlines a schematic view of this process.

Figure 3.2. Process for elaborating the annual report on the Strategic Plan



Note: This is a schematic view of this process. The process has not always been entirely followed in the past. For instance in 2018, the Council did not receive an answer from the CoG regarding the evaluation.
Source: Authors.

Before 2018, there was also no standard procedure for preparing the monitoring report across commissions; it was only during the second evaluation that the council attempted to harmonise procedures by standardising the questionnaires sent to ministries and the crosschecking procedures.

Likewise, an informal set-up has been developed whereby the state public administration reports to the council – and to each thematic commission in particular – on an infra-annual basis. In this exercise, working methods across commissions have been very heterogeneous, with each commission deciding, more or less collaboratively with the state public administration, on the number of meetings per year, the level and type of information they seek to receive and the potential outputs of these meetings. For example, the Education sub-commission did not have any meetings in 2018.

As a result of this informal set-up, the quality of exchanges between the state public administration and the council has often rested on the existence of trusting personal relationships between the Secretaries and the members of the commissions, rather than on sound and clear working methods and mandates. Moreover, the lack of standardised tools for data collection and analysis has meant that the intended output of the monitoring sessions between the commissions and the secretaries is not only heterogeneous, but also sometimes unclear. This may lead to a lack of incentive to collaborate, especially from the line ministries who do not have an explicit mandate and allocated resources to do so.

A clarification of the monitoring set-up, methodology and tools may allow for greater cooperation and coordination between the council and the state public administration, and the use of monitoring results.

Monitoring evidence can be used to pursue three main objectives (OECD, 2019[3]):

- it contributes to operational decision making, by providing evidence to measure performance and raising specific questions in order to identify implementation delays or bottlenecks;
- it can also strengthen accountability related to the use of resources, the efficiency of internal management processes, or the outputs of a given policy initiative;
- it contributes to transparency, providing citizens and stakeholders with information on whether the efforts carried out by the government are producing the expected results.

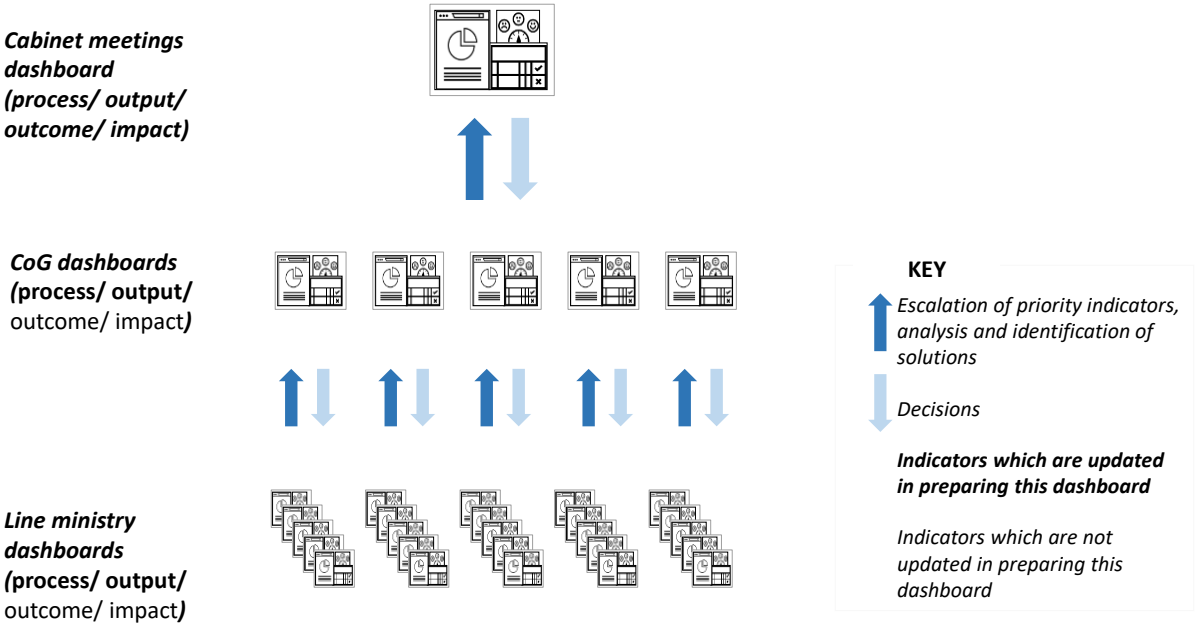
Each of these goals implies using monitoring data in a distinct manner. Firstly, for monitoring evidence to serve as a management tool, it must be embedded in a performance dialogue that is conducted regularly and frequently enough that it allows practitioners and decision-makers to identify implementation issues, determine resource constraints and adapt their efforts/ resources in order to solve them. Such an exercise is closely tied to policy implementation and management. In the case of Nuevo Léon, this exercise should be conducted within the state public administration, ideally between the highest levels of the centre of government and the operational levels of the dependencies.

Nuevo León has both a Strategic Plan and a State Development Plan. Given the plurality of strategic frameworks, it is important to ensure that the monitoring processes are streamlined and aligned to minimise the additional burden occurring with each strategy (Vági and Rimkute, 2018[11]). As a result, it is important to clarify that the state public administration should conduct this performance dialogue regarding both the SP and the SDP simultaneously. Given the more strategic nature of the Strategic Plan, the performance dialogue for the Strategic Plan could be held on a biennial basis, depending on the theory of change of every strategic objective and information availability. Two main functions can be identified in the context of this performance dialogue: a coordination and promotion function, which can be naturally conducted by the centre of government, and a data collection, analysis and use function, which can be the responsibility of the line ministries.

This performance dialogue could be centred around the action plans – as recommended in chapter 2 – to monitor the lines of action (processes) and strategies (outputs) which are common to the SP and the SDP,

at the level of line ministries, on a quarterly basis[1]. This dialogue would create an incentive for line ministries to resolve implementation issues at the technical or sectorial level through a gradual escalation process. If the problem is still unresolved after two quarters, it could be referred to the CoG twice a year for decision. Finally, any implementation issues that would require cross-ministerial coordination and mobilisation of additional resources may be referred to cabinet meetings on a yearly basis (see Figure 3.3).

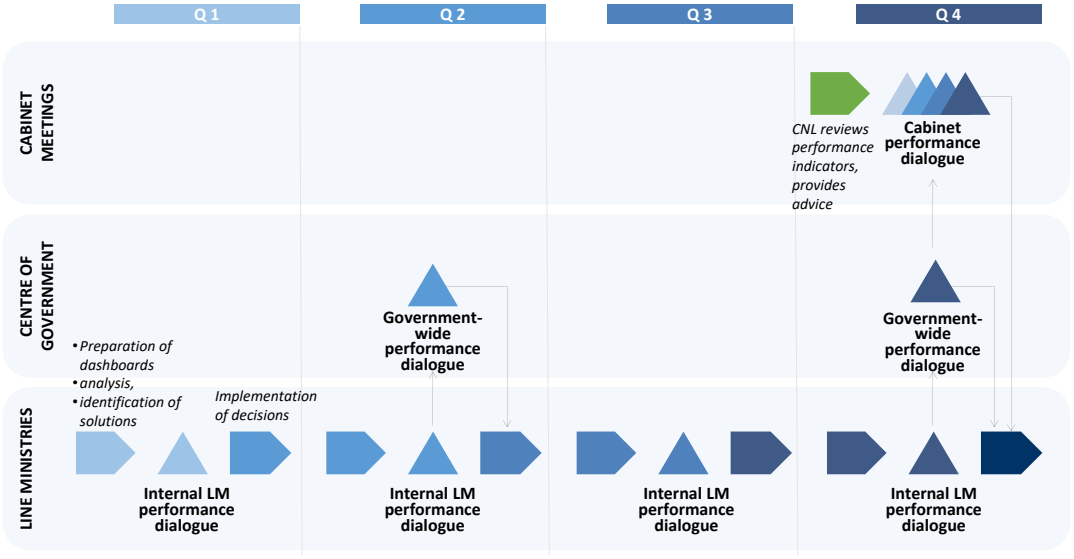
Figure 3.3. Articulation of different levels of indicator dashboards



Source: Authors

These cabinet meetings may also be an opportunity to update and analyse the outcome/impact indicators included in the SP and the SDP. Indeed, it is important to link process and output indicators to the progress of outcome and impact indicators to actually track results and not just activities (The World Bank, 2017[12]). Figure 3.4 demonstrates this process over a one-year period. The next section of this chapter will focus on the relevance and quality of indicators.

Figure 3.4. Proposed performance dialogue between the Line ministries, the CoG and the cabinet meetings



Source: Authors

As previously mentioned, monitoring evidence can also serve as a tool for remaining accountable to stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In order to do so, in preparation of the annual cabinet meeting on the SDP and the SP, the state public administration and the council could conduct a collaborative review of the plans' indicators, which would be presented to the cabinet. This collaborative review, which could build on the four performance dialogue sessions held every year, could be conducted jointly by the state secretariats and the council's commissions to review the data to be presented to cabinet, as well as give the opportunity to the council to serve as a sounding board for the administration. Indeed, while attempting to interpret the data and understand implementation gaps, the administration could seek the advice of the council. This review would be an opportunity for the council to offer the state public administration different insights on implementation gaps identified during the performance dialogue. Finally, given the council's multi-stakeholder composition, it could also offer implementation support to the cabinet where relevant and possible.

In order to carry on the performance dialogue and contribute to better accountability, the state public administration could consider uploading and updating the indicators of the SDP and the SP in a dashboard. This dashboard would include information concerning both the implementation of the action plan recommended in chapter 2, as well as that of the SP and the SDP outcome/impact indicators, but only the action plan indicators will be updated quarterly – the indicators from the SDP and the SP may only be updated annually or when new information is available. Monitoring dashboards are intended as management and decision-making tools, and therefore offer a performance narrative that allows for the identification and analysis of implementation gaps and potential solutions. To develop these dashboards, the state public administration could draw on a range of good practices. For instance, the current citizen councillors who belong to the private sector could share their best practices with the public servants in regard to preparing dashboards and monitoring strategies.

Moreover, the commissions may want to clarify their working methods for conducting this annual review. In particular, the council could create a guide for commissioners and for their technical secretariats in order to define the agenda for review sessions, the role of the commissions, the tools they may use, and how decisions should be taken in regard to this annual review (see chapters 4 and 5 for a more general discussion of commissions' working methods).

Finally, monitoring evidence serves to foster transparency, in particular to communicate to citizens. The centre of government could choose to produce a communication report on the SP. This communication report, which could be updated every three years, would replace the current "hybrid" monitoring/evaluation report conducted by the council on an annual basis. It would be designed primarily as a communication tool (see section on use of monitoring evidence for a further discussion of this leaflet). Moreover, it is important to communicate more regularly with citizens, notably through an up-to-date website showcasing the monitoring information of the SDP and the SP (see section on promoting the use of monitoring for a more detailed discussion of this recommendation).

Promoting the quality of monitoring

Collecting quality data is paramount in producing robust monitoring evidence

Access to robust and credible data is an essential component of building a results-based monitoring system. Data should not only be technically robust, valid, verifiable and policy-actionable, but they should also be transparent and free from undue influence (Zall, Ray and Rist, 2004[13]).

The lack of a systematic framework which would link indicators and opportunity areas in the SP hinders its monitoring

Developing performance indicators, their baseline and targets is an important stage in the strategy development process. Although article 9 of the Strategic Planning Law sets among the council's responsibilities the establishment of criteria for the monitoring and evaluation indicators, there does not seem to be an explicit and systematic framework for their design.

Firstly, there is a lack of systematic linkage between each layer of the Plan and the indicators making it hard for stakeholders to monitor the progress in terms of aspirations/opportunity areas/strategic lines (see Table 3.3). While most commissions have identified a set of indicators, they are not presented in a way that clearly indicates their connection with elements of the Plan (opportunity areas, strategic lines or initiatives). All indicators for the commission/sub-commission are grouped together in a table at the end of the section related to that thematic area. Some sub-commissions[2] have introduced indicators that cannot be directly or indirectly linked to either an opportunity area or a strategic line/initiative.

Moreover, not all commissions have defined indicators. For instance, four sub-commissions[3] of the Human Development Commission have not defined any indicators, suggesting that there is no way for their members to monitor and evaluate the achievement of the policy goals set out in that part of the Strategic Plan. Similarly, the Economic Development Commission is the only one that has defined indicators for both priority opportunity areas and strategic lines: 40% of opportunity areas have no indicators relevant to them.

Table 3.3. Lack of unified framework for the design of indicators

Commission	Sub-Commission	Aspiration	Strategic Axes	Opportunity Areas	Prioritised Opportunity Areas	Indicators	Strategic lines and Initiatives	Indicators	Strategic Projects
Human Development	Education	1	3	11	5	4	12	NA	4
	Health	1	4	17	4	NA	15	14	7
	Social Development	1	4	14	5	9	15	NA	6
	Art and Culture	1	3	10	5	NA	17	NA	3
	Sports	1	3	5	3	NA	11	NA	1
	Values	1	3	9	3	NA	10	NA	1

Commission	Sub-Commission	Aspiration	Strategic Axes	Opportunity Areas	Prioritised Opportunity Areas	Indicators	Strategic lines and Initiatives	Indicators	Strategic Projects
	Citizen's participation	1	3	4	3	NA	10	NA	2
Sustainable Development	.	1	4	15	5	8	38	NA	8
Economic Development	.	1	4	7	5	NA	8	4	3
Security and Justice	.	1	6	16	5	13	39	NA	5
Effective Governance and Transparency	.	1	4	10	5	NA	15	5	5

Source: Authors.

Therefore, explicitly linking each indicator to an opportunity area (strategic objective as recommended in chapter 2), first and foremost visually in the strategy document, will be essential to clarify the monitoring structure of the Plan. This exercise should be undertaken by the council.

Such an analysis also suggests that some output indicators may have been linked to outcome-level objectives. It would be preferable to maintain, to a feasible extent, a focus on outcomes in a performance-oriented framework (see example of Scotland in Box 3.4).

Box 3.4. The National Performance Framework of Scotland

The National Performance Framework of Scotland proposes a Purpose for the Scottish society to achieve. To help achieve this Purpose, the framework sets National Outcomes that reflect the values and aspirations of the people of Scotland, which in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and help to track progress in reducing inequality. These National Outcomes include:

- "We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy", in regards to the Scottish economy
- "We are healthy and active", in regards to health
- "We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination", in regards to human rights

Each National Outcome has a set of 81 outcome-level indicators updated on a regular basis to inform the government on how their administration is performing concerning the Framework. A data dashboard where citizens can access data on these indicators is available on the Scottish Government Equality Evidence Finder website.

Source: Scottish Government (2020[14]), *National Performance Framework,* https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/

Both the Strategic plan and the action plans would benefit from identifying sound and policy actionable indicators

Monitoring a policy, programme or project – such as the strategic plan 2015-2030 or the action plans – implies identifying indicators that are:

- sound, meaning that they are methodologically robust;

- policy actionable, meaning that they correspond to an observable variable that captures the intended direction of change and is under the remit of the actor in charge of implementation.

Firstly, the indicators in the strategic plan 2015-2030 are not always sound. In order for indicators to provide decision makers information on what course of action to take in order to achieve the intended policy objectives, they should be accompanied by information that allows for their appropriate interpretation. That is why, regardless of their typology, all indicators should be presented in a way that provides enough information:

- Description of the indicator: name, unit of measurement, data source and formula.
- Responsibility for the indicator: institution, department or authority responsible for gathering the data;
- Frequency of data collection and update of the indicator;
- Baseline that serves as a starting point to measure progress;
- Target or expected result.

For the most part, the indicators in the strategic plan are explicitly stated, as reflected by the fact that the commissions have chosen to present the indicators in a table often including information on the data source, the baseline and the target values. Nevertheless, some indicators do not have an existing baseline or source responsible for collecting data. The indicators also do not make explicit the institution or person responsible for collecting the data and updating the indicator.

Moreover, the indicators chosen for the Strategic Plan do not all fit the RACER approach (see Box 3.5 for an explanation of this criteria).

Box 3.5. Assessing indicators against the RACER approach

The quality of an indicator will depend on the purpose it serves, on the nature of the policy or programme it seeks to monitor, and on the development and maturity of the overall performance monitoring system. There are therefore no universal principles to be followed when defining indicators. One example of a quality framework for the assessment of indicators is the RACER approach, used amongst others by the Better Regulation Index. According to this approach, indicators should be:

- **Relevant**: Closely linked to the objectives to be reached. They should not be overambitious and should measure the right thing.
- **Accepted** by staff, stakeholders: the role and responsibilities for the indicator need to be well defined.
- **Credible** for non-experts: Unambiguous and easy to interpret. Indicators should be as simple and robust as possible. If necessary, composite indicators might need to be used instead –such as country ratings, well-being indicators, but also ratings of financial institutions and instruments. These often consist of aggregated data using predetermined fixed weight values. As they may be difficult to interpret, they should be used to assess the broad context only.
- **Easy**: To monitor (e.g. data collection should be possible at low cost). Built, as far as practicable, on available underlying data, their measurement not imposing too large a burden on beneficiaries, on enterprises, nor on citizens.
- **Robust**: Against manipulation (e.g. administrative burden: If the target is to reduce administrative burdens for businesses, the burdens might not be reduced, but rather shifted from businesses to public administration). Reliable, statistically and analytically validated, and as far as practicable, compliant with internationally recognised standards and methodologies.

Source: (DG NEAR, 2016[15])

For instance, not all indicators are from public or reliable sources. The Strategic Plan also contains indicators that are largely based on international and national statistical data (see Box 3.6 for a detailed description of types of monitoring data). Yet, this type of data is best suited to long-term impact and context indicators, for which the underlying changes are less certain than for outcome indicators (DG NEAR, 2016[70]). Administrative data and data collected as part of an intervention's implementation are usually better suited for process, output and intermediate outcome indicators, such as those found in the State Development Plan.

Box 3.6. Potential sources of data used for monitoring

Conducting quality monitoring requires quality data, which may come from various sources (as outlined below), each of which has associated strengths and weaknesses. Combining different data sources has the potential to maximise data quality, as well as to unlock relevant insights for monitoring.

- **Administrative data**: This type of data is generally collected through administrative systems managed by government departments or ministries, and usually concerns whole sets of individuals, communities and businesses that are concerned by a particular policy. Examples of administrative data include housing data and tax records. Since administrative data are already collected and cover large sample sizes, they are time and cost-efficient sources for monitoring exercises. Furthermore, since administrative data consist mostly of activity, transaction and financial tracking data, they do not suffer from some of the quality pitfalls associated with self-reported data. However, administrative data can be limited in scope (e.g. exclusion of non-participants, no socioeconomic information on participants, etc.). Moreover, since administrative data collection systems are decentralised, the underlying quality of the data may vary across government departments or ministries.
- **Statistical data**: this type of data is commonly used in research, and it corresponds to census data or more generally to information on a given population collected through national or international surveys. Survey data is a flexible and comprehensive source for monitoring exercises, as surveys can be designed to capture a wide range of socio-economic indicators and behavioural patterns relevant to the policy in question. However, data collection for surveys is resource-intensive and the quality of survey data is dependent on the survey design and on the respondents. For example, the quality of survey data can suffer because of social-desirability bias and poor recall of respondents.
- **Big data**: This type of data is broadly defined as "a collection of large volumes of data" (UN Global Pulse, 2016[71]); it is often continuously and digitally generated by smart technologies on private sector platforms and captures the behaviour and activity of individuals. It has the advantage of coming in greater volume and variety, and thus represents a cost-effective method to ensure a large sample size and the collection of information on hard-to-reach groups. Moreover, big data analysis techniques (e.g. natural language processing, detection, etc.) can help identify previously unnoticed patterns and improve the results of monitoring exercises. Nevertheless, big data also introduces several challenges, such as time comparability (big data often comes from third parties who do not always have consistent data collection methods over time), non-human internet traffic (data generated by internet bots), selection bias (even if a sample size is large, it does not necessarily represent the entire population), etc.

Sources: (UN Global Pulse, 2016[16]); (Innovations for Poverty Action, 2016[17]); (Results for America, 2017[18])

Likewise, the frequency at which some indicators can be collected is not relevant to the yearly monitoring mandate of the council. This is the case for the sub-commission on Social Development that proposes an indicator for "Mujeres en situación de violencia de pareja" using data from the "Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares (ENDIREH, INEGI)", which is only collected every five years.[4] As a result, 23% of indicators could not be collected in 2018.

Moreover, the current indicators identified for the Strategic Plan are not sufficiently policy actionable, meaning that they do not provide relevant and timely information for decision-making related to the implementation of the Plan**.** Some indicators in the plan measure actions that fall outside the responsibilities and control of the executive, meaning that they are not actionable or relevant. Indeed, if the Strategic Plan is to be implemented by the executive, its specific actions should therefore be under the remit of this branch of government. Nevertheless, the commission on Security and Justice included opportunity areas and indicators (e.g. "Duración de casos no judicializados") that fall under the responsibility of the judicial branch.

Similarly, some indicators proposed in the Plan do not have a state-level scope. The sub-commission on health, for example, uses OECD health data for its indicators, which are collected at a national level and therefore cannot directly reflect Nuevo León's efforts in this area. Nevertheless, in some cases, proxy indicators may be of use when state-level indicators do not exist. This is the case, for instance, for metropolitan area indicators, which cover 90% of Nuevo León's population.

The council could consider identifying a mix of indicators in order to best monitor the strategic plan

The Council of Nuevo León could consider identifying indicators for the Strategic Plan that are a mix of impact and context indicators, that would be available at state level, calculated on the basis of international and national statistical data – for instance in collaboration with INEGI – as well as outcome indicators calculated on the basis of administrative data or even ad hoc perception survey data. For example, these indicators could be taken from the national survey on government impact and quality prepared by INEGI every other year (INEGI, 2019[19]) (See Box 3.7). Indeed, while output indicators should not be used to measure outcomes and impacts, context and impact indicators say little about the policy levers to achieve the long-term goals associated with the strategic objectives. Instead, identifying intermediate outcomes, which respond fairly rapidly to changes in policy systems but can be linked to longer term objectives, may be beneficial in monitoring the plan (Acquah, Lisek and Jacobzone, 2019[20]).

Box 3.7. Typology of indicators

A classic typology of open government indicators discerns between:

- Context indicators, when considering the public sector as an open system, can monitor external factors such as socio-economic trends, but can also include policy measures by other governments or supranational organisations. Ideally, a comprehensive M&E system should include indicators to monitor the existence and development of environmental/context factors that can influence the governance of open government strategies and initiatives.
- Input indicators measure resources in the broad sense, i.e. human and financial resources, logistics, devoted to a particular open government strategy or initiative. In the context of the governance of open government, input indicators could include the number of staff working in the office in charge of open government or the budget allocated for a given open government initiative.

- Process indicators refer to the link between input and output, i.e. activities that use resources and lead to an output. In the context of the governance of open government strategies and initiatives, these indicators could include the duration for creating an office in charge of the co-ordination of the open government strategies and initiatives or the time allocated to their design.
- Output indicators refer to the quantity, type and quality of outputs that result from the inputs allocated. Output indicators refer to operational goals or objectives. For instance, in the context of this policy area, it can refer to the existence of a law on access to information or the existence of training courses for public officials on the implementation of open government principles.
- Outcome/impact indicators refer to the (strategic) objectives of policy intervention. In a public policy context, intended effects often relate to a target group or region, but they can also relate to the internal functioning of an administration. Effects can occur or be expected with varying time gaps after the policy intervention. Outcome and impact are often the terms used together to refer to them. The difference is based on the chronological order: outcome usually refers to shorter-term effects, while impact refers to longer-term effects. In this field, these indicators could be the share of public servants aware of the open government strategy or the number of citizens' complaints about public policy decisions.

Source: (OECD, 2020[21])

The council could consider applying the RACER approach in order to assess the extent to which the indicator could support decision-making[5]. It should include representatives of the different stakeholders, which during implementation have the responsibility of collecting, analysing and reporting on data (DG NEAR, 2016[15]). Each indicator, qualitative as well as quantitative, must correspond to an existing source, be it a statistical source or an administrative one.

Furthermore, in order to monitor the action plans, the state public administration could consider identifying process indicators mostly through administrative sources. Indeed, for this type of information/monitoring, authorities should tend towards regular flows of information, ideally at minimum administrative cost, automatically. The state public administration could consider submitting these indicators for review and comment by the Council of Nuevo León, in order to benefit from the opinion and expertise of a wider range of stakeholders.

The analysis of the data has to be fit for purpose

The current annual report is not well targeted to its audience

Although crucial to monitoring, collecting data is not sufficient in and of itself; in order to support decision-making and serve as a communication tool to the public, data needs to be analysed (Zall, Ray and Rist, 2004[13]). Indeed, the analysis of the data which serves as the backbone of the monitoring exercise needs to be tailored to the user, focused and relevant (OECD, 2018[22]).

In fact, it is important to identify the types of use for the monitoring information (demonstrate, convince, show accountability, involve stakeholders, etc.). The analysis of data cannot be targeted efficiently without a clear definition of its audience(s) and the types of questions that audience is likely to raise about findings. There are typically two main types of users of monitoring and reporting information:

- External users: citizens, media, NGOs, professional bodies, practitioners, academia, financial donors, etc. They usually seek user-friendly information, which is provided using a simple structure and language, concise text and as visually as possible.

- Internal users: congress, government, ministers, managers and operational staff, and in Nuevo León, the council. They are more interested in strategic information related to overall progress against the objectives and targets, and will seek to understand the challenges encountered in their implementation, as well as requiring indications of action required in response to data findings. Furthermore, the higher the level of decision-making, the more information should be aggregate and outcome-oriented (OECD, 2018[22]).

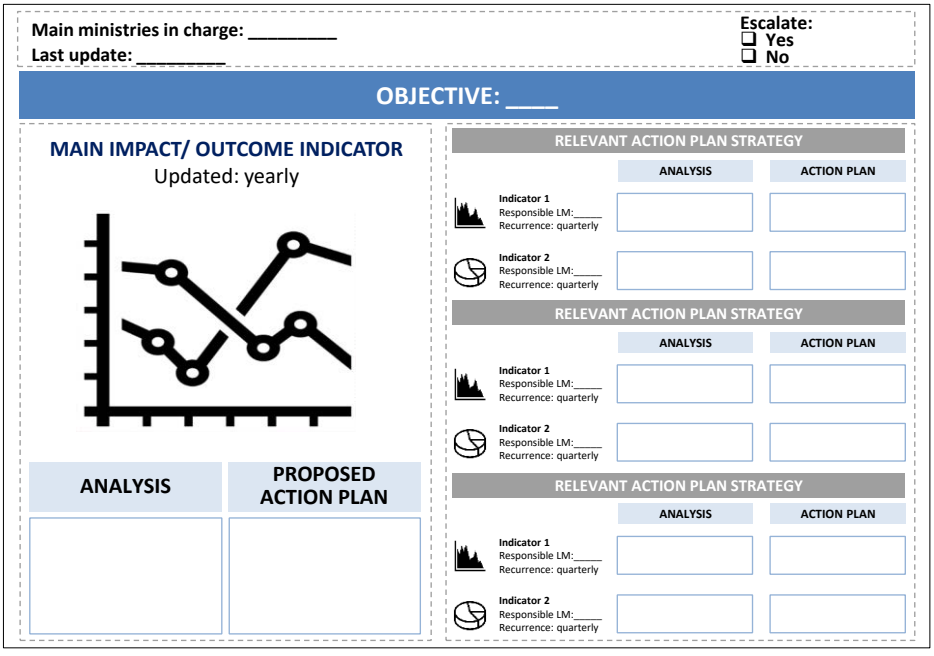
Currently, these types of users are not clearly differentiated in the annual monitoring report as the report is meant to serve as a transparency tool to communicate vis-à-vis external users (it is published on the website) and as an accountability and decision-making tool for internal users (for instance, the report is to be sent to Congress).

Clearly differentiating between the three different types of monitoring exercises will provide for more fit-for-purpose information

Clearly differentiating between the three monitoring exercises (performance dialogue, the joint review, and the annual report on the SDP) should allow for more fit-for-purpose analyses in each situation. The following section on promoting the use of monitoring evidence will discuss in further detail how to best communicate monitoring information to external users.

While the performance dialogue and the joint review are exercises aimed at an internal audience, they still need to present monitoring evidence in a manner that supports decision-making (i.e. by focusing on strategic implementation challenges, explaining them through analysis and proposing solutions). A robust monitoring dashboard could include the department or agency in charge of updating it, the frequency at which the relevant indicator(s) should be updated, as well as the analysis and action plan (or proposed solutions) in case implementation gaps can be identified. Finally, the dashboard could identify whether or not the issue must be brought to a higher level of decision-making (see Figure 3.3 for the proposed performance dialogue process). Figure 3.5 showcases an example of such a dashboard.

Figure 3.5. Creating user-friendly dashboards to monitor the SP and the SDP



Source: Authors.

More generally, the information included in the dashboards should be analysed and presented in a way that is (OECD, 2018[22]):

- User-friendly, in that the information is provided using a simple structure and language, with visual information;
- Focused, in that the performance information provided is limited to the most important aspects, such as objectives, targets and activities, and is linked to the achievement of results (outcome/impacts). It is therefore important that reports on the implementation of the action plan include both strategic (outcome/impact) and operational (process/ output) information, even if the main object of the meeting is the monitoring of the action plan.
- Relevant, in that only the points requiring decisions or encountering implementation bottlenecks should be discussed, in order to avoid overloading the reader with non-critical information. Only information that helps decision-makers manage the implementation of the strategy and key policy decisions should be provided. Where possible, the reports should include explanations about poor outcomes and identify steps taken or planned to resolve problems.

Quality monitoring: quality assurance and quality control

Quality means credible, timely and relevant data and analysis. There are three main ways to ensure that the data and analysis are of quality: ensuring capacity, developing quality assurance and quality control.

The state public administration needs to upgrade its capacity to monitor the Plan

Establishing a monitoring set-up that can produce credible, timely and relevant data and analysis requires skills and capacities, which can be defined as "the totality of the strengths and resources available within the machinery of government. It refers to the organisational, structural and technical systems, as well as individual competencies that create and implement policies in response to the needs of the public, consistent with political direction" (OECD, 2008[23]). In particular, two types of skills are crucial:

- Analytical skills to identify indicators, review and analyse data and formulate judgements or conclusions (Zall, Ray and Rist, 2004[13]).
- Communication skills to structure monitoring reports and dashboards in a way that is attractive to the end user (OECD, 2018[22]).

In order to have the necessary skills and capacities, monitoring set-ups require a critical mass of technically trained staff and managers, such as staff trained in data analytics, data sciences, communication, and in at least basic information technology (Zall, Ray and Rist, 2004[13]). All three of these elements rest on the availability of dedicated resources (human and financial) for the monitoring function. These have been framed in a number of relevant cases as "delivery units" or "policy implementation units" and are often located at the centre of government. Yet, currently, the state public administration does not have such resources for monitoring of the Strategic Plan.

A first step in strengthening the capacities of the state public administration may be the creation of dedicated reporting units in each of the line ministries, who would be in charge of collecting and analysing the data in the context of the performance dialogue. Moreover, the centre of government may wish to strengthen its analysis and communication skills with a dedicated delivery unit in order to provide methodological support and direction to the line ministries in preparing impactful monitoring reports.

Quality assurance mechanisms could be developed alongside current quality control

Currently, the data collected for the monitoring report are subject to an audit by a private accounting organisation. This form of quality control (i.e. looking at the end product) serves to provide assurance that

the data used for monitoring are valid and reliable, that is to say that the data collection system is consistent across time and space (validity), and that it measures actual and intended performance levels (reliability).

However, quality assurance (looking at the process) is also important. Some countries have developed mechanisms to ensure that monitoring is properly conducted, that is to say that the process of collecting and analysing respects certain quality criteria. In order to do so, countries have developed guidelines, which serve to impose a certain uniformity in this process (Zall, Ray and Rist, 2004[13]). Box 3.8 explores in more detail the difference between quality assurance and quality control.

Box 3.8. Quality assurance and quality control in monitoring

Firstly, countries have developed quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that monitoring is properly conducted, that is to say that the process of monitoring a policy respects certain quality criteria. In order to do so, countries have developed quality standards for monitoring. These standards and guidelines serve to impose a certain uniformity in the monitoring process across government (Picciotto, 2007[24]). While some governments may choose to create one standard, others may consider it more appropriate to adopt different approaches depending on the different purposes of data use (van Ooijen, Ubaldi and Welby, 2019[25]). Data cleaning activities or the automating of data collection processes can also be considered quality assurance mechanisms. Some countries have invested in the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to help identify data that deviate from established levels of quality (van Ooijen, Ubaldi and Welby, 2019[25]).

Note: In various countries, quality control mechanisms have also been developed. Mechanisms for quality control ensure that the data collection and analysis have been properly conducted to meet the pre-determined quality criteria. While quality assurance mechanisms seek to ensure credibility in how the evaluation is conducted (the process), quality control tools ensure that the end product of monitoring (the performance data) meets a certain standard for quality. Both are key elements to ensuring the robustness of a monitoring system (HM Treasury, 2011[78]). Quality control mechanisms can take the form of audits, as in Nuevo León. Approaches that seek to communicate on performance data or make them available to public scrutiny can also be included in quality control efforts in that multiple eyes are examining the data and potentially confirming the quality (van Ooijen, Ubaldi and Welby, 2019[25]).

Source: (van Ooijen, Ubaldi and Welby, 2019[25]); (Picciotto, 2007[24])

In Nuevo León, two types of guidelines may be of use. The state public administration could issue guidelines in order to clarify the working methods and tools that will support the performance dialogue to be conducted. In particular, these guidelines could specify quality assurance processes in order to strengthen the quality of the data that are collected in the context of this monitoring exercise, to be applied by every line ministry. Similarly, these guidelines may seek to clarify the criteria for escalating issues from the line ministry level to the CoG level, in order to harmonise this process across government.

Promoting the use of monitoring results

Using a system to measure the results in terms of performance and delivery is the main purpose of building a monitoring set-up. In other words, producing monitoring results serves no purpose if this information does not get to the appropriate users in a timely fashion so that the performance feedback can be used to better public decision-making, accountability and citizen information.

Communicating results to citizens

Keeping the annual monitoring report public and making data available on the Avanza NL platforms is important to maintain public accountability and engage with citizens

Greater publicity of monitoring results can increase the pressure on decision-makers for implementation and for a more systematic follow-up of recommendations, while providing accountability to citizens concerning the impact of public policies and the use of public funds.

The monitoring report for the Strategic Plan is made public every year on the council online platform (www.conl.mx/evaluacion).Similarly, the government report on the State Development Plan can be found on the government of Nuevo León website, which constitutes a first step in providing information to the public. However, the current monitoring report is not user friendly due to its length. The report includes an executive summary, which is a useful tool for diffusing key messages to citizens. Nevertheless, the executive summary is over ten pages long, separates the main findings from their associated recommendations and does not give a description of major issues encountered in the implementation of the Plan. A shorter and punchier executive summary may be more impactful in reaching stakeholders and the general public alike. Moreover, contrarily to the annual "*Informe de gobierno*", the monitoring report is not very visual.

Overall, the format and timeline of the communication report on the advancement of the Strategic Plan could be revised to better fit its primary intended use: to reach a wider audience and inform a variety of stakeholders about the progress of the implementation of the Plan based on tangible and possibly outcome indicators. To that extent, the centre of government could choose to produce a communication report on the Strategic Plan, which could be updated at mid-term and at the end of every gubernatorial mandate, i.e. every three years. This report would replace the current monitoring/evaluation report conducted by the council and would be designed primarily as a communication tool, so it should have a clear summary and be accompanied by clear messages for the press.

The council has also created an online platform, which is currently under construction, which seeks to provide up-to-date information on the evaluation of the Strategic Plan's indicators. In order to ensure timely updates and minimal use of extra resources, the platform could be directly updated by the state public administration. The platform could focus on the indicators from the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan in order to ensure more focused communication of the objectives that concern and affect citizens. Importantly, the indicators defined for the State Development Plan should be aligned with those of the Strategic Plan and reflect the underlying theory of change. This could be shown on platforms similar to those created by other Mexican states, such as MIDE Jalisco (see Box 3.9). *Avanza NL* should thereby seek to remain as simple to use and up-to-date as possible.

Box 3.9. MIDE Jalisco: Good practice of transparent reporting of monitoring information

MIDE Jalisco is the comprehensive monitoring strategy of the state of Jalisco, operated by its Planning, Administration and Finances Secretariat and involving 35 state executive agencies and entities. It facilitates dynamic and periodic monitoring of the quantitative indicators pertaining to the goals of the state's Governance and Development Plan. This monitoring mechanism contains 27 long-term impact-level indicators on the development of the state, 133 mid-term indicators measuring direct impact on the population, as well as 194 indicators that capture short and mid-term information on the implementation of programmes and policies. MIDE Jalisco has data dating back to 2006 for most of its indicators.

In addition to being a well-coordinated, inter-institutional and centralized platform for monitoring Jalisco's strategic planning instrument, MIDE Jalisco represents a good practice for effectively communicating

monitoring results to stakeholders. This is because MIDE Jalisco is hosted on an online platform, where members of academia, the press, CSOs and the public can access the indicators as open-source data. Furthermore, since these indicators are updated at least once a month (and more frequently if the source of the data allows), relevant stakeholders can access monitoring results in real (or near-real) time. Thus, this system fosters citizen participation and accountability. This participation is further facilitated by the existence of MIDE Jalisco's Citizen Council, which allows for the collaboration between public servants, experts and citizens to improve indicator selection and target setting.

Sources: (State of Jalisco, 2020[26]) (Elmqvist et al., 2018[27]) (OECD/CAF/ECLAC, 2018[28])

The state public administration and the council could consider developing communication strategies in order to increase public awareness and engagement in the Plan

Besides the communication report and the Avanza NL platform, the council and the state public administration could develop other communication tools in order to reach a wide audience. These could include social media strategies, newsletters with focuses on council actions and editorials in local newspapers (World Bank, 2017[68]), such as the newsletter, social media outlets and editorial column that the Council has on the local media Verificado. It could be useful to this end for the council to allocate a portion of its yearly budget towards communication.

Another way to increase public engagement in the Plan and its monitoring would be to collect periodic feedback on the Strategic Plan and its implementation through a survey of the general population, business leaders and civil society organisations. This survey could be conducted in collaboration with INEGI and the National Survey on Government Quality and Impact (INEGI, 2019[19]), which has experience in conducting opinion surveys on similar topics. It would be good to provide incentives to some of the NGOS to ensure that this could be published.

Ensuring the uptake of monitoring results in decision-making

Increasing the impact of monitoring results will require the development of a performance narrative focused on addressing inconsistencies in implementation

While preparing fit-for-purpose monitoring analysis is important, as it gives users quick and easy access to clear monitoring results, they do not systematically translate to better uptake of the outcomes in decision-making. In fact, it is pivotal that monitoring evidence be presented in a way that is compelling to its audience. Monitoring dashboards should include a narrative on performance, interpreting and using the results (The World Bank, 2017[12]) to understand implementation gaps and propose corrective policy action in a way that creates a coherent and impactful narrative. In order to create such a narrative, it may be necessary to filter the relevant data and to focus the information presented on the most pressing bottlenecks or the reforms with the biggest potential impact. Key messages, takeaways and suggested courses of action should accompany any raw data (i.e. indicators) (Zall, Ray and Rist, 2004[13]).

Increasing stakeholder engagement in the development of the Plan's indicators matters for monitoring and implementation

Moreover, involving stakeholders in the design of the monitoring set-up can increase the legitimacy of the resulting evidence and ultimately lead to greater impact in decision-making. In fact, cross country evidence shows that it is important to create ownership and manage change in both the public and private sectors when seeking to implement such an ambitious transformation programme (The World Bank, 2017[12]). Involving internal and external stakeholders in the definition of indicators may improve their quality as stakeholders may sometimes be better placed in order to identify which dimensions of change should

garner the most attention (DG NEAR, 2016[15]), in order words what output indicators best measure the progression of the causal chain (outcome/ impact).

The council itself is meant to involve stakeholders. Yet, the oversight of the council in the definition of the Plan indicators could have been stronger[6]. Revising the Plan could be an opportunity for the council to revise the indicators, in order to create buy-in among the implementers, within and outside the administration (through the composition of the council itself). Similarly, the state public administration (each ministry or entity) could consider asking the council for advice when selecting the indicators for the implementation action plan, in order to ensure that there is a common vision for how to operationalize the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan.

Monitoring for results implies creating feedback loops to institutionalise the use of monitoring results

Formal organisations and institutional mechanisms constitute a sound foundation for use of evidence in policy and decision-making (Results for America, 2017[18]). Mechanisms that enable the creation of feedback loops between monitoring and implementation of policies can be incorporated either:

- in the monitoring process itself, such as through the performance cycle (whereby performance evidence is discussed either at the level of the individual line ministry or at the CoG);
- through the incorporation of performance findings into other processes, for instance the policy-making cycle, the annual performance assessment of senior public sector executives, the budget cycle or discussions in congress.

As discussed in the section clarifying the monitoring set-up, the creation of a performance dialogue could allow practitioners and decision-makers to use monitoring evidence to identify implementation issues, constraints and adapt their efforts/resources in order to solve them. In particular, linking the strategic objectives with individual performance objectives is key to creating incentives for results in the state public administration, particularly at the level of senior public sector executives and leadership. There is a need to ensure the participation of government officials, such as heads of agencies or departments and to ensure that their organisation is contributing to the achievement of high-priority cross-government outcomes such as the Strategic Plan. In Chile, for example, both collective and individual incentives have been used in order to promote public sector performance in line with strategic objectives (see Box 3.10 for a more detailed explanation of this system).

Box 3.10. The monitoring systems and accompanying incentives for performance in Chile

The Chilean monitoring system has 3 main actors: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Social Development, and the line ministries. The system is comprised of four sub-systems that monitor the following elements :

- The H form (*Formulario H)*: a document that accompanies the Budget Bill and comprises performance indicators that include qualitative information on public goods and services. This is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance.
- Programme monitoring with the objective of following up on programme execution and measuring progress against targets, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance.
- Social programmes monitoring, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development.
- Internal management indicators *(Indicadores de Gestión Interna)* that focus on internal processes and procedures.

In parallel, there are three main mechanisms to create incentives for performance:

- The Management Improvement Programme (*Programa de Mejoramiento de la Gestión)* that grants bonuses to public servants who reach specific targets.
- Collective performance agreements (*Convenios de desempeño colectivo*) that encourage team work within work units towards annual institutional targets.
- Individual performance agreements (*Convenios de desempeño individual*) that set strategic management targets for every civil servant.

Source: (Irarrazaval and Ríos, 2014[29])

Other uses of monitoring results also include using the data for evaluations, supporting strategic and long-term planning efforts by providing baseline information and communicating to the public (see discussion above). Moreover, monitoring information produced through the performance dialogue could be used to feed into the budget cycle. Given that the performance dialogue should be linked to the monitoring of budget programmes (see previous section on clarifying the monitoring set-up and how these are linked through the action plan), the evidence produced through this exercise could provide useful information to the congress about the efficiency and effectiveness of budgetary spending through spending reviews. According to data from the budgeting and public expenditures survey (OECD, 2007[30]), spending reviews are a widely used tool in OECD countries as part of the budget cycle, which can be informed by monitoring data (Robinson, 2014[31]) (Smismans, 2015[32]) (The World Bank, 2017[12]). Finally, monitoring evidence may be used in the budgetary cycle through performance budgeting practices, as can be seen in Box 3.3.

Box 3.11. Main models of performance budgeting

The OECD has identified 4 main models of performance budgeting, which reflect the different strengths of the links between performance evidence and budgeting:

- **presentational**, where the outputs, outcomes and performance indicators are presented separately from the main budget document.
- **performance informed**, which includes performance metrics within the budget document and involves restructuring of budget document on the basis of programmes. This is the form of performance budgeting that many OECD countries have adopted.
- **managerial performance budgeting** is a variant on performance informed budgeting. It focuses on managerial impacts and changes in organisational behaviour, achieved through combined use of budget and related performance information.
- **direct performance budgeting** establishes a direct link between results and resources, usually implying contractual type mechanisms that directly link budget allocations to the achievement of results.

Source: (OECD, 2018[33])

Recommendations

To clarify the monitoring set-up to better support the delivery of the plans:

- Adopt a comprehensive definition of monitoring to establish a shared understanding of its objectives and modalities within the public sector. Such a definition could read as follows :
  - Monitoring is a routine process of data collection and analysis of the data to identify gaps in the implementation of a public intervention. The objectives of monitoring are to facilitate planning and operational decision-making by providing evidence to measure performance and help raise specific questions to identify implementation delays and bottlenecks. It can also strengthen accountability and public information, as information regarding the use of resources, efficiency of internal management processes and outputs of policy initiatives is measured and publicised.
- Clarify the roles of the key actors, including the council and the state public administration.
  - This requires updating the Strategic Planning Law and its regulation, and giving an explicit legal mandate to each of the actors, to clarify their respective responsibilities: collecting data, analysing data, using data, coordinating and promoting monitoring, designing guidelines for monitoring, etc.
  - Update the internal regulations of the secretariats and their entities in order to clarify their role in monitoring the Plans.
- Clarify, for example through guidelines, the different monitoring set-ups – including the actors involved, the timeline, the methodology and tools for monitoring, for each type of main objective pursued by monitoring:
  - operational decision-making (i);
  - accountability related to the use of resources, the efficiency of internal management processes, or the outputs of a given policy initiative (ii);
  - The information provided to citizens and stakeholders on whether the efforts carried out by the government are producing the expected results (iii).
- Set-up a performance dialogue within the state public administration in order to improve operational decision-making at the level of line ministries and of the centre of government (CoG), regarding both the SP and the SDP simultaneously.
  - Centre this performance dialogue around the action plan to monitor the lines of action (processes) and strategies (outputs) which are common to the SP and the SDP, at the level of line ministries, on a quarterly basis (thus at the same time as the line ministries monitor their budgetary programmes).
  - Identify common criteria in order to elevate the issue to the CoG (executive office of the governor) if identified implementation problems have not been lifted after two quarters.
  - Raise implementation issues that would require cross-ministerial coordination and mobilisation of additional resources at the cabinet meetings on an annual basis.
- Conduct an annual joint review of the SDP and SP objectives between the council's thematic commissions and the secretariats. Have each secretary present a preliminary version of the data and analysis to be presented to the cabinet meetings for this review, while the commissioners provide potential insights on why some indicators have progressed or not, and offer support in implementation where relevant and possible.
- Produce a communication leaflet on the SP. This communication leaflet, which could be updated every three years by the state public administration, would replace the current monitoring/

evaluation report conducted by the council and could be designed first and foremost as a communication tool.

- Harmonise the tools and working methods used by the state public administration and the council in order to monitor the SDP and the SDP:
  - Design a dashboard for the performance dialogue, which includes information concerning both the implementation of the action plan, as well as that of the SP and the SDP outcome/impact indicators (see Figure 3.5 for an example of a dashboard). To elaborate these dashboards, the state public administration could draw on a range of good practices. For instance, the current citizen councillors who belong to the private sector could share their best practices with the public servants in regards to preparing dashboards and monitoring strategies.
  - Elaborate guidelines for the commission and their technical secretariats on how to conduct the annual performance review, in order to clarify the agenda of review sessions, the role of the commissions, the tools they may use, and how decisions should be taken.

To promote the quality of monitoring

- Clarify the coherence between the indicators and the Strategic Plan's layers.
- Explicitly link each prioritised opportunity area to at least one outcome/impact level indicator. A single opportunity area could be associated to several indicators as long as the latter are linked to each other following causal logic.
  - Diversify the type of indicators used to measure the achievement of priority/opportunity areas, in order to capture all core aspects of each policy objective.
  - Consider including beside each prioritised opportunity area, the relevant output level indicators (and their long-term targets) from the State Development Plan to clarify the causal logic of the indicators.
- Strengthen the robustness of the Plan's indicators.
  - Consider identifying policy-actionable indicators, and impact and context indicators calculated on the basis of international and national statistical data.
  - For each indicator include key background information in order to facilitate its monitoring and evaluation, including baselines and targets.
  - Assess the soundness of indicators against the RACER model and replace the indicators that do not meet these criteria.
- Provide fit-for-purpose and user-friendly analysis in the dashboards.
- Increase the state public administration's capacities to monitor the Strategic Plan
  - Develop skills in the state public administration to include analytical skills as well as communication skills.
  - Dedicate specific resources to monitoring in the state public administration, in order to have a critical mass of technically trained staff and managers, and the appropriate IT tools.
  - Create dedicated units in each line ministry.
- Develop quality assurance mechanisms in addition to the current quality control mechanisms in place.
  - Design guidelines (state public administration) in order to strengthen the quality of the data collection process, to be applied by every line ministry. Clarify in these guidelines the criteria for escalating issues from the line ministry level to the CoG level.
  - Design guidelines (council) in order to clarify the commissions' working methods for the yearly monitoring review exercise.

To strengthen communication and the use of the monitoring results:

- Produce a communication leaflet (state public administration), every three years, in order to inform the general public.
- Update the *Avanza Nuevo León* platform (state public administration) with indicators from the Plan, at regular intervals (e.g. indicators for three opportunity areas every year).
- Promote the development of a performance narrative in the monitoring dashboards in order to promote the uptake of performance information by decision-makers.
- Feed monitoring evidence produced through the performance dialogue into the budget-cycle.

Notes

[1] Thus at the same time as the line ministries monitor their budgetary programmes

[2] Education, Health, Social Development, Security and Justice

[3] Art and Culture, Sports, Values and Citizen's participation

[4] https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/endireh/2016/

[5] This could also apply to the State Development Plan 2016-2021 and its implementation programmes

[6] They were defined by the consultancy that supported the Council in defining the Plan

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4 Creating a Sound Evaluation System for the Strategic Plan of Nuevo León

This chapter provides an in-depth and comparative analysis of the mechanisms in place to evaluate the Strategic Plan 2015-2030. To this end, the chapter adopts a systemic approach to policy evaluation, providing an overview of the Nuevo Leon's government evaluation system. It includes a comparative analysis of Nuevo León's institutional set-up for evaluation, as well as its tools for promoting the quality and use of evaluation. OECD findings suggest that creating a sound evaluation system for the Plan will involve clarifying the resources available for evaluations, as well as their intended use, by establishing a policy framework for evaluation. Strengthening the competences of the council in regard to evaluation will also play a key role in ensuring the quality of its evaluations.

Introduction

Evaluation is critical in order to understand whether policies are improving and sustaining wellbeing and prosperity. Providing an understanding of what policies work, why, for whom, and under what circumstances, contributes to generating feedback loops in the policy-making process. Policy evaluation also makes a fundamental contribution to sound public governance by helping governments effectively design and implement reforms with better outcomes. It can therefore promote public accountability, increase public sector effectiveness, and ensure progress towards long-term government goals (OECD, 2020[1]). This is particularly pertinent in Nuevo León: policy evaluation and its strategic use throughout the policy cycle can support strategic planning by improving the links between policy interventions and their outcomes and impact.

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of Nuevo León's evaluation system, including a comparison with OECD member practices on institutionalisation, quality and use of policy evaluation. The chapter takes a systemic approach to policy evaluation, allowing for a full discussion of the mechanisms through which policy evaluation can contribute to Nuevo León's policy cycle, strategic planning and policy tools such as regulation and performance budgeting. It provides a description of Nuevo León's institutional framework for evaluation, as well as its tools for promoting quality and use. Moreover, it frames Nuevo León's evaluation system in an overall Mexican context, benchmarking it against selected states, such as Jalisco and Mexico City among others. The analysis of current gaps in Nuevo León's evaluation system provides an opportunity to propose concrete and precise recommendations for improvement.

Evaluation reflects a mainstream concern to improve government performance and to promote evidence informed policy-making. Policy evaluation is indeed referenced in the legal framework of a large majority of countries and in all Mexican States (CONEVAL, 2017[2]), and at the constitutional level in some cases. However, most OECD countries also face significant challenges promoting policy evaluation across government. They also face challenges in using evaluation results in policymaking, as there is no coherent whole-of-government approach in this area, and a lack of appropriate skills and capacities (OECD, 2020[1]). The creation of an evaluation eco-system depends on the local political and cultural context as well as on the different drivers and objectives (such as improving budgetary performance, or having a better understanding of the impact of social policies). In Nuevo León, monitoring, performance budgeting and including citizens in the public decision-making process are mobilised to ensure government effectiveness and efficiency, and to promote accountability. This is particularly true in regard to the Strategic Plan, for which the Nuevo León Council for Strategic Planning was created, with the purpose of advising the state on strategic planning and its evaluation (Article 7 of the Strategic Plan). However, the state of Nuevo León still lacks a sound and robust evaluation system as is commonly understood among OECD countries, both from a whole-of-government perspective and for its Strategic Plan. For instance, the council seems to "monitor" rather than "evaluate" the Strategic Plan. However, Nuevo León has institutions, actors and capacities that have the potential to be leveraged in order to establish a sound evaluation system.

Building a sound institutional framework for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan

A sound institutional framework for evaluation can help to incorporate isolated and unplanned evaluation efforts into more formal and systematic approaches, which aim to prioritise and set standards for methodologies and practices (Gaarder and Briceño, 2010[3]). An institutional framework can provide incentives to ensure that quality evaluations are effectively conducted. Such a framework can also contribute to improving the comparability and consistency of results across time, institutions, and disciplines (OECD, 2020[1]).

The institutionalisation of evaluation is key to sustaining a sound evaluation system, and ultimately delivering good results. Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach for how countries have proceeded with institutionalising their evaluation practices, a solid institutional framework usually includes:

- Some clear and comprehensive definition(s) of evaluation. Indeed, OECD data (OECD, 2020[1]) shows that more than half of the survey respondents (27 countries) have adopted a formal definition of policy evaluation.
- A practice embedded in a legal and policy framework. OECD data shows that a majority of countries (29 countries, 23 OECD countries) have developed a legal framework that guides policy evaluation while half of surveyed countries (21 in total, including 17 OECD countries) have developed a policy framework for organising policy evaluation across government (OECD, 2020[1]).
- The identification of institutional actors with allocated resources and mandates to oversee or carry out evaluations, as is the case in the vast majority of countries. OECD data shows that 40 countries (including 34 OECD countries) have at least one institution with responsibilities related to policy evaluation across government (OECD, 2020[1]).
- Macro-level guidance on who carries out evaluation, when and how.

Nuevo León pursues several complementary objectives through evaluation

Although Nuevo León explicitly recognises the importance of evaluation for accountability, it does not fully communicate its value in terms of policy learning. Policy evaluation facilitates learning, as it clarifies why and how a policy was or has the potential to be successful or not by informing policy makers about the reasons and causal mechanisms leading to policy success or failure. At the same time, policy evaluation has the potential to improve public accountability and transparency. It also legitimises the use of public funds and resources as it provides citizens and other stakeholders with information on whether the efforts carried out by the government, including allocating financial resources, are producing the expected results (OECD, 2018[4]). Learning and accountability are therefore complementary objectives that Nuevo León can explicitly pursue while conducting evaluations.

The council's evaluation function currently focuses on increasing accountability, rather than on improving policy learning. This is partially due to the conflation of evaluation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan (see chapter 2). The annual evaluation report of 2016-2017 dedicates a whole section to how the council promotes accountability through its responsibility to inform the public about the progress of the Plan and its evaluation. More explicitly, this evaluation report is qualified as the council's "first accountability exercise" (Nuevo Leon Council, 2017[5]). As such, there is an apparent lack of recognition of the full objectives and potential value of the evaluation of the Strategic Plan, which is further reinforced, as strategic planning law does not explicitly state the objectives for evaluating the plan. Evaluation is not only about accountability, but also about understanding why the objectives have or have not been achieved, and what can be done in order to improve the public intervention in question.

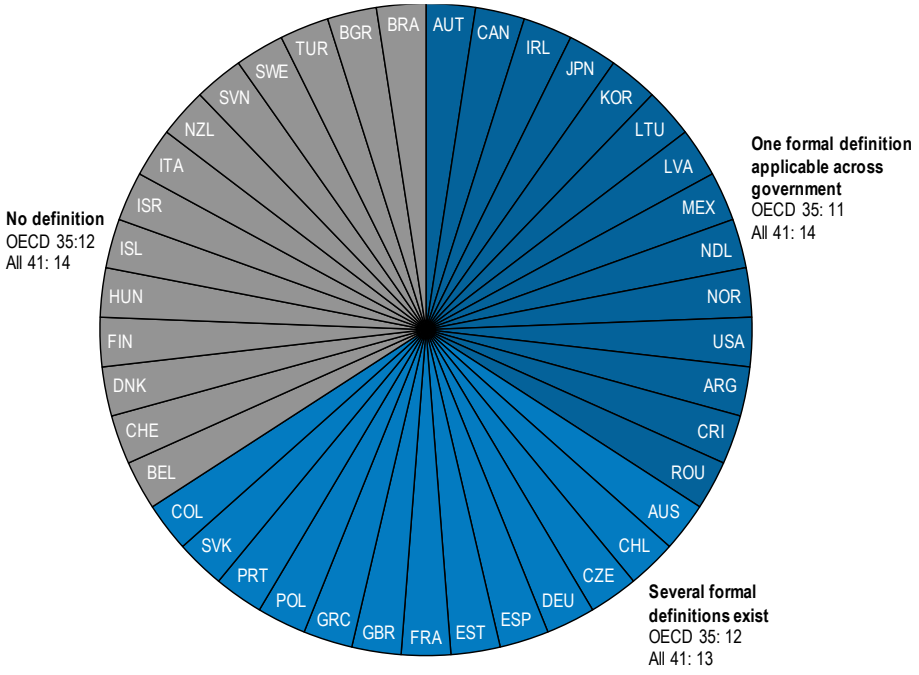
Making the objectives for evaluation clear and communicating those objectives in the Strategic Planning Law would create a shared understanding for decision-makers, evaluators and citizens about the importance and purpose of this policy tool.

The definitions of evaluation adopted across government in Nuevo León could be more precise

According to OECD data, a majority of OECD countries (23 out of 35) have one (11 countries) or several (12 countries) definition(s) of evaluation (See Figure 4.1). In some cases, this definition is embedded in a legal document. For instance, Japan defines evaluation in a law, the Government Policy Evaluations Act (Act No. 86 of 2001), while Argentina defines evaluation in the decree 292/2018, which designates the body responsible for preparing and executing the annual monitoring and evaluation plan for social policies

and programmes (2018[92]). Other countries define evaluation in guidelines or manuals as is the case for Mexico (general guidelines for the evaluation of the general public administration programmes (2007[6])), Costa Rica (manual of evaluation for public interventions (2018[7])), and Colombia (guide for the evaluation of public policies (2016[8])).

Figure 4.1. Governments' formal definition of policy evaluation



Note: n=41 (35 OECD member countries). Kazakhstan answered that they do not know if there is a formal definition for policy evaluation. Answers reflect responses to the question, "Does your government have a formal definition of policy evaluation?" and "Please provide the definition/s and the reference to the relevant documents".
Source: OECD Survey on Policy Evaluation (2018).

In Nuevo León, two definitions of evaluation co-exist. Firstly, according to the General Guidelines of the Executive Branch for the Consolidation of Results-Based Budget and the Performance Evaluation System, evaluation can be defined as " the systematic and objective analysis of policies, budgetary programmes and institutional performance, which aims to determine the relevance and achievement of its objectives and goals, as well as its efficiency, effectiveness, quality, results and impact" (State of Nuevo Leon, 2017[9]).

The existence of this definition is a useful first step in creating a shared understanding within the public sector of the aims, tools and features of policy evaluation. Secondly, the Strategic Planning Law provides a specific definition of evaluation applicable to the Strategic Plan and the role of the council in this regard (Article 18). According to this law, monitoring and evaluation refer to the measurement of effectiveness and efficiency of planning instruments and their execution. Additionally, it states that these should be carried out by the council, in collaboration with dependencies and entities of the state administration. Yet, this definition conflates monitoring and evaluation, which are two complementary but distinct practices, with different dynamics and goals (see Table 4.1). From an analytic and practical perspective, conflating the practices of monitoring and evaluation within a single definition makes the provisions related to them unclear.

Table 4.1. Comparing policy monitoring and policy evaluation

Policy monitoring	Policy evaluation
Ongoing (leading to operational decision-making)	Episodic (leading to strategic decision-making)
Monitoring systems is generally suitable for the broad issues/questions that were anticipated in the policy design	Issue-specific
Measures are developed and data are usually gathered through routinized processes	Measures are usually customized for each policy evaluation
Attribution is generally assumed	Attribution of observed outcomes is usually a key question
Because it is ongoing, resources are usually a part of the programme or organisational infrastructure	Targeted resources are needed for each policy evaluation
The use of the information can evolve over time to reflect changing information needs and priorities	The intended purposes of a policy evaluation are usually negotiated upfront

Source: Open Government in Biscay (2019[10])

Indeed, policy monitoring refers to a continuous function that uses systematic data collection of specific indicators to provide policy makers and stakeholders with information regarding progress and achievements of an ongoing public policy initiative and/or the use of allocated funds (OECD, 2016[11]; OECD-DAC, 2009[12]). Policy evaluation refers to the structured and objective assessment of the design, implementation and/or results of a future, ongoing or completed policy initiative. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of policy objectives, as well as to assess dimensions such as public policies' efficiency, effectiveness, impact or sustainability. As such, policy evaluation refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of a policy (OECD, 2016[11]; OECD-DAC, 2009[12]). Therefore, while monitoring is descriptive and an important (but not exclusive) source of information that can be used within the context of an evaluation, policy evaluation is a different activity that seeks to analyse and understand cause-effect links between a policy intervention and its results.

The absence of a clear and comprehensive definition applicable to the Strategic Plan undermines the ability of the state public administration and of the council to promote and sustain a robust evaluation system. Having a clear and comprehensive definition of evaluation would raise the awareness of practitioners and stakeholders alike, as well as clarify the goals and methods of evaluation in comparison to other similar practices (such as monitoring, spending reviews, performance management, etc.).

Therefore, Nuevo León would benefit from updating the Strategic Planning Law and/or its regulations to include two distinct definitions of monitoring and evaluation. In doing so, Nuevo León may wish to use –or refer to the already existing definition in the General guidelines of the Executive Branch for the consolidation of the Results-Based Budget and the Performance Evaluation System.

Similarly to a majority of OECD countries, Nuevo León has embedded the evaluation of its Strategic Plan in a legal framework

Another key component of the institutionalisation of policy evaluation is the existence of a legal or policy framework, insofar as they provide a key legal basis for undertaking evaluations, as well as guidance on when and how to carry them out. Legal and policy frameworks may also formally determine the institutional actors, their mandates and the resources needed to oversee and carry out evaluations (OECD, 2020[1]).

Several paths exist for the legal institutionalisation of evaluation practices. As shown through the OECD (2018) survey, the need for policy evaluation is recognised at the highest level, with a large majority of countries having requirements for evaluation in their primary and secondary legislation, and sometimes even in their constitution. Mexico, for instance, has provisions related to policy evaluation embedded at all three levels. The National Council of Social Development Policy Evaluation (CONEVAL) is an example of

an institution responsible for evaluation whose mandates are inscribed at various legal levels (see Box 4.1).

Box 4.1. CONEVAL, the autonomous agency responsible for evaluation in Mexico

Creating and embedding CONEVAL in a multi-level legal framework:

The National Council of Social Development Policy Evaluation (Consejo Nacional de la Política de Desarrollo Social, CONEVAL), was created in 2004 through the General Law of Social Development. The law, which aims to create a monitoring and evaluation system in Mexico, established CONEVAL as a decentralised body with budgetary, technical and management autonomy charged with measuring poverty and evaluating social development policy.

In addition, the Federal Budget and Fiscal Responsibility Law (2006), that established the Performance Evaluation System and the General Evaluation Guidelines, determined the coordination between CONEVAL and other entities in charge of evaluation in the federal public administration.

The Political Constitution of the United Mexican States was amended in 2014, with a decree that defined CONEVAL as an autonomous constitutional body with its own legal personality and heritage. Accordingly, it has the mandate to set standards, co-ordinate the evaluation exercises of the National Social Development Policy and its subsidiary actions, and provide guidelines to define, identify and measure poverty. In practice, the agency carries or contracts out evaluations of the social policies developed by the Mexican government.

Source: Adapted from (Cámara de Diputados del H.Congreso De la Unión, 2018[13])Federal Budget and Fiscal Responsibility Law [Ley General de Desarollo Social] ; and (Cámara de Diputados del H.Congreso De la Unión, 2020[14])Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicano [Political Constitution of the United Mexican States].

At the state level, data from CONEVAL collected in 2017 shows that all federal entities of Mexico have a normative instrument that establishes obligations regarding the evaluation of social policies and programmes, guidelines on carrying out evaluations and requirements to publish their results (CONEVAL, 2017[2]).

Nuevo León is one such state that has implemented a legal framework for evaluation, as part of their Performance-Based Management System ("*Gestion para Resultados*"), in line with the national guidelines. Indeed, since the 2006 Law on Budget and Treasury Responsibility (LFPRH), Mexico has transitioned to a Performance-Based Management System. One major step has been the implementation of a Result-Based Budgeting process (RBB), which attempts to link allocations to the achievement of specific results, and the development of a Performance Evaluation System (SED). The SED is defined as a set of methodological instruments used to conduct objective assessments of programme performance and impacts based on the monitoring of actions and the use of indicators (SHCP, 2018[15]).

At the national level, the main institutions responsible for the implementation of the RBB-SED system are the Secretariat of Finance and Public Funds (SHCP) and the CONEVAL. Created in 2008, the National Council for Accounting Harmonization (CONAC) also plays an important role at the federal and municipal level. It is in charge of issuing accounting norms and establishing guidelines on programme classification and public accounts structure.

Nuevo León and the other Mexican states, are bound by the national frameworks. In particular, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Mexican constitution state that resources are not evaluated by an independent unit, but by

the instances established by the Federal Government and the states. This evaluation process is carried out through an Annual Evaluation Programme (PAE) devised by each state, which establishes a list of programmes and funds that need to be evaluated within the year.

In Nuevo León, the Secretariat of Finance and General Treasury of the State devises the Annual Evaluation Programme in coordination with the Comptroller. In 2020, 25 programmes are to be evaluated, such as the "*Nuevo León Respira*", a programme monitored by the Secretariat for Sustainable Development. In 2019, the final reports of 13 evaluations were published on the Nuevo León website (Gobierno de Nuevo Leon, 2020[16]).

The PAE specifies which type of evaluation should be conducted (design, processes, results or impact) by the designated administrative units, court or institutions. They must follow the guidelines established by the CONEVAL and the Secretariat of Finance who is also in charge of coordinating the evaluations and of monitoring the selection of external evaluators, (research institutes, universities, development organisations, etc.). Nuevo León has put a management response mechanism in place for evaluations conducted within the Annual Evaluation Programme. The administrative entities must consider the evaluation's recommendations ("*Aspectos Susceptibles de Mejora*"), by implementing a Management Improvement Action Plan (PAMGE).

The specific evaluation of the Strategic Plan is embedded in primary legislation, the most common level chosen among OECD and non-OECD countries. In particular, the evaluation of the Strategic Plan is embedded in the state Strategic Planning Law, the primary legislation document that organises and supports the Strategic Plan. This law is also accompanied by regulations intended to regulate its provisions.

The law and its regulations give a clear and comprehensive mandate to the council to carry out the evaluation of the Strategic Plan, in a number of different aspects:

- Article 7 of the law states that the council will be an advisory body of the state executive in terms of strategic planning and evaluation, and specifies the actors that form the council.
- Concerning the commissioning of evaluations to external evaluators, article 9 of the regulations also mentions that the commissions can hire additional personnel depending on the evaluation to be carried out and the availability of resources.
- Article 19 of the law states that the council should evaluate the results of the Strategic Plan and the State Plan annually, based on the evolution of strategic projects and priority programmes, and the measurement of economic and social activity.
- Regarding the use of evaluation results, article 21 of the law states that the results of the performance evaluations carried out by the council shall be presented to the Head of Executive, and article 22 bis specifies that they should be sent to state congress after decisions are made upon the implementation of evaluation recommendations.

In Nuevo León, macro-level guidance on who carries out the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 and when is currently lacking

Having a legal framework for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan, in the form of a primary law accompanied by regulations, demonstrates the importance that the state of Nuevo León attributes to this practice, within the council and across government. However, the presence of a legal framework for the evaluation of the Plan is not enough to sustain a robust evaluation system. As per the evaluation of the Strategic Plan, a robust evaluation system needs to specify what should be evaluated, the actors involved, their mandates, the timeline, the methodology and tools for evaluating the Plan.

Article 19 of the Strategic Planning Law specifies that the council should evaluate the Strategic Plan on a yearly basis. However, given the large scope and number of objectives of the Plan, it is not possible to evaluate the plan in its totality – or even a single broad objective of the plan – within a single year.

Conducting a proper evaluation requires time and significant resources, and most importantly needs to be supported by a clear methodology.

A proper evaluation would require a more focused approach. The council should define a limited number of evaluations to be carried out in a given year, which should mainly focus on how specific policies or programmes, which the government is implementing, are contributing to the achievement of a specific plan's objectives. For this, the council needs to develop a specific timeline for evaluations (for example for data collection, delivering the evaluation report, etc.). Another crucial element that currently lacks any form of methodology is the way in which the recommendations based on the evaluation results should be communicated – in particular to the state public administration – and what types of formal responses, if any, should follow them. For example, the legal framework of Jalisco contains a large set of provisions, including evaluation planning; the criteria for undertaking and publishing evaluations, and following-up on results, among others (see Box 4.2).

Box 4.2. Jalisco's legal framework for evaluation

Jalisco, like all other federal entities of Mexico, has a legal framework that establishes obligations to evaluate social policies and programmes, as well as guidelines that include criteria for performing evaluations and publishing them and their results. However, Jalisco stands out as the only state that also has legal instruments that include provisions regarding evaluation planning and follow-up on evaluation results. The state's legal framework also specifies the objectives of evaluation, the use of evaluation results for budgetary decisions, the actors for evaluation and the definition of indicators (Coneval, 2017[89]). Precisely, in terms of:

- Evaluation planning: Jalisco's evaluation plan specifies the programmes to be evaluated, the types of evaluation that apply, and the deadlines by which the evaluations should be undertaken.
- Publication of evaluations: Jalisco's legal framework for evaluation requires the publication of evaluations, including information on those responsible for the evaluation and evaluators, the cost and purpose of the evaluation, the methodology used, the main results, recommendations and an executive summary. In practice, the state publishes evaluations and their results accordingly.
- Follow-up on evaluation results: Jalisco's legal framework includes provisions on the use of evaluation results. Specifically, an evaluation must specify the actions to undertake, the deadlines, responsible actors and coordination mechanisms.

The state's main legal instrument is the General Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Public Programmes of the Government of Jalisco, which include definitions and provisions regarding the programmes to be evaluated, the actors responsible and the evaluation process, types and scope of evaluation, communication and use of results (State Government of Jalisco, 2017[102]). These are described in detail in Box 4.4.

Source: (EVALUA Jalisco, 2017[17])

The council could consider making the mandates and timing of evaluations explicit in a policy framework

Good evaluation planning is important to ensure its quality, as well as its use. Indeed, many researchers emphasise the importance of timeliness of evaluation results to promote their use in decision-making (Leviton and Hughes, 1981[18]): the consensus is that evaluations should be thought of well in advance and

the evaluation process planned-out carefully. The general guidelines for the consolidation of Results-Budget and the Performance Evaluation System, outline to the state public administration when to conduct evaluations that are linked to budgetary programming (State of Nuevo Leon, 2017[9]).

Many country frameworks for evaluations contain provisions regarding the purpose, scope (time-period, target population, etc.) and objectives of evaluations. In Nuevo León, the guidelines mentioned above provide a useful definition of the different types of evaluations; their objectives and methodologies (see Box 4.3).

Box 4.3. Nuevo León State Government's typology of evaluation

In its Guidelines for the Consolidation of Results-Budget and the Performance Evaluation System, the Nuevo León state executive provides a typology of evaluation. They state that different types of evaluations should apply throughout the Annual Evaluation Programme:

- Design evaluation: analyses the order of the budgetary programme, considering its definition of purpose and objectives, its outputs (goods and services produced by the programme and delivered to the target population), the activities identified as necessary to produce the outputs, the assumptions under which the objectives of the programme were developed, as well as the problem that gave rise to the programme and how it has evolved as a diagnostic element. Its application is recommended for newly created budgetary programmes that have been implemented for one to two years.
- Process evaluation: analyses the operational processes (activities) developed to transform inputs into public goods and services with public value for the target population. It optimises these processes to achieve better programme results (effectiveness, efficiency). It also generates information for improving the operational management of programmes. Its application is recommended during the third year of operation of a budgetary programme.
- Consistency and results evaluation: analyses the consistency of the budgetary programme or use of state resources; the programmable federalised expenditure in terms of its design and strategic planning; the coverage, targeting, operation, and perception of the target population; and results obtained.
- Specific performance evaluation: based on a synthetic review, analyses the performance of the budgetary programme, focusing on the progress of the achievement of objectives and goals through the monitoring of performance indicators.
- Impact evaluation: analyses, with rigorous methodologies, the efficiency and effectiveness of budgetary programmes, the use of state resources, programmable federalised expenditure, as well as user satisfaction. The analysis includes quantitative and qualitative aspects. It identifies the effect that goods and services have on the beneficiaries once they use them.

Source: (State of Nuevo Leon, 2017[9])

Building on the state public administration's existing guidelines and definitions, the council could establish an evaluation framework, in order to specify what type of evaluations it will conduct, for what purpose, with what resources, and in what timeframe. This can help to support the implementation of quality evaluation and provide high-level guidance and clarity for institutions by outlining overarching best practices and goals.

Evaluation policy frameworks or requirements for government institutions to undertake regular evaluation of their policies are common practice (OECD, 2020[1]). Such frameworks exist in Spain, where there is an action plan for spending reviews and an annual plan on normative impact. Likewise, since 2017, Mexico has published an evaluation programme every year. Interestingly, CONEVAL data shows that in 2017, 30 federal entities planned their evaluations, including 16 entities that have updated their evaluation plans in the last two years, specifying the programmes to be evaluated, the types of evaluation that apply and the deadlines for carrying them out (CONEVAL, 2017[2]). Another relevant example on the subnational level that could serve as a model is the state of Jalisco's General Guidelines for the Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programmes of the Government of Jalisco (see Box 4.4). Interestingly, the state of Jalisco has an evaluation strategy (Evalúa Jalisco) whose implementation is supported by a technical council (Consejo Evalúa Jalisco) composed of academics and experts in the evaluation of public policies at national and local level (State Government of Jalisco, 2019[19]).

Box 4.4. Jalisco's General Guidelines for the Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programmes of the Government of Jalisco

These guidelines provide the technical bases for the implementation of the methods, guidelines and procedures of the State Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy for the programmes and public policies executed by the state of Jalisco (EVALUA Jalisco, 2020[20]).

More precisely, the guidelines include relevant elements for the implementation of an evaluation plan or strategy (EVALUA Jalisco, 2017[17]):

- Definitions: including the definitions of external evaluation entities, external and internal evaluation, evaluation, indicators (results, management and performance), monitoring, public programme, terms of references, evaluation units.
- Objects of evaluation: including planning instruments, budgetary programmes, etc. which must be subject to evaluation.
- The implementation of evaluations: including the evaluation process (planning, selection of the external evaluator, follow-up and verification of evaluation products, devising an improvement agenda). It also includes indications on the terms of reference (who drafts them and what information they contain, i.e. object of the evaluation, objectives, type of evaluation, methodology, data sources, expected product, criteria for selection of external evaluators), financing the evaluation, and selection of external evaluators.
- The types and scope of evaluation: including information on internal and external evaluation, a number of evaluation types (such as process, results, impact, etc.).
- The evaluation reports: including executive summary, recommendations derived from the evaluation results (given in order of priority for achieving improvement), and the technical, operational, financial and legal implications of the implementation of the recommendations.

Source: (EVALUA Jalisco, 2017[17]) (EVALUA Jalisco, 2020[20])

The Nuevo León council may wish to include several types of evaluations in its policy framework. In fact, beyond the evaluation of the impact of policy objectives, the council may also wish to carry out design evaluations. These would enable the council to provide support to the state public administration in devising action plans related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In particular, such evaluations would allow

the state to identify the existing inconsistencies in conditions for funding and implementing the action plans with measurable and assessable goals.

Finally, the council may wish to specify whether there will be any formal response mechanisms to the evaluations it will conduct, similarly to the SED's Management Improvement Action Plans. Specifically, it could distinguish between:

- evaluations of the Strategic Plan conducted on the basis of the council's mandate and of its own initiative, for which no formal response mechanism would be necessary;
- evaluations at the request of the state public administration, where a formal response mechanism from the administration to the council may be useful to ensure greater use of the evaluation evidence. The council may also wish to share these evaluations with Congress for information. An example of such a mechanism can be found in Australia's productivity commission (see Box 4.5).

Box 4.5. Australia's productivity commission: An autonomous government body

The Australian government's productivity commission is an autonomous research and advisory body that focuses on a number of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the wellbeing of Australians. At the request of the Australian Government, it provides independent and quality advice and information on key policy and regulatory issues. It also conducts self-initiated research to support the Government in its performance reporting and annual reporting, and acts as a secretariat under the council of Australian government for the inter-governmental review of government service provision.

The commission is located in the Government's treasury portfolio and its activities range across all levels of governments. It does not have executive power and does not administer government programmes. The Commission is nevertheless effective in informing policy formulation and the public debate thanks to three characteristics:

- Independence: it operates under its own legislation, and its independence is formalised through the productivity commission act. Moreover, it has its own budget allocation and permanent staff working at arm's length from government agencies. Even if the commission's work programme is largely defined by the government, its results and advice are always derived from its own analyses.
- Transparent processes: all advice, information and analysis produced and provided to government is subject to public scrutiny through consultative forums and release of preliminary findings and draft reports.
- Community-wide perspective: under its statutory guidelines, the Commission is required to take a view that encompasses the interests of the entire Australian community rather than particular ones.

Source: Australian Government. "About the Commission" and "How we operate". Accessed September 2nd 2019. https://www.pc.gov.au/about, https://www.pc.gov.au/about/operate

Promoting the quality evaluations

Quality and use of evaluations are essential to ensuring impact on policy-making, and thus on the capacity of evaluations to serve as tools for learning, accountability and better decision-making. However, both quality and use are widely recognised as some of the most important challenges faced by policy-makers

and practitioners in this area. This is due to a mix of skill gaps, heterogeneous oversights in the evaluation processes, and insufficient mechanisms for quality control and capacity for uptake of evidence (OECD, 2020[1]).

Quality and use of evaluations are also intrinsically linked, thereby increasing their significance for policy-makers. Use can be considered as a key quality factor, since the extent to which an evaluation meets the needs of different groups of users dictates its quality (Patton, 1978[21]; Kusters et al., 2011[22]; Vaessen, 2018[23]) . Likewise, evaluations that adhere to the quality standard of appropriateness – that is, evaluations that address multiple political considerations, are useful to achieve policy goals and consider possible alternatives as well as the local context – are by very definition more useful to intended users.

Quality should also be conducive to greater potential for use. Insofar as good quality evaluations benefit from greater credibility, they are likely to be given more weight in decision-making. Similarly, unused data are likely to suffer because they are not subject to critical questioning. However, in practice, it is important to recognise that quality may be associated with greater complexity of results, due to methodological requirements and limits with the use of quantitative methods, which may sometimes make the results difficult to read and to interpret for a lay audience (OECD, 2020[1]).

The council may wish to develop both quality assurance and quality control mechanisms

A majority of OECD countries have developed one or several explicit mechanisms to promote the technical quality of evaluations (OECD, 2020[1]). On the one hand, quality assurance mechanisms seek to ensure credibility in how the evaluation is conducted, that is to say that the process of evaluating a policy respects certain quality criteria. On the other hand, mechanisms for quality control ensure that the evaluation design, its planning and delivery have been properly conducted to meet pre-determined quality criteria. In that sense, quality control tools ensure that the end product of the evaluation (the report) meets a certain standard for quality. Both are key elements to ensuring the robustness of policy evaluations (HM Treasury, 2011[24]).

In Nuevo León, the council's commissions are partially composed of subject-matter experts, which could be mobilised to ensure the quality of evaluations. However, the council does not have explicit quality assurance mechanisms at present (quality standards for the evaluation process, competence requirements or skill development mechanisms, organisational measures for the promotion of quality) or control mechanisms (peer reviews of the evaluation product, meta-evaluations, self-evaluation tools and checklists, audits of the evaluation function). The council could develop one or several quality assurance or control mechanisms amongst the ones presented below.

OECD data shows that most surveyed countries have developed standards regarding both the technical quality of evaluation and its good governance. Standards are a form of quality assurance, as they enable the evaluation to be properly conducted, or ensure that the process respects certain pre-established quality criteria. In many countries, standards for good quality evaluations are embedded in guidelines, that is, non-binding documents or recommendations that aim to support governments in the design and implementation of a policy and/or practice (examples include white-books and handbooks).

International organisations have also adopted such guidelines in order to set standards for quality evaluations and the appropriate principles for their oversight (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2016[25]). At the OECD, the Development Assistance Committee's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation (OECD, 2010[26]) includes overarching considerations regarding evaluation ethics and transparency in the evaluation process, as well as technical guidelines for the design, conduct and follow-up of development evaluations by countries. Similarly, the World Bank Group's Evaluation Principles set out core evaluation principles for selecting, conducting and using evaluations (World Bank et al., 2019[27]) aimed at ensuring that all World Bank Group evaluations are technically robust as well as credible.

Guidelines have also been developed by sub-national entities. At the state level for example, Queensland, in Australia, has Government Programme Evaluation Guidelines, which outline a set of principles to support the planning and implementation of evaluation of programmes funded by the state government (see Box 4.6).

Box 4.6. Queensland Government's Programme Evaluation Guidelines

Australia's state of Queensland offers evaluation guidelines that provide minimum requirements to be met by those planning, implementing and managing evaluations of government-funded programmes. These guidelines outline principles intended to foster the quality of evaluations, both in their governance and technical aspects.

Ensuring the good governance of evaluations:

With an introduction containing several definitions and the evaluation objectives, the guidelines explain the key steps in planning an evaluation, with a particular focus on the definition of purpose and outcomes of the evaluation. They also outline practical considerations regarding the governance of the evaluation, such as determining appropriate roles, responsibilities and resources for the public officials planning and conducting the evaluation.

Ensuring the technical quality of evaluations:

The guidelines are attached to specific and practical indications regarding evaluation approaches as well as data collection. The first attachment gives detailed guidance and further resources for designing, implementing and delivering, effective and efficient evaluations. The second attachment on collecting evaluation data describes different types of data collection methods, recommendations for selecting the right method and further resources.

Source: (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2020[28]).

In 2017, all Mexican federal entities had one or several instruments that specified certain quality criteria for conducting evaluations. These include the states of Quintana Roo and Yucatán, who have developed standards for evaluator competencies, types of evaluation and evaluation planning (CONEVAL, 2017[2]) (see Box 4.7).

Box 4.7. Evaluation standards in Quintana Roo and Yucatán

Quintana Roo has guidelines and criteria for conducting and coordinating evaluations, which establish the different types of evaluations to be carried out, the use of evaluation results, the frequency at which evaluations should be carried out and specific requirements that must be met by evaluators (CONEVAL, 2018[29]). For instance, Quintana Roo's Standards for the dissemination of evaluation results from federal resources administered to federal entities (CONAC, 2015[30]) give a number of recommendations regarding:

- Annual evaluation programme: this should establish the programmes subject to evaluation, the types of evaluation that apply, and a calendar for their execution.

- Commissioning the evaluation: the commissioning, operation and supervision of the evaluation should be objective, impartial, transparent and independent.
- Drafting the Terms of References: these should include objectives, scopes, methodologies, profiles of evaluators and expected products of the evaluation.

Yucatán has a number of regulations regarding the evaluation processes undertaken in the states, which aim to strengthen the mechanisms for conducting quality, systematic and participatory evaluations (State Government of Yucatán, 2019[31]). For instance, the state's General Guidelines of the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System (State Government of Yucatán, 2016[32]) include:

- Requirements for contracting out external evaluators: such as recognised experience in the type of evaluation to be carried out, submission of a work proposal including the purpose of evaluation, the methodology, the profiles of the evaluators constituting the evaluation team, etc.
- Definition of evaluation types and their objects of application: such as performance, development, strategic, process, consistency and results, and impact evaluation.
- Recommendations on the evaluation methodology: the Technical Secretariat is responsible for approving the methodologies that apply in external and internal evaluations. The guidelines also recommend that instruments to gather data (questionnaires, interviews, etc.) be suitable and relevant.

Source: (CONEVAL, 2017[2]), (CONAC, 2015[30]), (CONEVAL, 2018[29]), (State Government of Yucatán, 2019[31]), (State Government of Yucatán, 2016[32])

Guidelines developed by countries address a wide variety of specific topics including the design of evaluation approaches, the course of action for commissioning evaluations, planning out evaluations, designing data collection methods, evaluation methodologies or the ethical conduct of evaluators. Table 4.2 below gives an overview of the different quality standards, in terms of governance and quality that OECD and non-OECD countries have included in their guidelines.

Table 4.2. Quality standards included in evaluation guidelines

	Technical Quality of evaluations						Good Governance of evaluations		
Countries	Identification and design of evaluation approaches	Course of action for commissioning evaluations	Establishment of a calendar for policy evaluation	Identification of human and financial resources	Design of data collection methods	Quality standards of evaluations	Independence of the evaluations	Ethical conduct of evaluations	None Of The Above
Australia	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○
Austria	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○
Canada	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○
Czech Republic	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○
Estonia	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	○
Finland	○	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	○
France	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Germany	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Great Britain	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○

	Technical Quality of evaluations						Good Governance of evaluations		
Countries	Identification and design of evaluation approaches	Course of action for commissioning evaluations	Establishment of a calendar for policy evaluation	Identification of human and financial resources	Design of data collection methods	Quality standards of evaluations	Independence of the evaluations	Ethical conduct of evaluations	None Of The Above
Greece	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○
Ireland	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	○	○
Italy	○	●	○	●	○	○	●	○	○
Japan	●	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	○
Korea	●	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	○
Latvia	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○
Lithuania	●	○	○	●	●	○	●	○	○
Mexico	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	○
Netherlands	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
New Zealand	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	○
Norway	●	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○
Poland	○	○	●	○	●	●	●	○	○
Portugal	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Slovakia	●	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○
Spain	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	●	○
Switzerland	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
United States	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
OECD Total									
● Yes	18	10	11	14	17	19	17	11	0
○ No	8	16	15	12	9	7	9	15	26
Argentina	○	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○
Brazil	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	○	○
Colombia	●	●	○	○	○	○	●	●	○
Costa Rica	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Kazakhstan	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○

Note: n=31 (26 OECD member countries). 11 countries (9 OECD member countries) answered that they do not have guidelines to support the implementation of policy evaluation across government. Answers reflect responses to the question, "Do the guidelines contain specific guidance related to the: (Check all that apply)".
Source: OECD Survey on Policy Evaluation (2018)

In Nuevo León, for the SED's Annual Evaluation Programme (PAE), each programme evaluation should follow several guidelines and good practices defined at the national and state level. For instance, the CONEVAL has devised the Guidelines for the Evaluation of Federal Programmes of the Federal Public Administration that establish the different types of evaluations to be carried out, the use of a matrix of indicators, the frequency at which evaluations should be carried our etc. (CONEVAL, 2007[6]). The CONAC also published its Guidelines for the Construction and Design of Performance Indicators through the Logical Framework Methodology (CONAC, 2013[33]) to help states design efficient monitoring and performance indicators. In addition, Nuevo León has published its own guidelines for the implementation

of a result-based budgeting and performance evaluation system (RBB-SED): *general Guidelines for the Consolidation of a Results-Based Budget and the Performance Evaluation System* of 2017.

Moreover, each evaluation unit is in charge of collecting and analysing a primary source of data composed of information contained in administrative records, databases, internal and/or external evaluations, public documentation and regulatory documents. Then, the unit has to answer a set of pre-defined methodological questions regarding the quality of the Result-based Indicator Matrix associated with the programme, the efficiency of programme management, the results in terms of outputs, transparency, citizen satisfaction, etc. The Result-based Indicator Matrix (MIR) is a major strategic planning tool that establishes the objectives of each programme. It includes several indicators measuring objectives, impacts and expected results, and identifies the sources of information needed for the performance management process.

The Nuevo Léon council may be interested in developing its own regulations for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan. These regulations could also be applicable across government. A methodology for evaluating the Plan should provide the objectives of the evaluation, its precise scope, the types of evaluation (design, implementation, and impact), the methods of data collection and guidance for carrying out or commissioning evaluations. In order to do so, Nuevo León may wish to draw inspiration from the guidelines developed by France Stratégie (see Box 4.8), as well as from the general positioning of this institution in the French government apparatus.

Box 4.8. France Stratégie and its evaluation guidelines

France Stratégie is a French agency attached to the Prime Minister but operating at arms' length from the government that provides expertise on major social and economic issues through ex post evaluations of public policies, analysis notes, debates and consultative exercises. The institution has issued guidelines on impact evaluations to help decision-makers and practitioners conduct evaluation and analyse evaluation results (Comment évaluer l'impact des politiques publiques: un guide à l'usage des décideurs et des praticiens, 2016).

Firstly, these guidelines present different methods for conduct scientifically reliable impact evaluations in order to deduce a causal relationship between the public intervention being evaluated and the effects it has on its beneficiaries (relevant indicators include health, employment, education, etc.). Several methods are explained in detail (including 'differences in differences' and randomized controlled trials), and the guidelines emphasise - among others - the importance of building a credible counterfactual, of choosing relevant indicators, and of avoiding selection mechanisms that could skew the results of the evaluation. In the next section, the guidelines address the question of how to analyse evaluation results and identify the reasons of the success or failure of a public policy. Finally, the guidelines explain how to compare the effects of multiple policies with the same goal and choose the most efficient one. This last section covers cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses.

France Stratégie's guidelines are concrete and user-oriented, as they take into account a wide range of scientific and operational constraints that often surround the implementation of evaluations. Such constraints include the availability, breadth and quality of data and the evaluation budget. These constraints often determine the evaluation method to use, as different methods require different types of data (for instance, the matching method requires rich data on individuals and their social and economic environment).

Finally, France Stratégie's guidelines are policy-oriented and help decision-makers bridge the gap between policy evaluation and decision making, as they give clear recommendations on how to use evaluation results to improve public policies, and how to strengthen the evaluation capacities of policy-

makers. The guidelines recommend, *inter alia,* conducting systematic reviews of the existing evidence in order to assess whether evaluation results converge and diverge depending on the institutional context of the policy. The need for policy-makers to institutionalise and operationalise the production and access to data is also emphasised in the guidelines.

Source : (France Stratégie, 2016[34])

The council could develop competencies to commission or conduct in-house evaluations

While quality guidelines and standards provide evaluators with resources to help them make the appropriate decisions when conducting evaluations, they may also benefit from the appropriate competencies. Evaluators' competencies imply having the appropriate skills, knowledge, experience and abilities (Stevahn et al., 2005[35]; American Evaluation Association, 2015[36]). The American Evaluation Association, for instance, has developed a list of core evaluator competencies (American Evaluation Association, 2015[36]), which focus on the professional, the technical, the interpersonal, the management and organisational skills necessary to be an evaluator – thus reflecting the wide variety of competencies such a profession requires beyond that of technical expertise.

For Nuevo León to conduct high quality evaluations in the long term, it will therefore be important to invest in skills, through promoting evaluator competences. Indeed, the council currently does not have sufficiently appropriate evaluation competences within its commissions and technical secretariats to commission or conduct in-house evaluations. In order to ensure the technical quality of its evaluations, the council may wish to consider several scenarios.

Firstly, the council should rely on external evaluators' competences to conduct evaluations in the short to medium term. In particular, the council can rely on the state's universities and research centres to commission evaluations. The council may wish to define some quality standards for commissioning evaluations that include competence requirements for the evaluators, since terms of reference (ToRs) constitute an essential tool for quality assurance (Kusters et al., 2011[22]). These guidelines may also cover issues such as the scope of the evaluation, its methodology and goals, the composition of the evaluation team, the evaluation budget and timeline, and the type of stakeholders to be engaged (Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, 2019[37]).

In the longer term, the council may wish to establish mechanisms to develop the appropriate competencies to conduct in-house evaluations. The council can therefore consider organising trainings for evaluators (i.e. the commissioners and technical secretariat staff). Indeed, OECD survey data shows that training evaluators is the most commonly used technique for competency development, with half of respondent countries having implemented such training. Staff could be incentivised to take courses (including online training) on different issues such as impact evaluation of public policies, programmes and projects (International Training Centre, 2019[38]), economic evaluation or data collection for programme evaluation offered by the University of Washington (University of Washington, 2020[39]). Beyond the use of trainings, the council may also wish to consider hiring staff with the appropriate technical skills to conduct evaluations, such as staff with previous evaluation experience in a multidisciplinary setting.

Finally, another way in which the council could develop the competences of its evaluators is by fostering networks of evaluators. OECD data shows that a common quality assurance mechanism that countries have implemented is the establishment of a network of evaluators.

The Nuevo León council could consider furthering its role as an evaluation champion in the state by forming such networks within the state. The council's Knowledge Network ("Red de Conocimiento") could be a successful starting point for developing such an evaluator network within Nuevo León as well as across Mexican States. This network currently fosters the collaboration and participation of Nuevo León's

academic community, with a particular focus on promoting applied research to support the monitoring and evaluation of the Strategic Plan (Consejo Nuevo León, 2019[40]). Bringing academics from across the state through thematic forums, the Knowledge Network could become an informal hub for exchanging practical and technical experiences related to evaluation. Hosted by the council, the Knowledge Network could easily connect its academics to the members of the council, namely practitioners, public servants, representatives from the private sector, and the civil society. Evaluators and relevant stakeholders from other Mexican states and their evaluation councils could be invited to forums, meetings or even webinars to enlarge the scope of exchanges. The Mexico City's Council for Evaluation of Social Development is an interesting potential participant, since it already works with a network of external evaluators coming from civil society and academia to evaluate social programmes (OECD, 2019[41]).

Controlling the quality of the evaluation product

Quality control tools ensure that the product of the evaluation (the report) meets a certain quality standard (HM Treasury, 2011[24]). Overall, quality control mechanisms are much less common than quality assurance mechanisms, with only approximately one third of countries using a quality control mechanism. These quality control mechanisms are less common and may constitute an area of development in order to ensure that evaluation reports and evaluative evidence meet a high quality standard (OECD, 2020[1]).

The most common quality control mechanism used by countries to promote quality of the end product of evaluations is the peer review process. Peer reviews see a panel or reference group, composed of external or internal experts, subject an evaluation to review of its technical quality and substantive content. The peer review process helps determine whether the evaluation meets the adequate quality standards and therefore can be published.

The council could consider submitting its evaluations to peer reviews by experts (for instance academics), before they are published. Thanks to the composition of the council, and in particular the experts and academics who are part of the commissions, the council can build relationships with a community of potential peers that could contribute to controlling its evaluation product.

Some countries have also developed tools aimed either at the evaluators themselves (i.e. self-evaluation) or at the managing and/or commissioning team (quality control checklists, for example) in order to help them control whether their work meets the appropriate quality criteria. Quality control checklists are aimed at standardising quality control practices of evaluation deliverables and as such can be useful to evaluation managers, commissioners, decision-makers or other stakeholders to review evaluations against a set of pre-determined criteria (Stufflebeam, 2001[42])

The evaluation unit for development assistance in the European Commission, for example, includes a clear quality criteria grid in its terms of reference, against which the evaluation manager assesses the work of the external evaluators (OECD, 2016[43]). Self-evaluation, on the other hand, is a critical review of project/programme performance by the operations team in charge of the intervention, as they serve to standardise practices when reviewing evaluation deliverables. Although less commonly used, self-evaluation tools can form an important element of a quality control system (OECD, 2016[43]), as they constitute the first step in the control process. The council could consider designing a checklist for evaluations, in order to help them control the quality of their own work. Examples such as the New South Wales' evaluation toolkit (see Box 4.9), show that initiatives to foster the technical quality of evaluations have also been undertaken at the state level.

Box 4.9. The New South Wales Government's Evaluation Toolkit and the Better Evaluation website

The New South Wales (NSW) Evaluation Toolkit is an online resource that provides advice and tools for planning and conducting programme evaluations. The toolkit supports government agencies to implement the NSW Government Programme Evaluation Guidelines developed by the Centre for Programme Evaluation, which provides advice on evaluation design, conducts evaluations and fosters capacity building for evaluation (New South Wales Government, 2020[44]).

The toolkit supports evaluation managers and internal or external evaluators to manage an evaluation project, choose the appropriate methods, use them well, and meet the quality standards set in the associated guidelines. It provides concrete guidance through seven detailed steps to ensure evaluation quality in terms of technical rigour, practical feasibility, utility and ethics (New South Wales Government, 2020[45]). A key resource that complements the toolkit is the Better Evaluation Website, where key actors from across the globe continuously provide information and guidance on evaluation. More than 200 evaluation methods, tools and resources are currently accessible, on topics ranging from defining what is to be evaluated, synthesising evaluation data, reporting and using evaluation results.

Source: (New South Wales Government, 2020[44]) (New South Wales Government, 2020[45]).

Meta-evaluations are another tool that correspond to the evaluation of an evaluation to control its quality and/or assess the overall performance of the evaluation (Scriven, 1969[132]). Nowadays, it mainly refers to evaluations designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. In its latter meaning, meta-evaluation is an evidence synthesis method that serves to evaluate the quality of a series of evaluations (by making an assessment of evaluations through reports and other relevant sources) and its adherence to established standards. As such, meta-evaluations constitute a useful tool for reviewing the quality of policy evaluations, before an evaluation is made publicly available. A relatively limited number of countries use meta-evaluations to control the quality of evaluations, either due to a lack of skills, familiarity or methods (OECD, 2020[1]).

Promoting the use of evaluations

While quality is very important and can facilitate use, it is not enough to guarantee the use of evaluations, which remains an important challenge faced by many countries. Indeed, in general, connections between evidence and policy-making remain elusive (OECD, 2020[1]). This appears to be the case in Nuevo León as well, at least within the scope of the Strategic Plan.

Promoting the use of policy evaluations is linked to how evaluations are communicated within and outside the public sector; and how (if so) evaluations are used to improve the impact and future design of public policies. More precisely, the instrumental use of policy evaluation implies that evaluation recommendations inform decision-making and lead to an alteration in the object of evaluation (Ledermann, 2012[46]). In that sense, effective use of evaluations is key to embedding them in policy-making processes and to generate incentives for dissemination of evaluation practices. It is a critical source of feedback for generating new policies and developing rationale for government interventions.

Conversely, if evaluations are not used, gaps will remain between what is known to be effective as suggested by evidence and policy and decision-making in practice. Simply put, evaluations that are not used represent missed opportunities for learning and accountability (OECD, 2020[1]). Moreover, the weak

link between evidence and policy-making is compounded by the fact that underuse of evaluations may jeopardize the legitimacy of the evaluative exercise in the first place. When decision-makers ignore the results of evaluations, the claim for further analysis is undermined (Leviton and Hughes, 1981[18]): unused evaluations may contribute to an impression of excess supply, whereby quality evidence gets lost in the shuffle. Underuse also represents a waste of public resources: policy evaluations, whether conducted internally or contracted-out to external stakeholders, require significant public human and financial resources, which will be lost if they lead to no outcomes.

Nuevo León can promote the use of evaluations through the following mechanisms, which a large majority of countries have put in place:

- conducting utilization-focused evaluations;
- promoting access to, and the uptake of, evaluation results;
- embedding the use of evaluation results in the institutional set-up, within and outside of the executive; through, for instance, the discussion of evaluation results at the highest level of government and the creation of management response mechanisms.
- increasing demand for evaluations through competency development.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, within their performance evaluation system, the government of Nuevo León has put a management response mechanism in place. According to OECD data, the use of formal management response and follow-up mechanisms is relatively infrequent. However, some countries, like Costa Rica and Mexico, do implement such mechanisms. Indeed, at the national level, Mexico implemented a mechanism to establish a follow-up process on external evaluation recommendations, which defines the actors responsible for constructing the tools that will track the aspects of programmes and policies to be improved.

In line with the national level, Nuevo León's the final evaluation reports must identify areas for improvement ("*Aspectos Susceptibles de Mejora*"), which include the weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the programme's efficiency. According to article 39 of the Strategic Planning Law regulations, the administrative entities must consider these recommendations by implementing a Management Improvement Action Plan (PAMGE). This action plan includes strategic actions aimed at improving the design, processes and implementation of the policy or programme evaluated. Each action is associated with a percentage of progress and a person in charge of its implementation. The use of findings in the case of the PAE is also facilitated by the fact that the final evaluation report including the ASM and the PAMGE must be publically available on the State website (article 42 of NL regulations).

Although the council has promoted utilisation-focused evaluations and makes evaluations available to the public, the use of evaluations is still a challenge in Nuevo León

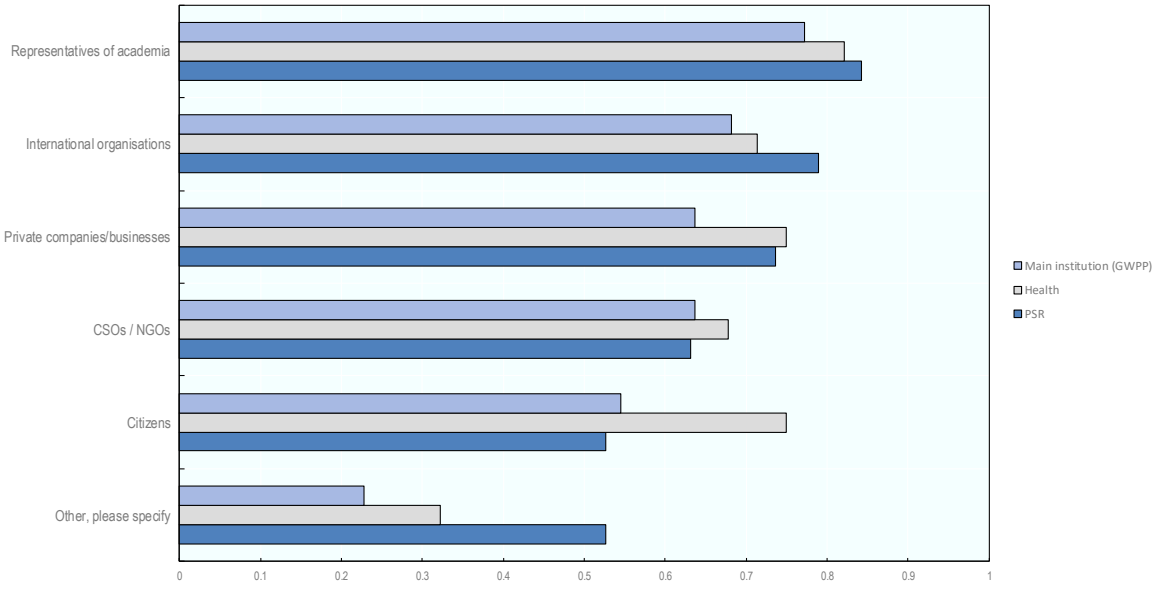
Countries have developed mechanisms to ensure that evaluation processes are utilisation-focused, meaning that evaluations are conducted in a way that is fit for purpose and takes into account the needs of their primary users and the types of intended uses (Patton, 1978[21]). Empirical research (Johnson et al., 2009[47]) has found that user-focused evaluations share several features:

- they are methodologically robust and credible (for a discussion of determinants of credible evaluations, see the section on 'Promoting the quality of evaluations');
- users and stakeholders were involved in the evaluation process;
- the evaluation methodology was perceived as appropriate by users.

The Nuevo León council is, in and of itself, a body composed of a wide variety of stakeholders, including state representatives, academics, the private sector and civil society. It could therefore be considered that the evaluations it conducts are utilization-focused in that they have engaged stakeholders, who can be

consulted at any point during the evaluation process. This shows that the state government of Nuevo León, like other governments, is eager to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the decision-making process to generate a broader consensus and increase the legitimacy of public-policy decisions (OECD, 2016[11]). Similarly, OECD data shows that a majority of countries report engaging stakeholders in the evaluation of their policy priorities (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2. Types of stakeholders engaged in policy evaluations



Note: For the main institution in charge of government-wide policy evaluation n= 21. Health ministries n= 28. For the PSR ministries n=19. Answers reflect responses to the question "Which stakeholders are engaged in the evaluation of government-wide policy priorities (Check all that apply)".
Source: OECD Survey on Policy Evaluation (2018).

In fact, evidence shows that policy-makers are more likely to seek and use evaluation results obtained from trusted familiar individuals or organisations, rather than formal sources (Oliver et al., 2015[48]; Haynes et al., 2012[49]). Having state representatives in the council could therefore increase their trust in and use of the evaluation it produces. Likewise, communicating findings to stakeholders as the evaluation progresses or involving stakeholders in the design of the evaluation, which the council can easily do with its members, can also favour their adherence to, and understanding of, the results (Fleischer and Christie, 2009[50]).

Within the council, despite the fact that the yearly "evaluation report" is in fact a "monitoring" exercise, and that, as mentioned before, an actual yearly evaluation of the plan will not be feasible, some provisions concerning stakeholder engagement during this process are worth mentioning. Within this review process, the document is presented to each commission in at least four instances: when the process is launched, when the first draft is finished, when the recommendations are written, and when the evaluation is published. Interestingly, commissions are invited to take part in the whole process and have to provide their opinions and suggestions at all stages as well as discussing the recommendations. The earlier and more actively users are involved in an evaluation process and with the dissemination of results, the more likely they are to use the evaluation's results (Patton, 1978[21]). The council should continue actively involving commissions in that manner.

However, although the council is composed of a wide variety of stakeholders, it does not mean that they are all equally involved in the evaluation process. Indeed, as mentioned in chapter 1, the council may be seen as being over-representative of the private sector, and of giving too little voice to representatives of civil society. Yet, it can be argued that citizens, as the primary intended users of the policy being evaluated, are the most important stakeholders to include in the evaluation process (Kusters et al., 2011[22]). Moreover, civil society actors are certainly influential in the institutionalisation of policy evaluation and critical in facilitating demand for evaluation (OECD, 2020[1]). In order to balance the voices of each stakeholder across commissions, the council could consider adapting the composition of its commissions to ensure greater representation of civil society and citizens (see chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the composition of the council).

Utilization-focused evaluations also require that the evaluation's set-up, understood as the planning, resources and communication channels involved in the results creation and use, be tailored to the policy maker's needs, in order to facilitate use in practice (Patton, 1978[21]). The resources for evidence should match the demand of policy makers in terms of timing and format. Finally, the evaluation questions foreseen by the evaluator should be set to match the users' needs (Patton, 1978[21]). In Nuevo León, public officials providing information requested by the council for the evaluation sometimes have no to or limited knowledge about the commissions' work and the way it relates to their own work.

In that case, the council could consider consulting the intended users (secretariat, policy-makers, and practitioners) early on in the evaluation process in order to ensure that they know about the evaluation and will use it. Going further, the state public administration may wish to commission specific evaluations for the council, on topics that are of importance to the secretariats. The role of the centre of government would be critical for communicating and co-ordinating the demand for evaluations across the public administration. There should also be a strong coordination with the Secretariat of Finance, given that it issues the Annual evaluation plan (PAE) every year. The evaluations carried out by the Council should be complementary or cover different subjects from the ones coordinated by the Secretariat of Finance.

A key aspect of ensuring the use of evaluations is ensuring access to them. Indeed, policy makers and stakeholders cannot use evidence and the results of evaluations if they do not know about them (Haynes et al., 2018[51]). The first step to promoting use is therefore making the results available to their intended users, simply put that they be communicated and disseminated to stakeholders.

Nevertheless, while a useful first step in promoting access to the evaluation report, publicity is not enough. Indeed, research suggests that in isolation, publicity alone does not significantly improve uptake of evaluations in policy (Langer, Tripney and Gough, 2016[52]; Dobbins et al., 2009[53]; Haynes et al., 2018[51]). Rather, the presentation of evidence should be strategic and driven by the evaluation's purpose and the information needs of intended users (Patton, 1978[21]). As such, evaluation results ought to be well synthesised and tailored for specific users for their use to be facilitated (Haynes et al., 2018[51]).

More generally speaking, evaluation reports such as those published by the council may not always be easily understood or assimilated by the wider public and policy-makers who may not have the time to read lengthy reports. Recommendations can also be too general, therefore not allowing to identify clear policy actions. This is why the states of Baja California, Jalisco, Estado de México, Morelos, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro and Tabasco include an executive summary in their evaluation reports (CONEVAL, 2017[2]).

In the future, the council could also consider including an executive summary in the evaluation reports, written in a clear, concise and user-friendly language that enables citizens and policy makers to acquire a rapid understanding of the evaluation and its results. Chapter 5 also provides recommendations on how the council could translate this evidence into more understandable language for policy makers and larger audiences.

Overall, despite engaging stakeholders, publishing results and thereby promoting utilisation-focused evaluations to a certain extent, the council's evaluation results may not systematically translate to better

uptake of policy evaluation in decision-making. Indeed, uptake of evaluation results is a complex phenomenon that demands broader and more systematic measures. As will be discussed in the following sections, a solution to increase demand for evaluations is to create an evaluation marketplace by embedding the use of evaluations in the institutional set-up, while another is to promote decision and policy-makers' skills for evidence use.

The council could consider developing a communication strategy to promote the uptake of evaluation evidence

The council also sends out a press release on the day of the release of its "evaluation report" (which is in fact a monitoring exercise), which is delivered to the congress and the Governor. As previously discussed, evidence should not only be accessible to the public and policy-makers, but should also be presented in a strategic way and driven by the evaluation's purpose and the information needs of intended users.

In order to tailor evaluation evidence to different publics, the council may wish to develop a communication strategy to adapt the way research findings are presented to their potential users. In particular, the council may wish to elaborate a communication strategy tailored to civil servants and decision makers in the state public administration to ensure greater uptake of its evaluations within the administration. Such a strategy could include the use of infographics, tailored synthesis of research evidence (for example in the form of executive summaries, which are especially useful for decision-makers), and dissemination of 'information nuggets' through social media and seminars to present research findings, etc. (OECD, 2016[43]) (OECD, 2018[54]).

Such tailored communication and dissemination strategies, which increase access to clearly presented research findings, are very important for use. An interesting example is the UK What Works Centre, which includes the Education Endowment Foundation, the Early Intervention and the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, which produces a range of policy briefs to disseminate key messages to its target audience. Box 4.10 below presents CONEVAL's use of infographics and story-telling to present evaluation results and their impact on citizens, which is another tool that the council could consider developing on its website.

Box 4.10. Communicating evaluation results: CONEVAL's emblematic cases

Storytelling in local cases where evaluation is used to contribute to social development

CONEVAL's website publicly shares five stories that demonstrate the use of the information generated by CONEVAL's evaluations related to the improvement of social development. These five evaluation cases are presented in a user-friendly, clear and concise way, through stories that involves characters, dialogues, and sometimes references to international newspaper articles. These stories also present the context in which the actual evaluation took place, the data that was used and generated through it, and how its results impacted people.

For instance, the "Value of time" story is a monologue through which the protagonist describes the experience of the transformation of an elementary school as part of the Full-Time School Programme. The programme had been consolidated thanks to the recommendations made by CONEVAL through the monitoring and evaluation of its performance. The story reflects the reality a programme evolving with verifiable results and impact.

Another story describes the experience of a state government that implements a social policy strategy based on the multi-dimensional measurement of poverty methodology issued by the National Council of

Evaluation of Social Development Policy. The story explains how the three orders of government defined and focused their public policies to maximise the well-being of citizens through a participatory process.

The website also includes infographics that summarise, with brief texts and pictures, some evaluation initiatives undertaken by CONEVAL and their results on citizens.

Source: Adapted from CONEVAL, (2019[55])

Nuevo León may benefit from systematically embedding evaluation into the policy-making cycle

While individual competencies are important, formal organisations and institutional mechanisms lay the foundation for evidence-informed policy making that can withstand transitions between leadership (Results for America, 2017[56]). The use of evaluations is intimately linked to organisational structures and systems, insofar as they create a fertile ground for the meeting of evaluation supply and demand.

Institutional or organisational mechanisms that enable the creation of an evaluation marketplace can be found either at the level of specific institutions, such as management response mechanisms, or within the wider policy cycle, such as through the incorporation of policy evaluation findings into the budget cycle or discussions of findings at the highest political level. As will be discussed in the following section, the state of Nuevo León could consider implementing or strengthening such mechanisms to promote the uptake of its evaluation results.

Incorporation of evaluation findings in the budgetary cycle is one of the most commonly used mechanisms in promoting the use of evaluations (OECD, 2020[1]). Indeed, the evidence resulting from evaluations can be used in a more or less systematic manner in the budgetary cycle depending on the model of performance budgeting adopted (presentational, performance informed, managerial, direct performance budgeting). In most OECD countries, performance evidence is included in the budget cycle according to one of the first three approaches. Some countries, such as Denmark, the Netherlands or Germany, conduct *ad hoc* spending reviews to inform certain allocation decisions every year. At the Mexican state level, all federal entities, such as Sinaloa, Coahuila and Tamaulipas have legal provisions for using evaluation results in budgetary decisions (CONEVAL, 2017[2]).

In Nuevo León, the policy evaluations conducted by the council could also be used, as part of budgetary discussions in congress, to inform Nuevo León's budget decisions. For instance, the council's policy and programme evaluations could be included as an annex in the main budget document, when relevant. Greater tracking of budgetary programme spending by the state public administration would also allow Nuevo León to conduct spending reviews, which could be informed by the evaluation results.

The state public administration and the council could also consider discussing evaluation results at the highest political level. In Korea, for instance, in the context of the "100 Policy Tasks" five-year Plan, evaluation results are discussed at the Council of Ministers. Other countries have set-up specific committees or councils, most often at the centre of government, in order to follow-up on the implementation of policy evaluations and/or discuss their findings. The Brazilian Committee for Monitoring and Evaluation of Federal Public Policies is an example of such committee, which brings together high-level representatives from the executive (Presidency of the Republic, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning, and the Ministry of Transparency) and from the Comptroller General of the Union (CGU).

Discussions concerning the implementation of evaluation findings could be held within the council, bringing together high-level representatives from the administration and a variety of sectors. Members of the council, including representatives from the executive would be able to exchange on the use of the evaluation results produced. The executive representatives could then present the conclusions of these discussions to the state administration, by organising a second round of discussions with high-level political

representatives. These discussions could focus on the implementation of recommendations from the council evaluations and the follow-up on this implementation. Such discussions could thus be organised on a systematic rather than an *ad hoc* basis.

Outside the executive, congress could also play a key role in promoting the use of evaluation evidence. In addition to ensuring state accountability, congress also has the potential to develop a more structured and systematic approach for using evaluations (OECD, 2020[1]). For instance, it has been shown that parliaments have been instrumental in increasing evaluation use by: promoting the use of evaluative evidence in the budgetary cycle by requiring more performance data on government spending, introducing evaluation clauses into laws, and commissioning evaluations at the committee level in the context of hearings (Jacob, Speer and Furubo, 2015[57]). For instance, OECD data shows that 21 member countries incorporate findings from evaluations into the budget cycle (OECD, 2020[1]). Some countries, such as Denmark, the Netherlands or Germany, conduct spending reviews to inform spending allocation decisions every year. In Nuevo León, article 22 of the Strategic Planning Law stipulates that the evaluation report of the Strategic Plan is sent to congress and that the executive will communicate to this same body the actions it intends to take following the recommendations of the council. This provision constitutes an important step in promoting evidence-informed policy-making in the state of Nuevo León, which would be useful to pursue should the Strategic Planning Law be modified or a new law be adopted. Nuevo León could consider updating the Strategic Planning law to stipulate that the evaluations that are done at the request of the state public administration should be shared with Congress for information.

Recommendations

Building a sound institutional framework for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan

- Adopt a comprehensive definition of evaluation applicable to whole-of-government. This could entail updating the regulations for the Strategic Planning law to specify that this definition is applicable to all public initiatives, including the strategic plan. The Strategic Planning Law could also be updated as well to include this definition.
- Establish a clear schedule for the evaluation activities of the Strategic Plan, which specifies how many and which programmes and policies are going to be evaluated, the evaluator (what competences they must have, whether they are internal to the council or external to the council), and when and how the evaluation should be conducted.
- Update the council's mandate to evaluate the Plan:
  - Update Article 19 of the Strategic Planning Law by replacing the yearly timeline with one that is based on the evaluation types to be carried out and their corresponding stages in the Strategic Plan (design, implementation, results and impact).
  - Update Article 19 of the Strategic Planning Law by mentioning that the evaluation of the Plan should be carried out according to a specific methodology, that facilitates learning and understanding of what works and why (see below).
- Develop a policy document framing the evaluation activities for the council. The policy document could include:
  - (i) A description of the different types of evaluation (i.e. design, process and impact evaluations) to be carried out with regard to different stages of the Plan and the type of policy initiative to be evaluated (policy, programme, etc.). This description could account for the evaluations already planned in the annual evaluation plan of the Secretariat of Finance in order to avoid being redundant.
  - (ii) A timeline specifying when each of these types of evaluation should be carried out (i.e. during the design, implementation and after the implementation of the Plan)

- (iii) Whether the evaluation will be done at the request of the state public administration and thus require formal follow-up, within a specific time frame, from the state public administration on the recommendations
- iv) The resources (human and financial) dedicated to the evaluation, including whether the council will consider externalising the evaluation.

Promoting the quality of evaluations

- Develop explicit and systematic quality assurance mechanisms within the council to ensure the credibility of the evaluation process, such as:
  - Developing quality standards for the evaluation process. These should build on the existing regulations for the Consolidation of a Results-Based Budget and the Performance Evaluation System and include competence requirement for evaluators. These standards can also spell-out the specific methodologies for carrying out these different types of evaluation (i.e. data collection and evaluation methods).
  - Developing appropriate evaluation competencies, for instance through:
    - Relying on external evaluators' competences, and particularly universities and research centres, in the medium term and identifying competence requirements for such evaluators;
    - Developing competencies to conduct in-house evaluations of the council by offering trainings (for example for the commissioners and technical secretariat staff) and hiring staff with the appropriate technical skills to conduct evaluations;
    - Fostering a network of evaluators, and considering the provision of trainings to the state public administration on evaluation as part of this network.
- Develop explicit and systematic quality control mechanisms to ensure that the evaluation design, planning, delivery and reporting are properly conducted to meet pre-determined quality criteria, such as:
  - Submitting evaluations produced by the council to peer reviews by experts (e.g. academics) before they are published;
  - Conducting meta-evaluations;
  - Designing self-evaluation checklists for evaluators to control the quality of their work.
- Review the composition of commissions to balance the voices of stakeholders, particularly to strengthen the voice of civil society relative to that of the public sector, since citizens, as the ultimate end-users of the Strategic Plan, are the most important stakeholder to involve in the evaluation.
- Continue to strengthen the role of internal stakeholders (within the commissions) and external stakeholders throughout the whole evaluation process. From early on, invite them to take part in the evaluation launch. During the drafting of the evaluation report and the recommendations, invite them to provide their opinion and suggestions, which should subsequently be considered. Lastly, when the evaluation is published, send it directly to stakeholders and organise a discussion about it with them.
- Continue publishing evaluation reports on the council's website, while including an executive summary of the evaluation (including its objective, scope, methods, results, etc.) (see strategy below).

Promoting the use of evaluations

- Elaborate a communication strategy to adapt the way in which research findings are presented to their potential users. Such a strategy could include the use of infographics, tailored synthesis of research evidence (for example in the form of executive summaries, which are especially useful for decision-makers), dissemination of 'information nuggets' through social media and seminars to present research findings, etc. (OECD, 2016[43]) (OECD, 2018[54]). In particular, develop a communication strategy tailored to civil servants and decision makers in the state public administration to ensure greater uptake of its evaluations within the administration.
- Incorporate evaluation results into the budgetary cycle through the implementation of impact and performance evaluations to inform budget decisions (and/or to inform the spending reviews used in the budget cycle).
- Discussing evaluation results at the highest political level by systematically holding discussions within the state public administration after reception of the evaluation report, as well as within the Council's commissions.
- Holding systematic discussions on evaluation results within congress once the report has been received.

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5 Promoting Evidence-Informed Policy-Making in Nuevo León

This chapter examines capacities for evidence-informed policy-making in the state of Nuevo Léon. It examines the role of the council in the policy advisory system in Nuevo León and suggests ways in which it may better contribute to shaping the state policy agenda on strategic issues. It offers concrete approaches to strengthening the supply of evidence in Nuevo León by suggesting the council encourage the adoption of knowledge brokering methods to promote the relevance, impact and use of advice in the state public administration, for instance for making use of evidence synthesis methods. Finally, the report concludes that enhancing Nuevo León's capacity for an evidence informed approach will require expanding the skills and infrastructure to generate and use evidence.

Introduction

Evidence-informed policy-making can be defined as a process whereby multiple sources of information, including statistics, data and the best available research evidence and evaluations, are consulted before making a decision to plan, implement, and (where relevant) alter public policies and programmes (OECD, 2020[1]).

Increasing governments' capacity for an evidence informed approach to policy-making is a critical part of fostering good public governance to achieve broad societal goals, such as promoting sustainable development or improving well-being. The goal of evidence-informed policy-making is to enable agile and responsive governments, which are well equipped to address complex and at times "wicked" policy challenges.

Despite the potential for policies to be based on evidence, an effective connection between the supply and the demand for evidence in the policy making process often remains elusive. Many governments lack the necessary infrastructure to build such effective connections. In practice, policymakers also tend to have limited skills and capacities (time, access, incentives) to generate and/or use scientific research and statistical data.

Moreover, in a context in which justifying the use of public resources with accurate evidence is becoming increasingly important, the way in which this evidence is gathered, applied and integrated into decision-making processes is a key element that can determine the nature and impact of a policy (Parkhurst, 2017[2]). The consultation of multiple sources of information and actors before the implementation of a public policy, programme or public service has become essential (OECD, 2020[1]). Indeed, the involvement of different stakeholders in policy-making processes helps to ensure that the relevance and context of emergent public policies is taken into consideration.

As a result, many OECD countries have set up policy advisory systems to support evidence informed policy making with the best possible evidence. The institutional set-up of these policy advisory bodies generally depends on the countries' institutional history, administrative traditions and the basic set-up of their governmental system (OECD, 2017[3]). These bodies can be very diverse in terms of organisational structures, mandates or functions in the policy cycle (OECD, 2017[3]). They can take the form of advisory councils or strategic planning councils, with either sectoral or horizontal responsibility, bodies operating at arms' length from the government but still within the public sphere at large, or organisations within government. In many ways, the functions of the Nuevo Léon council can be analysed within this framework of policy advisory bodies.

In this context, the report highlights good practices for enhancing capacities for evidence-informed policy-making. Firstly, it examines the role of the council in the policy advisory system in Nuevo León and suggests ways in which it may better contribute to shaping the state policy agenda on strategic issues. Second, the report looks at the supply side of evidence-informed policy-making, by suggesting that the council promote the adoption of knowledge brokering methods to promote the relevance, impact and use of advice in the state public administration. Finally, the report concludes that enhancing Nuevo Léon's capacity for an evidence informed approach will require expanding the skills for understanding, obtaining, interrogating and assessing, using and applying evidence, as well as establishing the appropriate infrastructure to generate and use evidence that stands the test of time.

Setting up an advisory system that meets the needs of government

Many OECD countries have set up a system of actors and institutions aimed at providing credible advice to government and at facilitating the capacity to implement reforms. Due to the pace of technological, environmental and cultural developments, policy makers are continuously called to find new solutions to

complex issues. One way in which governments have sought to increase their strategic capacities is by relying on networks of actors, within and outside of government, that provide evidence and policy advice – the so-called policy advisory systems.

Indeed, policy advisory systems, understood as "an interlocking set of advisory actors with a particular configuration that provides information, knowledge and recommendations for actions to policymakers" (Craft and Halligan, 2015[4]), do not base their advice to governments solely on objective facts and evidence, but also present new and alternative points of view (Hoppe, 1999[5]). In this sense, policy advisory systems combine the power dimension of politics and the knowledge dimension of policies (Hustedt, 2019[6]). Advisory systems contribute to wider evidence-informed policy-making approaches in that they provide tailored evidence to governments.

Most OECD countries have a policy advisory system of some sort, even if their specific institutional set-ups are generally the result of countries' institutional history, administrative traditions and the basic set-up of their governmental system (OECD, 2017[3]). It is possible, however, to distinguish three broad types of systems:

- 'Westminster countries', which include Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, share a common administrative tradition. In the 'Westminster model', there are often chief scientific advisors operating within governments, accompanied by chief medical officers, chief statisticians or chief economists. Still, in many of these countries there is a practice of setting up "royal commissions", as ad hoc advisory bodies on specific topics. More permanent advisory bodies exist, such as the Productivity Commission in Australia and its newly set up cousin in New Zealand, or the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare in Australia.
- 'Nordic countries' such as Sweden and Norway, where governance systems are characterised by the importance of agencies, rely on decentralised bodies. Sweden has a tradition of setting up "Commissions of Inquiry" to address significant issues. In Norway, the government has appointed the creation of external and temporary Norwegian Official Commissions, to examine major policy problems and provide recommendations. Their relevance is such that on average, around 30 commissions were appointed each year during 1967-2013 (Christensen and Serrano Velarde, 2019[7]).
- 'Continental European countries' such as Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, and to a lesser extent France, are also setting up bodies that either reflect a variety of interests or tripartite arrangements with the government, the social partners (including trade unions and business representatives), and civil society. The role of these bodies is to help achieve consensus on major options for reform. Still, there are also significant "expert organisations", such as the Central Plan Bureau, or the Social Cultural Plan Bureau/Netherlands Institute for Social Research, or bodies such as the German Council of Economic Experts that are driven by expertise and operate at arms' length from government.

Policy advisory bodies can be very diverse in terms of organisational structures, mandates or functions in the policy cycle (OECD, 2017[3]). Advisory bodies can take various forms, such as advisory councils, strategic planning councils (like the Nuevo Léon council), commissions of inquiry, foresight units, special advisors, think tanks and many other bodies, all of which provide knowledge and strategic advice to governments (Bressers, 2015[8]) (Blum and Schubert, 2013[9])

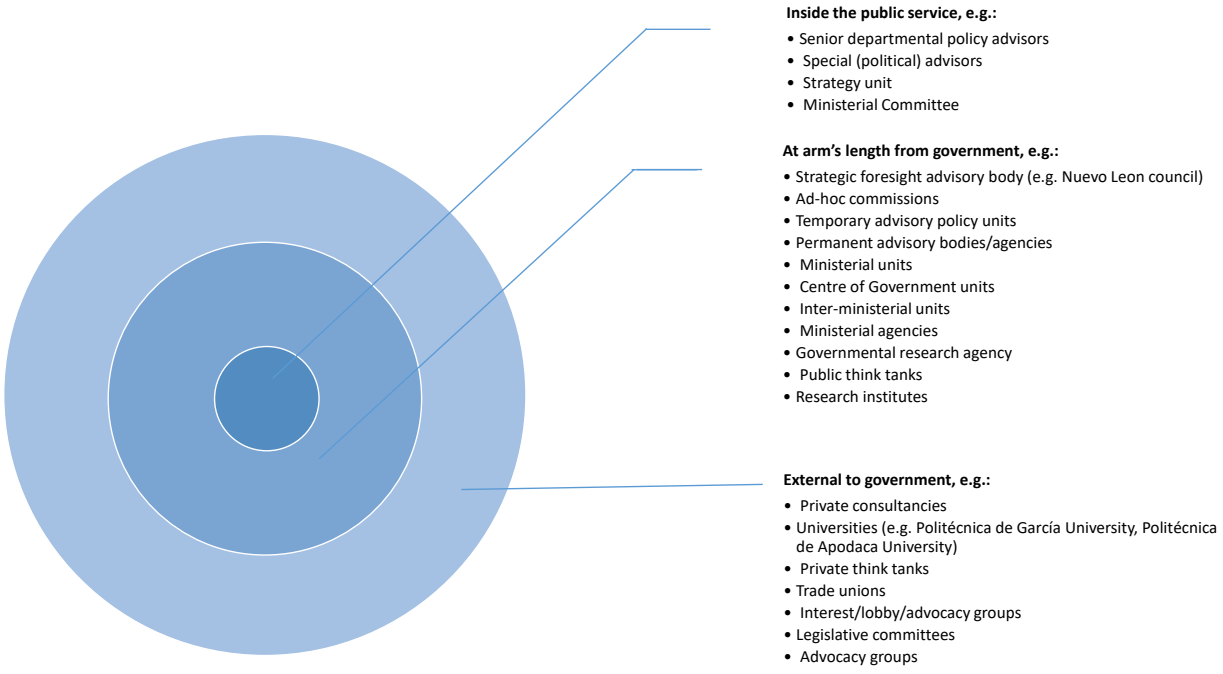
Despite this strong diversity, an OECD report (2017[3]) showed that policy advisory bodies share some common features. These include the duration of their mandate, position towards the government and thematic focus.

- Duration of the mandate: While the duration of the mandate of permanent advisory bodies (such as councils and research institutes) is not predefined, ad hoc advisory bodies are set up to examine an issue for a specified period and are dissolved after one to two years, when their mission ends.

Permanent advisory bodies can be either councils or research institutes, while *ad hoc* advisory bodies can take on diverse shapes, from cabinet committees to political strategists or community organisations.

- Position towards the government: Advisory bodies typically have three different degrees of legal and administrative autonomy relative to the government (see Figure 5.1).
  - They can be inside the government;
  - They can act at arm's length from the government, which means that they are not entirely legally independent of the government but have some administrative or technical autonomy– such as the Nuevo Léon council;
  - They can act outside of the government, meaning that they have full legal autonomy in providing advice to government (OECD, 2017[3]).

Figure 5.1. Advisory bodies' position towards government



Source: Adapted from (OECD, 2017[3]) Policy Advisory Systems: Supporting Good Governance and Sound Public Decision Making, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264283664-en, Van Twist, M.J.W. et al. (2015), "Strengthening (the institutional setting) of strategic advice", OECD seminar "Towards a Public Governance Toolkit for Policymaking: 'What Works and Why'", 22 April 2015, Paris; Halligan, J. (1995), "Policy advice and the public sector", in Peters, G. and D.T. Savoie (eds.), Governance in a Changing Environment, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, pp. 138– 172.

- The thematic focus of advisory bodies is variable. Certain advisory bodies have a very broad thematic focus, such as the German Council of Economic Experts, which advises German policy makers on questions of economic policy. Others have a very specific policy area; this includes the Lithuanian Council for the Affairs of the Disabled, which organises and coordinates measures for social integration of people with disabilities. Specific advisory bodies generally have a high level of technical expertise (OECD, 2017[3]).

Nuevo León has created an advisory system mostly centred around the council

In OECD countries, governments have relied on an increasing amount of actors to provide policy advice. In particular, actors outside of the government influencing policy decision-making processes have increased and are seen as beneficial to the advisory system overall, as they make policy advice more democratic and responsive to public concerns. In the European Commission, for example, the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) sought to organise the advisory system surrounding scientific advice. The mechanism stipulated the role and functions of each actor in the process, in order to standardise advice coming from a wide range of different bodies, such as the European and national academies and the wider scientific community (see Box 5.1).

However, a distinction has to be made depending on the size of the organisation or the country. Nuevo Leon is a state in a very large federation, but by its size is similar to many relatively small European countries, such as Denmark, Ireland or Norway. Any options for setting up an advisory system should be adapted to the size of its government apparatus, as it conditions the availability and diversity of expertise that is available. In Mexico, the capacity to rely on expert advice from bodies operating either at federal level, or with prime academic expertise, such as CIDE, also has to be taken into account. Finally, as further explored in chapter 1, the relatively small fiscal space in Mexican states can affect Nuevo León's capacity to rely on expert advice.

Box 5.1. The Scientific Advice Mechanism of the European Union

The Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) supported the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation of the European Union with independent scientific advice for its policy-making activities.

The SAM was composed of: the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, an expert group of the European Commission that provides independent scientific advice to the College of European Commissioners to inform their decision-making; the Science Advice for policy by European Academies (SAPEA), which brings together outstanding knowledge and expertise of fellows from over 100 academies and Learned Societies in over 40 countries across Europe; and the SAM Secretariat (within the Commission).

In order to ensure the policy relevance and uptake of the scientific evidence, the SAM worked closely with policy-makers at the highest-level. This allowed them to address the broader needs identified by the policy-makers (top-down) and to bring issues that were identified by the scientific world to the attention of the decision-takers (bottom-up). Specifically, the SAM produced evidence to support policy-making using the following steps:

1. **Identification of a subject for scientific advice:** The Commission consults the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors on a policy field and defines the timespan in which independent scientific advice is required.
2. Definition of the question: The Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation formulates the request for advice, which defines the question to be addressed by the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, following a consultation request originating in the Commission.
3. **Evidence gathering:** The Group of Chief Scientific Advisors appoints a lead member and sets up a coordination group, who ask the Commission (the SAM Secretariat) to allocate responsibility for the evidence gathering to SAPEA.
4. **Drafting the advice:** Lead member/coordination group drafts the advice of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. The SAM Secretariat assists the preparation and editing of the advice.

5. **Adopting and communicating the advice:** The Chair of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors sends the advice to the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation who will transmit it to the other members of the commission, including the President.

Source : Adapted from European Commission (2019[10]).

In the state of Nuevo León, the council really stands out as the main actor of the advisory system available at the state level. The council serves as a multi-stakeholder platform (civil, academia, private sector, and government) to promote the economic, social and political development of the state through strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation of the Strategic and State Plan. In that sense, it acts as an advisory body because the council has the mandate to collect data needed for future analyses, and to address both middle and long-term issues (article 9 of the Strategic Planning Law). Moreover, its thematic focus is broad, giving it large visibility as an advisory body of the government. Besides the council, a number of other actors are also collecting evidence and advice in the state, including some very active non-governmental organisations that are often focused on specific issues, as well as world-class experts whose advice is available through the academic institutions of the state (e.g. Technological Institute of Monterrey - Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey and the Autonomous University of Nuevo León - Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León).

With regard to the bodies that compose the executive of Nuevo León, there are other actors that could be considered as advisory bodies, since they support the executive in the exercise of its functions by supplying information and/or advice. For instance, the Organic Law of Public Administration from the State of Nuevo Leon (*Ley orgánica de la administración pública para el estado de Nuevo León)* considers the creation of citizen participation bodies *(consejos de participación ciudadana)* in its articles 41 through 46 (see Box 5.2). These councils serve to contribute legitimacy in agenda shaping, since they consult stakeholders in different sectors (academia, private, social, and trade union) about a particular topic; and disseminate priority programmes (Secretary of the State, 2009[11]). Nonetheless, the thematic focus of these bodies is rather limited to a specific policy issue. For instance, the State Youth Institute (*Instituto Estatal de la Juventud*) has a citizen council that monitors and promotes policies and actions focused on youth (State of Nuevo Leon, 2019[12]).

Box 5.2. Citizen participation councils in Nuevo Léon

Citizen participation councils are consultative and multidisciplinary bodies (with representatives from the social, private and academic sectors) that analyse, review, recommend and evaluate instruments and actions that fall under the responsibility of the executive. Article 41 of the Organic Law of Public Administration from the State of Nuevo León stipulates that the executive can constitute these councils to provide advice ("consult and propose") on matters of public interest or for strategic planning purposes.

Other than the state governor, who acts as honorary president, the councils are composed of a president (representing civil society), an executive secretary (often times a senior civil servant of the secretariat that works on these issues), a technical secretary and advisers. Each member has a vote in the council's sessions (article 45).

Citizen Participation Councils exist in the following areas (article 46):

- Justice;

- Public security;
- Education;
- Health;
- Economic Development;
- Social development;
- Jobs; and
- Sustainable development.

Source: Source: Adapted from the State of Nuevo Leon (Secretary of the State, 2009[11]), Organic Law of Public Administration from the State of Nuevo Leon, [Ley orgánica de la administración pública para el estado de Nuevo León)

As a result, it appears that the state public administration may have at its disposal a wide range of advice to draw from. In the future, the council could support the state public administration in mapping think thanks, research institutes, etc., working on policy advice to determine technical gaps in the advisory system and to increase representativeness in the evidence supply.

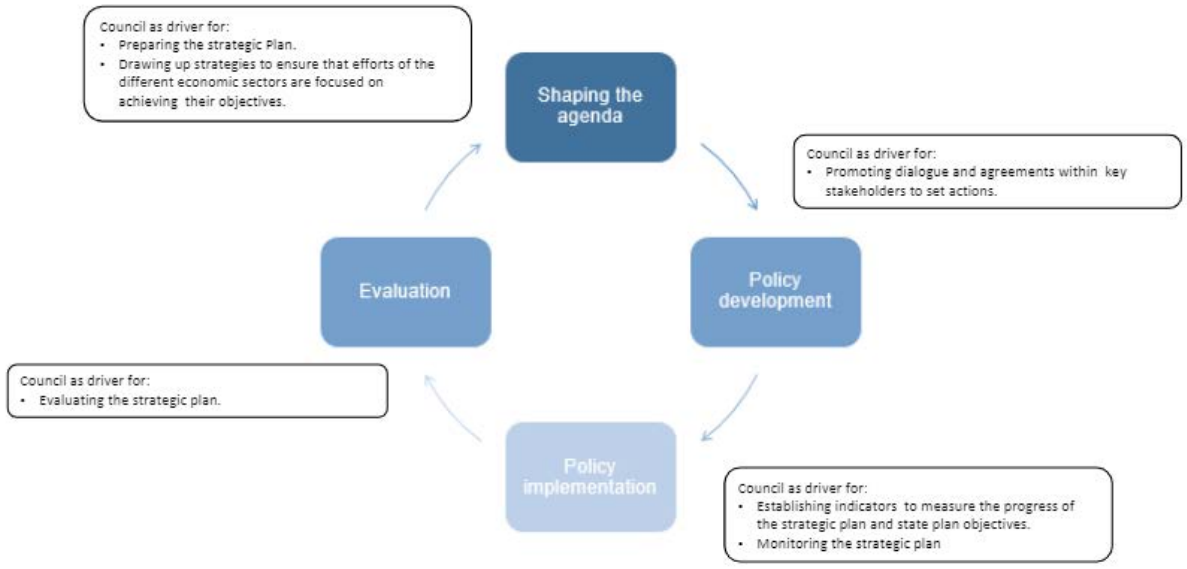
Currently, the functions of the council are blurred across a range of functions

According to the *OECD Survey on Policy Advisory Systems* (2017[3]), advisory bodies have a wide range of functions in the policy-making process, such as (OECD, 2017[3]):

- Shaping the agenda: advisory bodies can seek to draw attention to certain topics and help them gain importance in the political agenda. During this phase, public research institutions and planning/assessment advisory bodies have a particularly strong role, while 'foresight advisory bodies' and public think tanks are the ones with the least significant role.
- In the policy development phase, advisory bodies point to new policy options, create evidence, and help create legitimacy for choosing particular policy options. During this phase, *ad hoc* advisory bodies and public research institutions have a particularly strong role.
- In the implementation phase, all bodies tend to be relatively active with the exception of public think tanks, foresight bodies and planning/assessment advisory bodies. Public research institutions and ministerial advisors have a particularly strong role during this phase.
- In the evaluation phase, ad hoc advisory bodies, as well as permanent advisory bodies with a secretariat and public research institutions have a relatively important role. Planning/assessment advisory bodies play a specific role too, as they have the explicit task to 'assess' governments' policies. On the contrary, the role of foresight advisory bodies, public think tanks and permanent advisory bodies without a secretariat is more limited.

In Nuevo León, the council plays a role in each of the stages of the policy cycle described above. Figure 5.2 presents in more detail such roles.

Figure 5.2. The policy cycle and the role of the Council of Nuevo León



Source: Adapted from PAS review (OECD, 2017[3]) and Article 9 of the Strategic Planning Law

According to the Strategic Planning Law, the council is responsible, *inter alia*, for the elaboration of the Plan, for defining strategies to include society in the efforts for its implementation, for defining criteria for the elaboration of indicators (article 9), as well as for monitoring and evaluating the Plan's results (article 19). As such, the council serves as a multi-stakeholder forum for policy development through strategic planning, for monitoring policy implementation, and for evaluation.

Furthermore, the council offers a space to bring together the government, the private sector, academia and the civil society to discuss new initiatives that were not explicitly set out in the strategic plan. This is the case of the "*Hambre Cero"* initiative (see Box 1.5 in chapter 1), an inter-institutional effort derived from the 2030 strategic plan to eradicate extreme food poverty and food waste in the state. In these functions, the council is contributing to shaping the policy agenda.

Moreover, the council plays a major role in monitoring the Strategic Plan (See chapter 3). In addition, as discussed in chapter 1, the council has also been involved in policy implementation, for instance by developing new initiatives, such as "*Hambre Cero Nuevo León"*, to implement the plan. Finally, the council has a clear mandate to evaluate priority programme in the Strategic and State Plan (article 19, Strategic plan law).

Nevertheless, exercising these different roles along the policy cycle has weakened the impact of the council's advice. The fact that the council is playing a role in each phase of the policy cycle has created political tensions with the state public administration and resulted in the council losing its strategic focus on the planning function– a function which is also intrinsically linked to foresight and evaluation. These tensions can also be explained by the incompatibility of these functions: while effective monitoring requires strong political influence and commitment (for instance, to identify implementation barriers and to tangle them), evaluations benefit from independence and technical legitimacy.

Defining and separating the respective roles of the council and the public administration will help to boost the efficiency of strategic planning. As recommended in chapter 1, the council should strengthen its role in shaping the policy agenda and strategic planning to move away from monitoring and implementing policies.

Nuevo León council should focus on providing evidence and evaluation, as well as shaping the policy agenda upstream

As a relatively autonomous body that benefits from representing the views of a wide range of stakeholders, and as a body operating at arm's length from government, the council is best placed to provide credible evidence and evaluation, and in doing so, to contribute to shaping the policy agenda. Indeed, evidence does not only relate to statistical data but encompasses all research that seeks to understand why some policies or strategies work and why others do not (policy evaluation). Along with evaluation, it can therefore support decisions about policy choices based on facts and inform the policy agenda.

Although there is no strict definition of what effective advice is, OECD research suggests that it can be broken down into two dimensions: 'relevance' and 'impact' (OECD, 2017[3]). This section mainly explores the first of these factors.

Firstly, relevant advice is multifactorial, meaning that it depends on a multitude of interdependent factors, including the following (Cash et al., 2003[13]):

- Timeliness of advisory knowledge for policy-makers
- Representativeness, which denotes whether knowledge is produced in an unbiased way by considering all relevant interests
- Credibility, which refers to whether the production of knowledge follows established standards of evidence (whether it is scientifically robust)

Timeliness of advice

In the Strategic Planning Law the council defines to what extent its advice is made public. However, this formal advice is published annually (even though there are regular debates in the commissions) and therefore is disconnected from the decision-making processes. The council is currently bound by law to produce a yearly report on the results of the Strategic Plan. This could restrict its role in public debates of interest and decrease the influence of its advice in the decision making process.

Instead, the council could anticipate a calendar with the timing of its publications. For instance, the French council France Stratégie sets up an annual research schedule, which gives direction to its research and focuses the generation of knowledge on very specific issues throughout the year (see Box 5.3).

Box 5.3. Increasing the timeliness of an advice: the case of France Stratégie

At the government's request, or on its own initiative, France Stratégie carries out studies and evaluations of public policies, in order to fulfil the task it was assigned when it was established by the Prime Minister in 2013, namely "fostering dialogue and shared analysis and scenarios".

In 2019, France Stratégie adopted a research plan focused on six main themes: achieving sustainable development, adapting the productivity system to new challenges, reinforcing public policy efficiency, decreasing structural unemployment, anticipating the future organisation of work, and moving towards diversified and harmonious development in local territories. This annual research plan is also inscribed in a ten-year research agenda for 2017-2027, which sets up projects for the next decade.

Source: (France Stratégie, 2018[14])

Similarly, to this practice, and in line with the recommendations in chapter 4, the council could elaborate a research or evaluation plan, to identify the timing of its reports throughout the year and to anticipate how these would coincide with public debates and events. In order to do so, it could seek input from the state public administration, to identify key areas of interest. This plan would therefore clearly distinguish between the evaluations mandated by the government and the evaluations done on the initiative of the council. As explored in chapter 4, this distinction may require different follow-up mechanisms to ensure the discussion of the evaluations' recommendations.

Representativeness in decision-making

The private sector is strongly represented in the council, which also reflects the ambitions of the council at its inception. The council is composed of 16 members and a technical secretary. Membership includes six citizen councillors, three heads of universities (two are private and one is public), six government members, one member from the federal government, and the executive president, who is chosen from the citizen councillors. Thus, more than half of the members are from the private sector or economic/social organisations. Although commissions may invite representatives of federal agencies and municipal authorities to participate in their work (article 11), they only have voice in the council (article 7 from the Strategic Planning Law regulation).

As discussed in chapter 1, there is a significant perception among stakeholders that the council's representativeness remains unbalanced across sectors of civil society. In particular, citizens appear to have limited voice/influence, even if NGOs participate in some of the councils' commissions. Additionally, there are demands to expand the advisory role of universities to better leverage the council's technical capacities and skills. Lessons learned show that in order to provide credible and tailored advice, the composition of a committee, board, or commission needs to ensure that membership is neutral; provides high quality expertise; and, depending on the nature of the issues discussed, represents the age, gender, geographic, and cultural diversity of the community (Government of Canada, 2011[15]; Quad Cities Community Foundation, 2018[16]). In this regard, the council could consider giving a vote and more representativeness to other institutions working with minorities, vulnerable communities and municipalities to balance powers across different types of actors in order to level the play field. Such public deliberations could increase government trust, and strengthen government integrity and accountability. For instance, the Youth Institute (DJI) from Germany regulates the composition of its members to ensure that they come from various horizons and cover different perspectives (see further details in Box 5.4). In Nuevo León, this could require updating the guidelines of the Strategic Planning Law.

Box 5.4. Ensuring qualified board membership : the example of the Youth Institute in Germany

The Youth Institute in Germany (Deutsches JugendInstitut, DJI) is a social science research institute specialised in children and young peoples' life situations. It describes itself as 'an interface between science, politics and professional practice', with members coming from the fields of politics, sciences and from youth and family welfare institutions. In order to ensure that its members come from various horizons, the DJI has clear guidance for the composition of its members, for each of its three bodies:

- The General Assembly comprises members appointed by the highest federal youth welfare authorities, by family associations and by selected professional organisations;
- The Board of Trustees consists of representatives of federal ministries, one representative of each of the DJI home state and the higher regional youth welfare services; 5 members elected by the General Assembly, and one staff representative.

- The Scientific Advisory Council consists of 19 experts from both Germany and abroad, with the composition reflecting the scientific disciplines and topic areas in which the DJI is engaged.

Source : Adapted from Youth Institute official website (Institute, 2020[17]), https://www.dji.de/en/about-us.html (accessed 03 February 2020)

Distribution of competencies and skills among members

According to article 7 of the Strategic Planning Law, the citizen councillors are chosen because of their economic and social knowledge of the state and public reputation. However, the law does not establish competence requirements for the council's members. While there is no strict requirement, and it is also important that commissions represent a range of relevant interests, it would also be important to ensure that a share of the members be appointed with regard to their expertise in each thematic area, to increase the authority of the council's advice. For example, the Independent Technical Council for the Evaluation of Public Policies of Jalisco ("Evalúa Jalisco") stipulates in its statutes that members must have technical expertise in monitoring and evaluation. In addition, this council is composed, amongst other actors, of experts coming from state universities (6), an international research institute (1) and the national council for policy evaluation (CONEVAL, 1 member). All these members have a vote and voice on the board.

Moreover, in order to enhance the credibility of its advice, the council may benefit from improving its decision-making processes. According to article 6 of the Strategic Planning Law regulations, the agreements of the council are adopted by consensus. While making decisions by consensus may ensure greater uptake of the evidence, the lack of clarification of the decision-making process has resulted in several decisions being adopted without being informed by clear evidence (evaluations, systematic reviews, etc.). In this regard, Nuevo León could further define the council's decision-making process to ensure that any advice produced is based on:

- Evidence collected and presented by the council on the topic under discussion, which should include disclosing the underlying methodology of the evidence, its assumptions and limitations.
- Clear procedures for decision-making, including requirements to quorum. This should include ensuring the presence of representatives of the state public administration when a decision is taken. In Australia, for instance, the National Data Advisory Council has set clear rules regarding its internal decision-making processes (see Box 5.5).

Box 5.5. The National Data Advisory Council of Australia

The National Data Advisory Council (NDAC) of Australia provides advice to the National Data Commissioner on data use, trust, transparency and technical best practice. It comprises nine members from the Australian government, business and industry, civil society groups and academia.

The Council provides information on the appointment, the role and the position of its members as well as the frequency and goals of its meetings in its 'Terms of Reference'. In particular, the document outlines how the position of a member affects his role in the council. While the statistician, the chief scientist and the information and privacy commissioner have to ensure that government data is effectively and safely managed, non-government members should use their individual skills and understanding of the data ecosystem to provide advice to the National Data Commissioner.

The documents also contains practical and administrative information related to meetings attendance, such as the reimbursement of attendance costs to non-government members or the availability of teleconference facilities.

Finally, the Council outlines not only the frequency of its meetings (between two to four times a year), but also the quorum for council meetings (at least six members), and meeting summaries are published on the council website, which ensures council accountability and transparency towards the public.

Source: Adapted from the Office of the National Data Commissioner of the Australian Government, Official Website, (Government, 2019[18]), https://www.datacommissioner.gov.au/about/advisory-council (accessed 03/02/2020)

The council could also consider reinforcing the transparency of the decision-making process by publishing the minutes of meetings. According to article 8 of the Strategic Planning Law regulations, minutes shall be taken for both ordinary and extraordinary meetings. These minutes must be sent to all counsellors, but are not made publicly available. Publishing the minutes is a common practice among different councils in Mexico such as the Independent Technical Council for the Evaluation of Public Policies of Jalisco and the Research and Evaluation Council of Social Policy of the State of México (CIEPS). The council could consider publicising the minutes of its ordinary meeting by default. Meetings of extraordinary meetings may be made public only at the discretion of the council, as some sensitive issues (for example, issues of national security) may be discussed.

Developing innovative knowledge brokering methods to promote the use of evidence

The council could consider innovative knowledge brokerage approaches, to generate knowledge, translate it, and facilitate evidence adoption.

Advisory bodies can act either as knowledge brokers or as knowledge producers. While knowledge producers (which include the academia, statistical agencies and research institutes) provide core scientific, economic and social data and knowledge, knowledge brokers serve as intermediaries between the knowledge producers and the proximate decision-makers (knowledge users) by increasing the availability of robust evidence and by pooling and sorting out the information that is produced by a variety of sources.

The Nuevo León Council in its multi-stakeholder nature brings together actors from different sectors - academia, private sector and government. The council has created a platform for these actors to participate in the advice process. This should be the role of the secretariat to ensure that this knowledge brokerage function is being promoted through participatory and innovative processes. Under this approach, the council could consider adopting knowledge broker functions. Taken as a whole, knowledge broker organisations tend to fulfil three functions:

- Generating knowledge: They ensure that there is enough relevant evidence available for decision-makers to answer pre-defined questions by synthesising the available evidence and by identifying knowledge gaps. If knowledge gaps are identified, knowledge brokers can fill them by commissioning research.
- Translation of knowledge: When the required evidence is available, they translate knowledge gathered in a language that is understandable for decision-makers.
- Facilitating evidence adoption: They build an organisational culture for effective adoption of evidence. They are involved in capacity building activities close to the public service providers and they build networks between knowledge producers and knowledge users. Additionally, they build and maintain informal relations with their stakeholders.

Therefore, as a knowledge broker, an advisory body can provide critical, independent and reliable evidence in a timely and attractive manner, link knowledge sources and users, increase awareness of transferring

evidence into practice. It can build capability, and create networks for evidence use (Bressers, 2015[8]). In particular, the council could adopt a knowledge broker role with the capacity of generating knowledge, translating it, and facilitating evidence adoption.

Assessing the effectiveness of the existing evidence and identifying knowledge gaps can be an effective way to support policy-making

A number of policy advisory bodies in the position of knowledge broker use evidence synthesis methods to understand what is already known in a certain subject, and raise awareness of missing evidence for policymaking decisions (OECD, 2020[1]). They are particularly useful as they also help in drawing lessons from knowledge and evidence that is produced in other countries in such a way that it can be mobilised in the national context. These methods can come in a variety of forms, depending on the scope and content of the research, such as the following:

- Systematic reviews comprise a methodical literature review of published research to answer a specific question using rigorous procedures to locate, evaluate, and integrate the findings of relevant research (The Campbell Collaboration, 2019[19]). They are critical to identifying what is not known from previous research (Gough D. Oliver S. Thomas J., 2013[20]). On the other hand, there are specific methods such as meta-analysis, which uses statistical methods to compare the effects across different interventions.
- Reviews of reviews refer to the study of systematic reviews. It may achieve a broader scope but provide a limited analysis (Saran A. White H., 2018[21]).
- Evidence maps evaluate the quality of systematic reviews in a particular field in order to identify reliable evidence and gaps in scientific knowledge (Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services, 2020[22]);
- Evidence gap maps identify methods or practices for which no systematic review has been published (Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services, 2020[22]);

The council could consider adopting systematic research processes as part of the commission's activities to base its advice on the best available research evidence and evaluations. This could ensure that policy design in Nuevo León can rely upon the best global evidence, and provide policy-makers with an understanding of what challenges have been experienced elsewhere; and what good practices could be implemented. Of course, the synthesis needs to look for comparative evidence that can be adapted to Nuevo León, from countries with a similar context and institutional set up. This reflects a global tendency across other OECD countries, particularly in Europe as this approach was initially championed by the UK "What Works" centres and has now been adopted by other countries such as France or Sweden.

The council could translate evidence into clear language to promote its use

Barriers in the use of evidence are not limited to access to accurate technical information. Evidence needs to be translated into understandable language and respond to knowledge users' needs (Meyer, 2010[23]). A knowledge broker should look for ways to communicate the evidence in an attractive manner that is targeted towards the intended audience. The most common approach to evidence translation is to publish online reports or papers for a broad audience. In Nuevo León, apart from publishing the monitoring of the Strategic Plan, the Knowledge Network of the Council (*Red de Conocimiento*) has published three annual publications with the second one including ten public policy proposals focused on the priorities of the Plan and the third one including nine public policy proposals with brief summaries for each (Nuevo Leon, 2017[24]). However, most of these reports are long and require time and expertise from the reader to understand the findings that are presented. A simple first step would be to systematically produce executive summaries, with clear limits (e.g a maximum of 1000 words is the practice at the OECD).

Another way of translating evidence is to present data and evidence in a visually attractive and impactful manner through infographics. Chapter 4 provides some recommendations on how to communicate and disseminate evaluation results in a more attractive way. The Early Intervention Foundation from the UK conducts systematic reviews of past trials and evaluations to determine a programme's effectiveness. In order to present the findings in a form that is easy to grasp for a lay audience, it has created a searchable online database called *EIF Guidebook* that provides visual cues with which to assess each evaluation (see further information in Box 5.6). Two main criteria are used for this visual assessment: the cost-effectiveness of the intervention and the robustness of the evidence.

The council, through its Knowledge Network, could consider using data visualisation tools to translate the evidence gathered through evidence synthesis methodologies to a wider audience.

Box 5.6. Early Intervention Foundation's technical support for the use of evidence in policy design and implementation

The EIF Guidebook aims to serve as a starting point for practitioners and policy-makers to find out more about effective early interventions, what good practices look like and how they could be captured in a local context.

The guidebook provides information regarding:

- The overall strength of evidence regarding a programme. In fact, the EIF Evidence rating assesses the impact of programmes according to four criteria:
- Level 4: There is evidence of a long-term positive impact of the programme through multiple rigorous evaluations.
- Level 3: There is evidence of a short-term positive impact of the programme from at least one rigorous evaluation
- Level 2: There is preliminary evidence that the programme improves child outcomes, but an assumption of causality
- NE/'No effects': Indicates where a rigorous programme evaluation (level 3) has found no evidence of improving one child outcomes or providing significant benefits to other participants
- NL2/'Not Level 2': Programmes that EIF has assessed and which do not meet the criteria for a level 2 rating.
- Cost rating: the guidebook compares the cost of a particular programme to similar ones;
- Child outcomes: the guidebook details the specific outcomes found in the studies.
- Key characteristics of each programme: the guidebook includes information such as the background against which is was produced, its targeted age group, whether a delivery model was used, whether it was a universal or targeted programme, or information about its theory of change.

Source: Early intervention Foundation (2017[25]),Official website https://guidebook.eif.org.uk/ (accessed 02/10/2020)

Strengthening the networks of knowledge producers and the skills of knowledge users and producers is key to facilitating evidence adoption

Adoption of evidence might also be facilitated by building networks between knowledge producers and users. Knowledge brokers are in the right place in the system to initiate opportunities for meetings that in

other circumstances would not happen. The establishment of strong links between researchers and decision makers makes the incursion of evidence to the policy cycle more constant and might lead to an increase in joint projects.

While the Knowledge Network of the Nuevo León Council's (*Red de Conocimiento*) seeks to promote the generation of evidence, it does not appear to have a clear role in bridging the gap between policy-makers and academia. This is a role that the council could play. As an example, the Research and Evaluation Council of Social Policy of the State of México (*Consejo de Investigación y Evaluación de la Política Social)* (2019[26]) stipulates in its functions that: "it creates permanent links with academic institutions, national, and international organisations, to encourage the exchange of ideas and projects aimed at social development". The council could strengthen the role of the Knowledge Network by defining its principles, vision, and role in the decision making process of the council, and by highlighting the network as a space/opportunity for decision makers and researchers to cooperate. The experience of France Stratégie in fostering networking and in disseminating knowledge can be of interest for Nuevo León (See Box 5.7).

Box 5.7. Fostering dialogue between diverse stakeholders : the example of France Stratégie

To carry out its research, France Stratégie draws on a team of multidisciplinary experts and analysts, but it also works with other external actors in order to 'co-produce' knowledge. On its 'Climate and Territories' theme, it has set up a consultation with various local governments on issues such as the economy's metropolisation and local inequalities in order to draw on local innovations and initiatives. It also works on key themes of the French economy, such as promoting productivity, or looking at the long-term impact of fiscal and structural economic policy measures, in terms of taxation or the labour market.

In addition, France Stratégie frequently organises debates with various economic and political actors. In particular, it hosts the 'Rencontre Europe et International', a monthly meeting around European issues that brings together various personalities with diverse background (experts, policy-makers, researchers, civil servants). Since 2012, France Stratégie also hosts the platform 'Responsabilité sociétale des entreprises', which is a multi-party forum for dialogue on societal responsibility for business that brings together more than 50 member organisations.

Finally, France Stratégie targets a wider public, and specifically young people, through various public debates and conferences, such as the conference on the apprenticeship reform in 2018. In 2019, it also worked on the "great debate", to foster broader dialogue and to take input from citizens into account.

Source: (France Stratégie, 2018[14])

Developing capacities in the state public administration to support evidence-informed policy-making in Nuevo León

The council can contribute to developing skills for evidence use in the state public administration

Both research and practice indicate that despite the extensive production, communication and dissemination of evidence, its use by decision makers remains limited, and the commitment of top management to evaluation activities remains low (Olejniczak, Raimondo and Kupiec, 2016[27]). Indeed, despite the potential for policies to be based on evidence, an effective connection between the supply and the demand for evidence in the policy making process often remains elusive. Many governments lack the

necessary infrastructure to build such effective connections (OECD, 2020[1]), whether at the individual, interpersonal, organisational and environmental level (Newman, Fisher and Shaxson, 2012[28]). Firstly, policy makers may face challenges related to their lack of competence in analysing and interpreting evidence (Results for America, 2017[29]), meaning they do not have the appropriate skills, knowledge, experience or abilities to use evaluation results (Stevahn et al., 2005[30]) (American Evaluation Association, 2018[31]) (Newman, Fisher and Shaxson, 2012[28]). Increasing the uptake of evaluation evidence by policymakers can therefore be achieved through the development of their competences.

Country practices reveal a wide range of approaches aimed at developing competences for use of evidence. Mechanisms aimed at increasing the demand for evidence include practices such as training aimed at senior civil servants or policy professionals and mentoring initiatives (OECD, 2020[1]). The work by the OECD on *Building Capacity for Evidence Informed Policy Making* (OECD, 2020[1]) suggests that training for senior civil service leadership is aimed at increasing managers' understanding of evidence-informed policy making and policy evaluation, enabling them to become champions for evidence use. Intensive skills training programmes aimed at policy makers may be more focused on interrogating and assessing evidence and on using and applying it in policy making.

As a producer of evidence related to the Strategic Plan, the council could organise more capacity building initiatives to develop skills within the state public administration. Training for senior civil servants increases managers' understanding of evaluation and their ability to interrogate and assess evidence, as well as using it in policy-making. The council has already conducted such trainings and could continue to do so by leveraging its connection to academia, in particular schools of government, so they organise training programmes for civil service leadership. Such trainings can take the form of workshops, masterclasses and seminars. These would not only reinforce skills for the uptake of evidence but also increase the motivation and incentives for decision-makers in the state public administration to use evidence. Significant progress in terms of evidence uptake has been observed in Mexico City for instance, where initiatives that inform policymakers about the objectives and value of evaluations have been undertaken. Moreover, the council has been an intermediary of projects coordinated with the federation for training officials at the state level, such as a training for officials organised in 2018 on the methodology of obtaining federal funding via cost-benefit analysis, among other tools. This experience in training for government officials may facilitate the council's organisation for trainings specifically focused on the uptake of evaluation evidence by policy makers.

Evidence-informed policy-making will require the establishment of institutions and systems in the state public administration

Nevertheless, it is primarily institutions, organisational structures and systems that enable the effective use of evidence: Without addressing these, initiatives for evidence-informed policy-making in Nuevo Léon are unlikely to succeed. Building capacity for evidence use requires systemic and institutional approaches that include strengthening organisational tools, resources and processes, investing in basic infrastructure, including data management systems and knowledge brokers, and establishing strategic units to champion an evidence-based approach. Mandates, legislation and regulation are also important tools for facilitating the use of evidence (OECD, 2020[1]). Finally, the long-term institutionalisation of EIPM can be assisted by the machinery of government, such as a strategy unit or another entity at the centre of government with a clear responsibility and mandate over EIPM.

Recommendations

- Strengthen the leadership role of the council as part of Nuevo León's policy advisory system, with a broader whole-of-government perspective. This may also require:
  - Identifying gaps in the advisory system

  - Ensuring representativeness of different disciplines as well as representing the sociodemographic and economic diversity of the community
  - Facilitating a networked approach with other knowledge providers
- Enhance Nuevo León's council functions on evaluation and evidence provision. The council should be equipped to act as a strategic knowledge broker, operating at arm's length from the government while keeping a symbiotic relationship with the state administration to:
  - Provide credible evidence at the highest levels, and in doing so, contribute to shaping the policy agenda.
  - Increase the efficiency of the policy advisory system in Nuevo León. Bodies that are closer to the government and therefore more closely linked to the administrative mandate would be in a better position to contribute to policy implementation and monitoring, while the council could focus solely on evidence and evaluation and strategic planning to shape the reform agenda and chart a way forward for the state in the future.
  - Clarify the roles of advisors and policy-makers. This may alleviate political tensions with the state public administration, which is in charge of implementation. This would enable the council to focus on its main role of long-term planning and policy advice.
- Foster inclusiveness and expertise in the council's decision-making process, providing relevant advice. This requires the council to consider a multitude of interdependent factors to reinforce the effectiveness of the advice, such as timeliness, representativeness, and credibility to:
  - Make a calendar with the dates for publications.
  - Ensure that commissioners are able to provide a neutral view, have a sufficient credible level of expertise, and that they represent the sociodemographic and economic diversity of the community.
  - Provide professional qualifications and training to the members of the council.

  This may require updating the Strategic Planning Law's guidelines or the Council's guidelines.
- Implement knowledge brokering methods in the council, to promote the impact and use of evidence. The council should consider adopting knowledge brokering methods such as generating, adopting and translating evidence to:
  - Ensure that there is enough relevant evidence available to decision-makers in Nuevo León to answer pre-defined questions by synthesising the available evidence and by indicating knowledge gaps.
  - Provide critical, independent and reliable evidence in a timely and attractive manner, for instance with data visualisation tools to translate the results of evidence synthesis exercises for a wider audience.
  - Build networks between knowledge producers and knowledge users.
- Strengthen capacities for evidence-informed policy-making in Nuevo León by:
  - Strengthening the council's permanent capacity-building activities to develop new skills among knowledge users and producers, particularly in the state public administration.
  - Developing systemic and institutional approaches for evidence-informed policy making in the state public administration, for instance through establishing strategic units to champion an evidence-based approach in the centre of government.

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6 Nuevo León's Action Plan to Implement the Recommendations of the OECD Review

This chapter presents an action plan for the implementation of the OECD recommendations in the areas covered by the Review of the Monitoring and Evaluation System for the Strategic Plan of the State of Nuevo León 2015-2030, in particular: establishing a sound institutional system for planning, monitoring and evaluation; strengthening the Strategic Plan's methodology and structure; developing monitoring for results; strengthening capacities for evaluation; and setting up a sound evidence-informed policy-making system. This chapter provides a list of the main activities, actions and steps to be taken for the implementation of each recommendation in the Review, and suggests which government entities are best suited to carry them out.

Chapter 1

Building a sound long-term planning system in Nuevo León

1. Proposal for action. Clarify the council and the centre of government's respective responsibilities on strategic planning (notably the Executive Office of the Governor and the Secretariat of Finance) with a view to strengthening capacities for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy priorities.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Change the Strategic Planning Law, the law's regulation, the Organic Law on Public Administration of 2009 and/or the internal regulations on public administration to clarify responsibilities. Include in this new law and regulation, a definition of monitoring and a definition of evaluation. Include a definition of policy advisor. Eliminate in this law the obligation to carry out an annual evaluation of the Strategic Plan and the State Development Plan. Clarify the role and methods of the Council as a policy advisor.	State public administration/ council	Medium term

2. Proposal for action. Strengthen the Nuevo León council's role as an advisory body and strategic knowledge broker, moving it away from implementation and monitoring.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Update the internal rules of the council.	Council	Short term
Address a letter of intent to the state public administration with a new vision for the council.	Council	Short term
Provide the council' with the appropriate skills and tools for evaluation and evidence synthesis.	Council	Short term
Create an online public searchable to access the work of the Council.	Council	Medium term

3. Proposal for action. Strengthen Nuevo León's centre of government, with a specific mandate and resources to enable its function in terms of coordination and monitoring.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Update the office of the governor's internal regulations to include competences regarding whole-of-government co-ordination, carrying out objective setting and prioritisation exercises, and promoting/coordinating monitoring of government-wide policy-priorities.	State public administration	Medium term
Conduct strategic internal and external communication, particularly through the use of social media to outline key progress, success stories, bottlenecks and possible areas for improvement.	State public administration	Medium term
Equip the administration with the tools, human and financial resources, and institutional structures/arrangements to disclose and share key performance information with relevant stakeholders. Gain inspiration from good practices in this regard coming from the private sector as well as other fields.	State public administration	Medium term

Chapter 2

Revise the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 according to a robust methodology

1. Develop a new methodology for the revision of the Plan, which includes participatory methods for problem analysis and diagnostic.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Develop new methodological guidelines for the revision of the Plan.	Council	Short term
Conduct a public consultation to identify the main policy issues to be addressed in the Plan.	Council	Short term
Conduct a thorough analysis of the current state of affairs in Nuevo León, to serve as a basis for the problems to be addressed in the Plan. This phase should include a close look at state level statistics.	Council	Short term

2. Proposal for action. Clearly communicate, in the Plan itself, the reasons behind the selection of the strategic objectives in order to ensure support within and outside the administration.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Consult stakeholders and citizens on the strategic objectives selected through the problem analysis and diagnostic phase. This could include publishing a draft version of the Plan on a publicly available platform to receive feedback on individual chapters.	Council	Short term
Consult key stakeholders on the overall Plan to better understand whether the Plan addresses the key strategic issues in Nuevo León.	Council	Short term
Use of a logic model or theory of change, to clarify how the different objectives are related to each other at every level and between levels. Make this logic model explicit in the Strategic Plan.	Council	Short term

3. Proposal for action. Present the Plan to the commissions and the governor for validation.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Present the Plan to each of the commissions for feedback and final approval.	Council	Medium term
Send the final draft of the Plan to the Governor for final approval.	Council	Medium term

Simplify the Strategic Plan in order to recentre it around impact and outcome level objectives and indicators.

1. Proposal for action. Redefine opportunities areas as strategic objectives. Clarify the strategic objectives areas under each commission and reduce the overall number of strategic objectives.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Remove strategic lines, initiatives and strategic projects from the Plan. Keep only priority opportunity areas, their targets (including medium-term milestones when relevant, and systematic long-term targets) and indicators.	Council	Short term

Rename priority opportunity areas as strategic objectives.		
Include, at the end and the beginning of the Plan, a table summarising the strategic objectives areas monitored by each commission. Include, in each chapter, a table summarising the strategic objectives, as well as the indicators and targets associated to them.	Council	Short term
Reduce the number of strategic objectives areas in the Plan. Organize workshops and other participatory activities to reduce and redefine the plans objectives, used tools such as theory of change and SMART models.	Council	Short term

2. Proposal for action. Homogenise the number of strategic objectives in each chapter of the Plan.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Reorganise the chapters of the Plan, and the corresponding commissions, in order to allow for a homogenous number of strategic objectives in each thematic area.	Council	Short term
Consider eliminating thematic areas are either not policy actionable (values) or strategic (sports).	Council	Short term

3. Proposal for action. Improve the coherence and quality of indicators used to measure the results of the Strategic Plan.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Revise the Plan so that there is only one indicator and one target linked to each strategic objective. Context indicators can be kept for added information.	Council	Short term
Identify the indicators and targets for each strategic objective. Consider using a collective intelligence platform to consult experts on the selection of these indicators and targets.	Council	Short term
Involve INEGI in the definition of the indicators for the Plan.	Council	Short term

Clarify and communicate the coherence between the Strategic Plan and the SDGs

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Identify the strategic objectives of the Plan in such a way that they are aligned to the 2030 Agenda. Each strategic objective should be linked to either a sustainable development goal or target.	Council	Short term
Clarify what SDG is monitored by each commission of the Council.	Council	Short term
Clarify the alignment of the SDGs with the strategic objectives by including a table at the end and beginning of the Plan showcasing this link.	Council	Short term
Consider creating an interactive tool online showcasing the link between the SDGs and the strategic objectives.	Council	Short term

Chapter 3

Clarifying the monitoring set-up to better support the delivery of the Plan

1. Proposal for action. Adopt a comprehensive definition of monitoring and clarify the roles of the key actors, including the council and the state public administration.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Change the Strategic Planning Law to include a clear and comprehensive definition of monitoring that is distinct from evaluation.	State public administration/Congress	Medium term
Change the Strategic Planning Law's regulation to clarify the role of the council and of the state public administration in the three main monitoring exercises.	State public administration	Medium term

2. Proposal for action. Set up a performance dialogue within the state public administration at the level of line ministries and of the centre of government (CoG), regarding both the SP and the SDP simultaneously.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Establish a group at each level of the performance dialogue (line ministries, centre of government, cabinet) in charge of conducting the performance dialogue.	State public administration	Medium term
Identification of best practices regarding monitoring tools and methods	State public administration	Short term
Establish guidelines for dialogue between CoG and line secretariats to specify the role of each institutional actor along the monitoring value chain (coordinate and promote monitoring, collect data, analyse data, report data, use data). Within these guidelines, specify the definition of each of these roles.	State public administration	Medium term
Identify human resources available for monitoring, as well as staff members in each line ministry and a unit/ team within the CoG in charge of the performance dialogue.	State public administration	Medium term
Design a dashboard for the performance dialogue, which includes information concerning the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 and the State Development Plan 2016-2021 outcome/impact indicators.	State public administration	Short term

3. Proposal for action. Conduct an annual joint review of the State Development Plan and Strategic Plan objectives and indicators between the council's thematic commissions and the secretariats.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Establish joint guidelines for the review (timeline, actors involved, methodology, etc.) in the regulation.	Council and state public administration	Medium term
Develop shared tools for the review (e.g. canvas).	Council and state public administration	Medium term
Amend the Strategic Planning Law regulation to reference the existence of a joint review.	State public administration	Medium term

Promoting the quality of monitoring

1. Plan of action. Increase the state public administration's capacities to monitor the Strategic Plan.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Revise the indicators of the Strategic Plan 2015-2030.	Council	Short term
Develop a data governance strategy in order to better exploit public data in view of monitoring. Begin with a mapping of available data in the state public administration.	State public administration	Medium term
Update the manual for the elaboration of the State Development Plan in order to ensure that the SDP contains a clear section on the causal link between the objectives and indicators of the Strategic Plan 2015-2030 and the SDP. An independent quality assurance process should be conducted to make sure that this alignment is sound.	State public administration	Medium term

2. Plan of action. Develop quality assurance mechanisms in addition to the current quality control mechanisms in place.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Design guidelines in order to strengthen the quality of the data collection process, to be applied by every line ministry. Clarify in these guidelines the criteria for escalating issues from the line ministry level to the CoG level.	State public administration	Medium term

Promoting the use of monitoring results

1. Plan of action. Update the *Avanza Nuevo León* platform with indicators from the Plan, at regular intervals (e.g. indicators for three opportunity areas every year), based on the theory of change and the information available. Promote the development of a performance narrative in the monitoring dashboards in order to promote the uptake of performance information by decision-makers.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Identify the resources dedicated to monitoring at the CoG. Ensure that the corresponding team includes a mix of data analysis, data visualisation and strategic communication skills.	State public administration	Medium term

Chapter 4

Building a sound institutional framework for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan

1. Proposal for action. Adopt a comprehensive definition of evaluation applicable to whole-of-government.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Update the regulations of the Strategic Planning Law and the Strategic Planning law if possible.	State public administration/ Congress	Medium term

2. Proposal for action. Develop a policy framework for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan that includes a description of the different types of evaluation and evidence reviews to be carried out,

the timeline against which each of these should be carried out, and the resources dedicated to them.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Establish a roundtable to define the framework for the evaluation of the plan that brings together the president of commissions and the secretariats of the state public administration.	State public administration/ Council	Medium term
Identify, through the roundtable, the evaluation to be done each year by the council, at the request of the state public administration that will require a formal follow-up of the implementation of the resulting recommendations.	State public administration	Medium term

3. Proposal for action. Develop appropriate evaluation competencies in the council.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Identify staff in charge of commission and supervising evaluations in the council.	Council	Short term
Appoint at least one evaluation expert in each commission.	Council	Short term
Establish a dedicated unit to coordinate evaluations.	Council	Medium term

Promoting the quality of evaluations

1. Plan of action. Develop explicit and systematic quality assurance mechanisms within the council to ensure the credibility of the evaluation process.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Develop quality standards for the evaluation process. These should build on the existing regulations for the Consolidation of a Results-Based Budget and the Performance Evaluation System and include competence requirement for evaluators. These regulations can also spell-out the specific methodologies for carrying out different types of evaluation (i.e. data collection and evaluation methods) and criteria for the evaluability of policies.	Council	Medium term
Develop competencies to conduct in-house evaluations of the council by offering trainings (for example to the commissioners and technical secretariat staff) and hiring staff with the appropriate technical skills to conduct evaluations.	Council	Short term
Foster a network of evaluators, and consider the provision of trainings to the state public administration on evaluation as part of this network.	Council	Medium term
Leverage this network of evaluators as well as existing partnerships with universities to conduct peer reviews of the council's evaluations.	Council	Medium term

2. Plan of action. Develop explicit and systematic quality control mechanisms to ensure that the evaluation design, planning, delivery and report are properly conducted to meet pre-determined quality criteria.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline

Submit evaluations produced by the council to peer reviews by experts (e.g. academics) before they are published.	Council	Short term
Design a self-evaluation checklist for evaluators to check their work.	Council	Medium term

Promoting the use of evaluations

1. Plan of action. Design a communication strategy to adapt the way in which research findings are presented to their potential users.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Design a communication plan tailored to civil servants and decision makers in the state public administration to ensure greater uptake of its evaluations within the administration.	Council	Short term
As part of the communication plan, design communication materials such as case studies, infographics, tailored synthesis of research evidence, dissemination of 'information nuggets' through social media and seminars to present research findings.	Council	Medium term

2. Plan of action. Incorporate the use of evaluations in the policy-making cycle.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Incorporate evaluation results into the budgetary cycle through the establishment of impact and performance evaluations to inform budget decisions.	State public administration	Medium term
Discuss evaluation results at the highest political level by systematically holding discussions within the state public administration after reception of the evaluation report.	State public administration	Medium term
Discuss evaluation results within the commissions after reception of the evaluation report. Consider discussing these results with key stakeholders such as chambers of commerce, universities and civil society organisations.	Council	Medium term

Chapter 5

Setting up an advisory system that meets the needs of government

1. Proposal for action. Strengthen the leadership role of the council as part of Nuevo León policy advisory system, with a broader whole of government perspective.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Map think tanks, research institutes, etc., working on policy advice to determine technical gaps in the advisory system and increase representativeness in the evidence supply.	Council	Short term
Facilitate a networked approach with other knowledge providers.	Council	Medium term
Update the Strategic Planning Law to include the new role of the council in the advisory system.	State Public Administration	Medium term

2. Proposal for action. Foster inclusiveness and expertise in the council's decision-making process.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Ensure commissioners are able to provide a neutral view, have a sufficient credible level of expertise, and that they represent the sociodemographic and economic diversity of the community (for example through working with minorities, vulnerable communities and municipalities to balance powers across different types of actors).	Council	Medium term
Provide trainings for the members of the council.	Council	Medium term
Clarify the decision-making process within the council in order to ensure that any advice that is produced is based on clear evidence and transparent procedures.	Council	Medium term
Develop a declaration against conflict of interest for each commissioner to sign before taking office.	Council	Medium term

Developing innovative knowledge brokering methods to promote the use of evidence

1. Proposal for action. Implement knowledge brokering methods in the council, to promote the impact and use of evidence.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Consider adopting systematic research processes as part of the commissions' activities to base advice on the best available research evidence and evaluations.	Council	Long term
Use data visualisation tools to translate the evidence gathered through evidence synthesis methodologies to a wider audience. Make these tools available on a public platform.	Council	Long term
Strengthen the role of the Knowledge Network by defining its principles, vision, and role in the decision-making process of the council; and by defining the network as a space/opportunity for decision makers and researchers to cooperate.	Council	Medium term

Developing capacities in the state public administration to support evidence-informed policy-making in Nuevo León

1. Proposal for action. Develop individual, organisational and institutional approaches for evidence-informed policy-making in the state public administration.

Actionable item	Entity responsible	Timeline
Organise more capacity building initiatives to develop skills for use of evidence within the state public administration.	Council	Short term
Establish strategic units to champion an evidence-informed approach in the centre of government.	State public administration	Long term

OECD Public Governance Reviews

Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategic Plan of Nuevo León 2015-2030

USING EVIDENCE TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Pursuing sustainable development requires a whole-of-society effort, where the public sector engages with citizens, the private sector and civil society organisations. With this goal in mind, in 2014, the Nuevo León (Mexico) government created the Nuevo León's Council for Strategic Planning to develop, inter alia, a 2015-2030 Strategic Plan.

This review provides an assessment of Nuevo León's monitoring and evaluation systems for this Strategic Plan, as essential tools for achieving long-term objectives and delivering results. The review also assesses the general role of the Council in providing policy advice. It draws on a wealth of comparative international experiences in promoting sustainable development through long-term planning, as well as in monitoring and evaluation of policy priorities through inclusive and participatory processes.

The report's recommendations seek to promote an evidence-informed approach to public governance, and, ultimately, help Nuevo León deliver better results for citizens, paving the way for inclusive and sustainable development.



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