



Research Article

Challenges of Implementing Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) Systems in the Public Sector: Evidence from the Yem Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) systems mark a shift in public sector management toward outcome-focused accountability and evidence-based decision-making. However, implementing them often faces major challenges in resource-constrained, decentralized settings like Ethiopia's zonal administrations. This study examines the key barriers to effective RBME adoption in the public sector of Yem Zone, Central Ethiopia—a rural, ethnically diverse area with significant infrastructural and capacity limitations. Drawing on New Public Management, Institutional Theory, and Theory of Change, it investigates why local units struggle to progress beyond activity-based tracking despite national reforms. The research used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, combining quantitative data from a structured survey of 230 randomly selected employees (5-point Likert scale) with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews with 30 purposively selected managers, plus analysis of institutional documents (e.g., BPR manuals, Balanced Scorecard reports, and performance appraisals). Findings show moderate RBME practice (Grand Mean = 2.82) but a generally positive view of its value (Grand Mean = 2.13). Five main barriers emerged: limited technical capacity and staffing shortages, financial and technological constraints, organizational resistance to change, political interference undermining data integrity, and inconsistent stakeholder engagement. By examining an understudied zonal-level case, the study fills a gap in literature focused mainly on national or regional levels. It reveals how isomorphic pressures frequently lead to superficial adoption, resulting in a "broken causal chain" between data collection and performance improvement. The findings provide practical recommendations: protective legislation, institutionalized capacity-building, digital data infrastructure, and stronger stakeholder involvement to foster sustainable, results-oriented governance in comparable contexts.

Keywords

Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation, Public Sector, Implementation Challenges, Yem Zone, Ethiopia, New Public Management

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Received: 15 May 2026; Accepted: 28 May 2026; Published: 10 August 2026



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1. Introduction

Implementing Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) systems in the public sector is increasingly recognized as a vital management tool for enhancing the effectiveness of government programs. Unlike traditional systems that focus on inputs and activities, RBME emphasizes outcomes and impacts [12]. This approach has become crucial as globalization exerts pressure on governments to meet growing demands for good governance, accountability, transparency, and tangible results [17]. International organizations conceptualize Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) as a management strategy that prioritizes outcomes and impacts over the mere tracking of inputs and activities. According to the United Nations Development Program [12], monitoring is defined as a continuous process of collecting, analyzing, and using information regarding an intervention's inputs, outputs, and outcomes, while evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of a project's design, implementation, and results.

In a similar vein, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Trade Organization describe monitoring as a routine process of data collection to track progress, whereas evaluation involves a systematic analysis of program activities and characteristics to determine their efficiency and effectiveness [15, 20]. In addition, the [21] characterizes RBME as a comprehensive, systematic, and iterative approach to development that ensures performance is continuously monitored to facilitate evidence-based decision-making and improve organizational management.

The origins of RBME are rooted in the New Public Management (NPM) Reform Agenda of the 1980s, which shifted the state's role toward managing for results [9]. This shift is driven by global pressures for good governance, accountability, and transparency. Globally, performance measurement has been institutionalized in the UK and the US through regulations like the Government Performance and Results Act. Countries such as New Zealand, Canada, and Singapore have successfully fostered a performance culture through these systems [8].

In Africa, donor influence has largely driven the adoption of RBME frameworks to ensure accountability for development investments [2]. The African Union's Agenda 2063 further emphasizes these mechanisms to track continental development goals.

In Ethiopia, the government has integrated RBME into national strategies like the Growth and Transformation Plans (GTP) and the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda to track progress in infrastructure, healthcare, and education [7].

While RBME is a powerful tool for institutionalizing learning, its implementation in the public sector faces significant hurdles. These include financial constraints, insufficient human capacity, and inadequate institutional frameworks.

In Ethiopia, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems have gradually been incorporated into national and sectoral

development planning as part of broader efforts to promote results-oriented public sector management. Despite this progress, evidence from empirical studies shows that the practical effectiveness of these systems remains limited. For example, research conducted in the Gambella Region identified major challenges such as weak coordination of M&E activities, shortages of technical capacity, inadequate funding, and poor data management practices, all of which reduce the contribution of M&E to effective policy implementation and organizational learning [1]. Likewise, a multi-sectoral study on nutrition-sensitive agriculture programs reported structural problems including heavy workloads, weak supervision, fragmented reporting mechanisms, and insufficient technical integration among institutions, further constraining the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation processes [3]. In addition, broader analyses of public sector reform in Ethiopia highlight continuing institutional and implementation gaps that limit the meaningful use of performance information for evidence-based decision-making [18].

Findings from project and non-governmental organization contexts reinforce these concerns. Studies examining M&E practices in Ethiopian NGOs and development initiatives point to persistent barriers such as weak policy and legal frameworks, shortages of skilled personnel, lack of reliable baseline data, and limited financial resources, all of which hinder the effective operationalization of results-based monitoring and evaluation [13, 19]. These studies together, indicate that although formal M&E structures exist, their institutionalization and the culture of using data for learning and decision-making remain underdeveloped. Moreover, much of the existing research focuses on national or regional levels, giving limited attention to localized administrative settings and smaller governance units. As a result, there is insufficient empirical understanding of how contextual factors, such as administrative capacity, geographic complexity, and technological limitations affect RBME implementation at the zonal level.

The RBME is critical for ensuring that public resources are used effectively and efficiently. By assessing challenges in a specific localized context like the Yem Zone, the research provides insights that can influence regional policy and serve as a model for other administrative zones.

Despite the benefits of RBME, its implementation in the public sector faces hurdles such as financial constraints, insufficient human capacity, and limited stakeholder engagement [7]. Previous research in Ethiopia has focused on broad regional contexts, often overlooking the unique dynamics of smaller, complex geographies like the Yem Zone. Furthermore, there is a conceptual gap regarding how administrative, economic, and social sectors differ in their implementation of these systems.

To address this gap, the present study examines RBME practices in the Yem Zone by incorporating the perspectives of diverse stakeholders, from managers to frontline staff, in

order to generate context-specific evidence for improving public sector efficiency and results-based management. This study is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How do public service managers and employees perceive the implementation of RBME systems in the Yem Zone?
- 2) How are RBME systems practiced in the public sector of the Yem Zone?
- 3) What are the key challenges hindering the successful implementation of RBME in this region?

Theoretical Framework

The implementation of RBME systems is grounded in several management and sociological theories that explain organizational behavior and the drive for performance.

1. *Public Sector Management Theory and New Public Management (NPM)*: The shift toward RBME is rooted in the New Public Management (NPM) philosophy of the 1980s, which advocates for market-oriented reforms to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability [9]. This theory shifts the state's role from traditional administration to "managing for results," emphasizing performance measurement and a results-oriented culture [9, 17]. Within this framework, Public Value Theory suggests that public organizations must look beyond internal efficiency to ensure they are creating tangible value for citizens through outcomes and impacts [17].

This philosophy advocates for market-oriented reforms and a shift from traditional administration to "managing for results". In the Yem Zone, NPM principles drive the requirement for civil servants to set clear objectives and focus on outcomes rather than inputs. It provides the mandate for the "Results Framework" used to track the efficiency of public service delivery.

2. *Institutional Theory*: Institutional Theory explains why organizations often face resistance when adopting new systems like RBME [10]. It suggests that public sectors often conform to institutional pressures and norms rather than purely functional needs. For instance, "isomorphic pressures" from external stakeholders, such as international donors, can compel organizations to adopt RBME frameworks to gain legitimacy, even if the internal capacity to sustain them is lacking [2, 10].

This theory helps explain the "organizational inertia" and resistance to change observed in localized contexts like the Yem Zone. It also examines how organizations conform to institutional norms and external "isomorphic pressures". It explains why the Yem Zone may adopt RBME frameworks primarily to gain legitimacy from international donors or central government (isomorphic pressure) while simultaneously facing organizational inertia. This is evident in the research findings where "Resistance to Change" acts as a significant barrier because the internal culture has not yet aligned with the new institutional requirements.

3. *Theory of Change (ToC)*: The Theory of Change is a comprehensive planning and evaluation approach that allows organizations to articulate how specific interventions lead to

desired long-term outcomes [14]. By mapping the causal pathways between activities, outputs, and impacts, ToC provides the logical blueprint for an RBME system [17].

For the public sector in the Yem Zone, ToC provides the blueprint for causal linkages in project design. The study uses this theory to describe how current challenges, such as limited technical expertise, break these causal chains, leading to a gap between data collection and actual program improvement.

The core of the framework is defined by five distinct pillars of institutional and technical challenges that shape the RBME landscape. These factors are not isolated; rather, they foster a culture of resistance to change, where organizational inertia and a fear of increased accountability hinder the adoption of a results-oriented mindset. Furthermore, inconsistent stakeholder engagement and concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of the system create a fragmented environment where RBME is often perceived as a temporary initiative rather than a routine administrative function. These challenges directly permeate the operational dimensions of the RBME process, including framework design, data collection, and reporting. According to the Theory of Change, an effective system requires a robust "causal linkage" between activities and impacts. However, the framework suggests that when the public sector lacks manpower or technological infrastructure, this logical chain is broken. This leads to the inconsistent practices identified in the qualitative analysis, where managers noted that while protocols may exist on paper, their application remains uneven across administrative, social, and economic clusters. Ultimately, the framework describes the realization of strategic institutional goals as the final outcome of navigating these pressures. The goal of implementing RBME, as aligned with New Public Management (NPM) principles, is to foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. By examining these relationships descriptively, the framework underscores that the effectiveness of the Yem Zone's public programs depends on the ability of the sector to institutionalize these practices despite the rugged geographical and systemic hurdles identified.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design and Approach

The study utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, where quantitative and qualitative data were collected independently and then integrated during the analysis phase. This approach was selected to provide a holistic understanding of the RBME implementation challenges from multiple stakeholder perspectives.

2.2. Target Population and Study Area

The study was conducted in the Yem Zone, Central Ethiopia, specifically focusing on public sectors within Saja town and

surrounding districts. The target population comprised 750 employees and managers across various government offices.

2.3. Sample Size Determination

To ensure statistical representativeness, the sample size was determined using the Cochran formula. With a 95% confidence level ($z = 1.96$), a 5% margin of error ($e = 0.05$), and an expected proportion of success/failure ($p/q = 0.5$), the calculation resulted in a required sample of 260 participants.

2.4. Sampling Strategy

To ensure a comprehensive and representative understanding of the public sector in the Yem Zone, the study utilized a rigorous multi-stage sampling approach. This strategy began with stratified sampling, where the target population of 750 individuals was categorized into three distinct functional clusters: Administrative, Social, and Economic, to capture the diverse operational contexts within the government. This stratification is an analytical necessity, as it ensures that each subgroup is represented in the final sample, providing a more accurate reflection of the population than simple random sampling alone. Within these defined strata, a dual-selection method was applied to balance statistical breadth with expert depth. Simple random sampling was utilized to select 230 employees, ensuring that every member of the general workforce had an equal probability of participation, thereby reducing selection bias. In contrast, the study employed purposive sampling to select a specialized group of 30 managers and human resource personnel. This targeted selection was analytically driven by the need to engage participants with specific technical expertise and direct experience in managing performance systems, which is essential for addressing the complex qualitative dimensions of RBME implementation.

2.5. Data Collection Instruments

To ensure a comprehensive and rigorous assessment of the implementation challenges within the Yem Zone public sector, the study employed data triangulation through three primary instruments. Structured questionnaires served as the foundational quantitative tool, administered to employees using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". This standardized approach was analytically selected to ensure the quantifiability and efficiency of the research, allowing for the precise measurement of perceptions and current practices across the workforce. To maintain the reliability of these items and ensure conceptual clarity for all participants, the instruments were translated from English into Amharic.

Complementing this numerical data, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with purposively selected managers and leaders. This qualitative method was designed to extract rich, in-depth insights into the practicalities of system implementation, providing a platform for experts to detail specific challenges, best practices, and "lessons learned" from

their direct experiences. The semi-structured format provided the necessary flexibility for the researcher to pursue clarificatory questions and capture emerging concepts that structured tools might otherwise overlook.

Finally, the study utilized document analysis to provide institutional context and verify findings derived from primary sources. The researcher conducted a systematic review of existing records, including Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) manuals, Balanced Scorecard (BSC) reports, and employee performance appraisals. This analytical step was crucial for evaluating how result-based monitoring and evaluation tools are formally institutionalized and applied in day-to-day operations. By merging these three data streams, the research achieved a holistic understanding of the problem, effectively validating the findings through methodological convergence.

2.6. Data Analysis Methods

This study utilized a dual-track analytical approach to process the data collected from the Yem Zone public sector. The quantitative analysis involved the processing of numerical data through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0. The researcher employed descriptive statistics, primarily utilizing the mean to establish measures of central tendency and standard deviation (SD) to determine the variability and dispersion of participant responses. This quantitative method allowed for a precise measurement of the average levels of agreement regarding RBME practices while highlighting significant inconsistencies in perceptions across the various administrative clusters.

In parallel, the qualitative analysis focused on data derived from semi-structured interviews and institutional document reviews using thematic methods. This process involved the systematic identification of recurring patterns and trends within the non-numerical data, focusing specifically on the institutional barriers and technical gaps that impede results-oriented governance. By merging these analytical streams, the researcher was able to validate the statistical findings with rich, contextual insights from management, ensuring a holistic understanding of the challenges identified in the study.

3. Results

This section presents the empirical findings derived from the quantitative and qualitative data collected from 260 respondents in the Yem Zone public sector. The analysis is structured around the three core research questions: perceptions of RBME, current practices, and identified implementation challenges.

3.1. Quantitative Findings

3.1.1. Perception and Practice of RBME

Research Question 1: *How do public service managers and employees perceive the implementation of RBME systems?*

Research Question 2: *How do RBME systems practice in the public sector of Yem Zone?*

The study assessed the current practice of RBME using an

8-item scale. The results indicate a moderate level of implementation with a Grand Mean (GM) of 2.82.

Table 1. Practice of RBME in Public Sectors of Yem Zone.

No	Statement	Mean	SD
1	RBME systems are effectively practiced in the public sector	2.74	1.392
2	Objectives of RBME are clearly defined and understood	2.70	1.272
3	RBME practices are aligned with strategic goals	2.45	1.273
4	Sufficient training and support are provided to staff	3.30	1.335
5	Clarity on the use of RBME data for decision-making	3.09	1.280
6	Overall Effectiveness Rating	2.46	2.282
	Grand Mean (GM)	2.82	1.4855

Source: 2024 empirical survey

The general perception of the system was also measured, resulting in a Grand Mean of 2.13, suggesting a moderately positive outlook toward the system's potential benefits.

Table 2. Perception and Practice of the RBME System.

No	Statement	Mean	SD
7	RBME helps in improving overall organizational performance	1.55	0.727
8	RBME helps in identifying and addressing performance gaps	1.71	0.812
9	RBME promotes accountability among employees	1.53	0.728
10	I believe that the RBME system is beneficial for our organization	1.44	0.601
	Grand Mean (GM)	2.13	0.7967

Source: 2024 survey

3.1.2. Challenges Hindering Implementation

Research Question 3: *What are the challenges that hinder the implementation of RBME systems in the public sector in Yem Zone?*

The study identified five primary challenge categories. A lower mean score in these tables indicates a higher level of agreement that the item is a significant challenge.

- 1) Limited Capacity and Resources There is a strong consensus (GM 1.50) that a lack of manpower and technological infrastructure is a primary hurdle.

Table 3 Challenges Hindering Implementation.

No	Statement	Mean	SD
1.1	Challenges in creating capacity building for RBME	1.48	0.596
1.2	Inadequate financial, staff, and tech resources	1.53	0.802

No	Statement	Mean	SD
1.3	Lack of manpower to implement outcome-based M&E	1.49	0.596

Source: 2024 empirical survey

2) Resistance to Change Staff reluctance to move away from traditional methods is a significant barrier (GM 1.56).

Table 4 Challenges Hindering Implementation.

No	Statement	Mean	SD
2.1	Challenges from staff in adopting RBME practices	1.50	0.604
2.2	Challenges from management to change existing practices	1.65	0.789
2.3	Difficulties in setting clear RBME objectives	1.54	0.631

Source: 2024 empirical survey

3) Political Interference Respondents indicated that political issues frequently compromise the independence of the system (GM 1.52).

Table 5 Political Interference.

No	Statement	Mean	SD
3.1	Political issues pose challenges to processes and decisions	1.55	0.595
3.2	Interference undermines system independence and credibility	1.53	0.652
3.3	Challenges from political intervention involving stakeholders	1.47	0.632

Source: 2024 empirical survey

4) Stakeholder Engagement Coordinating roles and ensuring active participation from diverse groups remains difficult (GM 1.57).

Table 6 Stakeholder Engagement.

No	Statement	Mean	SD
4.1	Challenges of active participation of stakeholders	1.54	0.624
4.3	Challenges in identifying roles and responsibilities	1.64	0.822

Source: 2024 empirical survey

5) Sustainability of the System Ensuring the system lasts beyond immediate project cycles is a concern (GM 1.55).\

Table 7. Sustainability of the System.

No	Statement	Mean	SD
5.1	Challenges in sustaining the RBME system in the long run	1.54	0.631
5.2	Challenges to methods to ensure system sustainability	1.57	0.607

Source: 2024 empirical survey

3.2. Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings of this study provide a complementing understanding of the challenges hindering Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) implementation in the Yem Zone. Through thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with public sector managers, several critical issues emerged, often characterized by inconsistent application and systemic barriers.

3.2.1. Inconsistency in RBME Practice

Managers acknowledged that while the framework for RBME exists, its execution is far from uniform across different government offices.

Respondent 1 (Manager) observed: *"Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation practices are in place, but the level of implementation varies. Some areas are more advanced, while others are still struggling to integrate the system effectively"*.

Respondent 2 (Manager) further noted that: *"Implementation is inconsistent. Some projects adhere strictly to Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation protocols, while others lack clear guidelines and support"*.

3.2.2. Capacity and Technical Expertise Gaps

A recurring theme was the substantial gap in training and technical skills required to move beyond simple activity tracking to outcome-based evaluation.

Managers reported that the public sector "lacks internal technical experts" capable of providing necessary guidance.

This deficiency often forces departments to "rely on external consultants," which managers explicitly stated is "not a sustainable solution" for the zone's long-term development.

3.2.3. Financial and Resource Constraints

The qualitative data highlighted that even when the will to implement RBME exists, the financial means are often missing.

Managers reported that "financial resources allocated for Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation activities are insufficient".

They noted that budget constraints directly restrict the "purchase of necessary tools and the hiring of specialized staff," leading to "incomplete or delayed" evaluation processes.

3.2.4. Organizational Resistance and Mindset Shift

Resistance to change emerged as a powerful psychological barrier. Staff who have spent years using traditional methods are often skeptical of the new results-oriented approach.

Interviewees confirmed that many employees are "hesitant to embrace RBME due to the additional effort required to learn new processes and the shift in mindset that it entails".

Managers identified "considerable resistance from staff who are accustomed to traditional methods" and remain "doubtful about accepting new systems".

3.2.5. Political Pressure and Data Integrity

One of the most sensitive challenges identified was the impact of political interference on the objectivity of the data.

Managers expressed deep concern regarding "political pressure to produce favorable reports".

They argued that this pressure "leads to data manipulation and compromises the credibility of evaluation processes," ultimately "eroding trust in the system".

Additionally, they observed that "politically motivated projects receive unequal funding," causing essential but less visible projects to be underfunded.

3.2.6. Stakeholder Engagement and Decision-Making

While RBME is intended to inform policy, the link between data and action remains weak in the Yem Zone.

Respondent 5 (Manager) mentioned that although data is collected, it is "not fully integrated due to delays or data quality issues".

Respondent 7 (Manager) highlighted a fundamental disconnect, stating that while data is considered: *"it is not always the primary factor in decision-making, and there is a gap between data collection and practical application"*.

Regarding external engagement, managers noted that while some stakeholders are active, others "remain passive or only engage when issues arise".

3.2.7. Sustainability Concerns

Finally, the long-term survival of the RBME system is currently fragile and dependent on leadership rather than institutionalization.

Managers noted that "sustainability depends significantly

on stakeholders' long-term vision and commitment".

They warned that progress is frequently "challenged by shifting political and administrative priorities," necessitating that RBME be integrated into "standard procedures and policies" to be seen as a "routine and valued practice" rather than a temporary initiative.

4. Discussion of Research Findings

The discussion below integrates the quantitative data and qualitative insights from the study, aligning them with the established theoretical framework and existing literature to address the research questions regarding Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) in the Yem Zone.

4.1. Perception and Practice of RBME

The study found a moderately positive perception of RBME (Grand Mean of 2.13) among staff, with 60.4% agreeing that the system is beneficial for the organization. This aligns with the New Public Management (NPM) philosophy, which emphasizes a shift toward a results-oriented culture to improve public service delivery [9].

However, the actual practice of RBME was rated at a moderate level (Grand Mean 2.82), indicating a gap between perception and implementation. Qualitative interviews revealed that while RBME protocols exist, their application is inconsistent across different departments. As noted by [12], the value of RBME lies in its focus on outcomes and impacts; yet, in the Yem Zone, the system often struggles to provide the timely and relevant information needed for decision-making. This disparity mirrors the findings of [7], who observed that in Ethiopia, learning from RBME is often limited by low institutionalization.

4.2. Analysis of Implementation Challenges

4.2.1. Limited Capacity and Resources

Quantitative results showed a strong consensus (Mean 1.50) that capacity and resource constraints are major hurdles. Qualitatively, managers identified a "substantial gap" in technical expertise, noting that the public sector lacks internal experts capable of guiding RBME processes, leading to an unsustainable reliance on external consultants.

This finding is supported by Institutional Theory, which suggests that organizations may adopt the *structure* of a system like RBME to gain legitimacy from donors, even when they lack the internal capacity to sustain it [10]. Furthermore, [2], highlight that financial and human resource shortfalls directly hamper the ability to collect and use data for evidence-based decision-making.

4.2.2. Resistance to Change

The study identified resistance to change as a critical barrier

(Mean 1.56). Qualitative data revealed that staff accustomed to traditional, activity-based methods is skeptical of RBME, viewing it as an "additional effort" rather than a management tool.

This aligns with literature by [5], and [14], who argue that fear of increased accountability often drives organizational inertia. From a theoretical perspective, this resistance reflects the "isomorphic pressures" described in Institutional Theory, where the internal culture of an organization struggles to align with new, externally-imposed performance standards.

4.2.3. Political Interference

With a near-unanimous consensus (Mean 1.52, SD 0.0271), respondents identified political interference as a primary obstacle. Managers qualitatively expressed deep concern over pressure to produce "favorable reports," which leads to data manipulation and erodes the system's objective value.

As [6], and [11], argue, such interference undermines the independence and credibility of M&E systems. This challenge highlights a failure in the Public Value Theory aspect of management, where political interests may supersede the creation of tangible value for the public.

4.2.4. Stakeholder Engagement

The quantitative data (Mean 1.57) and qualitative reports confirm that stakeholder involvement is inconsistent. While 43% of respondents disagreed that stakeholders are actively involved, managers noted that some groups remain passive or only engage when problems arise.

This lacks the collaborative ownership described in the literature as essential for success [17]. Without active participation, as [4], and [16], note, the RBME system cannot remain responsive to the needs of the community.

4.2.5. Sustainability of the System

Finally, the sustainability of RBME faced significant concern (Mean 1.55). Qualitative findings suggest that the system's longevity is currently tied to individual leadership vision rather than institutionalized routines.

The Theory of Change emphasizes that for a system to be sustainable, there must be a clear causal pathway from activities to long-term impacts. However, as the [21], notes, sustainability is often compromised by short-term planning and a lack of ongoing political and financial support.

5. Conclusion

This final section synthesizes the study's findings into a coherent summary and offers a strategic roadmap for enhancing the implementation of Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) systems within the public sector of the Yem Zone.

The research identifies a significant implementation gap between the organizational perception of RBME and its practical

execution. While a majority of employees (60.4%) and managers view RBME as a beneficial tool for improving accountability and identifying performance gaps, the system remains underdeveloped due to systemic deficiencies.

The primary barriers are rooted in limited institutional capacity, characterized by manpower scarcity, financial constraints, and an inadequate technological infrastructure. Furthermore, organizational inertia, manifested as resistance to change among staff accustomed to traditional methods, and political interference significantly undermine the independence and credibility of the monitoring process. Ultimately, the study concludes that for RBME to move beyond a perfunctory exercise, the Yem Zone public sector need to transition from a culture of compliance to one of evidence-based learning and transparency.

6. Recommendations

To address the identified challenges, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the RBME framework:

- 1) *Establish a Legislative Framework*: A clear legal basis is essential to ensure long-term effectiveness. This includes establishing dedicated monitoring organizations and mandated reporting and accountability systems to insulate RBME from shifting political priorities.
- 2) *Targeted Capacity Building*: Continuous training programs must be institutionalized for public sector officials. These programs should focus on technical competencies such as data collection methods, analysis techniques, and the use of performance measurement frameworks.
- 3) *Strengthen Data Management and Technology*: The Yem Zone should prioritize the digitization of performance records by transitioning from paper-based Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) and Balanced Scorecard (BSC) manuals to a centralized Management Information System (MIS). This infrastructure should focus on automating data collection to enable the real-time reporting necessary for evidence-based decision-making, rather than relying on delayed manual appraisals
- 4) *Mitigating Financial Constraints*: To mitigate financial hurdles, the public sector must move away from costly external consultants and instead allocate a dedicated budget for hiring internal technical M&E specialists. Furthermore, funding should be ring-fenced specifically for institutionalizing continuous training programs, ensuring that "manpower scarcity" is addressed through long-term internal capacity building rather than one-off project cycles
- 5) *Enhance Stakeholder Engagement*: Moving beyond top-level management, engagement must involve civil society, community leaders, and service beneficiaries. This

collaborative approach ensures that monitoring frameworks remain relevant, responsive, and transparent.

- 6) *Foster Political Commitment*: Senior leadership must advocate for the system by allocating necessary resources and enforcing policies that prioritize evaluation findings in policy-making.
- 7) *Promote Continuous Learning*: The system should be viewed as a tool for improvement rather than punishment. Sharing best practices and utilizing findings to inform policy decisions will help embed a performance-oriented culture.

Abbreviations

RBME	Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NPM	New Public Management
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
WTO	World Trade Organization
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
BPR	Business Process Re-engineering
BSC	Balanced Scorecard
MIS	Management Information System
SD	Standard Deviation
GM	Grand Mean
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

Author Contributions

Habtmu Dura Bulgu: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft

Tesmamu Mirre Jobir: Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Supervision, Writing – review & editing

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflicts of Interest

The researchers declare there is no conflict of interest in this study.

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