Some Guidelines for the Design of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Grant Scheme Operations

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I. Introduction

1. What is Monitoring and Evaluation?

Monitoring is the systematic collection of data to provide management, donors and other stakeholders with an indication of project or programme progress.

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project or programme, including its design, implementation, and results. Evaluation leads to more informed decisions, allowing those involved in the project or programme to learn from experience and to be accountable to donors and stakeholders.

Both Monitoring and Evaluation should be used to demonstrate accountability and to understand the dynamics of the project or programme being implemented. The differences in the objectives, methodology and purposes of Monitoring and Evaluation are shown in the table below. It is important to keep in mind that Monitoring does not replace Evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences between Outcome Monitoring and Outcome Evaluation</th>
<th>Outcome Monitoring</th>
<th>Outcome Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>To track changes from baseline conditions to desired outcomes.</td>
<td>To validate what results were achieved and how and why they were or were not achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Focuses on the outputs of projects or programmes.</td>
<td>Compares planned with intended outcomes achievement. Focuses on how and why outputs and strategies contributed to achievement of outcomes. Focuses on questions of relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Tracks and assesses performance (progress towards outcomes) through analysis and comparison of indicators over time.</td>
<td>Evaluates achievement of outcomes by comparing indicators before and after the intervention. Relies on monitoring data to information from external sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>Continuous and systematic by Task Managers, Project Managers, Programme Managers and key partners.</td>
<td>Time-bound, periodic, in-depth. External evaluators and partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Alerts managers to problems in performance, provides options for corrective actions and helps demonstrate accountability.</td>
<td>Provides managers with strategy and policy options, provides basis for learning and demonstrates accountability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results.

*Good monitoring is the foundation for good evaluation because it creates a repository of data and other information aimed at assisting evaluators in their work.*
2. Why Monitor and Evaluate?

A commitment to Monitoring and Evaluation allows project or programme managers to:

- Follow and control project or programme progress, including identifying problems during implementation;
- Understand and learn how and why a project or programme works;
- Obtain the information needed to improve a project or programme and avoid repeating mistakes;
- Document project achievements;
- Demonstrate impact, and prove that the project itself, not other factors, led to a distinct improvement for the target population.

3. Dimensions to Evaluation

There are essentially two dimensions of approach to the evaluation process: Programme-Level Evaluation and Project-Level Evaluation. Programme-level evaluation is conducted at the central level and concerns overall programme performance, while Project-level evaluation is conducted at the local level and is focused on the specific performance of the individual projects.

The purpose of evaluation is to inform donors and partners of the progress and outcome of a project or programme, to assess and enhance the effectiveness of grant making, and to analyse and disseminate the conclusions produced by the project-level evaluation among stakeholders. Additionally, the Programme evaluation outlines lessons learned and the critical success factors for replicating it or to enhance future effectiveness of related or successor programmes.

One method that can be applied to the evaluation of programme or project performance is a Theory-Based Evaluation. Theory-Based Evaluation is often used to assess the performance of projects with broad community participation and outcomes that are not easily measured with the tools and methods offered by statistical analysis or quantitative analysis alone. In the case of projects of this nature, it can be a challenge to measure outcomes statistically since information and its impact are difficult to quantify in statistical terms. Therefore, the use of the Theory-Based Evaluation method can be beneficial. The advantage of Theory-Based Evaluation is that the results highlight both the outcome of the project and the exact contributing factors. This is accomplished through the mapping logic of the project and by specifying and tracking determining factors.

Independent of the method selected, evaluation of projects should be participatory. A participatory evaluation involves the active participation of all the stakeholders of the project in the evaluation process. Advantages of this particular approach are that it creates
a sense of ownership of the evaluation process and its results among stakeholders, strengthens partnerships and enhances local learning and management capacity.

While conducting an evaluation, it is important to keep in mind that the ultimate purpose of the evaluation goes beyond simply reporting on performance to actually improving performance. It is customary to have an effective mechanism in place to incorporate the knowledge derived from an evaluation into the decision-making process and overall programme design and future management.

By practicing a participatory approach, choosing the most appropriate approach to evaluate the performance of the project, beginning the evaluation at the early stages of the project, learning from the results and widely disseminating them among all stakeholders, partners, and donors etc., will be able to leverage the evaluation as a tool – one that effectively meets the needs of the target groups, improves the overall design of the project, strengthens partnerships, raises contributions and promotes the use of information for reaching development goals.

4. Who should perform Monitoring and Evaluation?

Evaluation can be conducted in four ways:

- **Internal or Self-Evaluation**, which means that the same people implementing a project or programme (e.g., RDSA, TS [programme level] or project promoters [project level]) are responsible for the evaluation;

- **External Evaluation**, meaning that the evaluation is conducted by an individual or group outside the implementing organisation, and;

- **Internal Evaluation with use of an External Consultant**, which is undertaken by the team implementing the project with the assistance of a professional evaluator. Such assistance can either apply to a specific component of evaluation or to the entire evaluation process.

- **Independent Evaluation**, which is undertaken by individuals or groups who are not only outside the implementing organisation, but also completely independent from it, in terms of control, remuneration capacity, political pressure, or other factors that could affect objectivity.

Each approach to evaluation has its own benefits and drawbacks (though is not the subject of this document). Here we assume, that it is the RDSA, which is responsible for and conducting the programme evaluation, while individual project beneficiaries will conduct their own internal project evaluations. Both may be supported in this process by the TS. Independent of the approach chosen, though, all evaluations can – and should – be participatory, meaning that they involve the various stakeholders of the project, the beneficiaries of the project, in particular. Stakeholders should initiate the evaluation process and remain active participants throughout. One of the ways to involve stakeholders is to form a Stakeholder Advisory Group to be brought together for discussion of major questions of evaluation, approaches and next steps. This would allow
team members and stakeholders to learn from each other, to solve problems together, and to further develop joint ownership of the project.

An evaluation can be participatory to a degree; it can involve the participants in answering evaluation questions through interviews or questionnaires. They may also be invited to define the evaluation questions. A characteristic of participatory evaluation is that the evaluator takes on the role of a facilitator rather than of an assessor.

5. Working with Consultants

It is essential to consider the following when using consultants to conduct the evaluation:

- The consultant’s terms of reference (TOR) should be as clear and detailed as possible on:
  - the purpose, scope, and timeframe of the evaluation;
  - expected outputs and deliverables, including what reports and presentations should be produced;
  - key research questions and a draft evaluation design;
  - cost projections, activities, and time requirements;
  - consultants’ qualifications.

- Select a consultant who has experience and expertise in the subject area, and who preferably speaks the local language;

- Appropriate procurement guidelines must be followed if the consultant is paid using donor assisted project funds.

6. When should Evaluation be performed

Evaluation is an ongoing process that requires the participation of all stakeholders. It should not be conducted solely at the end of the project. Ex-post evaluation needs to be complimented by ongoing evaluation and monitoring.

Ideally, this should begin by preparing an evaluation design during the Planning Phase and have an evaluation plan ready by the end of the planning. It is important to determine the baseline before the implementation of the project, i.e. during the last few months of the Planning Phase. A baseline assessment of the target audience should be performed. Also, project-related information should be accumulated by applying monitoring techniques during the entire project implementation period. The evaluation team should continuously collect data on project performance to be analysed at the end of the first year of implementation.

II. How to Design the Monitoring and Evaluation Process
1. Planning Evaluation

Step I: Define the Evaluation Questions
The evaluation process starts with management defining the goals of the evaluation and the intended use of the findings. Project management should work with stakeholders to define the questions that it wants answered in the evaluation process. Evaluation is a potentially time-consuming and costly process and should therefore only focus on issues that can improve the effectiveness of the projects, issues that are of interest to donors, stakeholders and beneficiaries. These questions may vary from one section of an implementing agency to another but they will be determined by the stage of the project, local circumstances, and problems encountered by the implementation team. Evaluation questions should be based on collaborative consultations with donors, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Step II: Establish an Evaluation Team
Establishing an Evaluation Team involves more than just identifying a person responsible for evaluation. Management decides whether hiring an external consultancy will be necessary, identifies the stakeholders that will become an incremental part of the evaluation process, forms a stakeholder advisory group if needed, and develops a mechanism for a participatory approach to evaluation.

Step III: Set a Budget
Project management should allocate a range of 5-10% of the budget towards evaluation. Once evaluation questions have been defined and the scope of work to be undertaken has been assessed, the evaluation budget can be finalised. The evaluation budget may include such categories as evaluation staff salary, cost of consultants, travel, communication costs, and data collection costs.

2. Evaluation Designs
An evaluation design is the overall strategy for how a manager will gather and analyse data to answer key evaluation or research questions. Evaluation designs vary greatly according to the purpose of evaluation, the nature of the project, and the budget available.

- If trying to describe what happened in terms of activities, outputs, and performance, it is best to use a descriptive design;
- If trying to estimate the impact of the project, the choice is between an experimental and a quasi-experimental design (as opposed to a non-experimental one);
- If a trying to answer ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions, then a qualitative design is appropriate. One example is the case study method (see http://www.tgsa.edu/online/cybrary/case1.html).

A well-thought out strategy that clearly demonstrates how a manager intends to find answers to the research questions posed is more important than the designation of the strategy.
When evaluating innovative projects such as technology applications, qualitative designs are more appropriate. A quantitative method explains ‘what’, ‘how much’, or ‘how many’, but does little to answer the ‘why’ or ‘how’ something happened. Qualitative methods, in contrast, are more dynamic – they allow for modification during the progress of the project and its evaluation, and as practitioners and evaluators learn more about the project. Qualitative methods are crucial for explaining unexpected consequences and outcomes. An example is a survey versus an interview. In a survey, you might ask respondents to rate how useful a project component was to conclude that “X% of respondents found the component useful or very useful”. In an interview or group discussion setting, you can ask questions like “What did you find useful about this component?”. You will get a wider variety of answers and you will have the opportunity to probe further into the topics that emerge.

Finally, many evaluations can be improved by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. For example, a qualitative method such as interviews or focus groups might be used to explain quantitative findings, or open-ended questions that require qualitative analysis may be asked in a questionnaire.

**In essence, all programme managers and recipients of grants may be expected to perform some type of Process, Product and Impact evaluations.**

**a) Process Evaluation**

A process evaluation consists of two parts: **context evaluation** and **implementation evaluation**.

A **context evaluation** assesses the impact of context and environment on the implementation and performance of a project. A context evaluation should answer some or all of the following questions:

- Do your stakeholders and partners help or hinder the achievement of your project’s goals? What can be done to improve your relationship with your stakeholders and partners to benefit the project?

- How do programme managers help or hinder the achievement of your goals? What can be done to improve your relationship with the programme management to benefit the project?

- Which contextual factors have the greatest impact on your project’s performance?

- Does the level of readiness of the target audience affect the performance of the project? What external factors have had a negative effect on the performance of the project? What would your risk assessment be for the next year of implementation?
An **implementation evaluation** provides background information on the implementation of the project. In other words, it answers the question: what happened and why? The implementation evaluation should answer some or all of the following questions:

- What are the most critical components necessary for the success of the project? What components were a hindrance to a strong performance and the achievement of your goals?

- Which aspects of the implementation process are promoting success? Which ones are hindering the performance of the project?

- Were you able to sustain project activities with the resources available to you? What is the projection for the second year of implementation?

- Did the organisation structure promote or hinder success? What was the level of performance of the project staff (including management)?

Please note that answers to these questions should not be based on the subjective opinion of the Project Manager or the Evaluator. They should be obtained as a result of a participatory evaluation process.

**b) Product Evaluation**

A product evaluation helps determine the overall quality of the project, as well as client satisfaction and the resulting demand for products and services produced.

A product evaluation may answer the following questions:

- Which products/services produced as a result of the project were the most successful in terms of quality and client satisfaction? Why?

- Which products/services produced as a result of the project were the least successful in terms of quality and client satisfaction? Why?

- Which products/services generated the most profits (if relevant)?

- Which products/services received the most support (in-kind and cash contributions) from partners and stakeholders?

c) **Impact Evaluation**

Impact evaluation has two distinct stages:

1) Measurement of a positive or negative change for the target population;

2) Determining whether this change was caused by the project.
The first stage is related to the project’s overall development goal. For example, can one observe an increase in Internet use by government officials and citizens seeking information from the government? The answer requires access to data (from statistical reports or by collecting data on the ground) on the number of government resources online, the number of users of these resources, and their level of satisfaction before and after the project.

The second stage establishes the fact that the project actually caused this change. For example, can the increase in the amount of government-related information online and its usage be attributed to a particular project promoter’s initiative or to other projects? If the specific project receiving a grant award played a key role in increasing the information and its use, how can we measure impact?

The impact of a project can be estimated by:

- Performing quantitative studies with experimental or quasi-experimental designs, to a varying degree;
- Using a control group to approximate a hypothetical situation, i.e. “if the project had not taken place, then…”;
- Consulting participants and experts;
- Conducting structured case studies;
- Conducting a baseline comparison.

For more on impact evaluation, see http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/impact/index.htm.

An impact evaluation helps assess short- and long-term results and measures the changes brought about by the project. The knowledge acquired as a result of the process and product evaluations is intended to assist grant recipients with the impact evaluation.

The impact evaluation should answer some or all of the following questions:

- What is the impact of the project on its target audience? On the community overall? On its partners, including the donor funding agencies?
- Did the project have an unexpected impact?
- Which group has benefited the most from the project?
- What is your assessment of the target audience as a result of the evaluation?
- Where the needs of your clients met? If so, to what extent?
- Were the objectives of the project met? What are the deviations?
- What is the most significant accomplishment of the project in terms of impact during the period being evaluated?
- Will your target audience, partners, product line, and/or project strategy change as a result of the evaluation? If so, why and how?

In order to answer the questions above, the grant recipient will need to conduct an evaluation of the work process, the products/services produced as a result of project and their development impact.

The grant recipients themselves will be responsible for conducting some form of internal evaluation of their own individually implemented and sponsored projects, as required under the original project grant application form. It may be useful during the contract negotiations process with successful applicants to inform them of the desirability of presenting when later asked a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, a Products of Evaluation Summary (including, perhaps but not limited to, for example, survey statistics, minutes of partner or focus group discussions, and web portal monitoring statistics) and an Evaluation Report summarising the results of the project overall.
### 3. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The Monitoring and Evaluation plan should describe how a project promoter plans to achieve requirements 1 through 6 below, including a timeline, responsibilities, and budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements</th>
<th>How to Demonstrate the Evaluation Plan in Project Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (1) Demonstrate a project logic that is a) consistent, b) geared towards achieving measurable results and c) produces an impact on targeted communities; | • Demonstration of the logic or causal chain by which your project will deliver results  
• Demonstration of short term, medium term and long term objectives and strategies used to achieve identified objectives |
| (2) Monitor project progress and report regularly on project progress; | • Logical model  
• Benchmarking  
• Budget for monitoring and evaluation activities  
• Timeline for monitoring and evaluation activities with allocation of responsibilities to team members |
| (3) Collect data according to certain indicators. Useful data should include data on beneficiaries and on the situation before the project in order to enable systematic monitoring and objective evaluation by the implementing organisation, funders, and/or by an external party; | • Draft list of indicators that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and trackable (“SMART”)  
• Data collection plan and strategy  
• Data collection resources  
• Data collection timelines |
| (4) Evaluate ex-post (after the project): a) whether the project reached its goals; b) the impact of the project (which is not the same as reaching its goals); c) to what extent the project might be sustainable after donor funding has ceased; d) under what circumstances the project might be replicated. | Evaluation plan, stating:  
• Goals of evaluation  
• Purpose; expected use of evaluation findings  
• Key evaluation or research questions  
• Scope of evaluation  
• Design  
• Method  
• Budget |
4. Reviewing Objectives and Describing Project Logic

Setting up a monitoring system and designing an evaluation should begin with a review of project goals and objectives and of the logic guiding the project. To gain a thorough understanding of the means by which a project delivers results, you should begin as early as the design stage.

The goal statement in the project application should clearly and unambiguously describe:

- The development problem the project addresses;
- The overall change in the beneficiary population the project would like to achieve or contribute to;
- The timeframe for achieving the outcome objectives (short, mid and long term);
- The beneficiary population, including ethnicity, race, gender, age, language, disability, or other sociological grouping, as relevant.

The project logic describes the strategic elements of the project, their causal links, related indicators, and the assumptions that influence success or failure. While logic models are essentially management tools to improve a project, capturing the project logic during the Monitoring and Evaluation process clarifies a number of factors that contribute, or fail to contribute, to the results.

The following is an example of project logic (or a causal chain): “The income of people in municipality X will increase, thereby reducing poverty, if people gain access to the ICT web portal to open a virtual store for selling locally-produced products or to find buyers in order to avoid a middle man.” This chain makes the following assumptions:

1) increased income will lead to the overall goal of reducing poverty, 2) the use of the ICT web portal will lead to increased entrepreneurship, and 3) more businesses will increase people’s income. The required input for our project example would include...
know-how, funds, labour resources to build the e-commerce interface on the portal, website building tools, a matchmaking database for small businesses, etc.

When describing the logic of the project, you should:

- Verify that the model is an accurate depiction of the project;
- Check that the causal chain is plausible and consistent – does it make sense?;
- Verify that the assumptions are consistent with current knowledge and experience. Is it reasonable to assume that people who will have access to the web portal in municipality X will engage in e-commerce? What would prevent them from engaging in e-commerce via the web? What are the findings of other projects in the same line of work? It is important to demonstrate knowledge of the findings of comparative projects whenever possible. Is there an explicit expression of demand for these services from potential users?;
- Clarify assumptions and related risks;
- State the necessary input required to produce intended output. Ensure that output leads to outcome.

The basic elements of a project logic model are well documented and one of the most well-known is the Logical Framework Approach (LFA). For more information, visit: http://www.ausaid.gov.au/ausguide/ausguidelines/ausguidelines-1.pdf

While the use of a specific logic model may not be required, it is helpful if a proposal is clear on the fundamental project logic and that any and all assumptions made are clear and convincing.

The use of a logical model does not mean that the evaluation should seek only to prove the accuracy of the causal chain. Looking back at a completed project, the logical model is a tool to help understand what a project was trying to achieve. The evaluation should also seek to understand the project in its dynamic context, to seek learning and to identify unexpected outcomes.

5. Selecting Indicators

An indicator is a factor or variable that enables you to:

- Measure achievement or progress towards targets or goals, e.g. how many people have been trained;
- Note changes connected to the project, e.g. an increase in income;
- Assess the performance of the project; e.g. the number of students who passed the knowledge test at the end of training.

The type of indicators needed to monitor, and later evaluate, varies greatly from project to project. However, when you start exploring what project elements it might measure, it
may come up with too many indicators rather than too few. It is impossible to measure all the things that one would like to know about a project, and it may not be useful to do so – perhaps a few indicators suffice to provide the key information needed. Finally, collecting data is very costly. Therefore, a key task is the selection of which indicators to use. There is no rule for how many indicators one should have although more than three and less than twenty is considered reasonable. Key indicators may need to be adapted as the project develops.

Indicators should:

• Enable the evaluation team and outside observers to tell whether the project succeeded or failed;
• Enable progress follow-up;
• Measure whether the intended outcome for the target population was reached;
• Be meaningful (does this data really tell me what I need to know?)
• Be powerful (do not add another indicator unless it adds significant information!);
• Be cost-effective (does the value of this data justify the costs of its collection?)

An example of development indicators are the indicators used to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, see http://www.developmentgoals.org/.

For more general and specific advice on selecting appropriate Monitoring & Evaluation indicators for use with EU funded programmes and projects, then see the European Commission’s Directorate General for Regional Policy - Working Paper No. 3 at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/doc/indic_en.pdf.

Below are some general indicators you might consider for an ICT web portal development project:

Output indicators:
• 24/7 operational portal
• X number of members
• X number of resources
• X number of training courses conducted

Outcome (impact) indicators:
• X number of NGOs found funding using web portal databases (contributes to the strengthening of Civil Society);
• An ICT policy was created as a result of the national dialogue initiated by the web portal (adds to the objective of contributing to national dialogue, partnerships and a shared vision for development);
• X number of companies that found joint venture partners or foreign investors abroad using web portal export opportunities (contributes to the
objective of improving global competitiveness by promoting national export, foreign investment, and business opportunities).

The following is an example of a poor indicator: Society is more aware of the opportunities ICT can provide (not measurable: it is not possible to measure changes in the entire society.)

It is impossible to measure the level of awareness without defining it. A key to selecting indicators is that they should be measurable.
III. Collecting Data

1. Data Collection Strategy
Once the key indicators have been decided, the next step is to devise a strategy for data collection. This strategy should state what, when, how, and who:

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data needed</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Collection mode</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of NGOs that found funding</td>
<td>Partnership, funding agreements</td>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>Electronic and hard copy survey, phone and personal interviews</td>
<td>Project Assistant (name)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more on data collection methods, see the Evaluation section.

2. Collecting the Right Data on Beneficiaries
A key type of data in every project is data on beneficiaries, or the target population. For instance, when evaluating assistance provided to the private sector, one would need to know the size of the company, the type of business they are involved in, and geographic location.

If the goal of a project is, for example, to increase literacy in ICT use among local regional populations, data should be collected on the literacy level of beneficiaries both at the beginning and at the end of the project, in addition to other data. The first batch of data is then referred to as ‘baseline data’. Without baseline data, it is harder to establish impact of the project.

Collecting data on beneficiaries is essential because it:

- *Tells you whether the project actually reached its target population*;

- *Helps you evaluate whether the project achieved its goals* (did we actually reach the target group?)

- *Enables you to identify unexpected consequences*, for instance, that your services were particularly beneficial to solo entrepreneurs while you targeted small to medium size companies.

Consider collecting data on…
…but only if it applies directly to the issue you are trying to evaluate. Avoid obtaining data that cannot benefit the research. Collection of data is costly.

3. Data Collection Methods
Listed below are some examples of data collection methods. They can be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. For qualitative methods, it is important to document the process by using a tape recorder or by taking exact and detailed notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>What it is and what it requires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>• Systematic first-hand examination documented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can be more or less obtrusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Requires preparation and a systematic approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Review</td>
<td>• Systematic analysis of project documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can be quantified, e.g. the number of times something is mentioned, or the share of documents that meet criterion X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is part of every evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys and Questionnaires</td>
<td>• Can be conducted face-to-face or by other means (mail, phone, Internet, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Most useful when looking for answers to multiple-choice questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Administration and analysis can be very costly for a large population (to some extent, can be mitigated by sampling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make sure to pre-test the questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>• Can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, depending on purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Requires an interview protocol, pre-test it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group interviews</td>
<td>• Form groups so that people are not hesitant to speak (separate manager-staff, women-men, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus groups
- Focus groups are a more systematic approach to group interviews, and can serve to quantifiy data
- The evaluator is the facilitator and does not participate in order to avoid introducing bias
- Also requires protocol

Diaries and self-report checklists
- For example, ask people to write down how they spend a typical 24 hours.

Expert Judgment
- E.g. moderated discussion group among experts to shed light on a particular topic. Generated by a few key questions.
- Can be done electronically and is easily disseminated.

Interviews and other face-to-face interactions are more participatory than other approaches. All methods can be more or less costly, depending on methods used. In selecting methods, ask yourself which method, or combination of methods, is likely to generate the most data of the best quality, while not involving excessive costs.
IV. Analysing, Interpreting and Presenting Data

1. Analysing and Presenting Qualitative Data

Qualitative data is often underestimated although it can sometimes lead to powerful conclusions.

Some key principles in analysing qualitative data are:
- The first step is to organise the data – check that it is complete, make copies, review and label the material;
- Do the analysis question by question first;
- Look for themes;
- When you have identified themes and patterns, look for data that contradicts rather than confirms your hypotheses;
- Use other methods for triangulation, that is, to verify your conclusions with the help of another data source (for instance, use statistics to check on statements made by a respondent).

Some key principles in presenting qualitative data are:
- Use the same words as respondents did and avoid misrepresentation in general;
- Present the findings for the reader to draw the same conclusions you did based on the material;
- Make sure to distinguish between facts/findings and your interpretations of the data;
- Be selective (don’t present everything) and use sample quotes to exemplify what you are saying.

2. Capturing Lessons Learned

During implementation and evaluation you are likely to gain insight and understanding, which they did not have at the outset. Lesson-learning is not a planned process; it is something that happens in all projects, and you should be prepared and ready to document it.

Lessons are insights based on evaluation experiences. They go beyond the specific circumstances and can be generalised. Programme lessons typically highlight the design or implementation strengths and weaknesses that affected overall programme performance.

Example of a lesson:
“People with some prior experience using computers tend to absorb IT training better. In cases, where we selected participants with more experience, average improvements in test scores were higher.”

Lessons are:
Monitoring & Evaluation for Grant Schemes

- Generalisable, which means they are valid in or relevant to other contexts;
- Significant and important, which means you are able to remember them distinctly and to distinguish them from other findings;
- New; for example “content development takes time” is an “old” lesson, this is knowledge that you will be expected to have before the start of the project;
- Unanticipated; therefore a result or an impact cannot be a lesson learned.

Although lessons can be learned throughout both the Planning and Implementation Phases, there are many cases where findings cannot be generalised because they are highly dependent on the specificity of the context. It is important to be careful ‘extrapolating’, i.e. assuming that a particular case would be the same elsewhere. A useful resource on lessons learned is [http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/lessons.htm](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/lessons.htm).

Lessons learned generally occur in three stages:

- **Stage of Exploring**: identifying lessons that are of value for redesigning the project or that can be used by others working in the same field.

- **Stage of Explaining**: codifying knowledge in such a way that it can easily be identified and used by others.

- **Stage of Exporting**: disseminating among other team members, management, or other organizations in the form of lessons learned, the knowledge obtained from the monitoring and evaluation work.

The table below may be useful for collecting and disseminating lessons learned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Collection of lessons learned</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Dissemination</th>
<th>Mechanism for use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create an organisation</td>
<td>Create a Steering Committee and Supervisory board, Register as an NGO</td>
<td>Registering as an NGO does not work</td>
<td>Other sectoral organisations</td>
<td>Why it was not the best way to register and what the alternative solution was</td>
<td>Share with other sectoral organisations in the region during a workshop</td>
<td>Other organisations are aware of the lessons learned and readily consult others if problems occur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Presenting the Findings

The evaluation report should present the following:

Local Partnership for Employment, Croatia an EU funded project CARDS 2002
• Evaluation Subject (what were the project, quantitative and qualitative summary of activities and objectives);

• Evaluation Questions;

• Methodology, including limitations;

• Findings, including summaries and illustrations in tables, graphs, and charts;

• Conclusions (interpretation of the findings);

• Recommendations (what you think should be done based on the findings and on your conclusions).
Annex I

Terminology

Monitoring – is the systematic collection of data to provide management, donors and other stakeholders with an indication of project progress.

Evaluation - is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, including its design, implementation, and results.

Inputs – investment in the programme (expert skills, equipment, and funds) that can be transferred into outputs in a process of programme implementation.

Outputs – specific services and products that emerge in the process of programme implementation.

Outcomes – changes in development conditions achieved through the implementation of the programme.

Outcome monitoring - systematic collection and analysis of data to measure the performance of the programme.

Lessons Learned – examples that emerged as a result of gained experience and that can be applied to general circumstances.

Indicators – measure of inputs, process, outputs, outcomes and impacts of the programme.

Baseline – value of an indicator at the beginning of the programme. It is used to track performance towards the results.

Logical Framework – approach to clearly presenting program logic and identifying causal links between inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact.

Target – specific results intended to be achieved within a specified timeframe.

RDSA – Regional Development Support Agency

TS – Technical Secretariats
Annex II

Evaluation Activities and Reports

Planning

- Determine the needs and readiness of the target groups
- Create a logical framework or describe the architecture of the project in any other clear and persuasive form. Describe how the project activities will lead to achieving project goals and to meeting the needs of the target groups
- Describe the activities and create a causal chain with the project’s objectives/outcomes
- Consult with stakeholders
- Choose the methodology
- Specify the budget
- Create the TOR for the evaluator

Report: Preliminary Evaluation Plan (submitted with the Final Report)
Timeframe: to be completed by the end of the Planning Phase

Start-up

- Finalise the evaluation budget
- Create an evaluation team
- Identify data resources and develop a data collection system
- Determine a baseline for impact and process evaluation

Report: Final Evaluation Plan
Timeframe: to be completed no later than the second month of the Implementation Phase

Implementation

- Assess environmental factors that influence implementation of the project
- Assess if deviation from the original implementation plan is necessary
- Evaluate short-term outcomes
- Assess if short–term outcomes warrant adjustment of long term objectives
- Continue to collect data on short-term and long-term outcomes
- Assess if project was implemented as expected, how and why
- Inform donors and partners about the accomplishments
- Inform alternative partners and donors about the accomplishments
- Outline lessons and critical success factors from the first year of implementation

Report: Evaluation Report (Year 1)
Timeframe: end of the first year of implementation

Maintenance
Monitoring & Evaluation for Grant Schemes

- Share funding with community, broad spectrum of partners
- Continue to collect and analyse data to improve project design and modify the project environment
- Continue to collect and analyse data to monitor the impact produced by the project
- Assess long term outcomes of the project and share them with stakeholders

Report: Evaluation Report (Year 2)
Timeframe: to be completed by the end of the second year of implementation

Replication and Policy
- Continue to use knowledge received through evaluation to replicate the project on a sub-regional level, if appropriate
- Continue to share knowledge received through evaluation with other funding bodies
- Continue to share knowledge received through evaluation with policymakers in the field

Report: ongoing knowledge exchange
Timeframe: throughout the project