

Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop



TRAINING MANUAL

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ROIC LTD.
RETURN ON INVESTMENT CONSULTING
15 Windsor Avenue, Kingston 5, Jamaica
Tel: 876-648-6617|876-678-0767|876-829-8771|
info@roicltd.com | www.roicltd.com

ROIC LTD.

Return on Investment Consulting (ROIC) Limited is a leading consulting firm with global partners serving some of the largest companies in the world. Our main partners are Cascade Strategy Software and Balanced Scorecard Institute.

1. Consulting and Corporate Training Services

At the core of ROIC's operation is helping our clients to make informed choices through research and practical and disciplined planning that engages the hearts and minds of employees, customers, and stakeholders. We support our clients to build capabilities through upskilling executives and teams in strategy development, cascading and alignment, strategy execution, and technology to support effective performance management.

a) Strategic Management Services

ROIC is a leading consulting firm for strategic management in collaboration with our partner Balanced Scorecard Institute. The Institute has served some of the largest organisations in the world with its proprietary Award-Winning Nine Steps to Success Framework for strategy development. ROIC is happy to support executives in determining the strategic direction of their firms or organisations to support their growth, expansion, and increased shareholders' value and sustainability.

ROIC's strategic planning consultancies are grounded in research and data analytics as a core pre-activity before the executive gets into planning. This ensures valuable critical and strategic thinking is stimulated to generate new insights. With our partner Balanced Scorecard Institute, we support executives and their firms with:

- Strategic planning, cascading and alignment of strategy, and operational planning
- Strategy execution assessment and implementation, including establishing an Office of Strategy Management
- Change management and communication of your organisation's strategy
- Auditing your existing plan and evaluating implementation efforts
- Performance Analysis and Software Implementation

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c) Business Advisory and Corporate Structuring

ROIC's Business Advisory Services encompasses specialized advice given to corporate clients. The final tier involves restructuring companies for growth and expansion, reporting on performance, and advising on strategic direction, risk management, corporate governance, and succession planning.

ROIC is driven to reduce business mortality and increase business survival and growth. ROIC is dedicated to continuous research and innovation to support MSMEs' growth and sustainability.

d) Corporate Training

ROIC organises corporate training for companies of varying sizes to meet their capacity building and upskilling in strategy and related fields. Corporate Training acts as a catalyst for employee empowerment, which, in turn, bolsters the potential success of your business/organization. Employees consider training an integral part of their work lives and development. According to a survey by LinkedIn, 94% of employees would stay at a company if they invested in their learning needs.

ROIC collaborates with the Balanced Scorecard Institute to deliver:

- Balanced Scorecard Professional Certification
- Key Performance Indicator Professional Certification
- Strategy Execution Professional Certification
- Objectives Key Results Professional Certification
- Balanced Scorecard Essential
- Key Performance Indicators Essentials

We also offer special training:

1. Advanced Strategic Analysis

2. Strategic Planning and Alignment
3. Monitoring and Evaluation for Practitioners
4. Qualitative Data Analysis for Practitioners

2. Software Services

ROIC is the Caribbean partner and distributor of the #1 Strategy Management Software in the world. Cascade allows you to:

- a) Automate your monthly and quarterly reports and gather critical insights as a leader with few clicks.
- b) Get appeal visualization on organisation, department, team, and individual performance.
- c) Do away with time-consuming spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, redundant reports, meetings, etc.
- d) Bring all departments, managers, and employees into a central, interconnected point of interaction and communication,
- e) Make quick decisions based on real-time information
- f) Input various department plans into a single software for seamless integration
- g) Monitor performance accurately

Cascade is built with the enterprise in mind. Get access to our strategy software features – unlimited strategic plans, goals, dashboards, reports, and users.

Cascade also understands the importance of your business information. Some of the largest organizations in the world run their business from Cascade, which is why we are relentless about security and reliability. Aside from allowing for custom security policies, Cascade takes unprecedented steps to ensure your confidential and sensitive data remains secure.

ROIC also has an advisory role on strategic management software and will help you to make better decisions once we understand your needs.

ROIC is also the Caribbean partner for System International Systems that supports governments and large international NGOs and multilateral with software for case

management, e-justice, jail management system, performance management, budgeting, public investment management system, and monitoring and evaluation.

3. Research and Publications

ROIC is a thought leader in its field of work. Therefore, ROIC is dedicated to research and publication to share knowledge and insights with its clients, stakeholders, and the public to increase business and other knowledge. Our business experts and researchers will explore and publicize various articles and papers on industries, organisational issues, and emerging trends.

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We believe in challenging the status quo by tackling complex issues that will advance humanity. ROIC will never choose “easy”. Our culture is to mine for solutions to bring breakthroughs to reach people and advance our society. ROIC focal areas for the next five years are child literacy and health research. ROIC will dedicate resources and form strategic partnerships to lead research to bring breakthrough approaches to increase children's literacy and find the cure for prostate cancer

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OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

This course seeks to introduce learners to key concepts which will help them to:

- Understand key elements of the project monitoring, evaluation and learning
- Understand and adopt methods and tools for effective project monitoring and evaluation
- Understand the role of M&E in organisational learning

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing the three-day course, learners should be able to:

- Differences and similarities between monitoring and evaluation
- The relationship between M&E and results-based management (RBM)
- Types and sources of M&E data
- Qualitative and quantitative data collection methods
- Selection and use of appropriate indicators for measuring programme outputs, outcomes and impact
- Concepts of baseline and performance targets
- Be able to apply the steps required to develop a monitoring and evaluation system
- Be aware of the three key uses of monitoring data – for project management, feeding into evaluations and sharing and reporting to others
- Be familiar with process and outcome evaluations
- Be able to develop appropriate research questions for an evaluation
- Know what questions to consider when planning an evaluation
- Know how disseminate M&E Data and use lessons learnt

Key Terms and Definitions

The discipline of monitoring and evaluation is often confusing because of the multitude of terms and definitions that are used by practitioners. To begin with let us look at some of the more common terms used in M&E.

Inputs

Inputs are what we *NEED* to do what we do. The financial, human, and other physical resources.

Activities

Activities are what we *DO*. The work performed using the inputs to produce specific outputs.

Results

The OECD defines results as ‘the outputs, outcomes or impacts of (development) interventions. USAID defines results as ‘the output, outcome or impact intended (or unintended)’ of interventions. Results are therefore the change in a state or condition as a consequence of some occurrence/happening/intervention. It must be noted that:

- A cause-and-effect relationship exists between an intervention – an activity, project or program that is introduced or changed (amended, expanded, etc) and some occurrence that has been caused by the intervention.
- There are three levels of results – Output, Outcome and Impact
- Results should be S.M.A.R.T - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

Outputs

Outputs are what we *PRODUCE* - products, services or facilities that result from our activities.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the results of the work we do. These are the immediate results that can be observed as a direct result of using the outputs.

- For example: Participants in a training programme apply the skills/ knowledge acquired.
- For example: Participants in an ART programme can explain the importance of adhering to their medication regime.

Impact

The CHANGE we would like to bring about. Impact can be positive and negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended. The impact (or change) is change is measured on three levels:

- Learning (usually identified as outcomes/ use of outputs) – immediate
- Behaviour (Impact level 1) – Medium-term
- Condition (Impact level 2) – Long-term

Indicators

Indicators are clues, signs or markers that function as a *MEASURE* of a specific aspect of a programme/ project.

Learning

Learning is the process through which information generated from M&E is reflected upon and intentionally used to continuously improve a project's ability to achieve results.

Module 1

Overview of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

SCOPE

This module is intended to introduce learners to concepts such as the project cycle under a results-based management framework and the role of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the project cycle.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this module are to:

- Introduce the learners to key terms in the field of monitoring and evaluation
- Allow the learner to understand the key elements of project monitoring and evaluation and where it fits in the the project or program cycle
- Understand the concept of results-based monitoring and evaluation

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Use and understand the various terms used in “monitoring & evaluation”
- Differentiate between monitoring functions and evaluation functions
- Understand how to develop a rudimentary results chain

Monitoring and Evaluation

“Do not confuse motion and progress. A rocking horse keeps moving but does not make any progress.” - Alfred A. Montapert

What is monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is the process of continual data gathering and performance assessment to determine whether progress is being made towards pre-specified goals and objectives, as well as to determine whether there are (positive or negative) effects from a project/intervention and its activities. In general, monitoring is conducted in order to track progress and performance as a basis for decision-making. On the other hand, evaluation is an assessment of data or an experience to establish the extent to which the initiative has achieved its goals or objectives. For M&E to be effective, it is critical that management prioritises this function, both in providing time and resources for it and taking responsibility for follow-up.

Monitoring is an ongoing process that focuses on what is happening. Monitoring data is typically used by managers for ongoing project/programme implementation, tracking outputs, budgets, compliance with procedures, etc.

Evaluation is a process of assessing whether the project has achieved its intended objectives. By drawing conclusions, evaluation seeks to provide recommendations for improvement on the future course of the existing project as well as lessons learned for other projects. (See **table 1.1**).




Why is monitoring and evaluation important?

M&E is important because:

- If you do not measure results, you cannot tell success from failure
- If you cannot see success, you cannot reward it
- If you cannot reward success, you are probably rewarding failure
- If you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it
- If you cannot recognize failure, you cannot correct it
- If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support

Table 1.1 Comparison between monitoring and evaluation

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Check progress, ✓ Inform decisions and remedial action, ✓ Update project plans, ✓ Support accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assess progress and worth, ✓ Identify lessons and recommendations for longer-term planning and ✓ Organizational learning; ✓ Provide accountability
When?	Ongoing during project / program	Periodic and after project / program
Who?	Internal, involving project/ program implementers	Can be internal or external to organization
Link to logical hierarchy	Focus on inputs, activities, outputs and shorter-term outcomes	Focus on outcomes and overall goal

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What experiences, if any, have you had, if any, in M&E? 2. Have you found M&E to be useful, or not? 3. What are the common elements that make M&E useful for decision-making? 4. Do you think M&E would be more useful in the public or private sector?
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Four uses of M&E within the public sector

There are four main ways in which M&E can be used within the public sector. These are:

- M&E can support budgeting and planning processes when there are many competing demands on limited resources – in this way M&E can assist in setting priorities. Terms that describe the use of M&E information in this manner include evidence-based policymaking, results- based budgeting, and performance-informed budgeting;
- M&E can help government departments in their policy development and policy analysis work and in programme development
- M&E can aid government departments to manage activities better. This includes government service delivery as well as the management of staff;
- M&E enhances transparency and supports accountability by revealing the extent to which the government has attained its desired objectives.

The Project Life Cycle

A project is a set of interrelated activities with a defined start and end, which are designed to achieve specific objectives, with specific resources within a defined timeframe. The Project Lifecycle is the sequence of phases inclusive of tasks and functions which must be performed in the lifespan of a project. The name, number and sequence of phases within the cycle may vary based on the organisation and the type of project. Generically, a project cycle contains initiation, planning, execution, and closure. However, we can represent the project life cycle stages of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (See **figure 1.1**)

Figure 1.1 Four stages of the project life cycle

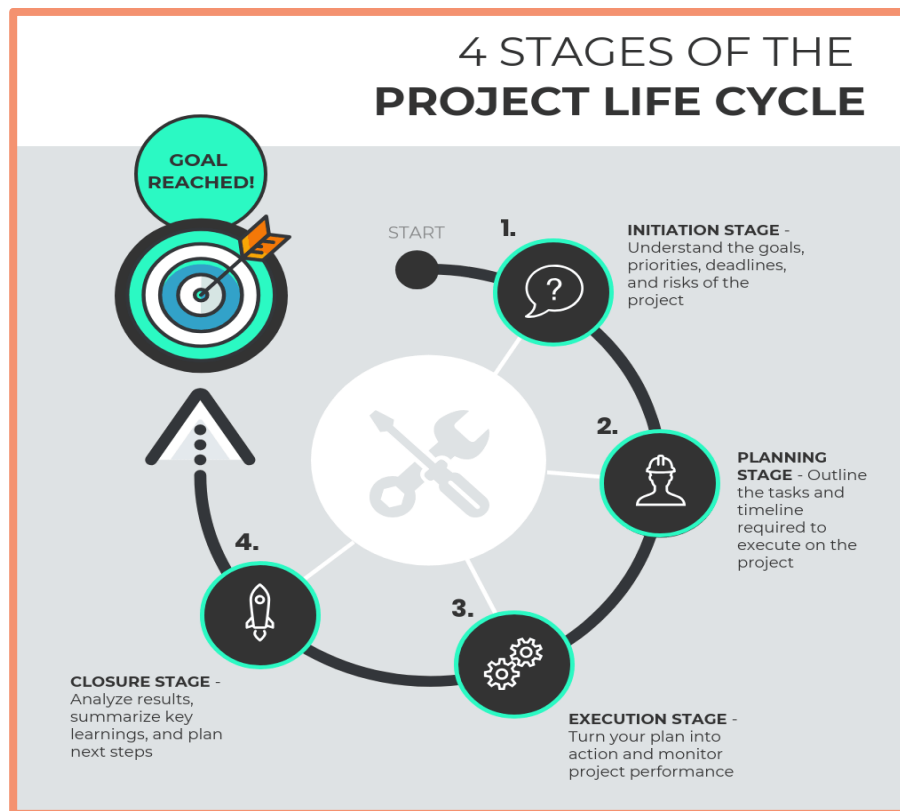


Image Source: <https://venngage.com/blog/project-life-cycle/>

M&E In the Project Life Cycle

Monitoring and evaluation are vital processes in accessing project success. It is therefore important that the need for good M&E is recognized from project conception, as it is often the quality of the M&E system in place that determines (at the very least) the ability to determine the success or failure of a project. Identifying and documenting successful programs and approaches is also a vital role of the M&E process in the project cycle (See **figure 1.2**).

Figure 1.2 M&E in the project life cycle

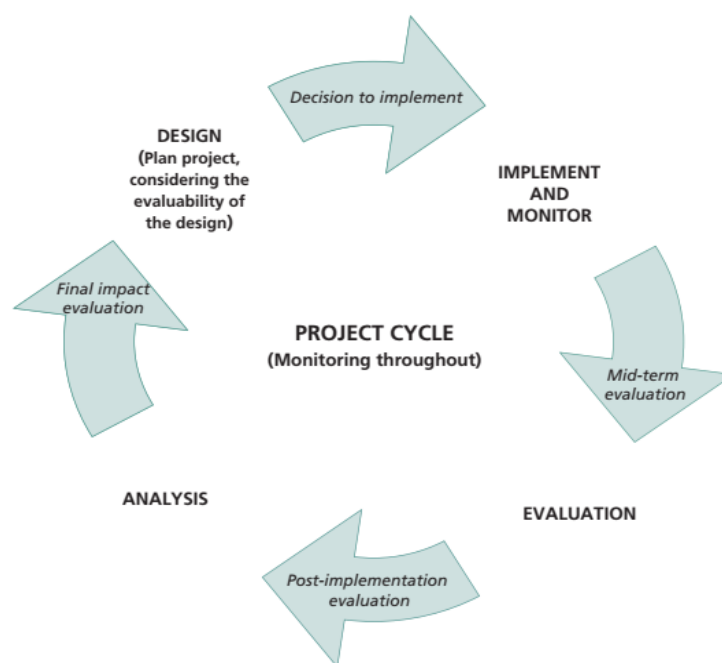


Image Source: *UNODC Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons*

A well-functioning M&E system is a critical part of good project or program management and accountability. Timely and reliable M&E provides information to:

- **support implementation** with accurate, evidence-based reporting that informs management and decision-making to guide and improve project/program performance;
- **contribute to organisational learning and knowledge sharing** by reflecting upon and sharing experiences and lessons learned so that we can gain the full benefit from what we do and how we do it;
- **uphold accountability and compliance** by demonstrating whether or not our work has been carried out as agreed and in compliance with established standards and with any other donor requirements;
- **provide opportunities for stakeholder feedback**, especially beneficiaries, to provide input into and perceptions of our work, modelling openness to criticism, and willingness to learn from experiences and to adapt to changing needs;
- **promote and celebrate the work** by highlighting our accomplishments and achievements, building morale and contributing to resource mobilisation.

Results Based Management (RBM)

The OECD defines Results Based Management (RBM) as “**a management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impact**”. RBM is therefore all about managing for results i.e., ensuring that there are clearly defined and agreed results and clear accountability frameworks for the achievement of these results, which includes monitoring progress towards results, and reporting on performance.

Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Results-based M&E asks whether the project achieved the desired outcome and impact. Under the RBM M&E approach the effectiveness of the intervention is assessed by looking at both the process and the result (See **figure 1.3**).

Figure 1.3 Distinction between implementation monitoring and results-based monitoring

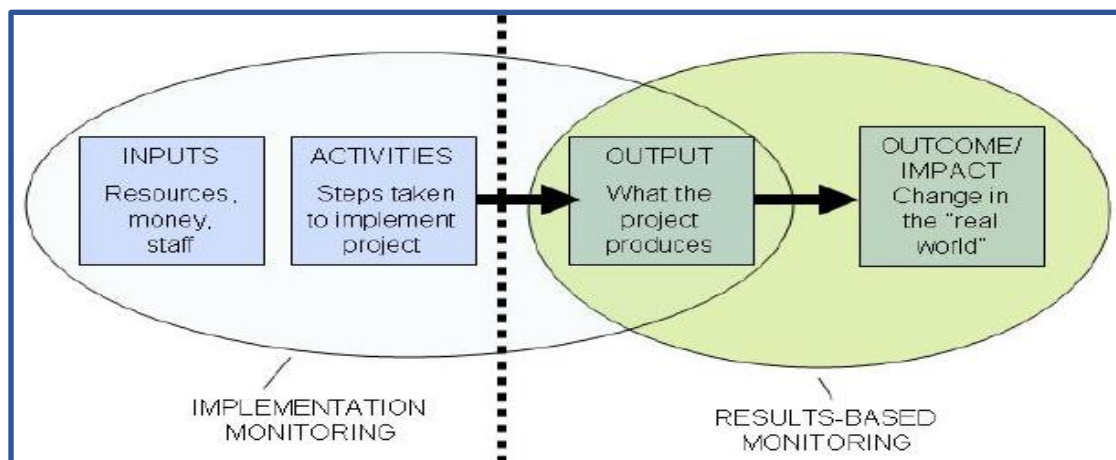


Image Source: *Project Management Institute (PMI)*

RBM M&E enables organisations to focus on evaluating long term results rather than on short-term outputs. In addition:

- it supports stronger programme and strategic planning resulting in more effective programme and project implementation including more realistic project schedules;
- allows for the identification of process and service improvements;
- results in more effective targeting of interventions and services and ensure that services being provided are actually needed;
- serves as a basis for ongoing learning to make our work stronger and more effective;
- better communication of results as stakeholders are aware of goals and progress; and
- more useful evaluations as everyone knows what is being measured and assessed

The RBM approach to M&E focuses on the timely achievement of relevant goals and objectives and it involves **Strategic Planning, Resource Management, Systematic Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting**. Proper use of M&E under RBM promotes systematic monitoring and evaluation of results as a means of ensuring the quality of delivery, as well as a means of tracking the achievement of results. Adopting RBM sees organisations:

- defining realistic expected results and agreeing on indicators;
- managing projects and programs by focusing on results;
- conducting regular monitoring and evaluation to assess what works and what does not work, and why;
- producing reports on results and performance that are used for management decisions; and
- sharing reports on performance with stakeholders, and using lessons learned in the performance improvement process.

A key concept of the RBM methodology is the **results chain**, which depicts the assumed causal linkage between an intervention and desired results beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes and Impact (See **figure 1.4**). The results chain provides the framework for the identification of indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Focusing on the results chain allows for the adoption of a strategic approach that focuses on:

- the alignment of intervention logic to the organisation's objectives;
- contributing to specific medium to long term outcomes and impacts;
- methodical and systematic implementation with structured performance monitoring, measurement & reporting;
- strategic and timely utilisation of performance information to guide inputs and activities; and
- systematic feedback and learning allowing for adjustments.

Figure 1.4 The results chain

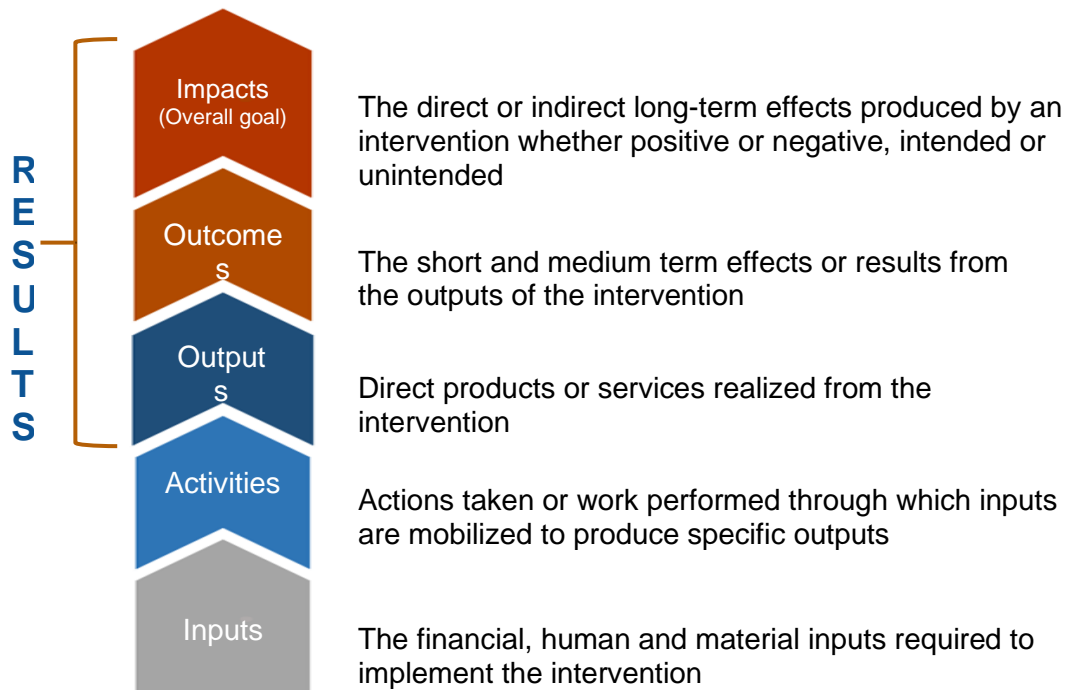
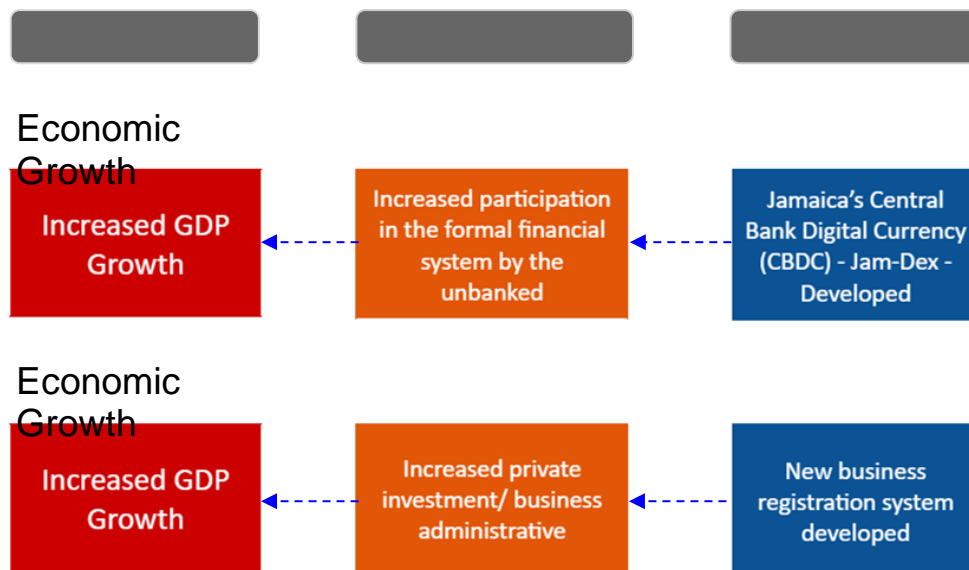


Image Source: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

For example, BOJ could have a results chain which looks like the following:



Some key questions under RBM are:

- What is the purpose/objective of the intervention?
- Who are the major stakeholders and what results do they expect from the intervention?
- What are the best methods for achieving desired outputs, outcomes and impacts?
- What are the best tools for measuring the achievement of the results?
- How can we capture and disseminate results to stakeholders?
- How can we use results to effect learning?
- How can we use learning to improve processes and results?



GROUP ACTIVITY

Now it is time to put what you have learned into practice! In your groups, review and discuss the case study that has

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1. Vennage.com. The 4 Project Life Cycle Phases
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<https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/results-based-monitoring-evaluation-projects-7394>
4. UNDP (2009). Handbook on planning, monitoring and evaluating for development results
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5. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2002). Handbook for Monitoring and Evaluation (2002)
https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/training/capacity-building-resources/basic-me-concepts-portuguese/IFRC_Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation%20handbook.pdf

Additional Resources

1. Video: Difference between monitoring and evaluation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tVlsYh9Nls>
2. Video: 1 Minute Results Based Management
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqAoYleaUow>
3. Video: Key terms in Monitoring and Evaluation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GU8sZLqIjq8>
4. Video: Theory of Change
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkpLmeVc5ck>

Module 2

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Frameworks

SCOPE

This module is intended to introduce the Logical Framework (logframe) and Theory of Change(ToC) to the learner as two of the most commonly used monitoring and evaluation tools.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this module are to:

- Introduce the learner to the logframe and ToC and their roles in monitoring and evaluation
- Provide an overview of the process of developing the Logframe and ToC
- Equip the learner to be able to develop a (basic) log frame for a project

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Explain the main elements of the logframe and ToC
- Understand how the logframe and ToC links project activities to outcomes and impacts (goals)
- Develop a (basic) logframe from a sample case/project

Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks

“Problems cannot be solved by thinking within the framework in which the problems were created” - Albert Einstein

M&E Tools

There are various tools and models developed that seek to allow us to both map out what we are trying to do in our programmes or projects as well as to measure the results – outputs, outcomes and impacts. Two of the more popular models or tools are the Logical Framework (Logframe) and the Theory of Change (ToC).

The Logical Framework

The **logical framework** is a management tool used to plan, manage and improve the design of interventions. It is normally a summary table of no more than 2-3 pages, which is used to identify inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact and show how they link and contribute to each next stage in a logical manner. It also allows you to identify sources of data as well as record risks and assumptions that may impact the achievement of results. The logical framework presents the intervention in a ‘logical,’ sequential way with activities leading to outputs, which in turn lead to outcomes, which in turn lead to impact (See **figure 2.1**).



Figure 2.1 Illustration of the LogFrame

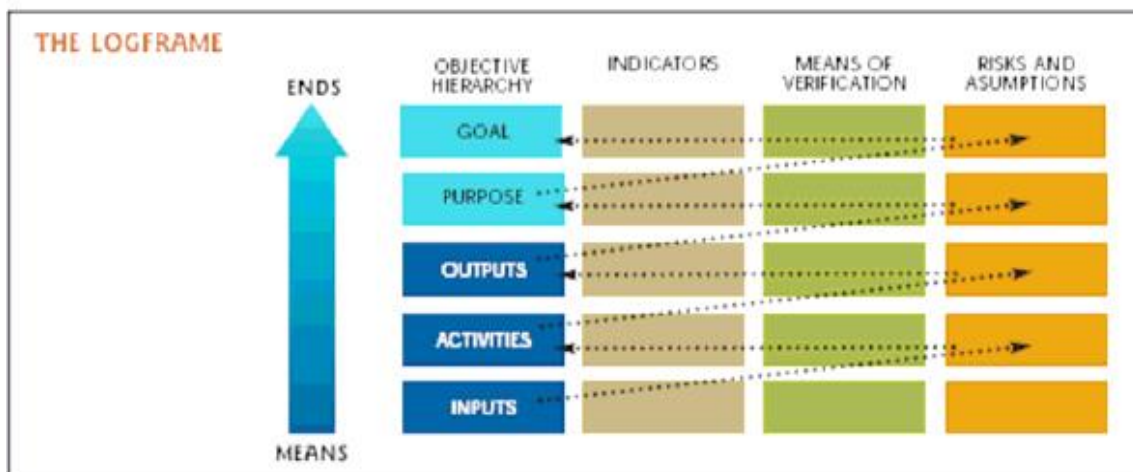


Image Source: <https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/results-based-monitoring-evaluation-projects-7394>

The Logframe is useful to both managers and evaluators at every stage of the project cycle. It is a vehicle for organising a large amount of information in a coherent and concise manner, assisting with the design, implementation and evaluation of projects (USAID, 2012). The Logical Framework is as much a way of thinking about development projects as it is a tool for summarising the key elements of a project design and establishing a basis for project M&E.

Structure of the LogFrame

In its simplest form, the LogFrame is organised in the form of a 4x4 matrix with four columns and four rows. Together, they outline the logic of the intervention or project. The vertical aspect of a Logical Framework represents the vertical chain of results as hypotheses, which can be tested and from which we can learn and advance our understanding of “what works”. The horizontal aspect of a Logical Framework, particularly the first three columns capture performance management aspects of the project. The “*indicators*” column captures both the target and the indicators and refines our understanding of results in the first column by telling us how we will know whether those results have been achieved. The “*data sources*” column which is sometimes labelled as “*means of verification*,” identifies data sources, methods and the frequency with which performance information will be obtained in order to help project managers. A description of each component of the LogFrame is presented in **Figure 2.2** below.

Figure 2.2 Description of the components of the Logframe

What the operation will do; what it seeks to achieve.	How performance will be measured.	Factors outside management control that may affect project performance	
Logframe hierarchy	Performance indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions & risks
Goal Higher objective to which this operation, along with others, is intended to contribute.	(Impact) Indicators (increasingly standardised) to measure programme performance.	The programme evaluation system	(Goal-to-Super-Goal) Risks regarding strategic impact.
Purpose The outcome of an operation. The change in beneficiary behaviour, systems or institutional performance because of the combined output strategy and key assumptions.	(Outcomes) Measures that describe the accomplishment of the Purpose. The value, benefit and return on the investment.	People, events, processes, sources of data for organising the operation's evaluation system.	(Purpose-to-Goal) Risk regarding programme level impact
Outputs The actual deliverables. What the operation can be held accountable for producing.	Output indicators that measure the goods & services finally delivered by the operation.	People, events, processes, sources of data – supervision & monitoring system for validating the operation's design.	(Output-to-Purpose) Risks regarding design effectiveness.
Activities The main activity clusters that must be undertaken in order to accomplish the Outputs.	Inputs/Resources Budget by activity. Monetary, physical & human resources required to produce the outputs.	People, events, processes, sources of data – monitoring system for validating implementation progress.	(Activity-to-Output) Risks regarding implementation & efficiency.

In practice, a logical framework:

- Gives a detailed description of the programme showing how its activities will lead to the immediate outputs, and how these will lead to the outcomes and goal.
- Could be used to complete the sentence “we plan to do X which will give Y result”;
- Is normally shown as a matrix but can also be shown as a flow chart/a logic model;
- Includes space for risks and assumptions, although these are usually only on a basic level;
- Does not generally include evidence for why you think one thing will lead to another; and
- Is used as a tool for monitoring.

Create a "logic model"



Formulation of a logframe involves a systematic analysis of the different components of a project. It is a stepwise and logical process including:

- **Step 1:** Define a goal
- **Step 2:** Formulate set of objectives
- **Step 3:** Determine the outputs (expected results)
- **Step 4:** Describe the activities (inputs)

An example is highlighted in **figure 2.3** below.

Figure 2.3 An example of a Log Frame

	PROJECT SUMMARY	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	RISKS / ASSUMPTIONS
Goal	10% increase in the number of Grades 5-6 primary students continuing on to high school within 3 years.	Percentage of Grades 5-6 primary students continuing on to high school.	Comparison of primary and high school enrolment records.	N/A
Outcome	Improve reading proficiency among children in Grades 5-6 by 20% within 3 years.	Reading proficiency among children in Grades 5-6	Six monthly reading proficiency tests using the national assessment tool.	Improved reading proficiency provides self confidence required to stay in school.
Outputs	500 Grade 5-6 students with low reading proficiency complete a reading summer camp	Number of students completing a reading summer camp.	Summer camp attendance records.	Children apply what they learnt in the summer camp at school.
Activities	Run five summer reading camps, each with capacity for 100 Grades 5-6 students.	Number of summer camps run.	Summer camps completed.	Parents of children with low reading proficiency are willing to send them to the camp.

Image Source: Tools4Dev. <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/how-to-write-a-logical-framework-logframe/>

Theory of Change (ToC)

According to the Center for Theory of Change, the “**theory of change** is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context,” mapped out in an outcomes framework. Theory of Change (ToC) is a methodology for planning, participation and evaluation that defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify necessary pre-conditions. The International Network on Strategic Philanthropy’s Theory of Change Tool Manual (2005) states that “a theory of change articulates the underlying beliefs and assumptions that guide a service delivery strategy and are believed to be critical for producing change and improvement”. Theories of change therefore represents:

- beliefs about what is needed by the target population and what strategies will enable them to meet those needs;
- what a project/program intervention does and how these lead to desired goals being achieved by first identifying the desired long-term goals and then works back from these to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these relate to one another causally) for the goals to occur; and
- the connection between a system’s mission, strategies and actual outcomes, while creating links between who is being served, the strategies or activities that are being implemented, and the desired outcomes.

Figure 2.4: Generic theory of change

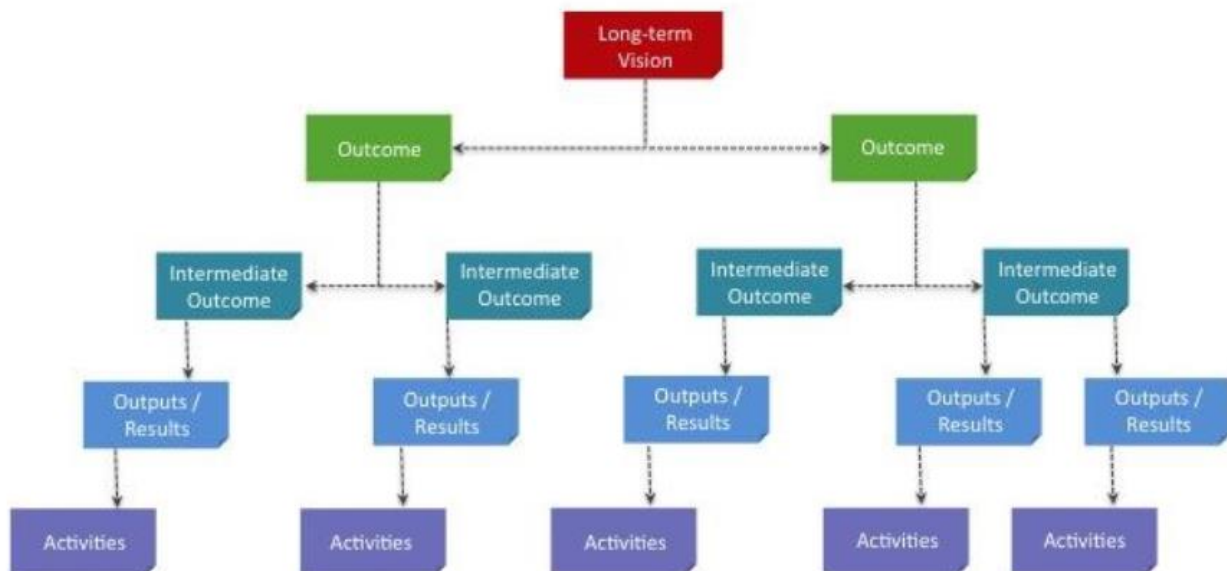


Image Source: <http://www.relativ.co.za/relativ-impact/theory-of-change-workshop/>

It must be noted that there is no standardised form of theories of change. Despite this fact, it is acknowledged that as Pirooska Bisits Bullen states "... a theory of change typically:

- gives the big picture, including issues related to the environment or context that you cannot control;
- shows all the different pathways that might lead to change, even if those pathways are not related to your program;
- describes how and why you think change happens;
- could be used to complete the sentence "if we do X then Y will change because....";
- is presented as a diagram with narrative text;
- the diagram is flexible and does not have a particular format – it could include cyclical processes, feedback loops, one box could lead to multiple other boxes, different shapes could be used, etc.;
- describes why you think one box will lead to another box (e.g., if you think increased knowledge will lead to behaviour change, is that an assumption or do you have evidence to show it is the case?; and
- is mainly used as a tool for program design and evaluation".

The theory of change (TOC) maps out your initiative through six stages:

1. Identifying long-term goals
2. Backwards mapping and connecting the preconditions or requirements necessary to achieve that goal and explaining why these preconditions are necessary and sufficient
3. Identifying your basic assumptions about the context
4. Identifying the interventions that your initiative will perform to create your desired change
5. Developing indicators to measure your outcomes to assess the performance of your initiative
6. Writing a narrative to explain the logic of your initiative.

The outcomes, preconditions and causal linkages in an intervention are demonstrated in **figure 2.5** below.

Figure 2.5 Outcome pathways on a theory of change

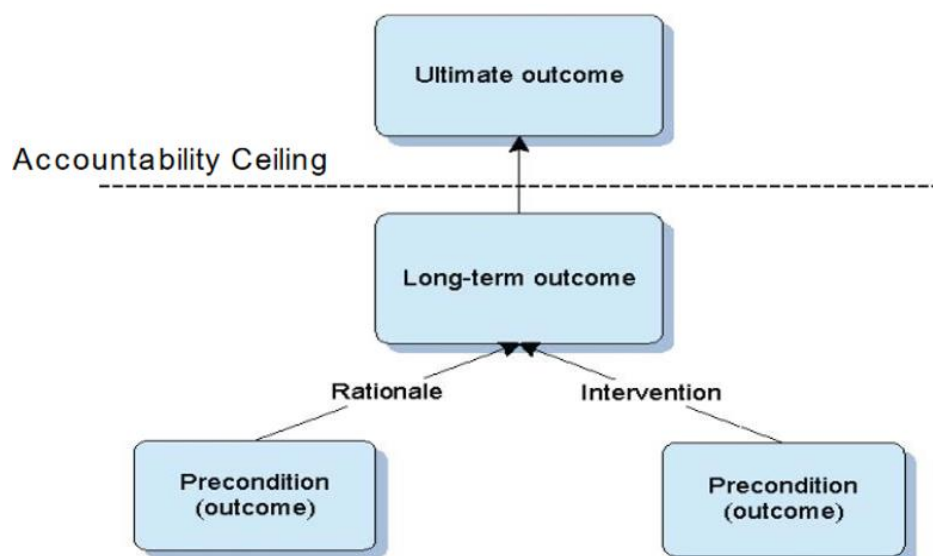


Image Source:

<https://www.annmurraybrown.com/single-post/2019/06/19/theory-of-change-back-to-basics>

Developing a theory of change

Developing a theory of change is a multi-stage collaborative process which involves the project team and all the key stakeholders (See **table 2.1**). The TOC approach to planning is designed to encourage very clearly defined outcomes at every step of the change process. Users are required to specify a number of details about the nature of the desired change — including specifics about the target population, the amount of change required to signal success, and the timeframe over which such change is expected to occur. This diligence often helps both funders and grantees reassess the feasibility of reaching goals that may have initially been vaguely defined, and in the end, promotes the development of reasonable long-term outcome targets that are acceptable to all parties.

The TOC process hinges upon defining all of the necessary and sufficient conditions required to bring about a given long term outcome. TOC uses backwards mapping, requiring planners to think in backwards steps from the long-term goal to the intermediate and then early-term changes that would be required to cause the desired change. This creates a set of connected outcomes known as a **“pathway of change.”** A “pathway of change” graphically represents the change process as it is understood by the initiative planners and is the skeleton around which the other elements of the theory are developed (See **figure 2.6**)

Table 2.1 Steps in developing a theory of change

Steps in developing a theory of change	
Components of an Initiative	Role of theory Of change thinking and steps
Identify Problem	Before TOC begins
Convene Key People to Address Problem	Before TOC begins
Conduct Research in Community to Better Understand the Problem	Can occur before having a clear theory and revisited when new questions emerge as a result of the TOC process
Set Initial Goals	Where TOC really begins, in establishing consensus around well-defined long-term goals
Enlarge Stakeholder Group	Based on knowledge of initial participants, but in creating the theory it often becomes clear that other people need to be at the table
Team Building and Forging Collaboration	As part of TOC, stakeholders are asked to be clear and explicit about their beliefs, goals, and assumptions. The process of discussion around these issues helps let everyone know where everyone stands and helps to build trust
Begin Planning an Initiative	The TOC process includes steps to elicit a conceptually tight, highly detailed explanation for what changes need to occur and their relation to one another
Raise Funds	Use your change framework and narrative to demonstrate to funders that your initiative is well thought out, practical, and measurable and that you have a process in place to be accountable for results
Develop an Action Plan	The theory developed during the initial planning phase identified interventions and strategies needed, and also identified how much change you are expecting. These two things provide the basis for deciding which specific actions will bring about the expected degree of change
Develop an Evaluation Plan	Your theory of change is the blueprint for evaluation. It identifies indicators of success and specifies the details of who is expected to change and how much. This is the basis for developing the methodologies to measure the indicators
Implementation	Your theory of change is a dynamic, living set of ideas that should guide implementation and provide a framework for checking that the initiative stays on track
Revise Plans (Mid-Course Corrections)	Because your theory of change is a living, dynamic set of ideas, you can update it as you learn from your experiences. A TOC helps guide decisions about how to make adjustments by clearly showing the relationship between outcomes

Image Source:

<https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/how-does-theory-of-change-work/when-to-use>

Figure 2.6 ToC diagram showing Pathways of Change

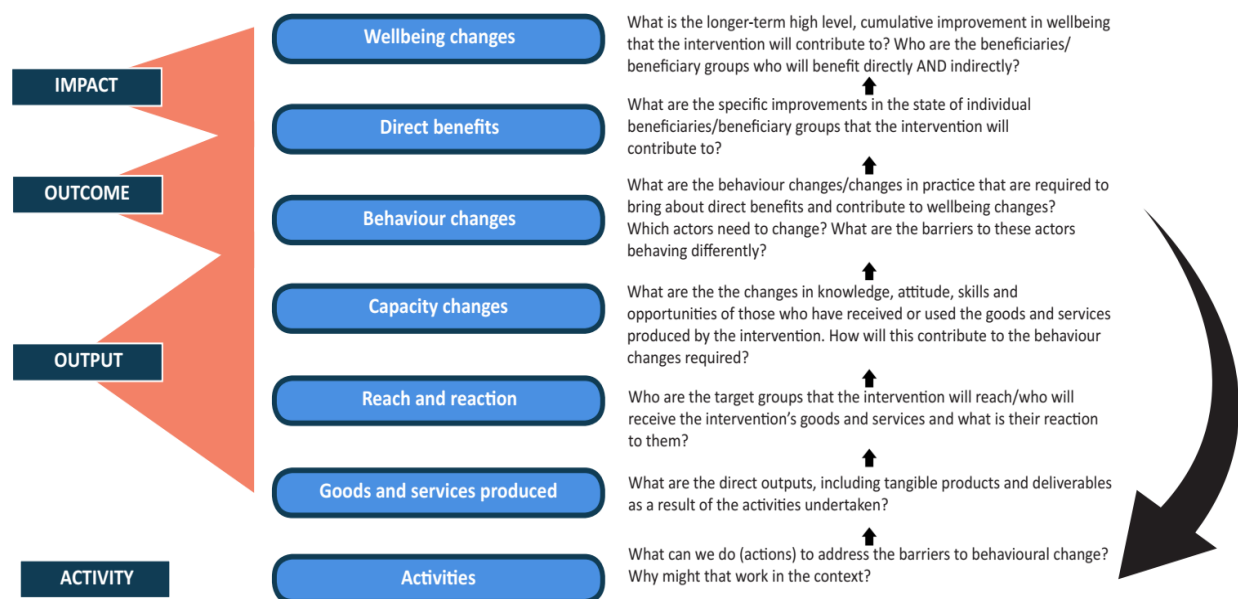


Image Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning-mel-in-conflict-and-stabilisation-settings-a-guidance-note>

During the process of creating the pathway of change, participants are required to articulate as many of their assumptions about the change process as they can, so that they can be examined and even assessed, to determine if any key assumptions are hard to support (or even false). There are typically three important types of assumptions to consider:

- (a) assertions about the connections between long term, intermediate and early outcomes on the map;
- (b) substantiation for the claim that all of the important preconditions for success have been identified; and
- (c) justifications supporting the links between program activities and the outcomes they are expected to produce.

A fourth type of assumption which outlines the contextual or environmental factors that will support or hinder progress toward the realisation of outcomes in the pathway of change is often an additional key factor in illustrating the complete theory of change.



GROUP ACTIVITY

Now it is time to put what you have learned into practice! In your groups, review and discuss the case study that has been provided. Together, design a logical framework for the project.

References

1. Gumz, J. & Parth, F. R. (2007). Why use a hammer when you need a wrench: results-based monitoring and evaluation of projects. Paper presented at PMI® Global Congress <https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/results-based-monitoring-evaluation-projects-7394>
2. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2002). Handbook for Monitoring and Evaluation (2002) https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/training/capacity-building-resources/basic-me-concepts-portuguese/IFRC_Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation%20handbook.pdf
3. Tools4Dev. How to write a logical framework (logframe) <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/how-to-write-a-logical-framework-logframe/>
4. Relativ Impact. <http://www.relativ.co.za/relativ-impact/theory-of-change-workshop/>
5. Annmurray Brown (2019). Theory of Change: Back to Basics <https://www.annmurraybrown.com/single-post/2019/06/19/theory-of-change-back-to-basics>

Additional Resources

1. Video: What is a logical framework? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0NPxGgGMtM>
2. Video: Theory of Change <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkpLmeVc5ck>

Module 3

Indicators

SCOPE

This module is intended to help the learner understand the concept of indicators, including what makes a good indicator and how indicators are used in the monitoring and evaluation.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this module are to:

- Introduce learners to the concept of indicators and their importance
- Expose learners to the different type of indicators and how they are used
- Explain to learners how to select good (new) indicators and evaluate existing ones

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Describe what indicators are
- Differentiate between different types of indicators - quantitative versus qualitative indicators and output versus outcome indicators
- Assess existing indicators and design new ones

INDICATORS

“If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it” - Peter Drucker

What is an indicator?

An **indicator** is a variable that measures what has been done or what has been achieved. Indicators are the means through which important questions such as *Who? How many? How often?* and *How much?* can be answered.

Indicators are often compared to a ‘*signpost*’ – they provide project implementers and stakeholders with information to gauge whether or not the project is on track to achieving the targets and desired goals. If the measures indicate that the project is not headed in the right direction, necessary corrective actions can be taken.

Indicators may also be regarded as one of the *building blocks* of a M&E system, since they help to inform the design of other aspects of the system such as what data must be collected, how and when.



Structure of an indicator

Indicators have three main components. These are: (1) unit of measure; (2) unit of analysis; and (3) context.

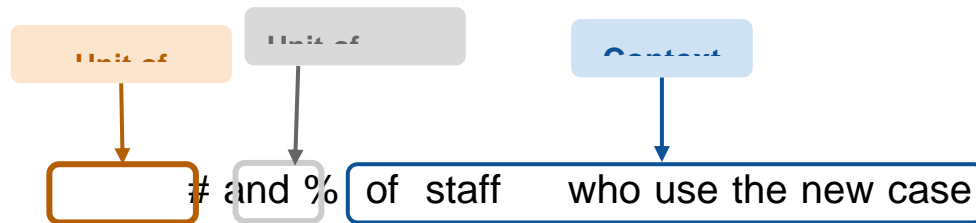
Unit of measure: the actual unit in which associated values are measured. For example, number/count, percent, degrees, metres, pounds.

Unit of analysis: the item of interest for a study that is observed, measured or collected and about whom/which analysis and conclusions will be drawn. It tells “who” or “what” the focus is. The unit of analysis can be individuals, groups, or a project or programme. For example, women, households, staff, managers, departments. It should be noted that there is a distinction between unit of analysis and unit of observation. Individual staff members may be observed (unit of observation), however through aggregation, the focus for analysis may be departments/units (unit of analysis).

Context: this is qualifying information about the unit of analysis and provides parameters to guide the measurement or collection of data.

The components of an indicator are illustrated using the example below (see **figure 3.1**).

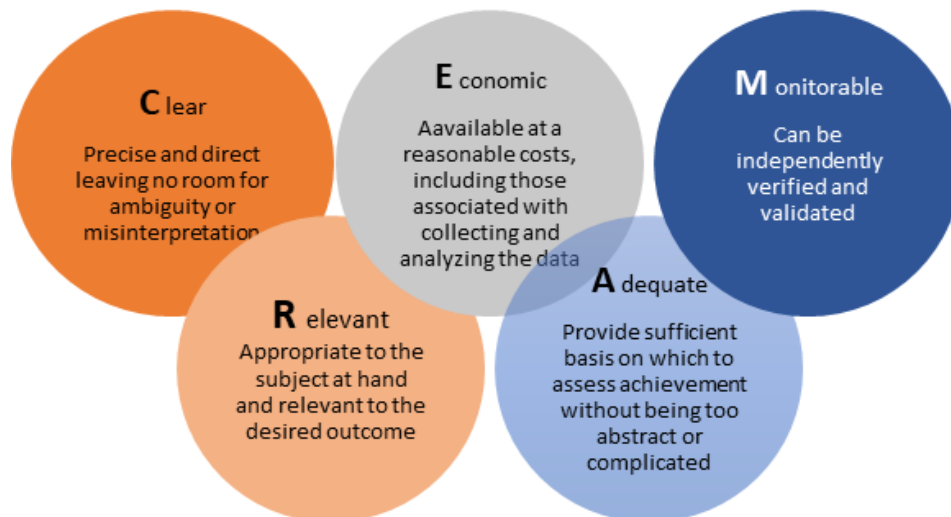
Figure 3.1: Components of an indicator



Characteristics of good indicators

Various acronyms have been used to support the development and selection of good indicators. These include S.M.A.R.T, i.e. Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (as first outlined by Peter Drucker in 1999) and AIMS i.e. Action-focused, Important, Measureable, Simple (New Economics Foundation, 2000). The mnemonic '**CREAM**' also offers useful criteria for developing or selecting good indicators for a project or programme (Schiavo-Campo in World Bank, 2004). See **figure 3.2** below.

Figure 3.2: 'CREAM' criteria for good indicators



Types of M&E Indicators

Various typologies are used for indicators. A few of these are explored below.

Process and outcome Indicators

For monitoring and evaluation, **process indicators** allow for monitoring the progress of implementation and indicate whether activities are being delivered as planned. They tell how the results of the project are being achieved. Examples of process indicators are:

- *the number and types of services delivered;*
- *the number of students trained;*
- *the number materials produced;*

Outcome indicators on the other hand, tell what the project is achieving and indicate the extent to which the activities being implemented were successful in achieving the desired results. For example, knowledge, attitudes and practices as measured by a survey such as:

- Number and % of staff who consider the newly implemented software to be user-friendly
- Number and % of staff satisfied with the IT support services
- % of population knowledgeable about the benefits of JamDex

Input, output, outcome and impact indicators

Indicators are often classified according to the different aspects of a project as depicted by the results chain, which highlights the causal link between the intervention and the results of the project vis-a-vis a sequence of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact.

Input, output, outcome and impact indicators are further examined below.

Input Indicators: These are measures of the financial, human and physical and technical resources that are needed. For example:

- Total budget of activities for 2022
- # of staff recruited to execute monitoring and evaluation activities
- # of computers procured for staff

Output Indicators: These are measures of the products or services which stem from activities that were implemented over a given period. For example:

- # of training manuals developed
- # of staff who completed training in monitoring and evaluation
- # of policies developed
- # of health workers trained in antigen testing

Outcome Indicators: These are measures of improvements or intermediate changes in the beneficiaries' behaviours, institutional performance or systems, which occurred as a result of the intervention's activities. Domains that are measured by outcome indicators address questions

relating to the value, benefit and return on investment through the inputs and activities of the intervention such as changes in knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, skills, behaviours, access to services, policies and environmental conditions. For example:

- # and % of staff who use the new case management system
- % of school staff with improved knowledgeable about MoE COVID-19 protocols in schools
- % of households in community X reporting access to internet services

Impact Indicators: These are higher population-level measures of long-term changes from the accrued effect of multiple programmes or projects over time.

- Average life satisfaction score for men and women aged 18 - 34 years
- National crime rate
- % of SMEs reporting tangible benefits from the supported changes in the business environment

Quantitative and qualitative indicators

Quantitative indicators tell ‘how much’ or ‘how many’. They are expressed in numerical terms by the use of absolute numbers (e.g. 44 children infected), percentages (e.g. 38% of households have internet access), and fractions or ratios (e.g. 1 teacher for every 20 students). Data for quantitative indicators are obtained by counting or measuring.

Qualitative indicators are descriptive and tell how people feel, behave or how things are done such as participation in an event, ease of access to health care services and level of satisfaction amongst employees. They are often expressed as numerical values. For example, 60% of employees are dissatisfied with the adjustments to the work schedule.

There is a commonly held misconception that quantitative indicators are solid, reliable and more ‘objective’, while qualitative indicators are ‘subjective’ and often subject to bias and lacking in rigour. However, while quantitative data may provide information on what is happening, the context and question of ‘why’ is often unanswered in the absence of qualitative measures. It is usually recommended that a mix of both quantitative and qualitative indicators are used when deciding on indicators for a programme or project.

It should be noted that ideally, when crafting outcome indicators, quantitative indicators should be used in combination with qualitative measures. This allows for a description of the number of individuals who benefit from an intervention, as well as the nature of the benefit. For example, outcome indicators for a COVID-19 vaccination campaign may include the following: the % of persons who were fully vaccinated (quantitative indicator) and the level of confidence persons have in the ability of the COVID-19 vaccine to reduce fatality from COVID-19 (qualitative indicator).

Selecting indicators

In addition to assessing the structure of the indicator using “CREAM”, the following seven criteria may also be considered when selecting or deciding which indicators should be used (USAID, 2010):

Direct: An indicator is direct to the extent that it clearly measures the intended result. An example of an indirect and direct indicator is presented below.

<i>Result:</i> Increased Transparency of Key Public Sector Institutions	
<i>Indirect Indicator:</i> Passage of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)	<i>Direct Indicator:</i> Progress on a milestone scale demonstrating enactment and enforcement of policies that require open hearings

Source: USAID, 2010

It is worth noting that in some instances, the use of a direct indicator is a challenge. This may occur when, for example, the cost to gather the required data is too high. In such scenarios, it is acceptable to use a **proxy indicator**, which is linked to a result through one or more assumptions. The higher the number of assumptions that are made, the weaker the indicator becomes. It is important that the link between the indicator and the result is clear. Examples are presented below.

Example 1:

Result: Increased household income in female-headed households

Proxy Indicator: Dollar value of household expenditures in female-headed households

The proxy indicator above makes the assumption that an increase in income will result in increased household expenditures

Example 2: *Result:* Increased access to vaccination services

Proxy Indicator: Number of vaccination sites established (*This proxy indicator makes the assumption that an increase in the number of health centres will result in greater access to vaccination services*)

Objective: An indicator is objective if it is unambiguous about: 1) what is being measured and 2) what data are being collected.

Useful for Management: An indicator is useful to the extent that it provides a meaningful measure of change over time for management decision-making. One aspect of usefulness is to ensure that the indicator is measuring the right change in order to achieve development results.

Attributable: An indicator is attributable if it can be plausibly associated with interventions.

Practical: A practical indicator is one for which data can be collected on a timely basis and at a reasonable cost.

Adequate: Taken as a group, the indicator (or set of indicators) should be sufficient to measure the stated result.

Disaggregated, as necessary Disaggregated data help track whether or not, or the extent to which groups which vary on different characteristics participate in or benefit from activities intended for them. This is important since interventions, especially for development, usually affect various groups or institutions in different ways. The disaggregation of data by gender, age, location, or some other dimension is important as it provides stakeholders with useful information to better manage and deliver the intervention.

Assessing existing indicators

The metadata is the data about the data. It provides us with information about the indicator to inform us about the suitability for use. The following questions can be used to help assess whether the essential components of an indicator are present (UNAIDS, 2010).

- Does the indicator have a clearly stated title and definition?
- Does the indicator have a clearly stated purpose and rationale?
- Is the method of measurement for the indicator clearly defined, including the description of the numerator, denominator and calculation, where applicable?
- Are the data collection methodology and data collection tools for the indicator data clearly stated?
- Is the data collection frequency clearly defined?
- Is any relevant data disaggregation clearly defined?
- Are there guidelines to interpret and use data from this indicator?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the indicator and the challenges in its use?
- Are relevant sources of additional information on the indicator cited?

When deciding on indicators, the use of already existing indicators should be explored. However, there are some limitations. These include:

- Data unavailable or inaccessible
- Existing data already aggregated or calculated and not ideal for the programme/project
- Data collection cost is prohibitive
- Limited human resource/technical skills to process or analyse data
- Indicators are imposed by individuals who lack understanding of M&E principles and techniques
- Reporting schedules may not be synchronised (e.g. fiscal versus calendar years; or annual versus quarterly)
- Diverging interests and priorities of stakeholders

Guidelines for defining new indicators

At times, it may be necessary to develop new indicators if existing indicators are not deemed suitable for use. All new indicators should be clearly defined. **Table 3.1** presents useful guidelines for defining new indicators.

Table 3.1: Guidelines for defining new indicators

Title. A brief heading that captures the focus of the indicator.

Definition. A clear and concise description of the indicator.

Purpose. The reason that the indicator exists; i.e. what it is for.

Rationale. The underlying principle(s) that justify the development and deployment of the indicator; i.e. why the indicator is needed and useful.

Method of measurement. The logical and specific sequence of operations used to measure the indicator; e.g. data collection tools, sampling frame and quality assurance.

Numerator. The top number of a common fraction, which indicates the number of parts from the whole that are included in the calculation.

Denominator. The bottom number of a common fraction, which indicates the number of parts in the whole.

Calculation. The specific steps in the process to determine the indicator value. Data collection method. The general approaches (e.g. surveys, records, models, estimates) used to collect data.

Data collection tools. The specific tools (e.g. AIDS Indicator Surveys (AIS), Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Service Provision Assessments (SPA), patient registers, antenatal clinic surveillance) used to collect data.

Data collection frequency. The intervals at which data are collected; e.g. quarterly, annually, bi-annually. It is important that frequency is consistent with the data collection methodology. (The frequency of data collection should not be confused with the frequency of reporting, which is commonly associated with external organisations and agencies, particularly funding partners.)

Data disaggregation. The relevant subgroups that collected data can be separated into in order to more precisely understand and analyse the findings. Common subgroups include sex, age and risk population.

Guidelines to interpret and use data. Recommendations on how best to evaluate and apply the findings; e.g. outlining what it means if the indicator shows an increase or a decrease in a particular measure.

Strengths and weaknesses. A brief summary of what the indicator does well and not so well. Challenges. Potential obstacles or problems that may have an impact on the use of an indicator or on the accuracy/validity of its findings.

Relevant sources of additional information. References to information/materials that relate to the indicator, including background information on the development of the indicator, comparisons with previous versions of the indicator and lessons learned from the use of the indicator or similar indicators in various settings.

Source: UNAIDS. An introduction to indicators.

https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/sub_landing/files/8_2-Intro-to-IndicatorsFMEF.pdf

Example of a well- and fully-defined indicator is presented in the handout for this module. In addition, see **figure 3.4** for an illustrative logical framework with indicators.


Figure 3.4 Illustrative Logical Framework with indicators

Illustrative Logical Framework with Indicators
from
Monitoring and Evaluating Gender-based Violence Prevention and Mitigation Programs
(USAID, MEASURE Evaluation and the Inter-agency Gender Working Group)

Goal: To improve the national response to violence against women

Objective	Activities	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
To improve access to justice for survivors of rape in conflict settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate access to legal aid networks; Foster reconciliation and confidence building through improved linkages between local stakeholders Raise awareness of rule of law, and human rights, including GBV among CBOs and civil society organizations Align customary law with international standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of staff of the Legal Aid Department of the National Ministry of Justice trained on rule of law and human rights principles, including GBV Number of workshops conducted aimed at improving linkages between health providers, legal aid networks, and lawyers' associations Number of GBV awareness raising sessions conducted by CBOs Percent increase in GBV cases reported, registered and resolved by official law enforcement and judiciary authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reports Programme training records Program records Crime statistics 	Stable political situation, sustained political commitment, and adequate financing

Source: Frankel and Gage 2007



What are some of the possible consequences of using poorly designed or poorly selected indicators for a programme or project?

Baselines and targets

The baseline and target are values of an indicator which, when compared against each other, are used to measure change. They are therefore important when attempting to track progress or assess change as a result of an intervention.

Baseline: a measure against which progress of an intervention can be assessed. Ideally, it is determined before the start of an intervention. However there are instances where it may be done after the intervention has commenced.

Target: a measure of the desired achievement or improvement that should occur during or as a result of an intervention.

The process at arriving at a target is a collaborative, but straightforward process involving a review of baseline levels and desired levels of improvement over a specific time frame. (World Bank, 2004). Key considerations when setting performance targets include:

1. **Baselines:** consider performance and trends over a previous period, e.g. last year's or last five year's performance;
2. **Resources:** targets should be feasible given all of the resource considerations as well as organisational capacity (budgets, personnel, funding, facilities) to deliver activities and outputs;
3. **Time frame:** targets should be realistic and be based on projections within a reasonable time frame. End of project targets are set alongside annual targets (and in some instances quarterly targets). There are too many unknowns and risks with respect to resources and inputs to try to project target performance beyond three to four years;
4. **Political processes:** Target setting should given consideration to expectations that are had as a result of political processes; and
5. **Flexibility** is important in setting targets because internal or external resources may be cut or otherwise diminished during budgetary cycles. Reorientation of the program, retraining of staff, and reprioritization of the work may be required. If the indicator is new, a range can be set rather than a fixed numerical outcome

HELPFUL TIPS

- Indicators are neutral; they neither indicate change or direction
- Each indicator should measure only one thing
- Mix quantitative and qualitative indicators
- Mix monitoring and evaluation indicators
- Explore indicators used by other projects



GROUP ACTIVITY

Review the logframe that you completed in the previous module. As a group, discuss and select suitable indicators for your logframe. In reality, the process of selecting all the indicators for a project will require more time for deliberation and consultation with the project team and key stakeholders. However, it should allow you enough time to select at least one indicator each for your

References

1. Tola Data (2018) How to create indicators that make sense.
<https://www.toladata.com/blog/how-to-create-indicators-that-make-sense/>
2. UNAIDS Monitoring and Evaluation Fundamentals: Introduction to indicators
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3. USAID (2010). Performance Monitoring & Evaluation Tips Selecting Performance Indicators Number 6 2nd Ed. https://Pdf.Usaid.Gov/Pdf_docs/Pnadw106.Pdf
4. World Bank (2004). [Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System. A Handbook for Development Practitioners](#). Authors: Kusek, J., Rist, R. Washington D.C.

Additional Resources

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3. Mosaic International Inc (2021). RBM Handbook: Key Results-Based Management concepts, tip sheets and examples
<http://www.mosaic-net-intl.ca/resources/RBM%20Handbook%20-%20Mosaic%20-ZENDialogue-Oct%202021.pdf>
4. www.indikit.net
5. Indicator Registry: <https://indicatorregistry.unaids.org/>
6. Handout: http://www.ncdsv.org/images/NRCDV_FVPSA%20Outcomes%20APP%20A-Logic.pdf

Module 4

Data Collection

SCOPE

This module is intended to help the learner to improve their understanding of and their capacity to collect quality data when developing and implementing an effective M&E plan.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this module are to:

- Explain the role and importance of data in monitoring and evaluation
- Expose the learner to the different types of data sources and collection methods
- Outline the pros and cons of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods tools.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Distinguish between primary and secondary data
- Assess the suitability of data sources for project M&E
- Identify criteria used to assess the quality of data
- Choose appropriate data collection strategies for their project M&E

Data collection

“Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.” - Albert Einstein

What is data collection?

Now that we understand the importance of indicators in measuring the results of a project, we turn our attention to collection of the data to inform the indicators. But what is data collection? **Data collection** is the process of gathering information on variables related to the activities and results of the project. The process is one that is conducted in a deliberate and systematic manner, and in accordance with established procedures. It is through data collection that the information system for tracking progress on indicators against set targets, is built.

Importance of data collection

Data collection is important for several reasons, including:

- facilitates tracking of progress on or towards the achievement of expected outcomes and targets;
- provides insights to inform needed decisions about the project;
- helps to assess whether, or the extent to which implementation of the project is maintaining fidelity to program design; and
- forms the basis for reflection, learning and responsive programming



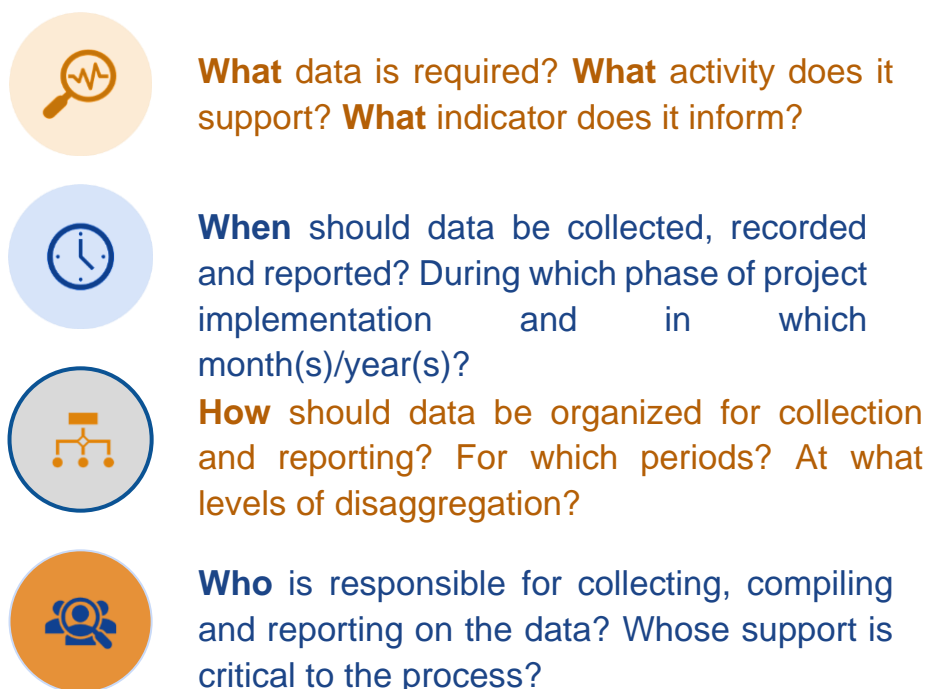
Identifying data sources

Sources of data are the ‘who’ or ‘what’ of data. In order to collect data to monitor and manage the performance of a project, the most suitable approach or method must be decided upon. However, in order to do this, consideration must be given to the potential sources of the data that will be used to inform each indicator.

Data may be gleaned from administrative records (hand-written or computerised); interviews and surveys with client target groups, program officials and service providers; reports from trained observers; and mechanical measurements and tests (World Bank, 2004). However, several questions about the data (source) must be answered, including What? When? How? and Who? (See **Figure 5.1**). As these questions about the data are considered, the project team will have

to determine which data source is most suitable. These relate to the ease and timeframe within which the data can be accessed, the quality of the data, and whether or not collection of primary data is feasible.

Figure 5.1 The What? When? How? And Who? of data collection



Types of Data

Primary versus Secondary Data

Primary data is first hand data that is directly gathered by the organisation, project or programme interested in its use and for a specific purpose. Examples are administrative data, personnel or budget data, interviews, surveys and direct observation.

On the other hand, **secondary data** is data that was previously collected by a project, programme or organization and used by external organisations, projects or programmes for other purposes. Examples are data gathered from government publications, websites, journals, etc. In Jamaica, for example, data published by the BoJ, STATIN and other such entities responsible for financial market data, social, economic and other data is used by others to inform decisions and policy. Where possible, the use of secondary data must be explored as it is convenient when the cost of collecting primary data with the frequency required is too high. Caution should however be exercised when using secondary data, as it is sometimes difficult to assess the credibility of the

data from secondary sources. A comparison of primary and secondary data are presented in **table 5.1**.

Table 5.1 Comparison between primary and secondary data

Basis For Comparison	Primary Data	Secondary Data
Meaning	First hand data gathered by the researcher himself	Data collected by someone else earlier
Data	Real time data	Past data
Process	Very involved	Quick and easy
Source	Surveys, observations, experiments, questionnaires, personal interviews, etc.	Government publications, websites, books, journals, internal records etc.
Cost effectiveness	Expensive	Economical
Collection time	Long	Short
Specific	Always specific to the researcher's needs	May or may not be specific to the researcher's need
Available in	Crude form	Refined form
Accuracy and Reliability	More	Relatively less

Source: <https://keydifferences.com/difference-between-primary-and-secondary-data.html#ComparisonChart>

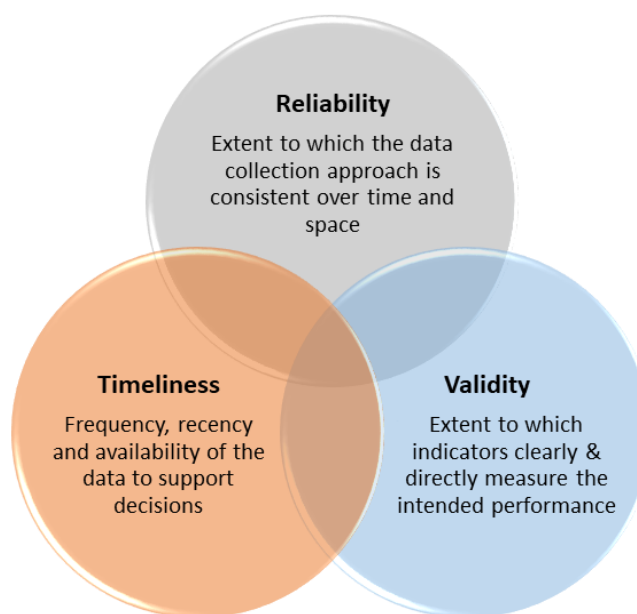
Data Quality

While the use of secondary data may appear more favourable, it is necessary to assess the quality of data that is used to build a monitoring system. Knowing the quality of data being considered for use helps to inform the degree to which the data can be trusted. The quality of data may be assessed using the following three criteria:

- reliability;
- validity; and
- timeliness (frequency, recency and availability for decisions)

In most instances, a trade-off may be required. Data may be reliable and valid, but not available on a timely basis. As timeliness also includes the dimension of 'recency', this becomes a challenge when trying to obtain baseline data for indicators. While a secondary data source may be assessed to be reliable and valid, it may be limited in that it was last gathered several years prior to the start of a new programme or project. Such data is outdated and hence not suitable to gauge the current condition or baseline before the start of the project. Similarly, data may be valid and timely, but other factors may influence the extent to which the data collection approach was consistent over time or across locations (See **figure 5.2**). Where the data collection system does not meet any of these criteria, the credibility of the system is reduced (World Bank, 2004).

Figure 5.2 Key criteria for indicator data collection system



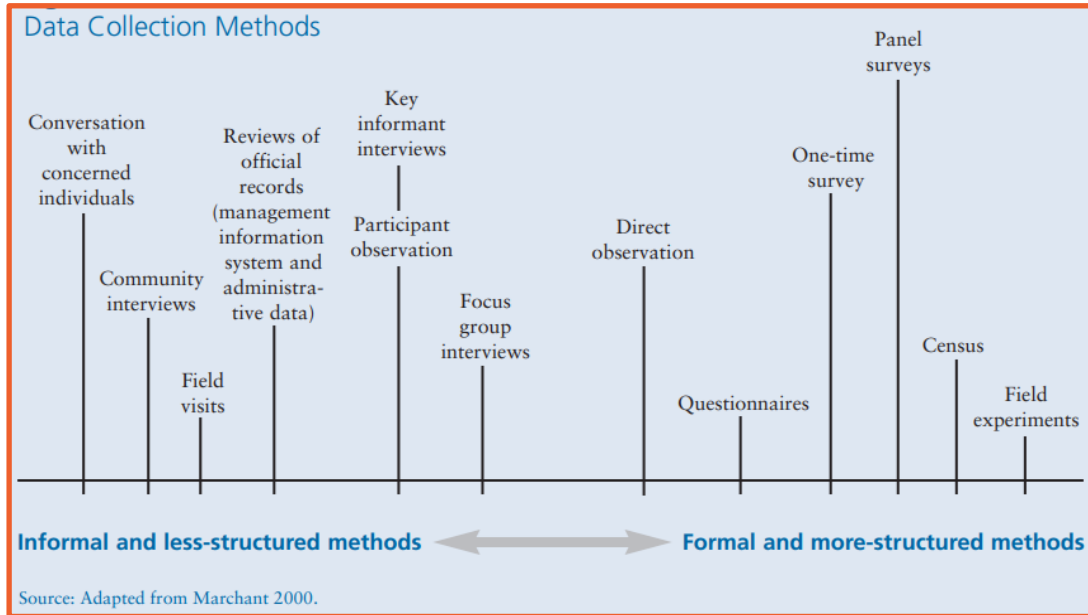
Data collection strategies

Once the data sources are identified, the data collection strategy must be determined. The data collection strategy refers to the approach and processes required to gather the needed data. This includes the data collection method, the instruments that will be used to record the data and the protocols to access the data, among others. There is no right or wrong approach to selecting data collection strategies. Each organisation or project will have to make a determination based on a realistic assessment of the context, user needs and resources, to name a few. These must then be matched against the available options and the benefits in selecting one approach instead of another.

There are several types of data collection methods (See **figure 5.3**). These vary in their level of complexity, the level of technical expertise required, the cost and time required for

implementation. A comparison of four main data collection methods are further presented in **table 5.2** while a more extensive listing is presented in **table 5.3**.

Figure 5.3 Data collection methods



Source: Marchant 2000 adapted by World Bank (2004). Ten Steps to a results-based monitoring and evaluation system. Authors; Jody Zall Kusek and Ray C. Rist

Table 5.2 Comparison of major data collection methods

Tool	Description	Usefulness	Disadvantages
Interviews	These can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured (see Glossary of Terms). They involve asking specific questions aimed at getting information that will enable indicators to be measured. Questions can be open-ended or closed (yes/no answers). Can be a source of qualitative and quantitative information.	Can be used with almost anyone who has some involvement with the project. Can be done in person or on the telephone or even by e-mail. Very flexible.	Requires some skill in the interviewer. For more on interviewing skills, see later in this toolkit.
Key informant interviews	These are interviews that are carried out with specialists in a topic or someone who may be able to shed a particular light on the process.	As these key informants often have little to do with the project or organisation, they can be quite objective and offer useful insights. They can provide something of the	Needs a skilled interviewer with a good understanding of the topic. Be careful not to turn something into an absolute truth (cannot be challenged) because it

		"big picture" where people more involved may focus at the micro (small) level.	has been said by a key informant.
Questionnaires	These are written questions that are used to get written responses which, when analysed, will enable indicators to be measured.	This tool can save lots of time if it is self-completing, enabling you to get to many people. Done in this way it gives people a feeling of anonymity and they may say things they would not say to an interviewer.	With people who do not read and write, someone has to go through the questionnaire with them which means no time is saved and the numbers one can reach are limited. With questionnaires, it is not possible to explore what people are saying any further. Questionnaires are also over-used and people get tired of completing them. Questionnaires must be piloted to ensure that questions can be understood and cannot be misunderstood. If the questionnaire is complex and will need computerised analysis, you need expert help in designing it.
Focus groups	In a focus group, a group of about six to 12 people are interviewed together by a skilled interviewer/facilitator with a carefully structured interview schedule. Questions are usually focused around a specific topic or issue.	This can be a useful way of getting opinions from quite a large sample of people.	It is quite difficult to do random sampling for focus groups and this means findings may not be generalised. Sometimes people influence one another either to say something or to keep quiet about something. If possible, focus groups interviews should be recorded and then transcribed. This requires special equipment and can be very time-consuming.
Community meetings	This involves a gathering of a fairly large group of beneficiaries to whom questions, problems, situations are put for input to help in measuring indicators.	Community meetings are useful for getting a broad response from many people on specific issues. It is also a way of involving beneficiaries directly in an evaluation process, giving them a sense of ownership of the process. They are useful to have at critical points in community projects.	Difficult to facilitate – requires a very experienced facilitator. May require breaking into small groups followed by plenary sessions when everyone comes together again.
Fieldworker reports	Structured report forms that ensure that indicator-	Flexible, an extension of normal work, so cheap	Relies on field workers being disciplined and

		to have to incorporate points in community projects.	
Fieldworker reports (See also fieldworker reporting format under examples)	Structured report forms that ensure that indicator-related questions are asked and answers recorded, and observations recorded on every visit.	Flexible, an extension of normal work, so cheap and not time-consuming.	Relies on field workers being disciplined and insightful.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Ranking	This involves getting people to say what they think is most useful, most important, least useful etc.	It can be used with individuals and groups, as part of an interview schedule or questionnaire, or as a separate session. Where people cannot read and write, pictures can be used.	Ranking is quite a difficult concept to get across and requires very careful explanation as well as testing to ensure that people understand what you are asking. If they misunderstand, your data can be completely distorted.
Visual/audio stimuli	These include pictures, movies, tapes, stories, role plays, photographs, used to illustrate problems or issues or past events or even future events.	Very useful to use together with other tools, particularly with people who cannot read or write.	You have to have appropriate stimuli and the facilitator needs to be skilled in using such stimuli.
Rating scales	This technique makes use of a continuum, along which people are expected to place their own feelings, observations etc. People are usually asked to say whether they agree strongly, agree, don't know, disagree, disagree strongly with a statement. You can use pictures and symbols in this technique if people cannot read and write.	It is useful to measure attitudes, opinions, perceptions.	You need to test the statements very carefully to make sure that there is no possibility of misunderstanding. A common problem is when two concepts are included in the statement and you cannot be sure whether an opinion is being given on one or the other or both.
Critical event/incident Analysis	This method is a way of focusing interviews with individuals or groups on particular events or incidents. The purpose of doing this is to get a very full picture of what actually happened.	Very useful when something problematic has occurred and people feel strongly about it. If all those involved are included, it should help the evaluation team to get a picture that is reasonably close to what actually happened and to be able to diagnose what went wrong.	The evaluation team can end up submerged in a vast amount of contradictory detail and lots of "he said/she said". It can be difficult not to take sides and to remain objective.
Participant observation	This involves direct observation of events, processes, relationships and behaviours.	It can be a useful way of confirming, or otherwise, information provided in other ways.	It is difficult to observe and participate. The process is very time-consuming.

	"Participant" here implies that the observer gets involved in activities rather than maintaining a distance.		
Self-drawings	This involves getting participants to draw pictures, usually of how they feel or think about something.	Can be very useful, particularly with younger children.	Can be difficult to explain and interpret.

Read through the table below. As you read, ask: would you use any of these methods to measure your indicators?

	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Surveys	A list of questions given to a part of the population. Surveys may be sent to participants to fill out themselves, be completed in person, over the telephone, or digitally.	Can collect both qualitative and quantitative data Can collect data from a large number of people	Requires a moderate amount of expertise to design, use and analyze Questions may be misinterpreted. Can be expensive, depending on how many people you are surveying Can be slow to design, use and analyze
Focus Groups	Focused discussion with a small group (usually 8 to 12 people) of participants to record feelings, opinions and beliefs. A trained moderator introduces the topic and uses an interview guide to lead the discussion.	Collects detailed qualitative data Low cost Quick: one focus group can be done in an afternoon	Requires a skilled moderator Creates limited quantitative data Since this is a group exercise, it may be difficult to collect personal data Collects data from a small number of people
Interviews	One-on-one conversations with people who have special information about a particular topic. Interviews usually have a set of prepared questions.	Collects detailed qualitative data Low cost	Requires a skilled interviewer Creates limited quantitative data Collects data from a small number of people Moderately time consuming
Observation	A record of what observers see and hear at a specified site, using a detailed observation form. Observation may be of physical surroundings, activities or processes.	Low cost Can provide many types of data, both qualitative and quantitative	Requires a skilled, objective observer Difficult to do for large groups
Document Review	A review of documents such as project records and reports, databases, training materials, communications, laws and policy documents.	Low cost Provides a view of how data change over time Provides both qualitative and quantitative data	Moderately time consuming Information may be incomplete, biased or inaccurate
Laboratory Measurements	Careful measurement of specific objective things, such as infant weight or water quality.	Very accurate, reliable quantitative data	Requires a high level of expertise Very expensive Time consuming to design, use and analyze
Community Workshop/Meeting	A form of public meeting open to all community members. An interviewer asks participants questions following a prepared interview guide.	Low cost Can gather a lot of data at once Provides a venue for discussion and collaborative thinking	Organizing the event takes time and resources. Requires a skilled moderator and skilled note-takers to capture information.

A distinction is also made between strategies that are quantitative based and those that are qualitative. The advantages and disadvantages are presented in **table 5.4** and **table 5.5**.

Table 5.4 Pros and cons of quantitative methods

Advantages	Disadvantages
You can collect data from a large sample of people.	Sensitive information on topics such domestic violence, drug use, racism, immigration status and other personal matters are difficult to obtain.
You can analyze the data relatively quickly and easily, especially if you are using software packages such as Excel, STATA, SPSS, etc. .	They generally do not explain the reasons for responses.
It does not require a lot of money if a survey is used and administered online or by mail.	They may not be comfortable or familiar for certain groups of people who distrust mail or telephone surveys, have low literacy, or come from oral societies where written words are not part of their traditions.
The results can be generalized if the sample is representative of the study population. (There are specific statistical methods to calculate the representativeness of a sample; ask someone with expertise in sampling.)	

Source: https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/WKKF_StepByStepGuideToEvaluation_smaller.pdf

Table 5.5 Pros and cons of qualitative methods

Advantages	Disadvantages
Provides understanding and description of in-depth experiences by individuals in your strategy, initiative or program.	Not useful if you want to generalize findings to the whole study population or community (i.e., findings may be relevant only to the people your organization or program serves).
Provides you or the evaluator with an opportunity to explain definitions or questions that are unclear to participants.	Participants may not feel comfortable verbalizing and discussing sensitive topics.
You or the evaluator can easily guide and redirect questions in real time.	Collecting and analyzing data can be expensive and time consuming.
Findings may be easier to interpret for some of your stakeholders who are uncomfortable with numbers and other forms of quantitative data.	
A useful approach when no readily available, field-tested survey questionnaires or assessment tools exist for the topic you want to explore.	

Source: https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/WKKF_StepByStepGuideToEvaluation_smaller.pdf

Piloting data collection tools and procedures

Before a data collection tool or data collection strategy is implemented in a monitoring and evaluation system, it must first be piloted. A pilot refers to the process of testing a data collection tool or procedure (data collection, analysis and reporting procedures) before it is finalised. This allows for any issues or challenges to be identified and corrected prior to implementation. Failing to pilot the tools and procedures used to collect data to inform indicators is a risky and often, very costly undertaking. It also has implications for target-setting. If targets are informed by faulty baseline data or procedures, a proper assessment of change as a result of the intervention cannot be done. Essentially, if after having conducted the pilot, the cost (financial, human, time) is too high, there may be a need to revisit the indicators that were selected.



GROUP ACTIVITY

Review the log frame for the selected case study that you have been working on with your group. Using the logframe that you have developed, select a suitable data collection method for each indicator that is listed. Record your data

References

1. Surbhi S. (2020). Difference between primary and secondary data. <https://keydifferences.com/difference-between-primary-and-secondary-data.html#ComparisonChart>
2. W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2017). The step-by-step guide to evaluation: How to become savvy evaluation customers. https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/WKKF_StepByStepGuideToEvaluation_smaller.pdf
3. World Bank (2004). [Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System. A Handbook for Development Practitioners](#). Authors: Kusek, J., Rist, R. Washington D.C.

Additional Resources

1. Video: How to define data collection tools and timelines <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2QcluRuhws>

Module 5

The M&E Plan

SCOPE

This module is intended to help the learner understand how to develop and use a “good M&E plan. Included in this module will be discussions on good monitoring activities and evaluation questions.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this module are to:

- Sensitize the learner to the M&E plan, its importance, components and usage
- Improve the capacity of the learner to develop “good” M&E plans

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Describe an M&E plan, its elements and how to use it
- Develop and use an M&E Plan

THE M&E PLAN

"Failing to plan is planning to fail" - Benjamin Franklin

What is the M&E Plan?

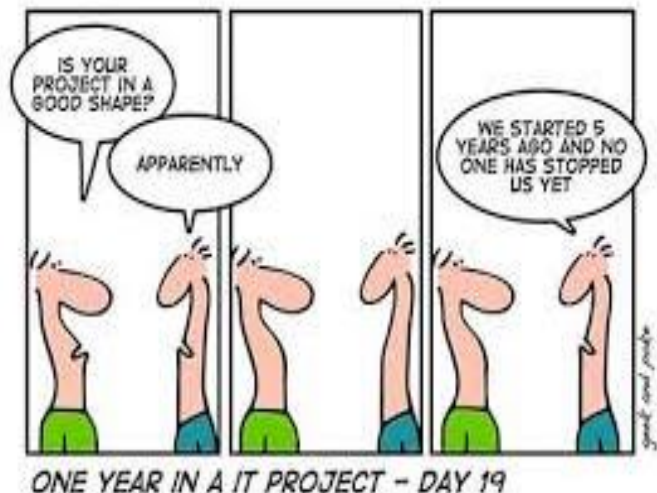
The **M&E plan** is a guide that describes how the monitoring and evaluation strategy will be implemented over the lifetime of a project. It documents how progress towards the desired goals and outcomes will be assessed over the lifetime of the project. In simple terms, the M&E plan helps to assess whether or not a project is successful.

In addition to demonstrating how the project goals or objectives relate to the results or outcomes, the M&E plan identifies the data needs, describes the approach for collecting, analyzing and using the data and anticipates the resources that will be required (FHI, 2004).

Importance of the M&E Plan

There are several benefits to having a M&E plan in place from the outset of the project. These include:

- **Transparency:** enables a shared understanding and consensus amongst implementers, donors and other stakeholders of how the project goals relate to the results
- **Accountability:** helps to ensure accountability for use of resources and implementation according to plan
- **Responsibility:** clarifies the roles and responsibilities that are required for implementation of the monitoring system
- **Standardization:** Facilitates a consistent approach to the measurement and assessment of progress towards desired outcomes over time and place
- **Sustainability:** Documentation of the M&E processes, data collection approaches, data flow and management, etc. helps to ensure that institutional memory is retained



Given its importance, it is necessary that the time and resources are allotted to ensuring that the M&E plan is developed at the earliest possible time and in consultation with the key stakeholders - both internally and externally.

Types and Elements of M&E Plans

The format and content of the M&E plan is flexible. However, one of two types of M&E plans are commonly used (Intrac, 2015). The *first* type of M&E plan is organized around the project indicators which are further aligned to other elements such as the project outcomes or outputs, the source of information, the person responsible, the timing and the frequency. This is usually displayed in a table or grid format. In some instances, columns to capture the baseline, milestone and target for each indicator are included (See **table 5.1** and **table 5.2**). In many instances, this format is used as a preliminary M&E plan that is required for approval of the project and to facilitate funding and/or budgeting. However, it does not normally contain sufficient information to guide the implementation of the monitoring system.

Table 5.1: Types of M&E Plan - Grid Format A

Objective	Indicator	Source	Who collects?	When?	How often?
To enhance the agricultural productivity of farmers in the Basin region	Average yield of maize crops	Survey of farmers	M&E department	September (the end of the harvest season)	At baseline, mid-point and end of project
	Farmers' use of new technologies	Focus group discussions with farmers	Project extension workers	During project reviews	Six-monthly
	Engagement of government officials with local farmer groups	Discussions with local government officials	Evaluation team	During final evaluation	Once

Image Source: Intrac (2015)

Table 5.2: Types of M&E Plan - Grid Format B

Monitoring & Evaluation Plan								
Expected Results	Description	Indicators	Targets	Type of M&E Activity	Data Collection		Responsible	Budget
					Method	Frequency		
Impact Statement								
Outcome 1								
Output	O1.1							
	O1.2							
Activity	A1.1							
	A1.2							
Outcome 2								
Output	O2.1							
	O2.2							
Activity	A2.1							
	A2.2							

Image Source: Public Investment Appraisal Branch (PIAB)

The *second* type of M&E plan incorporates the indicator grid, while also giving attention to other aspects of the project M&E such as data management, analysis and dissemination, capacity building and reporting schedules, among others. As with the first type of M&E plan which uses the grid format, there are several templates which exist for the second type of M&E plan. However, the basic elements are outlined below:

Figure 5.1: Simple structure for an M&E plan document

<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. IntroductionB. Purpose of planC. Project SummaryD. Logical FrameworkE. IndicatorsF. Roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">G. Data FlowH. Data ManagementI. StorageJ. AnalysisK. PrivacyL. Annexes - Data Collection Tools
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Source: <https://tools4dev.org/resources/monitoring-evaluation-plan-template/>

Figure 5.2: Alternate structure for an M&E plan document

<p>Project Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan Outline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Project Overview<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Theory of Change and Results Frameworkb. Implementation Mechanisms and Partners B. Monitoring Component<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Performance Indicators (Metadata)b. Baseline & Performance Data — Schedule & Frequencyc. Performance Targetsd. Monitoring Assumptionse. Data Quality Standards and Proceduresf. Sharing and Reporting Project Performanceg. Performance Monitoring Tasks and Responsibilitiesh. Reporting C. Evaluation Component<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)b. Impact evaluation (if applicable)c. Performance Evaluationsd. Evaluation Schedulee. Evaluation Quality Control Proceduresf. Communication and Dissemination Plan D. MEL Plan Roles and Responsibilities E. Project MEL Funding Requirements Annexes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Logical Frameworkb. Performance Indicator Reference Sheetsc. Performance Reporting Template

In summary, while the type and elements of the M&E plan that is selected for use on a project may vary, depending on the context and specific requirements of the donor(s), the purpose remains the same and should serve as a roadmap for the implementation of the M&E strategy for the project.



What do you think are the consequences of implementing a project without first establishing a M&E plan?

Designing the M&E Plan

As previously stated, the process of developing a M&E Plan should occur at the very early phases of a project and in consultation with both internal and external stakeholders. Main steps in designing the M&E Plan are:

- Develop the M&E Framework based on project goals
- Define indicators
- Identify data sources and determine methods for data collection
- Determine baselines and set targets for indicators
- Define reporting system, and data communication/dissemination plan

The monitoring component

The monitoring component of the M&E plan must establish specific monitoring activities to track all the indicators as well as establish responsibilities for data collection, analysis and storage of the data, and timelines. Also to be included in the plan is a detailed explanation of each data collection tool that will be required to monitor and track progress. It must also outline procedures for analysis, capture, storage and use of data that is collected. Further, anticipated challenges with the collection and analysis of data must be outlined as well as mitigation strategies. The M&E plan should also address human resources needed to support the monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as address the establishment of a system to efficiently collect and track data on output and outcome indicators (Global Affairs Canada, 2016).

The evaluation component

Global Affairs Canada (2016) presents a useful structure for the evaluation component of the monitoring and evaluation plan.

Rationale and purpose: Why is the evaluation being undertaken? Why at this particular point in time? For whom is it being undertaken? Will it be used for learning, accountability or some other purpose?

Specific objectives: What is the evaluation trying to find out?

Tentative key questions: At the design stage of a new project, it may already be possible to identify key evaluation questions of interest to the stakeholders. For example, if the project is implementing an innovative approach, what are the elements one would like to assess and when? This informs both monitoring and evaluation data needs and ensures timely data collection.

Scope: What is being evaluated? Is it a specific project component, activities taking place in a particular geographic area or something else?

Timing: When will evaluations take place?

Responsibility: Who will manage the evaluation? How will it be governed?

Budget: How much will it cost to manage this evaluation or participate in it? Aside from a fully completed performance measurement framework, what should be put in place now in order to evaluate performance in a few years?

Previous evaluations: Are there previous evaluations of similar projects, especially earlier phases that can help you plan this project and its evaluations better?

Evaluability: Is an evaluability assessment necessary? Aside from indicating whether an initiative or a project can be evaluated, it also

- reviews program design, and logic model and/or theory of change;
- assesses program performance measurement frameworks and monitoring systems;
- critically assesses the validity, reliability and usefulness of the baseline, monitoring and other available data sets;
- validates planned evaluation needs from the standpoint of stakeholders and users; and
- informs evaluation design to maximize the quality and utility of the planned evaluation.

Table 5.3 Evaluation Plan Grid Template

Evaluation Question	Indicator/ Performance Measure	Method	Data Source	Frequency	Responsibility

Image Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/CDC-Evaluation-Workbook-508.pdf>

References

1. Evaluation plan: - Simplified worksheet templates
<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/CDC-Evaluation-Workbook-508.pdf>
2. Global Affairs Canada (2016). Results-Based Management for International Assistance Programming at Global Affairs Canada: A How-to Guide
https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/funding-financement/results_based_management-gestion_axee_resultats-guide-en.pdf
3. W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2017). The step-by-step guide to evaluation: How to become savvy evaluation consumers.
https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/WKKF_StepByStepGuideToEvaluation_smaller.pdf
4. Zall Kusek, Jody and Ray C. Rist. Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2004. License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

Additional Resources

1. Course Handout - Monitoring Plan and Evaluation Plan Templates. *Public Investment Appraisal Branch (PIAB)*
2. Compass. How to Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
<https://thecompassforsbc.org/how-to-guides/how-develop-monitoring-and-evaluation-plan>
3. Video: How to draft a monitoring and evaluation plan
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LI8sC_B8cE

Module 6

Monitoring

SCOPE

This module is intended to help the learner to improve their understanding of the importance of monitoring and project performance reviews and how monitoring activities are conducted under results-based management (RBM).

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this module are to:

- Deepen the learners understanding of the monitoring process and its importance in RBM
- Expose the learner to project performance reviews as part of the monitoring process
- Highlight the importance of data management in the monitoring process

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Understand and explain monitoring in the context of results-based M&E
- Distinguish between implementation monitoring and results monitoring
- Understand the importance of project performance review mechanisms
- Understand key considerations for data management in project monitoring

Monitoring

“An intervention cannot be called an intervention if it is not progress monitored. An intervention without progress monitoring is just an activity” - Unknown

What is monitoring?

Monitoring is an ongoing systematic process of collecting and analysing data at multiple points throughout the policy/project/programme cycle, to check the progress of an intervention. This data is used to plan, monitor and improve the programme/project/policy. Monitoring seeks to answer the following key questions:

1. Were target beneficiaries reached by the project or intervention?
2. Was the programme or intervention implemented in an efficient (time and resources) manner? Was the objective achieved within the planned budget or were additional resources needed? If so, why?
3. Was the intervention implemented in the same manner in different locations/departments? If so, why was this and how did the implementation approach vary?



Importance of monitoring

Collecting and analysing data for project indicators on an ongoing basis is an important part of monitoring. This in turn allows for:

- provision of real-time information on progress towards the achievement of outcomes;
- identification of strengths, weaknesses, and problems as they occur;
- timely corrective action to be taken during project implementation, increasing the likelihood of achieving the expected outcomes;
- generation of data that serves as a critical foundation for evaluations.

Results based monitoring

In the context of results-based management (RBM), results-based monitoring takes account of implementation monitoring as well as results monitoring. These are critical to the effective management of resources and decision-making. Traditionally, management involved monitoring annual work plans with activities and assigned responsibilities, using a gantt chart or some other

tool to aid the tracking of activities and outputs. However, what is often lacking is information on whether the desired results are being achieved. In fact, successful completion of all the activities on a work plan does not translate to desired goals or outcomes. Through results based monitoring, there is an alignment of activities to outcomes.

A distinction is made between *results monitoring* and *implementation monitoring* (See **figure 6.1**) In *results monitoring*, for example, emphasis is placed on the ongoing tracking of outcome indicators. An example is ‘the number of women in targeted communities who gained employment within 6 months of completing a skills training programme’. *Implementation monitoring*, on the other hand, not only tracks inputs, activities and outputs, but also seeks to align strategies and plans to targets, which are in turn aligned to outcomes. According to the World Bank (2004), implementation monitoring “tracks the means and strategies (that is, those inputs, activities, and outputs found in annual or multi year work plans) used to achieve a given outcome. These means and strategies are supported by the use of management tools, including budgetary resources, staffing, and activity planning”. In other words, it emphasises the extent to which inputs enable the achievement of outputs and in turn, how these align to the outcomes that must be achieved.

Figure 6.1 Results based monitoring

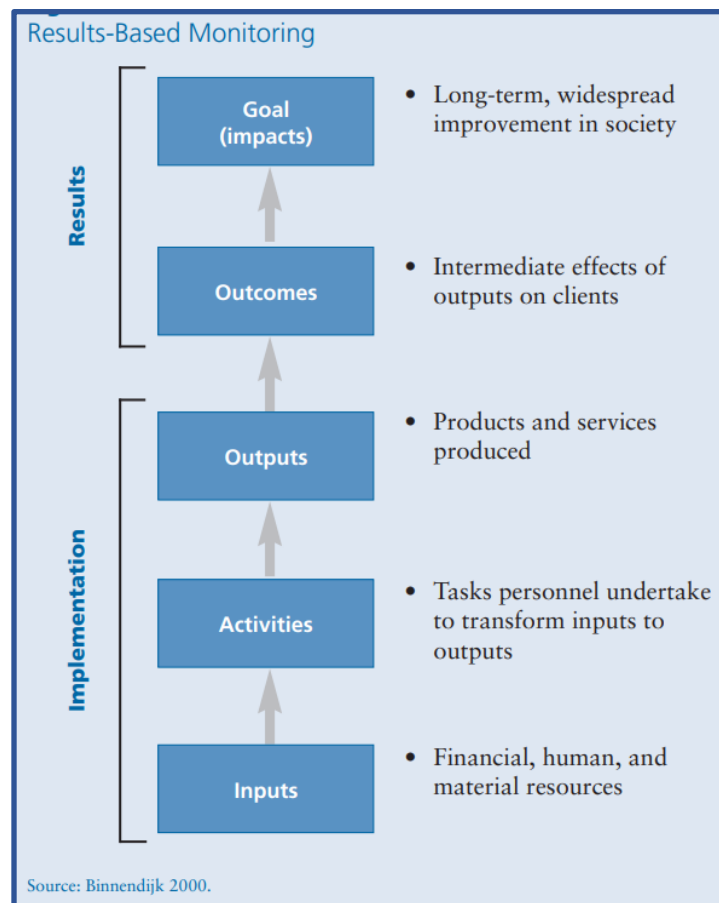
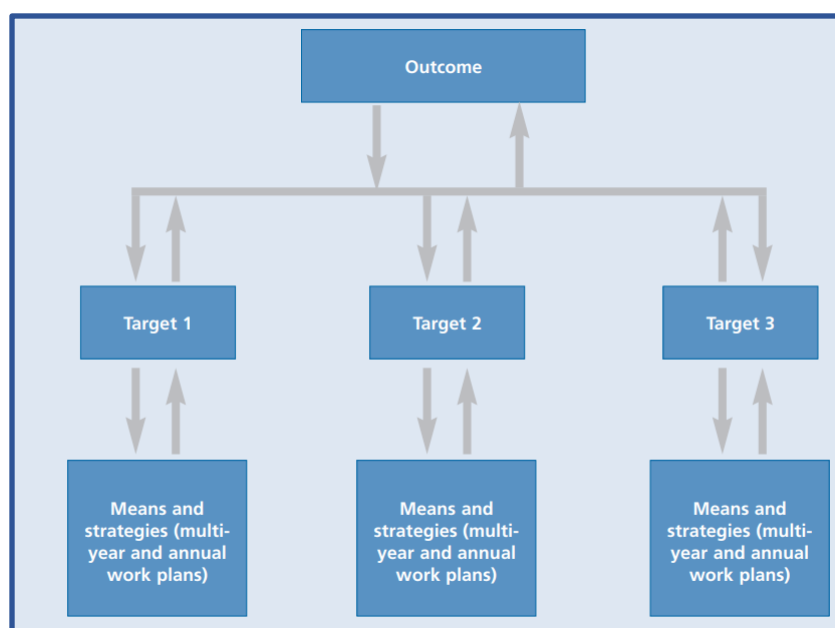


Figure 6.2 demonstrates the link between implementation monitoring and results monitoring through the linkages between work plans, targets and outcomes and the ongoing flow of information up and down the system. This is possible because every target is an interim effort on the way to achieving an outcome. Thus, the means and strategy (through the plans) and budget should be developed and implemented to achieve the targets.

Figure 6.2 Links between implementation monitoring and results monitoring



Source: World Bank (2004)

Project performance reviews

Project performance reviews are necessary for monitoring as they present an opportunity to review and assess how the project is being implemented, challenges encountered, lessons learned, as well as how the budget was executed during the reporting period. Performance reviews may take various forms, including:

- monthly/quarterly/semi-annual and annual review meetings with the project team to monitor progress on activities and budget over the reporting period,
- data interpretation workshops to review progress on results; and
- adaptive management sessions where time is deliberately set aside to reflect on lessons learned and to ensure that recommendations and adjustments to the implementation of the intervention can be incorporated into the new planning cycle. These sessions should be timed so that they occur prior to the annual work planning cycle; this ensures that feedback from the session can be taken into account into the development of work plans, including annual target setting, and in alignment with budgets.

Data management for monitoring

An important but often overlooked area in project monitoring is the development of the management information system, data entry, data quality and efficient flow of data to a central repository, as well as guidelines for use of the data (IEG/World Bank, 2012). Key considerations are:

- **How data that is gathered is recorded;** data must be recorded in a manner that will make it easy to report on indicators and provide the information needed at the required levels of disaggregation;
- **How the data will be transferred to the person/unit maintaining the system;** standard operating procedures or protocols should be developed to inform how data will be routed from the source to a central system where it can be further processed and managed. This may include physical as well as electronic transfers of information from source;
- **How the data will be processed and stored;** an efficient and affordable system must be put in place to ensure secure and efficient processing and aggregation of incoming data for results-based monitoring;
- **How the data will be aggregated or generated for reporting;** a system for converting aggregated data into the required reporting format must be in place to ensure timely reporting and decision making; and
- **How the information can be accessed for learning and use in decision-making;** a structure and system must be put in place to facilitate compilation of data on achievements for reporting and inputs into project performance reviews.

References

1. UNDG (2011). Results-Based Management Handbook: Harmonizing RBM concepts and approaches for improved development results at country level.
<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>
2. World Bank (2012). Designing a results framework for achieving results: A how-to guide.
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/WB%202012%20designing%20results%20framework.pdf>

Additional Resources

1. Video: Monitoring System Explained
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cidleRVdtPI>

Module 7

Evaluation

SCOPE

This module is intended to help the learner to improve their understanding of the importance of evaluations and how they are conducted under results-based management (RBM).

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this module are to:

- Deepen the learners understanding of the evaluation process and its importance in RBM
- Outline the difference between outcome and process evaluations
- Describe the evaluation process: developing evaluation criteria, developing evaluation questions and plans and producing evaluation report

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Understand and explain the importance and use of evaluations in the context of results-based M&E
- Know and understand why, when and how to use process vs outcome evaluations
- Know the key elements of the evaluation plan
- Craft appropriate evaluation questions for a project

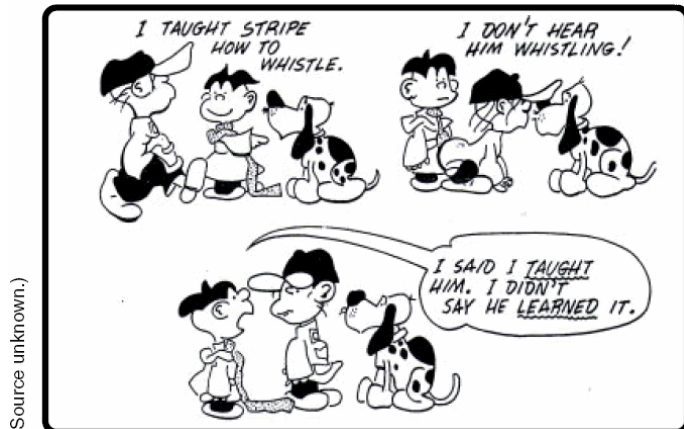
Evaluation

The question should not be, “should we evaluate?” but rather, “can we afford not to evaluate?”
- Unknown

What is evaluation?

Evaluation is defined as the systematic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the design, implementation and results of an ongoing or completed intervention. The core objective of evaluations is to provide managers, donors and other key stakeholders with information that is needed to inform the implementation or design of ongoing or new projects, programmes or policies.

Unlike monitoring which is ongoing through the life cycle of a project, evaluations occur on a periodic basis, usually at the midpoint and end of a programme, project or policy. Notwithstanding, it is important to ensure that at a minimum, the key evaluation questions and approaches are determined and agreed upon during the project planning phase and in consultation with key stakeholders.



Why evaluate?

Evaluations serve different purposes within the private and public sectors. When planning evaluations, the purpose and intended users of the evaluation results should be clearly established at the outset of an intervention. This ensures accountability, ownership and use of the findings. According to World Bank (2004), evaluations can be used to:

1. inform decisions on how to (re)allocate resources
2. reassess underlying assumptions about the causes of a problem
3. identify emerging problems
4. support decision-making on competing or best alternatives
5. support public sector reform and Innovation
6. build consensus on the causes of a problem and how to respond

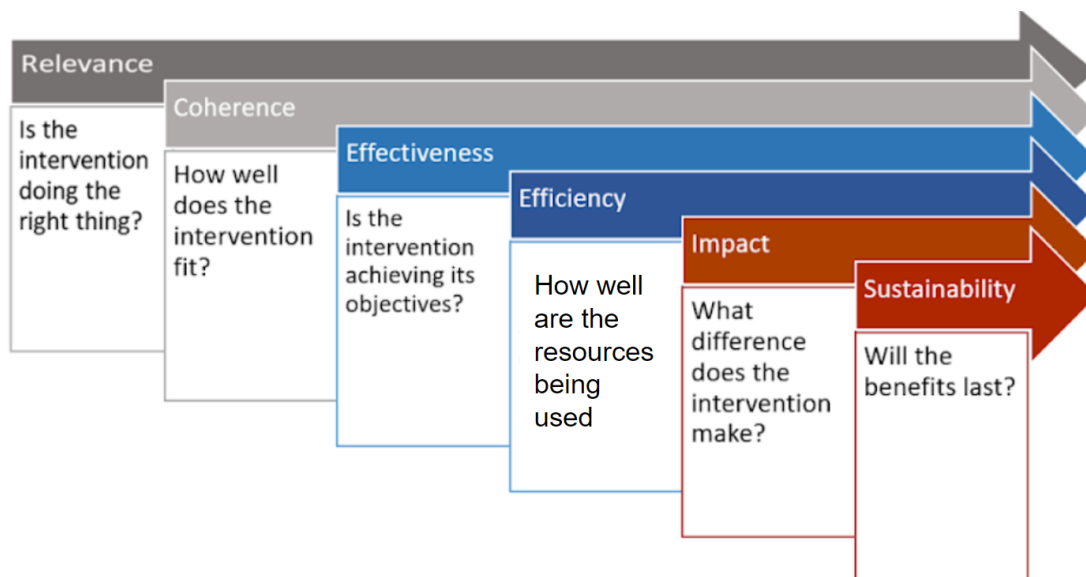
The evaluation process - An overview

Undertaking an evaluation involves several processes and tasks. According to BetterEvaluation (2014), the processes and methods that are involved in planning and conducting an evaluation may be organised around seven clusters of tasks, which can serve as a useful guide for project managers as well as evaluators themselves. The seven clusters are: 1) managing; 2) defining; 3) framing; 4) describing; 5) understanding causes; 6) synthesising; and 7) reporting and supporting use (See **figure 7.2**). Further description of each cluster of tasks is presented in the course handouts.

Evaluation criteria

The OECD DAC has defined six evaluation criteria which provide a useful framework for evaluating the merit of an intervention, i.e. policy, strategy, programme, project or activity. They are **relevance**, **coherence**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency**, **impact** and **sustainability** (See **table XX**).¹ The criteria can be used to look at processes (how change happens) as well as results (what changed). Table XX further describes each of the six criteria. The broad question addressed by each of the OECD DAC criteria are highlighted in **figure 7.1** below.

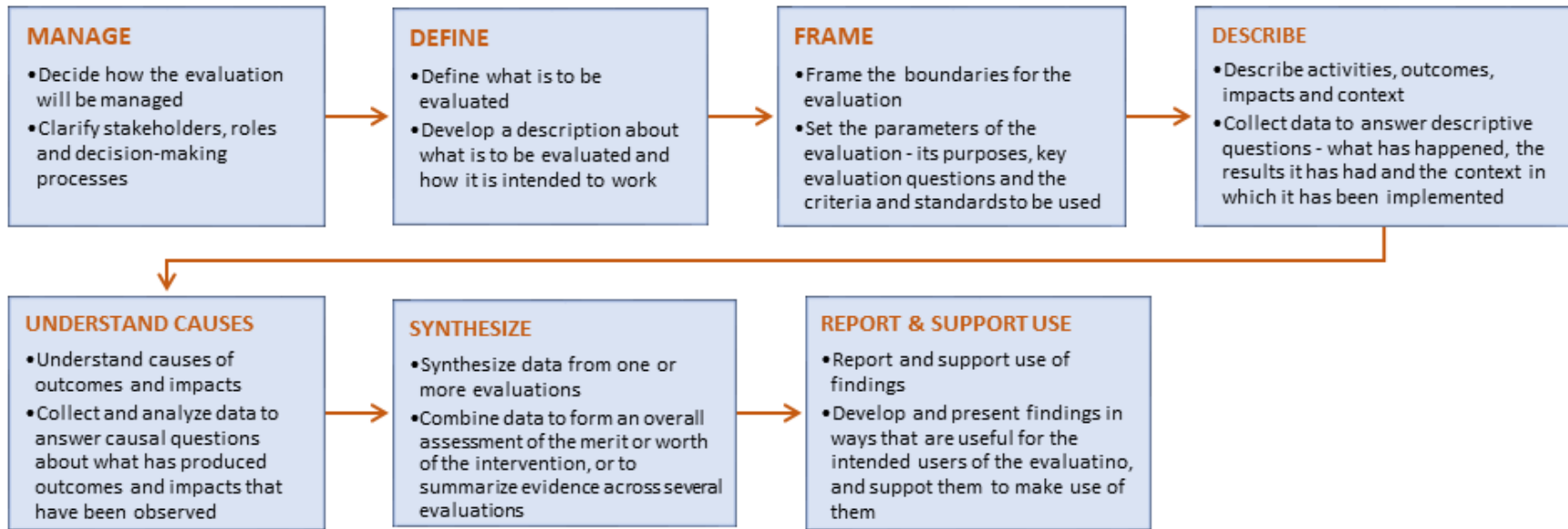
Figure 7.1 Broad question addressed by each OECD DAC criterion



¹ OECD DAC outlines two principles for the use of the criteria. According to principle one, the criteria should be understood in the context of the individual evaluation, the intervention being evaluated, and the stakeholders involved. The evaluation questions and what you intend to do with the answers, should inform how the criteria are specifically interpreted and analysed. According to principle two, the use of the criteria depends on the purpose of the evaluation. The criteria should not be applied mechanistically. More or less time and resources may be devoted to the evaluative analysis for each criterion depending on the evaluation purpose.

Well planned and properly conducted evaluations offer useful information that provides responses to a wide range of questions regarding the performance of a project or programme and the achievement of desired results. However, great care and attention must be given to ensuring that the appropriate questions are asked, while taking into consideration the interests of key stakeholders, the feasibility of the evaluation approach, as well as the available resources. Later, we will give attention to the process for developing evaluation questions with special focus on process and outcome evaluations. However, examples of evaluation questions, aligned to each of the evaluation criteria are highlighted in **Table 7.1**.

Figure 7.2: Framework highlighting clusters of tasks required for planning an evaluation



Source: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/Rainbow%20Framework.pdf>

Table 7.1 OECD DAC evaluation criteria with sample questions

<p>Relevance</p>	<p>Sample Questions</p>
<p>The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.</p> <p>The definition of relevance comprises four main dimensions: responding to needs, policies and priorities; being sensitive and responsive to context; quality of design; and responsiveness over time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the intervention being delivered as intended according to project design? ● Does the intervention meet the needs and priorities of project stakeholders? ● What are the financial and organizational characteristics, organizational mission, and coverage area of beneficiaries who have received the intervention? ● Have the appropriate (as defined in project design documents) beneficiaries received the intervention?
<p>Coherence</p>	<p>Sample Questions</p>
<p>The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in an institution, sector or country. Dimensions include (i) <i>internal coherence</i>, i.e. the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government; also, consistency of the intervention with international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres; and (ii) <i>external coherence</i> i.e. the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context, including complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with others; the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does the project/programme create duplication of efforts? ● Does it undermine or supplement the effects of any existing programs or policies? ● Can the programme succeed/fail if other programmes or support-system falters?
<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>Sample Questions</p>
<p>The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups. It can provide insight into whether an intervention has attained its planned results, the process by which this was done, which factors were decisive in this process and whether there were any unintended effects. It is concerned with the most closely attributable results and should be differentiated from impact, which examines higher-level effects and broader changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To what extent did the intended outcome in targeted regions occur over the course of the project? ● Did outcomes differ by region or gender? ● Did the project meet its targets in each component of the project? Why or why not? ● Are key stakeholders satisfied with the performance of the implementer in training youth in appropriate skills? Why or why not?

<p>Efficiency</p> <p>The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. Dimensions include <i>economic efficiency</i>, i.e. conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context), <i>operational efficiency</i> (i.e. how well the intervention was managed) and <i>timeliness</i> (within the intended timeframe).</p>	<p>Sample Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the human and financial resources used as planned? • How quickly did the project respond to requests from individuals/regions? • Were resources redirected as needs changed? • Were logistics/procurement decisions optimal? • Were the results achieved in the intended timeframe? If so, to what extent? • Were efforts made to overcome obstacles and mitigate delays in how the intervention was managed, as the situation evolved?
<p>Impact</p> <p>The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. It addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention; seeks to identify the social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term/broader in scope than those captured under ‘effectiveness’. The definition includes the key concepts of higher-level effects, significance, differential impacts, unintended effects and transformational change.</p>	<p>Sample Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the intervention caused a significant change in the lives of beneficiaries? • How did the intervention cause higher-level effects (such as changes in norms or systems)? • Did the intended target groups benefit equally from the intervention? • Is the intervention leading to other changes, including “scalable” or “replicable” results?
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.</p> <p>It includes an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional capacities of the systems needed to sustain net benefits over time. Involves analyses of resilience, risks and potential trade-offs.</p>	<p>Sample Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities and inputs are needed for project outputs, outcomes and impacts to be sustained? Is funding available? • What mentoring on technical, management, financial, reporting, fundraising, is needed as project phases over/down, before phasing out? • What are knowledge assets that need to be sustained and how will they be retained post-exit, e.g. databases of participant/ project data, reports and evaluations?

Sources:

1. https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/tips_for_developing_good_evaluation_questions_2016.pdf;
2. <https://valuingvoices.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Exit-For-Sustainability-Checklists-Dec2020-2.pdf>; and
3. <https://neerman.org/blogs/how-to-ask-the-right-evaluation-questions-oecd-dac-criteria-helps/>

Evaluation timing

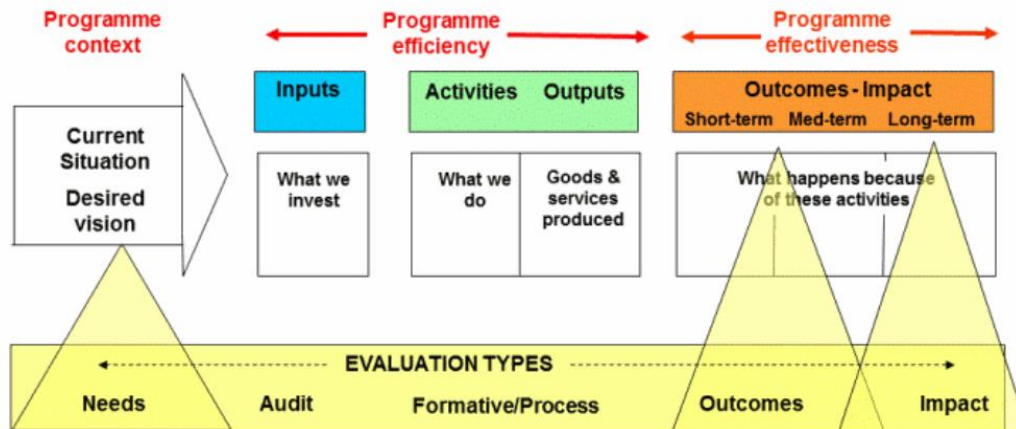
Generally, evaluations are undertaken at four (4) periods of the programme cycle, and the specific point at which an evaluation is to be done should be expressed in the evaluation plan as either of the following:

1. **Initial (ex-ante)** - This evaluation is undertaken prior to the commencement of the programme intervention and it ***focuses on its relevance and coherence***.
2. **Mid-term** - This is done for an ongoing intervention and is generally done at the midway point of the interventions stipulated time frame. This evaluation will ***focus on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency*** of the programme initiative.
3. **Terminal (complete)** - This evaluation is undertaken at the completion of the programme intervention's implementation, and it ***focuses on the effectiveness and sustainability*** of the intervention.
4. **Impact (ex-post)** - This evaluation is usually undertaken 3 – 5 years after the completion of the programme intervention and it ***focuses on the impact and sustainability***.

Process versus outcome evaluations

The appropriateness or relevance of an evaluation is informed by the stage of a project and the extent to which progress can be assessed. In this course, we limit the discussion to process and outcome evaluations. The distinction between process and outcome evaluations may be illustrated using the key elements of the logic model and a demonstration of how the focus of the evaluation varies through the course of the project (See **figure 7.3**).

Figure 7.3 Project logic model illustrating how different evaluation types and approaches may be used to measure progress.



A project logic model showing how different evaluation types and approaches can be used to measure progress through different stages of implementation

Source: <https://learningforsustainability.net/evaluation-questions/>

Process evaluations are geared towards understanding aspects of the project relating to the inputs, activities and outputs of the project, i.e implementation. They provide useful insight into how the outcomes or impact of the project was achieved by addressing matters relating to the operations of the programme or project with questions such as *who? what? when? where? how?* and *how many?* These questions help to provide information on: 1) whether activities were accomplished; 2) quality of intervention components; 3) how well activities were implemented; 4) whether the target audience was reached; and 5) how external factors influenced delivery (CDC, 2018).

Outcome evaluations on the other hand, focus on the short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes or results of the project. As much as possible, outcome evaluations aim to identify connections between an intervention and quantifiable effects of a project (CDC, 2008). They allow project implementers and key stakeholders to examine the effectiveness of the programme in contributing to changes, effects or impacts in knowledge, skills, attitudes and opinions (short-term) of target beneficiaries, their behaviours and actions (intermediate) and



ultimately, their conditions and status (long-term). Notable differences between process and outcome evaluations are summarised in **table 7.2** below.

Table 7.2: Comparison of process and outcome evaluations

Feature	Process Evaluation	Outcome Evaluation
Goal	To inform changes or improvements in the operations of the project	To identify the results of a project or programme
Focus	Emphasis on what the project is doing, to what extent and how consistently it is being implemented as planned	Emphasis on the change in beneficiaries' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours and/or conditions as a results of the intervention
Design	Does not require a comparison group	May include a comparison group (impact evaluation)
Data Collection	Usually employs quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches	Usually requires quantitative data and application of statistical techniques

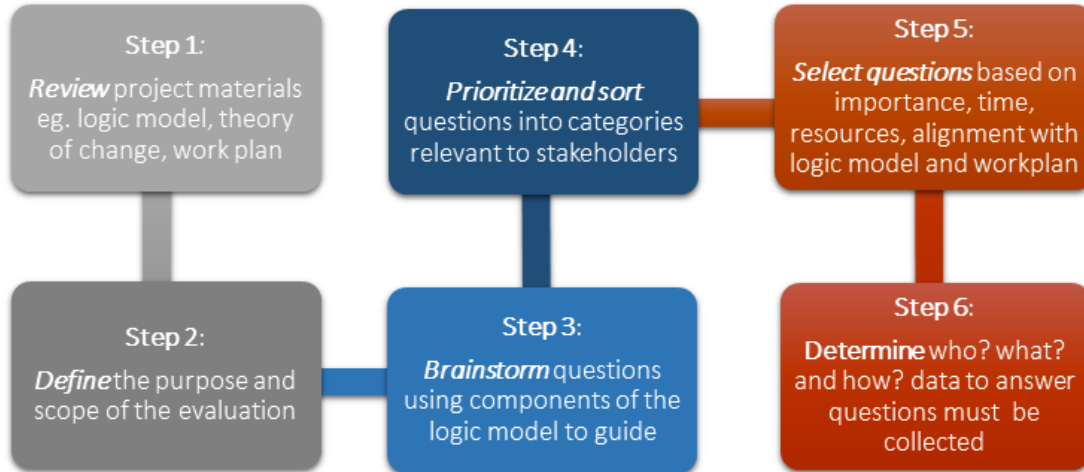
Developing questions for process and outcome evaluations

As previously mentioned, evaluation questions should be carefully developed as they give focus to and help guide the overall planning and implementation of the evaluation. Once answered, the evaluation questions provide a solid basis for determining whether the project has maintained fidelity to its design and whether there is need to make adjustments to delivery of the project or further, revisit the assumptions and refine the project logic and design.

In most instances, external evaluators are engaged to lead the evaluation planning and implementation processes. While it is the responsibility of the evaluator to further refine the evaluation questions, it is nonetheless important for members of the project team to have, at minimum, an understanding of the linkages between the purpose, uses and evaluation questions, as this allows for a more meaningful engagement in the planning process. In this section, emphasis is placed on the development of evaluation questions for process and outcome evaluations but first, we take a look at the basic steps required for developing evaluation questions

The process to develop evaluation questions requires collaboration between project staff, donors, the evaluation team and other stakeholders, including the intended users of the evaluation. The six main steps to develop the evaluation questions are highlighted in **figure 7.4**.

Figure 7.4: Six steps to developing evaluation questions



Crafting process evaluation questions

Process evaluation questions are mainly concerned with implementation. They are centred around the process-related components of the logic model such as the *inputs*, *activities* and *outputs*. Exploratory verbs such as describe, discover, seek and explore may be used to characterise process evaluation questions. When crafting outcome evaluation questions, emphasis must be placed on what was needed, what was done and the products resulting from the intervention or delivery of services. The structure of a process evaluation question may take the following form:

[Who, what, where, when, why, how, how many]	is the	[program, model, component]	for	[evaluation purpose] ?
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Examples:

- How is the project being implemented? What are the gaps? Is it meeting the targets?
- Are staff implementing the program within the same/required timeframe?
- Who is being reached by the programme? Are staff implementing the program with the same intended target population?
- What variations in implementation, if any, occur by site? Why are variations occurring? Are they likely to affect program outcomes?
- Are there unique challenges to implementing the program by site?
- What did or did not get implemented as planned?

- What congruence was there between what was intended to be implemented and what actually happened?
- How appropriate and close to the plan were the costs; the time requirements; the staff capacity and capability; the availability of required financial resources, facilities, and staff; and political support?
- What unanticipated (and thus unintended) outputs or outcomes emerged from the implementation phase?

Crafting outcome evaluation questions

Outcome evaluation questions are mainly concerned with the effects, changes, or impacts that occurred as a result of the implementation. They are centred around the process-related components of the logic model such as the *short outcomes*, *intermediate outcomes* and *impacts*. When crafting outcome evaluation questions, the outcome that is being measured should be clearly specified. The structure of an outcome evaluation question may take the following form:


Did	[model, program, program component]	have a	[change, effect]	on	[outcome(s)]	for	[individuals, groups, or organisations?] ²
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Examples:

- Did participants report the desired change after the implementation of the programme?
- What are the short or long-term results reported by participants?
- Did program beneficiaries change their (knowledge, attitude, behaviour, or condition) after program completion?
- Did all types of program beneficiaries benefit from the program or only specific subgroups?
- Did program participants increase their understanding of prevention after program completion?
- Did program participants feel more confident in the self-management of their pre-existing conditions after program completion?
- Did program participants improve their skills in searching for and using health information after program completion?

² The structure of an impact evaluation question may take the following format: Did [model, program, program component] have an [impact] on [outcome(s)] for [individuals, groups, or organisations] **relative to a comparison group?**

- Were program participants more likely to search for and use health information on their own after program

	<p>What are the benefits of involving stakeholders in the planning phase of an evaluation?</p> <p>What are the benefits of developing the key evaluation questions and approaches during the project planning phase?</p>
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Characteristics of a quality evaluation

Understanding the characteristics of a quality evaluation is helpful in determining whether the findings from an evaluation should be used. Alongside an assessment of the validity, reliability and other measures of data credibility, consideration should also be given to the following six features of a quality evaluation (World Bank, 2004):

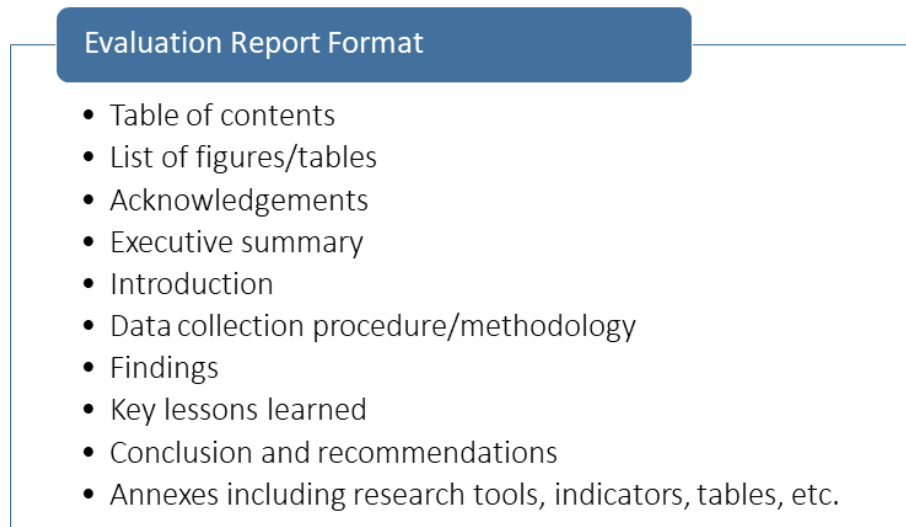
1. **Impartiality:** free from political influence or other bias; both strengths and weaknesses are presented;
2. **Usefulness:** information is relevant, timely and in an easy to understand format; evaluation findings address the evaluation questions;
3. **Technical adequacy:** meets technical standards for evaluations including appropriate study designs including sampling procedures, instrument design, analysis and evidence-based conclusions and recommendations;
4. **Stakeholder involvement:** Stakeholders were active partners in the evaluation effort; this builds trust in the information and ownership of findings and provides basis for a commitment to use of the findings as needed;
5. **Feedback and dissemination:** information is shared to relevant stakeholders in an appropriate and timely manner; and
6. **Value for money:** Just enough resources are allotted to gain the information needed

The evaluation report

All evaluations must conclude with a report. An evaluation report details the approach and procedures used to inform the findings of the process. The core elements of an evaluation report are presented in **figure 7.5**. Specific elements may vary depending on donor requirements,

however this should serve as a general guide. An evaluation report comprises the following features. See **module 8** for a more extensive discussion on writing evaluation reports.

Figure 7.5: Evaluation Report Format



References

1. Americorps. How to Develop the Right Research Questions for Program Evaluation
https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2015_04_16_AskingtheRightResearchQuestionsSlides_ORE.pdf
2. CDC (2011). Developing an Effective Evaluation Plan.
<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/CDC-Evaluation-Workbook-508.pdf>
3. CDC (2018). Evaluation Briefs. Developing Process Evaluation Questions
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief4.pdf>
5. Selecting Evaluation Questions and Types
<https://learningforsustainability.net/evaluation-questions/>

Additional Resources

1. Good Evaluation Questions: A Checklist to Help Focus Your Evaluation
[AssessingEvaluationQuestionChecklist.pdf \(cdc.gov\)](#)
2. Handout - Better Evaluation Rainbow Framework (2014).
<https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/Rainbow%20Framework.pdf>
3. Neerman (2020). How to ask the Right Evaluation Questions? OECD-DAC criteria helps!
<https://neerman.org/blogs/how-to-ask-the-right-evaluation-questions-oecd-dac-criteria-helps/>
4. Video: What is evaluation
<https://evalu-ate.org/video/what-is-evaluation/>
5. Video: Evaluation Questions
<https://evalu-ate.org/video/evaluation-questions/>

Module 8

Using Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Results

SCOPE

This session is intended to increase the knowledge of the learner as it relates to using M&E data to create, use and disseminate reports and the importance of M&E reports in organisational and project performance management and learning

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this module are to:

- To familiarise learners with the content of M&E reports
- To familiarise users with the process of creating, using and disseminating M&E reports
- To allow users to understand the importance of M&E reporting to organisational and project performance management and learning

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Understand how to create and use M&E reports
- Understand the relationship between M&E data collection and reporting
- Understand the importance of M&E reporting to organisational and project performance management and learning

Using M&E Results

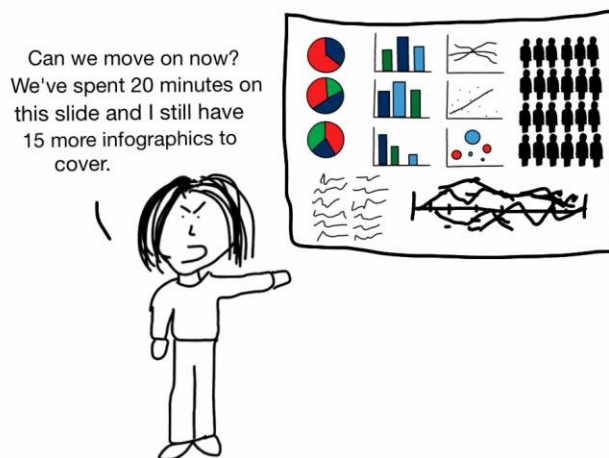
“The goal is to turn data into information, and information into insight” - Carly Fiorina

Using M&E Results

Hopefully by now you would be convinced that monitoring and evaluation are critical components of any project or programme. Through M&E, organisations collect and analyse data, and determine if a project/program has fulfilled its goals. Monitoring begins right away and extends through the duration of the project. Evaluation comes after and assesses how well the program performed. A good monitoring system ensures no one is left in the dark and that stakeholders have the information that they need on project progress and results, which facilitates learning and decision making.

M&E Reporting and Learning

Monitoring and evaluation allows for responsive programming by identifying and monitoring changing contexts and needs. In so doing, it allows implementers and stakeholders to identify “what works” and “what does not,” and by extension “what to do more of” or “less of”. All this is however only true if the M&E system allows for proper reporting and learning. The reporting and sharing of M&E results, allow stakeholders to understand and learn from the project i.e., allows for extraction of lessons learned and the identification of best practices. It also looks at the efficacy or lack thereof of some activities/interventions, which did not have the intended impact.



freshspectrum.co

What are M&E reports?

The M&E report is the result of the process of writing up the collected data, key analysis about the project achievements related to achievements against expected outputs, outcomes and impacts stated in the project or program documents. Stakeholders are able to use reports to look at the efficacy or lack thereof activities/interventions, to determine which had the intended impact or not. Proper reporting of M&E results therefore allows for the gaining of understanding about how and why a project/intervention is working and can help in the decision-making process about the best use of resources. For example, reports from outcome and impact evaluations often provide insight about how best to make necessary improvements. Such reports may, for example, allow one to identify problems early in implementation, and respond promptly by modifying program strategy, reassigning staff or shifting financial resources to improve the chances of

meeting program goals and objectives. M&E results should therefore be disseminated and used on an ongoing basis to ensure that they have a role in improving and strengthening your program. Specifically, M&E results should be used to:

- highlight program strengths and accomplishments;
- improve program management and planning;
- identify weaknesses of program implementation;]
- determine demand for service modification or expansion;
- assess quality of care, identify future research needs; and
- strengthen funding proposals

M&E reports are produced and distributed on a regular basis as defined by user needs and the M&E plan. M&E reports can be developed for internal or external stakeholders and can be prepared on any agreed upon frequency - weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually or on an annual basis. Reports generated more frequently e.g., weekly and bi-weekly reports are usually used for internal (project management) purposes and are based primarily on ongoing monitoring activities and the review of process indicators and are used by the project team to review project progress against targets and budget. Less frequent reports such as monthly, quarterly bi-annual or annual reports - are normally produced for senior stakeholders - management, donors, etc., in order to keep them apprised of the project progress over the period. They are much more comprehensive and detailed and often require the appending of evidence on the progress of the intervention, project inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, lessons learned, recommendations etc. These are shared with a wider audience, including partners, donors and other stakeholders (See **table 8.1**).

Characteristic of Good M&E Reporting

Relevant and useful. Reporting should serve a specific purpose.


Timely. Reporting should be done on-time for its intended use.

Complete. Reporting should provide a sufficient amount of information for its intended use.

Table 8.1 Comparison between internal and external reporting in M&E

Internal Reporting	External Reporting
Primary audience is the project/program team and the organisation in which it operates	Primary audience is stakeholders outside of the immediate team/ organisation (e.g., donors, beneficiaries, partner organisations, international NGOs, and governments)
Primary purpose is to inform ongoing project management and decision-making (monitoring reporting)	Primary purpose is typically for accountability, credibility, to solicit funds, celebrate accomplishments and highlight any challenges and how they are being addressed
Frequency is on a regular basis according to project monitoring needs	Frequency is less often in the form of periodic assessments (evaluations)
Content is comprehensive in content, providing information that can be extracted for various external reporting needs	Content is concise, typically abstracted from internal reports and focused on communication points (requirements) specific to the targeted audience
The project team typically determines format according to what will best serve the project/ program needs and its organisational culture	Format is often determined by external requirements or preferences of the intended audience

Image Source: *The Centre for Civil Society and Nonprofit Management*



- Why do we need to understand about report audience (internal and external audience)?
- Who are you internal and external stakeholders?
- What frequency do you think is best suited to your project?

Developing M&E Reports

It is important to fully think through and plan how M&E data will be reported to ensure that it is put to effective use. This is critical as no matter how well data may be collected and analysed, if it is not well presented it cannot be well used. Drafting report should be focus on:

1. **Determine The Reporting Frequency:** It is critical to identify realistic reporting deadlines. They should be feasible in relation to the time, resources and capacity necessary to produce and distribute reports including data collection, analysis and feedback. Some key points to keep in mind in planning the reporting frequency:
 - Reporting frequency should be based upon the informational needs of the intended audience, timed so that it can inform key project/program planning, decision-making and accountability events;

- Reporting frequency will also be influenced by the complexity and cost of data collection. For instance, it is much easier and affordable to report on a process indicator for the number of workshop participants than an outcome indicator that measures behavioural change in a random sample, household survey (which entails more time and resources).
 - Data may be collected regularly, but not everything needs to be reported to everyone all the time.
2. **Determine specific reporting formats:** Once the reporting audience (who), purpose (why) and timing (when) have been identified, it is then important to determine the key reporting formats that are most appropriate for the intended user(s). This can vary from written documents to video presentations posted on the internet. Sometimes the reporting format must adhere to strict requirements, while at other times there can be more flexibility. The International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Society (IFRC) M&E Report Format is a good representation of the information required for most M&E Reports (See **figure 8.1**).
 3. **Identify people responsible for reporting products:** It is important to specifically identify the people who will be responsible for each type of report. This can be the same person identified in the M&E plan who collects indicator data, or it may be another person who specifically prepares the data to communicate to others.

Disseminating and Communicating M&E Results

In the context of M&E, communication can be described as a process of sharing project findings with stakeholders. M&E communication is characterised by a clear purpose, clear content, reliable sources, and effective transmission channels, which make the findings available and usable to all project stakeholders. There are many report formats or templates that have been adopted and used by different organisations to share M&E results.

M&E Dissemination Strategies and Tools

Disseminating M&E findings is often complex because different audiences have different information needs. To be successful, you will need to involve key stakeholders to establish their information needs, budget adequate resources, and develop a dissemination plan beforehand. Based on mapping results, dissemination strategies and tools could among others include:

1. **PowerPoint Presentations.** It consists of slides, which may contain text, images, and other media, such as audio clips and movies. Sound effects and animated transitions can also be included to add extra appeal to the presentation.
2. **Press Release.** It is a tool made to announce something newsworthy in the most objective way possible. The whole purpose of a press release is to get coverage and get noticed by a target audience.

3. **Fact Sheet.** A fact sheet is a one-page document that provides basic information on a specific topic in an easy- and quick-to-read format.
4. **Conference Convening.** It means to bring people together or to come together for a common purpose. vi).
5. **Policy Briefs.** These are key tools to present research and recommendations to a non-specialized audience. They serve as a vehicle for providing evidence-based policy advice to help readers make informed decisions.
6. **Social Media.** These are applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking like mobile phones, websites, blogs.
7. **Written Reports.** This is a written account of something that one has observed, heard, done, or investigated. It is a systematic and well-organised presentation of facts and findings of a M&E event that has already taken place.

Figure 8.1: Sample M&E Report Format

International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Society (IFRC) M&E Report Format:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project/Program Information. Summary of key project/program information, e.g., name, dates, manager, codes, etc. ● Executive Summary. Overall summary of the report, capturing the project status and highlighting key accomplishments, challenges, and planned actions. ● Financial Status. Concise overview of the project/program’s financial status based on the project/program’s monthly finance reports for the reporting quarter. ● Situation/Context Analysis (positive and negative factors). Identify and discuss any factors that affect the project/program’s operating context and implementation ● Analysis of Implementation. Critical section of analysis based on the objectives as stated in the project/program’s logframe and data recorded in the project/program Indicator Tracking Table (ITT). ● Stakeholder Participation and Complaints. Summary of key stakeholders’ participation and any complaints that have been filed. ● Partnership Agreements and Other Key Actors. Lists any project/program partners and agreements (e.g., project/program agreement, MoU), and any related comments. ● Cross-Cutting Issues. Summary of activities undertaken, or results achieved that relate to any cross-cutting issues (gender equality, environmental sustainability, etc). ● Project/Program Staffing – human resources. Lists any new personnel or other changes in project/program staffing. Also, should include whether any management support is needed to resolve any issues. ● Exit/Sustainability Strategy Summary. Update on the progress of the sustainability strategy to ensure the project/program objectives will be able to continue after handover to local stakeholders. ● PMER Status. Concise update of the project/program’s key planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities. ● Key Lessons. Highlights key lessons and how they can be applied to this or other similar projects/programs in future. ● Report Annex. Project/program’s ITT and any other supplementary information.

Image Source: *The Centre for Civil Society and Nonprofit Management*

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Learning is the process through which information gathered as part of the M&E process is considered and used to improve processes and performance at both the project and organisational level. Learning is therefore not just an output from a project but can also be an input to new project ideas or even the organisation's strategic plans.

Figure 8.1 Reporting, reflection and learning in the project cycle



Image Source: *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

Learning in the context of M&E therefore allows organisations to:

1. identify what works well or what does not work well, in particular, which aspects of a project has more influence on the achievement of results;
2. identify which strategies can be replicated (and in some cases scaled-up), along with required adjustments
3. allows for the comparison of results across projects to determine efficacy, value for money and impact
4. allows for the aggregation of learnings from different projects to guide the strategic development of new projects and funding opportunities.

The process of learning occurs right throughout the project and can be based on information from ongoing monitoring activity as well as from the completion of a formal evaluation process.

Organisations often document their learning plans as part of the M&E Process. The learning plan often combines formal and informal learning and reflection meetings for diverse types of stakeholders, including frequency and required attendees. It is important that the learning plan identifies all stakeholders as it is good practice to share appropriate results and learnings with stakeholders. This mitigates the risk of learnings not being shared and as a result not being taken account of in the decision-making process. It is also important that the organisation views itself as a learning organisation and supports this by ensuring that there is appropriate documentation of processes and reports (paper based, photos, videos etc.); and appropriate storage (filing - electronic, paper based) of MEL outputs in order to keep learning within your organisation when key staffs leave.

References

1. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2002). Handbook for Monitoring and Evaluation.
https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/training/capacity-building-resources/basic-me-concepts-portuguese/IFRC_Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation%20handbook.pdf
2. The Centre for Civil Society and Nonprofit Management (2016). PCM Training Manual Narrative Module 5: Project Monitoring & Evaluation (PME) in Project Cycle Management
https://csnm.kku.ac.th/sites/default/files/public/learning/module/attachments/PCM-Module-05_Volume_01.pdf

Additional Resources

1. Video: How to Monitor and Evaluate a Project - Reporting and Dissemination
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJEAFL2wvps>
2. Video: How to Write a Monitoring and Evaluation Report | Doing it the Right Way
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAZGKwIjHJc>