



A WORLD BANK COUNTRY STUDY

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# Colombia

*Paving the Way for a  
Results-Oriented Public Sector*

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Results-Oriented Public Sector*

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*The World Bank  
Washington, D.C.*

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First printing June 1997

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ISSN: 0253-2123

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Colombia : paving the way for a results-oriented public sector.

p. cm. — (A World Bank country study)

Includes bibliographical references (p. ).

ISBN 0-8213-3911-7

1. Public administration—Colombia—Evaluation. 2. Administrative agencies—Colombia—Management—Evaluation. 3. Government productivity—Colombia—Evaluation. 4. Colombia. Ministerio del Medio Ambiente—Evaluation. 5. Public administration—Colombia—Public opinion. 6. Public opinion—Colombia. I. World Bank.

II. Series.

JL2831.C66 1997

351.861—dc21

97-6386  
CIP

## ***ABSTRACT***

In accordance with the 1991 Constitution (Article 343), the National Department of Planning (DNP) is responsible for organizing and coordinating the monitoring and evaluation of public policies, programs and projects as defined in the National Development Plans (NDPs). To fulfill this legal obligation, during the past three years DNP has been working in the design and initial implementation of a National Evaluation System of Public Sector Performance (SYNERGY). It has made the explicit decision to use SYNERGY as a tool to promote a results-oriented public sector management framework and as an entry point for public management reform. The decision is based on the conviction that the evaluation process and its results can themselves draw attention to the need for change in the incentive environment surrounding the public sector. It emphasizes the bottom-up dimension of evaluation--one that ensures both support and demand for improved public sector performance.

The success or failure of this Colombian initiative will ultimately be measured by its ability to deliver improved public sector performance. The challenge is to ensure that SYNERGY meets this ultimate objective. For this to happen, the evaluation system will need to be:

- Designed properly--internally consistent and with the necessary linkages to a results-oriented decision-making process.
- Supportive of other government initiatives, particularly in the related areas of connecting with civil society and decentralization.
- Implemented as a learning process which will build institutional capacity and pay particular attention to the management of change.
- Set within an institutional framework which is results-oriented, including strategic decision-making, budgeting and personnel administration.
- Used as a lever to shift as quickly as possible to a comprehensive results-oriented management system.

The enormous risks and difficulties the Colombian Government will face in implementing this system should not, however, be underestimated. The effort, which could probably take around 10 years to complete, has just recently been initiated with pilot projects in the Ministry of Finance, DNP and Ministry of Defense.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

During the past three years, the Special Division for Evaluation (SDE) in the Department of National Planning (DNP) has been working in the definition and implementation of a National Evaluation System of Public Sector Performance (SYNERGY) in Colombia. In mid-1995, DNP requested the Bank to review the system and define proposals to strengthen SDE's strategy to pave the way for a results-oriented public sector in Colombia. The report, product of the collaborative effort between DNP and the World Bank, presents the findings of the Bank team.

The World Bank team was led by Ernesto May (LA3C1) and integrated by Malcolm Holmes (PSP), Petter Langseth (EDIRP), Graham Scott (consultant), Harry P. Hatry (consultant) and Neil Andersson (consultant). The counterpart team in the DNP was the Special Division for Evaluation (SDE) headed by Sylvia Escovar Gómez and more recently by Miguel Gandour, and integrated by Pablo Abitbol Piñeiro (who traveled to Washington the last week in August 1995 to present to the Bank team the proposed National Evaluation System of Public Sector Performance), Gloria Gómez, María Cristina Obregón, Juan Fernando Robayo, Rafael López, Adriana Sanjuan Galvis, Monique Mekler, Julian Mariño and Fernando Pieschacón. The Bank team visited Colombia during the second week of October 1995. The report is based on the findings of the mission and background material prepared by SDE.

Initial conclusions of the mission were presented in Colombia on the First Seminar on Public Sector Performance Evaluation held in Santafé de Bogotá 4-5 December, 1995. The draft report was discussed in a one-day workshop held in Bogotá on December 9, 1996, with the participation of representatives from DNP, Ministry of Finance, Office of the President, Administrative Department of Public Office, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Defense, National Police, FIS and INVIAS.

The Bank team benefited greatly from preparatory work done by Tony Dale (consultant - collaborating with Graham Scott) and from the support of the Resident Mission in Colombia provided by Natalia Gómez de Pizano. The peer reviewers are Desmond F. McCarthy (DECVP) and Sanjay Pradhan (PRDPE). Report processing was handled by Neil Wirth and Kathy Scalzulli.

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CONPES</b>	- National Council for Economic and Social Policies (Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social)
<b>DANE</b>	- National Statistics Department (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadísticas)
<b>DNP</b>	- Department of National Planning (Departamento Nacional de Planeación)
<b>DRI</b>	- Integrated Rural Development Program (Desarrollo Rural de Inversiones)
<b>ECOFONDO</b>	- Environment Participation Fund (Fondo de Participación en Asuntos Ecológicos)
<b>GOC</b>	- Government of Colombia
<b>ICBF</b>	- Family Welfare Institute (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar)
<b>MTEF</b>	- Medium-term Expenditure Framework
<b>NDP</b>	- National Development Plan
<b>PPU</b>	- Program Performance Unit (Unidad de Gestión)
<b>ROPM</b>	- Results-oriented Public Sector Management
<b>SDE</b>	- Special Division for Evaluation
<b>SDS</b>	- Service Delivery Surveys
<b>SINPRO</b>	- Information System on Standards and Processes
<b>SYNERGY</b>	- National Evaluation System of Public Sector Performance (Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de Resultados de la Gestión Pública)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The National Evaluation System of Public Sector Performance (SYNERGY) now being put in place in Colombia--by the Special Division for Evaluation (SDE) at the Department of National Planning (DNP)--has the potential to revolutionize the public sector, turning it from a more inward looking, process oriented body that in occasions restrains economic and social progress, to being a more dynamic, results-oriented partner of the community and private sector in development. Critical to turning this potential into reality are the following four factors:

- Design of SYNERGY - Making it a real management tool.
- Linkage with Civil Society - Focusing on results for people and leveraging on their energy and resources.
- Development of Institutional Capacity - Defining a constructive learning process for implementation.
- Strategic Policy Formulation and Incentive Framework - Providing an enabling environment for a results-oriented public sector.

The report analyzes each of these components and puts forward proposals to strengthen SDE's strategy to pave the way for a results-oriented public sector in Colombia. It identifies both opportunities and risks. Critical to the success in this endeavour, in moving SYNERGY out of the conceptualization phase to development and implementation, is the management of change:

- Cultivating strong support from senior management in central government to deal with the expected resistance to change.
- Managing the implementation process, looking for early successes through the use of pilots.
- Identifying change-champions for the pilot programs, clearly defining areas of responsibility (who is responsible for what results), and resources needed to ensure the required successes.
- Developing a learning process where the different pilots will allow decision-makers to adjust and to fine-tune the proposed national evaluation system.
- Managing expectations about the impact of SYNERGY both within civil society and government.

### **Design of SYNERGY**

For success, SYNERGY needs to prove itself as an evaluation system of public entities for public entities. Public managers need to find it a useful management tool. For this to happen, the design of the system needs to be strengthened by addressing, among others, the following issues:

- extending the coverage of indicative plans to all entities in the public sector, not just those involved in executing the national development plans;

- encouraging entities to develop the full range of indicators they need to manage their programs, including intermediate outcomes, even though DNP will only require a smaller range of indicators for its own purposes;
- ensuring a focus on outcomes as the reason for government interventions;
- including the indicators developed as part of the related “It’s a Deal” program, which are expected to focus on the quality of services delivered, in the indicative plans;
- developing new or revised data collection procedures to address the specific needs of the system--data quality control procedures should be implemented;
- coordinating target setting with all relevant entities and, through partnership agreements, between all levels of government;
- treating initial targets as experimental, given the inherent difficulties in setting them, until some experience is attained;
- training managers in the use of performance information, with best practice being shared;
- encouraging managers to provide explanatory information along with performance reports, which should be published;
- defining selection criteria to identify the programs, projects or entities that should be subject to strategic evaluations each year;
- restricting program performance units (PPUs), intended to coordinate entities where more than one contributes to a program, to an advisory and coordination role;
- excluding DNP from the project evaluation process--leaving it to the line ministries--focusing its efforts instead on strategic policy analysis;
- assigning sector specialists at DNP to work with the PPUs--as one of their major responsibilities rather than a side duty; and
- establishing an Evaluation Advisory Committee to discuss common issues and to resolve common evaluation problems among entities.

### **Linkage with Civil Society**

As stated by SDE, SYNERGY can only address the government’s development objectives by taking into account its results for civil society. At the same time it is essential that the vitality and extensive resources of civil society be harnessed and freed in the cause of development for the people. The proposed involvement of civil society in SYNERGY is mainly through the National Planning Council in the definition of the National Development Plans (NDPs) and the participation of diverse stakeholders--identified by the national and territorial planning councils--in the PPUs. This, however, could easily decay in tokenism. The recommendations of the report are aimed at promoting civil society participation in two ways:

- identifying what the results are for individuals and communities; and
- being a partner in the evaluation process.

Institution or provider based data (e.g. hospital and school records) need to be complemented by data which is community or user based. The report highlights the potential for Service Delivery Surveys (SDS) to be an important component of the evaluation system and to contribute to improving public sector management and service delivery (ensuring client needs are more adequately met). But only part of the challenge in an evaluation system is to obtain the



data. Providing feedback to households and clients is a critical link that has often been forgotten. This lack of feedback neglects the potential multiplicative effects of communication with civil society and other stakeholders. The full range of communication techniques should be exploited.

While there is a considerable reserve of energy and skills in civil society, this should not be taken as meaning that it has much evaluation capacity. The vision of SYNERGY needs to be extended, and both public and private sectors need to consolidate their efforts. Coordination and working arrangements must be strengthened and streamlined at national, departmental and local levels. The view among government officials that evaluation and links with civil society will be against their own interests must be tackled head on. As an illustrative case of what this working relation with civil society might look like, the government should consider having a central ministry which provides services to the public, and involves all levels of government as well as NGOs, to test the use of Service Delivery Surveys as part of a performance measurement pilot project.

### **Development of Institutional Capacity**

By promoting a change in culture (results orientation), innovative and responsible leadership and community participation, SYNERGY can generate effective demand for capacity-building thereby creating the missing link to institutional development. In this context, the efforts to enhance institutional capacity for the successful implementation of SYNERGY and results-oriented public management (ROPM) in Colombia should be viewed as part of a broad capacity building process in which the government allows itself, through experience, to:

- build capacities to evaluate and use the results to improve policies and services; and
- learn by doing while motivating by showing results.

As much attention needs to be given to the supply side of technical assistance as the demand side. On the supply side, the GOC will need to ensure training and technical assistance is provided to those responsible for performance measurement and evaluation processes in their entities, as well as those using the evaluation system for managerial purposes. Some ways to provide such training would be to: (i) contract universities or private organizations; (ii) develop VCR tapes, computer-based training software, and even TV programs; and (iii) use internal personnel.

There is the need, on the other hand, to ensure there is effective demand to build capacity by central government, local administrations and communities. One way to create such demand is through demonstrations: showing authorities, managers, and personnel that they can reap the benefits of using the proposed evaluation system. As an example of learning by doing the SDS is a potentially powerful tool as are a whole range of evaluation techniques. For central government, as mentioned before, a performance measurement pilot project is proposed. A senior leadership network in central government would be another mechanism for sharing learning as well as providing a focus for the training of senior managers in current approaches to change management and reforming government. For local governments access to information about innovations and best practice in other municipalities and departments may well be the most powerful tool available for capacity strengthening. The report proposes that a series of two-day

workshops bringing together top departmental and local government officials be initiated. More generally, a data base and information service on best practice is proposed. Finally, the idea being contemplated by SDE to establish a Best Practice Committee which would recognize entities on the basis of excellent service is endorsed.

### **Strategic Policy Formulation and Incentive Framework**

For broad based success SYNERGY must feed its information into coherent decision-making processes at all levels and into management systems embedded in an overall incentive framework which will encourage and require appropriate actions to attain desired results--a system that demands performance information. To create this enabling environment special attention should be given to the areas of:

- strategic policy formulation; and
- management incentives.

It is essential that the total policy framework retain strategic coherence. The framework must allow for unbiased choices between policy instruments, whereas, in reality, there appears to be a risk of bias towards public expenditure, especially investment. It is also important that there be contestability in policy advice. To support this strategic focus, DNP should use SYNERGY as a vehicle to emphasize its role in strategic policy analysis and integration of advice to government.

For government's fiscal decision-making processes, the challenge is to strengthen macroeconomic control while ensuring that resources are allocated according to strategic priorities and resource use is improved in executing agencies. There are pressures on fiscal policy, including from the National Development Plan (NDP). If these are not managed carefully, SYNERGY will be undermined through the uncertainty associated with macroeconomic instability. Over the medium-term, greater coherence and stability in planning and budgeting would be achieved by putting in place (i) a medium-term expenditure framework, (ii) capped funding in the annual budget, (iii) a unified budget, and (iv) a results-oriented financial management information system. The on-going effort to put in place an integrated financial information system needs to be redefined and ensure it adequately responds to results-oriented management.

Performance at the entity level is a function not only of the strategic environment but of a host of factors which impact at that level every day. Self-evaluation, the focus of SYNERGY, and performance improvement will only occur if there are incentives for entities, and the people who constitute them, to deliver. This requires that entities have clear objectives and tasks, that they be given the flexibility to achieve them, and that they be held accountable for the use of their authority. SYNERGY can make an enormous contribution to defining objectives, tasks and accountability, and the promise of increased flexibility can be used as a lever to aid implementation of SYNERGY.

An important aspect of flexibility concerns budgetary resources. The report proposes that government undertake a review of budgetary procedures with the objective of minimizing the constraints they impose on entity (and local government) performance. The bias should be towards maximizing the freedoms available over the mix of inputs. Similar thinking should apply

to the approach to personnel management. Generally speaking, the approach should be to set standards from the center but delegate to local managers the responsibilities for obtaining and managing staff. At the same time, staff appraisal and promotion should be more closely linked to performance.

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# **1. EVALUATION - A CATALYST FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REFORM**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the 1991 Constitution (Article 343), the National Department of Planning (DNP) is responsible for organizing and coordinating the monitoring and evaluation of public policies, programs and projects as defined in the National Development Plans (NDPs). To fulfill this legal obligation, DNP is developing a national evaluation system. Within DNP, the unit responsible for defining and implementing the system is the Special Division for Evaluation (SDE).

Putting in place a well-functioning national evaluation system is a major undertaking and presents an enormous challenge for Colombia. Critical to success is to understand that the evaluation system is but one component of a broader management framework to improve performance of the public sector in Colombia. The existence of performance information does not guarantee a performance oriented public sector. It is critical that the management system as a whole functions to achieve improved performance over time, rather than any one of its components--such as the evaluation system--be a benchmark of best practice in some static sense. Without an enabling environment, the evaluation system--no matter how sophisticated and refined it is--is likely to be a waste of resources. From this perspective, the question of how much program evaluation can add to the effectiveness of public administration depends on how it is set up. If it is something done by outsiders over the top of skeptical managers who control vital flows of information it will not be effective. An alternative framework, focusing evaluation on topics of strategic importance, creating strong incentives for high quality analysis and full information disclosure, and integrating it into the ongoing process of policy formulation and resource allocation, could produce significant benefits.

SDE, having identified the dimensions of the challenge, has made the decision to use evaluation as a tool to promote the desired change in culture towards a results-oriented public sector. It has identified the National Evaluation System of Public Sector Performance (SYNERGY) as the entry point for public management reform. This is based on a conviction that the evaluation process and its results can themselves draw attention to the need for change in the environment. It emphasizes the bottom-up dimension of evaluation--one that ensures both support and demand for improved public sector performance.

The purpose of this study is to review the proposed evaluation system and the way in which the government intends to put it in place to attain its ultimate objective: improved public sector performance. The study analyzes the design of the system, both at a conceptual and practical level, and identifies existing deficiencies and gaps that need to be corrected. Particular attention is paid to the role of civil society and capacity development. Drawing on the experience in other countries--including developed countries where broad public management reforms have been undertaken and evaluation systems implemented (e.g., Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada and United States)--the study supports SDE's efforts to define the broader policy agenda Colombia needs to cover in its pursuit of a performance oriented public sector. It

focuses on the critical areas and steps that need to be taken to put in place a performance management system. In all, the study puts forward proposals to strengthen SDE's *strategy to pave the way for a results-oriented public sector* in Colombia.

### **DEFINING THE STRATEGY: FRAMEWORK, OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS**

As the different actors in the economy are now adjusting to the new realities of an open and more competitive environment, the public sector is facing the challenge of transforming itself into a results-oriented agent. SYNERGY is being developed as an instrument of this transformation. Its success or failure will ultimately be measured by its ability to deliver improved performance. The challenge, therefore, is to ensure that SYNERGY meets this ultimate objective. For this to happen, policy makers will need to follow a strategy that will lead the evaluation system to be:

- Designed properly--internally consistent and with the necessary linkages to a results-oriented decision-making process.
- Supportive of other government initiatives, particularly in the related areas of connecting with civil society and decentralization.
- Implemented as a learning process which will build institutional capacity and pay particular attention to the management of change.
- Set within an institutional framework which is results-oriented, including strategic decision-making, budgeting and personnel administration.
- Used as a lever to shift as quickly as possible to a comprehensive results-oriented management system.

### **Results-Oriented Public Sector Management (ROPM): The Framework**

The results-oriented public sector management framework being used by SDE can be schematized in Diagram 1. Evaluation, capacity-building, institutional feedback and incentives, improved policy formulation and service delivery, are all part of a virtuous circle in which many society actors--public and private, national, regional and local--become agents of change. By promoting a change in culture (results orientation), innovative and responsible leadership and community participation, SYNERGY can generate effective demand for capacity-building thereby creating the missing link to institutional development and setting the basis for a performance-oriented public sector in Colombia.

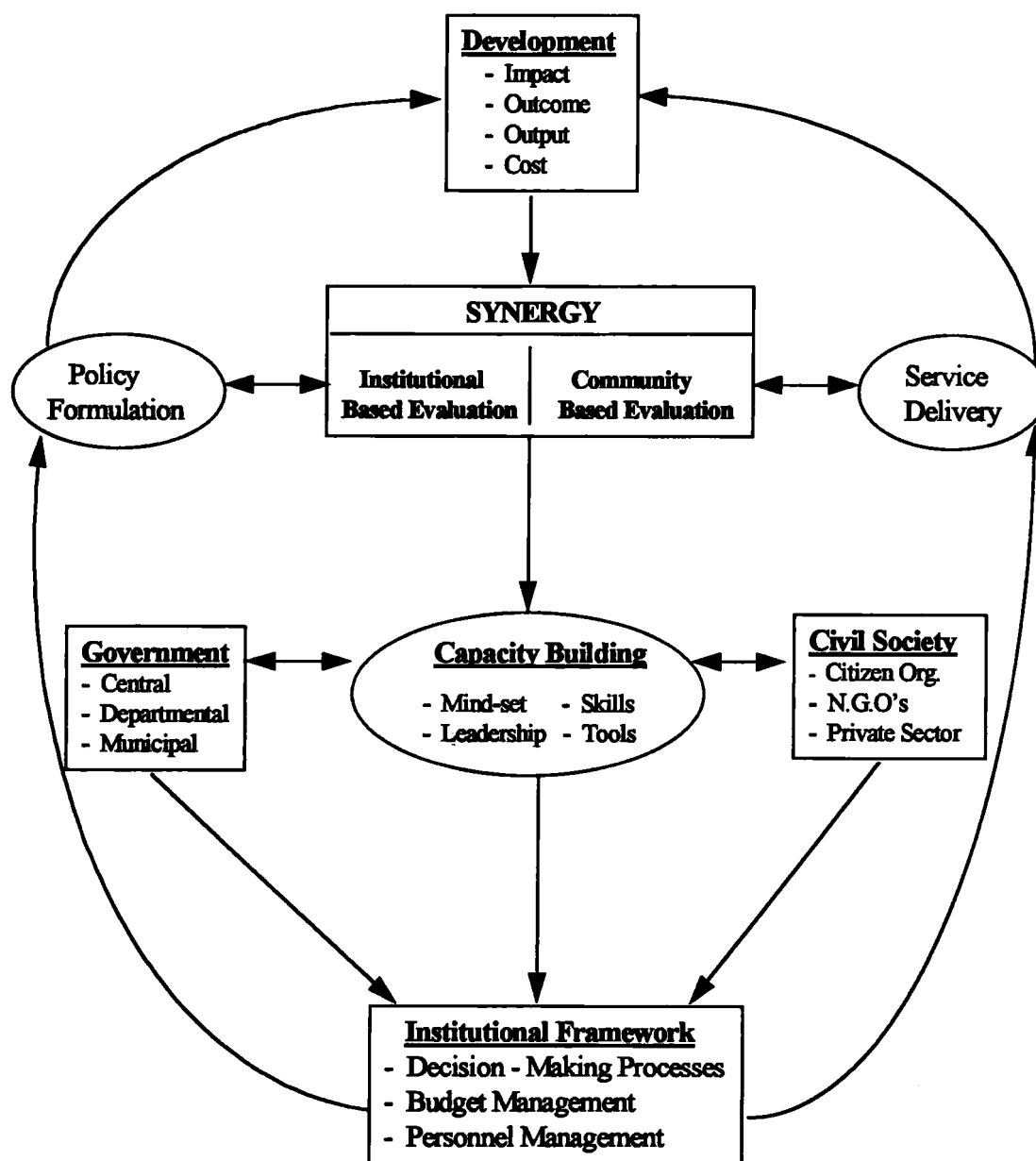
### **ROPM: Opportunities**

The 1991 Constitution seeks to redirect the actions of the state to serve the community promptly and efficiently. It sets out the basis to give the community greater freedom to choose the provider of services--whether it be the state, the private sector or community organizations. It reinforces the rights of the population to demand results in public administration and thereby attempts to create an environment where managers are to take responsibility for the services offered, and be held accountable for their performance. Thus, the Constitution promotes a new



Diagram 1

# RESULTS-ORIENTED PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



Source: DNP and Bank staff.