B3. Monitor

1. Monitoring improves development effectiveness and efficiency by reviewing performance and using evidence to adjust programming for optimal results. Good monitoring starts with good planning and clear identification of what a programme or project will strive to achieve with specified resources. It is a continuous management function that provides decision-makers with regular feedback. Evidence from monitoring also serves as a critical input to evaluation and enables evidence-based reporting.

2. All UNDP programming activities are required to adhere to monitoring standards and policies, for which managers of regional and country programmes and all projects are accountable.

3. The frequency of monitoring must be appropriate for decision-making, including joint governance mechanisms such as programme boards/Cooperation Framework steering committees, and defined during programming design. Outcomes must be monitored at least annually through the Results-Oriented Analysis Report, and outputs must be monitored through the integrated workplan/Results-Oriented Analysis Report and project-specific output monitoring.

4. Monitoring includes: (a) tracking performance through the collection of appropriate and credible data and other evidence; (b) analysing evidence to inform management decision-making, improve effectiveness and efficiency, and adjust programming as necessary; and (c) reporting on performance and lessons to facilitate learning and support accountability.

Tracking Performance

5. UNDP programming activities must collect appropriate and credible data as evidence for adequate monitoring. Data collection is established in the results framework and monitoring plan.

6. Monitoring data include:
    a. Progress data for outcome and/or output indicators as agreed in the results framework;
    b. Output verification, through project-level field visits and other means;
    c. Horizon-scanning information, including changes in the development context, updates on what other partners are doing in related areas, and changes in the political will of national actors;
    d. Data on operational performance, including delivery of the workplan, pipeline/resource mobilization management, dashboard and audit performance, delivery rates, deficits, unprogrammed resources, aged NIM advances, implementation of procurement plans, receivables management, and donor reporting performance (timeliness and quality);
    e. Baselines, targets and progress data for global IRRF indicators, as relevant;
    f. Evaluation recommendations and lessons learned from within the programme or project and beyond; and
    g. Assessments of changes in the programming context, including risks.

7. Data are collected considering aspects of quality such as credibility, timeliness, relevance and national ownership; the weight given to these may vary according to context. When data are not available from national or other sources, original data must be collected through programmes and projects using mechanisms such as surveys, observations, stakeholder feedback, and emerging data sources such as sensors, cell phone records and/or other sources.

8. Efforts should be made, where possible and relevant, to support national capacities for monitoring, and for leveraging emerging data sources for real-time monitoring.

9. In crisis settings, data may be collected through remote monitoring, from third-party contractors. Sufficient evidence must be collected by remote monitors to enable UNDP to verify credibility of the monitoring data, such as through photographs or satellite images.

10. In addition to the above, data must cover the following areas:

    a. **Target groups**. Targeted groups must be identified in programme and project documents, as relevant. This entails collecting data on how programming affects different target groups (women, men, youth, income levels, people with disabilities, etc.) to understand and analyse differentiated impacts. All programming must be able to track the most relevant targeting performance using measurable indicators, to assess if programming is reaching the groups intended. Monitoring activities must be carried out with the active participation of relevant stakeholders, including national and international government agencies, non-governmental and civil society organizations, the private sector, and representatives of local communities including representatives of indigenous peoples, where relevant. The use of real-time monitoring and collection of beneficiary feedback should be deployed when justified and feasible to track effects (good or bad), perceptions, unintended consequences and specific bottlenecks to results for disadvantaged communities, as well as to engage citizens in monitoring.

    b. **Capacity development**. Changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions must be monitored through indicators, as relevant.

    c. **Sustainability**. Each development project must have transition and phase-out arrangements, including a scale-up and sustainability plan. These arrangements must be reviewed annually and adjusted, as necessary. If transition and phase-out arrangements are not necessary, their absence must be adequately justified and approved during design.

Analysing Evidence to Inform Management Decision-Making

11. Effective monitoring must, at a minimum, inform analysis and decision-making related to:

    a. **Results**: An analysis of collected evidence against programming indicators, comprising baselines, milestones, targets and progress data at outcome and output levels, and including an assessment of why progress against results is above, at or below targets.
    b. **Theory of change**: An analysis of the programming approach and results against the defined theory of change to test the validity of the assumptions, and to consider alternatives, risks and cost effectiveness.
    c. **Quality**: An analysis of programming quality conducted against quality standards.
    d. **Risks**: An assessment of risks and analysis of risk management plans and implementation against the current programming situation.
    e. **Operational performance**: An analysis of operational performance against plans and corporate benchmarks.
    f. **Knowledge:** Analysis of evaluation recommendations and lessons from within the programme or project and beyond.

12. Additional analysis includes, as available and appropriate:
    a. Analysis of experiments: testing the effect of interventions against a control group based on statistical rigour and ethical standards; and

    b. Analysis of assessments of changes in the programming context, including in emerging crises.

13. Programme managers/Resident Representatives must monitor UNDP's contributions towards the achievement of outcomes agreed in the programme document. In addition, programme managers must also monitor the achievement of the overall outcome, including contributions from other partners, to inform needed adjustments in UNDP's contribution to results. The project pipeline must be reviewed at least once per year to ensure it is appropriate for achievement of the programme results.

14. Programme managers and governance mechanisms, such as programme boards, must review monitoring analysis and use it to inform management decisions and actions to adjust programming for optimal performance and results achievement.

15. Management decisions and actions address areas as needed, including:
    a. Adjustments to indicators, targets, theory of change and programming design (this can include changes to outputs, activities, etc.);

    b. Adjustments to implementation arrangements, including the identification of implementing partners, responsible parties and vendors;

    c. Adjustments to the budget and resource mobilization strategy and cost recovery arrangements;

    d. Actions to mitigate risks or respond to realized risks, including SES;

    e. Actions to develop or adjust a sustainability plan; and

    f. Other adjustments and actions, as required.

16. UNDP corporate programming governance mechanisms, including the Executive Group and the Organizational Performance Group, use monitoring evidence and analysis from across the organization to make decisions to improve performance. This includes a review of performance against targets set in the IRRF.

17. There must be at least one visit to all projects to monitor progress and verify that progress is achieved as reported.

Reporting Performance and Lessons

18. UNDP, as a knowledge organization, considers lessons a core aspect of its programming. Lessons, both in terms of successes and challenges to project implementation, must be reported to facilitate their use.

19. Data and other evidence collected from monitoring, along with analysis, lessons and decisions to improve performance, must be used in project and programme reporting, including:
    a. Regular reporting as defined in the programme and project monitoring and evaluation plan;

    b. Annual reporting in the Results-Oriented Analysis Report;

    c. Annual reporting to the UNDP Executive Board through the IRRF; and

    d. Other reporting as required, including donor, vertical fund and UN pooled fund reporting.

20. Programme and project reports support decisions to adjust implementation towards improved effectiveness and efficiency.

21. Programme and project reports are a foundation for outreach to stakeholders, ensuring visibility and transparency, and demonstrating results achieved to strengthen partnerships and mobilize resources.

Resources for Monitoring

22. UNDP offices and units must maintain adequate staffing for monitoring and evaluation. All offices with annual programme expenditures of $50 million and above, excluding expenditures for vertical funds with their own dedicated capacities, such as the GEF, GCF and Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, should maintain two full-time specialists dedicated to monitoring and evaluation. Offices with programme expenditures between $10 million and $50 million should maintain one full-time specialist. Offices with less than $10 million in programme expenditure must maintain staff with appropriate time dedicated to monitoring and evaluation.

23. The regional service centre should provide full-time equivalent staff dedicated to monitoring and evaluation to support offices that are unable to maintain the benchmark in a 1:4 ratio (1 full-time equivalent staff person to 4 countries without adequate capacities). Staff dedicated to project monitoring and/or evaluation do not count towards meeting programme benchmarks.

24. A minimum of 1 percent of annual development expenditures by region must be spent on monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring of Evaluation Plan implementation

25. The evaluation plan should be reviewed annually and refined and adjusted as needed. As part of the annual review, programme units should also ensure that all completed evaluations have been uploaded to ERC together with their management response, and that all management responses and key actions are up to date. A formal midterm review of the evaluation plan is also highly recommended. Changes to the evaluation plan during the midterm review ensure that: (a) the evaluation plan remains balanced and covers all aspects of the CPD in some way; (b) all completion dates are realistic and attainable; (c) all new evaluations have been included; and (d) all management responses and key actions are up to date.

26. All evaluations should have a clearly defined organization and management structure, and well established and communicated roles and responsibilities, including an evaluation manager responsible for oversight of the whole evaluation process. To avoid conflicts of interest, the evaluation manager cannot be the manager of the programme/ project being evaluated.

27. The evaluation manager should provide oversight to the some of the key expected timelines (1) Evaluability check should be done six months before proposed commencement (2) Terms of reference should be finalized three to six months before proposed commencement (2) Final evaluation report uploaded within two weeks of agreement and completion of the report (3) Management responses and key actions need to be agreed and entered into the ERC within six weeks of completion of the evaluation report (4) Update ERC at the end of every quarter

28. A programme unit M&E focal point, together with regional evaluation focal points, monitors the implementation of the evaluation plan to ensure that evaluations are completed, have management responses and that key actions are implemented. Bureau for Policy and Programmes monitors overall compliance with evaluation plans and implementation of management responses and key actions and follows up with regional bureaux to ensure timely implementation and reporting. Annually, Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) reports to the Executive Board on the number of evaluations planned during a given year, the number completed, the number of changes to evaluation plans and the reasons for those changes. IEO also reports on management responses to recommendations and key actions completed. For more information, See also the UNDP Evaluation Guideline.