Aiming Change for Tomorrow

Approved in BOD Meeting held on 7 July, 2012
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Chapter – I   Introduction, Objectives and Definitions

1.1   Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation enhance the effectiveness of assistance by establishing clear links between past, present and future interventions and results. Monitoring and evaluation can help an organization to extract, from past and ongoing activities, relevant information that can subsequently be used as the basis for programmatic revision, reorientation and planning.

Without monitoring and evaluation, it would be impossible to judge if work was going in the right direction, whether progress and success could be claimed, and how future efforts might be improved.

This chapter highlights the main purposes of monitoring and evaluation and explains how these functions are of use to the organization. This chapter also provides definitions of monitoring and evaluation.

This chapter covers:
A. Purposes of monitoring and evaluation
B. Definitions of monitoring and evaluation and other related terms
C. Guiding principles of the M&E system

A. Purposes and objectives of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation help improve performance and achieve results. More precisely, the overall purpose of monitoring and evaluation is the measurement and assessment of performance in order to more effectively manage the outcomes and outputs known as development results. Performance is defined as progress towards and achievement of results. Generally, monitoring and evaluation focused on assessing inputs and implementation processes. Today, the focus is on assessing the contributions of various factors to a given development outcome, with such factors including outputs, partnerships, policy advice and dialogue, advocacy and coordination. Programme Managers are being asked to actively apply the information gained through monitoring and evaluation to improve strategies, programmes and other activities.

The overall objective of the M & E system is to improve decision making, program quality and accountability to stakeholders. The main objectives of today's results-oriented monitoring and evaluation are to:

- o   Enhance organizational and development learning;
- o   Ensure informed decision-making;

- o   Support substantive accountability;
- o   Build state capacity in each of these areas, and in monitoring and evaluating functions in general.

Whereas, specific objectives of the system include:

- o   Demonstrate project / program accountability
- o   Describe the project and comment on how well it matches what was intended
- o   Improved program management through providing accurate, timely and consistent information
- o   Help program fundraising through establishing accountability system and providing information to stakeholders
- o   Generate learning for future program management

These objectives are linked together in a continuous process, as shown in Figure 1. Learning from the past contributes to more informed decision-making. Better decisions lead to greater accountability to stakeholders. Better decisions also improve performance, allowing for ACT-I activities to be repositioned continually. Partnering closely with key stakeholders throughout this process also promotes shared knowledge creation and learning, helps transfer skills, and develops the capacity of ACT-I offices and projects for planning, monitoring and evaluation. These stakeholders also provide valuable feedback that can be used to improve performance and learning. In this way, good practices at the heart of monitoring and evaluation are continually reinforced, making a positive contribution to the overall effectiveness of development.

Figure1 Objectives of M&E

Monitoring and Evaluation helps staff to
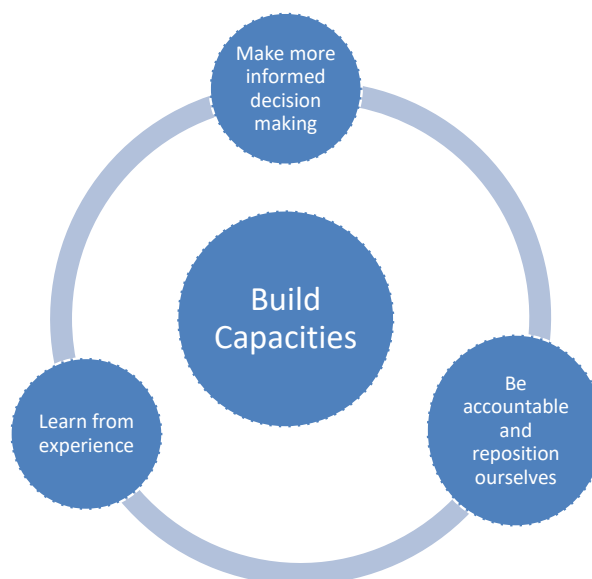
B. Guiding Principles of the M&E system

o Alignment with ACT International's Standards and Policies

o Promote intentional learning throughout in ACT International and consortium partners

o Participation of all stakeholders

o Use simple and practical tools that staff and communities can easily understand

o Connected to overall ACT International's strategy

o Use of indicators and making efforts in improving the performance measurement systems and developing baselines

o Disaggregated information (gender, age, socio economic groups etc)

C. Definitions of related terms

M&E Framework is a concise document that provides a roadmap for how M&E will be conducted over the life of the program. The document describes how *people*, *data* and *time* interact so that the performance of supported interventions can be meaningfully assessed and improved.

Monitoring can be defined as a continuing function that aims primarily to provide the management and main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results. An ongoing intervention might be a project, programme or other kind of support to an outcome.

Evaluation is a selective exercise that attempts to systematically and objectively assess progress towards and the achievement of an outcome. Evaluation is not a one-time event, but an exercise involving assessments of differing scope and depth carried out at several points in time in response to evolving needs for evaluative knowledge and learning during the effort to achieve an outcome. All evaluations—even project evaluations that assess relevance, performance and other criteria—need to be linked to outcomes as opposed to only implementation or immediate outputs.

Reporting is an integral part of monitoring and evaluation. Reporting is the systematic and timely provision of essential information at periodic intervals. Monitoring and evaluation take place at two distinct but closely connected levels: One level focuses on the outputs, which are the specific products and services that emerge from processing inputs through programme, project and other activities such as through ad hoc soft assistance delivered outside of projects and programmes. The other level focuses on the outcomes of ACT-I development efforts, which are the changes in development conditions that ACT-I aims to achieve through its projects and programmes. Outcomes incorporate the production of outputs and the contributions of partners.

Traditionally, staff has been more familiar with the first level: monitoring and evaluation that is programme and project based and that views performance in terms of outputs. Today, the challenge is to go beyond this level and to link performance with outcomes, with rigorous and credible assessments of progress towards and achievement of outcomes.

Approaches, techniques and tools for monitoring and evaluation, which should be applied at both levels, are presented throughout the *Handbook.*

Feedback is a process within the framework of monitoring and evaluation by which information and knowledge are disseminated and used to assess overall progress towards results or confirm the achievement of results. Feedback may consist of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons from experience. It can be used to improve performance and as a basis for decision-making and the promotion of learning in an organization.

A lesson learned is an instructive example based on experience that is applicable to a general situation rather than to a specific circumstance. It is learning from experience. The lessons learned from an activity through evaluation are considered evaluative knowledge, which stakeholders are more likely to internalize if they have been involved in the evaluation process. Lessons learned can reveal "good practices" that suggest how and why different strategies work in different situations—valuable information that needs to be documented.

D. Process used to develop the M & E guide

This guide is put together from various individual documents developed as part of the development of M&E process. Instead of drafting the document at once, decision is made to understand the program requirements and ongoing practices. More specifically, the following process is used to draft the M & E mechanisms:

- Review of M & E standards and requirements in LEAP framework
- Consultation within in the Quality Enhancement Unit regarding program requirements
- Decision by the management regarding work standards and reporting requirements
- Review of M & E standards and practices in other organizations

Chapter – 2   Results-Based Management

This chapter defines results-based management (RBM) and highlights the main features of a results-based monitoring and evaluation system. It presents the role of monitoring and evaluation within the context of shift towards RBM, which has been gaining momentum since last decade. It also compares past approaches with the current results-based approach. This chapter should help users pinpoint any areas in which changes in behavior are required, and to align monitoring and evaluation activities accordingly.

This chapter covers:

A. Monitoring and evaluation in the context of RBM

- Outcome monitoring
- Outcome evaluation
- Relationship between outcome monitoring and outcome evaluation
- Importance of partnerships
- Significance of "soft" assistance

2.1   Monitoring and Evaluation in the Context of RBM

An increasing emphasis on results is bringing about some major changes in the focus, approach and application of monitoring and evaluation. Central to these changes is results-based management. Results-based management (RBM) is a management strategy or approach by which an organization ensures that its processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of clearly stated results. Results-based management provides a coherent framework for strategic planning and management by improving learning and accountability.

It is also a broad management strategy aimed at achieving important changes in the way agencies operate, with improving performance and achieving results as the central orientation, by defining realistic expected results, monitoring progress toward the achievement of expected results, integrating lessons learned into management decisions and reporting on performance.

2.2   Outcome Monitoring

ACTI interventions consist of projects, programmes, partnerships and "soft" assistance such as advocacy delivered outside projects or programmes—all acting in concert to achieve an outcome, or development change. The monitoring of these outcomes represents a distinct shift away from the past interest in monitoring project outputs.

Outcome monitoring is a continual and systematic process of collecting and analyzing data to measure the performance of ACTI interventions towards achievement of outcomes at country

level. While the process of outcome monitoring is continual in the sense that it is not a time-bound activity, outcome monitoring must be periodic, so that change can be perceived. In other words, head office will accumulate information on an ongoing basis regarding progress towards an outcome, and then will periodically compare the current situation against the baseline for outcome indicators and assess and analyze the situation.

In order for a head office to monitor outcomes and outputs effectively, it has to determine exactly which projects, programmes and other activities contribute to any specific outcome. "Other activities" may include advice, advocacy and other types of soft assistance delivered outside of projects or programmes.

Outcome monitoring focuses on the following interventions and strategies and their implications:

- Projects;
- Programmes;
- Partnerships;
- "Soft" assistance in the form of policy advice, policy dialogue, advocacy, brokerage/coordination provided outside of established projects or programmes;
- Implementation strategies.

How do Programme Managers carry out outcome monitoring? They track the outputs and measure their contributions to outcomes by assessing the change from baseline conditions. Programme Managers need to keep an eye on key outputs (the specific products and services that emerge from processing inputs through project/programme or non-project/programme activities) because they can indicate whether a strategy is relevant and efficient or not. **Relevance** in a results-based context refers to whether or not a ACTI intervention contributes to the achievement of a key outcome, supports Organizational national development priorities and targets appropriate groups.

To conduct effective outcome monitoring, Programme Managers need to establish baseline data, select outcome indicators of performance, and design mechanisms that include planned actions such as field visits, stakeholder meetings and systematic analysis or reports. It is important to remember that outcome monitoring is not the same as implementation monitoring, as shown in Table 1. Project Managers in particular will still be expected to monitor the implementation of their projects. This monitoring should be planned and integrated with any outcome monitoring to avoid duplication and to lower transaction costs.

TABLE 1. KEY FEATURES OF IMPLEMENTATION VERSUS OUTCOME MONITORING	
ELEMENTS OF IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING (traditionally used for projects)	ELEMENTS OF OUTCOME MONITORING (used for a range of interventions and strategies)
▪ Description of the problem or situation before the intervention; ▪ Benchmarks for activities and immediate outputs; ▪ Data collection on inputs, activities and immediate outputs; ▪ Systematic reporting on provision of inputs, etc.; ▪ Directly linked to a discrete intervention (or series of interventions); ▪ Designed to provide information on administrative, implementation and management issues as opposed to broader development effectiveness issues.	▪ Baseline data to describe the problem or situation before the intervention; ▪ Indicators for outcomes; ▪ Data collection on outputs and how/whether they contribute towards achievement of outcomes; ▪ More focus on perceptions of change among stakeholders and more focus on "soft" assistance; ▪ Systematic reporting with more qualitative and quantitative information on the progress of outcomes; ▪ Done in conjunction with strategic partners; ▪ Captures information on success or failure of organizational partnership strategy in achieving desired outcomes.

2.3   Outcome Evaluation

An **outcome evaluation** is an evaluation that covers a set of related projects, programmes and strategies intended to bring about a certain outcome. Such evaluations assess how and why outcomes are or are not being achieved in a given context, and the role ACT-I has played. They may also help to clarify underlying factors affecting the situation, highlight unintended consequences (positive and negative), recommend actions to improve performance in future programming, and generate lessons learned. These periodic and in-depth assessments use "before and after" monitoring data.

Outcome evaluations may fulfill different needs at different times throughout the programming cycle. If conducted early in the cycle, they can supply information about potential impediments; if conducted halfway through the cycle, they can suggest mid-course adjustments; and if conducted at the end, they can contribute to lessons learned that could guide work in the outcome during the next cycle.

An outcome evaluation extracts lessons learned, findings and recommendations by assessing the following:

- Progress towards the outcome;
- Factors contributing to the outcome (substantive influences);

- Key organizational contributions (outputs, including those produced through "soft" assistance) to outcomes;
- The partnership strategy (how ACT-I works with its partners).

Assessments of these four major components are carried out in varying degrees of depth, depending upon the specific purpose of the evaluation. Additional areas for assessment may be added, although this requires additional time and financial resources and may yield less detailed results.

2.4   Relationship between Outcome Monitoring and Outcome Evaluation

Both outcome monitoring and outcome evaluation are aimed at the systematic collection and analysis of information to track changes from baseline conditions to the desired outcome and to understand why change is or is not taking place. Both functions are closely linked to decision-making processes at programme and policy levels. Both provide consistent information for the improvement of interventions and strategies to Programme Managers, Project Managers and stakeholders. And both can demonstrate accountability. They differ, however, in their specific objectives, focus and methodology and how they are conducted and used, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUTCOME MONITORING AND OUTCOME EVALUATION		
	Outcome Monitoring	**Outcome Evaluation**
Objective	To track changes from baseline conditions to desired outcomes.	To validate what results were achieved and how and why they were or were not achieved.
Focus	Focuses on the outputs of projects, programmes, partnerships and soft assistance activities and their contribution to outcomes.	Compares planned with intended outcome achievement. Focuses on how and why outputs and strategies contributed to achievement of outcomes. Focuses on questions of relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and change.
Methodology	Tracks and assesses performance (progress towards outcomes) through analysis and comparison of indicators over time.	Evaluates achievement of outcomes by comparing indicators before and after the intervention. Relies on monitoring data on information from external sources.
Conduct	Continuous and systematic by Programme Managers, Project Managers and key partners.	Time-bound, periodic, in-depth. External evaluators and partners.
Use	Alerts managers to problems in performance, provides options for corrective actions and helps demonstrate accountability.	Provides managers with strategy and policy options, provides basis for learning and demonstrates accountability.

Outcome evaluations rely on data generated through outcome monitoring, information from other sources such as the Results-Oriented Annual Report (ROAR), and information generated through external sources such as independent client surveys or the reports of partners. Similarly, outcome evaluations support outcome monitoring. They are, for example, a source of lessons that can be applied in the development of conceptual and methodological innovations for use in refining the monitoring function. Such innovations might include devising realistic results and strategies, developing appropriate indicators for future projects, or demonstrating the effectiveness of certain types of monitoring tools for certain types of interventions.

2.5   I M P O R TANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

No development change is ever achieved in isolation, which is why ACT-I works closely with its partners when monitoring and evaluating outcomes. ACT-I partners include UN agencies, governments, donor agencies, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and other entities with which ACT-I forms substantive relationships in the pursuit of common outcomes. Ideally, when formulating interventions to achieve certain outcomes, Programme Managers should consider how to encourage the participation of partners. This requires knowing what strengths each partner brings to the table.

For monitoring and evaluation, Programme Managers may draw on partners in a number of ways, such as:

- Involving partners and other stakeholders in the selection of indicators and targets, in data collection and analysis, as participants in field visits or as members of an evaluation team;
- Using already-established data sources and statistics of key partner agencies, which helps reduce the costs of data collection;
- Working with partners to analyze outcome progress and determine how best to enhance their collective strategy.

Programme Managers may engage various types of partners in a variety of activities associated with monitoring and evaluation. The roles of these partners are described in Box 1.

BOX 1. THE ROLES OF PARTNERS IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Government coordinating authority and other central ministries (e.g. planning or finance) usually have overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluating development activities They are in a good position to coordinate the design and support for monitoring and evaluation activities, particularly the annual review, and to take action based on the findings of evaluations.

Executing agents (the institutions designated to manage a project) are in charge of project management and the delivery of outputs. Such institutions provide critical technical information on the outcome and development situation, the effectiveness of the implementation strategy, and how outputs are being delivered.

Target beneficiaries provide information about the relevance and the quality of outputs or services through stakeholder meetings and consultations. They also provide technical support during evaluations.

National statistical offices are key providers of data as well as expertise in data collection and analysis.

Universities, research centers and consulting firms are potential suppliers of monitoring and evaluation skills and also have the capacity to offer training in a range of skills and evaluative techniques. They also have background in substantive areas that can inform outcome analysis.

Civil society may play a major role in using the information and findings gained through monitoring and evaluation by promoting informed debate on public policies. Civil society may also provide useful perceptions regarding the status of outcomes.

Development assistance agencies may develop capacity for monitoring and evaluation through the provision of technical assistance including advice , expertise ,organization of seminars, training, identification of qualified consultants and the preparation of guidance material including case study examples. Such agencies also provide information on the outcome and outputs, and exercise policy influence,

2.6   SIGNIFICANCE OF " S O F T " A S S I S TANCE

"Soft" assistance is a term that includes policy advice and dialogue, advocacy and brokerage/coordination services. It is "soft" as compared to the "hard" or concrete contributions to development that are identifiable as a building or a study or a training programme. In the past, this kind of assistance was often overlooked in the planning, assessment and documentation of programming and performance. It is now recognized as an important input for the achievement of results, a shift in emphasis brought about by the use of results-based management which direct attention to "soft" assistance.

 "Soft" assistance includes:

1. Policy advice and dialogue

In terms of assessment, it should be noted that policy advice and policy dialogue are related but distinct. Assessing policy advice requires looking at how information and analysis on policy options is provided to stakeholders, and then considering its impact from a human development perspective. In contrast, assessing policy dialogue requires examining how the exchange of information on policy options is facilitated among stakeholders, and considering the consequences for human development.
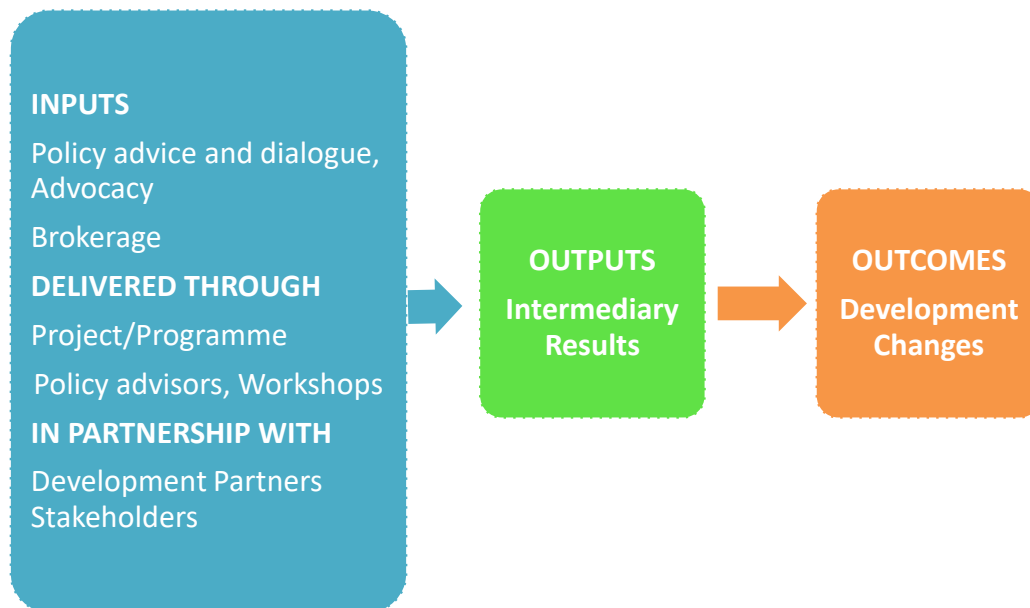
2. Advocacy

Advocacy involves speaking on behalf of or recommending something or someone. The role of ACT-I in advocacy is to promote the human development agenda at the global, regional and national level through issues as diverse as human rights, poverty eradication, child protection, gender equality and climate change.

3. Brokerage/Coordination

The actions associated with brokerage and coordination are so linked that the terms are used almost interchangeably to refer to a variety of activities known as "brokerage/coordination". Brokerage/coordination entails acting as an impartial intermediary or an agent who negotiates and makes arrangements, sometimes in sensitive areas, to achieve harmonious and effective results. As a form of "soft" assistance, it may be of a political, information or partnership nature, each of which is assessed differently.

Soft" assistance is provided as inputs to a system, as illustrated in Figure 2. This basic system incorporates the different forms of "soft" assistance, the methods of delivery, and its contribution to outputs and outcomes. These contributions are also made through partnerships.

Figure 2. How is Soft Assistance Provided

INPUTS
Policy advice and dialogue,
Advocacy
Brokerage
DELIVERED THROUGH
Project/Programme
Policy advisors, Workshops
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
Development Partners
Stakeholders

OUTPUTS
Intermediary
Results

OUTCOMES
Development
Changes

Why should "soft" assistance be monitored and evaluated?

- "Soft" assistance has potential for reducing poverty and promoting human development by affecting the national policy environment. National policies and regulations must be conducive to an enabling environment in which human development can flourish.

- "Soft" assistance is flexible, dynamic and highly responsive. "Soft" assistance interventions represent an additional service that organization can provide to developing countries. Such assistance requires little or no formal structure in terms of incorporation into a programme or results-based management framework, yet it can often produce significant development gains. It can also be delivered rapidly, meeting country demands in real time.

- Today's emphasis on results (outcomes) demands monitoring and evaluation that moves beyond project implementation to meet a challenging objective: assessing progress towards outcomes and performance in areas that are not easily quantifiable.

- Identifying the results of organization's "soft" assistance interventions will tell a more complete story of achievements and better demonstrate the role and impact of its efforts.

- Assessing "soft" assistance will become more important as organization places more emphasis on broad and strategic evaluations. "Soft" assistance figures prominently in these kinds of evaluations (e.g. outcome, thematic, cluster and impact evaluations).

- Assessing the quality of "soft" assistance interventions will help understand what works and why, and what does not work and why, thereby supporting the achievement of outcomes representing sought-after development changes.

Chapter – 3   M&E Quality Frame

This document supports the preparation of high quality monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for ACT-I supported activities. 'Quality' is defined in terms of seven 'attributes', each with underlying detailed 'standards'. Different users may apply this quality frame at different levels of detail. For instance, the six attributes may be used as a checklist when approving expenditure or conducting peer reviews; the detailed standards may be used by those involved in activity design or implementation. The standards may not all be relevant in every situation, nor treated with the same level of detail.

A. Seven Quality Attributes

1. Actively engage stakeholders in developing the M&E arrangements:
- Consult those who will contribute to and benefit from the M&E arrangements (this will normally include beneficiaries, partners and /or civil society).
- Assemble evidence that all relevant stakeholders have ownership of the M&E arrangements.
- Document how the M&E arrangements relate to other sectoral or national frameworks.
- Harmonize M&E arrangements with other donors who are significantly involved in the same area of activity to avoid adding to the partner's "transaction costs".
- Ensure ACT-I has advised all relevant parties of its expectations and provided adequate guidance about its requirements.

2. Verify partner M&E capacity and intent:
- Analyze the effectiveness of partner government/organization's existing M&E systems.
- Verify the capability of the contractor/partner to implement the M&E arrangements (where possible, review previous commitment to M&E, transparency and accountability).
- Plan to use and strengthen (where appropriate) existing partner organization accountability and lesson learning systems.
- Articulate a clear strategy for building sustainable M&E capacity within the partner organization(s) to address any deficiencies in capacity and/or intent.
- Ensure that ACT-I has adequate resources (including staff time) to fulfill the defined M&E responsibilities.

3. Ensure M&E arrangements are comprehensive, coherent & efficient:
- Ensure appropriate progress has been made in developing the M&E arrangements prior to the start of implementation so that: (a) approval for funding activity implementation is based on a clear understanding of what is to be achieved and how it is to be measured;

and (b) the implementing agency(s) is not given inappropriate scope for specifying its own responsibilities for M&E and its own performance assessment.

- Ensure any further detailing of M&E arrangements, planned for early in the implementation phase, includes an "evaluability" assessment of the activity's design (i.e., coherence of the design logic and appropriateness of the indicators and means of verification).
- Ensure that M&E arrangements at the strategy, program and sub-program levels are comprehensive, coherent and inter-related. Verify that there are no logical gaps, and that it is clear how M&E information will pass from one level to another.
- Verify that M&E arrangements are proportional to activity expenditure and complexity, and are based on pragmatic and economical data requirements.
- Confirm that M&E arrangements do not confuse activity *outputs* (the activity deliverables for which the implementation team can generally be held accountable) and *outcomes* (which will often involve the cooperation of other partners, and hence are beyond the control of the implementation team) with the payment *milestones* of a managing contractor or a multilateral agency (which are normally specified separately in contract documents or co-financing agreement documents as appropriate).
- Consider and address the information needs of all relevant stakeholders.

4. Explicitly define information requirements:

- Verify that the underlying design logic is robust, and that evidence will be collected at all levels/stages of change.
- Specify what information is to be collected and why, the frequency, methods and sources.
- Consider baseline information needs, and provide for its collection.
- Define methods to detect target group/beneficiary perceptions of change.
- Define methods to detect unplanned change.
- Define indicators for goal (impact), purpose (outcomes) and output levels of the design logic in terms of quality, quantity and timing.
- Employ an appropriate mix of short term and medium term change indicators (there is little point in only having indicators to be measured at the end of the intervention).
- Where possible, use existing sources of information at the goal and purpose levels (i.e., the impacts and the outcomes expected). Avoid generating information solely for the funded activity.
- Provide for monitoring of key design assumptions and major risks to successful implementation arising from the policy, political and institutional environment.

- Provide for monitoring key cross-cutting issues (e.g., gender, environment and poverty reduction).
- Define an appropriate mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators.
- Give appropriate consideration to how the data will be collected (i.e., methods), stored, analyzed and presented.
- Provide for monitoring the quality of key relationships.

5. Define M&E responsibilities and resources:
- Define who is responsible for the collection, storage, analysis, dissemination and utilization of each data set (outputs, purpose (outcomes), goal (impacts), risks and assumptions/context).
- Ensure the budget contains identifiable provision for monitoring and evaluation.
- Document ACT-I role in the M&E arrangements and ensure this is appropriate for the circumstances and consistent with the program strategy.
- Verify that ACT-I plans to take advantage of strategic opportunities (e.g. major activity reviews and TAG visits) to assess progress and significant changes fostered.
- Ensure that implementers have not been given inappropriate scope to define success and how their own performance will be assessed.
- Mainstream M&E responsibilities as a management function, rather than have it as the preserve of a dedicated unit or external consultants.
- Identify the person(s)/role(s) (i.e. within ACT-I and/or partner structures) that will be the point at which information generated will be used for accountability, management decisions or learning.

6. Ensure M&E arrangements accommodate the need for lesson learning and accountability:
- Balance the demands for accountability and learning/continuous improvement.
- Verify that the M&E arrangements will enable informed decision-making by the implementing agency.
- Ensure that all relevant stakeholders can contribute lessons and share in learning.
- Define a system for incorporating lessons learned for continuous activity improvement.
- Define the frequency, content, purpose and audience of reporting.
- Plan to subject M&E strategies, systems and tools to periodic review to promote ongoing improvements to the M&E arrangements.
- Establish an appropriate degree of public transparency within the M&E arrangements.

7. Applying Humanitarian Standards
- Apply humanitarian principles and standards in the M&E process during program design.

- Integrate various standards and principles (e.g. HAP – Principles etc).

Fig.3 below illustrates the process of integrating the standards and principles as appropriate into the DME process.
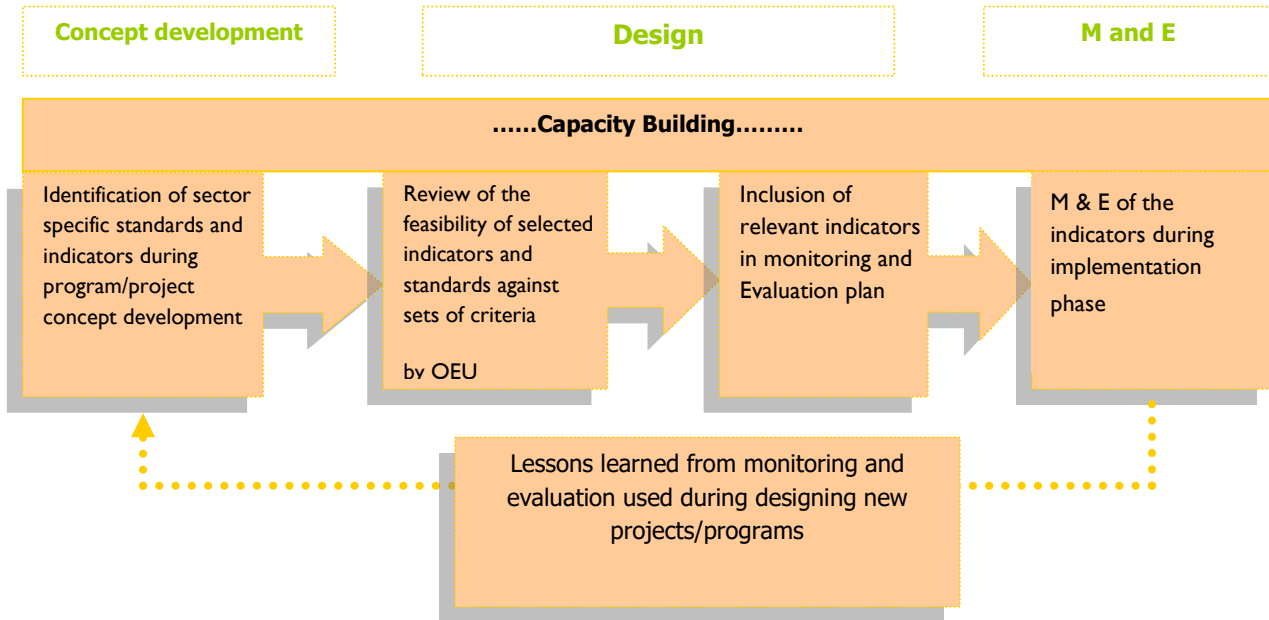

Concept development

Design

M and E

......Capacity Building.........

| Identification of sector specific standards and indicators during program/project concept development | Review of the feasibility of selected indicators and standards against sets of criteria by OEU | Inclusion of relevant indicators in monitoring and Evaluation plan | M & E of the indicators during implementation phase |

Lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation used during designing new projects/programs

Fig. 3 – Integration of ACT-I and other humanitarian standards and indicators into M&E process

B. GOOD PRACTICE CHECKLIST

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Has there been adequate consultation with, and ownership by, those who may contribute to or use the information?

Partner M&E Capacity:

- Does the framework work through and/or contribute to strengthening partner organization M&E systems?
- Have the partner's M&E systems been assessed and is a strategy in place to build capacity?

M&E Arrangements:

- Have M&E arrangements been appropriately defined prior to implementation?
- Will all the major changes that the intervention is designed to bring about be assessed?
- Is the M&E framework proportional to the activity expenditure and complexity?

- Is implementation team performance distinguished from the overall activity's performance?

Information Requirements:

- Is it clear what information is to be collected, when, where from and how?
- Are all levels in the design logic adequately addressed?
- Are existing data and systems to be appropriately used?

Responsibilities and Resourcing:

- Is it clear who will contribute to what and when?
- Is it clear how this will be paid for and resourced?

Learning and Accountability:

- Is there an appropriate balance between information for accountability and learning?

Chapter – 4   Components of M & E Mechanisms

The monitoring and evaluation plan developed during project / program design forms the basis for individual project M and E. Broadly, the monitoring system will focus on 4 major instruments (see Fig. 4 below)
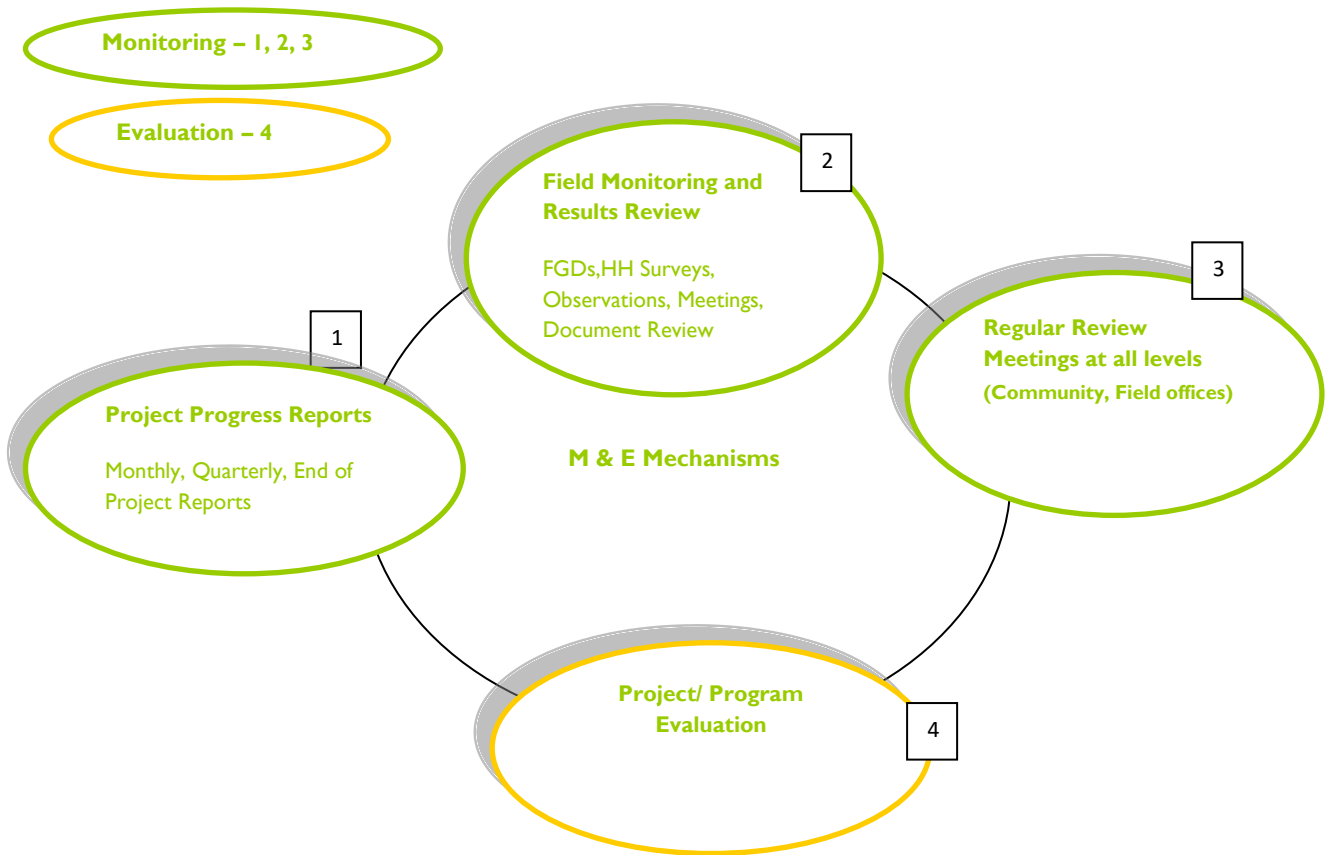

Fig.4 . Components of the M & E Mechanism

B. Relationship between Components – System Integration

The system is designed in such a way that one monitoring mechanism relate to the other mechanism to finally ensure information sharing and integration.   The relationship between the different mechanisms is driven by the type of information required at each hierarchy of the log frame. Table below shows the different levels of information required to understand changes at a given hierarchy in the log frame hierarchy.

Table 3

Information needs at different level of objective hierarchy

Level of objective hierarchy	What to monitor and evaluate
Outputs / Process	What direct tangible things has the project delivered as a result of activities? What are the processes involved in achieving the output?
Outcomes	What changes have occurred as a result of the outputs? What are the operating environment that can hamper or enhance the achievement of the outcome To what extent are this likely to contribute towards the desired goal
Goal / Impact	To what extent has the project contributed towards project goal

Starting with the M & E plan, the Fig. below presents how the different mechanisms relate to each other. Monthly progress reports are prepared following monthly reporting formats by the project coordinators with the assistance of M & E Officers. The DME team and project staff conduct field monitoring to understand context of operation, process used to deliver outputs, physical verification of reported outputs, and understand whether progress is being made towards project outcomes and goals.

The monthly reports and monitoring information are the sources of project quarterly reports. The project closing report is summarized from the quarterly reports. In addition to enriching the content of the quarterly reports, the field monitoring information will be used to inform evaluation process.

The project/ program evaluation, built with practical information from field assessment, surveys and final progress reports, create a room for learning. The lessons learned from evaluation processes should be shared by all stakeholders to improve future program DME (See Fig.5 below).
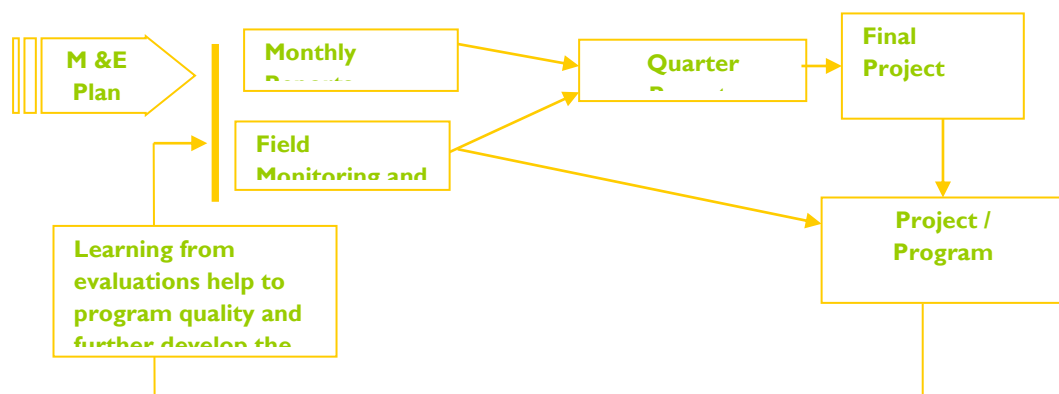

Fig.5 Relationship between the different M & E

Chapter – 5   Monitoring and Evaluation

A. Monitoring

Definition

Monitoring - The routine collection of information on an ongoing basis to support basic management and accountability functions and to establish that inputs, activities and outputs have occurred. Monitoring involves the recommendation of appropriate management responses to project implementation (LEAP Version 1.0 P. 46)

Purpose

- To provide information on progress toward planned results to stakeholders, including community and donors
- To assist implementation by identifying successes and challenges and thereby informing decision making
- To encourage and celebrate the achievements of project staff and participants
- To provide information for evaluation and learning

Principles

- Participates all stakeholders including beneficiaries
- Monitoring information is derived during project / program design
- Data disaggregated by gender and other socio economic indicators
- Simple tools and formats used
- Only necessary information for project management are collected
- Actual monitoring is done based on information contained in M & E Plan

Table 4

Description of the Monitoring Components of the M & E System

SN.	Monitoring Mechanism	Focus	Timeframe	Participants (Primary responsibilities)	Approaches and Tools
1	**Progress Reports** - Monthly Reports Including ITTs - Quarterly Reports Including ITT - Project Closing Report	Monitoring the delivery of outputs according to the log frame in a timely and cost effective way Project Outputs and description of Progress towards project Outcomes	Monthly Quarterly End of Project	**Project Coordinators**, M & E Officers **Program Officers**, RPM	Monthly Reporting Format, Indicator Tracking Table, LEAP Reporting Format. See annex 4 for information flow process for monthly reports
2	**Field Monitoring and Results Review (Validations process)** - Process - Impact - Context - Verification	- Monitoring the process of implementation (e.g. are women and men equally involved in the implementation process?) Monitoring the operational environment that can have impact on the program or is as a result of the program (eg. security, prices, presence of other NGOs etc) Monitoring progress towards stated outcomes/goals	Monthly / Quarterly/ Biannual	**DM & E Manager,** **M & E Officers, Community Development Workers** Project Coordinators, RPM, Community Development Workers	Project specific Monitoring Formats – Project Specific tools developed based on M & E plan Community involved in information collection and decision making Means of Verifications: HH Surveys, FGDs, Observation, document reviews and meetings NB. Monitoring is based on Information on Project M & E Plan
3	**Regular Program Review Meetings at all levels** FIELD OFFICE,	Review program Progress	Weekly / Fortnightly	Program Manager –	Meeting Minutes

ACT-I recognizes that Program / project M & E should not be limited to simple periodic tracking of activities and outputs. The success of a project depends on host of other factors. These factors might include: 'risks / assumption' identified during project designs, operational environment, processes followed and during implementation. The monitoring system should also be able to give indications of progress towards project outcomes. Systematic field monitoring and review and periodic review results can help better understand the situation of projects / programs and take corrective action in time. Description of this monitoring mechanism (Monitoring Mechanism 2 in table 2 above) is given in the following sections.

Field Monitoring and Results Review

This component of the M & E system is a continuous process that needs to be modified as new projects are designed. The data gathered through the system should attempt to provide information on progress towards impact / sustainability, process and context. The system should also allow for physical verification of reported results through visits and document reviews. The monitoring component of the framework builds up on the concept of monitoring for impact.

Table 5

Description of information that need to be captured through the monitoring system

Focus	Description
Impact / sustainability	The advantage of this approach is that it will allow ACT-I to assess project performance before actual program evaluation is conducted. Examples of information monitored through this process include: enrollment rates, engagement of women and other groups, engagement in alternative livelihood sources etc.
Process	Focuses on stakeholder's perception of ACT-T's work, participation, input efficiency, extent to which cross cutting themes, HAP –I Principles.
Context	Includes information on local capacities for peace, effect of project on social situation, change in local economy, arrival and departure of other actors (e.g. NGOs)
Verification of Reported Results (Results Review)	Once project information is included in progress reports, that information is authentic and a working figure for stakeholders (senior management, donors, and other stakeholders). The system should ensure that reported results can be verified on the field and through document reviews.

Process for developing monitoring tools

Once a project / program is approved, the DME team will follow the following process to integrate monitoring into the implementation process:

- Review Project Log frames and M & E Plans to identify critical indicators that needs to be monitored
- Identify information related to the indicators on M & E plan that ACT-I needs to monitor related to progress towards impact / sustainability, process and context (see table 3 above)
- Finalize the method of data collection (HH survey, Focus Group Discussion, Regular meetings etc).
- Finalize the frequency of data collection.
- Finalize responsibilities section of the M & E plan

Implementation of the monitoring tools

- Introduce tools to project coordinators and Integrated Project Manager (RPM) and seek input
- Test tools under field environment and make necessary changes
- Work on M & E Plan implementation in the field offices with the project coordinators and Community Development Officers
- Review project M & E budget in each project and discuss with field offices management on what is achievable given the available budget, staff and time.

Data Collection Techniques

The selection of data collection technique depends on the type of information and resource needed to collect the information.   ACT-I will adopt the use of the following techniques based on the different contexts:

- Review of secondary information (e.g. from schools, government departments and Madaris etc)
- Household surveys
- Focus Group Discussions with communities, boys and girls
- Key informant interviews (e.g. school principals, village heads etc)
- Observation
- Checklists
- Review meetings and workshops with community and stakeholders

Community Participation

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation empowers communities for to effectively managing future development processes.   Community members are involved in the different components of the DME process.   Community members can be involved in the following ways:

- Identify and agree on what should be monitored regularly
- Delegating the community to collect information
- Deciding on the adjustment to the project based on monitoring findings
- Share monitoring results with community members

Communication of Monitoring Results, Reflection and Learning

- M & E Officers and DME Manager to draft report and discuss with the RPM and CEO.
- DME Manager sends the final report to the respective RPM with a copy to the Program Manager at head office, Quality Enhancement Unit Manager and Technical Advisors and CEO.
- Program Manager, Quality Enhancement Unit Manager to share the report to other senior management members as required
- RPM makes sure that learning from monitoring results are shared during staff meeting.

Follow up on Implementation of Monitoring Recommendations

- Monitoring and Evaluation Officers and project coordinators work closely to ensure that concerns raised in the monitoring report are addressed.
- DME manager will discuss progress towards implementation of recommendations with RPM and CEO during field visits. Monitoring recommendation will be tracked using a tracking format.
- QEU manager will follow up with senior management for issues that need attention at higher level.

B. Evaluation

Definition

A time-bound exercise that attempts to assess, systematically and objectively, the relevance, performance and success, or lack thereof, of ongoing and completed programmes and projects (**LEAP Version 1.0**).

Purpose

- To provide information on whether underlying theories and assumptions used in the programme development were valid
- To assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of a programme or project
- To guide decision makers or programme managers in reproducing programmes that succeed
- To encourage and celebrate the achievements of programme stakeholders
- To assist learning about development

Principles

- The scope of an evaluation should be proportional to the available resources
- Design evaluations to be useful to key stakeholders. Connect the concerns, interests, and problems of key stakeholders to the larger context surrounding the programme.
- Evaluation is participatory, appropriately involving all stakeholders to a programme or project.
- The facilitator of evaluative thinking must examine his/her own attitudes, ideas and behavior
- To further enhance objectivity, analyze information from different perspectives using different methods.
- Respect and use the knowledge and experience of key stakeholders.
- Competent external Participation should be sought as required for technical input and objectivity

Planning and Management Process of Evaluations

The decision to conduct evaluation of a project/a program is made during program design. Period and scope of evaluation are defined by the size of the program, project life time, resource availability, and strategic importance. The details of planning and management will depend on how the evaluation is initiated. The following include the most common evaluation sources.

1. Evaluations included in proposals
2. Evaluation initiated by SOs/ donors
3. ACT-I Pakistan Initiated Evaluation
4. Multi Agency Evaluations

Description of each type of evaluation, responsibilities and applicable tools are given in table below. Each of these evaluations can take different modes (Assessment, Monitoring, Context, Formative and Summative) (Refer to LEAP manual Version 1.0 P. on the description of the possible modes).

Table 5:

Evaluation Component of the ACT-I M & E System

Source of Evaluation	Description	Tools
Evaluations planned during project / program proposal	DME unit review proposals and develop evaluation plan in the first quarter of a project period. The plan should include: the type of evaluation (mid-term, end of project, ex-post evolution), budget available for the evaluation, timeframe, scope, participants and responsible body. The scope the evaluation is usually guided by the M & E plan focusing on project outcomes. For evaluations included in the project document, it is the responsibility of the DME Manager to draft the plan, communicate the plan with stakeholders, draft ToR and manage the evaluation process. Evaluation process will follow standard procedures described in the LEAP manual.	LEAP TOR, Design, and Reporting Format on:
Donor initiated evaluation	This is a situation where even if it is not indicated in a proposal, support offices / donors might initiate evaluation. In such cases, ACT-I will assist in reviewing the terms of reference, providing necessary information, joining the team during field visits and arranging logistics.	LEAP TOR, Design, and Reporting Format.
ACT-I initiated projects / programs evaluation	ACT-I might initiate its own mid-term / terminal evaluation of projects / programs. In such cases, the RPM and DME manager will facilitate the formation of evaluation working group that would manage the process. The DME manager will work on the terms of reference and detailed work plan. ACT-I might initiate evaluation where one of the following conditions is fulfilled: ▪ Project / Program Budget of greater than USD / PKR XXXXXX ▪ Strategic importance for ACT-I	LEAP TOR format Design Format Reporting Format on: www.transformational-development.org
Multi-agency evaluation	Where ACT-I is required to join a multi agency evaluation mission either initiated at partnership Office level or within Pakistan, ACT-I will be represented by DME Manager of designate. However, ACT-I will make final decision to participate based on the anticipated value added to its program.	As agreed by the participating agencies

Follow up on Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations

Responsibilities depend on the type of recommendation during evaluation. The DME Manager, ACT-I Senior Management and Field office will agree on the content of the recommendation and timeline for implementation.   Implementation of recommendations is tracked using evaluation recommendation implementation tracking form. DME Manager should ensure that learning as documented and shared among various stakeholders who have interest in the program.

C. CLIENTS OF THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

Information from Monitoring and evaluation is shared with the following groups as appropriate:

Communities including boys and girls– The monitoring system is expected to improve accountability to beneficiaries. Local capacity will also be built through involving communities in M & E.   Communities will be able to get information on the status of projects and also will be consulted where adjustments are required.

ACT-I – The M & E system will allow ACT-I to make sure that commitments to target communities and donors are being fulfilled. Learning from the system will also enhance quality of programming in the future.

Donors - The M & E system will provide objective analysis of project / program implementation status.   Donors will be able to get a more detailed assessment of the progress towards intended goals through periodic reports. ACT-I quarter reports will include objective analysis of progress towards goals.

Other external stakeholders (Partner NGOs, government, NGOs etc) – The system will generate timely and accurate information that can be shared with other stakeholders.

Chapter – 6   Project Design and M&E Illustrative Formats

In addition to the narrative quality criteria, several key elements may appear in M&E framework documents such as

i) Logframe Matrix;

ii) M&E Operations Plan;

iii) Schedule of Reports;

iv) Risk Matrix;

v) Implementation Schedule;

vi) M&E Strengthening Plan.

vii) Baseline

The following discussion and examples are illustrative (not obligatory formats) and should be used/modified as circumstances dictate.

A. Log Frame Matrix

Design Logic	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal	Impact indicator	Source/method	Development assumptions
Purpose	Outcome indicator	Source/method	Intervention assumptions
Outputs	Progress indicator	Source/method	Management assumptions

A Log frame Matrix provides an overview of the intervention design logic, and the basis for performance measurement. The left-hand column succinctly articulates the 'theory of change'— the 'storyline' of the intervention. There is increasing recognition that this is best done when the key 'human actors', at each stage of the anticipated change process, are known. The right-hand column describes factors or events that may inhibit the various stages of change and are considered largely outside of the implementation team's control. The middle two columns present a rudimentary performance measurement framework.

A log frame prepared as part of the design phase may be revised in the course of developing a M&E framework to improve the 'evaluability' of the design logic. There is critique of the log frame, and corresponding calls for alternative approaches. From an M&E perspective, a log frame is just one way of representing the anticipated change fostered by an intervention. Irrespective of what 'tool' is used, the inherent causality (or logic) of the anticipated change should be clearly articulated and the underlying assumptions made explicit. Four general

questions are relevant: i) 'What are we trying to achieve?'; ii) 'How will we know if we are successful?'; iii) Where is the information coming from to demonstrate success?'; iv) What factors might erode our success?'

B. M&E Operations Plan

System Element	Date			People			Time		
Design Logic	**Indicator**	**MoV**	**Method of Analysis**	**Source**	**Responsible**	**Recipient**	**Frequesny**	**Analysis Deadline**	**Report Submission**
Goal									
Development Risk									
Purpose									
Intervention Risk									
Outputs									
Management Risk									

A M&E Operations Plan provides an overview of the operational elements of the M&E framework—the mechanics of how the M&E system will work. It should be clear how all the pieces of information fit together like a puzzle to provide a holistic picture of intervention performance; how the various stakeholders interact so that information flows; and the basis for timely management of the whole system. N.B the integration of risk management within performance monitoring is critical but commonly overlooked.

C. Schedule of Reports

Report	Content	Responsible	Frequency	Recipient

A Schedule of Reports can help to summarize how all the pieces of data are ultimately used. Ideally, routine internal reports should feed into periodic comprehensive reports, such as the Annual Report, or Activity Completion Report. There should be no redundant information reports for 'report's sake'.

D. Risk Matrix

Risk Class	Risk Event	Potential Adverse Impact	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Management Strategy	Responsibility
Development Risk							
Intervention Risk							
Management Risk							

Likelihood: Low, Medium, High. Impact: Low, Medium, High.

Risk Level 1=Low ,Risk Level 2=Medium, Risk Level 3=High, Risk Level 4=Extreme

A Risk Matrix identifies key risks at each stage of the 'theory of change', and describes any adverse impact on performance that could occur. An appropriate risk management strategy is proposed, based on the overall 'risk level' (calculated from the likelihood and impact). A person or role should be held responsible for implementing the risk management strategy. It is critical that risk monitoring be mainstreamed within M&E processes to ensure that risk management strategies can be initiated in a timely and proactive manner.

E. Implementation Schedule

Time	Year 1				Year 2			
Task	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1.1								
Task A								
Task B								
Task C								

An implementation schedule is a visual representation of how key tasks are to be implemented throughout the life of the intervention to ensure that each Output is delivered on time and to the required standard. Implementation schedules can be cross-referenced with cost schedules to verify that sufficient resources have been allocated to ensure quality results and that M&E tasks have adequate budget.

F. M&E Strengthening Plan

M&E Stakeholder/Role	Identified Weakness	Capacity Building Strategy				
		Method	Content	Location	Frequency	Responsibility

Good practice M&E requires that, where possible, existing sources of data and systems are used. Aside from possible cost savings, this approach is likely to foster ownership of intervention performance among partners. However, a pragmatic reality of this approach is that partner data and systems may be weak. For practical and ethical reasons, strengthening partner M&E capacity may be necessary. To ensure follow-through on capacity building commitments, it is necessary to specify the details of the capacity building strategy: who is the beneficiary of the capacity building? What are the identified weaknesses? How will the capacity building be provided? What particular topics/content will be delivered? Where will the capacity building take place? How often will capacity building 'events' be facilitated? Who will be held responsible for the success of the capacity building?

G. Baseline

A meaningful results oriented monitoring requires establishing baselines for project / program performance indicators. ACT-I recognizes that establishing baseline surveys for all new projects might not be feasible. If decision is made not to conduct a full survey, DME unit will attempt to establish baselines through the following process:

- Review available documents to find out if baseline figures can be obtained

- See if proxy indicators can be established from survey conducted in the same program area

H. M&E in Implementation

Whereas much of the foregoing is concerned with 'M&E at entry' (i.e. M&E planning at the design and start-up phases of interventions), M&E framework quality is relevant throughout the life of the intervention. Key documents, processes and structures, required during implementation, that are variously concerned with promoting activity performance include:

- **Annual Plans:** should provide information about 'big picture' progress, and evidence that key risks are appropriately managed.
- **ACCs/PCCs/Tripartite Meetings:** should be informed by recent independent assessments/reviews of progress; address major issues as they arise; demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement; be genuinely accountable; make practical recommendations that are implemented.
- **Program Strategy Performance Assessment Framework:** should be informed by the M&E framework processes and data.
- **Program Monitoring Plan (formerly CPRAMP):** should appropriately assess the relative riskiness of the activity and provide for adequate monitoring by the Post.
- **Technical Advisory Group (TAG):** should be used frequently and strategically; provide valued assessment of progress; assess the quality of contract/agreement deliverables; and distil lessons for continuous improvement.
- **Simplified Monitoring Toolbox (SMT):** should enable structured monitoring of progress; foster continuous improvement; support corporate reporting requirements to Parliament.

More tools to be added

Chapter – 7   Documentation and Information Management

A. Minimum Documentation Requirements

One of the ways we can ensure accountability is by being able to prove reported outputs.   In the absence of supporting documents, time spent tracking down project documents can be significant during evaluations and operational audits.   ACT-I projects are required to have proper documentation of achieved and reported outputs.   Each Project Officer / Project Coordinator should be able to provide supporting program related documentation for figures reported in the Indicator Tracking Tables.   The DME Information Management Officer is responsible for periodic review of documentation practices across the field offices.

Draft minimum documentation guideline for major modes of output delivery (training, awareness, distributions, construction, formation of committees, support to schools and institutions etc) is attached to this document **(Please see Annex ---).**   In cases where finance department demands for original documents before making payments, proper finance document reference numbers should be included in the project document.

The internal results review process designed as part of ACT-I M & E mechanism (table 2 mechanism no. 2) is related to such documentation.   This process aims to make sure that appropriate documentation is in place for the reported outputs.

B. Length of documents of source documents

There is no policy that states for how long source documents need to be retained (e.g., records, training attendance sheets, summary reports etc).   The general guideline in ACT-I is to keep source documents for at least three years after the closing of the projects/ programs.

C. Suggested Filing Systems

Following customary filing procedures, each Project coordinator/Project Officer or anyone responsible for managing a project should file project documents systematically.   Results reviews are conducted for individual projects.   The field office management is responsible for giving a uniform guideline on filing system for project coordinators.   The Project documentation folders should have at least the following:

-   Folder no. (More than one folder might be required for projects with long term time frame)
-   Name of the project
-   Donor (Because different donors might be funding the same type of project)

Annexes

Annex No.	Name of document	Attachment
Annex 1	Monthly Narrative Reporting Format	Monthly Reporting format Raja Hasrat.d
Annex 2	Monthly Reporting Information flow and management	In progress
Annex 3	Monthly Report Feedback form	feedback list (MPR) Raja hasrat.doc
Annex 4	Monitoring and Evaluation Recommendation Implementation tracking form	M&E recomendation implementation trackii
Annex 5	Monitoring Reporting Format	Monthly Reporting format Raja Hasrat.d
Annex 6	HAP-I and Sphere Integration action plan	HAP-Raja Hasrat.doc
Annex 7	Documentation Guideline	In progress
Annex 8	Initial Evaluation Planning Matrix	evaluation sheet.xls

References:

1. DFID, Managing for Impact – A Guide for project M & E
2. UNDP, Hand Book for Monitoring and Evaluation for Results
3. Aus AID, M&E Good Practice Guide
4. LEAP Manual

Figures, Tables and Boxes

TABLE 1:

TABLE 2:

TABLE 3:

TABLE 4:

TABLE 5:

FIGURE 1:

FIGURE 2:

FIGURE 3:

FIGURE 4:

FIGURE 5:

BOX 1:

BOX 2:

BOX 3: