

# The role of evidence in policymaking in Ghana

A political  
economy  
analysis

March 2021



## About SEDI

Strengthening Evidence Use for Development Impact (SEDI) is a five-year programme (2019–2024) that is working on increasing the use of evidence by policymakers in Uganda, Ghana, and Pakistan. In partnership with country governments, this programme aims to develop capacity and promote innovation in increasing evidence-informed decision making. SEDI is funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The SEDI consortium is led by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) and comprises national, international, and regional partners. The national lead organisations – the African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET) in Ghana, the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) in Uganda and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in Pakistan – provide programme leadership and coordination in each country. These national organisations are authoritative voices in policy processes and will ensure effective engagement and a sustainable legacy for SEDI.

The international partners – the International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP), the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and OPM – as well as the regional partners – the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) and the Africa Centre for Evidence (ACE) – contribute their knowledge and years of experience in working with governments across the world to promote evidence-informed development. They provide technical thought partnership, facilitate cross-country learning, and collaborate on programme delivery.

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**In-country research**



**Supported by**



# The role of evidence in policymaking in Ghana: a political economy analysis

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Sectoral focus on economic development, public financial management, and health

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# Executive summary

## Project introduction and objectives

SEDI is a five-year programme funded by the UK FCDO. It is designed to strengthen the use of evidence in policymaking in selected sectors in Ghana, Pakistan, and Uganda, in order to contribute to more effective and efficient decision making.

This diagnostic report analyses the political economy of policymaking and the evidence ecosystem in three pre-defined sectors in Ghana: economic development, public financial management (PFM), and health. Its aim is to identify key opportunities and constraints in each sector in regard to the use of evidence in policymaking, and the potential for SEDI to deliver politically smart interventions that would increase the use of evidence by policymakers over the next four and a half years. Here we draw out relevant findings and insights.

## Macro-level policymaking in Ghana

**The realities of policymaking in Ghana continue to be heavily influenced by neo-patrimonial practices and the prevailing clientelist political settlement**, whereby the operation of formal institutions is constrained by the exercise of personalised power (Khan, 2010). Ghana is a *de facto* two-party system. Electoral competition is intense, with a high-stakes ‘winner-takes-all’ prize that is contested through the distribution of benefits to party financiers and foot soldiers, involving the alternation of power. All of this produces disrupted and fragmented policies.

**Executive dominance is a significant feature**, with power exercised and maintained through the extensive and increasing use of political appointments that contribute to the polarisation of society on partisan grounds. This has long been a significant problem and the situation is arguably worsening, as it now extends to nominally independent organisations both inside and outside of government.

**There are extensive systems in place for the generation of evidence within government. However, the lack of staff capacity, coordination between units, funding, and incentives impedes evidence use within government.** Within the government system, availability and accessibility of data in the correct format is a challenge, and there is a general lack of trust in the data generated. The influence of evidence in policymaking is tempered by dynamics in which evidence that is consistent with political incentives is instrumentalised. Critical statistics (e.g. labour statistics and national accounts) tend to be produced only infrequently. Where data are available, they may be in the wrong format or not easily accessible (for example, data collected at the district level tend to be on paper and stored in many files).

**An array of universities and independent think tanks also produce evidence. However, think tanks can be perceived as partisan** – ‘friends’ of the opposition and ‘enemies’ of the sitting government – which undermines their role in evidence-informed policymaking.



**The country still lacks a comprehensive framework for promoting an effective state–civil society interface, both at the national and local levels.** Civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with socially excluded populations have some influence at the district level, where they monitor and engage with policy implementation. The advent of social media has given citizens a voice in discussions on policies.

**The media and development partners – especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank – play a critical role as intermediaries and facilitators of evidence use.** However, major media houses seem to lack the capacity to present in-depth political analysis that draws on evidence.

**The international governance system, including international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), increasingly prompts the generation of evidence in policymaking.** For instance, requirements to monitor the SDGs are stimulating data collection, especially on budget allocations.

**Deep-rooted gender norms in Ghanaian society shape all sectors and all aspects of policymaking.** In a context where politics is highly monetised and men control much of the productive resources, this means that they control political decision making: the public space, including politics, is perceived as being a space for men. Gender-responsive budgeting has not been operationalised in the country due to financial and implementation challenges of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

## Economic development

**Economic development is a major priority for the current administration, and in the country more broadly,** as reflected in the government’s Coordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development Policies (CPESDP) and donor investments in this area. However, findings from the most recent round of the Afrobarometer survey point to steep declines in all four measures of public perception of the government’s economic performance (Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), 2019).<sup>1</sup>

**Ghana has a comprehensive set of formal institutional arrangements for economic development-related policymaking.** At the core of these arrangements are the systems and processes for development planning, which assign sector ministries the mandate to set agendas for sector-led economic development activities and which give the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) formal responsibility for the integration and coordination of planning through the CPESDP process, as well as for advising the President on development-related planning, policy, and strategy.

**These institutional arrangements also include systems and processes for the sourcing and use of evidence on an ongoing basis,** which are consistent with broader governmental processes tasking specific directorates in ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) with the aggregation and application of evidence in economic development

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<sup>1</sup> The Afrobarometer survey is a non-partisan, pan-African research institution conducting public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, the economy, and society in 30+ countries, repeated on a regular cycle. Four measures include the current government’s handling of the following matters: managing the economy; improving the living standard of the poor; creating jobs; and narrowing income gaps. See CDD (2019).

policymaking. NDPC aggregates the evidence generated into annual progress reports (APRs) that are submitted to Parliament, with the aim of shaping policy adjustments.

However, **political economy realities have significant effects on the *de facto* operation of government institutions**, contributing to the persistence of important economic policy challenges, including difficulties in achieving employment generation and economic transformation. Features of note include the following:

- Important actors in matters of economic policymaking, such as NDPC, Parliament, and technocrats, have been side-lined by the creation of parallel systems that focus on the priorities of the political party in power (e.g. the Economic Management Team (EMT), which provides technical inputs into Cabinet decisions, and the recently created Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)).
- Party processes, including a manifesto for development, have in some cases displaced the processes carried out by career civil servants.
- The executive is able to assert its dominance over economic development because other institutional mechanisms, which in principle should act as counterweights – including Parliament, decentralisation processes, and the career civil service – remain weak.
- Development partners aim to help drive fundamental reforms that underpin economic development (e.g. macroeconomic management). However, the limitations of their efforts are apparent in the persistence of core economic development challenges.

**The influence of non-governmental producers of evidence remains limited.** The role of producing non-governmental evidence is taken on principally by universities and private think tanks; however, their influence on economic policy remains generally limited, with a few exceptions (often where informal personal networks are strong). Civil society organisations (CSOs) have been influential in some areas – for instance, they played a key role in pushing through the Right to Information law – but not in others – for example, they have not been influential in agricultural policy (an area that is more influenced by donors).

Nevertheless, there remain pockets of relative effectiveness in the use of evidence in economic development, as well as pockets of interest in, and incentives for, that use. While the EMT is more influential in Cabinet decision making than NDPC, the former is not a constitutional body and may not survive a government change. Similarly, while the Ministry of M&E has a clear interest in the production and use of evidence, the incentive to use evidence is limited to, and coloured by, the priorities of the current government.

## PFM

**Ghana has a set of formal PFM institutional arrangements and a legal framework for PFM, which have been incrementally strengthened since 1993.** Parliament, the MoF (and its technical divisions), MDAs, the Controller and Accountant-General's Department (CAGD), the Ghana Audit Service (GAS), the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), the GSS, and the Bank of Ghana (BoG) are key stakeholders within PFM and have been assigned clear roles and responsibilities in relation to producing credible national budgets. In addition, political parties, NDPC, and the Cabinet/EMT provide direction to PFM policy processes through their engagement with the government agencies responsible for these processes. The legal framework provides clear processes for policymaking, and sets out the evidence



required at each stage for each stakeholder. **Our analysis has identified the budget cycle and the tax policy process as critical processes within PFM that offer opportunities to strengthen the use of evidence in decision making.**

**However, political realities influence the roles played by these institutions and how they use evidence to inform policy decisions.** The growing dominance of the executive (highlighted in both the macro-level policymaking and economic development sections of this report) also manifests itself in PFM. This executive dominance propagates party interests and is channelled through the MoF. Competitive politics and winner-takes-all dynamics are key structural factors that affect policymaking. Other factors include fragmented institutions working in silos, weak commitment to reforms and budget expenditure controls, and capacity-constrained oversight institutions enforcing rules and regulations, among others.

**The MoF continues to have a central role in PFM and exercises tacit and overt control over key PFM institutions in Ghana, such as the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) and GSS.** The government, including the MoF, exerts influence over the GSS and the Bank of Ghana (BoG) to support its PFM policy agenda, despite the autonomous nature of these institutions. Though the BoG Governor is meant to be independent, it is perceived that appointees to this position almost invariably lean toward the agenda of the government that appoints them. The MoF exerts authority over the GRA, including financial allocations, which can affect the zeal for tax administration reforms.

**NGOs, CSOs, and development partners have low to moderate influence over PFM policies,** while the IMF and World Bank have been highly influential in economic and PFM reforms in Ghana. Most of the evidence provided by commissioned researchers from academia, CSOs, and think tanks does not find its way into government PFM policies. However, business interest groups and CSOs have increased their demand for accountability in budgeting by supplying evidence, or analysing evidence, and sharing key findings with the government and the MoF.

## Health

Since the transition to democratic governance in 1993, **social policies related to health and education have increasingly been treated as important electoral issues** through which the political parties can differentiate themselves. Given the health sector's potential for parties to connect to voters and build patronage, the sector has been given top priority by the government – independent of the political party currently in power. The provision of universal healthcare is not only seen as a top priority due to its benefits for the population, but also as a necessary element for sustained economic growth and development.

**The health sector is characterised by a complex dynamic that is highly politicised in its core functions, but simultaneously carefully protected from overt political influence through robust, transparent, and participatory policy processes involving evidence use.** It can be argued that the health sector policy processes are transparent and technical in nature, which makes the system relatively immune from the influence of short-term political interests. A multi-actor participatory planning and policymaking process safeguards against the direct influence of political parties. The influence of political party manifestos is limited by the priority given to the expertise of technical implementing agencies, the recommendations provided by global guidelines, and World Health

Organization (WHO) policies. The identification of causes of diseases, and the choice of interventions, are based on rigorous scientific methods, including systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

Nevertheless, **party politics do visibly impact the health sector through the politicisation of key political appointments.** The high turnover of ministers and other key positions in technical implementing agencies has provided political parties with an instrument to circumvent more evidence-informed policymaking procedures. The great political weight given to the health sector, in combination with the relatively short electoral cycle, imposes pressure to implement overly ambitious policies within the mandate period in order to gain political capital. Furthermore, new appointees are incentivised to strengthen their own legacy through the introduction of new initiatives, rather than to further advance the directives of their predecessor, which has led to increased policy fragmentation and evaporation.

**The health sector is characterised by overlapping, and sometimes competing, roles and responsibilities, between the Ministry of Health (MoH) and its implementing agencies.** This includes, for instance, the duplication of roles and fragmentation of power between the MoH and the Ghana Health Service (GHS), where the former provides the policy oversight but the latter is responsible for implementation. There are concerns that the creation of the GHS has drained the MoH of its technical expertise and capacity.

**Development partners, whose influence has historically always been very high, remain central to the health sector.** However, there have been critiques of skewed motivations and failure to consider local contexts by relying on global evidence. There are also challenges related to the sustainability of projects once development partner funding ends.

**There are institutional structures in place to facilitate engagement with diverse stakeholders in policy processes.** For example, there is a Common Management Arrangement (CMA) that sets out the modalities for collaboration and coordination among the sector's stakeholders to achieve the Medium-Term Health Development Plan. The CMA outlines five coordinating mechanisms for inputs into the policy process: business meetings, sector working groups, an interagency leadership committee, decentralised-level dialogue, and engagement with the private sector and civil society.

**The most important and influential data collection system in Ghana is the District Health Information Management System (DHIMS), and there are opportunities to improve the use of this system.** Data from DHIMS are used to inform processes and decisions around policy identification, formulation, implementation, and monitoring, as well as the sector's overall performance assessment. The fact that GHS controls DHIMS makes the agency very influential in policymaking processes. While weaknesses with DHIMS have been identified, it remains well trusted and concerted efforts are being made to improve the system. There are opportunities to strengthen the generation and use of DHIMS data by linking users and suppliers and having feedback loops to enhance the value of the data collection exercise.

## **Implications for strengthening evidence-informed decision making (EIDM) in Ghana.**

While there are still gaps in the generation and uptake of evidence in each sector, there is **clear recognition of the importance of evidence-informed policymaking** and a growing momentum toward achieving it.

**Political interests and the executive continue to drive policy decisions in all three sectors**, with political appointments and agenda setting linked to manifestos. Although each of the three sectors has its own formalised structures and processes that drive policy formulation, it is only in health that we observe a close alignment between the formal structures and the realities of policymaking on the ground.

**The generation of evidence by the government is more fragmented in economic development and PFM than in the health sector.** Within health, the responsibility for the collection and use of evidence lies clearly with GHS, in coordination with the MoH. In contrast, the GRA, MoF, BoG, GSS, and NDPC often duplicate the production of evidence on key economic parameters, with conflicting figures undermining institutional trust or enabling cherry-picking of the most convenient evidence by political decision makers. Parallel systems, such as those operated by the Ministry of M&E, further complicate the situation. Improving coordination in evidence generation and uptake across these partners is a clear challenge, and a possible opportunity for strengthening EIDM in Ghana.

**The use of evidence is prioritised and well understood among core actors within the health space, where the dilution of evidence by political agendas is more limited.** The evidence system for health is well developed, and trust in the evidence generated is steadily increasing, with gaps in key data sources (e.g. DHIMS) recognised and efforts underway to alleviate such gaps.

**Although the economic development and PFM sectors have formalised systems for evidence generation and uptake, challenges with credibility and trust persist.** This provides the opportunity for policymakers to use evidence that best suits the political agenda. Working with actors to optimise evidence supply and tailor it to what is most relevant for policymaking is an opportunity that any programme that seeks to strengthen EIDM in Ghana should actively consider, although the challenge of overcoming trust and credibility issues should not be underestimated.

**Outside government, development partner influence is greatest within the health sector, where such actors are active in policy dialogue through summits and working groups, as well as by directly funding programmes.** Within economic development and PFM, their support is increasingly shifting from programme funding toward providing strategic technical support and advisory services.

**Across all three sectors, partisan politicisation is increasing progressively, including within several organisations that are nominally independent.** This points to the significant challenge any programme that seeks to strengthen EIDM in Ghana is likely to have in maintaining its own reputation as non-partisan, even if it chooses not to further explore work with political parties. That reputation will need to be intentionally cultivated regardless of the sectors and partners chosen.

## **Disclaimer**

*This is the redacted version of a more detailed political economy analysis report. In this public version, sensitive information related to key stakeholders and internal references to SEDI's engagement strategy with national institutions has been removed. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the affiliate institutions of these authors. Also, while the report was finalized and published in 2021, the fieldwork that informed the findings was done in 2019 and 2020. It therefore did not take into consideration critical changes in the political economy of Ghana in the few months before and after the 2020 elections.*

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>1D1F</b>	One District, One Factory
<b>ACEP</b>	Africa Centre for Energy Policy
<b>ACET</b>	African Centre for Economic Transformation
<b>APR</b>	Annual Progress Report
<b>BCURE</b>	Building Capacity to Use Research
<b>BoG</b>	Bank of Ghana
<b>CAGD</b>	Controller and Accountant-General's Department
<b>CDD</b>	Center for Democratic Development
<b>CHAG</b>	Christian Health Association of Ghana
<b>CMA</b>	Common Management Arrangement
<b>CPESDP</b>	Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organisation
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>DHIMS</b>	District Health Information Management System
<b>EIDM</b>	Evidence-informed decision making
<b>EMT</b>	Economic Management Team
<b>GAS</b>	Ghana Audit Service
<b>GESI</b>	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
<b>GHS</b>	Ghana Health Service
<b>GIFMIS</b>	Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System
<b>GRA</b>	Ghana Revenue Authority
<b>GSS</b>	Ghana Statistical Service
<b>IDRIG</b>	Inter-Departmental Research and Information Group
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>ISSER</b>	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
<b>KIIs</b>	Key informant interviews
<b>MDAs</b>	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and evaluation
<b>MMDAs</b>	Municipal, Metropolitan, and District Assemblies
<b>MoFA</b>	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MoGCSP</b>	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>MTDP</b>	Medium-Term Development Plan
<b>NDC</b>	National Democratic Congress
<b>NDPC</b>	National Development Planning Commission
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>NHIA</b>	National Health Insurance Authority
<b>NHIS</b>	National Health Insurance Scheme
<b>NPP</b>	New Patriotic Party
<b>ODI</b>	Overseas Development Institute
<b>PEA</b>	Political economy analysis
<b>PFM</b>	Public financial management
<b>PPME</b>	Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation
<b>RSIM</b>	Research, Statistics, and Information Management
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SEDI</b>	Strengthening Evidence for Development Impact
<b>TCD</b>	Technical Coordination Directorate
<b>TPU</b>	Tax Policy Unit
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

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# 1. Introduction

SEDI is a five-year programme funded by the UK FCDO. It is designed to strengthen the use of evidence in policymaking in selected sectors in Ghana, Pakistan, and Uganda, in order to contribute to more effective and efficient decision making.

As set out in the terms of reference for SEDI, the overall impact the programme is seeking to achieve is more efficient and effective programming and policy by government institutions in the three partner countries. The SEDI consortium will seek to do this through two overall objectives that FCDO has defined:

1. To increase the use of robust evidence directly informing policy and programme decisions (referred to as the ‘instrumental use of evidence’) by targeted policymakers in Ghana, Uganda, and Pakistan, both during policy and programme design and during implementation.
2. To increase the use of evidence in processes, systems, and working culture (referred to as the ‘embedded use of evidence’) in government decision-making structures in Ghana, Pakistan, and Uganda, both during policy and programme design and during implementation.

SEDI is being implemented in the three countries in three phases: the analytical phase ran from July 2019 to March 2020; an inception phase is running from March 2020 to January 2021; and the implementation phase will run from February 2021 to July 2024.

The programme builds on the experiences and lessons from FCDO’s Building Capacity to Use Research (BCURE) programme (2013–2017),<sup>2</sup> which recognised that the generation of research alone is insufficient to ensure that policy decisions regarding poverty reduction and other development challenges are informed by evidence, and in turn lead to better development outcomes. The BCURE experience highlighted the often-limited demand for, and use of, evidence by policymakers in policymaking processes, from policy and programme design to implementation. It also identified a number of key constraints that need to be addressed to improve the use of evidence in policymaking. These include the following:

- Political economy factors that constrain the use of evidence;
- The fact that high-quality evidence may not exist, may be hard to access, may not be available when needed, or may not exist in formats that are conducive to decision making;
- Limited individual and organisational capacity to use evidence, with few incentives or mechanisms to improve this;
- The fact that timelines and windows of opportunity to use evidence may be under-utilised, both by policymakers and by evidence providers; and
- Insufficient and unsystematic coordination between those demanding and those supplying evidence.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information, please refer to BCURE’s final evaluation (Vogel and Punton, 2018).

SEDI offers an opportunity to examine in detail these constraints and their underpinning assumptions, and to design, pilot, and test possible approaches to addressing them, based on the existing strengths within each of the SEDI partner organisations.

#### Box 1: Defining ‘evidence’ for SEDI

This report bases its analysis of evidence use on work completed under BCURE, which proposed four broad and overlapping categories of evidence used in policymaking and programming to ensure that ‘evidence for policymaking and programming’ is not solely defined as academic research:

- statistical and administrative data;
- analytical evidence from research;
- evidence from citizens, stakeholders, and role players; and
- evidence from M&E.

Building on BCURE, over its five-year span SEDI will ground its approaches in the following lessons about what factors contribute to more effective evidence use (Vogel and Punton, 2018):

- **The importance of thinking and working in more politically aware ways:** using political economy analysis (PEA) to consider how internal political economy dynamics within specific sectors and organisations shape the potential for catalysing change.
- **Accompanying internal processes of change, rather than imposing change from the outside:** building on PEA, using a design thinking approach that considers how to capitalise on existing change processes and internal dynamics.
- **Changing behaviours around the use of evidence requires more than simply building skills through training:** identifying the full suite of changes that could be harnessed at individual, team, organisational, and ecosystem level, and using PEA and a design thinking approach to identify where to begin and why.
- **Catalysing a critical mass of evidence users requires specific and targeted strategies:** drawing on the results of the PEA and organisational assessments of authority, acceptance, and ability to identify a range of individuals, organisations, structures, and systems that the SEDI project can work with in targeted, holistic, iterative, and adaptive ways.
- **Supporting practical tools or targeted pilots to showcase the value of evidence:** identifying practical and useful ‘quick wins’ to demonstrate the efficacy of SEDI, and building out from those pilot initiatives.
- **Promoting genuine adoption of reforms for sustainable change:** designing changes in such a way that they become embedded within the operating systems of SEDI’s collaborating organisations.

In addition, SEDI will focus on ensuring that policy decisions in the selected sectors are informed by evidence sensitive to gender equity and social inclusion (GESI). This recognises that sustainable development outcomes require equitably empowering people who have been marginalised, including women and girls, and reducing the exclusion of minority populations based on disability, age, ethnicity, or religion.

## 1.1 Analysis phase

Lessons from BCURE and other interventions suggest that, for programmes like SEDI to be effective, certain minimum capacities, institutions, and incentives need to be in place. SEDI has undertaken analysis in Ghana, Pakistan, and Uganda to identify appropriate sectors, organisations, policy processes, and stakeholders that meet these requirements, in order to select sectoral entry points that offer the greatest opportunity for SEDI in each country. The terms of reference for SEDI identified three priority sectors as possible entry points for SEDI in each country, selected by FCDO as being aligned with, and part of, its country strategy (see Box 2). SEDI's analytical phase has sought to identify the key opportunities and constraints that each sector presents for strengthening the use of evidence in policymaking, and for engaging in SEDI as it evolves over the next four and a half years. This detailed analysis will be used to inform FCDO's decision on which sector(s) in each country offers the greatest potential as an entry point for SEDI.

### Box 2: Sectors identified by FCDO as possible entry points in each of the SEDI countries

The terms of reference identified three priority sectors as possible entry points for SEDI in each country, selected by FCDO as being aligned with, and part of, FCDO's country strategy:

Ghana: economic development, PFM, and health.

Pakistan: planning and reform for economic development, education pathways into employment, and child labour.

Uganda: humanitarian, family planning, and gender.

To keep the frame of the analysis manageable it was necessary to more closely define the sectors through discussions with FCDO.

**SEDI's analytical phase has been led by the ODI, with research and analysis undertaken by country leads and sectoral partners.** This phase has sought to address two core questions that are at the heart of understanding how to improve the use of evidence. For each policy issue:

- How does the policymaking process work and why, and what role does evidence play in that?
- Whose evidence is seen as more/less credible and legitimate, and therefore whose voices count in decision-making processes around policy and programming, and why?

BCURE showed that considering the internal political economy dynamics (including power relationships) within policymaking and programming helps us to understand what shapes the potential for catalysing change within sectors, and within organisations in those sectors.

SEDI's methodological approach in this analytical phase has been particularly innovative because it has developed a framework, anchored in an overall political economy approach, which explicitly brings together, for the first time, three core themes of work at the heart of the project: sector analysis, an understanding of evidence use, and organisational diagnostics.

This report brings together emerging findings and insights from the analytical phase in Ghana. It is intended to provide an evidence-based foundation for discussion among FCDO and other key SEDI stakeholders about how to shape SEDI for the remainder of the programme. It is structured as follows:



- **Section 2** outlines the methodology developed for the analytical phase.
- **Section 3** describes the key features of the political economy of policymaking in Ghana, as well as the macro-level political economy issues influencing the demand for and use of evidence at national level.
- **Sections 4, 5, and 6** describe the evidence ecosystem for each sector, providing an analysis of the political economy of the demand for and use of evidence for the priority policy issues in each sector and an initial assessment of the authority, acceptance, and ability of key organisations in each sector to participate in SEDI activities.
- **Section 7** presents suggestions for entry points for strengthening the use of evidence for decision making in Ghana.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Methodological framework

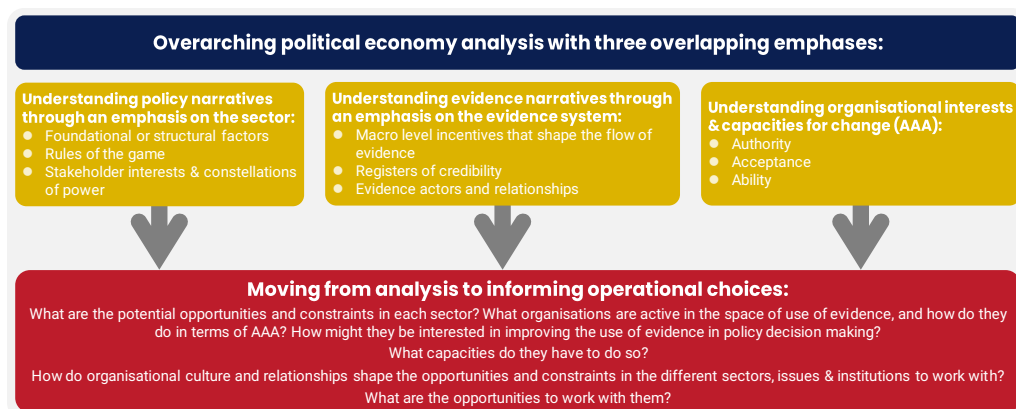
The overarching question that SEDI has sought to address in this analytical phase is:

**What role does evidence play in shaping/influencing decision making and policymaking in the sector, and why?**

To address this question, the SEDI consortium has developed, with ODI as lead, a methodological framework that is grounded in an overall **political economy approach** with three overlapping lenses. As noted in the introduction, and as captured in Figure 1 below, this approach is particularly innovative because, for the first time, it explicitly brings together three core themes of work that are at the heart of the project:

- A **sectoral lens** to understand the political economy of each sector in greater depth. This helps to understand how policymaking processes work in a given sector and why, through an exploration of how the sector is embedded within a wider system of policymaking and decision making. The key structural factors are analysed, along with the rules of the game and critical sectoral stakeholders, to identify how relationships and power dynamics influence policymaking in the sector. This includes an analysis of the role of evidence, any key policy narratives that have emerged and why, and how these suggest priority topics for further investigation.
- An **evidence system** lens to understand relationships between the full range of evidence providers and users, and any intermediary organisations that might broker interactions around the supply and use of evidence (sometimes called the evidence ecosystem). This includes analysis of how and why the macro-level incentives – such as around how research funding is allocated – influence the demand and supply of evidence.
- A **lens focused on organisations**, in particular on public agencies and on other relevant organisations with a remit to use evidence. This analyses their relative interest in, and (signs of) commitment to, strengthening or developing their evidence systems, and explores the degree of authority, acceptance, and ability they must use to do so.

Figure 1: SEDI's methodological approach



Source: SEDI methodology slides, 22 August 2019

## 2.2 Methodological principles: design thinking

Another important innovative aspect of the SEDI project, and this analytical phase in particular, is that it is anchored in **design thinking** as a guiding principle. Design thinking is an approach to project design and implementation that recognises that many situations are ambiguous, and that the possibilities for change are complex and fluid. It emphasises the following elements:

- **Intent:** A continuous reflection on whether, how, and why the intent of an intervention designed in SEDI could change, during both design and implementation, in response to internal and external factors. Changing intent during an intervention is not seen as a challenge but rather as an opportunity to clarify and reframe what might be possible.
- **Exploration and empathy:** Identifying insights about stakeholders' experiences and empathising with them as people with individual abilities, desires, and social networks.
- **Innovation, testing, iteration, refining, and reformulating:** Working with policymakers to envision options for change and desired futures, and re-envisioning them during the change process to ensure that new ideas and insights are incorporated throughout.

Design thinking helps navigate the sorts of complex, ambiguous situations that SEDI teams are likely to encounter while working with government departments. It helps teams focus on latent patterns of human behaviour in organisations and on learning by doing, iteratively refining their work based on policymakers' feedback.

As such, SEDI is as much about building capacity and learning across all team members to ensure effective engagement and a sustainable legacy for the programme as it is about strengthening evidence use in government departments. A design thinking approach requires co-design and co-learning between all partners, which demands a considerable investment in building relationships and capacities across the team – and, once again, this entails a process of uncertainty, experimentation, and learning by doing.

## 2.3 Research questions

To address SEDI's overarching question on the basis of the framework outlined above, the SEDI team developed a series of sub-questions at four levels, anchored in a political economy approach and focusing on issues related to gender and social inclusion cutting across all four levels (see Figure 2: Research questions below).

**Q1. PEA of the sector:** How does policymaking in the sector work, and why? What kinds of factors are relatively more or less significant in shaping policymaking in that sector, and why? Where does evidence fit into policymaking: is it a minor or a major factor?

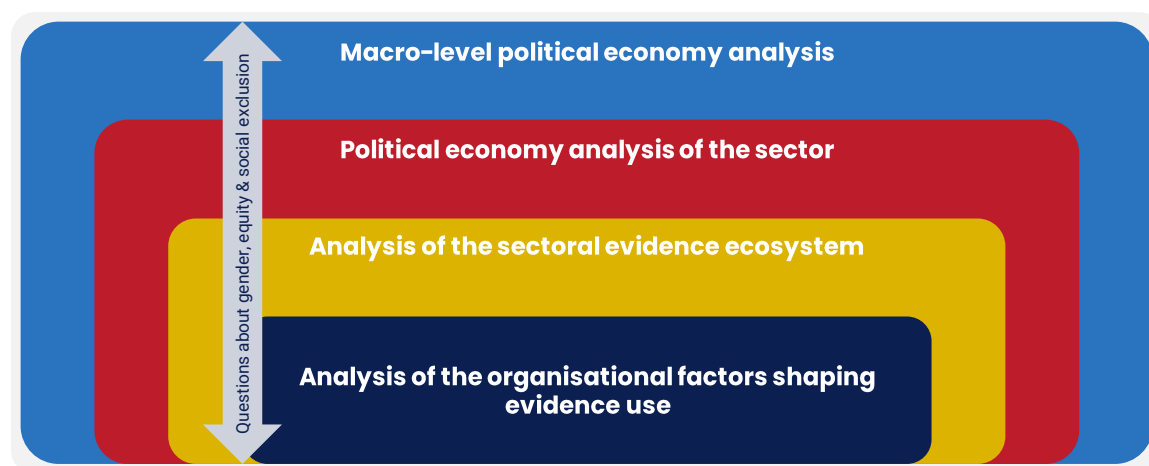
**Q2. Analysis of the evidence ecosystem:** What does the ecosystem of evidence actors look like in the sector? How do all these evidence actors relate to each other, both formally and informally? Where are those relationships strong and where are they weak? What does this imply for how different pieces of evidence are regarded in terms of their quality, credibility, and legitimacy? What does it imply for whose voices are strong in the policymaking process and whose are weak?

**Q3. Analysis of the organisational factors shaping evidence use:** How does the evidence system work within each policymaking organisation? What organisational factors shape the types of evidence that are prioritised and put forward for decision making? What does this suggest in terms of the authority, acceptability, and accountability within each organisation in relation to the use of evidence?

**Q4. Macro-level PEA:** What ‘rules of the game’ shape the flow of evidence? How do they influence what evidence is used to inform policymaking? Which actors shape the rules of the game, and what are their interests? What effect does this have on whose voices are heard, especially in relation to issues of gender, inclusion, and equity?

The questions are nested together as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Research questions



Source: Adapted from SEDI methodology guidance note

The country team in Ghana adapted these questions to design data collection instruments specific to the circumstances of each of the three sectors. Where appropriate, and following discussions with the FCDO country office, the research team narrowed down the scope of each sector to identify possible policy entry points in each sector.

## 2.4 Research activities

The research activities to inform this report took place between October and December 2019. The initial workshop held to design the methodology took place in late September 2019, while data collection took place over four weeks between mid-October and mid-November 2019. An analysis workshop took place on 11–12 November to discuss the preliminary findings and next steps. Data analysis was conducted in the second half of November, and the report was drafted in December. Individual sector reports have been brought together and synthesised in this country report.

The research activities consisted of a literature review and key informant interviews (KIIs). The sector teams conducted a literature scan of the political economy of policy processes and evidence use in the country for each sector using academic databases and organisational libraries, using broad word searches such as ‘Ghana’, ‘political economy’, ‘policy’, ‘decision making’, ‘evidence’, ‘actors’, and words specific to each sector’s context. The search was restricted to English-language literature and included both final reports as

well as forthcoming unpublished reports. The documents/literature reviewed for the sectors have been compiled as part of the bibliography.

Table 1: Documents reviewed

# of	Government documents	Research publications	Programme documents	Other reports	Total
Macro	3	26	5	8	42
Economic development	6	27	14	12	59
PFM	6	28	0	7	41
Health	8	25	5	0	38

Note: Other reports include development partner reports, books, policy briefs, and presentations made on the subject area.

Primary data were collected by each sector team through KIIs with directors and technical experts from key government and public sector institutions, the private sector, academia, CSOs, think tanks, and development partners. The interviews were conducted via face-to-face meetings, and the information from the interviews was triangulated with other sources of evidence from the literature review.

Table 2: Informants interviewed

Informants interviewed / sector	Key informants	
	F	M
Macro-level	8	26
Economic development	8	26
PFM	8	27
Health	3	20
Total	27	99

The analysis of data included team discussions, validation through triangulation, an analysis workshop in Ghana, and knowledge sharing. Both exercises (the literature reviews and the interviews) were conducted iteratively – the literature reviews were started at almost the same time as the interview guides were being produced. Initial interview sessions were held even as the literature review process was underway. Preliminary findings from the literature informed revisions of areas of concentration and the scope of subsequent interviews, helping us to adapt the semi-structured interview guides. The analysis process involved triangulating the information from key informants with the contextual situations identified in the literature.

The co-production of this report has drawn on intermediate sector reports produced by the teams for the three sectors. These sector reports were not meant to be standalone products but were needed to produce the sectoral synthesis included in this report.

## 2.5 Limitations to the study

The original intention was to conduct the analysis over a 16-week period but due to constraints beyond the control of the SEDI Ghana team, the design, data collection and analysis, and report production were compressed into 11 weeks (from the design workshop

in late September to the initial draft of the country report in mid-December 2019). This limited the team's ability to conduct a thorough literature review and to use those findings to shape the KIIs. As noted above, and to mitigate the short timeframe, the literature review and interviews were conducted iteratively instead of sequentially.

The Center for Rapid Evidence Synthesis (ACRES) team at Makerere University provided support during the rapid literature review process, though their standard protocol was found to be too intensive for the SEDI timeframe and there was insufficient time to fully adapt it to the sector teams' needs. To ensure the literature review was rapid, document searches drew on the team members' literature base, as well as a limited academic database search, and covered immediately available published and unpublished English-language literature that could be found in a limited timeframe.

The Ghana report was revised and strengthened in response to gaps identified by the authors, as well as comments from FCDO and external reviewers which were received in writing and in person during the analysis workshop (29–30 January 2020). Further feedback was received from FCDO Ghana at the end of February and could not be addressed in a substantive way as the additional research and work to strengthen the draft had been completed by this time.

Economic development is a broad area consisting of several sub-sectors, and we were unable to reach an agreement on a focus, or an anchor, with FCDO in time to inform the research in the analysis phase. The analysis in this section therefore stays at a high level. Going forward, should economic development be selected as a sector for SEDI to work in, it will be necessary to agree priority themes within this space.

While the report attempts to examine GESI at the macro level as well as in sector-specific sections, we have not been able to carry out in-depth analysis in this area. Due to the limited time available, we were not able to conduct analysis on whether and how evidence has been used to address the structural drivers of inequality and to improve outcomes for marginalised groups. We expect to take this up further in SEDI's inception phase, and for it to be an ongoing priority for SEDI throughout implementation.



### 3. Macro-level policymaking

#### Key findings

- The realities of policymaking in Ghana continue to be heavily influenced by neo-patrimonial practices and the prevailing duopolistic, competitive, clientelist political settlement.
- Electoral competition is intense, with a high-stakes winner-takes-all prize that is contested through the distribution of rents to party financiers and foot soldiers, involving the alternation of power. This leads to disrupted and fragmented policies.
- Executive dominance is a significant feature, with power exercised and maintained through the extensive and increasing use of political appointments. This contributes to the polarisation of society on partisan grounds, which is significant and is arguably worsening as it now extends to nominally independent organisations both in and outside of government.
- There are extensive systems in place for the generation of evidence, including both government and non-governmental systems, the latter of which includes an increasing array of university and independent think tanks. However, the influence of evidence is tempered by dynamics in which evidence is instrumentalised so long as it is consistent with political incentives.
- Deep-rooted gender norms in Ghanaian society shape all sectors and aspects of policymaking. In a context where politics is highly monetarised (and men control much of the productive resources), this means they control political decision making: the public space, including politics, is perceived to be for men.

#### 3.1 Politics and policymaking in Ghana – the state of play

Ghana has a history of grand visions based on long-term planning. Kwame Nkrumah's plans of industrialisation, based on import substitution, and Ignatius Acheampong's desire to have Ghana attain food self-sufficiency under the Operation Feed Yourself programme, are among the best known. The challenge of these ambitious programmes was that they were frequently driven by ideologies or beliefs rather than evidence (Ackah *et al.*, 2010).

The economic downturn of the country, driven by poor governance, saw the imposition of neoliberal policies under the Structural Adjustment Programmes that were part of a new global economic order. Although these programmes achieved limited success, many of the associated policies were premised on formal evidence and supported reforms that saw local evidence generated through various strategy papers (e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers).<sup>3</sup> The introduction of neoliberal economic regimes emphasised the role of technical experts who brought evidence to the centre of decision making. This was particularly relevant in the production of M&E and progress reports, developed both to satisfy donor requirements as well as to provide assessments and data to inform the next round of planning.

The promulgation of the 1992 Constitution included specific provisions demanding that evidence be generated. Indeed, the preparation of the Constitution itself involved a comprehensive public consultation process designed to collect, analyse, and collate Ghanaians' views on the form of state they wished to see. The Constitution prioritised long-term planning and made provision for institutions to drive this process, through the collection of evidence for developing and monitoring the plans. It also made specific demands

<sup>3</sup> Though the reforms were driven by the ideology of the dominance of markets, ample research was marshalled to justify this ideology.

regarding the need for evidence when making certain decisions (e.g. formal criteria for the creation of new districts) and made provisions for citizen participation in decision making.

### **3.1.1 Formal structures for policymaking in Ghana**

The incoming President is required by the Constitution to deliver the CPESDP within two years of assuming office, to outline his/her vision. NDPC has responsibility for aligning the political and longer-term development agenda by using the party manifesto to produce the CPESDP, which becomes the key policy document. The party manifesto is supposed to provide the political party's interpretation of the formal long-term plan. The CPESDP provides an opportunity to ground the manifesto in evidence as the longer-term planning framework is supposed to be evidence based.

Every ministry is required by law to set up Research, Statistics, and Information Management (RSIM) directorates that serve as the main research and information dissemination wings of the ministries. They are required to conduct and commission research and to compile and analyse data, including data gathered from citizens. The GSS is responsible for the collection and analysis of statistical data for the government.

In theory, Parliament is expected to hold the government accountable and has been equipped with a budget and staff to gather necessary evidence to do this. The President is required by the Constitution to report to Parliament at least once a year on all the 'steps taken' to ensure the realisation of the policy objectives contained in Chapter Six (Joseph and Ayee, 2012).

### **3.1.2 The political realities of policymaking in Ghana**

Ghana's experience since 1992 has brought to the fore some significant tensions and difficult trade-offs. A competitive democratic system of governance, with regular elections and a peaceful change of regime, is meant to result in good governance. The competitive nature of Ghanaian elections – where there is almost equal distribution of the electoral population among the two major political parties – has created large political financing needs, which are ultimately met by party financiers and individual politicians. The need to recoup such 'investments' tends to lead to rent-seeking on state contracts awarded to party members, as well as the use of political appointments as rewards (Abdul-Gafaru, 2017). Ghana's political structure is thus the classic neo-patrimonial system.<sup>4</sup>

This political settlement has a number of significant implications:

- The extractive nature of the political elite undermines the prospects for building a broad and enduring political consensus on a national development agenda. As a result, 'the national interest has become fragmented along party lines, with the result that each new administration has followed its own short-to-medium-term development agenda' (Abdul-Gafaru, 2017).

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<sup>4</sup> The patrimony systems have also been entrenched by a 'Big Man' culture that can be traced to traditional chieftaincy systems that venerate ostentation, and where Big Men are expected to take care of their boys (Owusu, n.d.).

- While the parties identify themselves with different ideologies,<sup>5</sup> in practice they are more distinguishable by clientelism and group loyalties (Abdul-Gafaru and Quantson, 2009). Neither party is associated with consistent and coherent policies (Cadman, 2018), and parties may pursue agendas that are contrary to their publicly stated ideologies to respond to various interests.

Neopatrimonialism has weakened the demand for improved performance (Booth *et al.*, 2012). The country has formal institutions and processes, as defined by constitutions and Acts of Parliament, which guide how resources are allocated and how the government functions. However, the interests of the ruling elite and party financiers tend to take precedence over policies.

Four key interest groups reap the benefits of the above situation:

- **Campaign financiers:** All political parties in Ghana obtain major funding from wealthy individuals and special contributions, rather than membership dues.<sup>6</sup> This affects who acquires contracts and how they are managed, hindering the emergence of a dynamic private sector, which is the proposed objective of both parties. Governments also fear that a strong private sector will be a countervailing force, weakening their monopoly over neo-patrimonialism.<sup>7</sup>
- **Party elites:** Each incoming regime rewards its party elites with jobs.<sup>8</sup> These tend to be experienced technical advisers that work closely with ministers and play a significant role in policy formulation. The high turnover of these experts with each change in regime means that much of the capacity previously acquired (and, crucially, organisational memory and relationships) is lost. It also inhibits the ability of suppliers of evidence to build the long-term relationships (and trust) that are key to improving evidence uptake. This impairs the state's capacity to formulate and implement policy. Gyimah-Boadi *et al.* argue that over-reliance on technical experts rather than career civil servants means that the effectiveness of Ghana's public bureaucracy is undermined by politicisation and the persistent 'clientelisation of the democratic politics' (Gyimah-Boadi *et al.*, 2012). This became more evident under the Rawlings administration.
- **Well-organised groups:** Administrations scrupulously avoid policies that would negatively impact specific religious and socio-economic groups, especially organised labour (Cadman, 2018). For example, teachers have been able to successfully resist proposed reforms in education (e.g. curbing teacher absenteeism) that have been supported by strong evidence and donors; thus, although Ghana has scored very highly

<sup>5</sup> The National Democratic Congress (NDC), for instance, subscribes to social democratic principles and is a member of Socialist International, an international organisation of political parties that seek to establish democratic socialism. The New Patriotic Party (NPP) is a liberal democratic and conservative party. It leans towards the centre-right on the political spectrum, while the NDC lean to the centre-left (Fritz *et al.*, 2014; Aninver InfraPPP Partners S.L., 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Some of these supposed 'party financiers' fund more than one political party in a bid to hedge their bets regarding the winner of an election. They often play a powerful role in the decision-making process of their parties, influencing the choice of candidates during internal contests, appointments, contracts, and more when their party wins power (see Sakyi *et al.*, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Whitfield (2018) notes that hostility to a strong private sector was quite entrenched in the first governments of Ghana, which suppressed the emergence of a capitalist class independent of the government bureaucracy as they deemed that an independent capitalist class posed a political threat. However, it is unclear that systematic opposition to such a class exists currently: rather, the opposition that does exist is an unintended consequence of the political system, in which any strong private sector actor that is seen as sympathetic to the opposition may be undermined by the government in power or not given the crucial support it needs. This appears to be the process at work, rather than an agreement by the political class to stifle the growth of the entire private sector.

<sup>8</sup> The Executive President of the Republic has considerable powers, including the appointment of national sector ministers, ministers, and deputy ministers of the 16 regions (currently totalling 123 ministers), all chief executives and mayors of the 260 administrative districts, and thousands of state appointees (Anaman and Bukari, 2019).

in terms of developing plans and policies to address issues within the education sector, it often falls short in regard to their full implementation (Tsikata *et al.*, 2013).

- **Traditional authorities:** Traditional authorities play a key role in politics. Their level of influence depends on their capacity, status, and relationship with politicians. Their role as custodians of land lends additional power, enabling them to guard their interests as policies are developed.

The very competitive electoral landscape and the winner-takes-all approach affects elections by raising the stakes for the next election. The four-year policy cycle is thus partly reduced to pre- and post-election concerns, where electoral advantage informs policy in the periods before elections. Policy discontinuity has marked Ghana's development process since independence (Osei, 2015; Gyampo, 2016).

Parliament has remained largely ineffective in performing its core mandate. Due to partisan politics and Constitutional Requirement 78(i), which requires most ministers to be appointed from Parliament, Members of Parliament (MPs) who are keen to become ministers will avoid 'offending' the President and favour the party interest. Technical work on instruments (Bills, contracts, etc.) may be completed at the committee level, but partisan politics makes it difficult to reach consensus when recommendations are presented to the chamber. When consensus is impossible, decisions are made on simple majority – the party with the majority gets its way despite different voices being represented at committee meetings. Since the inception of the fourth Parliament of the 1992 Constitution, the majority party in Parliament has concurrently won in the presidential elections.

Other weaknesses of the Parliament of Ghana (in contrast with the executive) are reflected in the fact that no MP (or group of them) has managed to successfully sponsor a Bill. This has been attributed to the lack of resources or expertise needed to draft legislation.<sup>9</sup> Female representation has also suffered from slow growth: in 2016, only 37 out of 275 parliamentarians (13.5%) were women.

The Constitution and the legal framework can provide a check on excesses by mandating the use of evidence. For instance, although the recent creation of new regions may have been prompted by patrimonial considerations, interviews reveal that the minister concerned spent significant time gathering supporting evidence. On such matters the Constitution requires that evidence be gathered through a commission of inquiry. However, contradictions in the legal framework remain, which hinder the use of evidence: in the case of decentralisation, the Constitution gives Parliament the main role in the creation of districts, but the President can circumvent this by using an executive instrument through Act 462 (Ayee, 2012).

## 3.2 Evidence ecosystems and policymaking

Figure 3: Evidence ecosystem, shows a summary of the evidence ecosystem, comprising generation, use, and intermediaries, each of which is shaped by interests and ideologies.

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<sup>9</sup> The Speaker of the current Parliament is seeking to change this by recruiting lawyers to help MPs with the process of drafting. An office has been secured and some lawyers who had put in applications have been interviewed (GhanaWeb, 2018).

### 3.2.1 Evidence generation

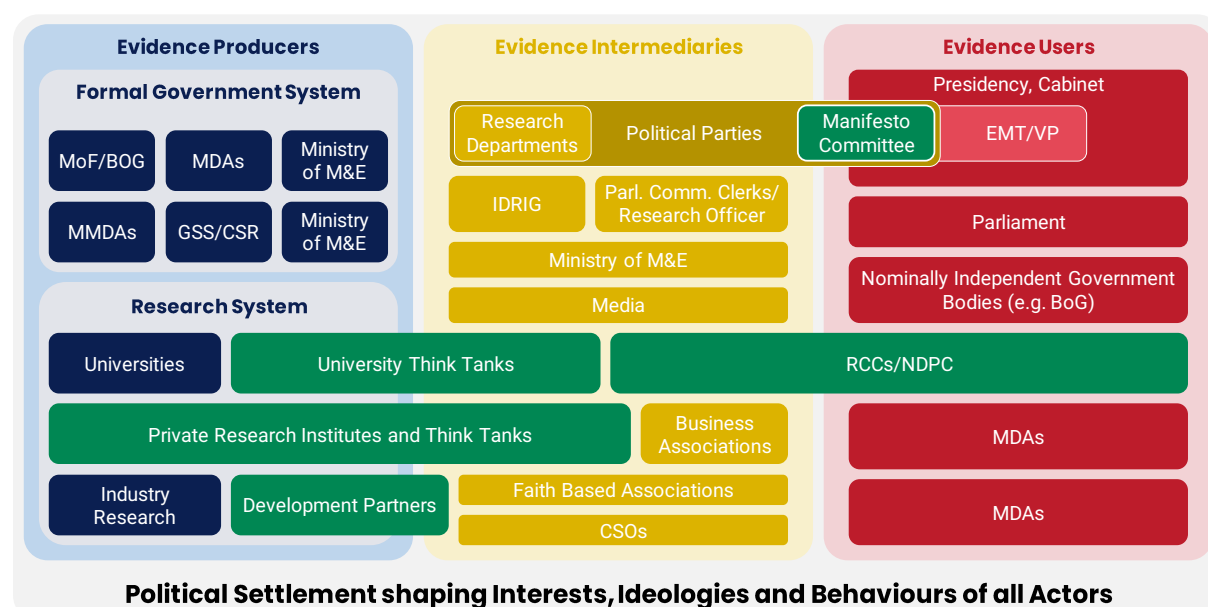
Evidence production is mainly achieved by three key producers: (i) The government's formal systems; (ii) research systems; and (iii) development partners and the wider international system. The latter also facilitates evidence generation by funding and committing the government to making international agreements that require progress reporting, and thus evidence generation (e.g. the SDGs).

#### 3.2.1.1 Formal government production of evidence

The formal government policymaking system generates evidence through administrative data collection and analysis, internal research, and various M&E studies. Organisations involved in this process include NDPC and the regional coordinating councils, which focus on M&E to monitor plan progress, and the GSS, which has the mandate to gather and disseminate national statistics. The Presidency, the EMT and the BoG have specialist units to generate evidence internally. Each MDA also has an RSIM directorate with the mandate to generate evidence to support decision making.

There are also efforts to move away from standalone research units and to develop overarching mechanisms for evidence generation. An example is the comprehensive Science, Technology and Innovation System, which includes the establishment of a National Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Apex Body, the establishment of the National Research Advisory System, and a newly established Presidential Advisory Council on Science, Technology, and Innovation to provide advice to the President (Wilhelmina-Quaye *et al.*, 2019).

Figure 3: Evidence ecosystem<sup>10</sup>



Source: Authors' construct, 2019. This figure is a necessary simplification that is intended to focus on three main functions: evidence production, translation (or intermediation), and use. The colour green represents those entities that straddle more than one function in the evidence ecosystem. As Stewart *et al.* (2019) note, ecosystems are intimately integrated in the context in which they exist, a point we emphasise here with respect to the political settlement.

<sup>10</sup> Note that there is an evolving body of scholarship on evidence ecosystems (see, for example, Stewart *et al.*, 2019).

There are also significant challenges with formal government production of evidence:

- **Availability and accessibility of data across many sectors of the economy.** Where data are available, they may be in the wrong format or not easily accessible (for example, data collected at district level tend to be on paper and stored in many files). The technical capacity to generate needed evidence is wanting among many national evidence producers, and critical statistics (e.g. labour statistics) are produced infrequently. To enhance efficiency, NDPC is planning to pull together individual sectoral databases from the DHIMS, the Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), etc. However, NDPC is underfunded and this affects its ability to marshal evidence for planning.
- **Lack of trust in the data generated.** Some key government officials interviewed affirmed their trust in the data from the GSS, as opposed to their own RSIMs. This is because the GSS is better resourced in terms of infrastructure and expertise in data collection and analysis. All the same, a highly politicised context means that any evidence can be contested. Thus, although the GSS is the main evidence actor in the country, the political class in both the government and Parliament contest GSS evidence when it does not support a preferred stance (and often an expert from the GSS is called upon to explain and justify it). Indeed, it has been pointed out that locally generated evidence is ignored: for example, the targeting of social protection has not been informed by useful databases, such as the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey and Ghana Living Standards Survey (de Graft *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, it was noted in KIIs that the government has more regard for foreign-generated evidence.<sup>11</sup>
- **Duplication of structures.** While NDPC must collect needed evidence from M&E to improve plans, it is common to find duplicate structures under the Office of the President that specifically monitor the ruling regime's flagship projects, leading to inefficient coordination in evidence generation and usage.<sup>12</sup>

Parliament is a key part of the evidence generation system but it generates evidence from a different starting point: to fulfil its key role of holding the government accountable. As well as drawing on external expertise and advice, the various parliamentary committees are supported by technical research units to generate the evidence needed to inform debates. However, Parliament is hampered by: (i) inadequate staff to support evidence generation; (ii) a lack of feedback processes to improve the quality of evidence; (iii) weak capacity to develop digestible products; (iv) last-minute requests that affect the quality of work and ability of MPs to use it effectively; and (v) the absence of a central repository (Draman *et al.*, 2017).

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<sup>11</sup> Although political settlements and the strong power of development partners have made party ideologies largely a subject of rhetoric, ideology does still inform policymaking. The national oil and gas policy framework has shifted as governments have changed, so while the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation has significant expertise in the matter of oil and gas, it is only listened to when the NDC, a party that believes in greater state ownership, is in power, while NPP administrations regimes tend to favour the private sector as a key driver (Mohan *et al.*, 2018; Teye and Torvikey, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Starting with the Atta Mills administration, specialised units within the presidency have been monitoring delivery of the party manifesto. The John Mahama administration also had the President's Delivery Unit, which played a similar role. The current administration has elevated this to cabinet level and established a Ministry of M&E. Interestingly, the APRs of these units are tabled at Cabinet (the highest decision-making body in Ghana) for discussion, while the APRs produced by NDPC end up at Parliament House.



### 3.2.1.2 Research institutions

Universities and think tanks complement the evidence generated internally by the formal government research system and are consulted by both political parties and Parliament. However, their impact is muted for three reasons. Firstly, think tanks are perceived as ‘friends’ of the opposition and ‘enemies’ of the sitting government. Secondly, research from universities tends to have less impact since promotion practices reward publication rather than uptake, influencing incentives for researchers (Andoh, 2017). Finally, there is a lack of platforms for disseminating research to policymakers as no funding is allocated for such activities (Andoh, 2017).

### 3.2.1.3 The private sector

Although they are not formal research institutions, private sector organisations generate evidence to influence policy, mainly through advocacy. Indeed, the private sector has had success in this area. For instance, the Private Sector Advisory Group, with the support of the MoF, was tasked with examining how laws and regulatory procedures impeded private sector development (Ackah *et al.*, 2010). However, KIIs indicated that this process has an element of being a mere formality to highlight buy-in from stakeholders. For private sector evidence to be used, more proactive engagement during the policy formulation process is required.

## 3.2.2 Evidence use

While the main users of evidence are the government and Parliament, actors in the political sphere also use evidence to further their interests.

### 3.2.2.1 Evidence use within MDAs

There are Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (PPME) directorates within each ministry, which concentrate on the application of evidence in policymaking. Some ministries do commission research for policy analysis, mostly with budgetary support from development partners, while the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) reported using evidence (mostly data and reports) from other MDAs, including the Ghana Export Promotion Council and the GHS. Furthermore, the National Employment Policy has included local think tanks and research institutes in its consultations for policy development (INASP, 2017).<sup>13</sup> Other sources of evidence identified by one interviewee<sup>14</sup> include sources relating to public discourse (for instance, newspaper clippings), which are captured by a dedicated unit within each ministry.

### 3.2.2.2 Evidence use in Parliament

At the committee level, stakeholders<sup>15</sup> reported that evidence plays a role in parliamentary decisions, although partisan interests sometimes overshadow technical necessities, even in committee work. Dedicated clerks and a research officer are assigned to every committee,

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<sup>13</sup> Note that when the government commissions a study, like any other service, it goes through the country’s procurement system. In line with the Public Procurement Act, 2003, when a state agency ‘seeks to enter into a contract for research, experiment, study or development’ the entity will have to go through a two-stage tendering process.

<sup>14</sup> KII 29.

<sup>15</sup> KII 18; KII 24; KII 10.

but there are challenges in terms of the capacity of the parliamentary staff that provide this support on evidence (including an inadequate complement of staff).<sup>16</sup> Parliament does not commission research on its own, but various sources of evidence are used in parliamentary deliberations, including: Parliament's own collection of near-verbatim discussions in the chamber (Hansard); reports from committees, MDAs, and Municipal, Metropolitan, and District Assemblies (MMDAs); APRs from NDPC; socio-economic and administrative data from the GSS, BoG, and other MDAs (including the website of the MoF and GIFMIS);<sup>17</sup> and reports from programmes implemented or research commissioned by development partners (Draman *et al.*, 2017). There have been instances when academics and experts from research institutions have been invited for stakeholder consultations organised by Parliament, but those are exceptions rather than the norm. Some MPs with previous academic/research experience also reach out to former colleagues for useful research publications.

There are systems within the legislature that provide evidence to support macro policymaking, producing policy briefs and budget briefs, background papers, procedure papers, etc.<sup>18</sup> These include the non-partisan Inter-Departmental Research and Information Group (IDRIG) and the partisan parliamentary caucuses. Partisan influences and limited institutional capacity have been a challenge, as IDRIG has limited capacity to provide its services, while the partisan caucuses, despite their limited institutional resources, are allocated priority budgetary resources to independently commission research for their needs.

### 3.2.2.3 Evidence use within political parties

The two major political parties have research departments within their administrative structures at national level, but they are generally understaffed, under-resourced, and compelled to use party members. These departments work within the party apparatus across the length and breadth of the country to get an understanding of realities at community level; however, this is done on partisan lines and does not reflect the totality of citizen evidence. Parties also monitor media platforms (both traditional and new media) for evidence (of varying quality and type) that might inform policy positions. The research departments of these parties also initiate their own primary research and make use of available evidence from key government agencies. One interviewee<sup>19</sup> showed sample research outputs produced using data from the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), while another<sup>20</sup> mentioned cases where political parties had to commission independent studies on thematic issues.

One main avenue for evidence use by political parties in the build-up to elections is manifesto development. The use of evidence in the development of manifestos by political parties (as mapped out in Figure 4: Mapping evidence use in political parties) is not insignificant, but it should be understood that these activities are undertaken instrumentally. Moreover, while evidence is selectively used to inform party orientation on economic development, this is often only so far as political expediency will allow.

<sup>16</sup> Development partners and local partners provide support in this area. For example, the African Center for Parliamentary Affairs in Accra is partnering with the GSS and INASP to help parliamentary committees and staff access and use the data they need to better execute their oversight and representative functions.

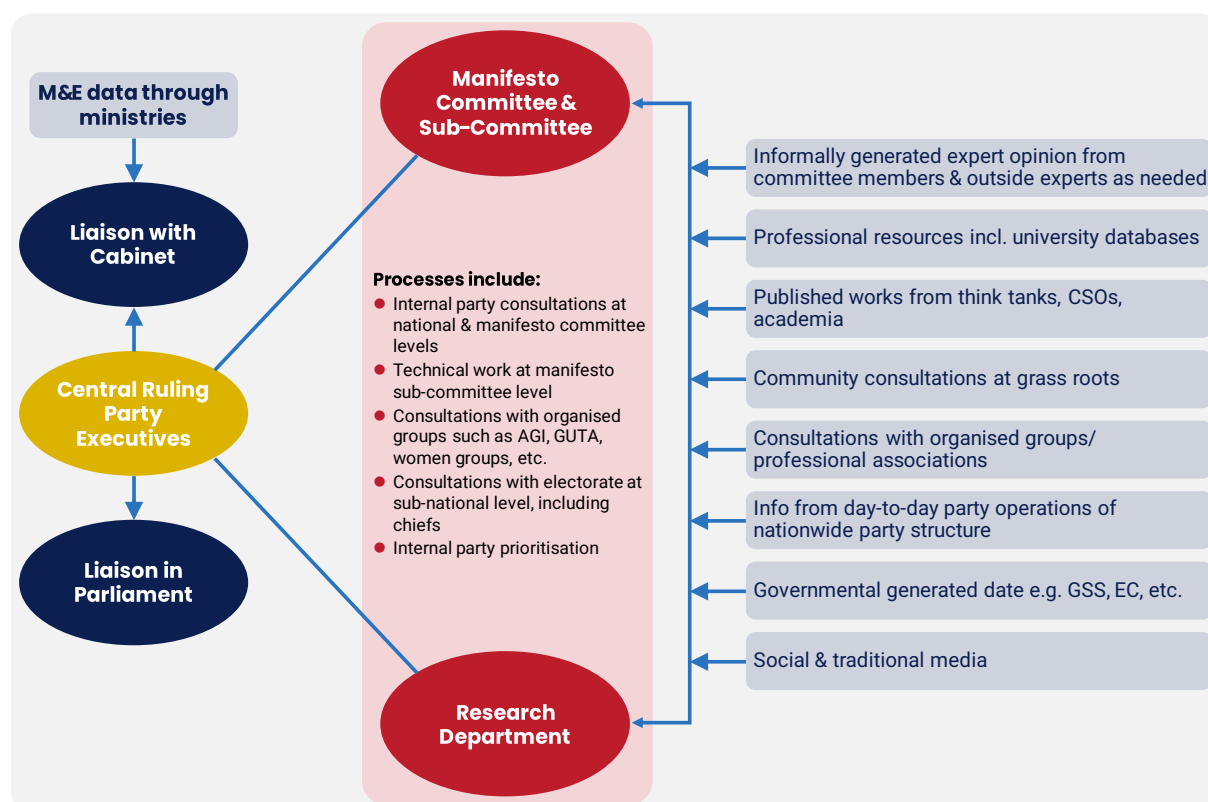
<sup>17</sup> KII 24.

<sup>18</sup> KII 24.

<sup>19</sup> KII 6.

<sup>20</sup> KII 24.

Figure 4: Mapping evidence use in political parties



Source: Authors' construct, 2019

This process begins with the formation of a national manifesto committee<sup>21</sup> that works with sub-committees – often constituted based on sectors – to produce the manifesto. Committees are made up of party stalwarts who have experience, sometimes academic, in thematic areas of the manifesto. However, key informants suggested that experts and members of research think tanks are increasingly being engaged by some political parties to author various sections of the manifestos.<sup>22</sup> Sub-committee members of the manifesto committee perform technical work on parts of the document which are then compiled by the main committee to form a complete version, which is then revised internally to produce the final version.

A team – which consists of sub-committee members, national executives of the political parties, and sometimes the presidential candidate – embarks on consultation missions to different interest groups in economic development. Such consultations take two broad forms: one involves mostly large-scale business enterprises and their associations, trade unions, and professional associations; the other involves community members (ordinary citizens, students, and traditional rulers) across the country. The objectives of these consultations are to gather the views of these constituents – which are fed into the manifestos – while securing buy-in. Although the manifesto committee does not commission new research,<sup>23</sup> stakeholders interviewed indicated that they rely heavily on evidence from socio-economic data from the GSS, the MoF, and the BoG, as well as published reports and briefs from renowned think tanks and research institutions in the country. Advocacy-based CSOs are

<sup>21</sup> News on the NPP's manifesto committee in 2016 ([www.blakkpepper.com/2016/10/crunch-npp-executive-meeting-underway-over-manifesto-content/](http://www.blakkpepper.com/2016/10/crunch-npp-executive-meeting-underway-over-manifesto-content/)), and also the unveiling of the NDC's committee in preparation for the 2020 election ([www.businessghana.com/site/news/politics/198950/NDC-inaugurates-manifesto-committee](http://www.businessghana.com/site/news/politics/198950/NDC-inaugurates-manifesto-committee)).

<sup>22</sup> KII 21.

<sup>23</sup> KII 6.

rarely engaged in these consultations, except through community *durbars* (inaugural celebrations for newly elected officials). As a result of the involvement of academic professionals in the sub-committees, the manifesto committees can benefit from the academic resources of various universities.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.2.3 Intermediaries, facilitators, and mediators

Another group of key stakeholders in evidence generation is those who mediate evidence. The fact that evidence is generated is not enough: evidence needs to be disseminated so it can be used. Importantly, the dissemination process itself generates further evidence through the reaction or response to the presentation of evidence, which can drive the refinement of the evidence that was originally disseminated.

**Development partners** have historically had a lot of influence on policy formulation in Ghana through their financing of various programmes. Within the evidence ecosystem, they not only fund evidence generation but also leverage this evidence, as well as evidence from global best practices, to influence policymaking. Their power is such that political parties are, in some cases, willing to take policy stances that are diametrically opposed to their prevailing ideologies.<sup>25</sup> Among development partners, the IMF and World Bank are the biggest influencers of Ghanaian policy. Most economic and structural reforms have been initiated by these two institutions, and some policies have even largely been drafted with active technical support from donors (e.g. the 2016 PFM Act was drafted using technical assistance from the IMF, while the Internal Audit Act, Public Procurement Act, and PFM Act were heavily influenced by the World Bank). Booth *et al.* (2005) add nuance to this claim by noting that there is a well-established pattern in which governments in Ghana go along with donor-supported reform programmes, doing enough to support claims that the reforms are ‘nationally owned’ while carefully controlling implementation and avoiding the politically tough decisions that genuine reform would necessitate. Similarly, the government has formulated decentralised policies primarily driven by donor pressure but has managed to largely maintain central control anyway through appointment systems.<sup>26</sup>

**The international governance system**, including international commitments such as the SDGs, is increasingly spurring the generation of evidence in policymaking. Global agreements require significant data collection for monitoring and progress reporting. For instance, as part of its commitment to reduce greenhouse gases, Ghana is setting up a monitoring, reporting, and verification system. Monitoring achievement of the SDGs is also spurring stronger efforts in data collection, especially on budget allocations for SDGs.

**The media** constitute a key element of evidence production and can force further evidence generation by interrogating experts and policymakers. Indeed, Ghanaian media can play a powerful role in forcing accountability and, therefore, evidence-based policymaking. However, key informants feel that major media houses seem to lack the capacity to present

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<sup>24</sup> KII 6.

<sup>25</sup> A good example of this is in the area of health policy: NPP administrations, which favour private sector-led development, have driven reforms tending towards a government-driven health sector, while NDC administrations, which support government-driven development, have supported reforms that give the private sector a greater role. Both of these reforms were at the behest of development partners.

<sup>26</sup> A chief executive, together with one-third of District Assembly members, is appointed by the ruling government, which means that the decentralised government is an extension of the executive branch and is largely unaccountable to the local population (Abdul-Gafaru, 2017).

in-depth political analysis and a sustained focus. Rather, they tend to pick up hot issues and then drop them as news cycles change.

The advent of social media is, however, providing new leverage and giving citizens a more direct voice in policymaking, with the Occupy Ghana movement being one example. A landmark action instigated by Occupy Ghana was a demand that the Auditor-General take proactive steps to ensure the accountability of public officers and institutions. The movement cited the Auditor-General's Audit Reports to Parliament from 2002 to 2012, which identified a wide range of funds stolen and/or misappropriated from the public purse. While social movements face challenges in terms of sustaining engagement, where the issue is immediately resolvable there have been notable successes: two prominent examples are the campaign against the revocation of the luxury tax and the successful '#Drop that Chamber' campaign against plans to construct a new US\$200 million chamber for Parliament.

There are several interpretations of the influence and ability of CSOs to push for the use of evidence in policy formulation. In the first, CSOs participate in consultation processes of various forms throughout the policy cycle, including during changes of regime. At times, this is prompted by development partner requests for government agencies to engage CSOs on specific economic development policies, though state agencies will also seek consultations where they believe doing so will reduce opposition to government policy (Prehi Botchway and Bendall, 2018). Some more regular consultative processes do exist, such as MoF calls for inputs at the early stages of developing policy plans for the year.<sup>27</sup> More often, however, these conversations happen informally, without codified processes, when evidence suppliers are consulted to advise. The country still lacks a comprehensive framework for promoting an effective state–civil society interface, both at national and local levels, where evidence can be used to inform discussions on government policy. The result is a process that relies heavily on personal connections and networks that facilitate access to channels of influence in the Office of the Vice-President, MoF, and the Ministry of Education (IMANI, 2019).

In the second interpretation of the influence of CSOs, CSOs form coalitions and networks on thematic issues relating to economic development to strengthen their influence in engagements with the government. However, such CSO interaction and engagement is not without its own complexities and dynamics. A full examination of this is beyond the scope of this report, but a selection of noteworthy challenges includes: CSO dependency on external funding; constraints on collective action between and within civil society actors (e.g. financial competition, ideological or generational interests, etc.); and a lack of linkages between civil society action and citizens' real preoccupations.

In the third interpretation of the influence of CSOs, CSOs in Ghana can play the role of an intermediary, especially in disseminating evidence needed to hold the government accountable and to make policy formulation more inclusive, as they are key in intermediating for excluded groups. However, CSOs face challenges such as poor access to critical information, which weakens their capacity to proactively engage with state institutions (Abdul-Gafaru and Quantson, 2009).

Faith-based agencies often exert significant power and influence, and through different types of partnerships with the government, they have ample opportunities to push for public

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example, IMANI's inputs to the 2019 Ghana Budget (IMANI, 2019). The IMANI Center for Policy and Education is an African think-tank based in Accra.

service reform. They play a key role in generating evidence to support their position and are quite influential in determining what evidence is taken up by the government. For instance, a host of faith-based agencies engaged the government on revoking the recently introduced comprehensive sex education in the basic education curricula, and they succeeded.

### 3.3 Gender equity and social inclusion (GESI)

Deep-rooted gender norms in Ghanaian society shape all sectors and all aspects of policymaking. While Ghanaian society does have some matrilineal systems in specific regions, generally speaking men effectively control resources such as land and assets and much of the household decision making (Tagoe and Abakah, 2015). In a context where politics is highly monetarised (and men control much of the productive resources), this means that they control political decision making: the public space, including politics, is perceived to be for men. Thus, the political system is patriarchal and reinforces both explicit and implicit gendered and inequitable decision making. The result is that access to employment opportunities tends also to be gendered: men occupy most jobs in the formal sector, while women tend to work in the informal sector (Tagoe and Abakah, 2015). Women are thus disadvantaged in almost all aspects of their private and public life, including access to economic opportunities, health services, and education.

**Policy developments in GESI:** The 1992 Constitution guarantees gender equality and ensures women, men, girls, and boys have freedom from discrimination based on social and economic status, race, and ethnicity. The government has set gender equality as an objective since its first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper: for example, with acts such as the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715). However, while legal and policy frameworks for GESI are in place, implementation remains problematic. For example, references to gender-responsive budgeting in national development planning have not been operationalised due to financial and implementation challenges faced by the Gender Equality Department (Allwood, 2018).

The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP) was established in 2013, with a mandate expressly broad enough to avoid the trap of being a marginalised gender agency. The ministry is tasked with implementing the 2015 National Gender Policy and mainstreaming gender equality in development through targeted interventions to improve the political, cultural, social, legal, and economic conditions of women, girls, and children, people with special needs, people with disabilities, and the vulnerable and marginalised. In practice, implementation has been limited due to lack of resources.

**Representation of women in politics and policymaking:** Despite formal commitments and statements made by the government to ensure the equal participation of men and women in decision making, the level of female representation remains at 13% in Parliament and 7% in District Assemblies at the time of the study. Women in Parliament or District Assemblies face considerable challenges to participate in, and influence, policymaking (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000). Social and political norms mean that efforts to make formal provision for women's representation (such as guaranteeing a percentage of seats) are unlikely to address informal barriers to women's participation and representation. In the civil service, efforts by the Gender Desk Office to help female employees rise to higher positions in the civil service were stifled by financial barriers, administrative bottlenecks, and lack of capacity and interest (Ohemeng and Adusah-Karikari, 2015).



**GESI and evidence in macro-level policymaking:** As the primary ministry responsible for GESI in policymaking, MoGCSP convenes stakeholder forums to discuss policy development and review progress, and coordinates evidence generation from various ministries to inform policymaking on social protection. While it uses evidence from development partners, it often struggles to access the most up-to-date data and relies on raw data from MDAs, which are often not disaggregated by gender (Hayter, 2016). Although approximately 90% of MoGCSP funding comes from donors and development partners, its ability to maintain this coordinating function is significantly constrained by a lack of resources. Ghana's aspiration to move beyond aid implies a reduction in donor funding and there are concerns that marginalised groups that depend on social protection and social assistance will suffer most in this process.

Other within-government bodies that contribute GESI evidence for policymaking include the following:

- The Ministry of M&E has a primary role of ensuring that the government is delivering on its manifesto, using monitoring data from other ministries. The think tank IMANI has noted shortcomings in this regard, including the use of data to target people living with disabilities and a lack of targeting of female-headed households in the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) social protection programme (IMANI, 2019).
- The parliamentary research department currently comprises three female and seven male officers (a significantly lower gender equality ratio than in 2005). Because the department has very limited resources, staff rely on academic institutions and think tanks for evidence (Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing, 2015).
- The Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation's strategy (2017–2020) recognises gender inequalities in public research institutions, but its policy response to this imbalance is limited to targeting girls in secondary school to specialise in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects.

**GESI and evidence from outside government:** While there is no formal research agenda in Ghana that aligns all public research institutions' research on gender, the NDPC-drafted national development plans provide pointers to national research priorities. Recent key documents include the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSDA I: 2010–2013) and GSDA II (2014–2017), and the 40-year national development plan (Alabi and Mohammed, 2018). These government documents arguably provide a basis for research to focus on GESI due to the government's intended focus on inclusive development, supported by donor pressure, to align policymaking with the SDGs and donor GESI priorities (Alabi and Mohammed, 2018). Ghana has a vibrant NGO sector, often working with, and generating evidence about, vulnerable and marginalised populations (Ohemeng, 2005). CSOs and NGOs working with socially excluded populations have some influence at district level, where they monitor and engage with policy implementation through roundtables and in-person engagement (Gildemyn, 2014). At national level, think tanks are likely to be more influential than NGOs and CSOs. If they have good GESI expertise, think tanks, which have close relationships with the government, can act as an important channel for bringing evidence on GESI into policymaking.

While the active media landscape in Ghana provides a strong basis for ensuring citizens' voices are brought into policymaking, they can also act as a barrier to inclusive policies. Inequalities in data access and social media usage exacerbate the socio-economic divide, as



many citizens – most notably women in rural areas – are unable to participate in the social media dialogue (Gildemyn, 2014). Citizens' voices expressed through social media are often laden with discriminatory language: for instance, against street hawkers and sex workers (Broadbent, 2012). In some cases, the media have functioned as a barrier to female inclusion in party politics, as some media content 'denigrated women leaders, candidates, voters, and issues of concern to women' (International Republican Institute, 2016). This suggests that the media and other platforms for citizens' expression can contradict inclusive, evidence-informed policies. Indeed, it has been noted that the mainstream media are not providing sustained coverage of minority populations and the vulnerable, among whom women and girls predominate. Women in the public sphere receive less coverage, and the coverage they do receive is often biased (MoGCSP, 2015).

## 4. Analysis of the economic development sector in Ghana

### Key findings

- Ghana has a comprehensive set of formal institutional arrangements for economic development policymaking, including systems and processes for development planning. However, political economy realities have significant effects on the *de facto* operation of these institutions, contributing to the persistence of important economic policy challenges, including limited economic transformation.
- These dynamics contribute to the marginalisation of nominally important actors, such as NDPC and Parliament, which have been sidelined by the creation of parallel systems focused on the priorities of the political party in power. Party processes, including manifesto development, have in some cases displaced the processes that are conducted by career civil servants.
- Nevertheless, there remain pockets of relative effectiveness in the use of evidence in economic development policymaking, as well as pockets of (sometimes inconsistent) interest in, and incentives for, this use.

### 4.1 Introduction

In Ghana, policymaking relating to the different considerations of economic development is vested officially in the planning systems of the country. Development planning has been an activity in Ghana since pre-colonial days (Vordzorgbe and Caiquo, 2001; FES Ghana, 2016), when chiefs often provided key governmental functions at community levels supported by a council of community elders, overseeing all forms of planning and economic activity. The emergence of colonial power weakened this approach by making traditional leaders subservient to the colonial administration, but they remain a significant force in the country with respect to economic development, as they control land (Crook, 2005). The production of the first formal development plan in Ghana in 1919 (NDPC, 2015) initiated a new culture of development planning that continued through colonial and post-colonial times at both national and local level, even if on an inconsistent basis (Vordzorgbe and Caiquo, 2001; NDPC, 2015). Planning, however, remained ‘highly centralised and sectoral with little or no participation from the rural district communities whose interest the planning system was to serve’ (Botchie, 2000).

It is noteworthy that similar themes have continued to appear in the different economic development plans produced since colonial days. The first development plan aimed to transform the production base of the country from a mono-crop economy into a diversified and resilient one – and similar challenges persist today, as highlighted in the 2017 CPESDP (Government of Ghana, 2017). Ghana’s economic structure is still fundamentally an extractive type, exacerbated by the addition of oil exploration, which serves to fuel a political settlement founded on the distribution of cocoa and gold rents to political clients and which undermines incentives for economic transformation. This dynamic has been widely noted in the literature on the Ghanaian political economy as ‘growth without transformation’ (Whitfield *et al.*, 2015).

Despite some form of evidence being fed into formal development planning systems throughout Ghana's history, there have been, as is the case in many countries, other political economy realities that have inhibited the full realisation of economic development goals. Section 4.2 thus briefly describes formal systems, with Section 4.3 then focusing on how economic development policymaking processes work in actual practice as part of the macro-political economy context previously set out in Section 3. These political economy factors have important implications for the evidence ecosystem and the organisations within it. They help to explain the persistence of core challenges in economic policymaking in Ghana. Section 4.4 gives specific attention to the evidence ecosystem, while Section 4.5 goes on to provide an overview of an initial assessment of key organisations in economic development policymaking, and Section 4.6 reflects on the potential implications for SEDI.

## 4.2 Economic development policymaking in Ghana: formal institutions

The national planning processes apply in the main to economic development policy, with sector ministries mandated to set agendas for sector-led economic development activities and NDPC formally responsible for the integration and coordination of planning through the CPESDP process,<sup>28</sup> as well as for advising the President on economic development-related planning, policy, and strategy (NDPC, 2015).<sup>29</sup> Appreciating the interconnected nature of economic development, Ghana has a Cross-Sectoral Planning Group which, although led and coordinated by NDPC, has representation from various MDAs, as well as non-state actors, including academia, think tanks, CSOs, and development partners.

A brief review of the current CPESDP (2017–2024), titled 'An Agenda for Jobs: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All', provides an indication of government objectives and perspectives on key economic development challenges. Achieving the envisioned doubling of GDP *per capita* between 2017 and 2024 will require an annual GDP growth rate of about 7.2% (Government of Ghana, 2017). This is positioned as a transformational drive led by the private sector and expected to result in a more diversified and resilient economy (FCDO, 2017). A key requirement of this transformation agenda relates to the need to reduce the cost of doing business in Ghana. The government hopes to make that happen by tackling energy issues and reducing the overall tax burden. A key component of the Agenda is to foster industrialisation on the back of agriculture and natural mineral resources (Box 3).

Apart from NDPC and the various MDAs and MMDAs, the formal institutional framework for economic development policymaking delineates roles for a variety of other actors. The MoF is considered as *primus inter pares*, despite being regarded as one of the sectoral policymaking 'units' within Ghana's administrative framework. This power comes from its formal mandate for maintaining the public purse, as laid out in the PFM Act 2016 (Act 921) and PFM Regulation, 2019 (LI 2378). In addition, the MoF's responsibility for aggregating and consolidating a national budget from all MDAs and MMDAs ensures its higher level of importance. While NDPC leads on economic planning, the development of the budget plays

<sup>28</sup> This coordinated programme is a constitutional requirement (Article 36, Section 5 of the 1992 Constitution).

<sup>29</sup> Major legal instruments that set the framework for development planning and policy in Ghana include the 1992 Constitution, the National Development Planning Commission Act, 1994 (Act 479), and the National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994 (Act 480). These are augmented by the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462), the new PFM Act, 2016 (Act 921), the Local Government Service Act, 2003 (Act 656), the Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (Act 815), the Civil Service Act (PNDC Law 327) 1993, and the Ghana Infrastructure Investment Fund Act, 2014 (Act 877).

a critical role in determining the operationalisation of the policy agenda, and alignment of planning and budgeting is by no means guaranteed.

### Box 3: Flagship government programmes for economic development

The current government's CPESDP (2017–2024) seeks to place 'people at the centre of development'. The plan lists a total of 47 projects and initiatives across six pillars: revitalising the economy, revamping economic and social infrastructure, transforming agriculture and industry, strengthening social protection and inclusion, institutional reform, and leveraging science, technology, and innovation for development.

The document identifies six areas as essential preconditions for the success of the different projects and initiatives, including macroeconomic stability, energy sufficiency, land reforms, national identification and civil registration, street naming and house numbering, as well as targeted public sector reforms involving the Registrar-General's Department, tax administration, port administration, and a labour market information system.

This vision not only provides insight into potential policy and programmatic priorities in the broad area of economic development but has also helped to guide donor support. Among other things, international development actors (including the UK FCDO) have focused on supporting economic transformation programmes, as well as the production and use of evidence to inform economic development initiatives.<sup>30</sup> In light of the priorities of the government of Ghana, FCDO Ghana has anchored its Jobs and Economic Transformation programme on the 10-point industrial development plan, with special emphasis on the development of strategic initiatives, including: One District, One Factory (1D1F); the development of strategic anchor initiatives, including the establishment of petrochemical industries; the establishment of multi-purpose and sector-specific industrial parks; the implementation of a comprehensive programme for small and medium-sized enterprise development; and the implementation of an aggressive programme for export development.

In principle, Parliament's mandate with respect to economic development policy is significant: its committees offer a forum for agenda setting and policy development, and it has the power to approve the national budget. There is no specific committee on economic development, owing to its overarching nature, but there are select committees that manage activities on the specific clustering of different sectors. There are also cross-sectoral standing committees that focus on issues relevant to economic development (e.g. committees on public accounts, government assurance, and gender and children). In its budget review role, Parliament, through its Finance Committee, invites MDAs and MMDAs to discuss budgetary allocations prior to their release for the implementation of development programmes.

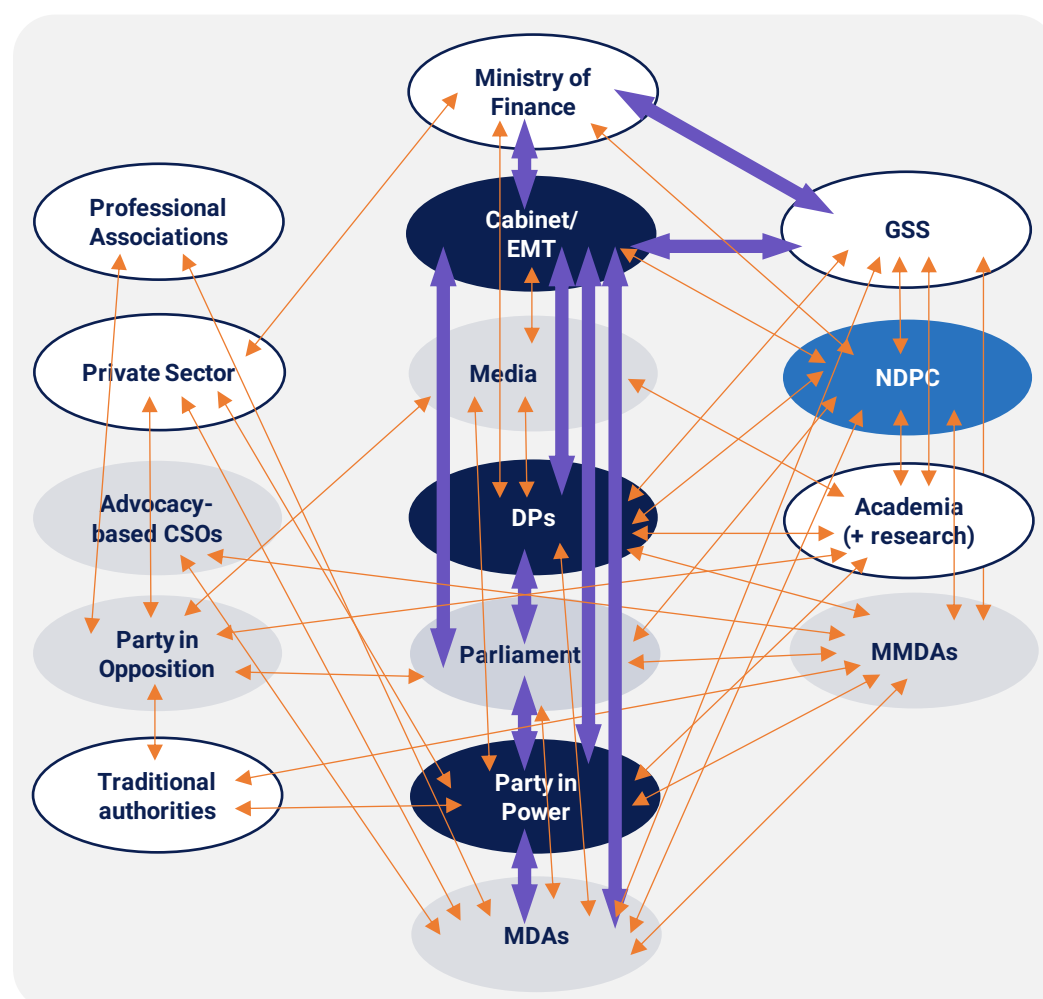
## 4.3 The political economy realities of economic development policy in Ghana

Rather than being a technocratic exercise involving the central coordination of inputs from across sectors and up through the layers of government administration, economic development in Ghana is a far more politically driven process, shaped by actors, interests, and incentives well beyond the stated economic development goals. Figure 5 presents a summary of the relationships between the different stakeholders of economic development policymaking.

<sup>30</sup> KII 49; KII 1; KII 7; KII 13.

While the central role of NDPC makes it stand out as the lead agency for development planning in Ghana, in reality the Commission has limited impact due to political influence. Two points are worth highlighting. First, there is considerable political interference with the workings of NDPC itself (regardless of the party in power), including through revisions to the CPESDP. Second, despite the constitutional designation of NDPC as part of the five-member executive arm of government,<sup>31</sup> the organisation is generally perceived as ‘orphaned’ in that it is not represented at Cabinet level, which is where executive decisions are made and final authority in economic development policy rests. Interviewees suggested that successive governments (especially Ministers of Finance) have been worried about losing control over part of the policymaking space to NDPC and, as a result, the Commission has been consistently marginalised even in the planning aspects of economic policymaking.

Figure 5: Stakeholder mapping for economic development policymaking in Ghana



Source: Authors' construct, 2019. A representation of the relationships between the different stakeholders of economic development policymaking, showing powerful actors (dark blue-shaded oval shapes) and potentially powerful actors (light blue-shaded oval shapes). Larger arrows indicate the most important and influential relationships and smaller ones represent more routine (less influential) relationships.

An interesting contrast thus arises between NDPC and two entities emerging as significant players: the EMT and the Ministry of M&E.

<sup>31</sup> This also includes the President, Cabinet, Attorney-General, and National Security Council.

The Cabinet is the final authority in economic development policymaking. It has technical functionaries that provide support on the quality of policies. Apart from the Cabinet Secretariat (Cabinet Secretariat of Ghana, 2007), the EMT provides technical backing services on the quality of evidence presented by the different ministries. The EMT is hosted under the Office of the Vice-President and allows the Cabinet to work with a set of directly appointed officials (eight ministers and one secretary under the current administration). To maintain control over the evidence that is created and supplied for its work, it prefers to receive advice from the EMT rather than equipping NDPC to perform its mandated policy input functions.<sup>32</sup> This dynamic is consistent with our macro-analysis, pointing to a concentration of power in the executive – in particular in the person of the President – through an expansion of executive appointments and an undermining of the career civil service.

MDAs and MMDAs are supposed to make use of the evidence generated from the M&E of their own programmes for revision of their plans.<sup>33</sup> They should report this to NDPC to inform revisions in the policies and programmes of government. However, the recently created Ministry of M&E now works with MDAs to secure the evaluation data to inform Cabinet on the performance of development programmes. Key informants<sup>34</sup> emphasised that the mandate of the Ministry of M&E is limited to the current government's priority programmes, and to providing regular updates to the President on those initiatives, which allows NDPC to gather evidence for its APRs, which are submitted to Parliament.<sup>35</sup> This might suggest a potential alliance between the Ministry of M&E and NDPC if economic development programmes are a priority, or at least a division of labour that allows each to work more effectively on a subset of M&E data. In practice, however, it appears to provide another example of the executive creating a parallel system that effectively side-lines NDPC and gives greater attention to the priorities of the political leadership.

This dynamic should also be seen alongside other features of the macro-political economy that have implications for economic development-related planning:

- **The executive is able to assert its dominance over economic development because other institutional mechanisms that in principle should act as counterweights – including Parliament, decentralisation, and the career civil service – remain weak.** The control each party has had over both the executive and the legislature during their respective administrations has given the ruling party considerable political power to manage and oversee economic development as it sees fit – power that stems both from its popular mandate and the powers vested in the executive branch.

In contrast, despite its formal mandate, Parliament has remained more of a rubber stamp than a useful check on executive power (Draman *et al*, 2017). Any revisions to the Budget resulting from parliamentary budget reviews are mostly insignificant (in part reflecting limited discretionary fiscal space, but also a tendency not to depart from the

<sup>32</sup> KII 19; KII 30.

<sup>33</sup> This is often limited by capacity issues within MDAs and MMDAs.

<sup>34</sup> KII 19; KII 29; KII 24.

<sup>35</sup> The creation of the new entity does not necessarily mean that it does not face some of the same challenges that others have encountered trying to gather evidence on the effectiveness of government programmes. Oduro and Ackah (2017) describe problems this ministry and others have in getting disaggregated data, which also limits the value of the data and evidence available to NDPC in formulating its APRs. Feedback received in the form of complaints from service beneficiaries (citizen evidence through the media) are at best considered to be operational challenges that the government will address in subsequent periods of implementation.



priorities of the ruling party). For political parties in opposition, their greatest potential for policy influence while out of power comes from their ability to marshal popular opinion or to mobilise opposition to implementation at local level, a dynamic observed recently in some cases of the government's flagship 1D1F policy (Ofori Kissi Ratina, Kwadwo, 2019).

Despite significant discussion of the potential benefits of decentralisation in Ghana, actual reform has remained limited, including in economic development. Beyond the practical implications of the presidential appointments already noted, MMDAs remain reliant on central government for revenue generation, which is routinely insufficient, unpredictable, unreliable, and often politicised (Adu-Gyamfi, 2014). This affects other areas of administration, including the development of institutional capacity to initiate projects for economic development.

Technocrats within relevant MDAs have the potential to directly influence economic development policymaking through the policy options MDAs offer to the government.<sup>36</sup> However, in practice, ministers and other political appointees (e.g. chief directors) remain particularly powerful in shaping policy and the space that exists for evidence use,<sup>37</sup> while the voices of others can be side-lined. As the already noted practice of executive appointments has expanded, it has reportedly reached progressively further downwards, undermining the mid-levels of the civil service.

- **Development partners remain powerful, albeit with limitations.** Although the centrality of aid has waned over the past decade, with Ghana's attainment of lower middle-income country status and the gradual phasing out of budget support, international development actors continue to exert influence. Through their assistance and other financial instruments, they have nudged successive governments in Ghana to take certain decisions that they would not have taken otherwise, often at times of fiscal crisis, when leverage has been greater (FCDO, n.d.). Development partners are thus drivers of fundamental reforms that underpin economic development (e.g. macroeconomic management), but the recurrence of such crises and the persistent nature of core economic development challenges (e.g. in relation to employment creation and economic transformation) suggest there is a limit to development partners' power in the face of the underlying political settlement.
- **Uneven civil society involvement in and influence on policy processes.** As noted in Section 3.2.3, CSOs have historically engaged in multiple ways. In the sphere of economic development-related planning, recent trends raise serious questions regarding the scope for influence through consultation processes. The best example here may be the decision by the current administration to largely abandon the 40-year development plan developed by NDPC. The process of developing that plan was largely viewed as widely consultative, including CSOs and other non-state actors, whereas the medium-term plan that replaced it was seen as the product of a much narrower, manifesto-driven process. While there are currently efforts, some of which are donor-supported, to expand CSO engagement with, and influence on, party manifestos (including on economic development themes), their efficacy is untested heading into the 2020 elections.

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<sup>36</sup> KII 18.

<sup>37</sup> KII 29.



With respect to the formation of CSO coalitions and networks on thematic issues, there are numerous examples of this in relation to economic development issues. In some cases, they have been noteworthy change agents (Aninver Infra PPP Partners S.L., 2017), as demonstrated by the push for the passage of the Right to Information Bill into law, which had stalled for close to two decades.<sup>38</sup> In others, results have been far more mixed, as described by Teye and Torvikey (2018), who point out that, although CSOs have sometimes been successful in shaping policies to favour peasant farmers, in general CSOs have not been very influential in agricultural policy formulation (which has largely been donor-driven).

Together, these dynamics help explain why, despite the presence of a formal institutional foundation for economic development-related planning that should in principle draw from three main domains – the priorities of the executive, those of sector-led MDAs, and the development aspirations of Assemblies and other sub-national level bodies – the agenda of the ruling party (as expressed in its party manifesto) has come to dominate. Rather than a shared responsibility among the different players, facilitated by a technocratic NDPC, the voice of the party in power, representing only a portion of society (mostly the elites of that party), supersedes all other voices.

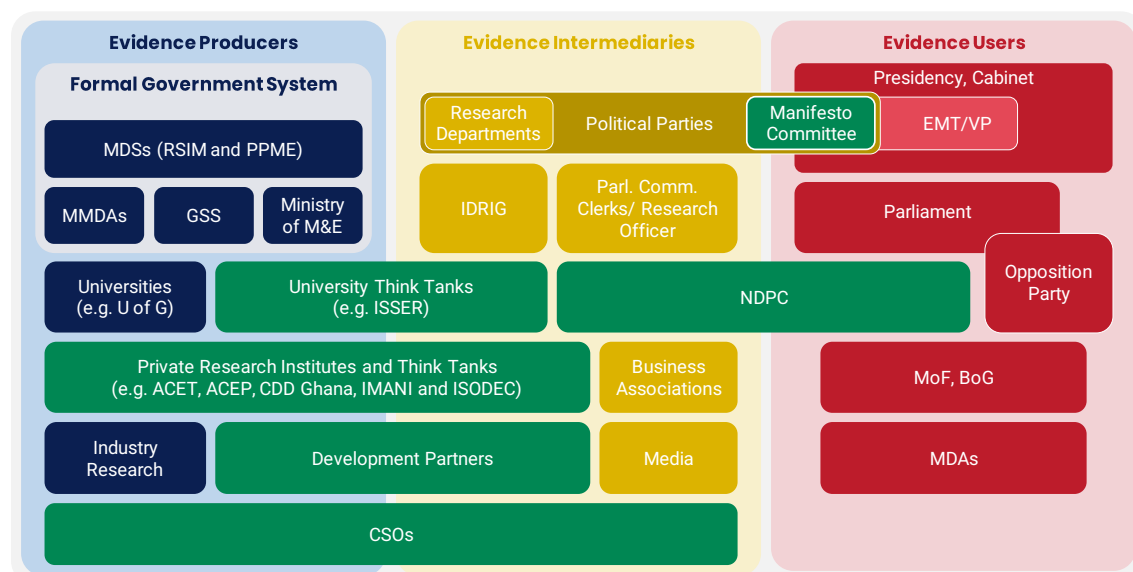
#### **4.4 Evidence ecosystem of economic development in Ghana**

This section provides an overview of the evidence ecosystem of economic development in Ghana (summarised in Figure 6). This ecosystem comprises a set of three functions (evidence production, intermediation, and use) but, notably, some actors cut across these categorisations: for example, several evidence producers also act as intermediaries, while more complicated multi-actor entities, like political parties, may include a range of actors, from relatively junior research staff acting as intermediaries to senior leadership figures in evidence use roles. It is also worth noting that some actors may have experience in multiple roles: for example, where academics are appointed as formal government policymakers (e.g. Mohammed Amin Adam, formerly of the Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP), an energy think tank, who is now a Deputy Minister for Energy).

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<sup>38</sup> On the Right to Information coalition and its honouring of stakeholders that helped realise the passage of the Right to Information law, see: [www.myjoyonline.com/news/2019/July-30th/the-coalition-on-the-rti-ghana-honours-stakeholders.php](http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2019/July-30th/the-coalition-on-the-rti-ghana-honours-stakeholders.php)

Figure 6: Mapping the evidence ecosystem for economic development policymaking



Source: Authors' construct, 2019. This figure is a necessary simplification that is intended to focus on three main functions: evidence production, translation (or intermediation), and use. Green represents those entities that straddle more than one function in the evidence ecosystem.

#### 4.4.1 Producers of evidence for economic development

The production of evidence is divided between the formal government system and non-state researchers. Broadly speaking, while government institutions tend to produce mostly administrative data and M&E data, the non-state system produces more analytical evidence from research, as well as evidence from citizens, stakeholders, and other actors. There is some level of collaboration (albeit limited) between the two in evidence production for economic development policymaking, like the use of GSS socio-economic data and census data by academic researchers from the Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research (ISSER) to establish the status of macro performance, through ISSER's annual 'State of the Ghanaian Economy' report.

##### 4.4.1.1 Evidence from the government establishment

Realities in the sector largely reflect the macro-analysis in Section 3 above. GSS data provide the foundation for a significant amount of the country's economic evidence, even where analysis is conducted by other actors (domestic or international). However, GSS data are opportunistically contested by senior agents of political parties in order to gain political advantage, leading to questions of whether GSS data can be 'trusted'. In response, development partners have supported numerous efforts to improve the GSS, including through the Ghana Statistics Development Programme, with the support of the World Bank, and more recently a portfolio of initiatives funded by the Hewlett Foundation. However, while there are undoubtedly improvements that can be made to GSS capacity and performance, there may be good reason to question whether improvements in quality would resolve the 'trust' and 'contestation' issue. This point is not, however, unique to the GSS, and is picked up in greater detail below.

Within each MDA, the RSIM directorates concentrate on the aggregation of evidence, whereas the PPME directorates concentrate on the application of evidence in economic

development policymaking. There is, however, a large disconnect between these two units and being posted to the RSIMs is often considered undesirable. PPMEs have gradually developed the capacity to work in isolation, with M&E units being located within the PPMEs instead of within RSIMs. As described above, the M&E evidence generated by MDAs and MMDAs is gathered into the parallel systems of NDPC – which aggregates findings into APRs submitted to Parliament (although APRs can also be accessed by other stakeholders) – and the Ministry of M&E, to keep track of the performance of its priority programmes.<sup>39</sup>

#### **4.4.1.2 Evidence from the research system**

Ghanaian academic institutions and their think tanks (e.g. the University of Ghana and ISSER), as well as a growing set of private research institutes and think tanks (e.g. ACET, ACEP, CDD Ghana, IMANI Ghana, and ISODEC), are the main producers of local, non-government research evidence in the economic development space. This research system applies scientific methods to the gathering, analysis, and reporting of different types of evidence – including primary qualitative and quantitative data. Secondary data are normally sourced directly from government agencies and/or from datasets in the possession of development partners (often the World Bank or IMF) on national economic indicators.

The bulk of the research produced by these organisations does not directly inform economic development policy. Relatively little uncommissioned evidence (such as the ISSER State of the Ghanaian Economy reports) ends up being used. As noted with respect to the GSS, this is nominally a result of quality and trust concerns on the part of partisan evidence users, although those concerns may not be founded (or at least are not the main driver of a lack of evidence use). One interviewee<sup>40</sup> intimated that agents of political parties only engage them when they are in opposition since they seek the necessary credible evidence to discredit the performance of the ruling political party.

#### **4.4.2 Users of evidence for economic development**

As indicated by the analysis above, the influence of partisan politics is a dominant factor for policymaking, if not the most dominant factor. However, numerous actors within the government and the policymaking space more broadly (including political parties) do make some (often instrumental) use of evidence. This section provides a brief overview of evidence use, highlighting key points of alignment with the macro-analysis in Section 3 that tend also to apply to economic development policy.

##### **4.4.2.1 Evidence use in Cabinet**

The above analysis makes clear the central role of the Cabinet in policymaking, particularly in agenda setting, and while there is no doubt that the Cabinet is a political body, it is also widely viewed as interested in evidence. Cabinet decisions, and particularly those relevant to economic development, are informed by a range of evidence types sourced and interpreted by the EMT (see ‘Intermediaries’ Section 4.4.3 below), including GSS and BoG data, administrative data from MDAs, and M&E data, particularly from the Ministry of M&E. The last of these speaks to the Cabinet’s interest in performance against its manifesto, which is

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<sup>39</sup> KII 1; KII 2; KII 19.

<sup>40</sup> KII 14.

relevant not only for campaigning (e.g. the recent claim that the 1D1F flagship economic development policy has now resulted in the construction of 58 factories) but also in the performance management of ministers and other appointees in relevant MDAs.

**Informing and justifying Cabinet decisions:** Evidence is used not only to inform decisions but also to justify decisions that have been made. That justification also reflects the Cabinet's dual nature as a governance mechanism and a political body. This aligns with the finding that the government (specifically the Cabinet, the executive, and the ruling party) tends to use evidence opportunistically to support positions, rather than in an embedded manner that would inform those positions.

**Cabinet-party linkages:** Administrative and M&E data, and reports on the implementation of ongoing programmes that are available to Cabinet, are also channelled to the political party of the ruling government, constituting privileged access to evidence to which CSOs, the media, the opposition party, and the larger Ghanaian public are not privy. This information asymmetry is created by the ruling party to protect its political interests,<sup>41</sup> and successive governments have attempted to secure such pieces of evidence, as access by the opposition party might threaten the chances of the party in power. This advantage not only informs manifesto development but also provides a campaigning advantage through the ability to display success and suppress failure. With the recent promulgation of the Right to Information law, it is expected that access to such evidence will be more politically neutral. It is interesting to note, however, that some stakeholders<sup>42</sup> saw little potential for a Right to Information regime, again due to patronage in the political environment.

#### 4.4.2.2 Evidence use at NDPC.

As noted above, the role of NDPC has been limited to 'redeveloping' the ruling party manifesto into the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (CPESDP). In undertaking this role, therefore, there is little room for NDPC to make use of credible and objective evidence to inform policy or programme design. However, after producing the CPESDP, NDPC then works with MDAs and MMDAs to prepare sectoral medium-term development plans (MTDPs) and district medium-term development plans, respectively.<sup>43</sup> Evidence (mostly socio-economic data) from the GSS and the BoG,<sup>44</sup> as well as administrative data from MDAs, feed into the formulation of such policies.

NDPC also produces national M&E plans and corresponding manuals to guide<sup>45</sup> MDAs and MMDAs in gathering M&E data. Based on the agreed core indicators, each spending unit prepares budgets for programmes/projects to achieve targets produced under the plans (MTDPs and district MTDPs). Having completed this, each MDA and MMDA is required to produce APRs<sup>46</sup> from M&E data that are gathered, and these are then consolidated by NDPC to produce a national APR.<sup>47</sup> The APR is shared with Parliament to inform debate on the progress of economic development initiatives across the country. As noted above, however,

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<sup>41</sup> KII 19.

<sup>42</sup> KII 10. KII 18.

<sup>43</sup> A district-level MTDP produced for GSGDA II can be found here: <http://lgs.gov.gh/wp-content/plugins/download-attachments/includes/download.php?id=523>

<sup>44</sup> The BoG is a semi-autonomous public institution under the responsibility of the MoF.

<sup>45</sup> A guideline prepared for GSGDA II can be found here: <https://new-ndpc-static1.s3.amazonaws.com/pubication/District+M&E+PlanPreparationGuide+2014-2017.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> APRs produced by MMDAs can be found here: <https://ndpc-cms.herokuapp.com/downloads/34/>

<sup>47</sup> National-level APRs are available at the NDPC website: <https://ndpc-cms.herokuapp.com/downloads/33/>

there are serious concerns that the influence of NDPC relative to that of the Ministry of M&E, as well as the *de facto* limited role of Parliament in economic development policy, constrain the effectiveness of these processes.

#### 4.4.2.3 Evidence use in and by political parties

Given the centrality of political party systems and processes in shaping economic development policy and planning, the general features of evidence use in political parties, as described in Section 3, are again worth noting. Additionally, there are signs that parties are using forms of evidence in this sector as part of their campaign strategy. For example, in the 2008 election, the opposition's marshalling of the evidence to paint the sitting government as responsible for domestic economic mismanagement and high urban and youth unemployment contributed to its victory (Ayee, 2012). Similarly, the opposition's use of evidence in the 2016 election contributed to its victory.

#### 4.4.3 Intermediaries

This section briefly outlines those actors whose primary role is the translation of various forms of evidence, and its transmission to evidence users. However, it is important to note that in many cases this function is distributed throughout the evidence ecosystem, rather than falling to a dedicated intermediary (e.g. when evidence producers write policy briefs to distil key messages for policymakers).

**The EMT:** The Cabinet is supported by, and relies upon, the EMT to secure the required evidence to inform all its economic policy decisions, including socio-economic data from the GSS and the BoG, administrative data from MDAs, and M&E data from NDPC and the Ministry of M&E. In addition, the EMT is increasingly engaging with academics and experts on technical issues, as well as with the views expressed by citizens.<sup>48</sup> However, the evidence sourced by the EMT is one of several considerations influencing Cabinet decision making, alongside political considerations.

**IDRIG:** IDRIG uses non-partisan evidence to inform the discussions of legislators. Requests received from individual MPs or from committee meetings are coordinated within the steering group of IDRIG to get the evidence supplied to the requesting entity as soon as practical. IDRIG has had to work with limited budgetary support and staff strength, leading to dissatisfaction with its response rate.

**The media (and use of social media):** Economic performance and flagship economic development policies regularly feature in the country's leading newspapers and receive significant coverage on major radio stations. However, the limitations noted in Section 2.5 largely apply in the context of economic development policy also (e.g. a lack of depth of analysis, a tendency to chase the next story, and the absence of a gender lens in reporting, with media positions generally reflecting gendered patriarchal and exclusionary attitudes as regards age, sex, and vulnerabilities). Coverage of economic development policy and its effectiveness often focuses on easy-to-count metrics, such as the December 2019 coverage of the number of factories completed under 1D1F,<sup>49</sup> set against manifesto promises, and

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<sup>48</sup> KII 15; KII 10.

<sup>49</sup> [www.graphic.com.gh/news/politics/revealed-see-the-list-of-58-1d1f-businesses-announced-by-president-akufo-addo.html](http://www.graphic.com.gh/news/politics/revealed-see-the-list-of-58-1d1f-businesses-announced-by-president-akufo-addo.html)

high-level reporting of the position of political parties on this and other major initiatives.<sup>50</sup> In this context, it is worth noting that there are a small number of specialist media publications addressing economic development policy issues, including, for example, the *Business and Financial Times*, which more regularly disseminates certain forms of evidence (e.g. basic statistical data on economic performance).

## 4.5 Organisational diagnostic of economic development for SEDI

Based on our AAA analysis (authority, acceptance, ability) of the political economy and evidence ecosystem within economic development, **the Cabinet/EMT, Parliament, NDPC, GSS, and MoF have been identified as institutions with whom SEDI could explore collaboration if it chooses to build up its economic development programme in Ghana.**

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<sup>50</sup> [www.modernghana.com/news/975483/ndc-will-revise-complete-all-1d1f-projects-maha.html](http://www.modernghana.com/news/975483/ndc-will-revise-complete-all-1d1f-projects-maha.html)

## 5. Analysis of the PFM sector in Ghana

### Key findings

- Ghana has a set of formal institutional arrangements and a legal framework for PFM policy that have been strengthened since 1992. However, the executive and political interests have significant influence on these formal structures through their engagement with the MoF. Despite this, there are opportunities to further strengthen the embedded and instrumental use of evidence in the annual budget cycle and tax policy processes.
- The MoF is a critical partner for SEDI to engage with in this sector, considering its influence over the GRA and the GSS, and the potential to leverage SEDI's work with the MoF to influence the executive.

### 5.1 Introduction

Ghana has a long history of fiscal challenges. This has mainly been manifested in fiscal slippages correlated with expenditures (recurrent), rather than revenue shortfalls (Osei and Telli, 2017). Although economic stability has returned to Ghana since the promulgation of the Fourth Republic and the return to democratic rule, fiscal challenges continue to affect the country in a cyclical pattern. The cyclical nature of fiscal deficits and slippages in Ghana has been occasioned by large government expenditures during election years and the lack of political will to commit to PFM reforms, despite extensive external support. The government's interest in PFM reforms fades in the face of spending pressures and political priorities (World Bank, 2017).

### 5.2 PFM policymaking in Ghana

Amidst these public expenditure management and tax policy challenges, Ghanaian governments have implemented various PFM reforms since 1992 to improve fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability. An evaluation of the early PFM reforms reveals a number of weaknesses, including: weak budget formulation; lack of ownership by MDAs and MMDAs; weak expenditure monitoring, and control; lack of robust accounting and monitoring systems; inadequate flow of information among key sector actors; scarcity of timely and quality data on government resources; and an outmoded regulatory framework.<sup>51</sup> According to Killick (2005), the budget process in Ghana was conceived entirely as a closed-door intra-governmental process from which the wider public and interested non-state parties were largely excluded. The formal processes of budgetary expenditure planning had limited bearing on how public monies were spent, a situation that was compounded by the continuous weaknesses prevalent in the politicised public service. This situation has improved in recent years, with the process being more open and data being available to different stakeholders in a timely manner. However, the foundational issues remain, with factors that dictate policy prioritisation not always consistent with development.

<sup>51</sup> The 2016 PFM Act and 2019 PFM regulations were passed by Parliament in order to update the PFM regulatory framework (World Bank, 2018).

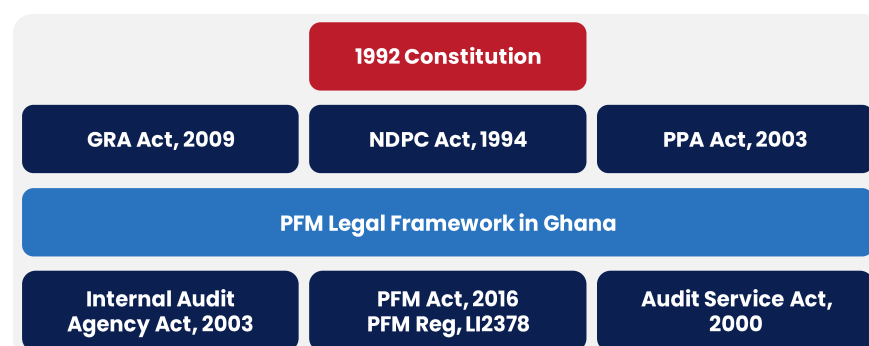


### 5.2.1 The current PFM system in Ghana

The legal framework for PFM (Figure 7) in Ghana is based on the 1992 Constitution and subsequent Acts and regulations that establish budget and accountability structures and arrangements for reporting. The PFM system has also established cogent rules and procedures.

**Key stakeholders:** Parliament, the MoF (and its technical divisions), MDAs, the CAGD, the GAS, the GRA, the GSS, and the BoG are key stakeholders within the PFM system that have been assigned clear roles and responsibilities with regard to producing credible national budgets. In addition, political parties, NDPC, and the Cabinet/EMT provide direction to the PFM policy processes through their engagement with the government agencies responsible for the process. CSOs, think tanks, the media, business associations, and development partners also provide inputs to this process.

Figure 7: The PFM legal framework



Source: Authors' construct, 2019

Our analysis has identified the budget cycle and tax policy processes as critical processes within PFM in regard to strengthening the embedded<sup>52</sup> and instrumental<sup>53</sup> use of evidence. The subsequent sections introduce these two processes, examine the political interests that drive them, and discuss the use of evidence in decision making.

### 5.2.2 PFM, the annual national budget, and the budget cycle

The annual national budget and economic policies of the government are proposals drawn from the CPESDP, developed by NDPC, and approved by Parliament (NDPC, 2015).<sup>54</sup> PFM involves three major activities relating to the budget cycle: the budget preparation, its execution, and continuous M&E of the budget. Unpacking and understanding these activities is critical, since subsequent sections will indicate how this annual cycle governs interactions between several critical government agencies and other stakeholders.

**Budget preparation stage:** The budget process in Ghana goes through eight stages in total. Some key activities during these stages include macroeconomic forecasting, engagement with MDAs on their strategic plans and budget formulation, setting expenditure ceilings, prioritisation exercises led by the MoF, and consultation on and approval of budget estimates by the Cabinet and Parliament. While the budget preparation process was difficult to scrutinise in its early days, and was described as constituting a democratic deficit in

<sup>52</sup> Refers to the use of evidence in processes, systems, and the working culture.

<sup>53</sup> Refers to the use of evidence directly informing policy and programme decisions.

<sup>54</sup> KII 1; KII 2.

Ghana, it has gradually become more open to stakeholders, especially CSOs<sup>55</sup> and private sector actors, through consultations with such non-government stakeholders.<sup>56</sup>

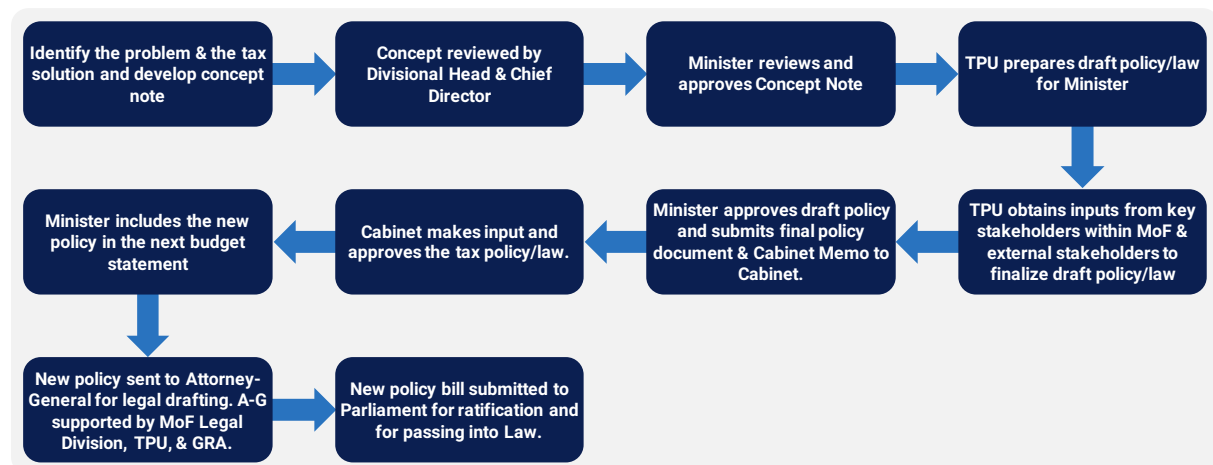
**Budget implementation:** Oversight of budget execution is assigned to the Minister of Finance, as per the Financial Administration Regulations (LI 1802) (2004). The MDAs/MMDAs are expected to provide monthly workplans and budget requirements to the MoF to aid in the release of funds. The MoF then issues budget allotments and warrants to the CAGD every quarter, based on which releases are made to MDAs. Although the PFM Act makes it an offence to spend over and above the approved allotment, there are times when specific MDAs have not strictly kept to their approved budgets, leading to budget slippages.

**Budget M&E:** M&E occurs throughout the cycle. The budget is monitored to check that what is to be executed is consistent with what the Appropriation Act directs, whether projects and programmes are being implemented properly, and whether the outcomes for which the plans are being executed are being achieved.

### 5.2.3 Tax policy process in Ghana

Under the 1992 Constitution (Art. 174), no tax is to be imposed without approval or rectification by Parliament under an act. The sole responsibility for making policies to *mobilise* tax revenues rests with the MoF through the Tax Policy Unit (TPU), with the support of stakeholders and collaborators such as the GRA. The TPU has the core function of developing, proposing, and advising the Minister of Finance on tax policy. It has developed an internal systematic process for tax policy formulation, with an in-built collaborative process, which, in theory, guides the introduction of new tax policies or laws (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Tax policymaking process



Source: Adapted from TPU (2012)

From interviews<sup>57</sup> and empirical literature (Kombat and Watzold, 2018), we understand that the process of problem identification, agenda setting, policy drafting, and approval outlined in Figure 8 is not strictly followed in practice. Tax policies/laws have been initiated by the Cabinet, the Minister of Finance, the TPU/MoF, the GRA, and sector ministries. Tax

<sup>55</sup> SEND Ghana collates citizens' inputs on the 2018 budget.

<sup>56</sup> Consolidated private sector inputs into the 2019 Budget Statement.

<sup>57</sup> KII 28.

proposals emanating from these actors are sometimes supported through consultations, lobbying and advocacy, and general awareness creation. In this scenario, the TPU is the main conduit for managing the policy approval process, with the GRA advising the MoF, as the implementer of tax policy.

It is important to note that while there is no explicit gender bias in the tax policy process, gender norms around economic activity and gender-based distribution of labour shape the differential effects of the tax regime on men and women.

Please refer to Table 3 in Annex A, where the case of the plastic excise tax is used to highlight how political interests guide the tax policy process.

### 5.3 The political economy realities of PFM policy in Ghana

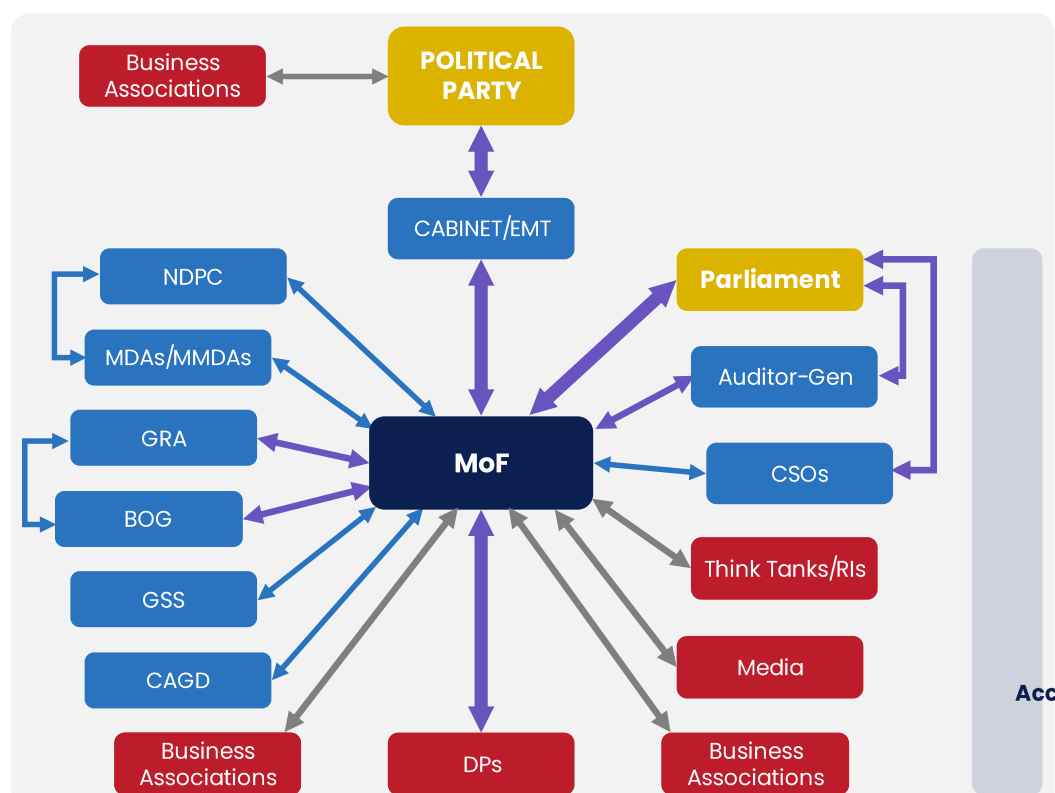
The following key insights on the **power dynamics between key actors in the budgeting and tax policy processes (treated as PFM)** combine insights drawn from the literature review and from the primary data that were collected. Figure 9 maps out the strength of these relationships (indicated by the thickness of arrows) and the relative importance of each actor in this space (indicated by colours).

**Centrality of the MoF: The MoF is the most critical central management agency in the PFM system in the country, as laid out in the 1992 Constitution.** The Minister of Finance has enormous power as he or she holds and controls the public purse.<sup>58</sup> Once the policy agenda is set, the MoF – through the Public Investment and Asset Division, and in collaboration with NDPC – develops policy options and considers their implications. The MoF plays a critical role on the revenue and tax policy side through its divisions (including the TPU) and oversight over the GRA, and leads the annual budgeting process. Under the PFM Act, MDAs/MMDAs submit their policies and expenditure priorities in the form of project-based budgets to the MoF for inclusion in the government's Budget Statement and Economic Policy.

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<sup>58</sup> KII 11; KII 26.

Figure 9: PFM stakeholders in Ghana



Source: Authors' construct, 2019 | Legend: red = very influential; blue = has some influence; yellow = not influential but consulted

**Political interests:** The political interests of the ruling party, as manifested through the Cabinet (and the EMT) and the Office of the President, are a key driver of tax policy and public expenditure priorities. At the macro level, policies are introduced by the Cabinet but are highly influenced by the political party's flagship programmes, which emanate from the manifestos used to win political power. The Cabinet has considerable power and influence over the national budget. Before a tax policy is sent to Parliament, the Cabinet must give approval for its incorporation in the budget statement (Kombat and Watzold, 2018).<sup>59</sup> The EMT, supported by its Delivery Unit,<sup>60</sup> scrutinises all policies, including public expenditure and tax policy recommendations made by the MoF, before they are considered for approval by the Cabinet. The party then wields its power in Parliament, where it has a majority, by 'whipping' all its MPs into line, even if they disagree on the policy being debated.

This political interest is supplemented by the influence of business (in the form of either individuals or business interest groups) on the Cabinet. This influence manifests itself in modifications to draft tax policies (as highlighted in Table 3 in Annex A, i.e. the plastic excise tax case study) or the insertion of projects outside the National Development Plan into the Budget. Clientelist politics manifests itself in the distribution of funds between regions, especially with respect to the poorer northern areas, as northern elites have no agenda-setting power to push for equal distribution of resources. This is particularly visible in the example of the way Heavily Indebted Poor Countries and Millennium Challenge Account funds were concentrated in the regions that were not showing the highest incidence of

<sup>59</sup> KII 26.

<sup>60</sup> KII 25.

poverty, despite the explicitly stated commitment to pro-poor resource distribution in the Poverty Reduction Strategy programmes (GPRS I and II). Even when presented with evidence to inform pro-poor policymaking, the resources were still distributed to regions that were not most in need, due to political clientelist dynamics.

**Relationships with agencies that focus on oversight: Parliament, and the oversight and approval functions provided by its committees during the budget process (as laid out in the 1992 Constitution) – from pre-budget proposal through to the Finance Select Committee, to the approval of the Budget and the Appropriation Bill – are often superseded by the Cabinet and the ruling political party.** In theory, Parliament has the power to call the Minister for Finance to answer questions on public accounts and government expenditures. However, Parliament has been unable to exercise effective scrutiny and control because of poor timetabling of budget processes and resource constraints. In addition, Ghana's budget process is such that the ruling party, with a majority in Parliament, plays a leading role in the consideration of budgetary estimates and their eventual approval. Although the minority party can leverage its presence in Parliament to demand accountability through the Public Accounts Committee, there are limits to its ability to do this. Indeed, there have been cases (regardless of the party in power) where the Public Accounts Committee, headed by the minority party, obtained verifiable evidence of financial malfeasance and corruption and yet found that its legal steps to retrieve the funds were frustrated.

The Controller and Accountant-General's Department (CAGD) also performs an in-house oversight function and is responsible to the Minister of Finance for the custody, safety, and integrity of public funds. The CAGD conducts internal audits and provides data to the GAS for an external audit of all Ghana's public accounts. As part of the budget PFM system, the CAGD is expected to be an important player in the budget execution phase. However, it is important to note that the evidence provided by the Auditor-General is given – at best – only formal acknowledgement in parliamentary debates, to indicate that due process has been followed.<sup>61</sup>

**Dynamics involving key government agencies: The government (including the MoF) exerts influence over the GSS and the BoG to support its PFM policy agenda, despite the mandated autonomous nature of these institutions.**

Funding challenges persist at the GSS and weaken its core role. For instance, in practice, the Consumer Price Index is very important for both the MoF and the BoG, but the GSS sometimes finds it difficult to fund market and consumer surveys. Apart from holding discussions with the GSS on its budgetary allocations for the financial year, dialogue between the two agencies is limited.<sup>62</sup> Additionally (regardless of the regime in power), the evidence provided by the GSS is sometimes opportunistically contested by government officials, leading to the use of data generated by multilateral organisations on the grounds that they find it less likely that those data have been manipulated.<sup>63</sup>

The BoG is a critical central agency related to PFM and assists the MoF in its preparation of the annual budget proposed to the Cabinet and Parliament. The BoG Governor is appointed

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<sup>61</sup> KII 31.

<sup>62</sup> KII 26.

<sup>63</sup> KII 31.

by the President in consultation with the Council of State but is expected to be independent of the President. Although the BoG Governor is independent, it is perceived that he or she leans toward the agenda of the government that appoints him/her, such that, at the beginning of a new government's time in power, pressure is brought to bear on the governor and sometimes their deputy resigns. This has happened under both the NDC and the NPP, in 2009 and 2017, respectively.

The MoF exerts authority over the GRA, including financial allocations, and can therefore thwart the zeal for tax administration reforms to support tax policy reform in Ghana. The GRA provides the MoF with revenue projections that are critical for the budgeting process. The evidence it provides is vital but, as noted by a key informant,<sup>64</sup> the generation and use of evidence by the GRA could be improved. This informant noted that both capacity and data quality are low. Factors like the lack of independence from the MoF, low staff capabilities, incomplete computerisation of revenue collection, and low capacity in tax revenue forecasting and simulation, among others, continue to plague the efforts of the GRA to use evidence in designing and implementing tax policies in Ghana.

**Interactions with non-government stakeholders: External government institutions, CSOs, and development partners have low-to-moderate influence over PFM policies through informal channels controlled by the government in power.** At the early stages of the budgeting and tax formulation process, CSOs are selectively consulted to make inputs into the budget on an ad hoc basis, and at very short notice. However, the 2016 PFM Act attempts to recognise the important role that CSOs play in providing evidence to support what goes into the budget and the government's economic policies. Development partners' influence on PFM reforms is secured by leveraging bilateral relations at the national level, along with the willingness of the incumbent governments in Ghana to introduce reforms. According to an EU/IEG report, development partner technical support has taken the form of a mix of small-scale projects within the MoF TPU, the BoG, and GAS, as well as the large-scale GIFMIS project.

## 5.4 Evidence ecosystem of PFM policy in Ghana

The PFM Act, 2016 (Act 921) and the PFM Regulations (LI 2378) provide for a robust system for regulating the financial management of the public sector within a macroeconomic and fiscal framework. The legal framework provides clear processes for PFM policymaking, the stakeholders involved, and the evidence required at each stage from each stakeholder. The spending powers and accountability structures set out in the legal frameworks are clearly intended to enforce the production of hitherto non-existent evidence within the PFM process. For example, there is currently open access to the Appropriation Bill, the debt management document, and financial strategy documents, etc., and evidence for policymaking – as well as for ensuring accountability – is available in a timely fashion.

The PFM Act identified a host of weaknesses in the then existing PFM system. Weak coordination was found to be a result of institutional fragmentation; for example, the central management agencies, divisions, and departments responsible for budget preparation and management worked in silos and did not coordinate their activities (World Bank, 2015).<sup>65</sup> On

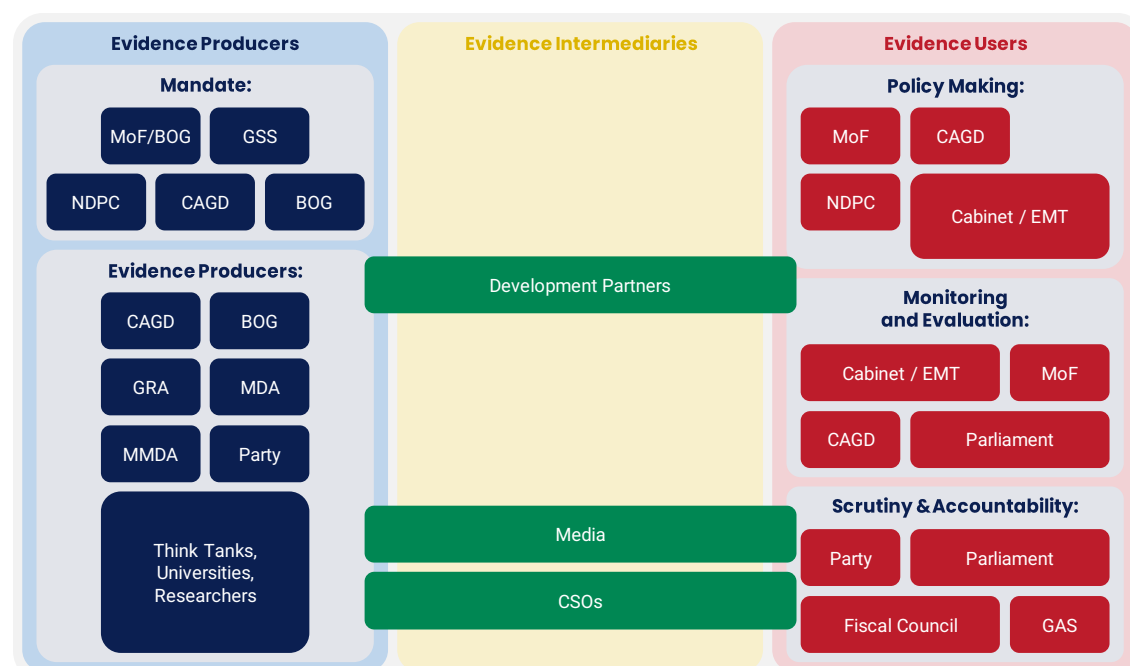
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<sup>64</sup> KII 28.

<sup>65</sup> KII 26.

the tax policy and administration front, similar factors – such as fragmented tax agencies, weak tax collection, and weak audit and controls systems – resulted in revenue leakages (Ohemeng *et al*, 2013). The efficient working of the revenue administration model, operating using the GIFMIS as its basis, demands timely dissemination of information, accurate and standard reporting, and detailed analysis and simulation of socio-economic survey and administrative data. The introduction or amendment of a tax policy also requires evidence-based problem statements to attract buy-in from all stakeholders in the policy formulation process (Kombat and Watzold, 2018).<sup>66</sup> Previously underreported information, such as the details of the procurement process and winners of government contracts, have become available through the GIFMIS, thus improving transparency.

Figure 10: PFM sector evidence ecosystem



Source: Authors' construct, 2019. This figure is a necessary simplification that is intended to focus on three main functions: evidence production, translation (or intermediation), and use. Green represent those entities that straddle more than one function in the evidence ecosystem.

<sup>66</sup> KII 28.



Figure 11: The budget process evidence ecosystem



Source: Authors' construct, 2019

## 5.4.1 Producers of evidence for PFM

Producers of evidence can be distinguished by whether they have a legal mandate to supply evidence to assist policymaking, or for scrutiny and accountability. For instance, the mandates of NDPC, GRA, GSS, CAGD, BoG, and MoF in the PFM cycle demand that they supply evidence to their stakeholders to support policymaking. It is important to note that the newly formed Ministry of M&E is primarily focused on government flagship programmes and does not examine expenditure-side processes related to PFM.

Evidence provided by the MoF, BoG, GSS, GRA, and development partners is highly regarded and used in policy formulation, technical analysis, and research, as well as for advisory purposes. Evidence from MMDAs has less credibility because of capacity constraints at local government level in regard to producing evidence. Apolitical research institutes and academia are perceived as credible and are often used by political parties. On the other hand, a key informant<sup>67</sup> asserted that most of the evidence provided by commissioned researchers from academia, CSOs, and think tanks is rejected and does not find its way into government PFM policies. The respondent cited from experience that evidence and recommendations generated through such research tend to be one-sided and do not provide flexible options for practice.

<sup>67</sup> KII FCP.

### 5.4.2 Users of evidence for PFM

Users of evidence can be distinguished by whether they need evidence to make effective PFM policymaking, or for advisory, scrutiny, accountability, or monitoring, evaluation, and learning purposes. For policymaking in the PFM sector to be credible there is a need for access to, and use of, evidence in various forms (quantitative and qualitative).

The PFM Act and its regulations require a great deal of evidence to be generated and used by stakeholder institutions and organisations. A key informant<sup>68</sup> pointed out that evidence for tax policy and PFM is primarily sourced from the GRA, GSS, and development partners (IMF, the World Bank, and the OECD). For budget reconciliation on the narrow fiscal balances, the MoF relies on data from the BoG more than those from the GRA since the BoG data are generated in real time and hence are more accurate. The MoF now openly shares evidence on the Budget by publishing the Citizens' Budget.

The actors in the PFM sector have diverse interests, incentives, and influences, meaning the budget process deviates from the defined norms and best practices in the sector. Our analysis finds that in the PFM sector, government political priorities are a major influence on the kind of evidence that is presented for the Budget and tax policy processes. Technocrats make technical inputs based on evidence generated in-house, or supplied by consulted experts where there is a lack of capacity and expertise. However, the political policymaker makes a final determination as to how much weight to give to the evidence provided. With regard to PFM-related policies born out of political party manifestos and campaign promises (e.g. the 'Kayayo' tax exemptions and free Senior High School financing, among others, that appeared in the 2017 Budget), 'technical' evidence on fiscal space does not appear to have been given much weight relative to political sentiments and outcomes. Strong informal party ties between technical staff and politicians (ministers and appointees) ensure they work closely together to make evidence-informed policies that fit within political priorities, as articulated by the party manifesto. This relationship can have a positive effect on evidence exchange.<sup>69</sup>

The new PFM Act enables Parliament to utilise the evidence generated through the PFM process and supplied to it by the GAS. Despite the constraints on Parliament in terms of exercising its oversight function, as articulated in the PEA, the capacity of the Public Accounts Committee to assemble and use the evidence supplied to it for its work continues to be relevant in the long run, as it will incrementally work toward a more transparent and accountable budgeting and tax policymaking process.

### 5.4.3 Intermediaries

This section briefly outlines those actors whose primary role is the translation of various forms of evidence, and its transmission to evidence users. However, it is important to note that in many cases this function is distributed throughout the evidence ecosystem, rather than falling to a dedicated intermediary (e.g. when evidence producers write policy briefs to distil key messages for policymakers).

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<sup>68</sup> KII 26.

<sup>69</sup> KII 16.

As noted in Section 4.4.3, the media (and the use of social media) are often cited as important evidence intermediaries, with both newspapers and radio serving as venues for discussion of the budget and tax policies proposed by the government. Outside government agencies, development partners have historically guided the direction of critical PFM sector reforms. From the existing literature (World Bank, 2015), it is clear that the IMF and World Bank have been highly influential in economic reforms (e.g. the Economic Recovery Programme and Structural Adjustment Programmes) and in PFM reforms (e.g. the Public Financial Management Reform Programme, Mid-term Expenditure Frameworks, GIFMIS, and Public Finance Management Reform). Business interest groups and CSOs have also increased their demand for accountability in budgeting by supplying evidence, or analysing evidence, and sharing key findings with the government and the MoF.

## 5.5 Organisational diagnostic of PFM for SEDI

Based on our AAA analysis (authority, acceptance, ability) of the political economy and evidence ecosystem within PFM, **the MoF, GRA, GSS, GAS, Auditor-General, and Parliament have been identified as institutions that SEDI could explore collaboration with** if it chooses to build on its PFM programme.

## 6. Analysis of the health sector in Ghana

### Key findings

- The health sector is characterised by a complex dynamic system that is both highly politicised in its core function and simultaneously carefully protected from overt political influence through robust, transparent, and participatory policy processes.
- There is significant trust in the evidence systems that feed into health-related policymaking processes. Substantial investments have been undertaken to streamline and enhance the prime national data collection system, and most key stakeholders are now utilising this system for their own internal evidence generation. This increasingly also includes development partners.
- The above, in conjunction with a common perception of the undue policy influence of development partners, could negatively impact the demand for services such as those provided through SEDI. However, opportunities might reveal themselves when applying a narrower policy and organisational scope.

### 6.1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, Ghana has committed to increasing both access to health services and financial protection in pursuit of universal health coverage through targeted health service delivery and financing reforms. Health sector reforms have been predicated on five premises: (1) increasing the efficiency of service delivery; (2) providing effective interventions; (3) developing linkages with all partners and providers; (4) improving the equity of access to health services; and (5) improving the quality of care.

The new National Health Policy (forthcoming) is based on the view set out in the CPESDP 2017–2024 that the health of the population is central to sustained economic growth and development. The key objective of the policy is to ‘ensure healthy lives for all’ through an approach that aims to address a wider set of determinants of health (see Box 4).

#### Box 4: Key determinants of health in Ghana

Ghana has a complex disease burden influenced by risk factors such as the physical environment, education, the socio-economic situation, population lifestyles, and the demographic characteristics of the population. These, in addition to the capacity of the healthcare delivery system to provide quality care, collectively determine the health and wellbeing of the people living in the country. Historically, the major health problems affecting Ghanaians have been primarily communicable, maternal, perinatal, and nutritional diseases. However, Ghana is going through epidemiological, demographic, socio-economic, and technological transitions that impact on the population’s health. While communicable diseases such as malaria and vaccine-preventable illnesses are on the decline, there is growing incidence of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. Moreover, although total fertility has declined, an increasingly ageing population is putting pressure on an underfunded health sector. Also, rapid urbanisation, youth unemployment, and lack of economic opportunities have resulted in an increase in mental illness. Simultaneously, changes in health technology, such as the electronic patient management systems, have improved efficiency in patient care.

## 6.2 Health policymaking in Ghana

### 6.2.1 Key actors involved in the health sector

The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders are defined by the Common Management Arrangements (CMA) which include the requirement for information sharing between development partners, the MoH, and a wider group of stakeholders, such as CSOs and the private sector. The objectives of the CMA include clarifying and improving reporting and communication within the sector and improving linkages between sector data sources.

Under the Ghana Health Service and Teaching Hospitals Act, 1996 (Act 525), the MoH<sup>70</sup> has been streamlined to form the backbone of the provision of general government policy direction, resource mobilisation, M&E, and to provide administrative support for the Minister of Health. The PPME directorate within the MoH consists of various units, including the policy coordination, planning, budgeting, collaboration, resource mobilisation, private sector, quality management, and M&E units. The Technical Coordination Directorate of the MoH is relatively new and provides technical expertise for policy development. The minister also has a set of more informal advisers, but the full extent of their role and influence is unclear.

The **GHS** is the key implementing agency as it provides public health and clinical services. It is tasked with the planning, implementation, monitoring, and performance assessment of health programmes and services (Adjei, 2003), giving it considerable power in the sector. It operates on a five-tier system: national, regional, district, sub-district, and community (Cassels and Janovsky, 1991). To make the health sector more responsive, all publicly owned health institutions, divisions, facilities, and agencies have responsibility for their own planning, budgeting, implementation, and M&E, through being designated as budget and management centres.

**The Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG)** is a network of health facilities and training institutions owned by different Christian denominations, with the mandate to provide healthcare to the most vulnerable and underprivileged population groups. CHAG is Ghana's second largest service provider, operating 345 facilities, including 20 health training institutions, in all regions and in almost 200 districts. The MoH currently pays the salaries of 75% of CHAG staff.

**The National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA)** regulates and monitors the operation of health insurance schemes in Ghana. NHIA evaluates applications by private facilities for enrolment in the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), which at present accounts for over 80% of the internally generated funds of public and private health facilities. The Research, Policy, and Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate of the NHIA is tasked with the following: i) conducting research in areas that enhance the implementation of NHIS policy; ii) leading and coordinating all national health finance research; and iii) supporting evidence-based decision making and strategy planning.

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<sup>70</sup> The roles of the President, Cabinet, Parliament, NDPC, and the political parties in policymaking have been discussed in the section above and will not be repeated in this chapter.

## 6.2.2 Policymaking processes in Ghana's health sector

Generally, the policymaking process in the health sector follows the formal process of problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, M&E, and a communication strategy. However, these stages are not linear but rather consist of overlapping and interconnected engagement among key actors in meetings and stakeholder consultations.

The CMA sets out the modalities for collaboration and coordination among the sector's stakeholders to achieve the health MTDP. The CMA outlines five coordinating mechanisms (listed below), each of which provides inputs to the policy process, though the first three are the most significant. During these meetings, various types and sources of evidence are presented – some through technical presentations while others are contributions from participants.

**Business meetings:** Chaired by the Minister of Health, these meetings take place three times a year, one of which is the high-level Annual Health Summit held in April and another of which is the November planning and budget meeting. The meetings are attended by key sector partners at senior management and technical level and are open to other interested stakeholders. At the summit, representatives from the MoF and other health-related ministries are also in attendance.

**The Annual Health Summit** involves a comprehensive assessment of the sector's performance using a variety of data sources, including health sector MTDP milestones and indicators, budget and financial statements, agency annual reports, and progress reports. Evidence is used not only to inform but also to justify decisions and to verify processes (Vecchione and Parkhurst, 2016).

**The November meeting** focuses on sector plans and budgets for the ensuing year. The MoH and development partners organise joint monitoring visits twice yearly to observe policy implementation on the ground prior to the April and November business meetings.

**Sector working group meetings:** Chaired by the Chief Director and convened by the Director of PPME and the Development Partner Lead, these meetings are organised monthly and are attended by all key sector partners at managerial and technical staff level. The purpose is to ensure effective engagement between the sector's stakeholders, provide input into policy formulation, and monitor implementation.

**Interagency Leadership Committee meetings:** Chaired by the Minister of Health, these meetings are organised quarterly between the MoH and its agencies to assess the sector's performance and to discuss governance and emerging issues confronting the sector.

**Decentralised-level dialogue:** The MoH and the GHS coordinate the sector's dialogue with sub-national institutions to ensure effective collaboration.

**Engagement with the private sector and civil society:** The MoH engages with the private sector through the Private Sector Unit of the PPME.

In addition, the MoH has an M&E framework and places the practice of M&E within the broader sector of the management and accountability framework. Agencies of the MoH are expected to have their own M&E systems in place, and to also report periodically on services provided within the framework of agreed indicators and formats.



Lastly, performance reviews have been institutionalised at sub-national level. Regional performance reviews are conducted in the first quarter of the year, during which regional and district performances are reviewed, challenges are identified, and plans are fed into the next year's programme of work. The quality of the analytical discussion at these reviews often depends on the technical capacity of the regional leadership. An innovation that has recently been introduced is the use of a modified holistic assessment tool to assess the region's performance.

## **6.3 The political economy realities of health policy in Ghana**

### **6.3.1 Political interests**

The health sector is characterised by a complex dynamic that is simultaneously highly politicised in its core function but also carefully protected from overt political influence through robust, transparent, and participatory policy processes.

On the one hand, it can be argued that health sector policy processes are transparent and technical in nature, which makes the system relatively immune from the influence of short-term political interests. Medicine or allopathic healthcare has a strong foundation in science, especially following the introduction of evidence-based medicine over the past two decades. The identification of causes of diseases, and the choice of interventions, are based on rigorous scientific methods, including systematic reviews and meta-analyses. Thus, there is a tradition of using scientific evidence at all stages of the policy process in Ghana.

Except in a few cases, political party manifestos do not directly influence the health policy formulation stage, since most health sector policies are initiated by the technical implementing agencies, which in turn are significantly influenced by policies and guidelines produced by United Nations agencies such as WHO, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Children's Fund. The participatory planning and policymaking process, which involves a wide range of actors, is a further safeguard against direct influence from the political parties.

On the other hand, since the advent of Ghana's Fourth Republic in 1992, social policies related to health (as well as education) have increasingly been treated as important electoral issues through which the parties can differentiate themselves (Lenhardt *et al.*, 2015). The most evident form of political influence in the health sector is through the appointment powers placed in the hands of the President by the Constitution (Ninsin, 2008). Remarkably, Ghana had seven different Ministers of Health between 2009 and 2015, averaging one minister per year (Abdulai, 2018). Politicisation through appointments extends beyond the MoH to include key positions at the technical implementation agencies. For example, there have recently been two major staff reallocations at the GHS motivated by political interests.<sup>71</sup>

While political influence is an integral part of policymaking, these frequent turnovers have both created a range of practical challenges and at the same time provided political parties with an instrument to circumvent more evidence-based policymaking procedures. The great political weight given to the health sector, in combination with the relatively short electoral cycle, imposes pressure to implement overly ambitious policies within the mandate period in

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<sup>71</sup> [www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Govt-withdraws-appointment-of-Baffour-Awuah-as-new-Ghana-Health-Service-boss-800601](http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Govt-withdraws-appointment-of-Baffour-Awuah-as-new-Ghana-Health-Service-boss-800601)



order to gain political capital (Fusheini, 2016). Furthermore, new appointees are incentivised to strengthen their own legacy through the introduction of new initiatives, rather than to further advance the directives of their predecessor. This has led to increased policy fragmentation and a poorer track record on project implementation progress.

Several studies point to the formulation of the NHIS policy as an example of this phenomenon: it has been criticised for relying more on decision makers' perceived need for immediate policy actions to avoid criticism or 'agenda capturing' by the opposition, rather than well-informed evidence-based policymaking processes.

#### **Box 5: The role of politics and evidence in the policymaking process relating to the NHIS**

The NHIS is a social intervention programme introduced by the government to provide financial access to quality healthcare for all residents in Ghana. It was launched by the NPP administration in 2000, with the stated motivation that 'nobody in Ghana will be denied medical attention because of his or her inability to pay'.<sup>72</sup> While several factors affected NHIS policy formulation, a number of studies suggest that political motives dominated the debate, at the expense of more robust evidence. Fusheini (2016), for example, argues that high political visibility combined with poor economic analysis led to overambitious statements regarding comprehensive NHIS coverage, which explains why it is currently struggling to achieve the set goals. Moreover, Agyepong and Adjei (2008) suggest that political associates had the power to veto evidence from technical working groups that did not support their decisions. These vetoes were allegedly applied to discussions around the minimum benefit package and premium, premium-exempt groups, and provider administrative claims-processing formats.

Interviewees also supported the claim that the NHIA relies insufficiently on robust evidence in its policy processes, primarily due to unsatisfactory engagement with providers. In addition, the MoH is seen as having limited control over the NHIA. Although the MoH has representation on the NHIA board, the ministry does not appoint its chief executive or influence overall strategic directives.

### **6.3.2 Overlapping roles and responsibilities in the governance system**

In addition to the political dimensions presented above, the governance system is also criticised for unclear divisions of responsibilities between key agencies in the health sector (Vecchione and Parkhurst, 2016; Fusheini, 2016). Information gathered from interviews reveals uncertainty regarding the roles of the GHS and CHAG, with CHAG sometimes seen as a rival of, and sometimes seen as an agency subsumed under the GHS. Representatives from CHAG would argue that they fulfil the same role as the GHS – i.e. that of a technical implementing agency – and they should therefore be granted the same level of influence. However, the GHS is not only given the mandate of the key implementing agency but is also the agency responsible for the main centralised data collection tool, the DHIMS, further described below. Given the importance assigned to evidence and medical data, the agency that controls data collection and dissemination clearly also has an influence over the political debate.<sup>73,74</sup> Interviewees<sup>75</sup> stated that this apparent rivalry has had a negative impact on the efficiency of the organisations and has reduced the level of support received from donors.

<sup>72</sup> [www.ghanareview.com?NPP.html](http://www.ghanareview.com?NPP.html)

<sup>73</sup> KII 47.

<sup>74</sup> KII 47; KII 52; KII 54.

<sup>75</sup> KII 54; KII 55.

Duplication of roles and fragmentation of power are also issues relevant to the MoH and the GHS. The GHS was created through the Ghana Health Service and Teaching Hospitals Act, 1996 (Act 525). This introduced the purchaser–provider split between the MoH and a technical agency (the recently established GHS), with the former providing policy oversight and the latter responsible for implementation. While this split is seen overall as highly successful in clarifying the roles of the MoH and increasing the health sector’s efficiency, there has been some concern that the creation of the GHS drained the MoH of its technical expertise and capacity. The MoH is highly reliant on the GHS to provide it with the required evidence to support policy decisions. Similar to the discussion above on the GHS and CHAG, the technical superiority of the GHS and its access to evidence put it in the driving seat of policymaking.

In addition, key informants shared their concerns that the Technical Coordination Directorate (TCD) lacks the technical expertise to effectively fulfil its mandate as policy adviser, and that the TCD consequently functions more as a secretariat that coordinates the activities of the working groups.<sup>76</sup>

### 6.3.3 Regional inequalities in health provision

The health sector has a resource allocation formula that has two components: 1) a uniform amount to cover administrative expenditures; and 2) a need-based component that considers factors such as population, number of health facilities, and distance from the national capital. Nevertheless, political appointees are frequently criticised for allocating resources to increase their influence on voters, rather than prioritising areas of need. Abdulai (2018) asserts that as a result, a significant share of the health budget is simply distributed equally across all regions, districts, and facilities, with limited concern for differential needs. The inequitable distribution of scarce resources, including health workers, is contributing to deepening regional inequalities.

The MoH recognises that there are huge regional disparities in the distribution of health personnel across the country and has established the Human Resources for Health policy to provide strategies to address some of the key challenges identified. To improve human resource distribution, especially in rural and underserved areas, the Human Resources for Health Directorate has implemented an online system for posting health workers. Despite this effort, doctors posted to remote areas frequently refuse to assume their postings due to poor conditions in rural areas, thus ensuring there is an overconcentration of medical staff in urban areas (Accra and Kumasi in particular) (Abdulai, 2018).

### 6.3.4 Dynamics relating to key stakeholders

**Development partners:** While development partners have recently significantly reduced their financial support, Koduah *et al.* (2015) note that they continue to influence policy agenda setting through the provision of technical assistance and advisory services. Key development partners are the United Nations organisations, for their global technical leadership, the World Bank in terms of financing, and various bilaterals for combined technical advice and financing – prime among which are FCDO and the United States Agency for International Development. The direct influence of development partners is not

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<sup>76</sup> KII 42.

always evident; often the dynamic between development partners and Ghanaian policymakers is complicated, and it can be difficult to ascertain the driving force behind a policy decision.

There are, however, certain cases where the direct influence of development partners is highly visible and tangible. One example is the Health Sector Gender Policy, formulated in 2009. This policy was developed to enhance the ways in which the MoH and the technical agencies analyse and prioritise gender issues in the planning, implementation, and M&E of policies. The key achievements during the early years of the policy included the creation of a Gender Desk, the appointment of a gender coordinator in the MoH, and improved collection and use of sex-disaggregated data. However, according to KIIs, the implementation of the gender policy has stalled due to it being primarily driven and funded by development partners. Once the development partner funding was depleted, activities were discontinued. The gender unit no longer exists and the experts who staffed the Gender Desk have left the MoH. The MoH does, however, plan to review the policy.<sup>77</sup>

While the support of development partners has often been considered essential in improving healthcare systems in Ghana, criticism has also been raised that development partner promises of additional funding and resources have granted them undue policy influence. Development partners have been criticised for driving policy reforms that are more in alignment with their own agenda, rather than reflecting the need or the context in the area in which they are to be implemented.

**Global conventions:** Ghana is a signatory to various global conventions that require innovative strategies to inform policy decisions. The country has signed several international protocols on sexual and reproductive health, including the International Conference on Population and Development and the Maputo declaration.<sup>78</sup> In regard to mental health, the WHO's strategic move to improve mental health in 2001 (WHO, 2001) necessitated a push for system reform to address mental health needs in Ghana.<sup>79</sup>

**Civil society:** Over the past two decades there has been a dramatic increase in the engagement of influential advocacy groups around the provision of health services and the monitoring and scrutiny of government performance (Lenhardt *et al.*, 2015). If the adoption of certain priorities risks alienating key clinical groups, then decision makers may choose to adopt alternative solutions that avoid such risks (Hauck and Smith, 2015). In particular, some coalitions of powerful minority groups have the interest, the means, and the opportunity to organise themselves to influence political decisions to their advantage. On the other end of the spectrum, there has been a decrease in the engagement of NGOs and others that lack the support of influential groups, due to overall reduced levels of NGO funding.

## 6.4 Evidence ecosystem of the health sector in Ghana

In principle, the health sector is supported by several information systems and has a well-structured system of accountability and reporting (MoH, 2018). Figure 12 below provides a simplified overview of the health sector's evidence ecosystem.

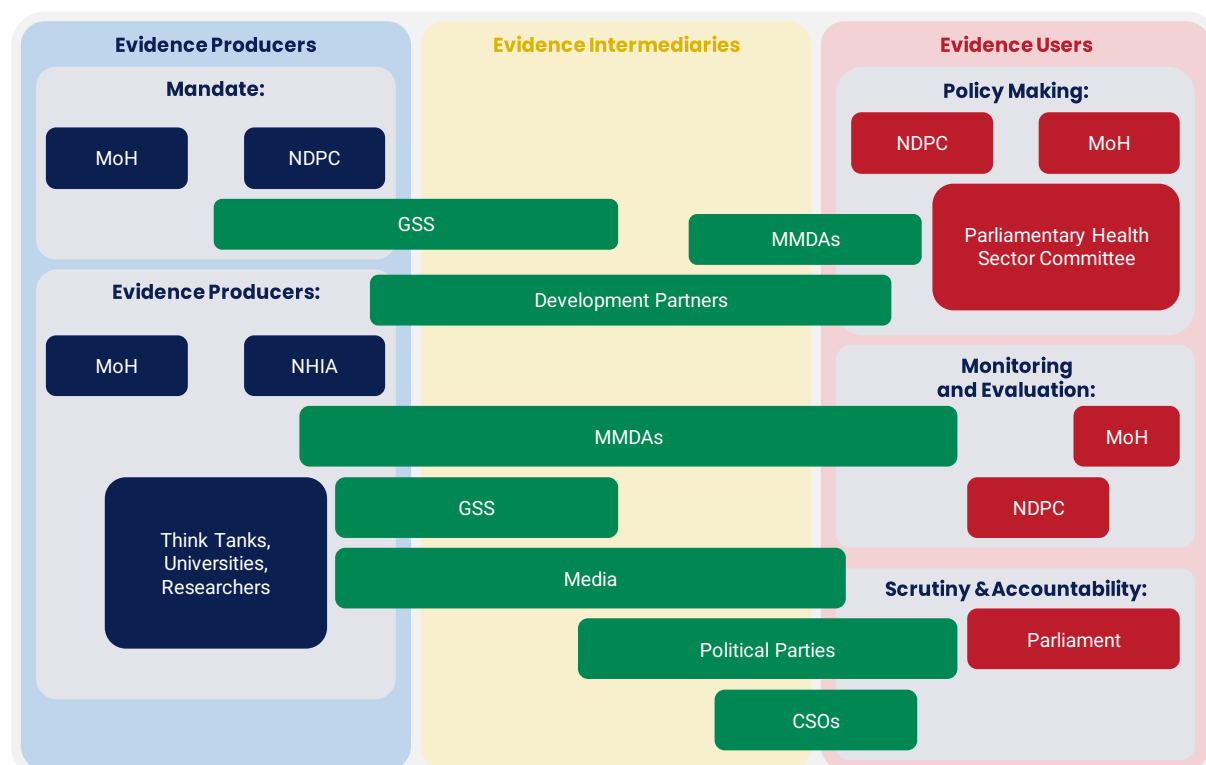
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<sup>77</sup> KII 43.

<sup>78</sup> KII 50.

<sup>79</sup> KII 51.

Figure 12: Health sector evidence ecosystem



Source: Authors' construct, 2019. This figure is a necessary simplification that is intended to focus on three main functions: evidence production, translation (or intermediation), and use. Green represents those entities that straddle more than one function in the evidence ecosystem.

### 6.4.1 Generation of evidence

The most important and influential data collection system in Ghana is the District Health Information Management System (DHIMS). As the national health database, the DHIMS collects, collates, and reports on all routine health services in the public sector, including data from mission, private, and quasi-government facilities. Data from the DHIMS constitute the prime evidence base that is used to inform processes and decisions concerning policy identification, formulation, implementation, and monitoring, as well as the sector's overall performance assessment (Vecchione and Parkhurst, 2015).<sup>80</sup> As noted above, GHS control over the DHIMS makes the agency very influential in policymaking processes.

Beyond the comprehensive collection of data from a wide range of sources across the country, the key strength of the DHIMS is the high level of user trust. Overall, government agencies, development partners, healthcare managers, universities, research institutions, and health providers all find the DHIMS highly credible. It is the primary source for the development of the holistic assessment tool, which is used to inform decision making during the Annual Health Summit. Donors no longer demand reports from programmes but instead access such data from the DHIMS. Development partners have increasingly shifted their investments in programmatic information systems into the DHIMS. The cloud storage, which costs almost US\$2,500 monthly, is financed by donors, which the MoH is expected to budget for in the future. Notwithstanding these strengths, although all public health facilities report through the system, it is estimated that only about 80% of data are reported (MoH,

<sup>80</sup> KII 56; KII 57.

2018). The reason for these data gaps is that district managers are sometimes poorly incentivised to use the system properly.

Although the DHIMS is the system that is most actively used for data collection and analysis, there are some other national systems for gathering evidence to inform policymaking. These include the following:

- **GIFMIS:** This is an electronic system introduced by the government to track expenditures, human resources, and procurement. According to a director of one of the MoH agencies,<sup>81</sup> the software generates a huge amount of data for decision making, but the data are underused because managers either do not have the time or are not motivated enough to use them. GIFMIS has yet to be deployed in hospitals.
- **Administrative records management:** Administrative record-keeping is necessary not only to support continuity in decision making but also to allow citizens to demand accountability in line with relevant constitutional provisions. Investments in administrative records management have been poor. The GHS has made progress in setting up the central unit and plans to expand this to the regions but is constrained by logistical and staff capacity, largely due to funding.
- **Health research units within the MoH and the GHS:** The MoH and the GHS both have dedicated health research units that aim to strengthen and coordinate health research to support policy and programmes, as well as to strengthen decision making (GHS, 2019).
- **Government-commissioned research:** The MoH and the technical implementing agencies frequently commission research to provide evidence to guide policy discussions and decisions. Frequently, this is done in collaboration with development partners.<sup>82</sup>
- **Other research institutions/centres:** The GSS collaborates with the MoH and its agencies in conducting the national household survey, the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey. This survey is very expensive and is funded significantly by donors, whose priorities influence the range of indicators used for the survey.

#### 6.4.2 Intermediaries

This section briefly outlines those actors whose primary role is the translation of evidence and its transmission to users. However, it is important to note that in many cases this function is distributed throughout the evidence ecosystem rather than falling to a dedicated intermediary (e.g. when evidence producers write policy briefs to distil key messages for policymakers).

- **Technical agencies:** A number of technical agencies function across the ecosystem as producers, users, and intermediaries of evidence and data. As an illustrative case, the GHS is a key producer of data through its management of the DHIMS. It analyses data through the research units, disseminates findings to feed into business meetings, and uses data to inform the implementation of policies and assessments of their progress.

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<sup>81</sup> KII 58.

<sup>82</sup> Authors' personal communication with the Director, PPME, MoH, in 2018.

- **WHO Observatory:** The Global Health Observatory is compiled by WHO, in partnership with member countries, in order to annually publish health statistics and report progress toward the SDGs. The Observatory is expected to improve the quality of data for policymaking, since national data will be validated by WHO. However, the Observatory has yet to be implemented in Ghana and senior representatives interviewed indicated that Ghanaian systems might need further improvement before the project can be launched.
- **Traditional and social media:** Social media's influence in providing narratives, experiences, and evidence that translates into policy is becoming increasingly visible. For example, the recent death of a 70-year-old man sparked public indignation because there was no bed to admit him in any of the major hospitals in Accra.<sup>83</sup> Ghanaians took to social media to share similar experiences and demanded a change in the health system.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, hospitals were directed not to turn away emergencies for any reason and the emergency facility in the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital was expanded. According to key informants,<sup>85</sup> the MoH is increasingly monitoring the media landscape as an avenue for generating evidence, although a more formal approach/guideline has yet to be developed.

### 6.4.3 Factors shaping the use of evidence

While policymaking processes are officially headed by the PPME in the MoH, the participatory dynamics of the health sector incentivise a wide range of agencies and organisations to use evidence to inform the procedures of policy identification, formulation, implementation, and M&E. Figure 12 above provided a simplified overview of the key users of evidence. Among key policymakers are the MoH (PPME), NDPC, MMDAs, development partners, and the parliamentary health sector committee. M&E at the policymaking level is driven by MMDAs, NDPC, and the MoH, while scrutiny and accountability are provided by Parliament, NGOs, CSOs, the media, and the political parties. Evidence is thus produced, collected, and analysed to inform a variety of procedures and functions, including the policy discussions held at the annual summits and quarterly business meetings, the policy formulation and design work of the technical working groups, and the feedback loops of the evaluations and performance assessments.

While there is ample and varied use of evidence, certain common factors shape the way that these data are used:

**Politicisation of data credibility and trust:** As presented above, the DHIMS is highly trusted among key stakeholders such as the MoH, the GHS and development partners. Nevertheless, the system has also received significant criticism for failing to capture and collect data from more remote health providers at district level. This issue is not necessarily inherent in the technical functions of the DHIMS mechanism, but rather is driven by insufficient reporting from private clinics, quasi-health facilities, and the teaching hospitals. Nevertheless, agents outside the GHS have given strong support to the planned WHO Observatory mentioned above, as it will provide independent data validation, which can safeguard the quality and integrity of health data and statistics.

<sup>83</sup> [www.myjoyonline.com/news/2018/june-12th/probe-into-death-of-70-year-old-denied-hospital-bed-begins.php](http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2018/june-12th/probe-into-death-of-70-year-old-denied-hospital-bed-begins.php)

<sup>84</sup> 'GHS presents "No Bed Syndrome" report to Parliament', [www.gbcghana.com](http://www.gbcghana.com)

<sup>85</sup> KII 41; KII 42.



**An asymmetrical power relationship between development partners and the MoH based on access to evidence:** Parkhurst *et al.* (2018) note that an asymmetrical power relationship exists between donors and the MoH, based on donors' superior access to global evidence. This imbalance is also observed by Vecchione and Parkhurst (2018), who state that development partners' superior evidence gives them decision-making control at the Annual Health Summit. Donors tend to promote interventions with strong evidence bases, but they do so in ways that may not appropriately reflect local context, needs, and capabilities (Liverani *et al.*, 2013). This is particularly relevant in the design of policy implementation, strategies, and plans, where donor priorities are primarily informed by macro-level evidence, at the expense of local contexts. This imbalance is contributing to the perception that development partners are given undue policy influence, as discussed above.

**Evidence use to address inequality and social exclusion:** It has been noted that while some work is being done to address gender inequality and social exclusion in Ghana, GESI-related issues are often prioritised for electoral purposes, leading to policies focusing on quick and visible fixes (Alidu *et al.*, 2016). To some extent this is evident in the phenomenon of 'policy evaporation', which occurs when the formulation of a policy initially appears to be grounded in recognition of gender norms and how they shape women's access to, and use of, health services, but the policy is then later reduced to highly simplified monitoring of female health access.

**Capacity and incentives:** As noted above, the use of evidence depends on the capacity and the motivation of health providers and managers to provide data to the system. DHIMS administrators admit this is a growing concern and have flagged the importance of engaging end users and data generators to improve data quality. By linking data users and suppliers, feedback loops can be strengthened to enhance the value of the data collection exercise. Incentives can also be provided through linking the data provision to the overall performance assessment of clinics and individual managers.

## 6.5 Organisational diagnostic of the health sector for SEDI

For this initial light-touch organisational diagnostic,<sup>86</sup> the focus has remained on the organisations directly addressed in the PEA and evidence ecosystem analysis, including the MoH, the GHS, CHAG, and the NHIA. Should the health sector be selected as a core sector for further SEDI implementation, more effort will be required to capture the specific dynamics of the health-related policymaking processes in the Cabinet, Parliament, and NDPC.

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<sup>86</sup> See Section **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report for details on our methodology.



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## 7. Implications for strengthening evidence-informed decision making in Ghana

This section aims to synthesise the key insights regarding points of convergence or divergence across all three sectors, followed by the specific narratives that have emerged for each of the three sectors explored in this report. The objective is to lay out the strengths and weaknesses that have emerged for each sector and to explore synergies and complementarities between different sectors.

### 7.1 Points of convergence and divergence across sectors

While there are still gaps in the generation and uptake of evidence in each sector, **there is a clear recognition of the importance of evidence-informed policymaking** and a growing momentum to strengthen evidence generation and usage across all three sectors.

**Political interests and the executive continue to drive policy decisions in all three sectors, with political appointments and agenda setting linked to manifestos.**

Although each of the three sectors has formalised structures and processes that drive policy formulation, it is only in health that we observe a close alignment between the formal structures and the realities of policymaking on the ground.

**The generation of evidence by the government is more fragmented in economic development and PFM than in the health sector.** Within health, the responsibility for the collection and use of evidence lies clearly with the GHS, in coordination with the MoH. In contrast, the GRA, MoF, BoG, GSS, and NDPC often duplicate the production of evidence on key economic parameters, with conflicting figures undermining institutional trust and enabling cherry-picking of the most convenient evidence by political decision makers. Parallel systems, such as those operated by the Ministry of M&E, further complicate the situation. Improving coordination in evidence generation and uptake across these partners is a clear challenge – and a possible opportunity for strengthening EIDM in Ghana.

**The use of evidence is highly prioritised and well understood among core actors within the health space, where the dilution of evidence by political agendas is limited.**

The evidence structure for health is well constructed, and trust in the evidence generated is steadily increasing, with gaps in key data sources (e.g. the DHIMS) recognised and efforts being made to alleviate such gaps. While friction between key actors such as the MoH, GHS, and CHAG slows down the evidence-sharing process, there are mechanisms institutionalised within the sector that drive evidence-informed discussions throughout the policy formulation process. This is shepherded by the PPME Unit.

**Although the economic development and PFM sectors have formalised systems for evidence generation and uptake, challenges with credibility and trust persist.** This provides a window for policymakers to challenge evidence and, as a consequence, evidence that best suits the political agenda gains strength. Plugging this trust deficit by working with actors to optimise evidence supply, and to tailor it to what is most relevant for policymaking, is an opportunity any programme seeking to strengthen EIDM in Ghana should actively consider.

**Outside the government, development partner influence is more overt within the health sector**, where development partners are active in policy dialogue through summits and working groups, as well as by directly funding programmes. Within economic development and PFM, their support is increasingly shifting from programme funding towards providing strategic technical support and advisory services. In view of that, it will be crucial for any programme seeking to strengthen EIDM in Ghana to explore complementarities with technical assistance programmes being offered by development partners, to avoid competing with other donor programmes for limited government engagement, and to leverage synergies in programmes and relationships where possible.

The attention given to GESI in policy is more pronounced in the health sector, which has had a gender policy since 2009. However, the role of the MoGCSP and the influence of the national gender policy are limited by insufficient resources and capacities, and a lack of needed inter-institutional buy-in, leadership, and coordination. The analysis suggests that the presence of this policy reflects the influence of global policy norms and priorities, as well as development partners active in the sector. However, **de facto practice across all three sectors suggests a more tokenistic approach to GESI**. Where international visibility and donor support are absent, the formal policy commitments and processes appear insufficient.

**Across all three sectors, partisan politicisation is extending progressively, including to several organisations that are nominally independent.** This includes the BoG and extends to reported penetration into the Electoral Commission and the state public security apparatus, both of which will be important in the run-up to the 2020 elections. Interviews also suggest that politicisation extends to nominally non-partisan CSOs (e.g. business and professional associations whose membership splits down party lines, creating challenges for collective action). These dynamics point to the significant challenge any programme seeking to strengthen EIDM in Ghana is likely to face in maintaining its own reputation as non-partisan, even if it should choose not to further explore working with political parties. That reputation will need to be intentionally cultivated regardless of the sectors and partners chosen.

## **7.2 Potential synergies between the economic development and PFM sectors**

In general, the economic development and PFM sectors as defined in this report have several overlaps in terms of key agencies and the overall policy agenda. In Ghana, economic development policy can be thought of as a portfolio of programmes and projects with the stated goal of transformative growth in particular, as associated with increasing quantity and quality of employment. PFM, on the other hand, addresses how to raise the resources to finance these programmes and projects. For any country (Ghana included), resources for financing the whole economic development plan cannot be raised in a single year. This means that PFM reflects the implicit priorities of the government on a year-to-year basis, as reflected by the government's budget and tax policies. The efficacy with which economic development goals are achieved is influenced by PFM sector policies. Having a good plan with the right projects and programmes is necessary for the achievement of the economic development goals. However, the plans need to be reflected in the PFM programme. Using evidence well in PFM alone, when plans are not 'good', will not result in the economic development objectives being achieved. On the other hand, having a good

economic development plan that is not backed by a sufficient PFM system (where adequate revenue is collected and disbursed efficiently) will not lead to optimal outcomes. The factors that influence the choices made (guided by evidence use), and therefore the information required for policies in these two areas, are not perfectly aligned. Therefore, there is merit in seeing these sectors as highly complementary from a SEDI perspective.

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## 8. Annex A: Additional relevant material for analysis

**Case study on the PFM policy process:** The case study highlights key insights that are important for SEDI to note in determining how political interests guide tax policy in Ghana:

- Purely technical considerations driven by evidence (revenue generation for the MoF and the GRA) are trumped by political interests in the tax policy space. The rejuvenated mandate of waste management considered right after the election gave the Cabinet the political confidence to implement the tax and to realise revenue gains.
- Industry and consumer groups leverage election periods effectively to appeal to the political interests of the party, President, and Cabinet in order to realise gains (Kombat and Wätzold, 2018).

Examining the design and implementation of the plastic excise tax in 2011 highlights the key insights that emerged from the political economic analysis (PEA) for tax policy in Ghana:

- **2003:** The plastic excise tax is first considered by MEST, the MoF, and the plastic industry group. However, it is halted by the President due to the risk of losing the election in 2004.
- **2009:** Owing to public pressure, the government constitutes a presidential committee to find solutions to regulate the problem. The Office of the President and MEST favour a tax policy that could be used to raise needed tax revenue and for waste management.
- **2010:** The MoF, the GRA, think tanks, relevant ministries, and private sector actors are consulted during the budget preparation process. Despite the industry group's opposition, Cabinet approval is given to the MoF to include the tax policy in the 2011 Budget Statement.
- **2011:** The tax policy rate is initially set at 20% but reduced to 15% due to intense lobbying by the industry group and the risk of losing votes in the 2012 election.

Table 3: Case study: plastic excise tax in Ghana (2011)

Key actors	Policy option	Interests/incentives	Concerns/challenges
MEST <b>Strength:</b> Moderate	Preferred a tax to restrict use rather than a ban due to enforcement challenges	Mandate to solve environmental pollution issues	Use of tax revenue to manage plastic littering
Presidency and Cabinet <b>Strength*:</b> Strong	Preferred tax	Raise government revenue, win votes	Acceptability of the tax and burden on voters
MoF <b>Strength:</b> Strong	Preferred tax	Revenue generation to close fiscal gap	
GRA <b>Strength:</b> Moderate	Preferred tax	Tax revenue mobilisation to meet target in budget and incentive bonuses	
Industry groups: <b>Strength:</b> Moderate	Feasible technological option Strongly opposed to ban or tax	Reduce cost of doing business	Restricting production of plastics to manage the level of plastic litter due to cost constraints
Consumer protection group <b>Strength:</b> Moderate	Opposed tax	Reduce tax burden on consumers and voters Reduce plastic waste and pollution	Tax revenue was used to support general government expenditure

Source: Kombat and Wätzold (2018). Note: \* Strength is defined here as power over the policymaking process.

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## **Legislation**

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- Petroleum Revenue Management (Amendment) Act (2015) (Act 893)
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