WHAT INFORMATION DO POLICY MAKERS NEED? THE CASE OF MALAWI

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INTRODUCTION

- **Policy Makers require information for:**
  - Impact evaluation of policies;
  - Making short and medium to long term interventions;
  - Preparing for bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations;
  - Preparing manifestos before elections;
  - Seeking donor support for development projects (Baseline Studies);
  - Targeting safety-net programmes;
  - Estimating the extent of poverty, disease prevalence (HIV/AIDs);
  - Estimating the extent of damage due to emergencies such as floods and drought; and
  - Preparation of national budgets and control of expenditure.

Data and Information

- In general, agricultural data and information needs include the following:
  - Sustainable agricultural production and environmental technologies
  - Weather forecasts
  - Input and output market prices and demand (domestic and international)
  - Crop production estimates
  - Animal population estimates
  - Pest and disease updates
  - Land surveys and land husbandry updates
  - Irrigation development updates

Data and Information - cont

- Gender balance in agriculture
- National food balance sheet
- Privatization of government assets (ADMARC depots, etc)
- Agricultural credit updates
- Agricultural produce transportation
- Household food security and Vulnerability Assessment
- Nutrition monitoring
- Organizational development issues
- Trade statistics

What Kind of Economic Analyses

- Emergencies: Rapid Assessment
  - ✓ Area and population affected by the emergency
  - ✓ Extent of damage cost of immediate support and post emergency recovery.
- Short Term Interventions – TIP
  - ✓ Distribution and extent of poverty – IHS (IFPRI, NSO & CSR);
  - ✓ Targeting – Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (VAM);
  - ✓ Input Availability – Status of stocks of fertilizer in the country, in transit and confirmed orders (IFDC);
  - ✓ Nation crop estimates – three rounds of surveys; (MOA)
  - ✓ National and regional food balance sheets; (MOA & FEWS)
  - ✓ Cross Border trade statistics (formal and informal) (APRU, University of Malawi)

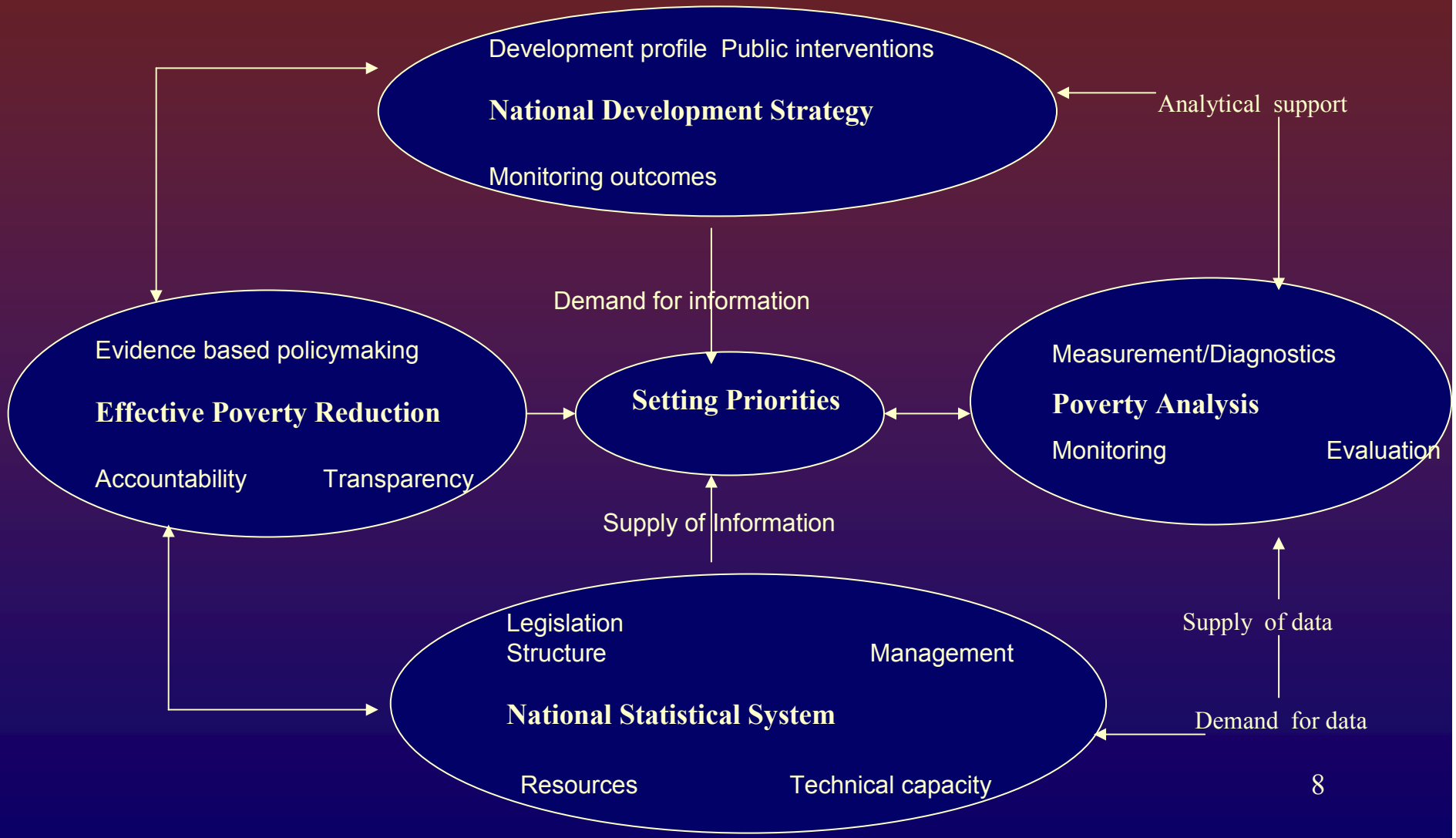
What Kind of Economic Analyses-cont

- Medium to Long Term Interventions
  - Situation Analyses (NSO & Consultants)
  - Baseline Surveys (NSO & Consultants)
  - Benefit/Cost Analyses (Consultants)
  - Farm Budget Analysis (ARET, APRU, NASFAM)
  - Environmental Impact Assessment (Consultants)
  - Gender analysis (Consultants)
  - Times series analyses of supply and demand of commodities and inputs with respect to policy reforms (Consultants)
  - Disaggregated policy impacts using policy impacts partial and general equilibrium frameworks (OECD).

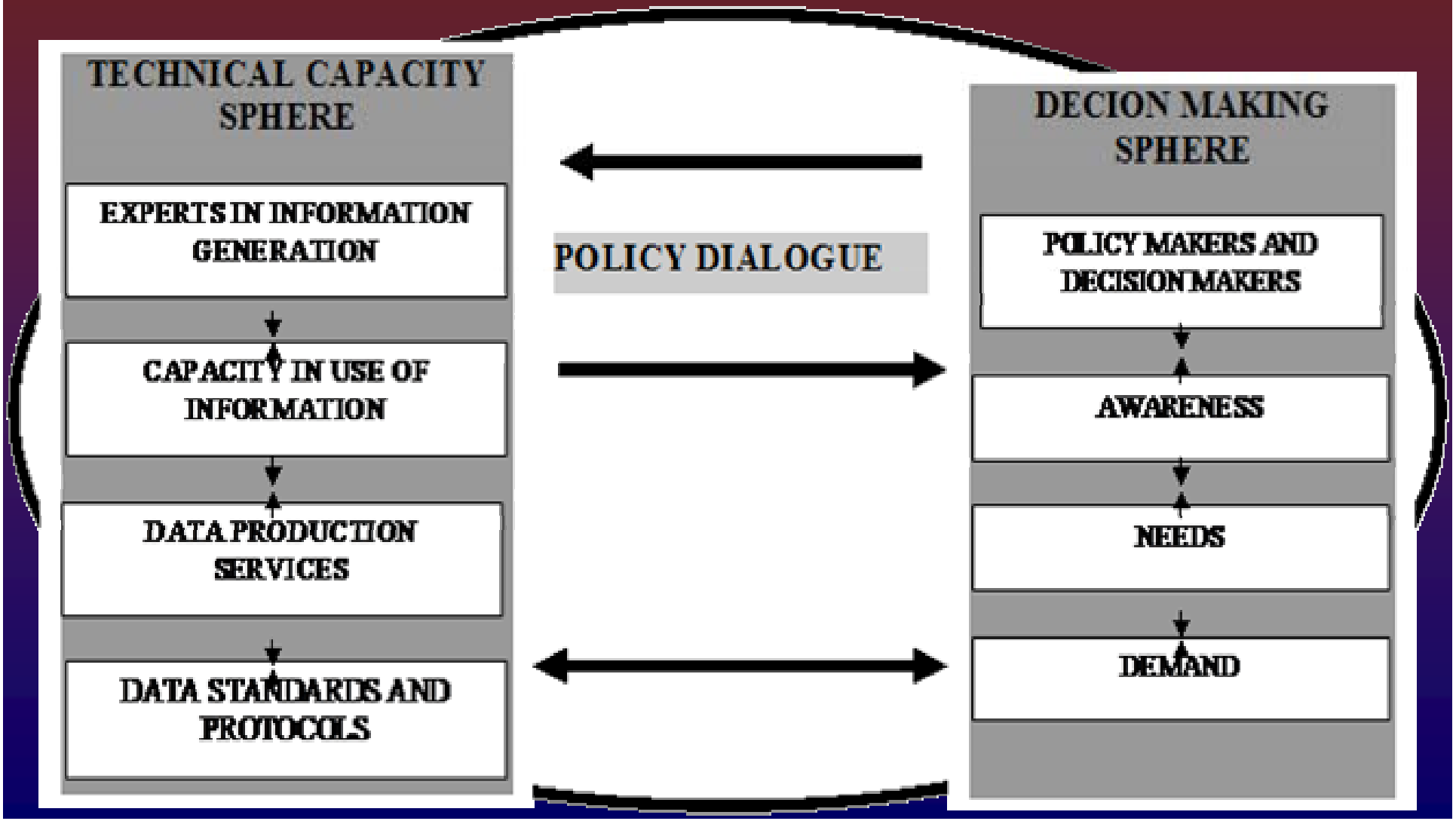
How to Ensure Consistency Between Short and Long Use of Information

- Vision 2020
- Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Growth Strategy Paper
- Food and Nutrition Security Policy (Short Term and Long Tern Interventions).
- VAM is part of the National Food Security Information System.
- Demographic Survey Data (NSO)
- Core Welfare Indicators (CWI) Survey (NSO)
  - collects information on demographic and socio-economic characteristics as well as health status of household members, household assets and amenities, as well as poverty predictors and predictors of child malnutrition. In addition, information on food security, social projects and HIV/AIDS was also collected.

Information Strategy for Effective Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation



Factors Influencing Demand and Supply of Information



Factors Influencing Demand and Supply for Information - cont

- Capacity to use and supply information (level of competence)
- Awareness of the need for change;
- Awareness of the availability of information;
- Ease of Access to information (format):
  - ✓ user-friendly;
  - ✓ clear, reliable, timely and informative;
  - ✓ Transparency of the method;
- Cost of Information;
- Level of interaction between users and providers of information;
- Political pressure to intervene in a critical situation;
- Donor pressure to reform; and
- Political Will.